

KINGS NORTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Christmas Day

Sunday 25th December 2022 10:00 am

Read John 1:1-18

Prayer & Exordium

✚ Imagine for a moment, if you will, that you are an angel! Yes an angel!

At Christmas we usually read from Matthew's gospel where an angel appears to Joseph. Or we hear Luke recount the angel Gabriel visiting Mary. Or we hear of the angels appearing in the sky to the shepherds.

Put yourself in the place of an angel this morning. Who are they? They are sent into the world to administer God's good purposes. They are sent to serve those who will inherit salvation, that is all who are saved by the Lord.

The angels are constantly in the presence of God, they gaze in wonder at His glory. They 'see' Him, they see who He is, and what He does, they are His servants and messengers. You might say they have the best of seats, the best of places, it doesn't get better than to be found united together around the throne of God.

But there is something they don't know. They know God has created all things, the earth and the vast, seemingly endless, universe and all for His glory. They can see how it was corrupted and became a godless and lifeless world, violent, perverted and dirty; fit for due judgment. Angels know God speaks and directs and commands. They know these words speak of a masterly event to take place, is the day of final judgment? They, said Peter **long to look into these things.**

But what they don't know, what they haven't been able to work out, no not in a thousand years is that God in all his might and Glory and magnificence will enter his world. No it is not appearing in the clouds in splendour – that Day will come - but as a babe born in a dirty stable and laid in a manger.

✚ In all that time the angels had always beheld the face of God; and had been studying God's works of creation; yet they never, till that day, had seen anything like that; never knew how *manifold* God's wisdom is, as now they knew it by Christ's incarnation.

But that is what happened.

1a

9 The true light that gives light to every man - was coming into the world.

Mathew and Luke have genealogies. Matthew traces Jesus back to Abraham to whom was given the promise of life, Luke tracing Jesus back from Adam the man, Jesus is one of us in the human race.

2 Timothy 2:8 **Remember Jesus Christ, descended from David.** (The King)

But here too in John 1 is a genealogy of sorts, its not Jesus the man but Jesus as God, God the Word. The Word who is God, became, took on flesh. This is no genealogy in the normal sense for He has no beginning nor end.

Yes it is the seemingly impossible – God becoming a man - for nothing is impossible with God.

■ Don't picture a man becoming an ant, no that's no comparison at all, - it is infinitely more than that.

The Word, distinct but divine, became a man. This is truly remarkable. Hear Charles Wesley:

✚ Let earth and heaven combine, Angels and men agree,
To praise in songs divine, The incarnate Deity,
Our God contracted to a span, Incomprehensibly made man.

He laid his glory by, He wrapped him in our clay;
Unmarked by human eye, The latent Godhead lay;
Infant of days he here became, And bore the mild Immanuel's name.

Solomon who raised his eyes to heaven recognizing God as the creator of everything seen and unseen, the one who is higher than the highest heavens and outside the universe, infinitely larger than we can ever imagine, said: **The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!** 1 Kings 8:27 and again 2 Chr 2:6, 6:18. He asks the question: **"But will God really dwell on earth?** Can He - the One regularly described in the Psalms as **exalted above the heavens.** Dwell on earth? Ps 8:1, 57:5, 57:11, 108:5, 113:4.

Jesus is described in Hebrews as **holy, blameless, pure, and, exalted above the heavens.** Heb 7:26. Yes Jesus the Lord of Lords, almighty God the everlasting father, the author of life and the light of the world. Entered this world.

■ Chris Tomlin's song 'Here I am to worship' starts with the line: "Light of the world You stepped down into darkness"

Into this dark work, - the light of God came. As the sun is the source of life with its light and heat, so God the source of true light and life came.

1b

Jesus the light and life giver: **In him was life, and that life was the light of men** came to shine into the dark prison cell of our hearts. God steps down, descends to the dingy cellar, to bring His light - into my darkness.

The metaphor of light and dark much used in the Bible has lost its impact. It has become a cliché.

But it is used repeatedly in the Bible for good reason. To make a contrast.

It is used morally. **Light is Godly, darkness is Godless. God is light in him is no darkness at all.** 1 John 1:5 Daniel says **light dwells with him.** 2:22

John chapter 1 is a clear parallel with Gen 1. Not only are there seven days in both, but we read in Gen 1 **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.** Genesis 1:1-4

Into the darkness the light came, through God the Word.

God energized this world with himself as the source. The world has nothing in and of itself. There is no innate life in the creation as pantheists, monists, New Agers, spiritists believe. It is God who brings life, it is **in Him we live and move and have our being.** This is the divine Son **In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The true light that gives light to every man.** John 1:9.

But the moment Adam and Eve sinned darkness reigned, as we read their **foolish hearts** were darkened. That came to them – and all of us.

Like Ezekiel's Army which is lifeless without the breath of God so to we are all dead to God. The result is we grope around in this dark world trying to find my meaning, my purpose, my identity in it - and squeeze out of the material world what fleeting pleasure - and hollow satisfaction I can.

Most watched something of the world cup, we saw the self-adulation of the winners - and the tears of the losers, both players and fans.

What now? This promise of temporary glory is soon snatched away. God calls it idolatry because it is looking to everything else - but not God - for our lives.

- **The media's portrayal of happy times with those: perfect holidays, perfect people, perfect homes, perfect food, 'must have' possessions etc, the bright glitz and glamour - is but darkness. Don't live in it. Don't look to it.**

Jesus speaking about what we look at said: **if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!** Matt 6:23

The darkness of dissatisfaction, the darkness of greed: look out for those January sales. There's unfaithfulness – look out for that January peak in divorces – all made easy. The love of self, this is darkness.

In God's mercy and grace Christ was born, and born to suffer – and suffer greatly. When he hung there on that cruel cross darkness came over the whole earth. The sin carrier – God incarnate, God in the flesh, was crucified.

It was Christ's intention to be the refuge of those that are afraid of God's wrath. If that is you, the risen Christ is calling you to repent and receive.

The light shines in the darkness. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness. Dan 2:22, Job 12:22. Let His light, the light of Christ shine on you. Confess what His word exposes, turn from it - and come into the light.

✚ **'O Saviour Christ, Thou too art man; Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried; Thy kind but searching glance can scan the very wounds that shame would hide.'** Henry Twells

He knows all about each one here this morning, every deed done in secret, every thought, every desire of your heart. Let his light do its painful work.

More painful than those 33 Chilean miners discovered when winched to the surface on 13 Oct 2010 after 69 days below. They were brought out of the darkness of the earth and into the light, it was so overwhelming they were given special glasses to shield them from the bright light.

Jesus said: **Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.**" John 12:35-36

✚ **'If Jesus was not truly Man and truly God, the chasm between heaven and earth has not been bridged, and God — as before the Incarnation — is still remote and inaccessible.'**

Hear Wesley again:

✚ **He deigns in flesh to appear, Widest extremes to join;
To bring our vileness near, And make us all divine:
And we the life of God shall know, For God is manifest below.** Wesley

Now all that has changed, you can come to God, and if you have, - if you have come into the light, received the light - then you should be quite different from those who haven't.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light Eph 5:8 Will you now people of the light stand out?!

Do you now deal honestly, Is your language clean and wholesome? Do you love others and not keep accounts or hold anything against anyone? Do you shun the world and shun evil in what you watch, - and think - and do?

How does Jesus shine his light today? Through his word of truth – Yes let us declare that fearlessly – but also through you - if you belong to him, then **you are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.** Mt 5:14-16

Christ entering this world has put the world on notice. He will return to bring His own to heaven. Today, yes today, make sure you know for sure!

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