He can walk on water, turn water into wine, no special effects, no camera tricks.

He has a head shot on every church van across the country!

Even before the Kings of Comedy, he was hailed the King of all Kings, Ruler of the Universe,

Alpha and Omega, beginning and the end, the bright and the Morning Star!

Some say he is the Rose of Sharon, and some say he is the Prince of Peace.

Get up on your feet, put your hands together and show your love

for the Second Coming of the One and Only!"

Today’s text is the apostle John’s attempt to introduce Jesus to his readers scattered throughout the Roman empire, and subsequent readers from that time until now. The intro is short, but powerful. It is all about Jesus, as is fitting on this day we call Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the church year. Next Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent, and we will once again inaugurate a new journey through the life of Christ, beginning with his birth. But today, we are at the end of that annual review, and Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the One and Only, is seated on his throne as King of kings and Lord of lords.

John argues that Jesus is **eternal**, an important concept because he starts and ends his introduction by stressing this point. “Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come” (1:4) and “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (1:8). Thus, John encapsulates the timeless nature and absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ. He is the beginning and the end, the eternal and unchanging foundation upon which all of creation rests. In a world marked by uncertainty and transience, the truth of Christ’s eternal nature provides a firm anchor for our faith. He is the unchanging constant in a world of flux, the source of hope amid the ebb and flow of human history.

In the era of TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, podcasts, blogs, and fake news it is no wonder that we get confused about what is real and what is phoney, what is true and what is false. Which is why in times of uncertainty, conflict and fear, it is reassuring to remember that Jesus is the one constant we can depend on and that his will is going to ultimately prevail.

In practical terms, Jesus’ eternal nature means that we can *trust God’s faithfulness*. When we feel overwhelmed by the pace of life or the pressures of the present moment, we know that God transcends time, which is why we can trust in God’s timing and plan for our lives.

The eternity of Jesus means that we can *find* *comfort in God’s constant presence*. The angel, speaking of Jesus, purposely tells Joseph that the child’s name will be Emmanuel, meaning “God with us” (Matthew 1:24). The prospect of God drawing near to God’s people is comforting. Remember, John’s audience suffered under the yoke of Roman oppression. They were lonely and fearful. John draws a picture of the triumphant Christ, who is the Alpha and Omega, signifying that in moments of loneliness or fear, we can draw strength from the truth that God is *always* with us.

The eternal nature of Jesus also means that we can tap into *God’s unlimited power and resources*. As we navigate a world filled with uncertainty and turmoil, we find hope in God’s sovereignty. God is bigger than, greater than, and stronger than the problems of this world. Knowing that God is God reassures us that nothing happens outside the will of God and that God is actively involved in our lives.

John describes Jesus as a **faithful witness**. Jesus was not an eyewitness to some disputed event, but a martyr (*martus* in Greek) who “loves us and frees us from our sins by his blood*”* (v. 5). A martyr believes in something so passionately that they are willing to die for it. Jesus was passionate about us, voluntarily laying down his life for us. Jesus is the ultimate witness to God’s great love for us and of God’s desire to redeem us. Jesus was born to die, as were the lambs of the temple sacrificial system. The angel of the Lord said as much to Joseph: “name [the child] Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” It sounds brutal, but there it is: Jesus was born to die for you and for me.

Paul reminds us that “Christ died for the ungodly,” then he goes on to note that “rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die” (Romans 5:6-7). We hear stories of someone who pushed a child out of the path of an oncoming train only to lose their own life, or for a hearty soul to defy a riptide in an attempt to save a drowning person. But it is virtually unknown for someone to give up their own life for someone they know is evil and incorrigibly bad and unrepentant. Yet, Jesus, “while we still were sinners,” died for us (Romans 5:8).

Here is the amazing part: It isn’t just *good* people that Jesus died for; it was, according to Paul, for “sinners” like us that he died as a “witness” to God’s grace. Imagine someone voluntarily giving up his life for a known rascal or a sinner!

The apostle John’s description notes that Jesus was not just death defying, he conquered death completely! We know we are going to die and that when we die, we remain dead*.* Jesus didn’t. John says that Jesus is “the **firstborn from among the dead**” (v. 5). As the firstborn from the dead, Jesus walked out of his tomb showing us that he has power over death and offers the same to us. His beat-down of death assures us on Christ the King Sunday that Jesus is indeed the sovereign ruler over all creation. This is why the resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate expression of hope. It transforms our understanding of death, turning it from an end into a beginning. In Christ, the conqueror of death, we know that death is defeated, and that eternal life awaits those who place their trust in him.

