

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Christmas Eve
Wednesday December 24, 2025

WELCOME:

- Introductions
- Gameplan: Simple service.
 - A medley of Christmas songs
 - Brief exposition of Jesus' birth and what that means for us today.
 - Visiting / We are a teaching church—We exist to teach you God's Word so that you can experience God verse by verse and share Jesus day by day.
 - Sing a closing Christmas song.
 - Invite you to stay for the fellowship.

PRAY:

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; shout for joy, all you upright in heart. (Psalm 32:11)

MUSIC:



INTRODUCTION:

I'm going to do something a little different tonight.

Rather than reading one Christmas passage from one particular Gospel and explaining and applying that passage to our lives, I'm going to skip around in the Gospels a bit, and we're going to land in the Gospel of John.

As we land there, we're going to focus on the part of Christmas that many of us know, but maybe don't spend a lot of time thinking about this time of year.

Our story tonight begins in Matthew's Gospel. — *verses on screen*

Just as each member in the human body has its own function, every book in the Bible has its own special purpose and function.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar Gospels—synoptic.

These men tell the story of Jesus through different lenses because their purposes for writing and their audiences differ.

I want to begin the Christmas narrative chronologically.

Mark's purpose in his Gospel is to reveal Jesus as God's perfect servant.

Mark begins by showing how Jesus' birth was predicted by two OT prophets, Isaiah and Malachi.

 **Mark 1:1**—*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

 **Mark 1:2**—*As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:*
See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way.

 **Mark 1:3**—**A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:**
Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight!

Mark prepares us to meet John the Baptizer.

John is the one “Crying out in the wilderness”.

Isaiah wrote these words 500-700 years before John was born!

John was Jesus' forerunner—because in ancient times, a forerunner would enter a city to announce that their king was coming.

The city would prepare for the king's arrival—in John's case, he prepared the people by preaching—“**Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!**”

Those who responded would then be baptized as a sign of repentance—repenting of their sins, turning from their old way of life to a new way—God's way.

Repentance is the idea of turning 180 degrees by allowing God to change you.

Moving now to Luke's Gospel—Luke deals with Christ's humanity.

Jesus coming from Heaven and becoming one of us is the very essence of Christmas—Jesus is human!

As Mark tells of Jesus' birth being prophetic, Luke is pragmatic and controversial.

- + **Luke 1:26**—*In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,*
- + **Luke 1:27**—*to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.*
- + **Luke 1:28**—*And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you."*
- + **Luke 1:29**—*But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be.*

Mary's minding her own business—could be as young as 13.

She knows she's not supposed to talk to strangers.

- + **Luke 1:30**—*Then the angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*

Who doesn't want favor with God? The angel told her that twice!



Luke 1:31—Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.



Luke 1:32—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.



Luke 1:33—He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.”

That's all very Jewish terminology—another sermon for another day.

Back to our Christmas theme.

Mary's still afraid and now confused.



Luke 1:34—Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?”



Luke 1:35—The angel replied to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

Mary, being a young Jewish girl, doesn't know who the Holy Spirit is.

She may be familiar with the phrase “Son of God.”

How does Mary respond knowing so little? Wouldn't you want a detailed plan or at least a bit more info?



Luke 1:38—“See, I am the Lord's servant,” said Mary. “May it happen to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

Wow! Talk about your whole world turned upside down—Mary trusts God and obeys Him.

Next, Matthew's primary function is to show that Jesus is the King of kings.

He begins his story in a very different way.

Since Jesus is the King of kings, Matt begins with Jesus' genealogy because kingship depends on bloodlines.

Then, after Matthew verifies that Jesus is from the tribe of Judah, which goes back to Abraham and King David.

Matt begins his Christmas story with conflict. *Drama*

Matthew 1:18—*The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way:*
He doesn't say, "once upon a time."

After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit.

That's quite scandalous.

Can you imagine the conversation that Mary tried to have with Joseph? (Illustrate)

Matthew 1:19—*So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.*

Marriage was taken much more seriously back then than today.

When they got engaged, they were technically married as they spent the next year planning the ceremony.

Matthew 1:20—*But after he had considered these things,*
Imagine the raw emotions that Joseph would have after hearing such an outrageous statement.

Anger, sadness, sleepless nights—tossing and turning.

Can you imagine the sense of betrayal and the sense of loss?

God has disrupted his whole world—yet he doesn't know it.

an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

 **Matthew 1:21**—She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

 **Matthew 1:22**—Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The prophet Isaiah predicted this would happen 500-700 years prior.

 **Matthew 1:23**—See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.”

 **Matthew 1:24**—When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her

 **Matthew 1:25**—but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.

The name “Jesus” means “God Saves.”

So that's the opening storyline from Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

And then there's John.

John's Gospel begins before the conflict with Mary and Joseph, before the interaction between the angel and Mary, and even before the OT prophecies.

