

Christmas,..... is a story of **contrasts**.....

- A **virgin**gives birth to a baby....
- a group of lower class (despised) shepherds... are the first people to get the news that this long awaited infant **KING** has been born...
- This **Royalty**... is born in a wayside village....in a **feeding trough**....in the barn behind the hotel

This is what the angels who announced His birth said to those shepherds:

Luke 2:11

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is **Christ the Lord**."

This baby boy.....is announced as not only the long awaited King of Israel..... but as the **LORD** Himself.... As the Supreme Ruler over all creation....

The Great I AM who has become flesh...

In our passage today, John is going to unpack for us what it means....that this Christmas child..... is to be LORD of everything..... starting in the various aspects of your life.

Christ the LORD

Remember that, last week, we left off with JTB rejoicing in hearing that Jesus is INCREASING... and that his ministry is decreasing.... and him saying that this must continue.... Now, John (the apostle) interjects his reflections about Jesus....

John 3:31-36

He who comes from above is **above all**. He who is **of the earth** belongs to the earth and **speaks in an earthly way**. He who comes from heaven is **above all**.

He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that **God is true**. For he whom God has sent **utters the words of God**, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

The Father **loves** the Son and has **given all things into his hand**. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not **obey** the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

Christ the LORD

1. Is the Man of Heaven

At the Republican debate this past week, each candidate tried to convince the viewers as to why their experience and particular perspective best qualifies them to be the Republican nominee. Some cited their business and economic experience... others their proven track record in state governmentwhile others hope voters will prefer someone from among the people.....

In our passage today... God is out to show us that Jesus is uniquely the Christ.... because He has come from **heaven**.... **not** the earth..

His authority and His **perspective**.... are **not** EARTHLY..... He is not speaking as one who simply looks out **laterally** on the landscape of history...

He is not speaking to us as our **PEER**.....

He comes and speaks as the **Author of Life** itself... the Creator of all things.....as the Word of God ...now... made flesh...

He is the Man **of** Heaven...

John 3:31

"He who **comes** from above is above **all**. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all."

Jesus is not from around here..... He is not from the south..... not from the north....or the west.... In fact, Jesus is not even American....

He is the Man from Heaven.....

He is above all.... because His origin is **DIVINE**.....

Of all the men ever to walk on the earth.... Jesus alone... was conceived of the Holy Spirit...

Remember what the angel told Mary when she asked **how** she was going to give birth if she was a virgin...

Luke 1:35

"And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

Christ the LORD is God in human flesh.... His **origin** is heaven... not earth.

So when Jesus speaks..... he has a heavenly accent.... not an earthly one..... His experiences and His contexts are all HOLY.....and TRUE....

When we lived in **Swaziland** as short term missionaries, we used to look forward to volunteers coming over for mission trips from the States. I just loved hearing their accents as it reminded me of home.....

In the same way.... the Voice of God speaks through Jesus Christ.... in **heavenly tones**....and heavenly insights.....because He is the Man of Heaven...

Day by Day.....You and I... listen to a lot of voices.

The voice of **sin** is never far away... we listen to the voice of **well meaning friends**.... the voice of TV personalities..... the voice and opinions of the whole world on the internet....

But there is **one voice** that is **ABOVE all**...of those.. One who's Words are SUPREME and **unrivaled**.....

His perspective is without parallelbecause He is the voice of heaven.

if we believe that... **Every** other voice.... must be **subjugated** to Histhat means.... every other voice in your life must **be subject to**.... must bow down to.... must fall in line UNDER..... the truth of His voice....

His VOICE trumps all others....

Fill in the blank.....of whoever you regard (in a practical way) to be the most highly **influential** VOICE in your life?.....

- Whose opinion.....whose remarks shape your thinking and your behavior the most?

Maybe it is a close friend.....maybe a teacher.....or even a man or woman of God.....

Whoever they are..... their insights and his perspective....are still **earth bound**.....

And even when an earthly opinion is CORRECT.... it is still **LIMITED** in scope....

