

Sermon #2374 — Miscellaneous Sermons

Title: **THE CHRISTMAS STORY**

Text: John 1:1-14

Subject: *The Gospel Story of Redemption by Christ*

Date: Tuesday Evening — December 19, 2017

Readings: *Bobbie Estes and Mark Daniel*

Introduction:

Between now and Monday churches around the world will have special services, playing their annual Christmas religious games.

- Living Christmas Trees
- Christmas Plays
- Christmas Carols

Many will gather in church houses Sunday morning, or Sunday night, and some even on Christmas day, to have a reading or telling of the Christmas story.

In fact, the religious tomfoolery has already begun. Sunday afternoon, while Shelby was preparing lunch (Sausage, Eggs, Biscuits, and Gravy), I sat down in my easy chair and turned on the television. Flipping through the channels, the first thing I saw caught my attention. There was a preacher in a big church (They had a huge, expensive, theatrical production.) dressed

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in a white suit with angel's wings on his back. They were telling the Christmas story with pizzazz. — What a farce! — What a sad charade!

Well, I want to tell you the Christmas story from a little different perspective. That is the title of my message — **THE CHRISTMAS STORY**. But you're going to hear the Christmas story as few have ever heard it.

AN IRREFUTABLE FACT

I am thankful that, in his good providence, the Lord God has given us this season of the year. At least for a little while every year, everyone in the world is forced to acknowledge the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world. While our minds are naturally turned to the fact of our Savior's incarnation, I want, by the assistance of God the Holy Ghost, once more, to tell you the old, old story. It is told throughout the Word of God and given in brief summaries in many passages. I want us to read **John 1:1-14** together.

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(John 1:1-14) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. (4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (6) There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. (7) The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. (8) He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. (9) *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (11) He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,

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but of God. (14) And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

MY DETERMINATION AND YOUR NEED

As a gospel preacher, this is my great desire and resolute determination. I am determined, every time I preach, to tell the same story over and over, again and again. **This is my message.** I have no other (1 Corinthians 2:2). Wherever I go, to whomsoever I may preach, this is my responsibility and delight. **I never tire of telling the story of Jesus Christ and his love** (Philippians 3:1). I never tire of preaching Christ to you; and I hope you never tire of hearing him preached. — Indeed, I know that...

If you are a believer, if you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have seen in his blessed face the very glory of God, you never tire of hearing him preached.

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“I love to tell the story,
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest.”

Christ is all to you. You never tire of hearing about the one you love. You never get tired of looking at pictures of one you love. You never get tired of hearing someone talk about the one you love.

Our sons and daughters, and you who are yet lost, need to hear this story often. It may be that God will be pleased to bless it to your hearts, granting you life and faith in his dear Son. What a blessing that would be!

This, too, I know: — If God is pleased to save you, if he is pleased to give you life and faith in Christ, it will be by the hearing of this story (1 Peter 1:23-25).

Those of you who are in your sunset years still need to hear this glorious old, old story often.

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- We need **comfort**; and nothing can comfort like Christ crucified.
- We need **strength**; and nothing can strengthen our souls like the grace of God in Christ.
- We need **assurance**; and nothing gives assurance like the person and work of our Redeemer.
- These cold hearts need **reviving**; and nothing revives them like the love of Christ for our souls.

I have been preaching the gospel for more than fifty years now. But **I never look for something new to preach.** I have preached in almost every English speaking county in the world, and in some that are not, as well as the length and breadth of this country. I have preached to a lot of people, in a lot of places, in prisons and parlors, in hospitals and hotels, in houses and horse stables, in cow pastures, in tents, in school houses, and in church buildings, large and small. I have even preached in parking lots, on street corners, and in store fronts, to rich people and poor people, to highly educated people and totally illiterate people, to the upper crust and to the plain old crusty.

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I have preached to a lot of people in a lot of places. But I never look for something new to preach. My concern, when I sit down to prepare a message is to “*know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*” I leave the complicated, moral, social, political, philosophical, and theological issues that trouble the minds of curious religionists to those who enjoy such trivia. — “*As for me and my house,*” the house in which I am the father, and the house in which I am the pastor, “*we will serve the Lord.*”

- We will worship God in the Spirit.
- We will rejoice in Christ Jesus.
- We will place no confidence in the flesh.
- And we will employ nothing but gospel preaching for the building of God’s church and kingdom.

I make this solemn pledge to you. — As often as we come together in this place, no matter where we open this Book, no matter what the reason for our gathering is (Worship Services, Weddings, Funerals), I will tell you the story of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Proposition: The message of this Book is Jesus Christ and him crucified. The story of redemption, grace, and salvation is the story of Jesus and his love.