As the “firstborn from the dead,” Jesus’ resurrection validated his claim to be the Son of God. His death and resurrection happened in fulfillment of Scripture, and it is the foundation of our faith. We also know that the empty tomb represents total and absolute victory over death, humanity’s greatest enemy, and that it is the hope of our future resurrection. Paulo describes Jesus’ resurrection as the “first fruits” of those who have died (1 Corinthians 15:20), meaning it is a precursor and guarantee of the future resurrection of all believers. Jesus is the “firstborn from among the dead”; because he rose from the dead, we have the hope and assurance that we, too, will be raised to eternal life.

In verse 7, John announces the **return of Jesus**. “Look, he is coming with the clouds! Every eye will see him, including those who pierced him.” This must have been fabulous news to the Christians suffering persecution at the behest of the Romans. John proclaims the future return of Jesus Christ, when he will come again in power and glory to establish his kingdom on earth. The promise of Christ’s return fills us with anticipation and expectation. It is a reminder that our present struggles and sufferings are temporary, and that a day is coming when all things will be made new. As we await Christ’s coming, we live with hope and faithfulness, knowing that he who promised is faithful.

So now that we know more about Jesus, the Christ and coming King, how might we introduce him if we were given that honor? For starters, we might say that Jesus Christ is the One who is, was, and ever will be; that he was born to die; that death could not hold him in the grave; and that we await his return. This is how the apostle John introduces us to the person of Jesus in his thrilling final book of the Bible. As we approach the season of Advent, may we prepare to get to know Christ the King even better!

Prayer: Ever-Faithful God, thank You for Your amazing grace and perfect peace which You supply in such abundance to all those who are called by Your name. Thank You that You are the eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting. Help me to take to heart all the truths that are contained in Your Word and apply them in my life, to Your praise and glory. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

**Source:**

* Harvey, Steve. <https://ww2.newagtalk.com/forums/thread-view.asp?tid=100780&mid=714070> Retrieved November 18, 2024.
* Jhangiani, Sharan. “How to introduce a guest speaker (with examples).” <https://app.yoodli.ai/blog/how-to-introduce-a-guest-speaker-with->examples, May 25, 2023. Retrieved April 25, 2024.
* LaMotte, Sandee. “If You Think You Can’t Focus For Long, You’re Right.” May 15, 2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/11/health/short-attention-span-wellness/index.html>. Retrieved November 7, 2024.

**Now Introducing…**

Sunday, November 24, 2024 [Revelation 1:4b-8](https://biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+1%3a4b-8&language=en&version=NRSVUE)

Federated Church, Fergus Falls, MN

Did you know that the average attention to a tv or computer screen decreased from 2.5 minutes in 2004 to 47 seconds in 2023? In most cases, people do not even read past the headline. The challenge for writers and speakers is to “hook” the audience with a joke, or a relatable story, or a provocative question, or a shocking statement that grabs their attention. A good introduction leaves the reader or the audience wanting to know more.

On a state visit to France in 1961, President John F. Kennedy, observing the popularity of his wife, introduced himself, saying, “I am the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris.” The president’s self-deprecating joke endeared him to his audience.

Robert Louis Stevenson introduced Mr. Hyde, the alter-ego of Dr. Jekyll, saying: "He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why." This negative portrayal intrigues us, prompting us to turn the page to find out more about this grotesque man.

Herman Melville’s novel, *Moby Dick*, opens with the protagonist announcing, “Call me Ishmael.” Since the name means “God will hear,” the reader wants to know what grievance of Ishmael’s God needs to hear.

Knowing that a powerful introduction grabs the attention and excites the imagination, what would you say if asked to introduce Jesus? That’s no small ask! The comedian Steve Harvey, known today as the host of “Family Feud, once stood on stage in front of an auditorium filled with people and said this:

“If I had the pleasure of bringing out Christ, this is just how I would do it. It ain't got to be the way you'd do it. You might not think it's just right, but this is how I would do it:

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my honor to introduce a man who needs no introduction.

His credits are too long to list! He has done the impossible time after time!

He hails out of a manger in Bethlehem and Jerusalem by way of Heaven!

His mother is still headlining in the Catholic church today!

His Daddy authored a book that’s been on the best seller list since the beginning of time!

He holds the record for the world's greatest fish fry!

He fed five thousand hungry souls with two fish and five loaves of bread!