

Jesus is Born

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Bible Text: John 1:1-14

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Take your Bibles and let's go to John 1. I have a simple message and a simple exhortation for us this morning. John 1, in just a moment we'll look at verses 1 and 14. You are well aware that not everyone who celebrates this time of the year is worshipping, at least not worshipping in Christ in the true meaning of his coming and his birth. So many are good with the coming of this baby and the promise that it holds. The so-called secular progressives, we used to call them liberals, now they're secular progressives, they have little to do with religion most of them yet most of them gladly embrace this baby Messiah. That is, in the sense that he's come to represent some sort of new start for mankind, a new age of love, a new era of maybe social justice. I mean, they embrace the hope of this new child coming if they can subjectively reduce him to be the champion of their social cause. So they gladly embrace this Messiah yet they will not submit to him as God. Even the Orthodox Jews from time immemorial has welcomed Jesus as a son of David but they certainly reject him as the Son of God. The casual Christian today and this is one of the most unfortunate things to me, so many who profess to be Christians and they're very nominal at best, really pretty much line up with the secular progressives when it comes to doctrine and theology. They're too bothered, too concerned, as a matter of fact, don't want to be too bothered with the great doctrinal truths of Christ's birth and the Incarnation, God becoming flesh. To them, once again, he's just the promise and the hope of a new age of love and giving and sacrificing, equality and caring and that's about the end of their concern.

All of this reminds us and points out to us that mankind is fallen, fallen in sin. Mankind has depraved minds, hearts and minds that are hopelessly polluted and scarred by the fall of sin. So, mankind gladly warms to the idea of a baby coming and the promise of some kind of new hope but they reject him as Lord of lords. Indeed, most like the story of the infant's birth but they reject the authority of the one born. While they adore the infant, they reject his government. The world ignores the core truth of Christmas so actually, so many at Christmas time who celebrate something of this newborn child, instead of honoring him and worshipping him actually they end up mocking him. Listen to me friend: anything less than treasuring and joying in and celebrating the truth of who he was and why he came is not worship. No matter how deeply you feel about it, no matter how stirred your emotions may be about it, no matter how magical the season may feel, God has the right to interpret the coming of his Son and we want to align ourselves with what our Lord said about his coming.

So, let's look at John 1 and let's look at verse 1 and then verse 14 just to get a back-drop and a foundation. This will not be a strict exegesis of this one text but it will give us the foundation for where we're going this morning. John 1:1,

“1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

“14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John here writes not to give us the story of his birth but to give us the great truth about why he came. “In the beginning was the Word,” this one who was born of the virgin Mary was already in existence. He didn't start in Bethlehem, he already existed. He was born a man in Bethlehem but he already existed. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,” the only one in all the ages of eternity and in all the realms of the universe who could ever be stated as being one who was there coequal with God the Father. “The Word was with God,” and then the most astounding statement, the statement that the liberal theologians and the unbelievers through the ages have just stumbled over, “And the Word was God.” God in human form. “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

So, John is not so interested in talking about the story of his infancy, John wants us to grasp the glory of his deity: God became man. So, instead of having the view of the secular progressive and the casual and nominal Christian and even the Orthodox Jew, Christians at Christmas worship him and understand that we want to think not so much about his infancy on this day, we want to think about his deity and his greatness and his glory. Christmas is the reality of God becoming man but never ceasing to be God. God is now in the world, an amazing upon amazing, mystery upon mystery, he came into the world as a little baby. Who had ever done such a thing? Well, God would.

Philippians 2:5-8, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.” He comes into the world in a form that would be the antithesis of what one would think if God appeared. He just laid all that aside, all the prerogatives of his deity. Verse 7, “But emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” The central message of Christmas is that the child in the manger is God. You just need to stop there sometimes and dwell on that. You know, we live in an age that in every way, shape or fashion discourages serious or deep thinking.

