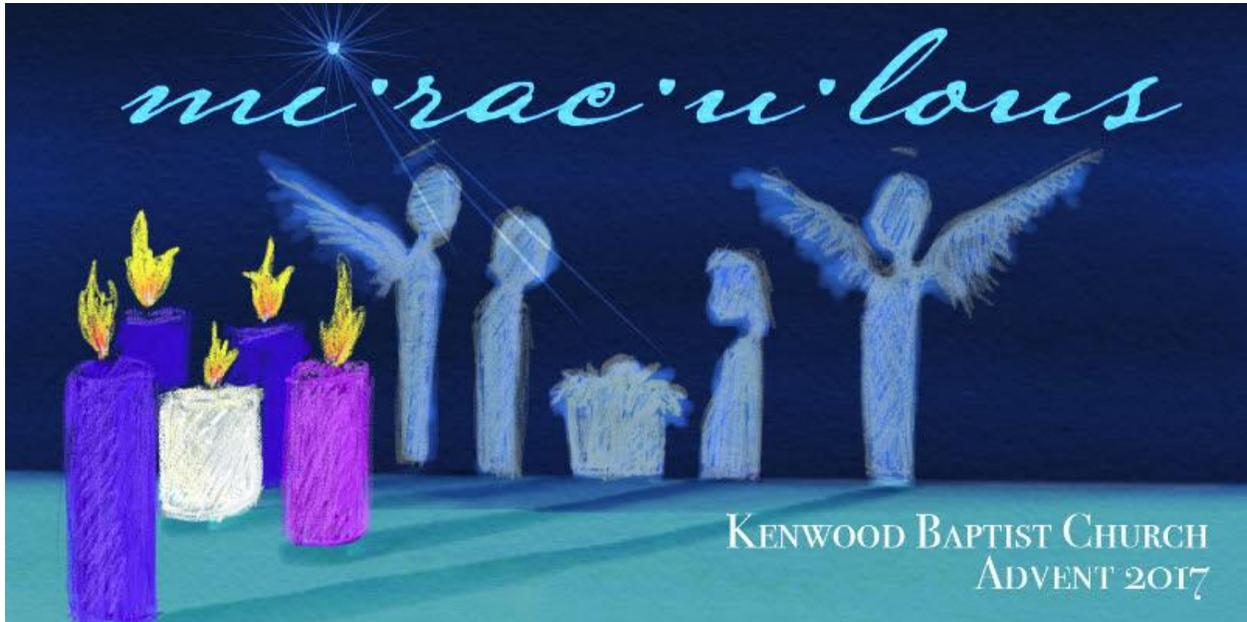


"Mi·rac·u·lous Savior"
Advent 2017 Sermon Series
Kenwood Baptist Church
Pastor David Palmer
December 10, 2017

TEXT: Luke 1:39-55



This morning we continue in our Advent series: *miraculous*. You will recall from last week that the word *miraculous* means something that has occurred through divine or supernatural intervention or manifesting such power. That's a crucial word for us this morning, that miraculous things happening through divine power. Miraculous things are highly improbable things; they are extraordinary things and bring very welcome consequences. The Advent season marks the four weeks leading up to the celebration of Christ's birth, and these are traditionally associated with hope, love, joy, and peace. This year at Kenwood we are exploring the Advent season to celebrate the birth of Christ from four scenes in the Gospel of Luke. Last Sunday we saw in Gabriel's announcement to Mary, the promise of a *miraculous Son*. This Sunday, we turn to Mary's response in praise as she heralds the coming of a *miraculous Savior*. In the subsequent weeks, we will follow Zechariah's prophecy of a *miraculous King*, and then the heavenly hosts' bursting out into praise with a *miraculous Message* for all the earth.

