

The Original Christmas Miracle

12-07-22

2. The Miracle of the Message

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 CK Christmas Spectacular:** December 17th, 1st-5th grade students sing and dance to holiday favorites. **Free shows at 4pm & 7pm.** Hot chocolate and refreshments available after each show.
- B. **Slide2 Christmas Eve + Day services:** Xmas Eve at 3,5,7pm & Christmas Day 10 am (kids in with us, same message)

II. Slide3 Intro: The Miracle of the Message

- A. The main and central action in Scripture is *what God has done, is doing, and will do for us*. **Jesus** is the **revelation** of that **action**.
1. Our main and central task is to **live in responsive obedience** to God's action revealed in **Jesus**.
 2. **But** more often than not **we add on, we supplement, we embellish**.
 3. **The letter to the Hebrews** was written for the *too religious-Christians*, **or for the Jesus-and-Christians**.
 - a) **In Hebrews:** it's *Jesus-and-Angels* (ch.1,2), *or Jesus-and-Moses* (ch.3,4), *or Jesus-and-priesthood* (ch.5-7).
 - (1) **In our time** it's *Jesus-and-politics*, *or Jesus-and-education*, *or even Jesus-and-Buddha* (*or* a blending w/any other religion).
 - b) **This letter** deletes *the hyphens, the add-ons*. The focus becomes clear and sharp again: **God's action in Jesus**.

III. Slide4 THE MIRACLE OF THE MESSAGE (Heb.1:1-3) READ

- A. (1) This epistle starts like a **Rocket** shot into the air. Seatbelt yourself to **a light beam**, traveling at *the speed of light* (186,000 mps) in 8 minutes you scream past **the sun**
1. **In one paragraph we fly past:** the **OT Prophets**, through the **incarnation**, past the **cross**, **then** it **bursts forth** in the **glory** of **Jesus' exaltation**.

a) *No opening greeting, no indication of the writer, no expression of good wishes*

B. **Many ways** - Sometimes God used: *direct oracles, other times Q&A, by allegory's acted out, by preaching, or by signs.*

1. **To Moses** at Sinai in thunder & lightening, **and** w/the voice of thunder. **To Elijah** in a still small voice. **To Ezekiel** by visions. **To Daniel** by dreams. **To Abram** in human form. **To Jacob** as an angel.

a) *This dramatically demonstrated God's loving desire to **communicate** with His people!*¹

2. Since God spoke **so clearly** it caused **men & women** to live on a **higher plane**.

a) **Abraham** had the faith to sacrifice his son. **Moses** to withstand Pharaoh. **David** to go against Goliath. **Daniel** to achieve & maintain integrity in Babylon.

3. Yet Gods communication to man was still *fragmented & lacking ... **until*** He spoke by **His Son**.

C. **Remember**, Judgment is based on *the revelation* you have been exposed to:

I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you Capernaum. Mt.11:24

D. **Slide5 God 1st spoke to man via CREATION**

1. Showing they have **not** been put together by *chance*, **but** were wonderfully made by a **Supreme Architect**.
2. Ps.19:1-4 *NLT* The heavens **proclaim** the glory of God. The skies **display** his craftsmanship. 2 Day after day they continue to **speak**; night after night they make him known. 3 They **speak** without a sound or word; their **voice** is never heard. 4 **Yet their message** has gone throughout the earth, and **their words** to all the world.

E. **Slide6 Next, He spoke through the PROPHETS**

¹ Kent Hughes, Hebrews Vol.1

1. The OT, or the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Tanakh = Acronym [T,N,K/ tav,nun,khahf] for the 3 traditional subdivisions: **Torah** (Pent/instruction); **Nevi'im** (Prophets/min & majr); **Ketuvim** (the writings, poetry).

F. **Slide7a Next, through His SON** (which *all* the NT writers wrote about).

Basically God *wrote Himself* into His own play. (as a director/producer can write themselves into their own production)

1. Like **Mel Gibson** in his *The Passion of The Christ* using his left hand nailing Jesus to the cross. Gibson said, "*I'm first on line for culpability. I did it.*"
2. Before his salvation **C.S.Lewis** thought, *We can't know God anymore than Hamlet or Romeo & Juliet could know Shakespeare.*
 - a) *We can't know God anymore than any character in a play can know its author.*
 - b) Then it occurred to him ... Hamlet or Romeo & Juliet *could* know their creator ... **IF Shakespeare wrote himself into the Play.**
 - c) Then he realized ... this is the phenomena of the bible ... *God wrote Himself into the play, so man could know who God is.*
 - (1) **The Centurion** at the foot of the cross witnessed the Greatest **Scene/Act** in History. He witnessed **God wrote Himself into the play!** ... and he had **front row seats.**
3. **Rembrandt** in 1633 painted *The Raising of the Cross*.
 - a) In the painting several people are seen helping or standing in acceptance, *during the raising* of Christ on the cross. (a religious/political leader, a soldier, a common person, and then, one person who does not fit) a self-portrait of Rembrandt himself in his 16th century clothes & painter's cap.
 - b) Rembrandt is clearly identifying himself with putting Jesus on the cross, and demonstrates his personal need of a Saviour.
4. **Slide7b The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, Thus God wrote Himself into our world.**

