

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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The Wonder of It All
John 1:1-5; Luke 2:1-20
December 17, 2017

The points for today's message:

- The coming of Christ began at the beginning of time.
- The incarnation means that God joined us in our neck of the universe.

1-THE COMING OF CHRIST BEGAN AT THE BEGINNING OF TIME.

SCRIPTURE John 1:1-5

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.

EXPLANATION

The coming of Christ began was predicted and prophesied. The scripture makes it clear from the beginning that this world needed a Messiah even though Adam and Eve had not yet sinned. God, in His foreknowledge, gave them the free will to decide, but he had already provided a means of grace. It may seem strange to quote these verses as a Christmas text, but when did Christmas begin? Christmas—meaning the coming of Christ—was in the heart of God from the very beginning.

Jesus was in the beginning with God, and he was God. His life is the light of all mankind. He's the light that was shown in the darkness through the ages, and try as it might, the darkness has not been able to overcome the light of Christ.

For the past few weeks, we've looked at how Satan tried to stop this lineage of the Messiah. We looked at some of the prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus. We

looked at four unlikely women in the lineage of Jesus, and last week we heard a beautiful choir musical about the coming of Christ and the name of Jesus.

Today, we're going to try to capture the essence of what Christmas really is, which is this, God becoming flesh God with us. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Christ was in the heart of God from the beginning.

2-THE INCARNATION MEANS THAT CHRIST JOINED US IN OUR NECK OF THE UNIVERSE.

EXPLANATION

I love how the Message translation states that the Word became flesh and blood and "moved into the neighborhood." Jesus moved into our part of the world when he was born in that stable in Bethlehem. This infinite God took on the form of a tiny, fragile baby boy. God became man without ceasing to be God, which indeed is a miracle in and of itself. The almighty God moved in those tiny fingers and those tiny feet. The life of God now beat with a human heart. God was love, and when Jesus came, love was wrapped in human flesh. Jesus was God with our skin on. God moved into our neighborhood.

ILLUSTRATION

I heard of 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 annual Christmas pageant at church, and it began to snow. As they prepared to leave, the wife pleaded with her husband one more time, "Won't you please go with us? It's just the children's Christmas pageant." He said, "No, I think I'll sit here by the fire and watch TV this evening. There's a sports program on that I want to watch. I'll have popcorn and hot chocolate ready for you all when you get home," and he said goodbye to them, cautioning his wife to be careful as she drove on the snow.

She said to him, “I wish you'd go with us, dear. It's Christmas Eve.” He said, “No, it's no different than the other night. I'll see you when you get home.”

His wife and children went in their car as he stood and waved them goodbye. So, this man, now having an hour to an hour and a half by himself, sat down in his easy chair in front of the fireplace. He turned on the TV. The Christmas tree in the house was lit, and he dozed off as the television droned on. All of a sudden, a loud thud awakened him, and he went to the large window where he thought he heard the noise. This large window faced the street, and another thud sounded on the window. He couldn't figure out what in the world it was.

He opened the door, and out in the white snow he saw two birds lying on the porch. He realized what happened. They must have lost their way in the snowstorm. Attracted by the light inside, they had flown into the glass window. He got a shovel from the end of the porch, and he shoveled them off to the side. He said, “Poor things,” and returned to the warm house, but it wasn't long before he heard another thud and then another. He went out onto the porch. There, he saw a flock of birds in the trees, apparently unprepared for the snowstorm. They were trying to find refuge but kept running into the glass window.

He waved his arms and yelled, trying to get them to fly away but to no avail. Their attempts to find shelter in the storm ended up, time after time, in their demise. Their broken bodies were scattered on his front lawn. Finally, the barrage ended, and the man settled down again in front of the fire in his comfortable chair watching the TV, but he felt a bit dejected that he had not been able to stop these birds from flying to their death. He thought to himself, “If I had only been able to communicate with them. If I had only been able to make myself like a bird for a few moments to warn them away. If only...”

Then, in a moment of startling clarity, this man realized that's exactly what God did for us. He saw man destroying himself, battering himself against the walls of false religions and philosophies, trying to find refuge from the storms of life. He knew that God sent prophets to warn us, but we didn't listen. God put up warning signs, but we ignored them. He gave us the Commandments to live by, but we were unable to keep them. So, he did the ultimate thing. He moved to our neck of the universe. He moved into our neighborhood, and he spoke the human language. He

became like us. He became that bird to warn us and give us a way out. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:1-20

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.

EXPLANATION

The Shepherd's returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen which were just as they had been told. How do we recapture the

wonder of it all, the birth of our Savior, the word becoming flesh, God with us? At times, we can become buried under traditions that have nothing to do with the Messiah entering human time and human space and becoming one of us. So, we've got to remind ourselves, it's all about this babe in the manger.

APPLICATION

Could we at some point on Christmas day just remain quiet for a few moments and gaze at the Word becoming flesh in our minds and hearts? Can we just sometime today privately thank him and praise him for coming to save us and to redeem us from our own sinfulness? Can we join with the shepherds and the wise men in proclaiming his birth without any embarrassment, without any shame? The angels represented the spiritual realm, and they worshiped him. The shepherds, the first to know, represented every person, and they worshiped him. The wise men, represented nobility, and they worshipped him. Not just human history but all of history, including the far reaches of the universe, all of time and space, all of human existence, and all of creation came together right there to worship this child who didn't remain a child but became a man.

This man died on a cross for our sins, was crucified on that old ugly cross, and was buried, and three days later he rose again. After a while, he ascended into heaven, and because of all of that we can have hope on this earth and hope beyond this life if we merely repent of our sin and trust Jesus as Lord and Savior.

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

All of us are broken. All of us are sinners, doomed to an eternal hell without Christ. The hope is the gospel. The good news is that it doesn't have to end that way. If we trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, he gives us a whole new life.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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