And that's where I would like to spend the rest of our time tonight.

 **John 1:1**—*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Big picture: Think of looking at the stars on a clear night.

Now think of the pictures that you've seen of all the different galaxies—maybe you have a telescope or looked through one.

Now imagine pushing through all those galaxies into nothingness.

That's where John takes us...

 **John 1:1**—*In the beginning* was the Word,

What John is saying is, “In the beginning was Jesus.” Because Jesus is “The Word.”

John is obviously pointing us to the opening verse found in Scripture—

 **Genesis 1:1**—*In the beginning... God*

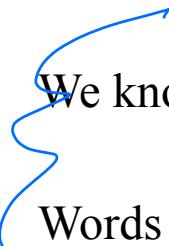
It's hard to comprehend how God can have no beginning.

 **John 1:1**—*In the beginning* was *the Word*,

Why is Jesus called “The Word”?

What is the significance of this title?

The answer has to do with the primary way God has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

 We know that “a word” is a means of communication.

 Words express what’s on someone’s mind.

“The Word of God,” then, is how God has chosen to speak to humans.

It’s through the Bible  where Almighty God speaks “humanese.”

In the OT, God used prophets to speak His Word to His people.

But 2,000 years ago, God sent His own son to speak to us directly.

The thought of Christmas—God reducing Himself and humiliating Himself to become a man is beyond comprehension.

 **John 1:1**—and the Word was with God.

John introduces some theology for us—then the rest of Scripture explains how God is three persons in one.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Each “person” has a different role and purpose in the Trinity.

So Jesus was with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit since eternity past.

 **John 1:1**— and the Word was God.

Here we see Jesus as God the Son.

In other words, Jesus is the face of God for us.

Jesus is the one who took on flesh (incarnated) for us so that we could see who God truly is.

The celebration of Christmas—*The incarnation of Jesus* is the second greatest event in the Bible.

What's the first? Easter / Resurrection Sunday

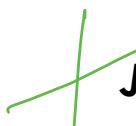
The scandal of Christmas—God being born as a man—leads to the scandal of the empty grave—God dying and being resurrected for our sin.

 **John 1:1**—*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

In the very first sentence, John's words contain a complete statement of Jesus' divinity.

As the Word, Jesus is the visible God.

Jesus is the one who communicates God's holiness and justice through His grace.

 **John 1:2**—*He was with God in the beginning.*

This is somewhat repetitive, but John knows he just blew our world up with verse one!

So he repeats himself to make sure we understand that Jesus is the pre-existent, eternal God who chose to become a man.

 **John 1:3**—*All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.*

John separates the Creator from His creation.

In other words, nothing was created without Jesus—Scripture goes on to teach that everything was also created for Jesus.

 **John 1:4**—*In him was life,*

One reason John separates creation from the Creator is that Jesus, as the Creator, offers life.

Jesus is not only the one who spoke the cosmos into existence, but Jesus is also the One who breathed life into Adam and Eve!

 **John 1:4**—*and that life was the light of men.*

It's pretty amazing how one small candle can light up a room.

Light displaces darkness—darkness doesn't displace light.

Light and darkness are opposites, but they are not opposites of equal power.

Light is stronger than darkness; darkness cannot prevail against it.

Spiritually speaking, God's light—His grace, truth and justice—illuminates our mind with reality.

The reality is that there is much more to life than the physical world we live in.

Without spiritual light, there is no vision, no reality, and no hope for tomorrow.

Without God's grace and truth, life feels like an endless version of the movie “Groundhog Day.”

 **John 1:5**—*That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.*

We all know how dark this world is—we see it every day.

Whether we see people suffering at the grocery store or watch the news, this world is full of darkness.

Here's the true joy of Christmas.

God chose to do something about the darkness. God the Father sent God the Son.

This Jesus is not just a “good, moral religious teacher” that is lumped in with other religious leaders—No, Jesus is God/Divine!

 **John 3:16 NLT**— “*For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*

 **John 3:17 NLT**—*God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.*

It's only through the person and work of Jesus Christ that we are saved and forgiven of our sins.

 **John 3:18 NLT**—“*There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.*

 **John 3:19 NLT**—*And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.*

 **John 3:20 NLT**—*All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.*

John 3:21 NLT—But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

Dear friends, Jesus is the light that dispels darkness.

Jesus goes on to say in John’s Gospel—

John 8:12 NLT—I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

APPLICATION:

Jesus is the light—He is also the way, the truth, and the life.

The way to have an eternal saving relationship with Him is this:

Romans 10:9—If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:10—One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

If you have questions about Christmas or any other spiritual matter. Please stay for a few minutes and begin a conversation on those things.

I hope you have a Merry Christmas tomorrow by remembering that Jesus is not only a special child, but the very Son of God.

Pray

Music