Could I just make a side note here, just kind of come off of my line of thinking for a moment? Are you telling me that in America today, if someone in the public square states that they hold biblical morality concerning homosexuality or adultery or fornication, pick

the area, are you telling me we live in a day in America where if someone in the public square states they hold to biblical morality they are some sort of pariah? They are some sort of weird, strange, unusual thing? Is that what we've come to? I know you've seen the things about Phil Robertson and the "Duck Dynasty" television program and his statements that he believed in the biblical truth and teaching of the sin of homosexuality and some say, "Well, he didn't say things quite the way he should have said them." My question is, "Have you been saying it?" There's been a giant vacuum out there. Where are the Jerry Falwell's? Where are the D. James Kennedy's who brought to bear on the conscience of the nation the truth of the word of God? Well, I just wanted to get that in this morning. Far from thinking that Phil Robertson ought to be labeled a hick or a hater, I think in my book he fits a little more like a hero. I just don't know where the great, great silence is. Even some conservative evangelicals seem to just avoid the subject. Well, anyway....

So, the central truth of Christmas is that God became man. The baby in the manger is God. Infinite yet an infant. Eternal yet born of a woman. Think on that. Almighty yet nursing at his mother's breast. Supporting the universe yet needing to be carried in his mother's arms. King of angels yet the son of the lowly Joseph and Mary. Heir of all things and yet the carpenter's despised son. It is true, he that made man was made man.

Let's remind ourselves of three things this Christmas. First of all, let's remind ourselves that Jesus was born and he was, while he was a baby laying there in the feed trough in Bethlehem, the King invincible. That little baby was not a king, the King invincible. That means he is the one and the only one who is incapable of being conquered. It's impossible for him to be overcome. It's impossible for him to be overcome. It's impossible for him to be subdued. One of the ways God points this out is in calling Jesus, giving him the title of the firstborn of God. Colossians 1:15 says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. Now, the idea of being firstborn is a rank, not origin. First of all, it didn't mean you're just the first though you are, it means you have a unique position compared to all the other siblings. The firstborn child in Jewish culture had all the rights of the inheritance. When something happened to dad, the firstborn son got all authority over all that the father had and so God wants you to understand that Jesus is my one and only firstborn Son. Jesus has all authority. He's heir of everything that belongs to God the Father. He has all rule over it, all authority over it, all control over it. God has given it to his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King invincible, God's firstborn.. Colossians 1:16-17, "For by Him," that's Jesus, "all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him," listen, "and for Him." He's the firstborn; it's all for him; it's all under his authority. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

Now, the firstborn son, he had the rights, he had all the inheritance, he had control of all that his father had, now look, but he was to carry out all that he inherited according to his father's will and that's what Jesus did perfectly. He came and carried out his Father's plan to redeem for themselves a people and he carried it out perfectly and in perfect harmony with his heavenly Father's will. He is the King invincible. Revelation 19:16 says that he

will come and on his breast will be a title, “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He's highest in rank of all beings yet, once again, he came into the earth as a lowly baby.

How can that be? Or why was that? There are probably many, many reasons and Scripture bears out some of them but one of the ones that is most precious to us is what Hebrews says when it says that our Lord, this King invincible, is one who can sympathize with our weakness. Some of you this Christmas, your hearts ache and I'll be honest though I have not walked in your shoes exactly for many of you, my heart aches for you because you've buried a precious loved one this past year. But the Lord Jesus also experienced during his earthly pilgrimage, the loss of precious loved ones. Does it not do something to your heart to know that your King and your Lord and your God in heaven has put on human flesh, walked this earth and felt the pain and the heartache and the loss and the disappointment that you feel even now? He is the King invincible but one who came as a baby for a lot of reasons but I think one important reason: that he can sympathize with our weakness. What a God. What a Savior. What a King.

This baby Jesus was born the King invincible but secondly, let's remind ourselves and let's not be in mockery this Christmas, let's be in worship and worship him as the Lamb incorruptible. The Lamb incorruptible. This means he's undefiled. He is unblemished. He is upright. He is free from error. In other words, he's incapable of any type of moral or sinful pollution or corruption. This little baby born of Mary, laid in the feed trough in Bethlehem, was an unblemished, incorruptible lamb sent from God. Colossians 1:19-20, “For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross ; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” He's the one who came as the sacrifice that would reconcile a sinful world back to a true and holy God.

