

## **Introduction**

Child-birth is amazing. If you have had children, you know the exhilaration and wonder of holding a baby in your arms that for months and months you knew was developing and growing but you could not touch and you could not see. Now that you can hold the child in your arms and gaze upon him or her, your heart is full. It was almost a year ago now that Melissa and I made our way down to Louisville to welcome our little grandson, Titus, into the world. All that time spent in development and then, there he was. And what a joy to be there within a day of his birth!

And so here we are at Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Jesus. And as wonderful as births are, what really makes the birth of Jesus so amazing and wonderful is how he was conceived. Mary was told by the angel that she would conceive in a miraculous way: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Joseph was told by the angel: "That which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." The miraculous conception fulfilled a dramatic prophecy from Isaiah that "the virgin will conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Immanuel." He is God with us.

The celebration of Jesus' birth is rooted in the miracle of Christmas. Here is the supernatural phenomenon of virgin conception and its corresponding marvel. The boy child conceived this way is in fact God incarnate. He is God in flesh—God having also become human. To boggle our minds, humble our hearts, and ignite our worship, we turn to John 1.

[Read Scripture and Pray]

Each gospel has its own emphasis. Matthew stresses the kingship of Jesus. Mark presents Jesus as our servant. In Luke, the text emphasizes the humanity of Jesus. As is clear from the verses we have read this morning, the distinctive emphasis of John's gospel is the deity of Jesus. The deity of Jesus is more than a theological concept we ought to know. It is fundamental to the gospel and it is indispensable to expanding our personal

vision of the true greatness of Jesus. These initial words of the gospel of John are some of the most concentrated and powerful and sublime in all of Scripture. In them we have the combination of God and man, immortal and mortal, spirit and flesh. Here at the outset of his gospel, John presents to us Jesus as God and Jesus as human. The combination of the two is the miracle of Christmas.

So, first notice with me

## **I. The Marvel of Jesus' Divinity (1-5).**

### **A. The Identity of Jesus**

In the opening of his gospel, John refers to Jesus as "the Word." The term refers to a means of communication. God's word includes his law, his commandments, his precepts, and his testimonies. The word of the Lord comes to the prophet and he communicates on God's behalf. As the word of God, Jesus communicates God to us. He reveals God to us. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and many ways, in these last days has SPOKEN to us in His Son." And John says that Jesus is more than A word from God. He is THE word. He is the consummate and ultimate word to which all others of God's words point. Jesus is the full word and the final word. He is the matchless word. It is so that Jesus says, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." Likewise, if you have heard Jesus, you have heard the Father for he only speaks what the Father instructs him to speak (John 8:28; 12:49-50).

However, in the OT, the idea of God's WORD also refers to a powerful expression of the will of God (Gen 1). "And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.'" God works effectually by His word. Thus God works effectually by The Word. The word personifies the will of God. Jesus declared that he came not to do his own will but the will of him who sent him (John 6:38).

There is another important aspect of God's word. By his word, he saves. Listen to Psalm 107:17-20. Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their injuries suffered affliction; they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in

their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. HE SENT OUT HIS WORD and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction.

So, then, as THE WORD, Jesus is the personification of God's self-expression in communication, in effectually bringing about God's will, and in saving those who cry to him for help. He is the one to whom you should listen. He is the one who can enact God's will. He is the only one who is mighty to save. If you are not trusting him, you are building your hope on sinking sand.

### B. The Eternality of Jesus

"In the beginning was the Word." John does not say, "In the beginning the word became." Rather when the beginning occurred, the word ALREADY WAS. John is captivated with the beginning. In his first epistle, he wrote similarly of Jesus: "That which was from the beginning." He takes us to Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here is a dramatic and complete contrast here between the Word and the worlds! In the beginning God created. But in the beginning God already was. And in the beginning the Word already was. All things came into being, but not Him! In the beginning WAS the Word. There never was a time when Jesus did not exist! He is the eternal I AM. You want to get a brain cramp? You just think on that for a moment. The word is eternal. Time is subject to him and not the other way around. He is transcendent. He transcends all reality and he transcends our comprehension.

### C. The Relationality of Jesus

"The Word was with God." The term with implies distinction but it also implies relationship. If you are with someone, you are in their company. You Wisconsinites have taught me a nice short-cut in speech. I always said, "Would you like to come with me?" But you say, "Do you want to come with?" or "Sure, I'll go with." You drop the "you" and the "me" because it is understood. And what is understood is that if one of us "comes with," we will be together. We are not the same persons, but we are in each other's company.

The relationship between GOD and WORD of which John speaks is the relationship between FATHER and SON. John records Jesus' statement, "I

and the Father are one," and "If you've seen Me you've seen the Father." But the Son is not the Father and the Father is not the Son. Their oneness is relational unity. There are personal relations between God and the word. And there can be personal relations between God and those created in his image.

#### D. The Deity of Jesus

"The Word was God." He was God in essence and character. Nothing about Jesus' character is diminished by being WITH God. He is no less Jehovah than the Father or the Spirit. And again we have a state of being that already was in the beginning. There was never a time when He was not. He is eternal. And there never was a time when he was not God.

#### E. The Creativity/Enormity of Jesus

v. 3 says, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." We often think of God the Father as Creator. But Scripture makes it clear that Jesus was integrally involved in creation.

Col 1:16-17: For by [the Son] 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 and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:2-3: through [His Son] [God] made the world. And [the Son] upholds all things by the word of His power.

Rev 4:11 ascribes glory to Jesus because He created all things and by His will they were created and have their being.

