

From the Pulpit of Keith Miller  
Meadowbrooke Church  
July 28, 2019

## Redemption's Glory

John 1:1-14 (Pew Bible p. 886)

### Introduction

On July 24<sup>th</sup> of this week, the Russian backed Syrian government launched an attack on the last rebel strongholds in Northwestern Syria. Over 100 civilians have been killed and that includes at least 20 children. A photo taken of the aftermath captured a father looking with horror at his three young daughters teetering on the edge of a bombed building. In the image can be seen one of his daughters, age 5, grabbing the shirt of her 7 month old sister in an attempt to save her from falling. Both daughters in the image fell; the infant survived, but the five year old did not. The father not only lost his wife, but also two of his three daughters.

A Syrian-American woman, who runs a center for women empowerment in one of the sites devastated by the attacks, pleaded in a Facebook video: "Mr. Trump, please stop this. Stop this shelling. Stop the killing of these innocent people.... Please America. Please do something!" Since the Garden, mankind has known little peace in the world. Only one can bring peace, and he is the Prince of Peace.

When Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel, she was told: **"You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end"** (Luke 1:30-33).

For the first time in history, God took on human flesh and became like us. Immanuel got tired like us, hungry like us, exhausted like us, in every way... Jesus became like us, yet without sin. The Bible says the reason Jesus was born was so that we could have One who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses so that, **"we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"** (Heb 4:14-16). Our greatest need is a savior; one who is able to save us from our sins and reconcile us to the God in whose image we were made and offended. **"Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned"** (Rom. 5:12).

On the day of Jesus' birth, it was not the dignitaries, the princes, the celebrities, nor the rich who were invited to witness the first moments of Jesus' life as a baby. The first to be invited to worship the Christ-child were shepherds, to whom the angels announced: **"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger"** (Luke 2:10-12). Then the curtain of heaven's wall opened and the shepherds were given just a sampling of the

kind of worship that takes place in heaven concerning Jesus as all of heaven responded to the good news announced to the poorest of the poor: **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased”** (v. 14)!

### **Through Him We Have Life (vv. 1-3)**

When the shepherds came to visit the Christ, their eyes beheld the Word of God in human flesh according to John’s gospel. For the Jew, Jesus as the “Word” of God would have brought to mind the first chapter in Genesis: **“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”** We learn from the Psalm 33 that, **“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host”** (v. 6). The means by which God created was through His Word. In the manger on the first Christmas was the power of God that created everything; in the manger on that first Christmas was God’s creative, life-giving word.

**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.** (Colossians 1:15–20, ESV)

The Greek word for “word” is *logos*, which was believed by the Greeks to be an impersonal, mysterious and unknowable stabilizing principle in the universe. Although it was believed in Greek culture that the *logos* was an unknowable, impersonal force that defined all of reality; The Gospel of John informs us that the Word of God is not only knowable, but defines the meaning of life and the purpose for all that exists.

The point is, that Jesus is the lynch-pin to the purpose and meaning of life. He is the perfect revelation of God; to see Jesus is to see God. For Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds as they marveled over the baby, they were beholding the very face of the living God. The person of Creation and the reason for the universe lay in a manger. It was solely because of the baby the shepherds were invited to see that, **“All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made”** (v. 3). Therefore, outside of Jesus you can have no spiritual life; outside of Jesus there is no hope; outside of Jesus there is no purpose.

### **Through Him We Have Light (vv. 4-11)**

**“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”** (vv. 4-5). Before Jesus’ birth was a darkness not entirely unlike the darkness of Genesis 1:2, **“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.”** Although at the birth of Jesus, the moon and stars illuminated the dark sky and the darkness of night fled with the rising of the sun, there was a darkness since Adam and Eve bit into the fruit. It was a darkness of the human soul and the curse of sin that only the Son of God could dispel.

Since Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden, the human experience has been one outside of the garden. Outside the Garden is the place of the curse... the wilderness. It is the place of pain,

distrust, frustration, thorns and thistles, weariness, sweat, burdens, and death. The Bible says, **“sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come”** (Rom. 5:12, 14).