This morning as we look at a miraculous Savior, we look at the song, the outburst of praise, that comes from Mary. We see in her words the heralding that in the coming of Jesus Christ, God Himself has arrived on planet earth and the power of God's saving arm is visited and evident to

all. Christmas has as its center a miraculous Son and a miraculous Savior who is none other than the Son of God. We consider the divinity of Jesus Christ, and this is a monumental truth. It is a truth that sets the trajectory of our lives. It is a truth that has been attacked and denied throughout Christian history by the ancient heresy Arianism, with its modern manifestations in the Unitarian movement in our country. There have been at least three waves of Unitarianism that have swept across the country, and these waves, under the guise of this seemingly innocent and affirming term Unitarian, are actually more about a denial of the divinity of Christ. If Jesus is not God in human flesh, then we do not have a Savior powerful enough to redeem. Sometimes scholars separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith. Take for example Gerald Smith from the University of Chicago. In his book, *The Christ of faith and the Jesus of History*, Smith writes:

“The distinct trend of interpretation during the past century has been away from the formula which passed into the great creeds of the church. The Christ of these creeds is no longer considered identical with the historical Jesus.”

Consider the statement of Claudia Setzer from Manhattan College in a PBS documentary that was widely viewed called, *From Jesus to Christ*. She says:

“The historical Jesus and the Jesus of the early church bear little resemblance to one another. Even more tenuous is the connection between the historical Jesus and later Christianity.”

Bart Ehrman, a New Testament scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says in *How Jesus Became God*:



“If Jesus really were equal with God from ‘the beginning,’ before he came to earth, and he knew it, then surely the Synoptic Gospels would have mentioned this at some point.

Wouldn’t that be the most important thing about him? But no, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke he does not talk about himself in this way—nor does he do so in their sources.”

These influential voices in our culture reflect an ancient heresy that says that Jesus is just a man and that the man Jesus is radically different from the Christ that we worship as God, and this truth has massive consequences for us.

So we turn to our text this morning. We must find out if these things are so. You'll recall that last Sunday Mary received an unexpected visit from the angel Gabriel, that angel whose name means *a mighty warrior of God*, who stands in the very presence of God and announced to her

a miraculous Son who would come into this world through divine agency. Now we pick up the narrative that needs telling, that in response to that visit, Mary arose and went with haste. As I'm getting older, I'm starting to walk with care. As you get older, one of the worst things that can happen to you is falling, and so I've just begun to walk a little more carefully. Some of you know what I'm talking about. But, Mary is young, so this doesn't apply, and she goes with haste to the hill country of Judah. If the angel Gabriel visits you and says that God is about to bring forth His one and only Son through you, through divine agency in the power of the Holy Spirit, and your relative Elizabeth who was barren is also six months pregnant, you, as did Mary, would go with haste. She goes and greets Elizabeth, entering the house of Zechariah. Luke 1:41 says:

"And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."

The Bible has a very high view of human life, and that life begins even in the womb, and the remarkable thing is that John the Baptist, at six months of age in the womb, recognizes the greeting, and leaps in response. Elizabeth is filled with the Spirit and exclaims with a loud cry that Mary is blessed. In fact, she is the most blessed among women. Using a superlative construction: *"Blessed is the fruit of your womb"* (Luke 1:42). Notice the present tense construction. The virginal conception has happened. Jesus is in the womb. He is maybe a week old, and yet our Redeemer, still in the womb, is greeted in an astonishing way in Luke 1:43. Elizabeth looks to Mary and says:

"And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Why is this remarkable gift given to me? Elizabeth greets Mary and identifies Jesus in the womb as her Lord. It's astonishing! Luke uses the word *kurios*, which in Greek is the word that used to translate the divine name *I am who I am* in Exodus 3. Elizabeth greets the Jesus in the womb with the title of the Lord God Almighty. It is astonishing; it is remarkable. Luke tells us that before Jesus even came into the world, He is greeted with the most honorific title that can be given. If you were here a couple of weeks ago as we finished our Old Testament series, we talked about the Cyrus decree. I mentioned that Cyrus proliferates titles for himself. It was unforgettable, for those who were here, that he refers to himself as the *lugal gal lugal*. I have heard some of you using this language, and it's exciting to me to have Akkadian working its way into the congregation. *Lugal* in Acadian means *the big man*, which is the ancient near Eastern way of saying *king*, and Cyrus had been given such position of authority that he called himself what no one ever called themselves, which was *lugal gal lugal: the big man who is bigger than all the other big men*. That's the greatest thing we can ever say about ourselves, and yet Jesus in the womb is identified as the Lord God Almighty. Do you see this? When He comes to this world, He does not come merely as a man, though His humanity is real. He comes as a divine Savior. Even in the womb, Jesus is named *the Lord*.

