

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, (2 Peter 1:1–2)

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.” (Revelation 1:7)

***Isaiah 2:10–17 (NKJV) — 10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the Lord And the glory of His majesty. 11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. 12 For the day of the Lord of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low— 13 Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan; 14 Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills that are lifted up; 15 Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall; 16 Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops. 17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The Lord alone will be exalted in that day.***

In Jesus name, who is, who was, and who is to come, our Savior in the flesh and in glory, dear elect of God and all who are redeemed by the universal atonement of Jesus Christ,

That word “Advent” means “coming.” There are 23 days until the advent of Christmas. Christmas is “coming.” This season is a time of preparation. But rather than Christmas lists, meal planning, and travel agendas – this is preparation of the heart. It is a preparation for the coming of Jesus. What sort of reaction did Mary have when she learned the coming of the Messiah would be in her lifetime – in fact in her womb? We heard it in our Scripture reading. ***He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. (Luke 1:52)***

She sings the fulfillment of Isaiah’s words. v.11, ...***the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*** But Christ will not be limited to just one day. He is every day – yesterday, today, and forever. In fact any day in which God brings to the salvation that comes through the birth of Christ alone, is **THE DAY IN WHICH THE LORD ALONE IS EXALTED. He brings this salvation in the day of His coming in the flesh ... in the day of His coming in your heart ... in the day when He comes for judgment, the Last Day.**

### **1. The day of His coming in the flesh.**

Raise your hand if you’ve heard of Rick Warren. Rick Warren recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of his book, “The Purpose Driven Life.” This self-help best seller sold over 30 million copies as of 2007. In his book and on his website he speaks of the “better life” that God wants you to have. He describes a “better life” where, by learning to change your behavior, you are able to have a relationship with God. As he puts it – “God gives you a second chance, a do over, a change to do things the way you wish you had.” He calls this being “born again.”

Is this the purpose of the LORD’s coming ... to give you a second chance? Is your purpose for living so that you can do it over, do it better, and have a more meaningful life?

***17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The Lord alone will be exalted in that day.***

That word, “haughtiness,” in the original language is described as “to have an unwarranted assessment of yourself.” Remember what the coming of the LORD in the flesh all about. It is about no other chances. It is about the last and only chance for all mankind. As Mary considers how she will bear the LORD in her womb, she proclaims, “He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.” (Luke 1:51). The day in which God entered into our world, our life, our sins, is a day in which we are all brought low. The event we call Christmas, where God became man was an event which tore down every ladder that man imagine himself building toward heaven. **The day of the LORD’s coming in the flesh is the day in which the LORD alone is exalted.**

Pride dulls us into thinking the Bible is all about me and how I can do the things God wants. It dulls us into thinking our life is all about finding what I can do or change to find purpose. However, the Bible is not all about me. It is about Jesus. ***But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. (John 5:38–39)*** The Scriptures, Old and New Testament, are all about Jesus, coming in the flesh for our salvation.

The loftiness of man is brought low. As soon as we begin to play a part in the work of Christ, we are lifting ourselves up before God – When we make the forgiveness of sins into a chance to do better, to make it right, to live a more meaningful life committed to God’s ways we take away to fullness of Christ’s work on earth. A purpose that is purposed in my purpose is a purpose that removes the purpose of the LORD becoming flesh.

The purpose of our life is that the LORD ALONE WOULD BE EXALTED ... in every way, at all times. The day where the LORD became Jesus Christ, born of a woman, born under the law, was the day where we were redeemed from being under the law that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for the glory of the One who saved us from our sins. Rather than a second chance, your only chance is in the purpose driven life of the LORD who came in human form. This brings our haughtiness low as we see from start to finish, our salvation depends on the life of Christ and the full atonement He has given us. **The coming of the LORD in the flesh is the day in which He Alone is Exalted.**

## **2. The day of His coming in our hearts.**

Many churches and pastors, like Rick Warren, will point to the day and sometimes even the hour when they were born again. Whether they know it or not, they are ultimately resting the assurance of their salvation in something they do – a conscious commitment to choose the right path, to live the Christian life. As Mr. Warren himself put it, “IF you prayed and meant it in your heart, IF you sincerely meant it when you said, yep, I’m stepping across the line, then you can have a meaningful relationship with God. ... Spiritually reborn ... a fresh start ... everything forgiven and forgotten.”

Will Elijah remember such things? Will he be able to look back and say, here on December 2, 2012 is where I accepted Jesus? Can we say that? How do we know that the Word was not working on Elijah's heart long before this? How do we know the Lord had not entered in when he heard the forgiveness of his sins just prior to his baptism? After all, faith comes by hearing the Word of God, Romans 10:17.

No matter which way you slice it, pride is trying to lift its ugly head into this scenario of salvation – trying to get a foothold, trying to find some part for me to play in the work of God. The LORD does not want us to be focused on the things that we have done to find Christ, but rather the things He has done to find you. He wants us to see every day in which we hear and believe in the salvation that He has brought to us freely as **the day in which the LORD alone is exalted**. The day of the LORD's coming into our hearts is not a focus on a one time event that occurred in my mind, but a one time event that occurred in God's mind. **THE DAY OF HIS COMING IN OUR HEARTS.**

*12 For the day of the Lord of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low.*

What are the cedars of Lebanon? In the day of Isaiah these were the prize commodity of the middle East. They were the pride of Lebanon, the precious possession of that land. Think now of all the precious commodities we glorify in our lives. Think of those moments when we lift up our lofty looks and rely on ourselves to accomplish what is good. Upon everything lifted up ... our high mountains – those mountains we tend to stand upon – trust in job, our organizational abilities, skills with people, our ability to handle stress ... Think of the towers and fortresses we build to exalt or protect ourselves – those towers where we refuse to ask or accept help when we need it most, times when drugs or money or alcohol or sex have fenced us in for security or escape ... upon all the ships of Tarshish, all things beautiful – those beautiful clothes, that renovated house, the beauty we place in our own looks ... the loftiness of man shall be bowed down.