Illustration: Acts 13 summarizes the whole history of the Bible as the story of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I tell you this story again, I will give it to you in six parts, or under six points.

THE PLOT

1st — The Plot — Every story has a plot. **The plot for this story was drawn up in the council chambers of almighty God before the world began.** The story begins in the covenant of grace made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost before the beginning of time.

Here is the determination of the Almighty. — “*I will be gracious...*” (Exodus 33:19). What a blessed determination that is! Once the determination was

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made, an election was made (Ephesians 1:3-6; 2 Timothy 1:9-11).

(Ephesians 1:3-6) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-11) God “hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11)

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Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

We know that God does not and did not do these things in a sequential order. He is God, before whom time is nothing! But to accommodate our puny, finite brains, such language is used. We cannot comprehend the fact that God’s everlasting love, his determination to save, election, and predestination were and are instant, immanent, eternal acts of the Almighty!

But the Lord God was faced with a dilemma. I call it “The Dilemma of Grace.” As the Lord God planned and purposed our redemption, our fall in our father Adam was anticipated and planned by him, for “*all things are of God.*” And that fall presented the Almighty with a dilemma. **How can God both be just and the Justifier the ungodly?** How can he both punish sin and forgive sin? How can he both by no means clear the guilty and forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin?

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Illustration: *Darius' Dilemma* (Daniel 4:14)

Now, watch this. — **Deliverance was found!** In the covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ stood forth as our Surety and Substitute. And God the Father trusted him with all his glory, all his purpose, and all his elect (Job 33:24; John 6:37-40; Ephesians 1:12-13). Let me show you.

(Job 33:24) “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.”

(John 6:37-40) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on

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him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

(Ephesians 1:12-13) “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”

Illustrations: *Judah — Surety for Benjamin*
Sheep Given to the Shepherd
(John 10:16)

(Genesis 43: 8-9) “And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones. 9 I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever.”

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Actually, when the covenant of grace was made, once it was established, the whole story of redemption was finished, written out in a book, and sealed (Revelation 5 and 10). **When the story began, it was concluded.** — “*The works were finished from the foundation of the world*” (Hebrews 4:3; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:9).

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Ephesians 1:3) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.”

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(2 Timothy 1:9) God “hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

The whole plot of the story was unalterably fixed from the beginning. No changes shall ever be made in the story. The plot of this story is the story.

- Who will be saved? God’s elect!
- How will they be saved? By the obedience of Christ!
- What will secure the salvation of every chosen, redeemed sinner? The sovereign rule of Christ (John 17:2).

THE INTRODUCTION

2nd — Alright, that’s the plot. Here’s the introduction. **The entire Old Testament is the introduction to this story of redemption by Christ.**

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When Paul tells us that “*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*” he is talking about the Old Testament Scriptures (John 1:45). — “*To him give all the prophets witness*” (Acts 10:43).

Illustrations *Peter* — Acts 2

Stephen — Acts 7

- **Genesis – Malachi** – A Redeemer is coming!
- **Matthew – John** – The Redeemer Has Come!
- **Acts – Revelation** – The Redeemer is Coming Again!
- **Genesis** — The Woman’s Seed
- **Exodus** — The Passover Lamb
- **Leviticus** — The Atoning Sacrifice
- **Numbers** — The Smitten Rick
- **Deuteronomy** — The Prophet
- **Joshua** — The Captain of Our Salvation
- **Judges** — The Mighty Deliverer
- **Ruth** — Our Kinsman Redeemer
- **Kings** — The King of Peace and of Righteousness
- **Nehemiah** — The Restorer of All Things

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- **Esther** — Our Great Advocate
- **Job** — The Daysman
- **Psalms** — Our Song
- **Proverbs** — Wisdom
- **Ecclesiastes** — The Teacher of Wisdom
- **The Song of Solomon** — Our Beloved
- **The Prophets** — The Coming Messiah
- **The Gospels** — The God-man
- **Acts** — The Exalted Lord and King
- **The Epistles** — The Head of the Church
- **Hebrews** — Our Great High Priest
- **Revelation** — The Worthy Lamb

This is what I want you to see: **All the Scriptures speak of Christ** (Luke 24:24, 45-47). **Every law** in Israel pointed to him. **Every event** recorded in the Old Testament had reference to him. **Every priest**, his garments, his service, his sacrifices, even his washings and his miter, foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ. **The tabernacle**, the temple, the ceremonies, and the covenants God made with men, all speak of Christ and portray him.

