

The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord  
St. John 1:1-14  
December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## The Life Was the Light of Men

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we give thanks unto Thee, that of Thy mercy and compassion Thou didst suffer Thy dear Son to become incarnate, and didst through Him redeem us from sin and everlasting death: We beseech Thee, enlighten our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may ever be thankful for such grace, and comfort ourselves with the same in all tribulation and temptation, and at last obtain eternal salvation through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Throughout the Advent season our focus was on our Lord + Jesus Christ's coming to us. St. John the Baptist, who is the "John" spoken of in our Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, pointed us to the coming Christ during the season of Advent. It was his office to prepare the way of the Lord + Jesus; to make straight the path. His office was to tell us that the Lord + Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, was coming to us. Here in the Christmas, and also in the Epiphany, season our focus is on the fact that our Lord and Savior now dwells with us. He is no longer coming, He has come, and dwells with us in our very own flesh. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Our Lord + Jesus, our Savior from sin, death and the devil, has come and now dwells with us, His people.

Our Lord + Jesus in His coming to us bring for us two things. He brings light and He brings life. In the beginning of creation, the Earth was empty and dark. He created the Earth by His word. The Word, which was in the beginning, spoke and it was so. To this darkness and emptiness, the Triune Lord God gave it shape and He gave it light. He brought this world out of darkness and emptiness and gave it light. Having given it light the Lord God also created life. With His word He created all living things—the plants, the animals, creeping things, flying animals, and even all the creatures of the sea. All of this He made with only His command. He commanded it, and it happened. It was good and perfect. This light and life He made with His word spoken; out of nothing was all things made.

Mankind, however, was a special creation of the Lord God. He was not made with the word of the Lord God; mankind was made with the very hands of God out of the dust of the earth. And woman was made out of the man—from the rib of the man. So that male and female were created by the hand of God, and they were joined together as one flesh. The Lord God breathed into Adam the very breath of life. He gave Adam and Eve, our first parents, life and set them into this world filled with the light that He had created, the light that dispelled the darkness.

Unfortunately, darkness crept back in when the devil, the father of lies, who on account of his jealousy of mankind as a favored creation of the Lord God, deceived Adam and Eve into eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the only tree from which the Lord God had forbidden them

to eat. On account of their sin, darkness once again filled the Earth. Darkness was accompanied by more sin and death. The whole of mankind's every thought, word and deed were filled with sin; it was filled with the darkness that sin and death produces. We as the children of Adam and Eve share in their fate; we share in the consequences of their sin. We too, are filled with sin. We are indeed, poor, miserable sinners. For this we will all go the way of all the earth; we will all die and return to the dust from which we were created.

Our blessed creator, Who loves His creation—His special creation—planned for our salvation before He even set about framing the world. In His foreknowledge He knew that the devil and his angels would fall, and the devil would deceive Eve, and her husband Adam, who was with her, so He made plans to redeem His beloved creation. His plan was to restore to us light and life—the light and life that we threw away on account of our desire to be like the Lord God. They lived with the Lord God in paradise—the Garden of Eden—but they were cast out of God's presence; cast out of the garden of paradise to produce the fruits of the earth through toil and sweat.

We desire to be like the Lord God, but our Lord God desired to be one of us. Therefore, our Lord + Jesus Christ came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. He was made man. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He came into this world filled with the darkness of sin and death, in order to give it back light and life. The Lord + Jesus is our light and our life. He is the way for mankind out of the darkness of sin. He is the way out of death for mankind. In Him is life and salvation. In Him is light and forgiveness.

He gifts to us light and life by dwelling with us. He first came as a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and was laid in a manger. He was born of humble and lowly means to humble and lowly parents. He came to us through His birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In His state of humiliation, He fulfilled the Law of God perfectly, the Law we break daily and often on account of our manifold sins and transgressions. Just like our first parents and their children, our every thought, word and deed is contrary to the Law and will of God. We deserve the fate of our first parents. We deserve the fate of those outside the ark during the flood. But our Lord + Jesus took upon Himself our punishment. He suffered the agony of the cross—the punishment that we deserved—for the atonement of all mankind.

He bore the sins of the whole world in His flesh. This is a picture of His love for us. It is one thing to desire to be one of us—to be a part of mankind—but it is an entirely different thing for that One to become a man with the sole intention of suffering for us. He came down to dwell with us in order that He might suffer and die for us. This is the very picture of love. He sacrifices Himself for another. He sacrifices Himself for us. And in this sacrifice of Himself on the cross He is truly glorified. His throne from which He rules in His crucifix. This is why we place the crucifix of our Lord + Jesus in a prominent place. This is His throne. This is the place where He is glorified. For through His death, He has paid the penalty of sin for all mankind. Those who believe on the Lord + Jesus—who in faith cling to Him—receive the gift of this sacrifice: forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

This is the true reason for Christmas: to receive a Savior Who suffers and dies for our sins, so that we might be brought out of darkness and given life—eternal life—with Him and all the saints and angels of Heaven. For this reason, it is strange and out of place to have birthday parties for the Baby + Jesus. We are not celebrating the Lord + Jesus getting another year older. His birthday is not like our birthday celebrations. We are celebrating today that the Word made flesh now dwells with us. He had promised that He would come. St. John the Baptist pointed to His coming during the Advent season. But now He has come and with His coming He brings light and life to all mankind. He brings light and life to us.

This is why it is also strange and out of place to place an over emphasis on the cuteness of the Baby + Jesus. Yes, we get it, babies are cute bundles of joy. But our Lord + Jesus did not come down

from Heaven and be incarnate as a man so that we could fawn and coo over how cute He looks as a Baby. This is perhaps one of the reasons that His birth was under such humble circumstances. Other than shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night as they lived in the countryside with their sheep, and some wise men from the east, no one really paid attention to our Lord's birth. Our Lord's birth is great because God has become man, but our Lord + Jesus was born for a greater purpose.

He has come into the world; He has put on our flesh, in order that He might fulfill the Law of God for us, and bring us out of darkness by entering into our grave and bursting open our tombs, and in so doing He brings us out of death into eternal life with Him.

We celebrate this day—this day of our Lord's dwelling with us now in our flesh—by singing and chanting and raising incense and sounding bells. The silence of Advent is replaced with the adornment of much music. As glorious as it all sounds and smells, our worship is only a shadow and foretaste of what our worship will be like in Heaven. We are preparing for that Day when our Lord + Jesus will call us out of this valley of darkness to our eternal home in Heaven. There we will be filled eternally with the Light of the Christ, and we will enjoy eternal life with Him and all the saints and angels. What a great and glorious present that will be! It is the greatest present you can ever receive. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

O Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank Thee that of Thy great goodness and mercy Thou hast caused Thine Only-Begotten Son to become incarnate, that we through Him might be redeemed from sin and everlasting death; and we pray Thee, enlighten our hearts that we may be truly thankful to Thee for His gracious incarnation and birth, that we may be comforted by the same in all time of tribulation and temptation, and in the end be saved with an everlasting salvation; through Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*