

Unto Us.

Matthew 1:18-25

Luke 1:68-79

Responsive Psalm 138:1-6

Luke 2:1-14

Today I thought we would do something a little different, with Christmas coming up here on Tues I thought we could take some time this week to focus on not only Jesus birth, but rather the larger picture leading up to, and after his birth. Instead of this being a sermon continuing on through Mark I wanted to take this week and just worship and praise God together by looking through scripture to see God's redemptive work in his Son throughout the ages. A sort of survey of scripture, but coming at it from the view point of Christ's centrality through it all.

Building on last week, about Christ being the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, this week I want to look at some of these high points throughout scripture that points to this time of year that church tradition observes as the birth of Christ. For this overview I think the best place to start is in the beginning, Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" In 6 days God created the earth, and on the 7th day he rested. Even at this point in scripture God is setting up a shadow of a future fulfillment. That is what last weeks message was all about, how our sabbath rest is not a certain day, or time, but it is fulfilled and held within Christ himself. He is our rest, it is in him that we find peace and rest. Lets now turn over to the the Apostle Johns writing on the creation, John Chapter 1, first 5 verses. I am going to be skipping around a lot today, so be prepared! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life of the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it"

Not only were all things created by him, Paul tells us in Roman's that all things were created for him. Chapter 11:33-35 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become his counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" So we see in these 2 passages that Christ is the central point from creation, to judgment at the end of the age. All things are for him, and through him, and by him.

In this Christmas season in the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we really are celebrating not the birth of just some promised child that the prophets foretold, but the God man who has come to reconcile the lost and rebellious world to himself. The trinity is a mystery beyond our ability to understand, how God can be 3 separate persons, and yet be one. But this is something that we can find mentioned in scripture, and one of these passages is in john that we already read. "in the beginning was the word, and the word was god, and the word was with god." The same who would one day be born of a virgin, who one day would be nailed to a cross and rise again, and who will one day gather his followers as a shepherd gathers their flock was here before the foundation and creation of the world. So we all know how this story goes, so I am not going to spend a lot of time on it, my intention today is to just point out Christ, the promised messiah throughout scripture, today is less about teaching and preaching and more just about just glorifying and worshipping our Savior together.

After God created earth, and mankind in his own image, having body and soul we see that Satan the fallen angel who sought to be equal with God comes and tempts man in the very same rebellion against God. Just as Satan did, now Adam and Eve sought to be equal to God, it was not just the eating of the fruit in itself even though that was a direct rebellion of God's command. It was a deeper sin, an outright rebellion, It was their desire to become like God themselves, to be wise and to serve their own purposes. They wanted to decide for themselves what was right and wrong, they sought their own purpose and glory rather than God's.

Now Because of this fall, and curse upon mankind that separates us from God, there must be a mediator between God and man to reconcile man from his sin and rebellion back into right fellowship with God. So after Adam and Eves rebellion we see God dealing out some punishments but in that punishment we see hope, for here is the first mention of a redeemer of the one who will come and defeat Satan, an early promise of the Messiah to come. Genesis 3:14 "So the Lord God said to the Serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." The promised seed, the one who will come and crush Satan under his feet. This redeemer, this seed, this messiah is continually pointed to throughout the old testament in prophecies and pictures.

Next we see a picture of Christ, and a promise of this coming seed to Abraham in the account of God telling Abraham to offer his only son Isaac, his son of promise as a sacrifice. Genesis 22:1 "Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him Abraham, and he said, Here I am. Then he said, Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." Verse 6 "So Abraham took the word of the burnt offering and laid it on the back of Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his Father and said, My father, and he said, here I am my son. Then he said, look the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, my son, God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering. This is a picture, a foreshadowing of the messiah to come.

Just as God provided the Ram for Abraham to sacrifice to God instead of Isaac, God himself provided the sacrifice needed to reconcile men to himself. Verse 16 we see again the promised seed, the one in whom all the nations shall be blessed. "By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and the sand which is of the seashore, and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all of the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

And we see in Galatians exactly who this seed is, Chapter 3:15 "Brethren I speak in the manner of men, though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, And to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to your Seed, who is Christ." This seed, who is Christ, that was promised in Genesis to crush the head of Satan comes through the promised seed of Abraham. Paul wrote in Hebrews, 11:17. By Faith Abraham when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, in Isaac your seed shall be called. Concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." A picture, a foreshadowing of Christ sacrifice and resurrection.

Abraham had faith that God would keep his promise, even in the event of sacrificing Isaac. But as we see in the story, God provided for himself a ram for the sacrifice. Praise God for his grace and mercy providing the atoning sacrificial lamb in his own son.

Another Prophecy we see of the coming of the messiah is in Deuteronomy 18:18 “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear my words, which he speaks in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods that prophet shall die.” God promises Israel that he will bring up one from their own nation one who will be a prophet greater than Moses. We see the fulfillment of this promise in Hebrews, chapter 3 which I think we read last week. “Therefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him who appointed him as Moses also was faithful in all his house. For this one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who built the house as more honor than the house.

Looking at this big picture view really does bring this passage here into perspective. The word, Jesus Christ, who through all of creation was made, and for whom creation was made who is the promised seed, and the prophet who is worthy of more glory than Moses because he is both the architect, and builder of all things.

These are just a few of the we promises, and the pictures of the messiah that runs throughout the old testament. We can see that God has set apart a people for himself, he establishes a holy nation, which he gives laws, a temple, and sacrifices. And just like the Sabbath we talked about last week, all of these things point to Christ who is the substance of all of these things. The purpose of the law was to point to mans need for a savior, to show mans inability to gain favor with God, the temple and sacrifices pointed to Christ the messiah who is the sacrificial lamb provided by God himself to redeem his people, and the Sabbath pointed to Christ for it is only in him and his redemptive work on the cross that we can find peace and rest from the punishment of God for our sins.

All of this, each of these promises, each of these prophecies, each of this pictures find their meaning and substance in Christ, the babe that was born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. This moment is the pinnacle of all time. The one promised in the garden who would come and defeat that serpent of old, who would conquer death, hell, and the grave came on a quiet night, in a little town, born in a stable. The God of creation, the architect of our salvation, the sacrifice for our atonement, the king of king, and lord of lords was born, of a virgin over 2000 years ago. All of scripture points to this moment, we even see Jesus himself teaching this very thing in Luke 24. In The account of the 2 Traveling to Emmaus when Christ approached them and they were talking about Jesus who had been crucified and he says to them in verse 25 “ O Foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and enter into his Glory? And beginning in Moses and all the prophets he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. “ And in verse 44. “ Then he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me. And he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the scriptures.

Sometimes even as much as we try in the hustle and bustle of life especially around this holiday season the reality of Christ can be lost. Sure we remember his birth, we sing about that silent holy night but I think we have maybe lost a bit of the massive importance of this event. That God, sent his only Son to be born in the flesh whose purpose was to die the most cruel death on the cross paying the punishment of our rebellion and the curse of Adam's sin to make for himself a holy nation, a people set apart, for his purpose and glory.

So as we observe the tradition of Christmas, and celebrate the birth of Christ, let us do so with renewed fervor remembering the centrality of Christ in all things. That all things exist by him, and through him, and for him, for his glory. All of time before the birth of Jesus was looking to the future messiah, the promised seed, the savior that would come, and now that he has come and his work is finished it is Christ that we look to for our salvation. That night, in a stable in Bethlehem truly is the pinnacle of all of creation.