- The Skins for Adam and Eve

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- The Ark of Salvation
- The Mercy-Seat
- The Rock in the Wilderness
- The Manna

Everything in the Old Testament speaks of Christ. His blood of atonement is the scarlet cord that runs through the pages of the Inspired Volume and binds it all together.

The plot of the story was laid in the covenant of grace. The introduction was given in the Old Testament.

THE BODY

3rd — **The body of the story was written in the incarnation, life, and obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ** (Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-8).

(Galatians 4:4-5) “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (5) To redeem

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them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

(Philippians 2:5-8) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

- **When did he come?** — *“In the fulness of time.”*
- **Who sent him?** — *“God sent forth his Son.”*
- **How did he come?** — *“Made of a woman.”* — *“Made under the law.”*
- **Why did he come?** — *“To redeem them that were under the law.”*
- **What is the result of his coming?** — *“That we might receive the adoption of sons.”* — *“With his own blood he entered in once into the holy*

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place, having obtained eternal redemption for us!”

THE CLIMAX

4th — **The climax of the Christmas story is the death which our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished at Jerusalem** (Luke 9:31; John 12:31-32).

(Luke 9:31) “Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

(John 12:31-32) “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (32) And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.”

“Now is the judgment of this world.” — The word “judgment” might be translated three ways.

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- The Crisis of the World — (The Turning Point — The Crucial Time — The Climax)
- The Judgment of the World — (The Condemnation of the World)
- The Justification of the World — (The Justification of God’s Elect throughout the world — John 16:11)

“Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” —

As the death of Christ was the salvation of his people, so the death of Christ was the binding of Satan, the breaking of his power and dominion over the nations of the world (Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:1-3).

(Colossians 2:15) “*And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it..”

(Revelation 20:1-3) “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent,

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which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, (3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” — Here the efficacy of our Lord’s atonement is declared. By the power of his blood applied to the hearts of chosen sinners, by the almighty grace of his Holy Spirit, the Son of God draws all men unto himself, irresistibly! — **Not all men Without Exception, but all men Without Qualification!**

- All Kinds of Men!
- All Races of Men!
- All Elect Men!

This is the climax of the story. Christ was born at Bethlehem that he might die at Calvary. — *“In due time Christ died for the ungodly”* (Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25).

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(1 Peter 2:21-25) “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

THE CONCLUSION

5th — The gospel is “good news,” the good news of redemption accomplished. The gospel is “God’s story,” God’s story of redemption and grace through his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. **Here is the conclusion of the story.** It has three parts.

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1. **The Resurrection of Christ** — On the third day after his death the Son of God arose from the grave. He came forth triumphant over death, hell, and the grave. Thus, he was “*justified in the Spirit.*”
 - Our Lord arose to die no more.
 - He arose to declare our justification accomplished (Romans 4:25).
2. **The Rule of Christ** — Having accomplished redemption for us, the Son of God ascended up into glory and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, and now rules all things in absolute sovereignty (John 17:2).
 - His work of redemption is finished (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 10:9-14).

(Romans 8:34 “Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

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(Hebrews 10:9-14) “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. (11) And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: (12) But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. (14) For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

- His rule is total.
- His Intercession is Effectual.

3. **The Return of Christ** — Soon the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear in the brightness of his glory to consummate his redemptive purpose (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

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(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

- The Lord himself shall appear.
- The dead in Christ shall rise first.
- We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

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- The world and all the wicked shall be destroyed, consumed with the brightness of his glory.
- Christ shall make all things new.
- He shall come to the earth with ten thousands of his saints.
- “*Then cometh the end*” (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

This will be our Lord’s final act of obedience to the Father as our Surety and Mediator. “*Lo, I and the children thou hast given me!*”

To the best of my ability, I have told you the Christmas story, the story of redemption, grace, and salvation by Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. I have shown you

- the plot of the story in the council chambers of eternity,
- the introduction of the story in the Old Testament Scriptures,
- the body of the story in the life of our Savior,
- the climax of the story in his death,

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- and the conclusion of the story in his resurrection, sovereign rule, and glorious return.

Now, let me finish by declaring to you...

THE MESSAGE

6th — I love a story that has a message; and **the Christmas story, the story of our Lord Jesus Christ has a threefold message** (John 3:35-36).

(John 3:35-36) “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. (36) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

1. All things are in Christ.
2. “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*”
3. “*And he that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*”

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Illustration: *The Chief and the Worm*

Will you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; or will you perish? Will you trust Christ; or will you go to hell with your fists in God's face? Oh, may the God of all grace work his work of grace in you, giving you life and faith in his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Amen.