

INTRODUCTION

1. We are 19 days away from Christmas.
2. And as we enter into the Christmas season, I feel compelled this evening to say a few words about it and to challenge us to think about our evangelism of unbelievers.
3. Please take God's Word and turn with me to John 1.
4. Christmas can be summed up in one phrase in the Bible which is found in John 1:14.
5. Here the apostle John says, "And the Word became flesh."
6. This is "the most concise biblical statement of the Incarnation...The four words with which it begins, *the Word became flesh*, expresses the reality that in the Incarnation God took on humanity; the infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible (cf. Col.1:15); the Creator entered His creation" (John MacArthur, John 1-5, 39).
7. "He became that which, first became through Him" (Marvin Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament).
8. The word "became" (*egeneto*), means He "took to Himself" (The Bible Knowledge Commentary). It "emphasizes Christ's taking on humanity" (MacArthur).

9. The word “flesh” (sarx) is a reference to “the whole man” (Brown) even though it is used in the NT in other ways.
10. God became flesh—that’s the Christmas story.

LESSON

I. Christmas Has Only One Purpose

A. To Reveal a Savior Has Come

According to the 4 Gospels, The Gospel of Jesus Christ is to encompass the entire story of redemption beginning with the birth of Christ.

1. The announcement (Luke 2:8-14)

a) It came from the angel of the Lord to shepherds

“If you were a modern public relations agent in charge of getting out the news of Christ’s birth, the last group you would have picked to be the first to inform would have been a small band of shepherds. Instead, you likely would have targeted the influencers, the real movers and shakers. You might have considered telling the high priest first, because he was the religious leader of the

nation. Or you might have weighed the advantages of going first to the chief priest and scribes, the leading teachers in Israel. On the other hand, you might have thought it smart to go first to the Sanhedrin, the body of seventy elders that was the theocratic leadership of Israel. Or you might have insisted on informing the Pharisees first. After all, they were the religious fundamentalists who were very strict about Old Testament prophecies and looked forward to the Messiah's arrival. You might even have wanted to send an official press release to Caesar Augustus to make sure he knew the true Savior had recently come into the world. But none of those alternatives was God's option for revealing the news of Christ's birth. Instead, He first took the special message to one of the unlikeliest classes of people imaginable, an obscure group of shepherds" (John MacArthur, *God in the Manger*, pp.70-71).

1 Corinthians 1:27 says, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong."

b) Shepherds were social outcasts

Matthew Henry writes that "Shepherds were...outcasts in Israel. Their work not only made them ceremonially

unclean, but it kept them away from the temple for weeks at a time so that they could not be made clean.”

Their job was seven days a week which made it hard for them to keep the Sabbath. The Pharisees did not like this. They despised them.

2. Their reaction (Luke 2:15-20)

- a) They reasoned among themselves (v.15)
- b) They believed what they heard (vv.15-16)

(1) They knew this was something “the Lord has made known unto us” (v.15)

(2) This therefore brought about a swift response

Verse 9 says, “they were terribly frightened” at the appearance of the angel. The word “frightened” or “afraid” is the Greek word *phobea*. It means “to give flight.”

Instead of running in fear they ran in anticipation.

- (a) It says they “came with haste”
- (b) They found Mary, Joseph and the baby after a careful search.

“These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them and then responded with immediate obedience. After finding the Baby, they reported the good news to others” (Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*).

- c) They made it known to others (vv.17-20)
“Made known the statement.”

The word “statement” is the Greek word *rhema*. This refers to a “specific statement,” “what is said,” “a saying.”

It occurs in Matthew 26:75 where Peter remembers the specific statement Jesus said to him, “Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times.”

It also occurs two times in Luke 9:44-45 which says, “Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. 45 But they did not understand this *statement*, and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this *statement*.”

It is translated “saying” in Luke 20:26.

Probably the best known verse is Romans 10:17, which says, “ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the *word* of Christ.”

What is the specific statement the shepherds made known? Verse 11, “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

- (1) Evangelism is a matter of seeing Jesus and making His presence known to everyone (v.17)
- (2) Though we can't see Jesus physically we can see Him spiritually in His Word
 - (a) Their declaration came after they confirmed what they were told by the angel
 - (b) Our faith is not blind but is confirmed by God's Word

- (1) The Bible says Jesus would be born in Bethlehem:

Mat.2:1 - “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem.”

Mic.5:2 - But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,

though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.

(2) The Bible says Jesus would be born of a virgin:

Isa.7:14 - Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

(Quoted in Mat.1:23)

Lk.1:26-27 - Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

Lk.1:31 - “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.”