Now, the Jews had what they called a Passover feast. It was mandated by God that the Jews observe regularly this memorial meal to point back to an historical event because the original Passover was when the Jews were enslaved in Egyptian bondage and God wanted to free them that they would be a separated people, separated only and unto himself. And so he decided in order to cause the Egyptians to release the children of Israel, that he would send the Death Angel into Egypt and the night the Death Angel came into Egypt every household would be visited by the Death Angel and the firstborn child of every household would be killed. But God said to all the families in Israel, “Find for yourself a spotless little lamb, an unblemished little lamb and I want you to take that lamb and I want you to put a knife through it's throat and I want you to cut its throat. I want you to sacrifice it and you're to take a hyssop branch and you're to dip that hyssop branch into the blood of that spotless, unblemished lamb. I want you to put blood on both doorposts, on the lintel, three marks of blood on your doorpost and when the Death Angel comes into the nation of Israel, every house that has the blood of the spotless lamb applied, the Death Angel will pass over your house and will not visit there and kill the firstborn. And that is exactly what happened and year after year, decade after decade, century after century after that, the Jews have an observance called the Passover whereby

the commemorate that God had grace and mercy on us through the blood of a spotless lamb and did not visit us in judgment and in wrath but passed over our lives.

My friends, Jesus is our Passover Lamb. A little four-legged lamb as cute and beautiful as they are and their little white wool and all that they might represent to a person raising one and as precious as they may be, can never, never, never cover us of our sins. All that little lamb was doing there in the Old Testament was a foreshadowing. He was a type that pointed to Jesus. Jesus is the Passover Lamb. That's why in John 1:29, the Bible says, this is John the Baptist. John the Baptist is baptizing people and Jesus walks on the scene and then the next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." That's what Jesus was when he was born. He was born, came into our world from another world. Why did he have to come from another world? Why couldn't he have the agency of the human father? Because he had to come in incorruption. He had to be a pure, undefiled, unblemished lamb to be qualified to pay for our sins. 1 Peter 1:18-19, "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." 1 Corinthians 5:7, challenging the Corinthian church to set aside worldly man-centered concepts of works and hoop-jumps and rituals in order to save them, here's what he says, "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed." He was when he was laid in that feed trough in Bethlehem, God's Lamb incorruptible.

I think it was Barnside who did such a wonderful job in his preaching of illustrating, he tells a story about a man who bought a new home in London and I go to London and preach at a conference over there regularly and they build their houses in London, usually 4-5 flats and this guy had several stories and they have little yards, they don't call their yards "yards," they call them "gardens." Anyway, it had been untended, the house had been untended and he was on the second story looking down and there was a beautiful rose down in that front yard but the weeds were so high he could barely see it when he went down. He went down and tried to find it and couldn't find the rose and he goes back up and looking over among all those weeds, there he saw the rose again. He concentrated on where it was and he went down and he wove his way through the tall weeds and finally found it and he went to pull it up and he found that the root system ran through the yard and under the fence and was connected to his neighbor's very fertile flower garden. That's exactly the way the Lord Jesus was. That's why he could be the Lamb incorruptible, he was connected to another world. His virtue, his value, his quality, his very being came from the throne of God and then he was placed to grow among the weeds and the thorns of this world. Sent to us as our Lamb incorruptible.

But not only was Jesus born as the King invincible and the Lamb incorruptible but also he was born the gift incomparable. The gift incomparable. That means he is imminent beyond all comparison. Matchless. And we preachers try and illustrations do help but, friend, there's nothing in the realms of literally time, eternity or the universe whereby you can somehow compare the gift of Jesus with any other type gift that has ever been given. When Jesus was born and laid in the feeding trough in Bethlehem, there lay in a tiny