Resultant of Adam and Eve’s sin, they were driven away from the face of God and that has been the human condition and experience ever since. S.M. Lockeridge, in his famous sermon, “The Lordship of Christ” reflected on this very thing when he said: *“We are forever blowing bubbles, looking for ships that never come in, chasing pots of gold at the end of receding rainbows.... How do you expect your ships to come in when you have sent no ships out? You will never find that proverbial pot of gold because you ignore Him who has the rainbow wrapped around His shoulder.”* According to John 1:10-11, **“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.”**

The Word of God and the Logic of the universe was in the world and the world never noticed (v. 10). I am not even sure the shepherds, Joseph, or even Mary could comprehend that the cooing, crying, hungry baby was the Word of God in flesh before their very eyes in Mary’s arms. The One who was the Word that made the universe, He who owned the cattle on a thousand hills, Jesus to whom the birds owe their tune to the songs he has written into their DNA... did the unthinkable by becoming like one of us.

What the world so desperately needed was in their midst, but it never even noticed. The promised seed of Abraham had come into the world He created, **“yet his own people did not receive him.”** Not much has changed, for the greatest news in the universe is news most of the world is not interested in receiving.

### **By Him We Have Redemption (vv. 12-14)**

The message to the Shepherds was simple and clear: **“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”** The Lord of heaven and earth took on human flesh! **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”** Jesus the Christ, the promise of redemption and God’s “Yes” to His commitment to reverse the curse of sin was born so that we might be free from the tyranny of sin and the dark cloud of the curse. Jesus was born so that all, **“who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...”** Consider the people included in Jesus family tree; each person is the included in His bloodline to illustrate that they were the kinds of people He came to die for. The infant Messiah was born to redeem:

- God-usurpers like Adam and Eve.
- Conniving husbands like Abraham and wives like Sara.
- Compromising father’s like Lot and his morally debased daughters.
- The Leah’s of the world who long for the love of a father or the affection of their husbands.
- The Judah’s of the world who have used women for their own gain.
- Tamar’s of the world who have been used by men like Judah.
- Whores like Rahab.

- Widows like Naomi who have lost everything.
- Moabites like Ruth who seemed too far for the love of God to reach.
- Adulterers and murderers like David.
- The Bathsheba's of the world who have lost a child to death.

Jesus came to redeem sinners like you and like me so that we might be free. Jesus will ultimately break the chains that bind all of creation to death, decay, violence, disease, injustice, and everything else that is wrong with our world.

How does the Word of God... redeem lost sinners? **“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”** (vv. 12-13). How does one receive the forgiveness of their sins? How does one become a son or daughter of the God who made us in His image? How does one find the joy only his or her Creator can give? Jesus. **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”** (v. 14). I like how the New Living Translation translated this verse:

*“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.”*  
(John 1:14, NLT)

The principle means that God has chosen to reverse the curse of sin. He made His home among us in the person of His Son Jesus the Christ. Why? So that we can find our home... our purpose... our joy... forgiveness... the love that has eluded us... and contentment in God. I don't know where you are at spiritually, emotionally, or mentally. I don't know what life-path has brought you here today. I do not know the pain that may be flooding your heart, the disappointments that have left you wounded and broken, but I do know that Jesus can make you whole. Oh won't you come to the One to whom all of Scripture and Creation testifies that through Him you can know the truth of the hymn, *Across the Lands*:

You're the Word of God the Father  
From before the world began.  
Ev'ry star and ev'ry planet  
Has been fashioned by Your hand.  
All creation holds together  
By the power of Your voice.  
Let the skies declare Your glory;  
Let the land and seas rejoice!

Yet You left the gaze of angels,  
Came to seek and save the lost,  
And exchanged the joy of heaven  
For the anguish of a cross.  
With a prayer You fed the hungry;  
With a word You calmed the sea;

Yet how silently You suffered  
That the guilty may go free!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend, *Across the Lands*. Thankyou Music; 2002.