

XII. Gospel Worship in Biblical Perspective

Worship God!

“The King Worships”

John 1:14

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December 1, 2013 – Morning Sermon

We will start by looking in John 1 but I will also read a passage from John 20 as well. John 1:14 says [14] *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.* Many times you have to discern the purpose of an author but John three times in the Gospel tells you why he wrote what he wrote, empowered by the Holy Spirit. John 20:30-31 says [30] *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

We have overlapped the advent theme with the ministry theme of the year. As we started this year our theme was “Worship God.” Our thematic statement was that we were in the Gospel pursuit of God-glorifying, Christ-centered, Bible-shaped, Holy Spirit-empowered worship of the Triune God of glory. We want to worship the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit and shaped by the Bible. There are two features to worship. They are adoration and action. Worship is a verb. It is action. Worship is adoration when we give God praise with our lips and our lives and that means there are also two factors of worship. The two factors of worship are gathered worship and life worship. Gathered worship is gathering together. Hebrews 10:25 says [25] *not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* We are not to forsake the assembling together. We gather together to give God the adoration with the action of worship.

Then we scatter from the gathering to give God life worship, life worship with adoration. I Corinthians 10:31 says [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Romans 12:1 says [1] *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* Those two work together, as you live life worship you then long to be a symbol for worship. Then you gather together to worship in order to scatter for worship and giving praise to the Lord our God.

The advent focus is “Worship the King,” the preeminent Christ. How do we worship the King? Twenty one hundred years ago Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit had conceived within her a Seed, not just the egg which a woman would have but now a Seed. Growing within her was the King who was to be delivered twenty one hundred years ago in a cave underneath a house in which there was no room for them in the house. It was probably a relatives house and all their relatives were crowded up. In the animal gathering place of a stable she delivered this Child that had been nurtured through an umbilical cord and He was the King. He was delivered and laid in the manger of an animal’s trough. There would be a series of visits to that place from angels, shepherds,

wise men and that King would be taken to the temple eight days later and He would see Simeon and Anna.

Every time there is an encounter in this advent season when the Savior came three things would happen. There was the acknowledgment that this One was a King, a Savior and that this One was to be worshipped. Worship the Savior who is the King. I want to start off the advent season by looking at the King Himself. The amazing thing is that the King who came to save and is worshipped, came as a Savior and He worshipped. As we look at this King in this study I want to ask two questions. The first question is who is this King whom angels, shepherds, wise men, Simeon and Anna worship? Who is this King? Who is this King who worships? The second question is why did this King come? Who is this King who has come down? That was Christ's favorite language. Christ loved to say "I have come down" and not just "I have come." "I have come in humility. I have come down." It's not so much spatially as it is directionally as it is in the humiliation of what He laid aside to come down and be with us, Emmanuel. Who is this King and why did He come?

To answer those two questions I'd like to go to the Gospels. The Gospels are interesting. Two of the Gospels give some very significant time to the birth of Jesus and that is Matthew and Luke. Luke even gives some time to the childhood of Jesus. Mark doesn't but he starts right off with His baptism and His ministry. Mark is writing under the leadership of Peter so that really shouldn't surprise us because Peter just likes to get to the point. The start of His ministry and His baptism was when Peter met Jesus and was converted, so that's where Mark starts but Matthew, Luke and John does. Yet John does differently, not giving the historical details of the birth but the backstory of the birth of Christ.

Let's look back in John 1 and John answers our questions for us in John 1:14 which says *[14] 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.* All of the encounters answers the question of who is this King and why did He come but this passage answers it very specifically. This is very crucial to understand who this King is. Why has John written what we're about to look at? He is writing this so that you who read this will know that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Prophet, the Priest and the King. Then he says the Son of God and when you believe in Him you gain and are given eternal life by Him. So how does John get across to us that this is the Messiah who is the Son of God?

He does it in John 1:14 with this summation about the birth of Jesus. He doesn't go into wise men, shepherds, angels and stables, he just says *[14] 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.* I want to answer the two questions but I'm going to reverse the order. I'm going to answer the second question first.

The second question is why did this King come? John 1:14 answers that question, when he said that He came to dwell among us. Here John is turning a noun into a verb. When we tell someone we are to 'friend' them on Facebook we have turned a noun into a verb. John takes the noun that is usually translated in the Bible as temple or tabernacle into a verb so its translation is 'the Word tabernacle/templed or dwelt among us.' By doing that John has done something very interesting. He has just grabbed everything from the Old Testament with its central point being the temple which was the gathering

for teaching, worship and prayer and it was the central point because God dwelt there. The Shekinah glory, the holy of holies were all there. The tent of meeting, the tabernacle, the temple were the central points of God's redeeming work. God is with us. So we go to that place to worship Him, to learn of Him and to pray to Him.

