

The Basics of Christianity

The Reason for the Season

Luke 1:30-35, John 1:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

Luke 1:30-35 (NASB95)

John 1:1-13 (NASB95)

BODY:

I. The Baby in the Manger was God.

John 1:1-2 (NASB95)

Genesis 1:1 (NASB95)

II. The Baby in the Manger was the Creator of All Things.

John 1:3 (NASB95)

Colossians 1:16-17 (NASB95)

Genesis 1:1 (NASB95)

Genesis 1:27 (NASB95)

III. The Baby in the Manger Brought Life and Light Into the World.

John 1:4 (NASB95)

John 1:5 (NASB95)

John 1:6-8 (NASB95)

Acts 1:8 (NASB95)

John 1:9 (NASB95)

John 1:10-11 (NASB95)

IV. The Baby in the Manger Brought Salvation to Mankind.

John 1:10-13 (NASB95)

John 14:6 (NASB95)

CONCLUSION:

The Basics of Christianity

The Reason for the Season

Luke 1:30-35, John 1:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing with "The Basics of Christianity" series. The purpose of this series is to make us more effective in our witness to those outside the church who still need to know about the Gospel.

Many prophecies in the Old Testament proclaimed the birth of Christ, the Messiah. It was an event that had been planned by God even before creation. He knew that man was going to sin and would need a savior. This morning we are going to talk about Jesus before He was born as a baby in the manger and then look at the reason why He was born and lived among us.

Who was this baby Jesus?

Why did He need to come to earth to live among men?

What did He teach us?

How did He accomplish His plan?

All Stand and Read Scripture

Luke 1:30-35 (NASB95)

³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

John 1:1-13 (NASB95)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but *he came to testify about the Light.*

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even to those who believe in His name,* ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Prayer

BODY:

I. The Baby in the Manger was God.

John 1:1-2 (NASB95)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

Verse 1 sounds a lot like the beginning of Genesis.

Genesis 1:1 (NASB95)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1 is talking about the beginning of God's creation, the beginning of time. John 1:1-2 is much more than that.

The reason this verse is written here is to point out that (1) before time began, (2) before Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem, and (3) even before Genesis 1:1 when the heavens and the earth were created, God existed and Jesus existed. It points to the eternal existence of God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel of John Jesus is referred to as the Word. The Bible contains the Word of God. We do not worship the Bible, but we know that it contains the Word of God and through our study of it, we can know how to live our lives for God.

An interesting thing about this passage is it says Jesus "**was God**" which would indicate that He has the same characteristics as God and was absolutely identical, but, it also says Jesus "**was with God**" which indicates that He was somehow also a separate entity from God.

From a human perspective, you cannot be absolutely the same and also be "with" God. Would you like for me to explain that to you? How can God be three persons in one? Well I can't.

ILLUSTRATION:

Neil likes to use the following example to show how one object can take on different forms on earth. Take the case of water. When it is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit it takes on the form of solid ice. When it is between 32 and 212 degrees it is in the form of a liquid.

When it reaches the boiling point of 212 degrees it becomes steam. Ice, liquid, and steam appear to be different, but they are the same, just in different forms.

The scriptures make it clear that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one, living eternally. They are a unity, yet they are individual, and they are one. The baby born in the manger was the eternal Son of God and He was God.

II. The Baby in the Manger was the Creator of All Things.

John 1:3 (NASB95)

³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

When we think of Jesus and His birth in a manger, we tend to think of His ministry on earth. We often do not tend to think of Him as the creator of all things. But that is exactly what He is. Jesus was a member of the trinity in charge of creating. He created by speaking words with authority and creation appeared. Not only did He create, but He also was in charge of sustaining creation.

Colossians 1:16-17 (NASB95)

¹⁶ For by Him 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. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

This is a powerful statement. Everything that exists was created by Christ for Christ and He is the sustainer of creation. Mankind was created because "The Son" spoke the Word with authority and mankind was created. It says He was "**before all things**" which, again, talks of His preexistence or eternal nature and it says that He will be above all rule and authority and above every name. Everything that is created is to bring glory to Christ.

What a powerful statement! It is much more than just a cute little baby in a manger. This gives us perspective on Who this baby is!

But wait a minute! Doesn't Genesis say that **God** created the Heavens and earth? Not Jesus!

Genesis 1:1 (NASB95)

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The scriptures make it clear that God consists as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is often overlooked, but this is actually first revealed to us in **Genesis 1:26** where God says:

"Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, according to **OUR** likeness."

Note....: There is only **ONE** image, and there is only **ONE** likeness -**Singular**, But the **Plural** is also used - "Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, according to **OUR** likeness".

Then you , once again, see that a **Singular** God in verse 27 created man after His image.

Genesis 1:27 (NASB95)

²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Isn't it amazing how apparent discrepancies in the Bible always become clear as we continue to study the scripture?

Jesus, the baby in the manger, WAS the singular God of Genesis! Yet He and the Father were one. So we know the baby in the manger was God and He created all things, so why did He come to earth to be born among men?

III. The Baby in the Manger Brought Life and Light Into the World.

John 1:4 (NASB95)

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Jesus did not only bring physical life, but spiritual life. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were told **not to eat of the tree of good and evil for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.** The devil comes and tempts them and they eat. At that point they did not immediately die, but physical death started at that point. Their bodies started deteriorating with decay and disease and eventually caused their death. Spiritual death started on the spot and their personal relationship with God was taken away from them.

