
“God In Human Form”
The Doctrine of God the Son - Part 2

Various Passages

Last week I gave you an example of what secular sources are saying about Jesus. They gathered their assessments from the liberal wing of Christendom. But there are those who seem to be in the pale of the faith who also seem clueless about the identity of Christ. Consider the following:

“ The second Adam was named Jesus. As Abraham’s descendant, Jesus was wealthy and prosperous. He lived in a big house, handled big money, and even wore designer clothes. In fact, Jesus was so wealthy that He needed a treasurer to keep track of all His money.

Jesus, who was a whiz at speaking things into existence, showed His disciples how to master the art of positive confession. Thus they too enjoyed unlimited health and wealth. Some of His followers caught on so well that they become rich beyond comprehension. The apostle Paul, for example, had so much money that government officials would work feverishly to try to get a bribe out of him.

Jesus also overcame every trick and temptation that Satan could through His way. Even though He never claimed to be God, Jesus succeeded in living a life of sinless perfection.”¹

A bit further on we read:

“ One day, upon a cruel cross, the crystal Christ—the paragon of virtue—was transformed into a defiled demoniac. The lamb became a serpent and was ushered into the very bowels of the earth. There Christ was tortured by Satan and his minions. And all Hell laughed.”²

I know this is shocking, and it is no wonder the world is confused. But this material represents the teachings of men like Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Frederick Price, and many others. And there are many churches, some in our own community, who believe these to be godly men. No wonder we have to take people back to scripture as the foundation of all truth, not a warped understanding of scripture, but the simple clarity of who Christ really is. After all, ...

All of history has been directed to two events. All we read in the Old Covenant is directed towards those two points in time. Historians see history as circular. We can certainly understand how they draw these conclusions as we see nations rise, become morally degenerate, politically and militarily impotent and disappear as an issue.

I was watching “Lawrence of Arabia” a while back. In one scene Lawrence is speaking to Prince Faisal, the apparent leader of an “Arab” people. Lawrence tries to remind him that once the Arabs had been a great people, but because of their fragmentation they were now a little people. And if they continued to fight one another they would always remain little. Yes, nations rise, nations fall, and history appears cyclical.

¹ Hanegraaff, Hank, Christianity in Crisis, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR, 1993, p. 24-25.

² Ibid., p. 25-26.

But history would better be understood as spiral. Yes the cyclical factors are there, but there also seems to be a downward trend of peoples and nations. This certainly appears to be the case as we look at the world today. And it is certainly advancing towards a moment in time even now. History has passed one focal point and is moving on towards the second, and last.

These two focal points are the first and second coming of Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is the first of these two, and the events following, we will examine this morning. We are going to consider the Incarnation and touch on some of the doctrines surrounding of the life of Jesus including: His death and resurrection.

The truths we examine this morning are the basis of our salvation and worship. They are the underpinning of our faith. They are the foundation stone of the message we bring to the world in our obedience to the command,

“... go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 19-20).

The Incarnation - The promise of the Old Covenant was God would manifest Himself as a man. He would do so through the miracle of the virgin birth. He was coming so He could be the perfect sacrifice needed for restoration of the fellowship, lost at the fall, between God and man, Creator and creation. He was coming so one day all of creation could be restored.

Incarnation means “in-flesh-ment.”³ The doctrine of the incarnation means that God Himself took on the flesh of His creation.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

It is through the Incarnation that God made Himself visible and present to His creation. It is through the Incarnation God provided us with the model for our living as His child.

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son ...” (Romans 8:29).

The purpose of the Incarnation isn't limited to the work of the cross. It also includes the revelation of the invisible God to a visible world. Jesus was able to be observed in contrast to God the Father, being spirit.

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:2).

Jesus is the only visible manifest of God as person we will ever have.

³ Alan B. Stringfellow, Through The Bible In One Year, Vol. 3 “Great Truths of the Bible,” Virgil W. Hensley, Inc., 1981., pg. 37.

“No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known” (John 1:18).

