

## The Greatest Miracle in the World

### John 1:9-14

Good morning! Merry Christmas to all of you! I'm glad you made it here this morning. Just a few days more and we're celebrating the birth of the Lord Jesus. Isn't that exciting? It's always exciting when we celebrate. But it's doubly exciting especially as we discover the significance of the birth of our Lord.

We know that the Christmas story is a miracle in itself. But there are sub-miracles that go along with it. Just like the plot of a great, engaging story. There are sub-plots that make up the whole story and help us to understand the meaning of it all.

This is the last part of the message series we're going through this month called "Christmas Miracles". We began with miracles from the perspective of Mary, how an angel appeared to her and told her that she was going to bear a child even though she was a virgin. And then, we continued to talk about miracles from the perspective of Joseph, how an angel appeared to him, too, and told him to take Mary as his wife even though he wasn't the father. And today, we finalize it by talking some more about miracles from the perspective of God himself, how he sent an angel to announce to the world that his son, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus was born to save people from their sins.

Our text this morning is based on the gospel of John which may seem odd because he never mentioned the circumstances of the birth of Jesus. We know that Matthew and Luke explicitly describes the event. But not John. Or did he? Well, let's turn to John 1:9-14 where we see how describes the coming of the savior on Christmas day implicitly. Please turn with me to your Bibles in John 1. If you're going to use the Bibles on the table, that's on page 750.

From this passage, we will look at four miracles that God did on Christmas day. How many of you believe in miracles? Let me tell you about these guys who believe in miracles.

It was Christmas eve, two guys were driving hurriedly to the mall to get last-minute gifts for their wives or else they'll spend the evening out in the cold. But because they were so much in a hurry, their cars collided. Roy, one of the drivers, stepped out of his car and went to check on the other driver. He was fine.

Roy said, "This is a miracle. Look at how bad our cars are and we are totally unscathed. Even still, I have this bottle of wine in my backseat which is still unbroken. This surely is a sign. We should toast". The other man agreed, it was a sign and a toast was in order. So, Roy popped the cork and the other man took a big swig and passed the bottle back. "Now, it's your turn to drink and celebrate this miracle".e

And Roy said, "No thanks. I'll wait for the cops to show up first."

What's the lesson? Don't drink and drive on Christmas eve. Anyway, let me share with you four miracles that we can distill from the passage we just read. These are four miracles that happened on Christmas Day.

### 1. God is from heaven who came to earth.

If you think about it, the first miracle we're dealing here on Christmas day is God's invasion of planet earth. When man first walked on the moon, that was a big deal. But God walking on earth was even a bigger deal.

You see, God coming to earth is something unheard of. The way that most people perceive God is that he is out of this world literally. His place is in heaven. That's where he operates. Why should he come down to earth when he is powerful and sovereign and can see all things? He surely knows what's going in this world

so why should he come down to earth? Besides, as most religions teach, he really didn't have to come down to earth, he can just send his messengers, an angel, or maybe a prophet, or a really wise religious person. And he can just relay his message through them. Something like a President who sends ambassadors to represent him.

The God of the Bible certainly has done that. He sent his angels and prophets and wise religious men. But in the end, God himself came down. John says God came down to earth and lived among us.

In John 1:10 it says, "He was in the world". Meaning, there was a point in history when God lived in this world. For Christians, we know that took place about 2000 years ago when Jesus walked on earth. As Christians, we believe that Jesus is God. In fact, the subject of John 1 is Jesus. John is talking about Jesus. How do we know that? Right at the start, in verse 1, he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That word Word is a title applied to Jesus in the Bible. Therefore, Jesus is God.

That is something that many people don't understand. They accept that Jesus is a good man, a prophet, a great teacher but cannot accept Jesus as God. I was involved in a pseudo-Christian religion before and this religion recognize Jesus as the Son of God but not God himself. They teach that Jesus was just the first of God's creation and that he was actually Michael the archangel. They have a hard time grasping the idea that Jesus is God and part of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, because logically it cannot be, they say. You know,  $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$  and not 1. Well, if only they will stretch their minds a little bit, and apply multiplication instead,  $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ . I'm just trying to simplify it but, of course, there are better explanations.

The thing is, Jesus never claimed to be a good person, he never claimed to be a prophet, and he never claimed to be a great teacher. One thing he claimed is

that he was God. In John 10:30, he said, “I and the Father are one”. Critics will say, he was just claiming that he is one with his father in terms of purpose and mission and qualities. However, you must look at the context. If you look at the verses before it, the Jews were asking Jesus whether he was the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus said he was and that they should look at all the works he was doing which was God-like and then he said those words, “I and the Father are one.” With those words, he angered the Jews and they picked up stones to throw at him and the Bible says, “but Jesus said to them, ‘I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?’ ‘We are not stoning you for any good work,’ they replied, ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.’” (John 10:32-33) It was clear to the Jews that Jesus claimed to be God. Did Jesus correct them? No! Because he really was God.

