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#1 In the Worth it Series:

Before it All

Forest Park Church

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Genesis 1:1 starts with the beginning.

- There was a beginning to everything...
- Except the One mentioned at the beginning, God.
- He has always been there even before the beginning.
- Before there was time, before there was space, before there was matter... there was God.

We know a little from the time of the world's creation but occasionally we are allowed to peak back deeper still.

- Scripture gives us three glimpses of this time using the phrase 'before the creation of the world'.
- This phrase was spoken by Jesus, Paul and Peter.

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1. Before the creation of the world: Love

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John 17:24 *Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

The first instance of this phrase 'before the creation of the world' is given by Jesus Himself.

- The focus is love.
- The Bible says that God is love (1 John 4:8,16).

- Before time, before matter, before angels, before humanity, there was love... love within and between the Godhead.
- There was love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the Bible describes love it says the following:

1Co 13:4-7

- 4 *Love (God) is patient, love (God) is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it (He) does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

This verse describes what love is and who God is for God is love... right from the beginning and beyond.

Love, by its very nature, does not seek its own. That is, it is not self-focused but needs another to love.

- And this love is willing to bear all things, believe all things and endure all things... for another.
- ‘That is pure love.
- That is the love of God.

1 Corinthians 13:13

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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2. Before the creation of the world: The recipients

- 6 **Eph 1:3-5** *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy*

and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

This is where things begin to blow our minds!

It is understandable that there would be love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit even before the foundation of the earth.

- But Paul tell us that God was also thinking back then of all those that would be, even before they came into being!
- Before the foundation of the earth?
- **And if He is thinking about you and me, knowing what we'd become, why is it in love?**
 1. Why not in anger
 2. Disappointment
 3. Frustration
- The wonder of this passage tells us that even before anything came into being God chose to: love us, chose us to be holy and blameless sons in His sight.
- God, it seems, right from day zero (or negative something), was looking forward to the time when there would be many in His family!

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3. Before the creation of the world: The cost

1Pe 1:18-20

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For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

Not only were we, believers, chosen before the foundation of the Earth, but so was Jesus.

- We were chosen to be His, holy and blameless in His sight.
- He was chosen to be the One who would make that happen.

Remember what we said about love above?

- It bears all things,
- Believes all things
- Hopes all things
- Endures all things'.

Before the foundation of the earth Jesus was willing to offer himself so that we could go free.

- And all planned and agreed before there was space, time or matter.
- That's why Revelation speaks of Him being 'the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth' (Rev 13:8).
- **If that isn't love I do not know what is.**

To put it very simply, the Cross of Christ was not an ambulance sent to a wreck. Christ was the Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world because God knew all the time that Jason Corder would need a Savior, and He loved him enough to provide that Savior.

I didn't need a theology degree to break down all the particulars, and come to the overwhelming conclusion I was lost.

- **I only need a God with a great heart of love who provided redemption by His grace.'**

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4. Before the beginning of time: The promise

There is a final verse that uses a similar phrase to describe something that happened before time even existed.

- Before the creation of the world,
- There was love between the Father and the Son.
- That love also extended to us who would believe.
- Finally we saw that God knew the cost. Jesus would have to die in our place.

With this in mind, scripture tells us about an ancient promise:

Tit 1:1-2

10 *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-- a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.*

A promise was made before there was even time. A promise before there was anyone around... except God!

- It was a promise made from the Father to the Son and it involved eternal life.
- The promise was that if the Son would become the Lamb of God, the Father would grant eternal life to all who placed their trust in Him.
- And God, who cannot lie, promised this before the beginning of time!

'God's plan of salvation for sinful mankind was determined and decreed before man was even created.

So here was the plan of God, right from before the beginning:

- Jesus, in love, was willing to be the One who would come as the Lamb of God and die as a sacrifice for sin
- So that those who were lost could be adopted back into His family and experience all the blessings that God had been planned from the beginning of time.

Jesus. Came. To. Die. It was not plan B.

Of course the plans of men led to this.

- The Jews plotted and formed their plans to get rid of Jesus.
- The Jewish council (Sanhedrin) especially planned to do away with Jesus using any means or lies necessary!
- Even after the resurrection the Jewish leaders were still making their plans on how to deal with Jesus!

Mat 28:11-13

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan , they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.'

But in all of this, the plan of God was at work!

God is always unlimited steps ahead!

Listen to what Peter says to the Jews on the day of Pentecost.

Act 2:22-24

11 *"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God , you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*

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Conclusion:

Where does that leave us?

- God has set all of this in motion before he created the world.
- Jesus was obedient to death even death on the cross.
- We are recipients of this amazing gift.

But do we really care?

- We struggle to prioritize spiritual things ahead of all of our plans dreams and hobbies.
- We are surrounded by people who don't personally know the savior and yet we never tell them, or worse yet we destroy his witness with our attitudes, our words, our actions, our opinions about useless things, and our sin.
- He has loved us before the foundation of the world and we can't seem to set that world aside long enough to be truly amazed at his awesome grace and his endless love.
- We go to him in prayer to ask for more, without even stopping to consider what we have already been given.