God had promised that His coming, and therefore the Incarnation, is the necessary fulfillment of those promises. i.e. to Abraham;

“The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ... “He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit” (Galatians 3:8,14).

But most important, the Incarnation was necessary because it was only God Himself who could provide the necessary perfect sacrifice for the sins of a fallen mankind.

“But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5) ... “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10) ... “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).

This truth is what makes Biblical Christianity so offensive to the world. It says we are incapable of doing anything to satisfy God. People want to be deserving of salvation, assuming they think about the question at all. People want to be their own gods. But with the Incarnation God says you can do nothing to save yourselves. You can never be gods. “But I love you so much that I will do for you what you can’t do for yourselves. All you have to do is accept the gift.” And for most simply accepting is unacceptable.

How and why God chose the Incarnation is, and may always be, a mystery to us. ***“Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).*** It is something we must simply accept on faith.

The Virgin Birth - Underlying the truth of the Incarnation is the truth of the Virgin Birth. If God is to take on human form then He must somehow intervene in the normal method of birth. The virgin birth is rejected because it can’t happen within the norms of human function as we understand them. So what! We’re speaking of the miraculous, not the norm.

Isaiah told us, as we noted last time, that God would be born of a virgin. ***“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).*** God, through His angel, announced that He would be born to a virgin, to that virgin.

“In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” ... “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give

him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David ...” (Luke 1:26-32).

The New Covenant makes it quite clear that the birth was supernatural, for Mary made it quite clear she was a virgin and had not had intercourse with any man. Her question was therefore how could she be pregnant.

““How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”” (Luke 1:34-35).

She understood this was impossible by natural means. But unlike educated theologians, she also understood with God anything is possible. As we see, it was the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit who brought about the presence of the Eternal God, the great I AM into the womb of an obscure young Jewish girl.

Why do so many people have a problem with this truth? Primarily because they don't want there to be a God who will come in and directly involve Himself in this world. If He wanted to make it and then go away and leave it to us to run, fine. But, it is none of His business to interfere in it. He certainly should not make any demands on us, such as accepting Jesus as the only way to Heaven.

By the way, it is probably worth noting here again that the miraculous was the work of the Holy Spirit. There was nothing miraculous about Mary, except she was obviously a faithful follower of Yahweh in a nation that had fallen away from Him. There was no immaculate conception. The teaching she was born without sin is false. If Mary had refused to accept Jesus as Messiah, as Saviour, she would have ended up in Hell just as all who reject Him will.

The promise of Scripture was that Jesus would be the seed of woman as opposed to man. Ladies, it appears the fallen nature of Adam must be carried by the guy not you, for Jesus did not participate in that nature. ***“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15)***, and according to Paul, ***“The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ” (Galatians 3:16).***

The New Natures of Jesus Christ - Probably the next most difficult aspect of the Incarnation to understand, after the virgin birth itself, is the two natures of Jesus. Jesus was the God-Man. He was the of divine nature, being the Eternal God, but He was also truly man. He encompassed the qualities of both. *It is as one aspect is emphasized over the other that we find different types of cults and cultic teaching arising.*

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Not, John isn't saying that the word became a man, in other words God took on the form of man, but didn't give up being God.

It is this truth that underlies the concept of what we become when we accept the gift of salvation. We, being men, become partakers of the divine nature.

“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2 Peter 1:4).

Jesus was also wholly man. Certainly He had a physical body, not simply a spiritual manifestation of a human body, as taught by some. ***“When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial” (Matthew 26:12).*** The actions are those needed for a physical body.

And as with human beings Jesus had a soul, a spirit.

“Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”” (Matthew 26:38) ... “Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last” (Luke 23:46).

Jesus had a childhood.

“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him ... And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:40-52).

Jesus suffered the same needs as all people. He became hungry, thirsty, weary, sleepy and experienced sorrow. This is way we can take comfort in the knowledge that He understands all that we suffer.

“For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Hebrews 2:17-18).

