

Redeeming Christmas
Message 2 of 3 – Jesus: Before His Birth

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Dear Readers,

What follows is one man's weekly attempt to know the truth of God's Word and bring it to His people for their good and ultimately for His glory. Please regard these only as notes belonging to a busy pastor uploaded as they stand (for better or for worse, complete or incomplete, almost always with grammatical errors, and always with room for refinement in content, structure, presentation...) to support the ongoing study of God's Word. I firmly believe that the community of faith which is the body of Christ can and should bring their gifts to bear for the good of the rest of the body and that any one teacher can be taught by the others with an understanding of the truth. Therefore, should you have insight that would sharpen any of the thinking expressed here, know that I would be pleased to receive it. Clearly, the input that is most welcome and most helpful is that which is more concise than verbose, Biblically grounded and expressed with the goal of displacing misunderstanding and apprehending the truth of God's Word. Your thoughts of that nature are most welcome, certainly appreciated and will be thoughtfully considered. You are invited to send those insights to me at johnny@stoneharborchurch.org.

In pursuit of truth and growing a shepherds heart,
Johnny

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

Date: December 20, 2009
Series: Redeeming Christmas
Section: Jesus: from His Birth to Resurrection
Topic: Jesus in Fulfillment
Message Title: Jesus: from His Birth to Resurrection
Short Title: Jesus: Birth to Resurrection
Text: Luke 1-2
Key Words: Jesus, born, angel, promise, fulfillment, reconciliation, peace, faith

Message Outline

Jesus: Birth to Resurrection

- I. Jesus' **Birth**
- II. Jesus' **Life**
- III. Jesus' **Death** & Resurrection

Related Scripture

1. Luke 1-2

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Who was Jesus that we celebrate at Christmas?
2. Why did Jesus come to earth?
3. Have we received what Jesus came to bring? How can we receive His gift more fully?
4. How can you redeem Christmas time to honor Christ?
5. What could you know or do on Christmas Eve to honor Christ?
6. What could you know or do on Christmas morning to honor Christ?
7. What could you know or do on the day after Christmas and as the pattern of your life to honor Christ?

Memory and Meditation Verse

“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men
with whom He is pleased.”

Luke 2:14

Redeeming Christmas

Message 2 of 3 – Jesus: Before His Birth

Homiletical Idea

Christmas, if it is to honor God, needs our redeeming; and we can do so by listening to the full story of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Goals of Message

- That we would take a season overrun by the world and redeem it for the glory of God

Service Plan

- Greeting (Johnny)
- Worship in Song (Chuck & Co.)
- Community Life Announcements (Leslie)
 - Community Groups on two-week holiday – resume first week of new year
 - Christmas Eve encouragement to enjoy families
 - Caroling at Hospice House Wed – Must sign up today
- Pastoral Prayer (Johnny)
- Scripture Reading
 - Reading 1: _____ (Becky)
 - Reading 2: _____ (Lori)
- Message (Johnny)
- Closing Prayer (Dave)
- Benediction (Johnny)

Jesus: from Birth to Resurrection

(Christ in Fulfillment, the Incarnation of Jesus)

Introduction

Last week we began to tell the story of Jesus where the story rightly begins – at the very creation of all things by Him, i.e., by “the Word” who was with God and was God. The Word was Jesus (John 1:1-14). And we saw that He has existed always being Himself God the Son. We also saw last week the sad events of the Fall which left man in the compromised state of estrangement from God. Pursuing what they thought would be a value-added life, they were cut off from the true life which is life as God intended.

But the story of Jesus is far from a tragedy, it is a gospel – the ultimate story of good news bound up in the fact that God would send one particular and specially anointed man to restore and advance creation to His ultimate intention. And what would that be? It is intimate communion between God and mankind. It would be mankind as God’s adopted sons and daughters administering the rest of Creation according to the mind of God. That this One – this Redeemer, this Savior, this Messiah, this Christ would come and restore fallen creation is what God promised in all the OT Scriptures.

Today we will continue that story (being 2/3 of the way into it) at what has become in our day the starting point most frequently used -- the birth of Jesus. Where last week we looked primarily at the OT promise of this coming Messiah, today we will look at the NT fulfillment of that promise – we will also look at His life, death and resurrection – the entirety of the earthly dwelling of God with man in the flesh and blood person of Jesus the Nazarene. We will do so in very summary form as we have developed much of the life of Christ in our just completed study of Mark.

Then next week, we will look at the story of Jesus *as it continues even today*. For, just as His story begins before His birth, it also continues after His death. He not only has ongoing impact on us today because of what He accomplished but also because He Himself continues to exist. But that is for next Sunday.

