

That Infant Is God!
Sermon on Colossians 1:13-20
Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI
Pastor Karl Walther
December 25, 2004

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you! He is Christ the Lord!
Amen.

God's Word to us for this Festival of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is Colossians chapter one, verses thirteen through twenty:

God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

This is God's Spirit-inspired Word of our newly born Savior, Jesus Christ.

Introduction: Last Night God's Light Shone into the Darkness

Dear fellow Christians—created by Christ, and reconciled by Christ:

Wow! That was quite a sight last night, wasn't it?! There we were—all alone, in the silence of night, in the darkness of night. And boom! That angel appears to us—surrounded by all that light, surrounded by all those other angels, and oh! their voices! So, we go and see – amid all the commotion – that darling baby and that nice, young couple.

Now, daylight has returned. And we've maybe gotten ourselves a little sleep. And now we're asking ourselves: What did all that mean?!

Theme: That Infant Is God!

God's Word to us this morning: actually written by a man who wasn't there (the Apostle Paul), to people who weren't there (the Colossians from Asia Minor), and written more than sixty years after those events—God's Word to us this morning does a beautiful job explaining what we've witnessed. It tells us: that infant, lying in the manger over there—**THAT INFANT IS GOD** himself! And we're going to wonder at that message a bit this morning. And then we're going to figure out what God is doing here....

Exposition One: That Infant Made Us...!

So, we have this baby ... in the manger. He's – who knows? – six pounds or seven pounds. He's so little! He's got hands that are just big enough to wrap around your little finger, and his fingernails are so tiny they're just about invisible in this little light. He is utterly, utterly helpless and still!

And yet—and yet we read (and this is the second paragraph of God’s Word to us today: ***He is the image of the invisible God.*** We would say: He is the *exact replica* of God. This baby makes the *invisible* God visible to us.

Going on: He is ***the firstborn over all creation.*** He is the *firstborn* son of Mary. He is the *firstborn* Son of God. That’s not to say that he had a beginning.... Yes, according to his humanity: he had a start in time; he has shared our flesh for just some two thousand years now. But according to his divinity: Jesus always, always was.

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. Birds or stars or angels—this baby created them all! Whether elephants or insects or fish, whether trees or grass or water—this baby made them all! Subatomic particles and supernatural spirits—this baby created them all! Kings and presidents, archangels and archdevils—this baby made them all!

All things were created by him and for him. This baby is the almighty God! He made matter out of nothing. He brought life out of what was lifeless. He fashioned and formed every human being.

He is before all things. Before anyone existed, he was. Before any mountain stood, he was. Before the universe existed, he was.

And in him all things hold together. This baby is God, who – if he withdrew his hand from his creation for even one moment – it would disintegrate immediately into oblivion.

Appropriation One: ...So, Won't that Infant also Aid Us?

That is the God shares your flesh! Your very Creator has become one of you! The Almighty cared about you to such a degree that he left his exalted throne in heaven to be born into a cattle feed box ... for you!

Wow!!! He must love you! He must really, really love you!!! Could there be any sickness or accident that could separate you from his love? Could there be any sadness or tragedy that he cannot walk you through? Could it be that sin or Satan could overcome his powerful love for you? No! Absolutely not!!!

Whatever pain you're suffering—cast it on the infant Christ; he cares for you! Whatever pain of heart you feel—place it on the infant Christ, whose compassion for you never fails! Whatever fear your soul suffers, put it on the infant Christ; he will gain the victory for you!

That's what Christmas means to you!

Exposition Two: That Infant Reconciled Us...!

So: that infant in the manger is God himself. He made us, so he will always aid us. But how? I mean: What in the world is the Almighty God doing here on earth as a little infant baby?

Well, let's take a look at the first and last paragraphs of God's Word to us today. ***God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness*** – so, there's a rescue mission going on in that manger! – and God has ***brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.*** We call that particular transformation ... ***redemption, the forgiveness of sins.***

Now, that's what made this baby ***the head of the body, the church.*** That's why ***he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*** That's why ***God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell***

in him. He was on a rescue mission: *to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Appropriation Two: ...So, Won't that Infant also Rescue Us?

So, do you understand what's going on here?

That darkness we witnessed last night—that wasn't just the absence of light in the area of Bethlehem some two thousand years ago. No! That darkness was my soul! That darkness was your soul! Our souls were dark: dark with sin, dark as the wombs from which we came.... And that silence we witnessed last night—that wasn't just the absence of sound around Bethlehem. No! That was our Heavenly Father's silent treatment for the sinful, shameful way we treated him.

See, you and I dwelled in *the dominion of darkness*.... But God has brought us into the *kingdom of the Son he loves*.

You see, Jesus *redeemed* us—like it says here. That was his mission. To *redeem* means to pay a price to set someone free. ...We weren't free. We were slaves – and being a slave “ain't no fun” – we were slaves to sinfulness, slaves to the cold dark grip of death, slaves to eternal fiery hell. And we had no way to purchase ourselves out of that predicament. But Jesus did! Jesus paid the price. It wasn't a monetary ransom payment. No, that would have been far too small! He paid in blood, his blood, the blood of God—to set us free.

And that's blood and a body that he took on at Christmas!

And so, by redeeming us: Jesus *reconciled* us—like it says here. And you know what a *reconciliation* is: there are two friends, one wrongs the other, they get to be enemies, and someone needs to right the wrong and get them back together again. ...Well, in the beginning God made us to be his friends. But our sinfulness made us to be his enemies. We'd have stayed enemies forever. Forever! But Jesus came and righted our wrong; he took our sins away. He made us friends with God again—he reconciled us.

And that's what that baby is doing in the manger. He's living proof that God is our Friend again!

Conclusion: Today God's Light Has Shone into the Darkness

So, what is it that happened last night? Well, that baby born to Mary is God! He made us!—so, won't he always aid us? He reconciled us!—so, won't he always rescue us?

And doesn't that inspire you to live a whole new life? Just the way dear Baby Jesus was born to live an entire life serving his Father—and us, his brothers and sisters—so also you are reborn to live an entire life of love and service toward God and toward others.

That means nothing matters to you more than growing up and getting to know God. Nothing matters to you more than spending time each day with Baby Jesus. Nothing matters to you more than serving others whom Christ redeemed and reconciled with his own cross and blood.

And this morning: you have an entirely new life with which to do exactly that! Amen.

Glory to God in the highest! And on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests!
Amen.