

Seasonal Messages

Dan Snaddon

Used by permission, as published on plymouthbrethren.org. More of his ministry at dansnaddon.org.

Also online at <https://plymouthbrethren.org/series/12019>

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

Christmas Message

Luke 2:1-20

Every man or woman enters life as the natural climax of certain biological processes. They enter the world as a new being—their birth is the beginning of their existence. Man's birth marks his origin. In contrast to this, Christ's birth at Bethlehem was not His origin, but rather His incarnation. Jesus Christ knew neither "beginning of days nor end of life" (see Hebrews 7:3).

The book of Proverbs gives us an illuminating glimpse of the relationships between the eternal Father and the eternal Son. Proverbs 8:22-31 says, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way. When He prepared the heavens I was there. When He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

Isaiah also had this concept when he wrote, "Unto us a child is born [...]" speaking of His humanity and "Unto us a Son is given [...]" speaking of His deity. As a Son, God gave him to the world, and as a child He was born into the world. "Coming into the N.T., John puts the preexistence of Christ beyond all doubt." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Then, John, in the same chapter describes the incarnation in one phrase, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This statement is overwhelming.

Our Lord came from the ivory palaces into a world of woe. He came from infinite distance, into finite nearness. He came from the unknowable to the

knowable. He came in a body of flesh. He came as the Infinite Creator—God of the Universe, who made the stars, constellations and galaxies. He laid aside His own unique glories, and came down to the lowest depth to save us. He came down past all the greatest stars and blazing planets and stepped into the infinitesimally small planet called earth. On earth this great God of all eternity took up His abode in a microscopic human cell, was planted in the womb of a virgin of a Jewish nation, and dwelt under her pulsating heart for nine months. At the appointed time, He was born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

When our Lord came into the world, He passed the palaces and the kingly court; there was no room for Him in the Inn. He was born so low that no baby has ever been born lower. The Virgin brought forth her first-born Son alone, with the exception of cattle and sheep. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. Mary did all of these things by herself—there was no one to help her.

Had Jesus been an ordinary baby, these conditions would have been terrible. How tragic and how profound this is when we consider that this baby was none other than the Son of God—God manifest in flesh. On that first Christmas, this was God’s message of salvation to a despairing world, “Unto you is born a Savior who is Christ the Lord!” Watch this Savior at work in John’s gospel.

John wrote his gospel so that those who read it might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name” (see John 20:21). John’s gospel is written around two sets of

miracles. One set is in the realm of words and the other is in the realm of works. The seven miracles in the realm of works were carefully chosen by John to show that Jesus was the Son of God. Five of the seven miracles are shared in the gospel of John alone, while two are also described in the other synoptic gospels.

1. Jesus turned water into wine - John 2.
2. He healed the nobleman's son - John 4.
3. He healed an impotent man at Bethesda - John 5.
4. He feeds five thousand - John 6.
5. He walks on water - John 6.
6. He heals a blind man - John 8.
7. He raised Lazarus - John 11.

There are also seven miracles in the realm of words. In His pre-incarnate appearance at the burning bush, He was declared to be the great "I AM." As he walked among men for the last 3 ½ years of His life, He said that He was the great "I AM."

1. I am the Bread of Life - John 6:35. He fed 5,000; He also was the Bread from heaven.
2. I am the Light of the world - John 9:5. He gave the blind man his sight.
3. I am the door - John 10:9.
4. I am the good shepherd - John 10:11.
5. I am the resurrection and the life - John 11:25.
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life - John 14:6.
7. I am the true vine - John 15:1.

No person who has ever lived could truthfully make such tremendous claims. John says that this One called Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, the Man of Sychar's well, the Stranger of Galilee, and He whom ultimately became the Man of Calvary, is indeed the Christ - the Son of God. There was no room for Him in the Inn. There was no room for Him in the world of His day. By and large there is no room for Him in the 20th Century world.

Have you any room for Jesus?

He who bore your load of sin?

As He knocks and asks admission,

Sinner, will you let Him in?

Room for pleasure, room for business, but for Christ the crucified; not a place that He can enter, In your heart for which He died.