For today let’s continue to seek to honor God and redeem the American Christmas holiday by giving ear to the story, the true never ending story of Jesus. As we look at His birth, life, death and resurrection, take joy in hearing again the truth you know (like a glass of milk with your favorite Christmas cookie); and *also* listen for that which you may not have known or that which you may not have regarded as highly as God would have you. This story is neither fluff, fairy tale, nor myth. Rather it is the gospel and as such it is the very power of God unto salvation for those who believe.

Romans 1:16 – “For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for it is the **power** of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

A. Jesus' Birth Demonstrated He was the One

1. Some of the Events Surrounding the Birth of Jesus

a) The Promise of the Birth of John the Baptist

(1) Lk 1:1-25

b) The Annunciation (Gabriel to Mary)

(1) Lk 1:26-38

c) Mary's Visit to Elizabeth

(1) Lk 1:39-56

d) The Birth of John the Baptist

(1) Lk 1:57-80

e) The Genealogy of Jesus

(1) Mt 1:2-17

(2) Lk 3:23-38

f) The Birth of Jesus

(1) Mt 1:18-25

(2) Lk 2:1-7

g) The Adoration of the Infant Jesus

(1) Mat 2:1-12

(2) Lk 2:8-20

h) The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple

(1) Lk 2:21-38

You have heard that story before. It is good to hear it again -- it is God's story after all. We have probably heard it enough only when we can tell it to others without notes and without missing any of the details. Now let's appreciate the significance in God's great plan of redemption and reconciliation of some of the components of that story of Jesus' birth.

2. The Significance of Some of those Events

a) Jesus' Birth Brought the Creator to the Creature

(1) *The Exalted God Came to the Lowly Man*

(2) *The Invisible Appeared to the Eyes of Men*

(3) *The Untouchable was Placed in the Arms Mary*

(4) *The Distant God Drew Near to His Image-Sons*

(5) *Philippians 2*

- ⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

b) Jesus' Birth Demonstrates His Identity as the One

(1) *His Virgin Birth by God Indicates that He is the One*

His Virgin Birth Indicates His Nature Qualifying Him to be the One

(a) He is God

(i) Promise

- God had promised that one day a Man would be born who would restore the fallen creation to a new creation – one according to the way He intended it to be: peace, rest, man in communion with God and exercising dominion over God's creation on His behalf. And this promised One to come would somehow be **God Himself**.
- As Prophesied through Isaiah (Is 9:6)
“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.”

(ii) Fulfillment

Jesus' birth to a virgin by the overshadowing of God fulfilled that promise.

NT affirms the divinity of Jesus (John 1, “the Word was God.” If you have seen me you have seen the Father. Who can forgive sins but God alone. This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. I and the Father are one....)

(b) He is Man

(i) Promise

- As first promised in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:15)
- Then as developed in God's subsequent promises to bring His ultimate blessing through a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David
- One day a child would be born in the line of Abraham and David who would be this special Man the One who God had promised.

(ii) Fulfillment

- Jesus was born to Mary
- Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the nation of Israel and then Israel's premier King David as promised
- Jesus life and death testify self evidently that He was a real man who really lived in real history. He was not a myth, a metaphor, a legend but a man born of a mother like you and I adopted by Joseph, with younger siblings, born in the real town of Bethlehem, raised in the real town of Nazareth by the real Sea of Galilee.

So Jesus was a man in history and He was and is God. Putting these two truths about His identity together we see that...

(c) He is the Unique God-Man

- He is the unique God-man who was and is the Man who God had promised. All other men born have been conceived naturally by their paternal parents. Only Jesus was born to a virgin by the miraculous overshadowing of God. In the most complete of all meanings God is the Father of Jesus, Jesus is the Son of God. He is also the son of Mary.
- As Such, He is Himself the ultimate union of God and man.
- Remembering that God's ultimate intention in regards to mankind is that we would be restored from a compromised relationship with Him characterized by distance to a redeemed relationship of intimate communion with Him. And in the unique God-Man, Jesus, we have the very personification of this intimate communion. He was in Himself the dwelling place of God with man, i.e., He was Immanuel, God with us.

So we see that the virgin birth of Jesus testifies that He was the unique God-Man uniquely qualified to be the One who would restore by being both son of man and Son of God.

(2) His Precedence by John Indicates that He is the One

(a) OT Promise of Forerunner

The OT had made clear that the Messiah would be preceded by another who would prepare the way for coming of the One.