Now what John is telling you is that the place is not the focus any more for it is the Person, Jesus who is the Temple, who has tabernacled. When you look at Him there is the glory of the Lord because in Christ He is full of grace and truth. He is full of the glory of God. There is not a measure of grace. I have a measure of grace. It is not a measure of truth. I have a measure of truth. You have a measure of truth and grace but He is full of grace and truth and here veiled in this human body is the glory of the Father, the perfect image and glory of the Father has been made manifest to you, not behind a curtain anymore, but now in this body He has come to dwell among us.

Why did He dwell among us? It has to do with grace and truth. He dwelt among us to save us by grace and to honor the truth that God is holy. How can sinners be saved because God will surely punish the guilty? Sinners are saved because God sent His Son, out of grace, full of grace to bear in truth what was due to us. So in the meeting of the judgment of God for our sins upon Christ on the cross, He by grace overcame all of our sins and in truth declares "Verily, verily, he who believes in Me has eternal life for I paid for your sins. I have come to you, for you, to be with you that you now can be with Me. I have done it out of an unmerited love and a work of grace."

How did He do it? He did it on a cross. Dying on a cross doesn't necessarily mean salvation for the key is who died on the cross. When Paul says he preaches he doesn't just preach cross, he preaches Christ crucified. It is important who is on that cross. What had He come to do? He has come to save us from our sins. This is written for you that you might believe and have eternal life. So if you leave here today saying that you don't believe then you'll leave believing in something else. You won't be an unbeliever. You'll believe in something in terms of what is life, you'll worship it and live for it and it will capture your adoration and affection. It will take all of your life but it can't deliver because no one but Christ can pay for your sins. Every other religion tells you what you have to pay or do to get to heaven. Christianity says you don't pay or do for Jesus came for you.

This may not be the best illustration but I heard the other day that there are people who make money on Iron bowl week because they go down and stake out a place for people to bring their RVs. They make money helping these people stake out good places. I keep thinking one place to start would be staking out a place in worship each Sunday and then the other thing I thought about when I heard this that God came and staked out a place for you in heaven but you don't pay for it. He paid for it and He staked it out for you so that where He is there you may be also, full of grace and truth. It's one thing to make that claim and now it depends on who it is who will do this. Can He do it for us?

Here is where John gets further interesting because he says "The Word became flesh" in the first part of John 1:14. He takes an Old Testament title for the Messiah, the second Person of the Trinity, "The Word" not a word but the Word. He is called the Word because God is self-revealing. Why do you know there is a God? It is because God reveals Himself. It is in His nature. God is Light. He reveals Himself in creation and in His Word. The Old Testament was the Bible of the day because the New Testament hadn't been written yet and the Word Inscripturated was there to point to the

Word Incarnate. John 5:39 says [39] *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.*

Eternal life is not in the Bible. Eternal life is in Christ. The Bible is here to tell you about Christ. The Word Inscripturated is there to tell you the Word who is coming which is Christ Incarnate, who perfectly reveals the glory of God in all of His majesty, glory and honor. Luke 24:27 says [27] *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* He is the Word and the fulfillment of all those prophecies, types and shadows. Everything in the Old Testament is wrapped up in Him. He is the fulfillment of it. The Word Incarnate is the Word Inscripturated having come now in the flesh. The Word of God points us to the God of the Word.

John now wants us to make sure we know who this Word is and he tells us in John 1. John 1:1-5 says [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 were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life, and the life was the light of men. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* John Murray has really opened up the door to this in ways that have really astounded me throughout the years. I am paraphrasing a lot of what he says on this.

Does the phrase ‘in the beginning’ sound familiar? It is taken from Genesis. Genesis starts out ‘In the beginning’ and then explains everything we now call history. John uses the same language but he doesn’t write what comes after the beginning for he goes backwards. In the beginning the Word made everything. With His spoken word He brought everything into existence. Nothing existed until the One who everlastingly existed brought it into existence. The Word made everything.

What is the first thing you find out about that Word? *In the beginning was the Word...* The word *was* here comes from the Greek word *eimi* and is used three times in this text. It is in the imperfect tense and it means He was, is and is to come and there has never been a time when He wasn’t. In other words, the One who brought into existence existed for all and all time. He is eternal. So when he says ‘in the beginning was the Word’ he is telling you that this Christ, born in that manger, came through that umbilical cord, delivered by Mary, made those stretch marks on Mary, brought those birth pains, came to that trough, was there and went into His suffering life, His atoning death and His resurrection and this One is the One who made everything and when everything was made He had existed forever before it. So press your mind back to the very beginning of everything for He is. That’s the One who comes in the flesh.