All of man's understanding is **FINITE**.....

Illumined only to the degree of revelation which God grants him.....

Jesus, by contrast sees everything through an **eternal lens**.... He is **unlimited** in His understanding.....and (best of all) He speaks as an eyewitness of heavenly realities.

He is the Man of Heaven..... He is Jesus Christ.... the LORD!

Philippians 2:6-11

"who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **made himself nothing**, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him **the name that is above every name**, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is **Lord**, to the glory of God the Father."

To **believe** this good news.....

That God Himself would so love the world.... that He would take on flesh.....

And become not merely our King..... but our **SERVANT**..... serving us... ultimately.... by offering up His own human life on the cross.... DYING in our stead.....

So that.... after our sin was atoned for.....by His sacrifice.....

God could be glorified by RAISING Him up from the dead.... and EXALTING Him as LORD over all!

To confess that this JESUS is LORD.... not only of the cosmos... but of your life.....(where you want to obey His direction)

.....gives evidence that you who were once.....merely a son of Adam..... born in sin.....

Have now been BORN from **Above!**..... born from **on high**..... through the WORD of this Man of Heaven....

Listen to the insight Paul gives us:

1 Corinthians 15:48-49

"As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is **the man of heaven**, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

So... if that is your heritage..... if you have been born from above..... and are now part of the Kingdom **of HEAVEN**.....

- WHY is it that you keep on prioritizing and **heeding the voices of earth?**

Why is it that the words and OPINIONS of people.....matter **MORE** than those of the Man of Heaven?

Good news.... there is grace from heaven.... to **repent** of that right now..... and open your heart and mind exclusively to the Word of Christ....

To ask for grace to be intentional about **forcing** the voices from below to SUBMIT to..... making them all bow down to the ONE VOICE who is above ALL.

Here's Why....

Christ the LORD

2. Reveals **GOD** through His Words

The Discovery Channel produced a documentary a few years ago containing the testimonies of the astronauts from **Apollo 13**; In the film they describe what it was like to walk on the surface of the moon. One said " I felt as if I was standing on **God's front porch.**" Another said that (as they looked back towards the earth)... the earth looked so small and fragile out there..... delicately perched upon the backdrop of space....

You may have seen the black and white film taken of them walking on the moon..... I remember watching it live.... as a 7 year old boy.....

But their **TESTIMONY** of what it was like.... from someone who has actually been there... is even more compelling...than the film...

It is most likely that you and I will never set foot on the moon..... but we can know something of what it was like through the testimony of another human being....

In the same way.... No man has ever seen GOD..... but the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to know Him through the WORDS and true **testimony of His Son**....(even while we are still here on earth).

Jesus is our **EYEWITNESS** to the reality of Who God is....

John 3:32-33

"He **bears witness** to what he has seen and heard, yet **no one receives his testimony.** Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is **true.**

Try to ponder the reality.... that **EVERY single thing** that has ever occurred..... even before the dawn of time..... until now..... JESUS has personally SEEN and HEARD....first hand..

Paul said that when the Lord took him (whether in the body or out of the body – he does not know) into the **3rd** heaven..... that "he heard things that cannot be told, which **man** may not utter."

Paul only had a brief **GLIMPSE**.....of heaven.....

Jesus has SEEN the face of God the Father..... which no man can see.....

And in coming to earth..... He has **EXPLAINED** Him to us....

Jesus said in...

John 14:9b

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father...."

None of the unbelievers whom you will be around this Christmas.... have ever seen God. But if, by faith in His Word.... you have come to know Jesus.....

If you have **RECEIVED** Him as the EYEWITNESS of heaven..... and are following Him as LORD....

Then you are giving your **ENDORSEMENT** that God (as revealed in His Word) is **TRUE**....

By believing you become a living **stamp of approval**.... on the gospel....

That is what it means to "set your seal to this, that God is TRUE."

You are saying that Jesus' testimony reveals to us what God is really like.....

