

Introduction:

- “The angel said to the shepherds, *“Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!”* (Luke 2:10-11, NLT) Our Nativity is complete this morning. I hope you noticed that Jesus was among the characters of Christmas outside as you arrived.
- We have been looking at the Nativity (the birth event) and my challenge this Christmas has been for you to put yourself in the story. In many regards Christmas is all about you! You will not hear me say something like that often but this morning it will be clear that it was all about you.
 - If you had not been lost there would have been no need of Jesus to come into the world.
 - If you had not been bound by sin there would not have been any need for Jesus to come.
 - It was ‘us’ He loved and it was ‘us’ He came to love...to the fullest.
- I hear this question often: *Why did Jesus come into the world?* I think the best answer to the question is the one that Jesus Himself gives.
- *“Pilate said, “So you are a king?” Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. **Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth.** All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”* (John 18:37, NLT) Jesus was born into the belly of the underworld to testify to the truth.

I. The Belly of the Underworld

- A. Define - Underworld - 1. a criminal class. IE. on the internet it is the “dark web” 2. In religion it’s the realm of the dead (hell). 3. In Greek mythology it is also referencing hell. When we talk about the belly of the underworld you are talking about the lowest part of that underworld realm.
 1. If you follow Marvel Comics or movies, you meet bad guys from the underworld...Joker, Magneto, Octavius, Red Skull, Bane, are from the underworld and enemies of the Super-hero’s.
 2. They are the dregs of criminals. They are the darkest and lowest of society. Their activity almost always happens at night.
- B. Jesus comes into this world. John 3:17 *God sent His Son into the world.* Right into the belly of the underworld. Jesus says to Pilate: *“I was born and came into the world...”* What world are we talking about. It is not just this planet. ‘World’ refers sea of lost humanity depraved and dying in its sin without hope of escape. And the ruler of this world is producing fruit after his kind—stealing, killing, destroy - Jn 10:10.
 1. John 12:31 says that Satan is the ruler of this world.
 2. John 14:30 and 16:11 both refer to the ruler of this world being Satan.
- C. If Jesus came into the world, and He did. Then he certainly found the belly of the underworld in Jerusalem.
 1. Here we find corrupt religious leaders. They do not care about truth because they can no longer recognized it. They have plotted to kill Jesus. They have lied to condemn Him. They have schemed to have the Romans kill him. They have totally believed lies and their spiritual world has been darkened.

2. Pilate, the Roman governor does not recognize truth when it is standing in front of him. Nor does he want to. He finds Jesus innocent but does not have the courage stand up for Him.
 3. Herod is only curious about Jesus wanting him to do a miracle for those at his party. The truth is far from him.
 4. The crowds don't have a clue about truth because they have chosen to believe the lies of the Pharisees.
 5. Judas has betrayed the truth
 6. The twelve have temporarily abandoned the truth.
 7. Jesus is right in the middle of the belly of the underworld as he stands before Pilate.
- D. This was the world Jesus was sent into. This was the world that Jesus was born into. *"For this reason I was born and came into the world."* What reason? Why did Jesus come into the world?

II. To Testify To The Truth Jesus came into the world to testify to the truth.

- A. Pilate says, *"So you are a king?"* Jn 18:37
1. the pronoun 'you' used by Pilate is an emphatic pronoun. "So **You** are a king? (Jesus' kingship is one of John's great themes.)
 2. Lets follow this question back a few verses. vs. 33 "Are you king of the Jews?"
 - a) This is not the question of a man honestly seeking the truth. Jesus' answer is as if saying, "Do you really want to know or are you just saying what others have said?"
 - b) Jesus answers his question with a question in order to get him to think. He is really asking Pilate: "What do you believe?" Jesus is always asking that question of lost people. It helps them to discover the truth. IE. My greatest lesson have been at the feet of those able to ask questions in such a way as to empower me to discover truth. IE. Jesus when He asked the disciples, *"Who do men say I am? Who do you say I am?"*
 3. Vs 36 Jesus speaks in a language that Pilate understands, *"My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."* "So you are a king?" Pilate. *"You say I am a king."* "I am not saying that. Here is what I say..."
- B. Here is my purpose: To testify to the truth!
1. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth.
 - a) Romans believed that all men were given a destiny by the gods. So Jesus is actually speaking in a way that Pilate could clearly understand what He was saying.
 - b) My destiny, my purpose, for this reason, actually...I was born and came into the underworld to take it back under control of my Father in heaven!
 2. I was born to testify - marturion - to be a witness. To speak in confirmation of the truth.
 - a) In John, witness is especially the witness that is given, not specifically to the facts of Jesus' history, but to the person of Jesus (Jn. 1:15; 5:31ff.; 8:13ff.) as the eternal Son of God (1:15, 34). Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT (p. 568). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
 - b) to testify meant to bring proof of something. A witness was one who spoke what he knew to be true.

