

Christmas Day, Gospel, Year B

BORN OF FLESH?

Christmas Day

John 1:1-14

Analysis by Peter Keyel

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Diagnosis: Darkness Overcomes Us

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Not Knowing

We don't know God in this world. When do we see God in our neighbor? If we have to stop to think about it, it means we're not seeing God.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Dwelling in

Darkness

We don't see God in this world because we dwell in the darkness of our own hearts. We filter everything through our hearts. Maybe we see God in some people, but can we see God in **all** people? Even if we try, does our heart let us see God in Donald Trump, or Hillary Clinton, or our least favorite political leader? Or if we avoid politics, is it in us to see God's light in the least and most wretched criminals amongst us? Or even in a cockroach?

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Born of Blood and Will

We are born of blood and our own stubborn will. By our own power, we don't see God in other people, and then judge them for not showing God's light. Some we need to condemn. The problem is that others also reach that conclusion about us. That leads us into a hellish cycle of eternal condemnation from which we cannot escape.

Prognosis: God's Light Shines in the Darkness

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Born of God

We cannot escape, but God comes down and joins us in the flesh. The Word becomes incarnate and is fully human. God participates with us in life as Jesus to the point of dying in the same cycle of eternal condemnation. However, this cycle does not hold God. God breaks this vicious cycle with Jesus' resurrection and promises that we, too, will escape it.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Enlightened

The power that breaks us out of this cycle of condemnation is God's forgiveness. John describes it here as "receiving Jesus" and "believing in his name." He also mentions that it gives "the power to become the children of God." It creates in us faith in God. Through that faith, we can see God in all people.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Witness

The end result of this faith is that we now witness to God's light throughout the world. Like John, we are not God's light, but we testify to that light. We see the light of God's glory everywhere, that glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. That glory and that faith helps us share God's light with others.