Then John says *and the Word was with God.* It is the Greek word *pros* which is translated *with* and means separate from but intimately related to. So here the glory and mystery of the Trinity is unfolding for us. John 1:1 says [1] *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* We see that this God is One yet this God exists in three Persons. The closest description I can give you about this word with is when you meet a lady who is about to have a child (pregnant). When you find out a woman is pregnant then we say like Mary, Mary (or she) is with child. Here is One Person with child but that illustration I just gave about the woman with child doesn’t cover the Trinity but it at least gets you started in the understanding of the togetherness.

The Father and the Son are distinct yet One. Jesus says when you see Me you have seen the Father, yet the Father speaks from heaven and Jesus is being baptized and then the Holy Spirit is being poured out of them. They are three distinct yet One in the God head. In the beginning was the Word, for He is God and now He comes in the flesh and the One who has come in the flesh is with God and that means He is the second Person of the Trinity in intimate everlasting fellowship – Father and the Son.

Then John sums it up for us in the next verse which says [2] *He was in the beginning with God (John 1:2)*. He was in the past, evermore, eternally existent with the Father as One in absolute fellowship and intimacy – three in One and that's who became flesh, very God of very God, the eternal God, and second Person of the Trinity. His distinct calling was to be sent by the Father to come among us as one of us. John 1:14 says [14] *And the Word became flesh...* He was and everlastingly is God. He is distinct from the Father yet one with the Father. He is the God of glory for all eternity and this One who existed before existence existed and brought everything into existence, now became a part of the creation by becoming flesh. He became flesh.

This is important here. This is not referring back to the Old Testament. In the Old Testament we have these appearances of Christ that are called Christophanies – pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. Usually it is denoted by the phrase 'the angel of the Lord.' It is not 'an' angel but 'the' angel of the Lord. He appeared to Abraham and was with Daniel in the Lion's Den. He was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace. He wrestled with Jacob. He was in the burning bush speaking to Moses. He was with Gideon. Those were pre-incarnate appearances of Christ as a man but He was not a man. That is not what this is here.

Here in John 1 it is talking about the Incarnate Christ who becomes not simply like flesh but became flesh. He becomes very man of very man with a true human soul and a true human body. It wasn't a superman body. It was a sin-cursed body. I have your attention, don't I? He didn't have a sin nature because He didn't come from Adam but He did come from Mary, with her infirmities and all of humanity's infirmities. He really suffered. He had a real body like yours. The Gospels explain everything about Jesus except to tell you that He had a real body. Once you get caught up in the appearance it takes away from who He really is and the Bible doesn't tell us those things.

The Bible does tell you He had a real body. Romans and Hebrews explain this and tell us why this is important. Hebrews 2:10, 11 and 14a says [10] *For it was fitting that he (God), for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory (god is going to give His only Son in order to bring many sons to glory), should make the founder (Christ) of their salvation perfect (complete) through suffering (you have to have a true body to suffer).* [11] *For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers.* [14a] *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things...*

The same thing you have He took except without a sin nature but a sin-cursed body. He didn't have a body like Adam's before the fall into sin. Before sin, Adam had no pain, no death because sin had not come so he had a perfect body and the curse of sin had not come which brings pain, sickness and death. The DNA of Mary's egg had brought Him, the Son of God, into the very bodies that had been cursed by sin but with no sin nature and He now partakes of that flesh and blood.

Let's continue in Hebrews 2:14b-18 which says, [14b] ...that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. [16] For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. [17] Therefore he had to be made like his brothers **in every respect**, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

He is telling you why Jesus has to have a sin-cursed body. He has to have it for two reasons. He has to go to a cross and suffer. In His body He bore your sins and your suffering. He had to have a body that could die, could be hurt, inflicted pain and a true human soul that cries out "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" He is truly in soul and body suffering. If He can't suffer He can't save you. When He does save and you come to Him and say "Jesus, my Mediator, I am being tried, tested, I'm hurting, discouraged..." He is able to comfort you because He has been tried and every point just like you and beyond. Therefore He can not only save you at the cross but He can intercede for you, empathize with you and know that which has fallen upon you.

Paul emphasizes this so that we can't miss this as well. Romans 8:1-4 says [1] There is therefore **now** no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death (the law is good but it can't save you for it brings out the sinfulness of your flesh). [3] For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. In other words, He had a body that could suffer to take your condemnation so that now there is no condemnation for you.

