

Series: Heaven on Earth

December 3, 2017

## **Title: Heaven on Earth**

**[Slide 1]**

**Text: John 1:1-5**

### **Your Kingdom Come!**

**“Good morning, Sunshine!”**

**[Slide 2]**

Every morning a little bit of heaven comes to earth. It comes in the form of sunlight – light that began its journey 93,000,000 miles away at the surface of the Sun. For 8 minutes and 20 seconds it speeds through space until it reaches our little world. It brings with it energy and warmth, the end of darkness and night for another day: A little bit of heaven on earth.

On a dark night in Bethlehem angels lit up the sky with the announcement that another Sun was rising, a new day was about to dawn:

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*Luke 2:11-14 NIV*

*“To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,*

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”*

That very night Heaven’s King came to earth, not to visit, but to stay.

### **Heaven on Earth: The God who dwells with us**

When the baby born that night grew up, He taught us to pray:

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*Matthew 6:9-10 NIV*

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven."*

Heaven on earth: It has been God's plan all along, from the Garden of Eden to the Baby in the manger, and all the way to the end of the story, when Heaven itself comes down to Earth forever.

**The Word****In the beginning:**

The challenge for us is actually living out this new reality. To do so, we must be able to see God present in our world. How do we do that? The writer John found a way to answer this question in the opening verses of his Gospel:

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*John 1:1-5 NRSV*

*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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What came into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

**The Word:**

John's description of Heaven coming to Earth focuses on Someone he refers to as simply "The Word." In the original text, John's term for "The Word" is "the *logos*." John chose this term very carefully!

- For his Jewish readers, saying "In the beginning was the Word..." meant a retelling of the Creation Story. Genesis 1 begins with the

words "In the beginning." And the story goes on to tell how God created the world through His spoken Word.

- For his Greek readers, the universe was *kosmos*, an ordered place. And what lay behind this ordered world was "reason" or *logos*. *Logos* gave meaning and purpose to the world. It was the organizing principle, the "logic" behind everything else.
- In some ways the Jewish and Greek ideas had already begun to come together in Jewish reflection by thinking of the Word as Wisdom which stood at God's side during Creation, functioning as His Master Craftsman. In Proverbs Wisdom says:

### **[Slide 6]**

*Proverbs 8:29b-30 NRSV*

*"...when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always."*

So here, in the word *logos*, was a term to which Jew and Greek could relate. It took them all the way back to before the Creation of the world. It gave them each a familiar starting point for the world's story. But it also opened the possibility for something utterly unexpected: that God had come into our world as a fellow human being to dispel the darkness of sin and death.

### **The Word's Journey:**

John begins the Word's Journey in Heaven where the Word "was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1-2) The Word is God's Wisdom, a part of God Himself, eternally present with the Father. The words "In the beginning was the Word" recall the name of God: The I Am. The Word didn't come into being "in the beginning." The Word *is*. Like the Father, He is the one who describes Himself by saying:

### **[Slide 7]**

*Revelation 1:17b-18a NIV*

*"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One."*

Then John goes on to announce that it is *this Word* who made the world. He is both God's powerful Word which spoke the Universe into being, and the

*reason*, or “logic” that gave form and function to that world. He is The Logos, The Word.

Here is the Word’s Journey. It begins in Heaven, in the heart of God. Then the Word, God’s Wisdom, goes forth and makes the worlds. In a way, The Word is like the light of the Sun: It is “in” the Sun and part of the Sun, but it also goes out *from* the Sun. So far so good, for John’s Jewish *and* Greek readers.

But then comes something utterly unexpected:

### **[Slide 8]**

*John 1:3b-4 NRSV*

*What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*

The great Word of God, present at Creation as Spoken Word and the deep Logic of Reality, came to life in our world. As John will show us, the Word took on humanity. The Creator became the created. Only then could we experience Heaven on Earth.

## **Living in Light**

**All of God we can possibly see!**

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Scientists tell us that when we look at the Sun we only see 44% of its light – the light that falls in the visible spectrum. Most of the Sun’s radiation is either blocked by our atmosphere or is invisible to our eyes. So yes, we see the Sun, but only as much of it as our eyes can discern.

The same is true with the great God who has made Himself known to us through The Word, His Son. We could never comprehend the vastness and power, the wisdom and holiness of Almighty God. As John puts it: “No one has seen God at any time.” We could never bridge the gap between Heaven and Earth. We’re earthbound mortals, locked in Time. He is the Eternal I Am.

But when we see Jesus, the Son, we see God. We experience as much of God as a human being is capable of experiencing. Jesus is like those rays of

sunlight that stream into our world, bringing life and light. Jesus brings Heaven to earth.

## **Living in the Light**

### **Overcoming the darkness:**

Every morning the Sun makes darkness flee. No matter how dark the night might be, it is no match for those first rays of dawn. The same is true when the Word who is the Light of all people came into our dark world. John writes:

#### **[Slide 10]**

*John 1:5 NRSV*

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

Jesus' birth was not announced at high noon in the center of Jerusalem. It was proclaimed by angels in the middle of the night over a group of terrified shepherds. The Word who is the Light had come into our dark world.

No emperor trembled in his bed that night. King Herod had no clue that the true King of the Jews was lying in a manger 6 miles away from his Jerusalem palace. But the first streaks of dawn were already in the eastern sky. The light was shining already in the darkness, and the darkness could do nothing to overcome it. Heaven on Earth.

### **Living in the Light:**

Every morning Jesus promises to make the darkness flee. He invites us to turn toward Him and welcome God's very presence and life into our lives. John wrote to fellow Christians:

#### **[Slide 11]**

*1 John 1:5-7 NIV*

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.*

*If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he is in the*

*light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Jesus, The Word that is our Light, promises to come and bring His light to our darkness. He promises to bring us into the fellowship and love of God's own family. He comes to us *as one of us*. We can know Him and experience His love. But only when we choose to walk in the light.

**[Slide 12]**

So let's throw back the curtains and roll up the shades. Let the Light from Heaven flood in to every nook and corner of our lives. Welcome the great God of Heaven into our little patch of earth. Let Him dispel the darkness and fill our world with life-giving Light.

Let's allow The Word who is the Light to bring Heaven to earth.