That statement of Jesus “I and the Father are one” is still something that many people miss today. That’s why John says, “and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.” (John 1:10b-11)

In Colossians, the apostle Paul teaches without reservations that Jesus is God. And this time, I want us to read together this passage. “Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.” (Colossians 1:15 NLT)

If you believe what the Bible says, it’s not difficult to believe that Jesus is God. And believing he is God is the first step toward accepting the next miracle on Christmas Day.

## 2. God is divine who became human.

So, God came to earth. He came to earth as a man, with flesh, just like each of us. John says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14) That’s what the Bible teaching of incarnation means, God becoming a human

being. God taking on flesh...and blood. This is another concept that many people find hard to believe. If God became one of us, wouldn't he be subject as well to all human sin and failures? Wouldn't that put a blemish on his holiness?

As a matter of fact, there was a group of Christians in the first century, called Gnostics, who believed that Jesus did not come in human form. They said that he actually came as a spirit and appeared to people as such. To them, all things material are evil and unclean and, therefore, God cannot take a physical form.

But the Bible says that Jesus experienced what any ordinary person experiences. He became hungry, thirsty, he experienced physical pain, and all that stuff. He was even subject to temptations. In Philippians, the apostle Paul took pains to describe the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus. Please turn with me now in your Bibles to Phil. 2:6 and following. If you're using the Bible on your table, that's on page 831. Let us read together.

You see that? He was made in human likeness, he appeared as a man, but most of all, he died on a cross. How can you crucify a spirit if Jesus was just a spirit? No, he was real. In flesh and blood.

But it's interesting how Paul described the coming of Jesus. Look again in verse 6, he says, although Jesus was God, he did not take advantage of that. I think Paul had in mind also how God came to earth, the way he arrived on planet earth.

If you were God, how would you announce your coming to the world? Perhaps, you would come in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and you would cause all TV stations to focus their cameras to the sky or perhaps you would send thunderbolt and lightning or perhaps you would make the clouds form words like "This is God. I'm coming" or maybe you'd arrive on a big flying saucer with blaring horns announcing your coming and people should come to FedExField to meet you and sing for you. I would.

But God came as a little baby with no fanfare. Would you come as a baby? Why did God come as a baby?

You know, is anybody afraid of a baby? No one's afraid of a baby. In fact, we welcome the arrival of a baby. We're happy when there's a baby. A baby can make you smile. A baby can lighten your day. And you want to hug a baby, to cuddle a baby. So, when God came as a baby, he was letting us know that he wants to save you, not to scare you. If he came with thunderbolt and lightning, wouldn't that scare you?

Another reason he came as a baby is that he wants you to see that he stooped down to your level in order to save you because he loves you. His love for you is so great, so immense, he humbled himself to serve you. Jesus says in **Mark 10:45**, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

God became a man because he is a personal God. He is not a long-distance God. He wants to have a personal relationship with you. He wants you to know that he cares for you and he longs to embrace you in his arms. If you would just come to him and not be afraid of him. You may have an image of God as someone who is like a cosmic cop, ready to punish you for any wrongdoing. That's not the God of the Bible. When God came as a man in the person of Jesus, he wants you to know that he will carry your burdens and will help go through life. In **Matthew 11:28-30**, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

God understands what you're going through. Remember, he became like one of us. He suffered, faced afflictions, became tired, faced temptations, struggled a lot, and that's why you can bring all your pain and sorrows to him.

You see, you were created for a relationship with God. You cannot go it alone. You need a helper and a savior. The point of Christmas is to know that there's a God and he wants to have a relationship with you because he loves you.

So, God came to earth, God came as a man, and the third miracle is

### 3. God is Extraordinary who came for ordinary people.

The story of Christmas is the story of common people. You see, when God came, he came to ordinary people. Like you and me. He was not born to a wealthy family. He was not born to a royal family. His parents, Joseph and Mary, were ordinary people with ordinary means. The reason is that he wants to identify with us. He could have chosen to be born in a palace. But where was he born? Let's look at what the Bible says, "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."

(Luke 2:6-7)

Where Jesus was born was not even common, it was an uncommon place. A place where there's a manger, in other words, a place where livestock were kept and where they ate. A manger is a feeding trough. Those pictures show how a manger looks like in the time of Jesus. It could either be made of stone or wood. But stone was more common. That's where Mary laid her baby Jesus because no guest room was available for them. The manger was the crib of Jesus for the time being.

On the night Jesus was born, angels appeared in the sky and announced the birth of Jesus to rich people in Jerusalem so that they could give gifts. Of course not, the angels appeared to shepherds. Luke describes it this way, "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring

you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:8-12) And in later verses, we see that the shepherds went to visit the baby Jesus.

It’s interesting that God would choose to announce his message to shepherds. I think it’s because the shepherds represent all ordinary people who need hope and assurance of God’s love and care. During those times, shepherds were considered to be at the low rung of society. People looked down on them. People considered their jobs to be so menial and lowly. They weren’t admired and respected. They were extra-ordinary.