(3) The Bible says Jesus is God (Jn.1:1)

- (4) The Bible says Jesus is Lord (Phil.2:9-11)
- (3) Our duty is no different than the shepherds — we are to “(make) widely known the saying” (Lk.2:17)
- (a) Mat.28:19-20
- (b) Mat.24:14 - And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
- (c) Mk.16:15 - Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
- (d) Lk.24:46-47 - Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The apostles obeyed the command to preach the Gospel (Acts 2:14; 3:11; 4:8-12; 5:42).

Richard Baxter says, “Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbors. Alas, there is but a step between them and death and hell; many

hundred diseases are waiting ready to seize on them, and if they die unregenerate, they are lost for ever. Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If you believe not the Word of God, and the danger of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves? If you do believe it, why do you not bestir yourself to the helping of others? Do you not care who is damned, so you be saved? If so, you have sufficient cause to pity yourselves, for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace. . . . Dost thou live close by them, or meet them in the streets, or labor with them, or travel with them, or sit and talk with them, and say nothing to them of their souls, or the life to come? If their houses were on fire, thou wouldst run and help them; and wilt thou not help them when their souls are almost at the fire of hell?” (The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations).

B. To Manifest Our Obedience As Believers

1. Evangelism is a matter of love

- a) God revealed His love to us by sending Jesus to die in our place (Jn.3:16)
- b) You reveal your love for sinners by telling them the

Good News

Richard Baxter says, “Methinks if by faith we did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectually untie our tongues” (The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations).

There are 5 words for boldness: “Open your mouth and speak.”

Galatians 4:12-16 - Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. 13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

2. Evangelism is a matter of obedience to God

- a) Acts 4:18-20 - So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them,

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

- b) Acts 5:28-29 - "...Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."
- c) Acts 8:4 - Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word.

II. Christmas Has Only One Challenge

- A. As Believers, Our Challenge is to Evangelize
- B. As Unbelievers, the Challenge is to Believe
- C. What Will You Do?

"Here's a side to the Christmas story that isn't often told: those soft little hands, fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, were made so that nails might be driven through them. Those baby feet, pink and unable to walk, would one day walk up a dusty hill to be nailed to a cross. That sweet infant's head with sparkling eyes and eager mouth was formed so that someday men might force a crown of thorns onto it. That

tender body, warm and soft, wrapped in swaddling clothes, would one day be ripped open by a spear. Jesus was born to die” (John MacArthur, *God With Us*, p.116).

1. The Person of the Christmas story

a) He is revealed by His name

Matthew 1:21 says, “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

(1) “Jesus” occurs 700 times in the Gospels, 100 times in the epistles and Revelation” (Francis Derk, *The Names of Christ*, 26).

It is the Greek equivalent of Jehua, or Jehoshua, which means, “Jehovah (yahweh) saves.”

(2) “Christ” (Christos) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Mashiah which means, “anointed One.” It occurs 49 times in the Gospels, 235 times in the epistles and Revelation (Ibid., Derk).

b) He is revealed in His Person (Mat.1:21)

“...it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

Lehman Strauss writes, “On that first Christmas day when Mary’s babe was born in Bethlehem, divinity was clothed upon with the garb of human flesh, the Infinite and the finite came in inseparable union in the Person of Jesus Christ, the God-man. Therefore Jesus is divine because He is God. Throughout the New Testament we find it repeatedly stated that Christ possessed the attributes of deity and these divine attributes ascribed to Him are applicable to God alone” (The Second Person, 23).

(1) Colossians 2:9 says, “For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

(2) Jesus said to Phillip in John 14:9, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

2. The paradox of the Christmas story

What is true of God is also true of the Son. They share the same attributes.

a) God is Savior

(1) Isa.43:11 says, “I, even I, am the LORD; And there is no savior besides Me.”

(2) Hosea 13:4 says, “Yet I have been the LORD your God Since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me.”

b) Jesus is Savior

(1) Matthew 18:11 says, “For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”

(2) Luke 2:11 says, “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

c) God is Immutable

Malachi 3:6 says, “For I, the Lord, do not change.”

d) Jesus is Immutable

Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.”

e) God is Omnipotent

God said to Pharaoh in Exodus 9:16, “But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to

show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.”

f) Jesus is Omnipotent

Hebrews 1:1-3 says, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

g) God is Omniscient

Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

h) Jesus is Omniscient

Matthew 9:1-4 says, “And getting into a boat, He crossed over, and came to His own city. 2 And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed;

and Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven." 3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"

I) God is Omnipresent

Psalm 139:7-8 says, "Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there."

j) Jesus is Omnipresent

Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

k) God forgives sin

Isaiah 43:25 says, "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins."

1) Jesus forgives sin

Matthew 9:2 says, “Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven.”

John 8:11 (the woman caught in adultery), “Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.”

CONCLUSION

1. Are you making widely known the statement about Christ?
2. This is our duty regardless of the time of year.
3. Let’s make sure we are loving people by telling them how they can escape the wrath that is to come.
4. Let’s pray.