precious package of a baby, a gift incomparable. Beyond comprehension and beyond comparison in every way. Isaiah 9:6 speaks of him being given to us. Prophesying of Jesus it says, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Notice: one is given to us. He said, a son will be given to us. Now, think about that, child of God, the most blasphemous and ludicrous thought that has ever come across the thought of a man is that somehow he could earn the gift of Jesus Christ. Look, there is only one way this salvation could come to us. There is only one way this great redemption could be brought to bear on our behalves. It had to be given as a gift. Take all of the works of all of the beings who've ever lived on the earth and stack them all up and it's but a filthy stench. It's a rotten useless, polluted, corrupt effort compared to the glory and the wonder and the majesty of the gift of Jesus Christ. He is the gift incomparable. In Romans 3:24, "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Something turns in me in great, really a painful frustration when I hear these teach that somehow we can earn or merit God's grace and God's salvation. My friend, all you can do is bring a wretched, lost, sinful, proud, self-consumed, sinful mess and lay it at a cross and say, "If your grace can't cover me, I'm doomed forever." But it can and it does and it will. His salvation is greater than all of our sin. That's what Christmas is about. That's a gift that's incomparable. You cannot comprehend the glory and the wonder of this gift.

Oh, as your pastor, I hope at least once or twice, maybe tomorrow morning, maybe Tuesday afternoon, maybe Wednesday at night, I don't know when it is but I hope there's a time when just maybe you and God are just fellowshiping a little bit and you think on Christ. You think, "O, hallelujah. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! What a Savior! What a salvation! What a gift! What a redemption! I can't even verbalize it, it's just too great!" Just have yourself about a 90 second, two minute praise to God for the gift incomparable: Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

But friend, on this Sunday before the day we celebrate as Christmas, you must find in him for yourselves, listen, you must find in him for yourself personally this gift of salvation. He's not just a gift "for mankind" that comes to shed a spirit of hopeful new peace on the earth, he came to save sinners personally. Personally. 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 tells us, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." There is a blindness. When you watch some of these guys on television and they in their mockery and vile spirit, demean and just are critical of the values that we hold precious, you need to remind yourself, "Well, there's a blindness. There is a spirit of blindness in men's hearts and minds."

There is a story of an agnostic newspaper reporter in Boston. The latter part of the 19th century and he's standing at a storefront window, it's a toy store and three little girls are standing in front of him and two of the little girls are just describing with the greatest

emphasis and encouragement and detail that they possibly can what the toys look like to the third little friend because she was blind. They wanted so badly for her to know what those little dolls and those toys looked like. And that agnostic reporter took that very story in the paper the next day, he thought that was precious and it touched his heart. Well, D. L. Moody, the famed evangelist, was preaching in Boston that week and it was common every time Moody or any evangelist of that area in particular went to an area there was some agnostic or atheistic reporter who would go to the meeting and try to find some inconsistency, some error in his teaching that they might discredit him so that agnostic reporter went and D. L. Moody ended his sermon by quoting from that very newspaper article and Moody pointed out that just as that little girl was unable to see, so you haven't come to Christ because your hearts and minds are blinded and you can't see the glory of God and the glory of redemption because of the blindness of the work of Satan in your heart.

But the Scripture does promise, "Anyone whosoever, whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." You don't have to stay in that blindness. Whatever else happens this Christmas, I would exhort you and encourage you: don't remain in the darkness of unbelief. Do not embrace him only as a messiah, as some promise for a better tomorrow for mankind but embrace him as God. Do not just welcome him as the son of David, welcome him as the Son of God. Do not see him as a lowly baby only, that's true but see him as the Lord of lords. Do not embrace the story but miss his authority. The story is not for us in our subjective power to speculate about and speak of, it's for us to humble ourselves in worship. Do not miss the core truth of Christmas because then instead of honoring and worshiping him, you end up mocking him. Embrace him as the Lord invincible. Embrace him as the Lamb incorruptible and the gift incomparable. That's who this baby Jesus is. That's who the baby Jesus was.

Let's stand together in prayer.

Our Father, we joy, our hearts are stirred, I pray our passions are deepened, I pray our treasure is more truly placed in Christ this Christmas than it was last Christmas. As we share meals, enjoy family, hug babies, welcome relatives, exchange gifts, stir in our hearts and guard our hearts that there would not be a spirit of mockery, assigning to your coming something that fits in the fallen minds of men but may there be an ever humble bowing of our spirits, a deepening awe, rejoicing and treasuring of this baby Jesus who was indeed even as a baby, the Lord invincible, the Lamb incorruptible, the gift incomparable. O God, thank you. Thank you. We praise you. What a gift. What a salvation. What a Savior. What a Lord. And we love you for it. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.