I think God is telling us that if you feel extra ordinary like the shepherds, you have an extraordinary God who loves you and really cares for you. He will lift you up and fight for you. The Bible says, **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”** (Psalm 46:1) If life’s got you down, look up and you’ll see God helping you.

You see, if you feel ordinary, in the sight of God, you’re really special. He created you for a purpose. You’re not here on this earth by accident. God has a plan for you and that plan is the best plan he could ever have for your life. You may feel like you messed up or there’s no future for you. You’re embarrassed of the crazy things you’ve done in the past or maybe you’re even doing in the present. You feel like you’ve sinned so much. You ask, “Is there hope for me?” Cheer up! God is a God of second chances. He will continue to love you and never tire of loving you. God is telling you, **“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”** (Jer. 31:3) You’re so special that he came to earth as a man to a common person like you. Which brings us to the last miracle on Christmas Day.

**4. God is Jesus who came to die for your benefit.**

This is the greatest miracle of all. God in the person of Jesus came for your benefit. Not for his benefit. For your benefit.

He humbled himself. He became like sinful man. He served others. Finally, he died a humiliating death on the cross. Was any of that beneficial to God? Not at all! All this God did because he loves you so much. He could have just left you alone in sin. He could have just ignored you and then, perhaps, wait for someone who would love him the way he wanted to be loved. But no. He loved you first. He cannot stand the thought of losing you for all eternity. All his eyes are focused on you. The Bible says you're the apple of his eye and that's why he willingly came down to earth, became man and sacrificed himself on the cross.

That's what Jesus, the God of the universe, did for you. When he died on the cross, there are two benefits he wants you to have.

First, **he wants to give you an abundant life on earth.** Jesus says, **"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."** (John 10:10) Does that mean you'll be rich and healthy and well-liked? That'll be good but Jesus doesn't promise you that. What he promises is that you will have his peace, joy, and comfort whatever you experience in life. Whether you're rich or poor, healthy or sickly, liked or not liked in Facebook, Jesus will always be with you and his comforting presence will be enough for you. He says, "My grace is sufficient for you".

The thing is, when Jesus starts to dwell in your life, you will also start living. You will find purpose and meaning in life. You see, some people are not living, they're just existing. They go on with their lives day by day, not really knowing where they're going. With Jesus you'll know exactly what he created you for, in short, your purpose in life, and where you're going which is the second benefit.

Jesus **wants to give you eternal life in heaven.** There couldn't be anything better than that. Nothing on earth will match that. Your 401K cannot match that. In heaven, the Bible says, there will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears ,

and no more death. Most importantly, we will be in the presence of Jesus for all eternity. Look at what John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Friend, that is a promise from God. That is a promise that God will keep. If you believe in your heart, that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, that he was buried, and on third day he rose again, you will be saved.

In closing, let me tell you a story that was told by the late Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ. He said there was a man from India who was a devout Hindu and who had a profound sense of reverence for life. He would not kill an ant, a cow, or even a cobra, because to him, due to his belief in reincarnation, he might be killing some past relative.

During his visit to America, he had been confronted with the claims of Christ, yet he could not grasp the biblical truth that God actually visited this planet in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. He could not comprehend how the Great Creator God of the Universe could become a man, or why.

One day as he was walking in the field meditating upon this new truth about Jesus the Christ being God, he was wondering how this could possibly be.

He ran across a large ant hill with thousands of little ants scurrying around in their busy-like manner. He was standing there observing with wonder the activity of these ants, and what amazing creatures they are, when suddenly, he heard a tremendous and threatening noise. It was the noise of a large tractor plowing the fields.

As he looked up he discovered that the tractor would soon be plowing through that ant hill and thousands of ants would probably be killed and their home destroyed. Gripped with the same concern you and I would feel for hundreds of

people trapped in a burning building, he became frantic. He wanted to warn them of their impending destruction.

He thought to himself, "How can I warn them? If I could write in the sand, they wouldn't be able to read it. If I shouted to them, they wouldn't understand me. The only possible way I could communicate with them would be by becoming an ant, if I had that ability."

Then suddenly he had a revelation from the Spirit of God. He saw why God, the Creator of the universe, chose to become one of us by becoming a man, in the Person of the God-man, Jesus of Nazareth.

Through his experience with the ant hill, the light suddenly came on in the heart of that Hindu man, and now he understood the words of Paul: *"Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form"* (Philippians 2:6- 7, NLT).

What we and billions of other people will celebrate this week is not the birth of some average, normal baby. This baby was God in human form. This baby grew up to be a man who died for the sins of mankind. Folks, that is the greatest miracle in the world.

Today is a day of miracle. Why don't you let God do a miracle in your life today? Give your heart to Jesus and he will transform your life. This Christmas, give your heart to God as a token of appreciation for God giving Jesus to you. Will you exchange gifts with God?

Let me close this message by playing a song, a song that is beautiful, a song that talks about who God is. It is a new song. Composed by Kanye West. As you listen, you just reflect on the words and let God speak to you through this song.

**Video: God is**