

Evermore and Evermore

Aurelius Prudentius Clemens was a Christian poet, born in what is now Northern Spain, in AD 348. He was a well-known and widely read poet during the middle ages. Today, not many people have even heard his name, and few are aware of his writings.

Clemens wrote the words to the hymn that began and ended our program—*Of the Father's Love Begotten*. The modern tune for this song, titled *Divinum Mysterium*, was developed from plainsong or chant that was popular during the middle ages. The tune used today was first published in the late 1500s. Both the words and the music are a bit different from what we are used to; but this is ancient music, so we should not be surprised if it's a bit unusual to our ears.

We sang three verses of this ancient hymn, and our narrator spoke another verse. There is one remaining verse:

3 This is he whom seers and sages sang of old with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word.
Now he shines, the long-expected; let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.

You perhaps noticed that each verse of this song ended with the words “evermore and evermore.” The hymn writer is asserting that there is something eternal about Jesus.

At Christmastime, we celebrate a particular event or time in the life of our Savior. He was born into the world at a certain point in history. As we celebrate the birth of Christ in time, we should also celebrate the aspects of Jesus that are timeless and eternal. The birth of Jesus was one event in a timeline that extends from eternity past to eternity future. His birth by no means defines or limits Jesus; he is eternal.

What is it about Jesus that is eternal, that extends “evermore and evermore”?

- I. Jesus being/nature/person is eternal.
- A. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary at a certain point in history about 2000 years ago. That's what the Christmas celebration is all about—his birth, his entry into humanity.
1. The story of Jesus is a record of historical events. It's not a legend, a "once upon a time" story; it's not mythology.
 2. The Gospel writers tell us that Jesus was born when Caesar Augustus was ruling the Roman Empire and when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Herod the Great was the king or ruler of Judea at that time. All of that is undisputable history.
 3. The Gospel writers include many historical references and markers in their works. Jesus was born into a particular historical setting.
- B. Knowing that, we might assume that Jesus began to exist at that point in history. But we would be wrong about that. Jesus is an eternal being. He's the 2nd Person of the Trinity. As the song says, he existed "ere the worlds began to be."

John 1:1–2 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*

John 17:5, 24 *And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. ... You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*

Trans: Jesus' physical, human, earthly life began on that holy night many centuries ago, but his being and person is eternal.

II. Jesus' plan and purpose is eternal.

- A. Galatians 4:4 tells us that "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son." Jesus came into the world at the proper time, the time set according to God's eternal plan.
- B. The Bible describes Jesus as "slain from the foundation of the earth" (Rev 13:8). That means, in the mind of God, Jesus' sacrificial death was already planned out before creation.

Before God made one molecule of matter, before one photon of light began shining, he had a plan to save sinful man. From eternity past, God had a plan and a purpose that required Jesus to be born, to live a sinless life, to suffer, and to die for our sins.

Acts 2:23 [Jesus], being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

- C. The OT reveals some fairly clear guidance as to when and where the Messiah would arrive, what he would do, and what would happen to him. The book of Daniel reveals the timing of the coming of the Messiah. Jewish scholars should have known that the time was right for the Messiah to show up when Jesus was born.

Lu 24:44 [Jesus] said ... all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

- D. All of these plans began in the mind of God in eternity past and were revealed to the prophets hundreds of years before Jesus was born.
- E. On that night long ago, God's eternal plan and purpose were fulfilled in Jesus' birth.

App: It should be a comfort to us that God has a plan and is working out that plan in our world. Events of our world may seem chaotic and out of control, but we know that God is providentially moving all things toward the fulfillment of his final goal—the kingdom of God will be established on earth; Jesus will ultimately reign from the throne of David. That’s where history is going. God is sovereignly moving the events of history to fulfill his eternal plan and purpose.

III. Jesus’ word is eternal.

- A. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Mt 24:35/Mk 13:31/Lk 21:33). The words of Jesus, although they were spoken many centuries ago, continue to be authoritative and relevant for us today. We have not lost them; they have not passed away into obscurity; they have not dissolved into the sands of the middle east. Billions of people still read the words of Jesus. They are as important today as they ever were. They have not passed away.
- B. God insured that the record we have about Jesus birth, life, death, and resurrection was recorded without error in the original MSS and that this record would persist.
- C. The OT tells us that God’s word is “settled in heaven” (Ps 119:89). Many powerful people have tried to stamp out and silence the word of God, but those efforts have proven futile.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

App: Since Jesus’ words are eternal and true, we should pay attention to them. His words, spoken so long ago, still pertain to us today.

One of the most important things that Jesus said was that if we believe in him, he would grant us forgiveness and eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

Trans: These are the eternal words of God.

IV. Jesus' rule and reign is eternal.

- A. Jesus ruled/reigned with God the father from eternity past. Long before his birth in Bethlehem, Jesus reigned as king over all things.
- B. At Christmastime, we celebrate Jesus' birth in a lowly stable to a humble carpenter and his wife.
- C. But the Bible assures us that Jesus ascended to a place of glory and majesty at the right hand of God. At some point, at the right time, Christ will come again in glory and power. At that time, he will make all his enemies a footstool for his feet.
- D. Jesus will establish an earthly kingdom over which he will rule with a rod of iron. That kingdom will extend for 1000 years.
- E. Eventually, God will initiate a new heavens and a new earth, and after that, the eternal state will extend "forevermore."
- F. The little baby placed in a feeding trough at his birth is the eternal king of kings and lord of lords, the creator of all things. His glory was veiled for most of his earthly life, but it will shine forth in brilliant splendor when he comes again.

Lu 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Jesus' kingdom is eternal.

Aurelius Prudentius Clemens was entirely justified in repeating the words “evermore and evermore” in his poem.

1. Jesus being/nature is eternal,
2. his plan and purposes are eternal,
3. his words are eternal,
4. and his reign is eternal.

What should our response be to these profound ideas? Quoting Clemens again:

Let the heights of heav'n adore him,
angel hosts his praises sing,
pow'rs, dominions bow before him and extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev'ry voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.