- c) To testify meant to bring light to something or something to light. IE. Phrase, "Let me shed a little light on this." Meaning you are bringing understanding to something that was in the dark. What Jesus is bringing to light in the belly of the underworld is **truth!** Truth is something that those living in the underworld do not have.
- 3. Truth is light and light is life John 1. *"The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."* (John 1:9, NLT) Angels to Shepherds, "Those living in darkness have seen a great light."
 - a) the Truth testified to pharisees
 - b) The Truth testified to Pilate
 - c) From dregs of the street to the palace of the Roman Governor, Truth was pronounced and declared. No man is without excuse. Romans 1:20-21 *"they would not worship him,"* and therefore sunk deeper into the darkness.

III. What is Truth? Great question Pilate!

- A. What is truth? Pilate stood in the presence of Truth and asked, "What is truth?"
 - 1. Greek: Aletheia - truth. It denotes **a reality** that is firm, solid, binding, and hence true. With reference to persons it characterizes their action, speech, or thought, and suggests integrity. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). TDNT (p. 37). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans. Truth is absolute, firm, solid, binding.
 - 2. Many people believe that there are no absolute truths. In the underworld, that is the major philosophy of belief. What ever feels good do it, no matter who it hurts. There are many ways to God. It is this thinking that has our world so messed up today.
 - 3. Jesus comes to us as Truth. *"Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6, NLT)
 - 4. Truth can be known. Jesus testifies to that. *"And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:32, NLT)
 - 5. Truth is recognizable. *"They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?""* (Luke 24:32, NLT)
 - 6. Absolute truth provides anchor points for people. It provides surety of something we can count on.
 - a) IE. The story is told of a man who came to visit his old friend, a music teacher. As the man came in, he said, "What's the good news today?" The old teacher was silent as he stood up and walked across the room. He picked up a small hammer and struck a tuning fork. As the note sounded throughout the room, he said, "That is 'A.' It is 'A' today; it was 'A' 5,000 years ago, and it will be 'A' 10,000 years from now. The soprano upstairs sings off-key, the tenor across the hall flats on his high notes, and the piano downstairs is out of tune." He struck the note again and said, "That is 'A,' my friend, and that's the good news for today!" The absolute allows for accurate measure of sound... every time.
 - b) IE. If it is true that gravity exists, then I have to take that truth into consideration when deciding whether or not to go hang gliding or bungee jumping. If I refuse to believe that gravity exists, then I may go bungee jumping with absolutely no fear. Neverthe-

- less, if the cord is longer than the jump, the truth is going to be around long after I've flattened myself on the dry river bed below.
- c) Truth call for a commitment like a tuning for and like a law of gravity. When ignored bad things happen.
 - d) Truth is truth, regardless of the individual's approach to or acceptance of it.
- B. What is not truth?
1. Lies are not truth. *"For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies."* (John 8:44, NLT) The lord of the underworld is Satan himself. And under his lordship everything evil is produced. All humanity is subject to him until they are born again.
 2. Relativism is not truth. Here is what relativism says:
 - a) If it seems right to me, then it is right for me. If it feels good, do it.
 - b) It also teaches that what is right for me might not be right for you, and neither of us should decide what is right for the other. It is bad to try to force your system of right or wrong on someone else.
 - c) The religion of relativism teaches there are no absolutes. Everything is a murky grey—there is no absolute right or wrong, no black or white. Everything is situational.
 - d) The problem is that relativism ALWAYS leads to chaos. IE. "Telling lies is abhorrent to me, but OK to you. But on the further end, relativism ultimately teaches that murder may be abhorrent to some, but it tells the murderer that it is OK for him."
 - e) *"There is no truth in him..." The system that Satan has lined up for us leads us down one path: to a place called hell, where we suffer punishment and separation for all eternity.*

Conclusion:

- Christmas is all about you! You were born into the belly of the underworld. A prisoner of its fears.
- For this reason Jesus was born and came into this underworld...to set us free.
 - He came to seek and to save the lost.
 - He came to die that we might live.