Room for Jesus, King of glory, swing the heart door wildly open, hasty now His word obey, bid Him enter while you may.

Christmas Message - 1982

Luke 2:1-20

The Message of Christmas

Let us begin by asking three questions:

1. What does Christmas mean to the world?

To most it is a meaningless holiday. It is simply a time for family reunion, a time of revelry, and a license for intemperance and indulgence. It has been commercialized beyond recognition. Santa Clause has replaced the Savior.

2. What does Christmas mean to Christendom?

Christendom has tried to make Christmas beautiful. It has created sacred symbols and nativity scenes. It has produced some beautiful carols, cantatas, and oratorios. The forgotten and unwanted Christ is not concentrated on. Despite all this dressing up, many so-called Christians have missed the mark. They fail to see the Christ, the Savior of the world.

3. What does Christmas mean to you?

Is it Christmas trees, toys, tinsel, lights, and gifts? Do we really see the Christ Child, God manifest in flesh? Do we thank God for His unspeakable gift? Are we beyond words at how indescribable, unbelievable, and stunning He is? Do we bow down in worship and present our gifts to Him? In the light of the glory of the greatest of all gifts, should not we, in return, present our body to Him as an act of worship?

The true meaning and message of Christmas is, "Unto you is born this day a Savior Who is Christ the Lord." God had not spoken to the world for 400 years, and then in one act He emptied heaven and revealed to earth the unfathomable fountains of His love. John tersely describes the event of the incarnation in John 1:14 saying, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This statement is overwhelming.

Our Lord came from ivory palaces into this world of woe. He came from infinite distance into finite nearness. He came from the unknowable to the knowable. He who was in the form of God took upon Himself the form of a servant. He came as the infinite Creator, the God of the universe who made the stars, sun, moon, constellations, and galaxies.

He laid aside His glories; He veiled them in human flesh, and stepped down to the lowest depth to save us. He came down past all the greater stars and blazing planets and stopped on an infinitely small planet called earth. On earth, this great God of eternity took up His abode in a microscopic cell. The Holy Spirit planted Himself in the virgin womb of a fair Jewish maiden, dwelt under her pulsating heart for nine months, developing under perfectly natural biological processes.

Finally, He was born in a stable and cradled in a manger. He was Emmanuel - incarnate Deity. Think of the paths that surrounded this event:

1. "She" brought forth her first-born son.
2. "She" wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.
3. "She" laid Him in a manger.

Mary did all these things herself—there was no one to help. This is most profound when we consider that the baby was born, God manifest in the flesh. 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...” while 2 Corinthians 9:15 says, “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.” Both of these in a way reference the profound birth of Christ.

Let us now look past all the things with which we have beclouded Christ’s birth and look at the true meaning of Christmas. At this time God expressed His great love for us. He gave His Son, the Man of history, Deity, and destined Him to rule the world. This love is expressed in John 3:16 and in Romans 5:8, which says, “But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

After His birth, the Babe of Bethlehem became the Man of Sychas, the Stranger of Galilee, and finally, the Man of Calvary. The Lord’s beautiful life was terminated abruptly in a scene of unparalleled brutality. He was cut off from the land of the living.

The Unwanted Christ

John 1:11, 12 “He came unto His own.”

Isaiah 53 “He was despised and rejected of men.”

Despite the many prophecies of Christ’s birth, there were only eight people who recognized Him and welcomed Him to earth. His birth hardly caused a ripple on the waters of seething humanity. Today, He is still unwanted by the masses. Are you among this crowd?

The Challenge of Christmas

What do you think of Christ?

What will you do with Christ?

Is there room in your heart for Him?

A lady lived in a cottage not far from Balmoral Castle. One day she had words with a neighbor and locked herself in. There was a gentle knock on the door, but she would not open the door. After a short pause, there was another knock, but she was determined not to open the door. She was almost beside herself the next day when a neighbor told her that the Queen had stood at her door and knocked for admission and she had refused to let her in.