Elizabeth blesses Mary and says in Luke 1:45:

“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

It is in response to the angel’s announcement. It is in response to this astonishing statement of her relative Elizabeth that Mary bursts into song, and we must follow closely this song of praise. Mary's song begins in Luke 1:46 with magnifying the Lord:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Jerome's Latin translation in the fifth century begins: *“Magnificat anima mea Dominum.”* This portion of Scripture, in some Christian traditions, is called the *magnificat* because it is magnifying, declaring the greatness of the Lord. Mary makes God's name great and mighty. Her spirit rejoices in God her Savior. This morning, as we consider the miraculous Savior that is at the heart of the Christmas story, I want us to see that in Mary's song of praise she celebrates, and her celebration is rooted in the conviction that God really has come to this world in the Person of His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. I want to look at her song, because her song celebrates God's power as miraculous Savior. Her language looks back and picks up the imagery of the Old Testament where God is celebrated as our Savior. Her language also points forward and anticipates the work and ministry of Jesus as an adult. Let's look at this more closely together, and note this deep correspondence between who the Lord is in the Old Testament and who He is in the coming of His Son Jesus, our divine Savior.

Mary begins and bases her praise in that God has looked on the humble state of His servant. The God of the Bible regards, sees, and notices the humble. You will recall in Exodus 3, when the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He said in Exodus 3:1:

“I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them.”

We see the same things spoken of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 9, that when Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them for they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. In John 6:38,39, Jesus says of His heavenly origin:

“I have come down from heaven not to do My will but the will of Him who sent Me, and this is the will of Him who sent Me that I should lose nothing of all He has given Me.”

We serve a miraculous Savior who sees the humble. We serve a miraculous Savior who does mighty deeds. Mary says of Him who is mighty in Luke 1:49:

“. . . for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.”

The God of the Bible is a wonder-worker. In Exodus 15:11, the song of Moses, celebrates the works of the Lord:

“Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”

Psalms 71:19 says:

“Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like You?”

Those who saw Jesus’ ministry spoke the very same language. The disciples on the road to Emmaus spoke of Jesus’ public ministry. They spoke of Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet, mighty indeed. In Acts 2:22, Peter’s first Christian sermon speaks of Jesus in this way:

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know.”

The works of Jesus are enumerated throughout the Gospels, and they are the works of God Himself. Matthew 9 clusters a number of these together: Jesus heals a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years; Jesus comes to a ruler’s house and raises his daughter from the dead; Jesus passes by immediately from there and two blind men following enter into the house and Jesus touches their eyes and heals them. Jesus continues and frees a demon-oppressed man who was mute, and when the demon had been cast out, the crowds marveled and said: “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.” The Gospels want us to identify the mighty deeds of Jesus with the mighty deeds of the Lord God Almighty. Mary continues in praise in Luke 1:50 and celebrates God for His mercy on those who fear Him:

“And His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation.”

We have a miraculous Savior who extends mercy. This is something that only God can do. John Calvin’s favorite portion of Scripture was Exodus 34, and I know why. In Exodus 34, when God had redeemed His people with an outstretched arm and brought them to the mountain of His presence and revealed His will, He instructed on how to build a portable sanctuary that He might dwell in their midst. As Moses was on the mountain receiving the instructions for the people, they made a golden calf and abandoned the Lord. Whenever we abandon the Lord, what quickly follows is our lives begin to unravel, and that was happening at the base of the mountain. As we are reading this narrative, we expect God to come in judgment, and yet, we read in Exodus 34:5-7:

“The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.”

The God of the Bible alone can extend mercy, and this is exactly what we find in the public ministry of Jesus. Those two blind men who came following Jesus cried out to Him and said: “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” When Jesus entered the village, ten lepers came up to Him, standing at a distance, and lifted their voices and said: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Who could it be but God Himself to have a request for mercy to be extended. The Jesus of history is worthy of your worship. He is more than a man, and the request for mercy is rightly directed to Him.

One of my favorite scenes where we see Jesus is divine is in Luke 7. Luke's narrative artistry describes for us how a woman of the city, a sinner, learns that Jesus was reclining at the table. She was invited for dinner at a prominent Pharisee's house, and she came into the house and brought an alabaster flask of ointment. She stood behind Him at His feet weeping, and she began to wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and anointed them. When the Pharisee who invited Jesus saw this, he said within himself in Luke 7:39:

“If this man were a prophet, He would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.”

