

“The Power of Jesus’ Birth”

John 1:11-13

Theme: God’s redemption of sinners focuses entirely on the life and death of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.

Have you ever watched an elaborate arrangement of dominoes triggered by the first domino being toppled, beginning a chain reaction of other dominoes falling in planned succession? There have been some fascinating patterns and even structures designed and executed by the artists or physicists, involving thousands of dominoes. However, the successive “toppling” of the dominoes requires one of the dominoes – hopefully, the first- to topple.

Jesus’ birth is the first “domino” in God’s elaborate plan to bring Himself glory through our redemption. Without the birth of Christ, God Himself would have no ability to alter the course of our condemnation. However, through Jesus’ birth, all the mercies, graces, and compassions God is capable of become ours. In our text this morning, we can stand and observe the “dominoes” of redemption begin to fall. We are convinced in these verses that ***“God’s redemption of sinners focuses entirely on the life and death of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.”***

I. The Power of Humility - **1:11**

A. The Humility in the Incarnation

1. Our text begins with the simple declaration – ***“He came to His own ...”***
2. This is the reality of the Christmas celebration – not merely the birth of a baby, but the coming of the One who would fulfill the prophecies of “God with Us!” – cp. ***Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23.***
3. The Lord Jesus Christ existed before the creation of the world – cp. ***John 1:1.***
4. At the incarnation – when he was conceived in the womb of His mother, Mary, He became flesh – ***John 1:14.***

5. Our text specifically refers to His creative work in referring to the world to which He came as “*His own*” [ἴδιος] – an inclusive word to include everything He could claim as belonging to Him because He created it – the *kosmos* – cp. v. 10; cp. **Colossians 1:16**.
6. Jesus made the science of biology and procreation He would now rely upon; He made the blood that would nourish His body; He made the air He would depend upon to breathe; He made the food He would have to eat; He made the water upon which He would rely for hydration; He gifted the technology that would take plants He made to provide clothing to protect Him from the elements He had created that could now harm Him.
7. He knew fatigue, hunger, thirst, warmth, coldness, unawareness, dependency, and sorrow.
8. He was perfected through submission to the Holy Spirit on whom He relied for strength and enabling to do what is right – every single time:
 - a) *He was conceived by the Spirit* – **Matthew 1:20**.
 - b) *The Spirit anointed him for the Messianic role in the way Old Testament saints were empowered* – **Mark 1:10**.
 - c) *He was led by the Spirit* – **Luke 4:1**.
 - d) *The Spirit empowered him for miracles* – **Acts 10:38**.
 - e) *He was submitted to the Spirit* – **Hebrews 9:14**.
 - f) *He was raised by the Spirit* – **Romans 8:11**.
9. In this way, He walked in the Spirit precisely the way we must but cannot to provide us the righteousness needed to enjoy God’s approval – **Hebrews 2:14-18**.
10. The power involved in the incarnation surrounded the supernatural humility that brought Him down – cp. **Philippians 2:3-8**.

B. The Humility in the Intolerance

1. Yet Jesus' humility went even further – *"... and those who were His own did not receive Him."*
2. *"... those who were His own ..."* refers to both mankind in general (most of whom rejected Him) as well as the Jewish people in particular.
3. Here, we see the power of His humility in granting freedom to His creatures to respond to Him freely – and they *"... did not receive Him."*
4. *"... receive ..."* [παραλαμβάνω] – means to take into close association, to grasp or take hold of something or someone.
5. It refers to the fact that sinners of every ethnicity or race chose to reject Jesus as Lord – ***John 3:20; 5:43; 13:20.***
6. Sinners today reject Jesus and refuse to confess Him as their own Lord and Savior, choosing instead to indulge their flesh, pursue their sin, and spurn the Lord of God.
7. Such humility displays its power in allowing the very creatures He has created to have their way in rejection of Him, demonstrating their depravity and the just condemnation under which they sit.

II. The Power to Transform – ***1:12-13a***

A. The Transformation through Relationship – ***v. 12***

1. However, Jesus' power extends to accomplishing what God gave Him to do – to save sinners.
2. Here, John declares: *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God ..."*
3. Again, to *"receive Him"* involves more than an intellectual acknowledgment of Him, but is to *"believe in His name"* – that name refers to all He is and all He does – ***John 3:18; 1 John 5:13.***

4. It refers to placing one's eternal welfare into the hands of Jesus Christ, who, by His power, transforms us first by justifying us through His power and then sanctifying us through His Word.
5. There is a unique relationship belonging to sinful people who are reconciled to God through their faith in Jesus Christ – not everyone is a child of God – cp. ***Ephesians 2:3***.
6. The **“right”** [ἐξουσία] – describes **the state of control or freedom to choose** – here, it refers to the choice to receive Him to choose to become children of God by believing in His name.
7. John emphasizes the power of Christ to transform a sinner from a self-willed, self-governed, self-satisfying, autonomous slave to sin to a submissive child of God who obeys the Father and maintains the family standards.
8. This transformation is a work of grace, causing the sinner to behave like a saint as **“He gave the right”** to them.

B. The Transformation through Regeneration – v. 13a

1. Jesus' birth has an additional power – it is the power to give life to others as well – **“who were born”** [γεννάω] – a term meaning “begotten” or produced.
2. We can only be born again because He was born, fulfilled all righteousness we could not, and then died in our place to pay the price of our sins.
3. In His resurrection, He made it possible for us to know eternal life – cp. ***Romans 6:4***.
4. The Father causes us to be “born again” through the power of Christ's resurrection – the culmination of the purpose for which Jesus was born – cp. ***1 Peter 1:3***.
5. The power of the birth of Christ, resulting in His redemptive accomplishments and resurrection from the dead, causes our transformation to righteousness – cp. ***1 John 2:29; 3:9; 5:4***.

III. The Power of Grace – **1:13b**

A. The Powerlessness of Men

1. The structure of this verse indicates the strong denouncement of human achievement – *“who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*
 - a) *Pedigree: “... not of blood...” -*
 - b) *Proficiency: “... nor of the will of the flesh ...” -*
 - c) *Piety: “... nor of the will of man ...” -*
2. Men are entirely powerless to accomplish their own redemption, nor can one maintain their salvation – it is completely the work of God.

B. The Power of Mercy

1. This is the significance of the phrase – *“... but of God.”*
2. The term *“... were born...”* is a passive voice – meaning that we have about as much to do with being spiritually born as we did with being physically born.
3. It is amazing that on our birthdays, we are celebrated when the one we ought to celebrate is the mother who did the work and labored to deliver the child.
4. Likewise, we cannot pat ourselves on the back for being born again when God did it out of His mercy – cp. ***Ephesians 2:4-5***.

So What?

1. Without Jesus’ birth, what was needed for our salvation would not have been provided.
2. Without Jesus’ birth, we would not have been given the right to become children of God.
3. Without Jesus’ birth, God would have no ability to show mercy to us but

would be a Judge exacting justice on us.

4. The richness of His mercy is established through the merits of Jesus, who came to fulfill righteousness and die as a sacrifice for us.