

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon title: The Wonder of It All, John 1:1-5

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SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-5 ¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ²*He was with God in the beginning.* ³*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* ⁴*In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.* ⁵*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it King James Version).*

INTRODUCTION: There are two points to today's sermon, and they are:

1. The coming of Christ began at the beginning of time.
2. The Incarnation means Christ joined us in our neck of the universe.

First, THE COMING OF CHRIST BEGAN AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME.

- This may seem like a strange Christmas text, but let's ask ourselves the question: When did Christmas begin? We have to respond that Christmas was in the heart of God from the beginning. He told Adam and Eve that the seed of woman would eventually crush the head of the serpent. But even before this, there was Jesus, the Word. He was in the beginning with God, and He was God. His life is the light of all mankind. He is the light which has shone in the darkness throughout the ages, and try as it might, the darkness has not been able to overcome it.
- We have looked for the past three weeks at: (1) How Satan tried to stop the lineage of the Messiah; (2) Some of the prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus; (3) Four unlikely women in the lineage of Jesus. And, today we are going to try to capture the essence of what Christmas really is ... God becoming flesh— God with us.

SCRIPTURE: John 1:14 ¹⁴*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish (The Message).*

Second, THE INCARNATION MEANS CHRIST JOINED US IN OUR NECK OF THE UNIVERSE.

I love how the Message translation states this: *The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.* Jesus moved into our world when he was born in the stable in Bethlehem. The infinite God took on the form of a tiny baby boy. God became man without ceasing to be God. The Almighty God moved in those tiny fingers. The life of God now beat in a human heart. God was love, and when Jesus came, love was wrapped in human flesh. Jesus was God wearing skin ... God in our neighborhood.

ILLUSTRATION: There was a man who cared nothing about God, but he had a godly wife and children. One Christmas, his wife and children were bundling up to go to their church's annual Christmas pageant. It began to snow as they prepared to leave. The wife pleaded one more time with her husband, "Won't you please go with us?"

"No, I think I'll just sit here by the fire this evening. I'll have popcorn and hot chocolate ready for you when you get home." He bid them good-bye, cautioning his wife to drive carefully in the building snowfall.

"I wish you'd go with us, dear. It's Christmas Eve."

"No different than any other night. I'll see you when you get home." His wife ushered the children out into the snow and into the car.

The man settled into his easy chair, in front of the fireplace and the brightly lit Christmas tree and dozed off as the television droned on. All of a sudden, a loud thud startled him awake. He went to the large window, which faced the street, when another thud sounded on the window. "What in the world?" He opened the door to a white-out snowfall and saw two birds lying on the porch. He thought, "Attracted by the light inside, they must have lost their way in the snow storm and flown into the window." He got a shovel from the end of the porch and shoveled them off to the side and thought, "Poor things."

The man returned to the warm house, but it wasn't long before another bird flew into the window and then another. He went out onto the porch and tried to warn the flock—which was finding refuge in the storm away from the window—by waving his arms wildly, but to no avail. Their attempts to find shelter in the storm ended time after time in their demise ... broken bodies, death.

Finally, the barrage ended, and the man settled down again in front of the fire in his chair, a bit dejected that he wasn't able to stop the carnage. "If only I'd been able to communicate with them. If only I could have made myself like a bird for a few moments to warn them away. If only ..."

In a moment of startling clarity, the man realized that's exactly what God did for us. He saw mankind destroying himself, battering himself against the walls of false religions and philosophies, trying to find refuge from the storms of life. God sent his prophets to warn us—but we didn't listen. He put up warning signs—but we ignored them. He gave us the Ten Commandments to live by—but we were unable to keep them. So, he "moved into the neighborhood" and spoke our language. He became like us. He became a "bird" to warn us and give us a way out— *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20 ²⁰*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.*

⁴*So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

⁸*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.*

¹¹*Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the*

Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told (NIV).

APPLICATION: How do we recapture the wonder of it all? The birth of our Savior, the Word becoming flesh, God with us— at times can become buried under traditions which have nothing to do with the Messiah entering human time and human space and becoming one of us. We’ve got to remind ourselves it’s all about this babe in the manger.

Could we just remain quiet for a few moments and gaze at “the Word becoming flesh” in our minds and hearts? Could we just thank him and praise him for coming to save us and to redeem us from our own sinfulness? Could we join with the shepherds and the wise men in proclaiming his birth without any shame?

The angelic choir announcing his birth—they represent the spiritual realm. They worshipped him.

The shepherds – the first to know – they represent every person. They worshipped him.

The wise men – they represent nobility. They worshipped him.

CONCLUSION: All of history—not just human history—all history—including the far reaches of the universe that man knows nothing about—all of time, space, human existence, and human creation came together right there to worship this child. And, he didn't remain a child but became a man. And, this man died on a cross for our sins and was crucified upon that ugly cross. He was buried, and three days later, he rose again. Awhile after that, he ascended into Heaven, and because of all of that, we can have hope while on this earth—hope beyond this life if we merely repent of our sin and trust Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

What will you do with Christ? What will you do with the wonder of it all? Is it just another day for you? Is it just a day on the calendar? Is it just a day with a few special things on the calendar? Or, is it truly a day when you realize that man, long ago, set aside to remember the coming of Christ?

Our invitation will be open today for anyone who would like to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. What a wonderful day to do this! All of us are broken. All of us are sinners, doomed to an eternal hell without Christ. We might say, “Why are you saying this on Christmas Day, but the truth is— the hope is—the Gospel. The Good News is it doesn't have to end that way. If we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, he gives us a whole new life. We'll be waiting down front for you if you need to come.

The invitation is open.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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