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Advent Sermon: “Who” Is Coming To Town? (Heb 1:1-4)

Introduction – The song starts out good: “You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I’m telling you why...” but it misses the point in the end. But the general sentimental, American version of the Christmas story isn’t much better, for today’s Christians are far too uninformed when it comes to understanding how the whole of Scripture testifies to the coming of Immanuel.

The Supremacy of This Word (Heb 1:1-4) – Hebrews begins with the emphasis of the Word given in Christ Jesus, the Final Word. It is not that Jesus trumped the Old Testament, but that He fulfilled it – He revealed it more fully. He and His message was what the prophets had spoken of and had longed to hear and to read (1 Pet 1:10f). The “last days” were the time of the Incarnation of Christ, prophesied before Christ was born and testified to as fulfilled by the apostles after Christ’s Ascension (Acts 2:16ff). This means that Christmas was the beginning of the end – the end of the days of shadows and types, and the days of the full proclamation and manifestation of the gospel of God’s Son. The angels declare, “Peace on earth” because Psalm 2 “I will give You the nations” is being fulfilled in the Christmas story.

Seeing it in the Word – Those who saw this in the Word, granted by faith, worshipped the Christ Child for all He was, as Simeon and Anna did in the temple (Luke 3:25-38). The Spirit-filled Word led them to Christ, the Word Incarnate. There were also those who searched the Scriptures for salvation in that searching, but were not willing to come to the One of whom the Scriptures spoke (John 5:29-30). It is the same today.

This Little Baby, The Gift to the World, The Word of God, The Lord of All – So who is it that “is coming to town?” Who are we really preparing to celebrate – and ironically the world around us is preparing as well? A true nativity is not sentimental-sweet. This is the One who comes with great violence. King Herod, slaughtered babies, midnight escapes to another country; all are a part of this story. The passage in Hebrews reminds us of all this Person is and will do.

- Baby Jesus has been appointed heir of all things (that would be the world).
- He is the One who made everything and sustains it all (not only was the Word spoken and all things were created, but by that Word you are held together sitting on a pew in a world that is at this moment held together by the Word of His power).
- He is the Radiance of the Glory of God (that is, we can see that which we cannot be seen by this Word made flesh).
- He is the Word born to die and the Word born to be raised to rule all things.

Word, Word, Word – Who is coming to town? What is it that we are preparing to celebrate? It isn’t Santa, and it isn’t simply cute little baby Jesus. He is the King of Glory. The center is the Word. It was a Word that pointed forward to Christ then, and it is a Word that leads us back to Christ now.

The Word is Your Life (Deut 32:46-47) – For the OT and NT saints, this Word is not first of all propositions. It is first of all life.

The Word is Your Eternal Life (1 Pet 1:23-25) – We are born again through the Word of God.

The Word is Your Sustaining Life (1 Pet 2:2-3) – The Word is just as powerful to sustain us in this life. Having given birth to you, it is only natural that you would turn to her for sustenance.

The Word is Your Purifying Life (Heb 4:11-13) – It reveals who we are, lays us bare, dissecting all of our secret thoughts and intentions. It judges us, cleanses us, and sanctifies us (John 17:17).

The Word is Your Quality Life (1 Tim 4:4) – The Word directs us as to how we should live. And it is by the Word and in the Life of the Word, God’s Son, that anything we do in life makes sense or makes a difference. Only the Word can declare, “it is good,” and so it is only in the light of the Word that we can discern what is true, what is noble, and what is beautiful.

The Word is Our Assurance (1 John 5:13) – The Word is our defense against the constant struggle to doubt the most precious things, like God’s love for us, His grace over us, His care through all of our trials, and the hope of eternal life. The Word tells us, “Immanuel: God is with us”

Handling the Word, or rather, Being Handled by the Word (Rom 12:2) – The Word of God transforms us as it renews our minds. We are called to put this Word in our heart (Deut 6:6, 11:18) front and center in all aspects of our lives. We do this through taking it in like daily bread (Deut 8:1-3), through singing the Word (Psalm 95:2, Col 3:16), through meditation and study (Psalm 1:2, 2 Tim 3:16). In addition, we often forget how important it is to give ourselves to the hearing of the Word (Rom 10:17) and applying the Word (Luke 11:28, James 1:22).

What Happens – Just One Example (Psalm 119:129-136) – Here, in just this one section, we see that the one who reads and meditates and sings the Word finds that the Word perpetuates a heart of worship and obedience (v129), brings help to the simplest of minds (v130), refreshes the soul (v131-132), protects us from sin’s potential dominion over us (v133), and keeps our hearts soft to the need for the world to repent (v136).

The Gift of Christmas/The Gift of the Word – Here is the point of the passage in Hebrews. You cannot understand nor celebrate Jesus (or Christmas) without understanding that He is the Word, the Law, the Prophecies, the Psalms – made flesh. And the only way to come to understand that is to seek after it – seek after Him – in the Word, the scriptures given to us. We do this individually, and we do this as His community, His body, together as well. Our private and family devotions as well as our public gatherings are to be adorned with His Word just as our homes are adorned with lights. We are to seek Christ in the Word as one seeks for buried treasure, or as your children will seek for their Christmas gift under the tree (Ps 19:10).

One Practical Gift and Application for Us in 2006 -

Dave Hatcher – December 11th, 2005

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