

## **Briefing Document: Christmas 2025 Lesson 1**

**December 21, 2025**

### **Executive Summary**

This document synthesizes the core themes of a sermon centered on the theological significance of Christmas, drawing its primary analysis from the Gospel of John, particularly John 18:37. The central argument posits that a proper understanding of Christmas requires moving beyond sentimentality to grapple with the profound and challenging truths of Christ's identity and mission. The sermon begins with a stark warning about the spiritual dangers of a hardened heart and the seriousness of hearing God's Word, emphasizing that salvation is an act of God drawing individuals to Himself.

The main thesis is developed through an examination of Jesus's dialogue with Pontius Pilate. It asserts three key points derived from this text: the **uniqueness** of Christ's birth, revealing His pre-existence and eternal nature; the **purpose** of His birth, which was to "bear witness to the truth"; and the **precondition** for accepting this truth, which is to be "of the truth." The speaker argues that Christ's birth was not a creation but an incarnation—the eternal Son of God entering the world. This is substantiated with scriptural evidence from both the Old and New Testaments. The document concludes with the sermon's impassioned plea for the modern church to reject a "domesticated" and harmless view of Jesus and to rediscover a sense of awe, fear, and wonder at the unimaginable reality of God's glory and power as revealed in His Son.

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### **A Warning on Hearing God's Word**

Before examining the central Christmas text, the speaker issues a solemn warning regarding the gravity of engaging with scripture. The message stresses that an individual's response to God's Word has eternal consequences.

### **Spiritual Blindness and Hardness of Heart**

The sermon highlights that a failure to believe is not a neutral state but can be a consequence of divine judgment. Drawing from John 12:38-40, which quotes the prophet Isaiah, the speaker explains why some people are unable to believe.

- **Isaiah's Prophecy:** The text explains that some hearts cannot be penetrated because God has "blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts." The speaker references Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 as the sources for this prophecy.

- **The Act of Withdrawing:** This spiritual hardening is described as an act of God "withdrawing himself from that person's life" and leaving them to their own sin. The speaker quotes Isaiah 64:7: *"And there is no one who calls on Your name, Who stirs himself up to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us, And have consumed us because of our iniquities."*

- **The Primacy of Sin:** The ultimate cause of this separation is when an individual's sin becomes more important to them than God. As the speaker states, "God will allow you to have your sin if it's more important to you than he is."

### God's Sovereignty in Salvation

The sermon strongly emphasizes that the ability to come to Christ is not a product of human will alone, but a divine act.

- **Divine Drawing:** Citing John 6:44, the message asserts, *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."* This is presented as a "very, very chilling scripture" for those who do not know Jesus, underscoring the urgency and dependency on God for salvation.

- **A Call to Believers and Unbelievers:**

- **For Believers:** The Christmas season should be a time to give God credit for drawing them into His kingdom and to foster an even greater reliance on Him.

- **For Unbelievers:** The message is an urgent call to "give heed to the word of God and pray... that he'll open your eyes and that he'll soften your heart lest you be found blind and hardened and without any hope."

### The Christmas Message from John 18:37

The core of the sermon pivots to an unconventional Christmas text: Jesus's declaration before Pontius Pilate in John 18:37. This verse is presented as a powerful summary of the meaning of Christ's birth, delivered just hours before His crucifixion.

*Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."*

From this passage, the speaker extracts three foundational truths about Christmas:

1. **The Uniqueness of His Birth:** Christ did not originate at His birth; He existed eternally before it.

**2. The Purpose of His Birth:** He was born and came into the world to "bear witness to the truth."

**3. The Precondition of Approval:** The ability to agree with and accept this truth is conditional on a person being "of the truth."

#### The Uniqueness of Christ's Birth: Pre-Existence

The sermon argues that the greatest miracle of Christmas is not the virgin birth itself, but the fact that the infant in the manger existed "from of old, from everlasting."

#### Distinction from Human Creation

While human souls are created by God at a point in time and exist forever after, Jesus was not created. The personality and personhood of Jesus of Nazareth existed before the man was born.

#### The Mystery of the Incarnation

- **Not Created, but Incarnated:** The theological term used is "incarnation," meaning the pre-existing Son of God took on a human body. "His birth was not coming into being a new person... when he came into this world he was infinitely old."

- **Scriptural Affirmations of Pre-Existence:**

- **Micah 5:2:** Prophesying 700 years before the event, Micah states of the ruler from Bethlehem, "*Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.*"

- **John 8:58:** Jesus Himself declares His eternal nature to the Jews, stating, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.*" The use of "I AM" was a direct claim to divinity, equating Himself with God, which is why His audience immediately sought to stone Him.

- **John 1:1:** The apostle John affirms, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"

- **Philippians 2:5-8:** Paul describes Christ "*who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant,<sup>1</sup>... and coming in the likeness of men.*"

- **Hebrews 1:2-3:** The author of Hebrews states that God has spoken through His Son, "*through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...*"

- **Co-Eternal with the Father:** These passages illustrate that the Son is the very image and glory of God, eternally begotten by the Father, not created. The speaker concludes, "There was never a time when God the Father did not have his perfect real and living image of himself to see. They are in fact co-eternal."

#### Concluding Call to the Church

The sermon culminates in a passionate appeal for the contemporary church to re-engage with the awesome and fearful reality of who Jesus Christ truly is.

- **A Call for Awe and Wonder:** The speaker expresses a deep concern that the church has become "dead and callous and unfeeling in regards to the glory of God and his son." A true revival must begin within the church, with a renewed sense of "awe, the fear, the astonishment, the wonder that we should feel in regards to the son of God."

- **Rejection of a "Domesticated" Jesus:** A central warning is issued against a modern tendency to view Christ as harmless. "We live in a church where Jesus Christ has been domesticated and is harmless. That is not who Jesus Christ is."

- **The Urgency of Belief:** The message closes by reiterating its foundational purpose, mirroring the words of John 20:31: to speak these things "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."

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#### Greek Terms Referenced

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
<b>Doulos</b> <sup>1</sup>	<i>doo'-los</i>	A slave; one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, with their will completely subject to the other. In the New Testament, it is often used to connote absolute devotion to God to the disregard of one's own interests.

<sup>1</sup>The speaker notes that in passages like Philippians 2:7, the Greek word is *doulos* (slave), but that many English translations, such as the King James Version, rendered it as "servant" or "bondservant." A similar point is made regarding Jesus's statement in John 18:36 about his "servants."