Jesus answered and said to him in Luke 7:40:

“Simon, I have something to say to you.”

When Jesus begins to address you in that way, get ready. Jesus speaks a parable. It's a very short parable, just two verses. Jesus said in Luke 7:41-42:

“A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii (18 month's wages), and the other fifty (a month and a half). When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon answered in Luke 7:43:

“The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.”

Jesus replied in Luke 7:44-47:

“‘You have judged rightly.’ Then turning toward the woman He said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven-- for she loved much.’”

The forgiveness of sins is the prerogative of God alone. Mary's song continues in Luke 1:51 as she celebrates the Lord who shows strength with His arm.

I love this image. One of my classmates at Gordon Conwell, Jeff, was a hard-working guy from a blue-collar background. He was of a "B" student, stayed up late at night. He had come to Christ later in life, so he didn't have the same background as some who had grown up in church. He sometimes was not on the leading edge of some of the finer theological points, but I just love this guy because he loves Jesus, sometimes more than those who had grown up and never known a day without Him. I remember this one time a couple of guys were doing some theological hairsplitting, and Jeff wasn't following exactly what they were saying. It seemed to him like they were making a big deal of something that wasn't such a big deal. Jeff finally inserted himself into it. He was a big guy, and he said: "Look, let's arm wrestle over it." I thought: "I'm going with Jeff. If we're going to arm wrestle on this theological point, it's Jeff who will carry the day." I love the biblical image of the Lord's strong arm. Do you love this image? It's an Exodus image. The Lord says in Exodus 6:6:

"I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment."

Deuteronomy 5:15 says:

"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm."

We cannot save ourselves. The distance is far too great. You cannot improve yourself to any significant degree, nor can I, but we can be the recipient of a mighty outstretched arm. John 12, summarizing Jesus' public ministry, summarizes it in this very same image. John says in John 12:37-38:

"Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?'"

You want to understand what's happening in the public ministry of Jesus? It is that very same mighty outstretched arm reaching out to save. Mary's song continues, that God's mighty outstretched arm overturns the world. It's the great reversal of the arrival of the Kingdom of God. In Luke 1:52 Mary says that when God shows up:

"He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate."

This is a goal, a biblical picture, of what happens when God arrives. God arrives and He removes

illegitimate kings. Aren't you glad for that? God arrives and tyrants are deposed. Belshazzar's reign ends tonight. The beast is bound and cast into a lake of fire, and the kingdom is given to the Son of Man. When the Lord arrives, the pride of man is cast down in Isaiah 2, and the Lord alone is exalted. When Jesus teaches His disciples as He is journeying toward the cross, He says in Matthew 20:25-28:

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

This is the character and action and leadership vision of the Lord God Almighty. It is the ruling style of the sinful human heart to gather power cords, to hold onto it and exploit those around them, but it is the character of the Lord God Almighty to come in the form of a human being and to become obedient unto death and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Mary continues bursting into praise in Luke 1:53. She says that when the Lord God arrives:

“He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.”

Are you hungry this morning? God feeds His people in Scripture. In Exodus 16, He brings manna from heaven. Notice that the manna from heaven is given to teach us that man lives by every Word that comes from the mouth of God. In Jesus' opening sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, He pronounces blessing on those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for *“they will be satisfied.”* The hunger that is even deeper within us than a hunger for food is a longing for righteousness. If you're saturated and satiated with all the pleasures of this world, the Lord will send you away empty. If you gorge yourself on what this world can provide, and you are not hungering for the righteousness that is available in Christ, you will be sent away empty. But for all who long for His appearing, he will be satisfied. You will be fed with good things. Mary's song reaches a climax in Luke 1:54-55, that God has come in the Person of His Son:

“He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

We several miraculous Savior who keeps His promises. In Isaiah 44:21, the Lord says:

“Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant; I formed you; you are My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me.”

Micah 7:20 looks forward and says:

“You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as You have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.”

