**Our History with God**

Based on [Luke 3:1-14](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk3.1-14)

Preached on December 6, 2015

Advent 2

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Based especially on this verse, *"****In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar... the Word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness****.”*

When two people have been in a relationship before and it ended badly, and one of them lets on that they already know the other... they say, "**We've got a history**". It means there's a backstory between the two of them. It means this isn't the first time they've met. They have already been linked to a particular place and time in history.

The evangelist Luke is interested in history. Every Christmas Eve you hear Luke’s attentiveness to detail, **"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.**" Historical detail, that’s Luke’s MO. And today look at what he does. He starts out "**In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...Pontius Pilate, Herod tetrarch, his brother Philip tetrarch in the region of Ituraea and Trachonitus…"** When Luke starts off his gospel, he says that he wants to give an orderly account of the life of Jesus. And he wants you to know that the things he's writing about are not just some inspirational tales or bedtime stories. He's giving historic details facts, locations. And he does it because he wants to locate Jesus Christ in Human history for you. Just like in the creed, which mentions that our Lord "suffered under Pontus Pilate"...because the who and the where and the when are important. Jesus had contemporaries, lived under rulers and regions, and Luke wants you to know that we and Jesus share a history.

Luke wants to tell you where the story of Jesus fits into your High School History textbooks. When our Nicene Creed says Jesus came down from heaven, it doesn’t mean he came down from heaven and landed directly in your heart. It means he came down from Eternity, a place where there is no history, no before or after…and he T-boned our timeline 2000 years ago and was incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit and was made man. Jesus entered our history as one of us.

Now, it wasn't the first time the Son of God came into our world. If you pick up any Old Testament book with a prophet in it...Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah. Et cetera, you'll realize that these prophets, before they begin speaking for God say, "**The Word of the Lord came to me**." That means Jesus--before he was called Jesus, before the incarnation before he took on our human flesh, before he was born into the world from Mary—Jesus was eternally begotten of the Father. Or, as we say in the Nicene Creed He was, “**Begotten of his Father before all worlds**.”…before all history. “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God**. “ All things were created through the Word of God, ladies and gentlemen, and the Word of God is the Son of God. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, and he has a history with his people. And John the Baptist came to remind us of that history.

The Gospel lesson for today tells us about John the Baptist. And it says, “T**he Word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness**.” John the Baptist is the last prophet, or at least the last prophet before Christ came preaching. And it says the Word of God came to him in the wilderness. And so John begins preaching it.

John preaches about the coming messiah and he tells people to be prepared. Like most of the prophets, he is urgent. Urgency is the difference between having a month left to do your Christmas shopping and a week. It’s the difference between having a year to plan your wedding, or only a couple months. As the day draws near you want to be prepared. And for we procrastinators, we don’t realize just how unprepared we are until the day is at hand.

John the Baptist is a prophet because he lives his life as if every moment a confrontation with God. Once in a video Bible Study, a man was asked, “**How do you determine right from wrong**.” He says, half jokingly but with a ring of truth to it… “**I determine right from wrong based on whether I would do it if my mom were in the room**.”

For John the Baptist, mom is always in the room. For John, every moment of life is a confrontation with the living God. “**Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.**” “**Even now, right now God is in the room, are you prepared for him to reveal himself**?” That’s the kind of guy John the Baptist was.

Folks, you wouldn’t invite this guy to a party; he’d kill the mood. He’d spoil the fun. He’d remind you that, as you’re yuckin' it up…stirring the olive in your martini and charming your friends, there are people out there who have no food or no fresh water or no tunic. And God might be only silently watching you now, but any moment he could ask you to explain yourself, to give an account of your actions and inactions…and can you do it? Not exactly the life of the party, John, but he’s real, as real as a punch in the face and as serious as a heart attack.

And John tells the crowds that come to him in the wilderness. He says that they have no more power in themselves to please God than stones. God alone chooses, God alone raises, God alone saves. He says, "**God is able, from these stones to raise up children for Abraham**." The crowds are stones; we are stones. Our condition is sin, that is, we are born deaf, dumb, dead and blind to God and rebellious toward his kingdom, until He makes from our hearts of stone, hearts that believe.

God makes his children; the Holy Spirit makes faith, and John the Baptist says, "**I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you *with the Holy Spirit* and with fire**." From stones God can make children of Abraham; and from dead sinners he can make living stones, as 1 Peter (2:5) says, "**you yourselves like *living* stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**." And he has, when he cleansed us with the washing of water with the word and made us his bride, awaiting in holiness the bridegroom when he comes to call.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Advent is a time to prepare for the coming of the Lord, and it’s a serious matter. The divine eye is always watching you, you can’t hide; only place your life in front of a mirror and ask, does God like what I see?

Advent is a time of preparation, of making our paths straight. But we who, by faith, stand in the grace of God prepare ourselves for Good News. Because the one who came into our history came not as a haughty judge, but as a humble savior. And this is nothing new, ‘cause the **Word of God** has been saving mankind ever since the beginning.

God spoke the world into existence out of nothing, and his Son, his Word is who divided the waters from the dry land and set the stars in their place. This Word shaped Adam from the dust and pulled Eve from his side. And when they sinned and the whole world fell away from God, it did not fall apart. Because the word of God continued to hold human history together to be the contact point between heaven and earth, God and man, both in ages past and in the age to come.

As Christmas approaches let us remember that the Child born in a barn, laid in a manger is the eternal Word of God. The one who is the contact point between God and man, the one who, when we were charged with breaking his law, stood between…took the shock, blew his fuse on the cross, and suffered the wrath of God lest we, His creation be torn apart by sin. Jesus Christ is the Word, the One in whom the history of the human race holds together.

We’ve got a history with God. We’ve got a backstory with Him. But He sent his son to set the story straight. And this Advent we remember that he has brought this history to completion 2000 years ago when Lord Jesus Christ's broken body and shed blood on the cross made atonement for the sins of the whole world. And he brings that history to you when his body and blood are given and shed for you this day from the Lord's Table. Come lord Jesus.