I have got physical life standing here, but my spiritual life, because of sin, needs to be fixed. Just as light was needed and created for physical life, I need light now to bring about spiritual life. If we just had physical death to worry about, it would be over when we die. The problem with spiritual life is that it is an eternal problem that follows us beyond the grave. It must be fixed and solved now because one day it will be unfixable and unsolvable. So, I have to have a solution. John is looking back to the fall of man and pointing out what needed to be fixed.

Christmas is much more than a holiday of symbols such as Christmas trees, lights, and merry Christmas signs in stores. It is about a baby who has the power to speak physical life and speak spiritual life.

Now we want to get beyond eternity past and consider what happens when Christ did come to earth.

John 1:5 (NASB95)

⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

A better word for comprehend might be that the darkness could not stop the light. It might be true that without enlightenment, we might not understand the light, but the main point is that Jesus came and He shone into the darkness and the darkness could not do anything about it. When Jesus said "Let there be light", the darkness did not have the ability to stop it or push it back. No matter how dark the room, just one small light will still be seen. The darkness cannot hide the light!

John 1:6-8 (NASB95)

⁶ There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but *he came to testify about the Light.*

The Old Testament prophesied of the one who was to come to be a forerunner of Christ. Can you imagine being the one chosen to testify about the Light as John the Baptist? John's call is very unique in that he was called before he was born and God knew that he would accept that calling. Before creation, God had John's plan and purpose in place. That would be a very important calling. Wouldn't you agree?

Consider:

Acts 1:8 (NASB95)

⁸ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

We are not talking about John the Baptist here are we? There is not a lot of difference between us and John the Baptist. Jesus knew as much about us before creation as He knew of John the Baptist before creation. The only difference is John's calling was prophesied. God calls us to do the very same thing, to be witnesses to testify about the Light. We are not living in the same time, the same place, or the same way. But, in our time, our place, and in our way He calls us exactly as John the Baptist was called: to be witnesses of the light, if we have seen and know the light.

John 1:9 (NASB95)

⁹ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

The word true is used here to point out that Jesus is the only light. Jesus came to teach us the ways of God. He came to teach us about spiritual things that we cannot know on our own. He taught that He is the only way to salvation. We cannot come up with an alternate way to be saved. We have the advantage of prophecies that told what was to happen so we could know that the Bible is the true Word of God. We are told that Christ came for all men, Jew and Gentile. The Jews had trouble with this because they felt that they were the chosen people and Gentiles were not part of God's plan. Christ is the ONLY light that can create a spiritual birth and fix a spiritual life.

John 1:10-11 (NASB95)

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Isn't it hard to believe that the **CREATOR OF THE WORLD** could to earth and the world would not recognize Him or accept Him?

Have you ever thought, if God would show me a major miracle, it would be much easier to believe in Him? Jesus worked miracles (raising from the dead, healing the sick, giving eyesight to the blind, rebuking nature, multiplying food, and driving out demons) and yet, despite all of that, the world rejected Him. We took a sinless man and crucified Him on a cross.

He came to His own (the Jews) who were continuously studying the scripture and waiting for the Messiah to arrive and even they rejected Him. Humanity has proven that even the most obvious signs are not enough for sinful man.

IV. The Baby in the Manger Brought Salvation to Mankind.

You would think that was the end of the story wouldn't you? He came and we rejected Him. We asked Him to give us signs and He did. We asked Him to fulfill all of the prophecies and He did. Then we rejected Him and crucified Him. You would think He would just wrap up the world and throw it away and start on another creation. **But what did He do?**

John 1:10-13 (NASB95)

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them **He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name**, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the **will of the flesh nor of the will of man**, but of God.

You might ask, If the world did not know Him and the Jews did not receive Him. Who did receive Him? This scripture is saying that those who believed in His name received Him. When it says we were given the "right" to become children of God, it is saying that we were given the means to become a child of God. We must believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

Verse 13 talks about our inability and God's ability to make us children of God. We cannot be saved based on our physical birth or our Jewish ancestry. We must have a spiritual birth, not physically of blood, but of God.

It is not by the "will of the flesh". We cannot save ourselves by human effort and works. If it is the Word of God that has life and light and power, we can only get salvation from Jesus, not by our efforts. We tend to think, "I will just try harder". But no matter how hard you work, your works cannot erase your sins. You need to go to Him and He will make you white as snow. He is the source.

John 14:6 (NASB95)

⁶ Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

CONCLUSION:

The good news is that Jesus came to this earth knowing He must die on the cross. Christ's death on the cross provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven. Once we have sincerely asked for forgiveness of our sins, Christ has provided the way for our spiritual life to be made whole, without sin. Christ took the wrath that God should put on all sinners for our sins and put it on His Son. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins and rose from the dead proving that He had the power to save sinners like us. We must believe in God's Son and obey His commands to become children of God.

When we think of Christmas and the birth of Christ, we must go beyond the manger and understand the reason Christ became man and lived among us. **He is the reason for the season!**

Jesus came to tell us that the Baby in the Manger is also God, He is The Word, He is The Creator, He is the Light, He is the Life, He was Rejected and Crucified by the World and His Own. But He Arose from the Dead to prove that all that He had said and done was of God. By Receiving Him and Believing in His Name, **we** can Become Children of God!

Go Tell it on the Mountain.