Someone greater than all the kings and queens of the world is knocking at your heart's door now; it is Jesus Himself. The King of kings and Lord of lords is asking permission to come into your life. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." What shall your answer be? Do not be one who says, "I'll just take Him home with me, that is what I'll do with Jesus."

When God became incarnate in Jesus and lived among men, He did wonderful things. He healed the lepers, He gave sight to the blind, He made the lame to walk, the dumb to talk. He also raised the dead. To sinners in every strata of society, He offered salvation. When we review the inspired record of His lowly birth, sinless life, vicarious death, glorious resurrection, and His ascension, we must exclaim, "He is wonderful!"

He stands supreme over all men. God thought He was wonderful—His commendation from heaven. The angels thought He was wonderful—they lit the heavens with the glory of God. The shepherds thought He was wonderful—they rejoiced when they saw Him. He is wonderful for He has the words of eternal life. "To whom can we go for

thou hast the words of eternal life?" Do you think He is wonderful?

The Mighty God - See Him opening the windows of heaven and breaking the great fountains of the deep and flooding the world, destroying the human race, and at the same time saving those who were in the ark. See Him standing as the great creator, the upholder and sustainer of all things and saying, "While the earth remaineth, there will be seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." See Him stand on the earth again, confronting the united armies of the world as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Never in human history had such might been assembled. Their massive destructive power was aimed at Him.

Calmly He will speak, and His words will go forth like a great sword. Suddenly the flesh of His enemies will begin to dissolve, their eyes will melt in their head and their tongues will waste away in their mouths. "The Mighty God:" John saw Him in all His glory and fell as dead. He also saw Him on the Great White Throne.

Note the contrast between His birth and death:

- He entered the world through a stable—He left via a cross.
- At His birth the heavens were lit with the glory of God—at His death the sun was blackened and darkness covered the earth.
- At His birth the angels sang—at His death the earth quaked, the rocks were split.

- At His birth His mother comforted Him, she gave birth, she wrapped Him in baby clothes, she laid Him in a manger—at His death His Father abandoned Him.

- At His birth Mary and Joseph protected Him—at His death the wrath of God enveloped Him.

Christmas Message - 1990

Matthew 1:18-25, Matthew 2:1, 12

The first Christmas was the sweetest, greatest, most profound, and stupendous event ever recorded. There are great days mentioned in the Bible, but none of them can ever compare with the birth of Christ. Some of these great days and events consist of: The Passover, the Red Sea, the water pouring from the rock, the crossing of the Jordan, the manna, and the day the sun and moon were stopped. These all pale in significance in comparison to the day God came to earth as a babe of Bethlehem. The world has mutilated Christ's birthday and it has become a time for family reunion, a time of revelry, and a license for intemperance and indulgence. It has been commercialized beyond recognition.

Saint Nicklaus has replaced the Savior and Santa Claus has replaced the Christ. He is the unwanted Christ, the forgotten Christ. He is despised and rejected of men. Christendom has tried to make Christmas beautiful. It has created sacred symbols, nativity scenes and made up lovely carols. Despite all this dressing up, Christendom has missed the mark. Most see the extraneous things and fail to see Christ, the Savior of the world. [Tell the story of the Last Supper and Leonardo da Vinci.]

The Unwanted Christ

Who was this babe that was born at Christmas? "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Isaiah said that He was wonderful, distinguished, excelling all others, unique, unparalleled, the mighty God, the fullness of the

Godhead, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. He is the Lord of glory, the Alpha and Omega, the Son of the Highest, the Savior of the world, Emmanuel, the Light of the world, and the Life of men. This is what God thought of His Son.

What do you think of Christ?

The two responses are (1) Away with him, or (2) I will receive Him as my personal Savior. God had not spoken to the world for 400 years. Then, in one act, He emptied heaven and revealed the unfathomable fountains of His love to earth. "Unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

We opened this section of our talk by asking the question, "Who was this babe?" To supplement the biblical evidence, the poet wrote of "the incomparable Christ." He is the Man of eternity, the Man of History, the Man of Deity, and the Man of Destiny, who is destined to rule the world. He is "a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Thirty years after His birth, the babe of Bethlehem, the Man of Sychars' well, and the stranger of Galilee became the Man of Calvary.