Let me get to the takeaway and the conclusion. Who is this King? He is very God and very Man. Jesus Christ is the King, who always has been and who never came to be, who became what He never was yet now and forever will be. I know, I know, Christianity doesn't fit on a bumper sticker but neither does Jesus. What am I saying here? Jesus Christ is the King who always has been. He didn't become the King. He is the King in all eternity. In the beginning of beginning He was there. He began all the beginnings. He always has been. He didn't come to be. He is eternally begotten. He was sent forth eternally from the Father to save us from our sins. He didn't come into existence. He always has been and He didn't come to be. Yet when He came into this world He became what He never was. Twenty one hundred years ago the second Person of the Trinity took upon Himself a real human body and soul which He never had before which He now has and in that soul and with that body He bore our sins, suffered, died and rose again. Now that body is glorified and He now in that body has ascended and in that body He'll come again. One day you can now see God when you couldn't have before.

I don't want to overstate the case but everybody says "I want to see God." You can't see God. If you look upon God you will perish, even the perfect angels are equipped with wings to cover their eyes and wings so they don't land in front of Him. They can't look upon Him. Moses got to see a little bit of His backside and He hid him

with His hand in order for Moses to do that. I believe one day you will see God and I believe it will be the way John did. In Revelation 5 there is weeping and it says “Is anyone worthy to unseal the scroll? No one was worthy. Then an elder said to John “Weep no more. Look, the Lion of Judah is worthy!” John looked and saw the Lion of Judah, the Incarnate Christ risen in a glorified body and he said “I saw the Lamb standing as if slain.”

A couple of weeks ago we read a list of people who were members of Briarwood who knew Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and they went to be with the Lord this past year. We said together “I am the resurrection and the life” those dear brothers and sisters this last year have now been ushered into the presence of the Lion of Judah, standing as if slain. They now see their God. They now behold Him no longer by faith but by sight, for He who had no body prior to twenty one hundred years ago, came in a body to save us and has that glorified body for all eternity. Now you’ll be able to see Him and as you see the Lamb you’ll see just like Thomas did, the marks of your salvation upon Him and you’ll be reminded that He has loved you and loosed you from your sins. That is who was on the other side of that umbilical cord, in that trough and who grew in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man. That is who was tempted in the wilderness. He is very God of very God and very Man, whom you will see one day.

Who is the King? In one Person all of the attributes of true deity God has come down. We are united with all the attributes of true humanity, a real body, real soul and a real man. By a Man came death and by a Man comes the resurrection of the dead. Here is Adam but He doesn’t have the seed of Adam. The Holy Spirit places the Seed that is within the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. True humanity comes forth with no sin nature from Adam but a real sin-cursed body and soul that can suffer, that did suffer and in that body He bore our sins and with that body He took our sins away from us. That body has now been glorified.

Philippians 2:5-8 says [5] *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* [6] *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* [7] *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* [8] *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* He didn’t lay aside deity but laid aside the privileges of deity and He came down. He took a body upon Himself to take away our sins. In other words, the incarnation of Jesus is the only case I know of subtraction by addition. He took upon Himself by addition true humanity and laid aside His privileges to save us from our sins.

Why did the King come? Jesus Christ the King made His entrance into the world by way of a manger in humility to make His exodus by way of the cross in triumph to the praise of His Father. The whole reason for the manger is the cross. The explanation of the manger and His humiliation is the cross and the triumph of our salvation. Hebrews 2:12 says [12] *saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”* I, Jesus, have come down to make a people, many sons, and I will tell of Your saving Name to all of my brothers. I will lose not one of them and I will sing your praise.

Why does Jesus the Son of God come into this world to take upon Himself humanity? It is to save us from our sins, to intercede for us and to praise the Father. Do you know what the Son of God was doing in that manger? While everyone was

worshipping Him, He is worshipping the Father. As He in His childhood is growing in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man He is worshipping the Father. When He goes into the wilderness where Satan tempts Him and wants Him to fall down and worship him, He says to Satan "You shall worship the Lord Your God alone." When He is on the cross and they tell Him to come down if He's really the Son of God He says "I'm staying here because I am the Son of God. I'm going to save sinners and worship the Father. Though He (the Father) forsake Me and all your judgment falls upon Me I will save you and I will worship the Father."

That is the Savior who has staked it out for you in eternity. That's the King in the manger we worship whom you one day will see and on the way, like Him, we will cry out "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, hallelujah, praise God, what a Savior!" Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You that this One whom we rejoice has come, is our King and our Savior, very God of very God, very Man of very Man, bearing our infirmities and our sins that we might be saved and become worshippers of the God of glory through the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We would worship the King, in Jesus' Name, Amen.