I can **VERIFY**..... that you don't have to come up with some politically correct ...cosmopolitan god.... who is a blend of all the world religions....

The Lord Jesus Christ....is the ONE WAY to see the One True God.

.....and people can come to know Him through believing **THIS** Word.... (Bible)

John 3:34

"For he whom God has sent **utters the words of God**, for he gives the Spirit without measure."

In the Word becoming flesh..... Jesus lived the perfect human life by faith in the POWER of the Holy Spirit..... .

God gave Him the Spirit **WITHOUT MEASURE**.....

The Spirit came and REMAINED on Him..... (John said at His baptism)...

Result we see of that:

Being full of the Spirit.....(by faith) JESUS **always** DID what was pleasing to the Father..... He **ALWAYS** spoke just what the Father had taught Him... .. He never once walked or spoke according to the flesh.....

Because Jesus was **not** a sinner.....

As He shared a revelation from God He was NOT seeing through a **glass darkly** (like you or I)... He spoke of what He **KNEW** objectively....from firsthand knowledge...

He uttered the **very words of GOD**....

He never felt led by the Spirit as some **subjective** impression (like you or I)...

Example: On Thursday.... I had this vivid impression that I needed to call my old pastor (that I had in Texas).... he meant a lot to me..... but I could not explain why I suddenly felt so strongly that I wanted to talk to him.....

I found out later that he was undergoing a major 7 hour surgery during that time.....

Was that the Holy Spirit?..... I would say probably..... because I have had similar promptings....in the past that proved to be valid.....

So have some of you.....

But it is still a **SUBJECTIVE** impression..... because I see LIFE through a glass darkly..... I have a deposit of the Holy Spirit... according to the measure of God's choosing.....

God gave JESUS... the Spirit **without** MEASURE.....

Mind you.... He still needed to go away and PRAY..... and seek the LORD.....

He was still TEMPTED by Satan (in every way – just like we are)....

But He never once **grieved** the Spirit..... Never once **quenched** Him..... by imposing his own human desires on top of the LORD's.....

God gave Him the Spirit in unlimited supply.....

God gave Him **Power**... even to raise the deadto **heal**.... to cast out demons.....to prophesy.....

as the Spirit of God led Him to bring glory to the Father in various contexts....

Through the **whole of His life** and the individual **sayings** from His lips.... He **perfectly revealed** the GLORY of God to us....as He walked by faith... empowered by the Holy Spirit....

CONTRAST that..... to all other people..... even people in the Bible...

Think about believers in the **Old Testament**..... God often spoke to His people through the PROPHETS....

The Holy Spirit came upon them..... for specific **DEGREES**... and for certain **DURATIONS**.....He carried them along.... directing their words and actions.... in **direct proportion** to the amount of revelation God wanted to convey through them.

....

2 Peter 1:21

"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were **carried along** by the Holy Spirit."

Think of King **Saul**... who prophesied briefly..... verses Samuel or Isaiah who did so over the course of several decades.....

God apportioned a measure of His Spirit in accordance to the **amount of revelation** He wanted to convey through an individual....

The Judges were given WISDOM to make decisions.... in the power of the Spirit....

We have a **SONG** from Deborah..... or a LAMENT from Jeremiah..... many prophesies from Isaiah.....

Moses had POWER according to the grace given to him..... to do miracles....in liberating Israel.....

- All in LIMITED supply....

JESUS....is in a whole different category..... He is the **final** revelation of the Word of God.....the **COMPLETE revealer** of Who God is.....Through HIS Words.....

When **we** are saved....we are transferred out of the domain of darkness....and immersed into the Person of Christ.... BY the Holy Spirit....

By faith in Christ...we AIM to walk according to the Spirit.....

We pray that God will FILL us with His Spirit.... as we ingest His Word.... and seek to live according to what pleases Him.....

As we seek POWER to be used of God in serving the church..... in speaking the gospel to the lost.....

But we have a **MEASURE** of the Holy Spirit according to the gift which God sovereignly ordained for us to have.....