The Lord's beautiful life ended abruptly in a scene of unparalleled brutality. [Contrast babyhood and manhood.] The true meaning of Christmas is that the love of God was revealed to mankind (see John 3:16, Romans 5:8). The incarnation and the redemptive work of Christ should never be separated.

John 3:17 - "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might have life."

2 Corinthians 5:9 - "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

Matthew 1:21 - "Thou shalt call His name Jesus."

The Message of Christmas

Luke 2:11 - "For unto us is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

Luke 19:10 - "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Acts 4:12 - "Neither is there salvation in any other [...]"

John 1:12 - "To as many as received Him, to them gave he the power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

We should come like the wise men, bringing our gifts and worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. "O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord." Christ died for our sins. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and was buried and was raised again on the third day according to the Scriptures. [Give the plan of salvation at this point.]

Our Lord has now ascended and sits in glory at God's right hand. He has promised to come again. First, He will come to rapture the Church. Then, He will come to earth a second time. At this time, "The heavens shall glow in splendor, but brighter far than they; the saints shall shine in glory, as Christ shall then array. But the beauty of the Savior shall dazzle every eye, in the crowning day that's coming by and by." "He was born that man no more may die, born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth." May we sing, "Glory to the new-born King."

An Illustration for the Incomparable Christ

Leonardo da Vinci was a wonderful painter, and one of his masterpieces was "The Last Supper," which has been called the most perfect composition in the history of painting in all ages. It was painted on a convent wall, and the artist put all his talent into it. Even the cup the Lord used was perfect, an ornate golden vessel richly set with jewels. When he completed the picture he admitted a few friends to see it.

"What a wonderful cup!" they exclaimed. "How it sparkles, such a cup was never painted before." The painter immediately splashed some dark paint over the glittering chalice and made it look like an ordinary vessel. Da Vinci said, "The glory of Christ, and not the beauty of the cup, must be the central object of the painting."

Mother's Day 1981

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 1:3-5, 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Motherhood is one of the most sacred of privileges. With privileges there comes accompanying responsibility, because motherhood not only involves the present, but also embraces the future. Henry Ward Beecher once wrote, "The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom." Abraham Lincoln wrote, "All that I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother." Napoleon Bonaparte said, "The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother."

Psychologists say that the first seven years of a child's life are the most important to the development of character. These are the years when the child comes mostly under the influence of the mother. To be a mother and raise a child for God is one of the highest privileges given in God's economy. The Bible says, "Train up (instruct, dedicate) a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it when he is old" (see Proverbs 22:6).

A really good mother is unusual in that her love for her child goes far beyond the call of duty. A mother is the light in the window and the door that is never locked, the one who is ready and willing to welcome home the prodigal. It is not the first time that a mother has given her life for her child. In fact, every mother lays her life on the line to give birth to a child. Consider the love of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the covenanters of Scotland, and the mothers of Greenock. A mother's love can be measured because it is expressed for her own flesh and blood that she conceived and nurtured in her own body.

Let us for a moment compare this with Divine love.

Romans 5:6-8 “For when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet on occasion, for a good man some would even dare to die. But God lavished His unmitigated love on us, in that, while we were yet sinners, and enemies, Christ died for us.”

God’s love is incomparable in that Christ died for His enemies. Divine love is incomprehensible, unfathomable, and immeasurable; it is beyond all human thought. This is love that no tongue can teach—love that no thought can reach—no love like this—God is its blessed source—death never can stop its course, nothing can stay its force—matchless it is.

No higher honor could be conferred upon a human being. No greater responsibility could be given a human being. Charles Dickens once wrote: “The virtues of the mother shall be visited upon their children as well as the sins of the father.” Every mother should be acquainted with the words of the Egyptian Princess, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages” (see Exodus 2:9).

God has entrusted that little one to your care, dear mother. It is your responsibility to train it and nurse it for God. We are accountable to Him—we will receive our wages. If the mother’s heart is the child’s schoolroom, we are chargeable to God for our child’s moral and spiritual welfare.

“Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Mephibesheth's nurse let him fall and was lame for life. On the other hand, consider Hannah, the mother of Samuel. She gave him to God before he was born. After he was born, she nursed and trained him for God. Later as a young man, God took him unto His service and he became one of the greatest prophets Israel ever had.

Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Mother, do you teach your children the great truths of the Gospel? Let me ask you, mother, at this time, "Do you know the Lord as Savior?" If you do not know Christ, how will you be able to teach them about Christ? [Explain the ABC's of the Gospel at this point.]

Mother, that little warm bundle of flesh that snuggles in your arms, that little one who skips so blithely at your side, that little dynamo that never seems to run down, that little one with the cubby cheeks and those big, round, trusting eyes, has been given to you by God, to nurse for Him. Paul says in 2 Timothy, "I thank God for the genuine faith in you." This speaks of grandmothers and mothers. Timothy was actually a third generation believer. Paul attributes Timothy's faith to the teaching of his grandmother and mother (2 Timothy 3:15). What was the result of their devotion to this child? A man of God.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." Lord Shafterbury said, "Give me a generation of Christian mothers and I will undertake to change the face of society." I urge each believing mother to teach their child about Christ. Do not leave it to the Sunday School teacher. The great need for this is in view of educational standards. Teach them their need of a Savior. Teach them that He is the Guide through all of

life. Teach them a faith by which to live. The faith that lives in you will be transmitted to your child. Urge salvation upon everyone, but especially on mothers. Romans 10:9 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raise him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Thanksgiving 1978

Thanksgiving in its original concept was a time when the early settlers got together for the purpose of giving thanks and praise to God. The occasion was the gathering in of the harvest. This was accompanied with rejoicing and feasting. The first American Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1621. The winter of 1620 had been disastrous; nearly half of the members of the colony had died. New hope came in the summer of '21. The corn harvest was plentiful and Governor William Bradford decreed that a three-day feast would be held. From this time until 1863, no special day was set aside for Thanksgiving.

In 1863 President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November as "a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father." For 75 years afterwards, Thanksgiving was celebrated on the last Thursday of November. In 1939, President Roosevelt, in order to extend the shopping time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, proclaimed Thanksgiving Day to be celebrated a week earlier. In 1941, by an act of Congress, Thanksgiving Day was made a legal holiday.

Nations down through the millenniums have had their own thanksgiving days. Israel's first thanksgiving was held on the wilderness side of the Red Sea (see Exodus 15). They had experienced redemption equally as great as their deliverance from Egypt. They had witnessed an unparalleled display of the awesome glory and power of God. [Describe the action.] "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hands of the Egyptians. And Israel saw the great work which God did." (Exodus 14:30-31)

As they appreciated their deliverance, thanksgiving welled up in their hearts and found expression in song.

In Ezra 3, we have another thanksgiving. Thanksgiving seems to be generated after God moves in a crisis. Sons of the Jews had returned to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity. They had built an altar. Then they had laid the foundations of the Temple. In verse 11 we see that they sang together and praised the Lord. They gave “thanks unto the Lord because He is good and because His mercy endureth forever.”

We should be thankful for the land in which we live. [Describe our many blessings – see also Deuteronomy 8:7-19.] We should be thankful that the Lord came to Bethlehem. Luke 2:12 “Fear not, for behold I bring you great tidings of great joy—which shall be to all people. Unto you is born a Savior.” We should be thankful for our Savior, salvation, and our secure future. Consider the social changes that have been brought about, such as the emancipation of women.

In conclusion we should be thankful for the following:

1. For the abundance of the harvest and for our godly heritage. God bless and God save America.
2. For our perfect salvation, past, present and future (blood, powers, and experience).
3. For our freedom to worship.
4. For our victory in Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57 - “Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:14 - “But thanks be unto God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.”)
5. For His unspeakable and indescribable gift (see 2 Corinthians 9:15).

6. For our spiritual blessings. He has chosen us, predestined us, and made us accepted in the beloved. He has redeemed us. He forgave our sins and has made known unto us the mystery of His will. In Christ, we have obtained an eternal inheritance; the Spirit has sealed us eternally.