G. Many unbelievers have cried out to God wanting to hear from Him & shouted, “*If you’re real say something, or do this or that so I’ll know you out there.*”

1. **But that’s not** how He chose to reveal Himself. He has already spoken in volumes. If you want to **hear Him or from Him, you must listen** the way He wants you to **hear**.
2. **Illust:** Phone in prison cell analogy: Picture visiting a prisoner in Jail. On the other side of the glass he **1st** tries to put his **ear to the window**, then tries placing **a glass to the window**; then tries **reading your lips**. Next he yells, “**I CAN’T HEAR YOU!**” - You finally say ... “**Pick up the phone!!!**” [it’s the **only way & best way** to communicate!]

H. **Slide8a** (2b) The heir of all things – **Sons** are naturally heir of all things.

1. Ps.2:8 **Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations** for Your inheritance, **And the ends of the earth** for Your possession.
2. **Slide8b** What does Jesus inherit? Yes *everything*, **but** listen to **the apex** of his inheritance in Eph.1:18 **that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**.
 - a) Paul was praying that his readers would understand *how highly they are valued* in Christ.
 - b) **Saints do you know that?** Out of all of His inheritance **YOU** are His precious treasure. The kingdom of heaven is like **treasure** hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that **field**.

I. **Slide9a** He created the world -

1. Cambridge physicist **Stephen Hawking**, who as been called “*the most brilliant theoretical physicist since Einstein,*” says in his best-selling book, **A Brief History of Time** that our galaxy is an average-sized spiral galaxy

that looks to other galaxies like a swirl in a pastry role & that is over 100,000 light-yrs across – about 600 trillion miles.²

2. He says, “we now know that **our galaxy** is only one of some hundred thousand million that can be seen using modern telescopes, **each galaxy** itself containing some hundred thousand million stars.”³
3. It is commonly held at the average distance between these hundred thousand million galaxies (each 600 trillion miles across and containing 100,000 million stars) is 3 million light years! On top of that, the work of Edwin Hubble, based on the Doppler effect, has shown that all red-spectrum galaxies are moving away from us – and that nearly all are red. Thus, the universe is **constantly expanding**.⁴
4. Some estimates say that the most distant galaxy is 8 billion light years away – and racing away at 200 million miles an hour.
 - a) The writer of Hebrews simply says, ***He created the world!***

J. Slide9b (3) He is the radiance of the glory of God - What comes to mind when you think of God’s glory?

1. See, Jesus doesn’t simply reflect God’s glory ... He is **part of it**. (shown on the mount of transfiguration)
2. Barclay said, ***The glory of God is not the glory of shattering power, but the glory of suffering love.***

K. Slide9c After making ***purification for sins***, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high -

1. **Story:** On November 26, 2008 a gang of **terrorists** stormed The historic ***Taj Mahal Palace Hotel*** in Mumbai. After the carnage that took over 200 innocent lives ended, one of the guest who had been at the hotel for dinner that night was interviewed by the media, an Indian-born English

² Stephen W. Hawking, A Brief History of Time (New York: Bantam, 1990), p.37.

³ ibid

⁴ ibid pg.38,39

actor. He described how he and his friends were eating dinner when they heard gunshots. Someone grabbed him and pulled him under the table. The assassins came striding through the restaurant shooting at will until everyone, so they thought had been killed. This man however found himself miraculously alive. When the interviewer asked him how it was that everyone at his table and everyone in the room was dead, and yet he was alive. His answer was sobering, "*I suppose it was because I was covered in someone else's blood, and they took me for dead.*"

- a) The perfect metaphor of **God's gift** through **Jesus** for everyone of us.
- b) Do you know His Son? He is **God's** final word ... *There is no other!*

L. Slide10 *The Miracle of Christmas is ... The Miracle of the Message. And The Miracle of the Message is that Jesus didn't just proclaim His Father's Message, He is The Father's Message! Are you listening?*

M.Keywords: God, glory.