In accordance with the **WORK**... He has called us to do....

Ephesians 4:4-7

"There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us **according to the measure of Christ's gift.**"

God commands us to be FULL of the Holy Spirit..... and even in those periods of time when we are..... (because we ourselves are LIMITED)... we have the HS in a carefully proportioned SUPPLY.....

God CAN and does speak through us.....through His gifts.....but

JESUS is unlike us in **this** way..... He has the HOLY SPIRIT **without measure**..... so **ALL** His Words.... are the VERY words of God....

Christ the LORD

3. Exercises Sovereign Rule

Because men are sinners.... anytime one man exercises absolute rule over a people or a nation.... or even over a religious organization..... you are asking for trouble.... men need accountability.....

But God has given Jesus absolute authority over ALL of creation.

John 3:35-36

"The Father loves the Son and has given **all things** into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

God has chosen to delight in all things being **summed up** in His Son. He has made Him LORD over every entity.... every spirit.... every person within creation....

We don't yet SEE that **now**..... because most of mankind seems to be continuing to do whatever is right in THEIR own eyes....

And God is giving us space to REPENT.....

But one day we WILL see the reality of it with our eyes.....

Until then.... we BELIEVE that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Christ...

Here is how Paul says it, and follow the progression of authority....

Ephesians 1:19c-23

"according to the working of His great might, that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **far above all rule** and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

Jesus is RIGHT now.... upholding all things by the Word of His Power..... He is RIGHT NOW.... defeating his enemies through the spread of the gospel.....

He is squashing demonic strongholds in people's lives through the power of His Spirit...

As He saves them THROUGH the preaching of the gospel..... He brings them under His RULE in the church.....

Lest you misunderstand..... I do not mean (by that) that you come under the RULE of a pastor.....or pastors.....

But JESUS brings you under His RULE as expressed in His Word..... He is our HEAD.... our Savior.... our Shepherd.... our KING...

He is the Sovereign LORD..... He is God Over **All**....

And the church is designed to DISPLAY the goodness of His rule as we voluntarily gather together under His Leadership.....

He is RIGHT NOW (at this moment...in this room) seeking to expand the display of His Sovereign goodness....by gathering more sheep into His fold....

As the good news that has formed the heart of **John 3**.... is proclaimed....

that God so loved the world that He sent His only Son..... to rescue us from SIN'S **DESTRUCTION**.... from the WRATH of God that is coming upon the whole world....

So that whoever **BELIEVES** this good news..... enough to begin to **OBEY** the Son....demonstrates.... that he or she has received the gift of eternal life.....

It is nothing short of a **perversion** of the gospel..... to tell someone that they can RECEIVE Jesus as Savior now..... and think about beginning to leave their sin behind later..... when they feel like it.....

A call to RECEIVE His Love.... is likewise a call to begin demonstrating that His Love now abides in you by Keeping His Commandments,,,,,

The Sovereign Ruler of all Creation humbled Himself.... and obeyed His Father..... enough to take up a CROSS.... and die in your place.....

If anyone CLAIMS to belong to Jesus.... let Him also be willing to take up His cross..... (by faith) to count as having DIED with Jesus to their sinful ways.....

So that the everlasting GOODNESS of grace.... can be SEEN through their lives... as a testimony to who Jesus really is...

The Sovereign LORD of Heaven and Earth.....

But for those who **refuse** to OBEY..... for those who continue to prefer running their own life without JESUS as their RULER.....

They have not....and will not.... escape the PUNISHMENT of God's wrath

which they are already getting a foretaste of in the misery of this sin cursed world.

Otherwise.... unless you believe that Jesus is **the CHRIST**.... **you will die** in your sins....

And experience the wrath of God forever in hell..... apart from the goodness of the loving kindness of the LORD.

Good News!

It is NOT too late..... repent today... and believe the gospel.....

Receive JESUS as Who He is..... your Savior and the KING to whom you owe **obedience**.