Mal 4:5-6

⁵"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶"He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

(b) NT Fulfillment of Promised Forerunner

The angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias and spoke of the son that would be born to him (John the Baptist) saying that, "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the Spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Lk 1:17)

(3) His Davidic Lineage Indicates that He is the One

(a) Promise of a Davidic King

(i) 2 Sam 7:11ff

(ii) Noteworthy elements of the promise

(a) The LORD would make a house for David

(b) God would establish the kingdom of one of David's descendents

(c) That descendant would build God a house

(d) God would establish the throne of that one's kingdom forever

(e) God would be a father to that king

(f) That king would be a son to God

(g) God's lovingkindness would never depart from that one

(h) His house and kingdom and rule would endure forever

(b) Fulfillment

(i) Gabriel to Mary Announcing Jesus Birth: Lk 1:32-33

(ii) Noteworthy fulfillments of the promise

(a) He will be great

(b) He will be called the son of the Most High

(c) God will give Him the throne of His father David

(d) He will reign forever

(e) His kingdom shall have no end

The events surrounding Jesus' birth demonstrated that He was the One.

B. Jesus' Life Demonstrated that He was the One

1. Some of the Events of Jesus' Life

a) His Authority over Unclean Spirits

b) His Authority over Sickness

c) His Authority over Forces of Nature

d) His Authority to Forgive Sin

e) His Authority to Interpret Scripture

f) His Authority over Death

2. The Significance of those Events

Who has this breadth and depth of authority? Only the King of the Kingdom of God!

a) His Authority Demonstrated He was the One – The King of the Kingdom of God

(1) He was the Anointed One who would Reverse the Curse and bring Peace

(2) Mark 1:14-15 – In His coming the KOG drew near

C. Jesus' Death & Resurrection Demonstrated that He was the One

Recall to your mind...

1. Some of the Events of Jesus' Death & Resurrection

a) His Perfect Submission to the Father

(1) Not My will but Yours be done.

b) His Death

(1) That He was scourged

Isaiah 53:5 -- But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are **healed**.

(2) That He was crucified

(a) Paul explains in Gal 3:13 quoting Deut 21:23

¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON ^(C)A TREE"—

(3) That His death was accompanied by

(a) Darkness

“In Him”, John said, “was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:4-5

It makes perfect sense that at the event of His death we would experience darkness.

(b) Shaking of Earth

This was not the death of a normal man who goes to the grave without the shudder of the earth itself.

(c) Ripping of the Temple Veil

This was an indication that the temple was no longer needed to be the place of meeting with God.

c) His Resurrection from the Dead

Bring all these events we have recently looked at to mind. Now what is...

2. The Significance of those Events

a) Jesus' Submission Demonstrated He was the True Israel/Son of God

- His perfect submission demonstrated that He was the True Israel. Although He obviously had power and authority of the King of the KOG He did not live selfishly according to the "procedure of the king," but He lived as the Son of God was intended to live – in perfect loving submission to His Father, no matter what.
- Israel had entered into a relationship as the covenant son of God, but their history demonstrated they did not and could not live as the son of God should. Instead of submitting to God as Father, time and time again they chose to do what was right in their own eyes and not according to the terms of the covenant they had agreed to with God. As Adam and Eve had rebelled in the Garden so did Israel in Canaan.
- Where Israel had failed to be Israel all throughout its history, Jesus proved Himself the true Israel even dying rather than compromising His integrity.

b) Jesus Death Demonstrated He was the Final Atoning Sacrifice

- Jesus' death on the cross provided the occasion for Him to be the effective, ultimate and permanent sacrifice to atone for sins once for all. In His death He was the actual and final sacrifice that all the sacrifices previously offered -- even those prescribed under the Old Covenant -- only pictured so that we might understand the ultimate sacrifice when He came.
- Over the past few weeks of our Sacred Space study Pastor Kit has helped us see that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the themes of the Scriptures that point to the anointed One we have been talking about all morning: He is the Light, the Life and the Peace. In regards to Jesus as the one in whom peace is realized we learned that the peace offering of the OT was to follow the sin offering in sequence. The peace offering did not bring about peace; rather it celebrated the peace that had been secured (albeit symbolically) by the sin offering. The OT worshipper would first bring the sin offering, then with sin atoned for – estrangement symbolically removed -- the worshipper would celebrate the resultant symbolic peace between himself and God.
- In His death Jesus actually atoned for sin as a substitutionary sacrifice acceptable to God to effectively mediate between God and man replacing estrangement with intimacy. If sin separates man from God, Jesus' atonement for sin in His death made union with God accessible.
- That being done, peace was now possible. Peace between God and man. I loved the definition of this peace Pastor Kit offered in last week's study:
 - "At the macro level of the whole creation, peace speaks to the condition in which every created thing is characterized by perfect conformity to its true nature and function in relation to itself and everything else." Sacred Space p. 181.
- The OT spoke in promise of the One who would come who would be the Prince of Peace. Jesus is that One.

c) Jesus' Resurrection Demonstrated He was Not Eliminated by Death

- Death is not an insurmountable problem to our God!