For those who were here this fall, you will remember that the great promise of all promises spoken to Abraham is near the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis 12:1-3 when God calls Abram, an elderly idolater, from Ur and says:

“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

This promise reaches forward in Scripture to a day that is realized in the advent of Jesus Christ. Jesus' public ministry, when He entered the city of Capernaum, a Roman centurion, a pagan man outside of the promise, came to Jesus. He said in Matthew 8:6:

“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.”

Jesus says in Matthew 8:7:

“I will come and heal him.”

But the Roman centurion said in Matthew 8:8-9:

“Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.”

When Jesus heard this, He marveled, and He said in Matthew 8:10-11 to those who followed Him:

“Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

They are coming every day. The apostle Paul says in Romans 15:8:

“For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs.”

He says in 2 Corinthians 1:20:

“For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.”

We come to a miraculous Savior: God in human flesh. How does Mary's song call us to action? Let me suggest three different ways.

The first way is to notice that *Mary's speech*, this young Jewish maiden, *is saturated with scriptural allusions*. I just want you to notice that. All of her language echoes passages of Scripture. Luke's narrative telling reflects the language and style of the Scriptures. It's a little bit hard to see in the English, but when you read this portion in Greek, Luke's language, though he is an educated Greek, reflects the language and style of the Bible. This is actually quite remarkable. Luke's opening sentence of this gospel is written in a very elegant, classical prose. Luke 1:1-4 is a single sentence. Luke is an educated Greek man and yet his narrative style echoes the Hebrew language of Scripture. How is this the case? Both Mary, in her very word choice and imagery, and Luke, in his narrative style, reflect lives which are saturated with Scripture. If you are not saturated with Scripture, then you might be tempted to absorb the folly of the scholars that I cited at the beginning. You might be vulnerable to embrace the absurdities that you can find online of the low view of Jesus. For some of us, we are inclined or somewhere picked up along the way, hopefully before you got to Kenwood, that the Old Testament isn't important. I'm still having Martin Luther flashbacks, and that is why I want to read to you what Luther said at the beginning of his preface to the Old Testament. Luther said this—it's great:

“There are some who have little regard for the Old Testament. (Can you imagine that?) They think of it as a book that was given to the Jewish people only and is now out of date, (He said this in the 1500s) containing only stories of past times... But Christ says in John 5, ‘Search the Scriptures, for it is they that bear witness to me.’ The Scriptures of the Old Testament are not to be despised but diligently read ... Therefore dismiss your own opinions and feelings and think of the Scriptures as the loftiest and noblest of holy things, as the richest of mines which can never be sufficiently explored, (Remember that his father was a miner.) in order that you may find that divine wisdom which God here lays before you In such simple guise as to quench all pride. Here you will find the swaddling cloths and the manger in which Christ lies... Simple and lowly are these swaddling cloths, but dear is the treasure, Christ, who lies in them.”

I want to challenge you from Mary's song and Luke's reporting of it to seek this saturation in Scripture. When you're saturated in the Scripture, you are protected from the folly of low views of Jesus.

Secondly, Mary's song challenges us and stirs us to *follow in imitation to worship Jesus as the divine Son, our miraculous Savior*. At one level, the application of every sermon is the same: it's worship, to worship Jesus. Why is Jesus worthy of worship? Because He is God Himself incarnate. He is our miraculous Savior who, like the God that we read about in the Old Testament, has come to us in the New. He is a God who regards the humble state of His servant. He is a God who does mighty wonders of healing and rescue for those afflicted with

disease or demonic power. He is a God who extends mercy to the penitent sinner. He is a God who saves through a mighty, strong, outstretched arm. He is a God who brings down the proud and exalts the humble. He is a God who feeds the hungry and satisfies them with good things, and He is a God who keeps all of His promises. I pray that your heart is stirred to worship Him, as is mine. Jesus is our miraculous, divine Savior. We need to be saturated in His Word. We need to follow the course of the text into worship.

Finally, ***we need to imitate these works in our lives***. This is the scary part. This is where we really chicken out. Sometimes we can say: “Okay, maybe, pastor, I’ll read the Bible. Okay, I’ll follow along in singing, People around me are doing it, there’s some social pressure.” But, you know, the call of Jesus, the divine and human Savior, ends up as a call to imitate those same works in our lives. We are made in the image and likeness of God. We are not God, and when we deny God, we don’t end up us atheists; we end up making ourselves God, yet, we rewrite the job description for own convenience or gain.