Scientists tells us that there are 100 billion stars in the average galaxy and that there are 100 million galaxies about which we know. If Einstein was correct that we have scanned only a billionth of space with our telescopes, then there are at least 10 octillion stars in space (10 with 27 0's following it). And he made them all and holds them all together! Jesus!

## F. The Vitality of Jesus

In Him was life. Not "he was alive" but "in him was life." He possesses life. It belongs to him. He therefore can breathe into man the breath of life so that he becomes a living soul. Unlike each of us who depend on Him to give us life, Jesus possesses it. He has self-existent life! He is "I Am." And thus He has the wherewithal to impart life, both physical and spiritual.

## G. The Invincibility of Jesus

The life was the light of men and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. The darkness has not overpowered the light.

The darkness of nothing was not able to withstand the creativity of Jesus. When God said "Let there be light." There was light! Neither can spiritual darkness overcome Him.

Light shines through creation; light shines through the person of Jesus, and light shines through the gospel of Jesus. Hearts may be hard to it. People greeted Jesus with hostility, and people reject his gospel. But the darkness has not won, and neither shall it win.

F. F. Bruce wrote, "A little candle can dispel a roomful of darkness and not be dimmed by it. Light and darkness are opposites but not equal in power. Darkness cannot prevail against light." Jesus shines in this world and the darkness cannot and will not overcome Him.

And all that John explains about Jesus tells us why He will triumph: He is Mighty, Majestic, and Amazing God!

## **II. The Miracle of Jesus' Humanity (14-18).**

A. The miracle is stated with 5 words: "And the word became flesh." The word who was in the beginning, who was in the relational company of God as a person, and who was eternal and invisible God in essence of being—the word became flesh. Not "took on" but became. Here is a change of the constitution of his being. In the beginning he was God, but in the midst of time, he has become flesh. He has become something he was not. And this something is that the infinite God has entered into the finite world he created. This is the miracle of Christmas. He was not born of man. He

was conceived by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. This explains the necessity of a virgin birth and the fulfillment of the prophecy. He is God with us. Rightly does Mark Lowry ask, "Mary, did you know that when you kiss your little baby, you kiss the face of God?" Here is why we celebrate his birth. He actually CAN DO what he came to do because of who he is. John stresses three things.

B. John stresses that . . . Jesus Makes Visible the Invisible God

Just because you do not see something does not mean it does not exist. Have you ever seen gravity? Just because you can't see God does not mean He is not there. In fact, John recalls the giving of the law through Moses. The people were so affected by the speech of God, they could not bear to hear it anymore. But in an unprecedented and stupendous way, God has made Himself known, and that is by the eternal Word, His Son. God became a man! The Invisible became visible and not as a vision or an illusion but in concrete fact.

C. John stresses secondly that . . .

Jesus Mediates the Presence of the Invisible God

He declares that "the Word . . . DWELT AMONG us." The word here that is translated "dwelt" literally means "to pitch a tent." He came to us and "pitched his tent" among us as one of us! You and I tend to associate a tent with time. None of us live in tents. We go camping in tents, and that is temporary. In fact it is very temporary for my family. Every time we have gone camping in a tent we have experienced rain storms, and the camping part did not last long. And Jesus was here for a short 33 years, but the most important aspect of His pitching His tent is that he did it among us as one of us. Not only did he become human, he came close. He came here to our camp, to our desperate situation, to the very things we experience day-in and day out. He came close, on our level, in our setting, to let us see Him and know Him.

D. John stresses thirdly that . . .

Jesus Manifests the Glory of the Invisible God

"And we have seen His glory." The language of the tabernacle combined with the mention of God's glory directs us back to the completion of the tabernacle. When Moses finished the work, the glory of the Lord filled the

tabernacle. The same thing happened when Solomon finished the tabernacle's replacement, the temple. Both of those facilities embodied the presence of the Lord and reflected the provision for atonement because of the guilt and corruption of sin. Jesus is the full and final tabernacle. The blood of his sacrifice offered to God in the heavenly tabernacle satisfies for the forgiveness and cleansing from sin. And in this is the glory of God made known. Christ is full of grace and truth. The tabernacle is where God comes to fellowship with and be worshiped by those who draw near on the basis of atonement. He draws near to them to reveal his glory and draw them into his personal relational presence. They draw near to him to behold his glory and to worship. The word made flesh is the tabernacle where all this takes place.

Jesus came not that we might merely know facts about God but that we, despite our sin, might know and worship God. In knowing Him through Christ we experience not simply a wave of grace but wave after wave after wave. "For of His fullness we have received and grace upon grace."

Grace abounds to God's people in Christ, and it never ceases. Everyone who has ever been to the beach can identify with the endless repetition of waves lapping upon the shore. It never stops. Daily, moment by moment we receive strength for the purpose of God in our lives. God wants every Christian to understand that His grace is sufficient and to rest in Him.

## **Conclusion**

Every Christian has everything we need in Christ. He is full of grace and truth. Think what that means. The God-man who holds the ungraspably enormous universe together is FULL of truth and grace. It is a supply that cannot be depleted. Jesus will never run out of what you need. And he will be happy to supply his resources for your need if you will come to him. He came here to us because without him we could not get to him. He became flesh and was born and lived and died and rose again so that by simple faith we might lay hold of him and what he supplies.

He is worthy of worship. The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest," and so should we. The shepherds spread the news and so should we. All

who heard it wondered at the shepherds report. And wonder should fill our hearts. The magi came to worship and so should we. He is God incarnate.