- Jesus' own resurrection demonstrated God's intention and ability to bring eternal life out of physical death
- The grave could not and did not hold Him!
- The blow from the enemy was not fatal, it was but a bruise to His heal.

D. Conclusion

1. Summary of Jesus

- This holiday season we can redeem Christmas and honor God by recognizing and appreciating that Jesus is the One!
- Jesus Christ is the One through whom God had promised He would bring redemption from the curse of estrangement and yield reconciliation to God. In Jesus Christ we have the man promised throughout all the Scriptures, the Messiah, the King of the forever Kingdom of God, the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world... He is the light, the life, the Prince of Peace. He is the One!

2. Jesus and Us

- And He is all these things not in a vacuum -- for us to know about from a distance -- but He has come and dwelt amongst us so that we might know Him in the most complete sense, and by knowing Him know God Himself. We do not need to settle for having a mental assent of His reality. Rather...
 - God would have us know Him as a son or daughter knows their father, but even more fully than our experiences have allowed us to know our own fathers.
 - God would have us know Him as a wife and husband know each other, but even better than our experiences have allowed us to know our own spouses.
- Like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, God has come to us – both to the younger brothers whose sins are known to all and to the elder brothers whose sin are harder to see – God has come to all of us and each of us. Jesus the Nazarene explained Him (John 1:18). Jesus allowed His humanity, His divinity and His love to be displayed in His birth, life, death and resurrection. He was Himself Immanuel, God with Us.
- He was born to live and die and be resurrected all for the grand redeeming purpose of God. He presented His resurrected self to His skeptical disciple Thomas and said in effect, “Touch Me!” “**Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach her your hand and put it in My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.**” And that of course satisfied that skeptic and silenced him besides only his awed exclamation, “My Lord and my God!” Thomas saw the resurrected Jesus and believed. But then Jesus spoke to how the rest of humanity, how we, must apprehend Him... “**Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**” John 21:29b
- Jesus' resurrection did not only bring His life out of death but, **joined to Him by faith**, we too have the sure hope of life after death.
 - By faith in Him, we have even now new life out of our old deadness.
 - We have it in growing degree as the Holy Spirit transforms us by the renewing of our minds as we come to know Him better in the Scriptures which He has given us for that purpose.

- We will have New Life in consummate completion when as promised all who are in Christ will be raised bodily at His second coming. For He is the first fruits of the resurrection, and all who are His may rightly consider themselves the second fruits of the resurrection. We too, in Him have been delivered out of death into life.

3. Jesus and Us at Christmas

- Beloved of God, this morning we bring near to our minds and our hearts the story of Jesus, and with that story the reality of Him as God’s ultimate redeemer. With Him brought near His Spirit calls us to touch Him. How? We must do it through faith.
- We must walk not limited to only that which we see with our natural eyes, but we must walk by faith believing what we can not see but what we know to be true. The writer of the book of Hebrews has said of God, “...without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (11:6).
- The reward of peace with God, of intimate communion with Him, awaits those who believe. Hear Jesus steady urging again, “...do not be unbelieving, but believing”! Walk by faith that Jesus has secured life in its highest form – life as God has intended, life with Him in perfect peace.
- Pray with me and let us ask God that we might taste and see His goodness by faith.
 - Lord God, help us apprehend and touch in faith this reality that is most real but that can not be seen with our natural eyes. Give us the light by the illumination of Your Spirit that we might see Jesus for who He is. Push back the curtain of the natural the fleshly that Satan seems to use to blind us from seeing the reality of Jesus. For those who have never caught a glimpse of Jesus, and for us who have seen but not tasted the full goodness of knowing Him, may You enable us now to know Him to the full extent of Your will. Work in us dear God. Replace the fallen heart, mind and soul with the new creation that is for us in our union with Christ.
 - You have brought us peace in the Prince of Peace and this morning and forever we give you all the glory. You died that we may live and we know that we live by You; and we choose afresh to live for You and with You. Oh how sweet the fellowship with You that You have made available in Christ Jesus. May we enjoy it to the fullest of Your intent. We love You. We celebrate the Birth of Your Son, our Savior the Prince of Peace, Lord of Lords, the King of the Kingdom of God. In His name we pray.