As I have reflected on the statements that I read at the beginning, I want to come back to that. At the beginning of the week I thought that academics tend to be skeptical, and this towering portrait of Jesus is just too much for some to believe. But, as I worked through the text, I came to see that I believe the deeper reason why we are afraid of the divinity of Jesus is the claim that it ultimately has on our conduct. If you deny the divinity of Jesus, then you can do whatever you want. There’s no accountability; there’s no future judgment. Yet, the divinity of Jesus is at the earliest layers of the New Testament witness.

I want to conclude with a counter testimony. I cited three scholars who had a low view of Jesus, and I want to conclude this morning with the work of a very significant New Testament scholar, Richard Hays, who teaches at Duke. He wrote a book called *Reading Backwards*. It doesn’t mean that you read the sentences backwards, but it is reading backwards in the sense of reading in a way that you pick up on the allusions. In the preface of this book, he quotes Warren Buffett right before the last economic downturn, referring to the *dot bomb cycle*. Warren Buffett publicly issued a statement. He said: “Beware of geeks bearing formulas.” Some of you are looking quizzically and others have already caught the allusion. He was alluding in that statement to another text, Virgil’s *Aeneid* which says: “Beware of Greeks bearing gifts” at the ending of the Trojan War. Buffett said: “Beware of geeks bearing formulas”—all these .com companies with projections of unlimited growth have no real assets. That’s what reading backwards is. It’s picking up on the allusion of the text with another text. Hays says:

“What is at stake in the identification of Jesus as Lord, as κύριος? . . . Κύριος is, of course, the Greek word used by the Septuagint to translate the holy name of God. . . . And yet there are also at least fifteen instances in Luke’s Gospel where the Evangelist refers to Jesus as

the κύριος – many of them in his own authorial voice. Consider the following examples: ‘And why has this happened to me, that the mother of *my Lord* comes to me?’ (Luke 1:43); ‘to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ *the Lord*’ (Luke 2:11 RSV); ‘when *the Lord* saw her, he had compassion for her’ (Luke 7:13); ‘John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to *the Lord* to ask’ (Luke 7:18-19); ‘Mary, who sat at *the Lord’s* feet’ (Luke 10:39); ‘*The Lord* turned and looked at Peter’ (Luke 22:61); ‘*The Lord* has risen indeed’ (Luke 24:34).”

Hays concludes:

“In short, Luke *in his own narration* quite remarkably applies the title κύριος both to the God of Israel and to Jesus of Nazareth—occasionally in a way that suggests a mysterious fusion of divine and human identity in the figure of Jesus. This is not a result of editorial carelessness. But Luke has deployed his references to Jesus as κύριος with careful compositional skill to shape the reader’s understanding of Jesus’ divine identity.”

(Reading Backwards, 65)

Hays powerfully offers this conclusion against the skeptical, unbelieving world. He says:

“I would hazard the following conclusion: the ‘low’ Christology that modern NT criticism has perceived in Luke’s Gospel is an artificial construction (fake) that can be achieved only by ignoring – or suppressing – the hermeneutical relevance of the powerful Old Testament allusions in Luke’s story. It is therefore precisely by attending more fully to the Old Testament intertexts in Luke’s Gospel that we gain a deeper and firmer grasp of the theological coherence between Luke’s narrative testimony and what the church’s dogmatic tradition has classically affirmed about the identity of Jesus.” *(Reading Backwards, 72)*

We ended last Sunday with the Apostle’s Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

We have a miraculous Savior. We have God in human flesh who is worthy of our worship and

worthy of our service! Let's pray.

Oh, Jesus, we extol You this morning, mighty God, everlasting Father. Lord, forgive us for low views of You. Forgive us, Lord, for fearing the consequences of a high view of You. Lord, I pray that You would open our eyes, open our ears, open our hearts, this morning. (If that's your prayer, would you put that into action by standing.) Lord, we want to stand before You, and we confess, Lord Jesus, κύριος has come in human flesh. We have a miraculous Savior, born of a virgin's womb, who manifested the identity and power of God. Lord, we offer ourselves to You in response. We offer our heartfelt worship and our lives in service. We praise You, Lord, and we worship You now.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.