But the difference between Jesus, as a result of the miraculous nature of His birth, and mankind in general is: He was sinless. It wasn't just that He didn't sin. He didn't partake of the fallen nature.

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This reminds us that the reason He was tempted, even as we are, wasn't because He could sin. His temptation shows us He was without sin. He understands temptation, but He didn't give in to it.

Jesus was also wholly God, and co-equal with the Father. ***“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began” (John 17:5).*** Jesus did not give up being God when He became man. This is illogical at face value. What He gave

up were the prerogatives that went with His divinity. He accomplished what He did through the leading of the Father, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, just as He expects of us. So with the Incarnation, through the virgin birth, God took on the form of man. And He did so for a number of reasons, but primarily to go to the cross to pay the price of our sin. He came to give up His life.

“But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die” (John 12:32-33).

We see in Christ’s prayers the expectation of His death.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them” (John 17:13).

Jesus gave up His life freely. It wasn’t taken, it was given.

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father” (John 10:17-18).

Christ’s life was given specifically, not to teach good works, a moral life style or the “Golden Rule,” but because the blood of the perfect sacrifice had to be spilled to pay the price for sin.

It was through Jesus’ death, and resurrection that He made peace between us and the Father. He came to reconcile mankind to God.

“... that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

But the gift of salvation is only available to those that are willing to accept this gift.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” ... “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly” (John 3:16; Romans 5:6).

The culmination of the work of the cross was the resurrection and the eternal life it promises for us. Without the resurrection all that went before would have been meaningless and all that we believe of Jesus would have been proven to have been false.

“But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” ... “Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.” ... “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact” (Acts 2:24,31-32).

Because of Jesus' resurrection we will also have life,

“Jesus said ..., “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die”” (John 11:25-26).

The resurrection is the final defeat of sin and death at the hands of God.

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” ... “The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:14, 26).

Finally, the irrefutable proof of His resurrection is clearly delineated in His post resurrection appearances. i.e.

“Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me”” (Matthew 28:9-10).

And of course there are many other examples.

With the resurrection Jesus' life was finished on earth. He promised the Holy Spirit for us.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

Next He ascended into the Heavens to be with the Father

“After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”” (Acts 1:9-11).

This is where He is for us today, until that time when He comes again.

We worship on the first day of the week, instead of the Sabbath, as a testimony to these truths: the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, the dual nature of Jesus, His substitutionary death on the cross, His burial and His resurrection.

But we must also remember that our daily walk is an act of worship, of witness in which we have opportunities to delineate the message of the gospel, ***“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ...” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)***, to the lost around us.

*God sent His Son—they called Him Jesus,
He came to love, heal and forgive'
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.*

*How sweet to hold a new born baby
And feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance;
This child can face uncertain days because Christ lives.
And then one day I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.*

*Because He lives I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living just because He lives.⁴*

⁴ "Because He Lives," Text by Gloria Gaither and William J. Gaither, Music by William J. Gaither, © Copyright 1971 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

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The Visible God: (*John 1:18; Gal 3:8, 14; 1 John 3:5;*
Heb 10:10; Acts 13:38-39)

The Virgin Birth

The Prophecy: (*Isaiah 7:14*)

The Announcement: (*Luke 1:26-32*)

The Question: (*Luke 1:34-35*)

A Promise Fulfilled: (*Gen 3:15; Gal 3:16*)

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Wholly Man: (*Matt 26:12; 26:38; Luke 23:46*)

A Childhood: (*Luke 2:40, 52*)

Needs: (*Heb 2:17-18*)

The Sinless Man: (*2 Cor 5:21*)

Wholly God: (*John 17:5*)

The Death, Burial and Resurrection:

Sin Payment: (*John 12:32-33; John 17:13; 10:17-18*)

Reconciliation: (*2 Cor 5:19; John 3:16; Rom 5:6*)

Resurrection: (*Acts 2:24 31-32; John 11:25-26,
1 Cor 15:14, 26; Matt 28:9-10 John 14:16-17*)

The Ascension:

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