

† I preach in God's name for God's people. Let my words be from God and for God's people. **Amen**

Good morning.

**I. ON CHRISTMAS EVE WE HEARD** that the baby Jesus was announced in splendor by the angels to the shepherds.

Even from birth Jesus is King of the Cosmos, heralded by the angels, visited by the shepherds, looked upon by his parents, surrounded by the animals.

Jesus introduces a different kind of kingdom, a superior political order, an everlasting kingdom. And even, from birth, Jesus isn't a docile little baby. Even in his infancy, even in this incredibly humble state, note what baby Jesus accomplishes. He gathers the sheep and animals to him; he beckons the angels announce him — first the singular angel, and then the whole heavenly host; and then he gathers the shepherds to him. What does this tell us already about this baby Jesus? That he is already the Good Shepherd, that from birth he is the Shepherd of Shepherds. And there, lying in the manger, the feeding trough of animals, he signals that he has come to feed his sheep — to feed you and me in his heavenly supper.

What a contrast in mission and purpose from Caesar and his census — seeking out money and military might — and our little Lord Jesus — who has come to shepherd us and nourish us.

**II. THIS MORNING WE HEARD** from the Psalm, that Jesus is the King, whose inheritance is the nations, whose wrath is to be feared by those who refuse to serve him. We heard from Exodus, that the glory cloud that filled the tabernacle is the same glory cloud that shone round the shepherds. That the glory of the birth of Jesus is the same glory as God dwelling with his people in the wilderness. We heard from Titus of Jesus' lavish mercy upon us, cleansing us from our sin, and making us inheritors of eternal life. And from John's Gospel, we heard that Jesus is the Word, the Light, the Son of God.

Our Scriptures collectively testify to the glory of God — to God himself — unveiled as the infant Jesus.

I have to wonder just how silent of a night the night of our Lord Jesus' birth was. The heavenly host heralded his birth. The Virgin Mary gave birth — likely not a silent affair. And Jesus, shall we really assume he never spoke through cries and smiles? The rest of that hymn is heavenly, but I am unconvinced the night was silent.

Consider John's Gospel. Jesus is God's Word. Whatever else may have been unsaid that night, the entrance of Jesus into the world is God's Word to us. The baby Jesus himself is God's Word, spoken to us.

Swiftly, richly, magisterially, John's Gospel reveals mystery upon mystery of God — this baby Jesus is the very one through whom the world was made. Everything was through him; nothing escaped being made through him. When we return to the Creation account of Genesis—and the *In the beginning* signals that we *should* return there!—when we go back and read, “And God said...” we now know that these words of God were the Lord Jesus himself.

And what of the light of Christ? Again, in the Creation account, when we sheepishly wonder how light could have shone forth before the making of the stars in the sky, we are reminded that the Light—our Lord Jesus—has always been, from time immemorial — it was darkness that had not yet been made. Light from light, true God from true God, shone forth in those early days of Creation. And then, the stars and celestial bodies were made, and these were ordered and arranged according to what already was, evening first, and then the dawn.

From the Creation of the world until this night — this evening and morning we remember — it has always been evening. But at last, the Light of the World has come, and the dawn of the Day is at hand.

*[2] The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. (Isaiah 9:2, ESV)*

Who is the light of the world? Who is the Word of the Father? Who is God? All these questions have the same answer: the baby Jesus.

How could the unbounded, uncountably infinite, the eternal, the only God, be revealed in any man? And yet, he has come into the world as even more meager than a man, for he has come as a baby.

How could the one through whom the world was made, the one who shone forth in the great abyss—lighting the cosmos before the celestial bodies were formed and shaped through him—appear in trenchant humility, piercing through his world as a mere baby?

As resplendent as is the glory of the Son of God — the light of the world piercing creation’s darkness; the glory shining round his people in the wilderness; the glory shining round the shepherds that night — as luminous and resplendent as is the glory of the Son of God, is as staggering and monumental as his humility.

This is who God is — the one who comes to us as an infant, the one who pours himself out for the sake of his world, the one who has come to atone for our sins against *him*. Humility and sacrifice are essential to who God is. And thus, quite plainly, if humility and sacrifice are not essential to our character, then we are severely lacking, we are not yet godly, we are not Christ-like.

We see who God is by how he comes to us — as an infant, as the suffering servant, as the one who is betrayed, as the one who is handed over to a death he freely accepts for us. We hear the very word of his Son — the Word — who says that we must give up our life to him, that he must have our lives, if we wish to save our lives. For this is the very thing that he has come to do and which he does do — he gives up his life that he may save our lives.

It’s precisely this nature — that Jesus is not only the glory of the Father, but the humility and sacrifice of the Father — that gives him an entrance into this world. Christ’s coming into the world through the Virgin Mary was truly subversive. And that’s why this Sunday we’ll see the devil’s reaction through Herod in the slaughtering of the innocents. Satan’s mission — since his own fall — has been to prevent the Christ and to destroy the Christ. Because the victory of the Christ means the permanent downfall and defeat of satan.

Satan’s playbook is finite, limited, microscopic, essentially zero in comparison to the incommensurate, uncountably infinite God and his ways. Satan’s playbook could not have anticipated the lowly, humble coming of the Son of God — the Light of the World — born as a baby of the Virgin Mary.

The darkness of satan and sin and death was always going to be overcome by the glorious light of Christ — even though his light shone forth as veiled, subtle, hidden, humble. The coming of Jesus as the light of the world is the guarantee that darkness will be finally and fully vanquished. All that is done in darkness will be exposed. That is what light does to darkness. Christ’s light will shine forth everywhere. And on that final day — Christ’s light and glory will shine forth radiantly everywhere evermore.

And so, on this morning, we remember and we believe that the baby Jesus is the Word of God, the Light of the World, the Son of God. And believing Jesus, let us respond with song and praise because Christ the Lord is worthy of all worship and praise and glory and honor and majesty, now and forever. **Amen and amen.**