The coming of the LORD is brings every lofty look low. But He does so with a very good purpose. You see, the LORD is purpose driven. He alone has the good purpose for every one of you. It is to bring you to repentance, true repentance that abandons any hope of securing life based on me. This is where and when the LORD enters.

This small baby may look cute on the outside, but inwardly he is full of the same corruption you and I suffer from – a sinful flesh, pride, selfishness. He just hasn't learned how to express it yet as you and I are able. Then he'll go through a phase where he can express it very well. One of his first words will probably be "mine." Later though he'll turn into a grown up who think all these things, but have figured out how to cover it up, to hide it.

Baptism is God's means of entering into our hearts, rooting out those sinful attitudes and giving them to the work of Jesus. As Peter says, "for the forgiveness of sins." Baptism takes away our sins. It has nothing to do with a certain day or time or choice. It has to do with the WORD promising and giving something eternal. The WORD gives you something that will not go away though we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. The WORD gives you

Christ – *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27).* Elijah is born again, because the Word says so. He is clothed with Christ, receiving all the treasures and riches of our Lord's work of salvation – fully righteous as are you and I. But it is not in the water, it is not in the parents choice to bring him here. It is alone in the Word. You can see how this truly exalts the LORD alone. What credit do anyone of us have in this gift. What credit can Elijah claim for what has happened today. He didn't come himself. He didn't ask for it. His parents brought him. As Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me ... for of such is the kingdom of God."

We heard in our Epistle reading from 1 Corinthians 1 – *26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ... 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:26,29-31).*

The day the LORD has entered is not one day, but a whole lifetime. It is passing from pride to lowliness in Christ Jesus who is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. To be born again rests not in me, but in the life of Christ brought to us. Our spiritual life consists only in what Christ has done for us and all that He does in us. For He does dwell in us. And this will be evident. We cannot be clothed with Christ and not wear it. We cannot be born again by baptism and the Spirit and not live a new life. For our purpose driven life is to glorify God through daily repentance and a faith which exalts the LORD alone.

### **3. The day of His coming for judgment.**

How subtle pride can be. We see this in Rick Warren's own theology of sin. He indeed admits that we all are sinners. In fact I think all the world will agree – no one's perfect. So we think, "No one's perfect, so how can God expect it out of me?" Pride readily admits I'm not perfect, but pride also figures, in the end, what matters is that I'm not as bad as other people. Pride is always sweeping sins under the rug ... covering up those things which are so dreadful in every one of us ... trying to forget about **the day of His coming for judgment where He alone is exalted.**

*10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the Lord And the glory of His majesty.*

This is where we have to go if we cling to the thought that things aren't so bad. We're talking about the rocks that conceal us from the terror of the LORD that we know we deserve. We hide from the glory which would expose this. Pride wants some part of salvation to come from how I have lived my life. Pride will always allow for excuses for the things I struggle with or the things I have failed to do.

As is prophesied in the book of Revelation – *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and*

***hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Revelation 6:15–17)***

Who can stand on this day?

Remember this baptism today. We began this service in the name of the Triune God, the same name that became yours at your baptism. We then drew near God’s throne confessing our sins and receiving the gift of eternal life through the forgiveness of sins. This is where Elijah was brought forward. He was humbled as all of us were to come before the LORD filled with sin. Yet through water and the Word he was able to be brought into God’s presence. Every one of you should feel the same. Every service we begin with these essential elements to faith you should think of being brought near God’s presence. Elijah was brought near the altar now cleansed and presented before the LORD, perfectly righteous through Christ to offer prayers and praise to our holy God.

Elijah has entered into the day of the LORD, and the day of the LORD is eternal. Every service you should see yourself go through this transition. Entering into God’s presence through Baptism and coming forth with new life and new praises through the hearing of God’s Word. You wear the white robes of righteousness. You have come to judgment day itself. Yet you have done so not in unbelief on the Last day caught unaware. The LORD has brought you low today to hear and receive the judgment in Christ – righteous, delivered, exalted in Him. ***“He who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).***

You will stand on this day. The Spirit says later through Isaiah, ***The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness. (Isaiah 33:5)***

The LORD is on high the one who has filled this place with righteousness. As His word is spoken, He is here. In Baptism, and soon in the Lord’s Supper He entering this place to fill you with His righteousness. The WORD comes through water, through bread and wine declaring you forgiven, fully. Today is the day of eternity where you believe and receive heaven itself. As Jesus promised,

***“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)***

A purpose driven life? Ours is one purpose – to exalt the Lamb who was slain through a life of repentance and faith that receives all the glory of God through Jesus Christ. In that day where God invades our life – the day of His coming in the flesh, the day of His coming into our hearts, and the day of His coming for judgment – **HE ALONE IS EXALTED.**

Amen.