

Intro: It is Christmas time again! Hallelujah! It is time to rejoice, right?! Why? What is so great about long lines buying stuff that we don't really need? What's so great about time with family, when over half of our family's are broken and dysfunctional? Have we simply agreed with each other to be ignorant during the season of giving? Is this the "good news of great joy which is for all the people" that the angels pronounced 2000 years ago? All the people can now gather together and support Hallmark?

Now, I am of course speaking with a large "Christmas-sized" portion of sarcasm. The question raised may be, "Well, is it wrong to celebrate with gifts and trees and cards with the family that I love?" Absolutely not! We should celebrate those whom we love and we should rejoice together in each others' love. However, that is not enough for "good news of great joy"! That is not the reason for Christmas. The question that we should be asking is: "Do these things lead me to treasure Jesus Christ as my gift from God?" Aah, now that is some perspective.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ, the coming of the God-Man, sent from the Father, is one of the most sublime and awe-inspiring truths of history. God became man...for man's sake. The Master became the Servant in order to save His rebellious image-bearers from His own just wrath. You see, it is our salvation from our sins that makes His birth the reason for great joy! It is the deliverance from His wrath that made the shepherds leave their flocks that night, and bids us to leave ours as well to draw near to the Christ. John Piper states the problem well when he writes:

God sent his Son to save us from his own just condemnation and wrath. The need for salvation implies that there is a danger we need to be saved from. That danger is sin and death and the devil. But the most serious danger of all is the danger of the condemnation of God. If God is for us, then sin and death and the devil will fail to destroy us. But if God is against us, then nothing can save us.

You see, the incarnation of Jesus Christ being made human is the awesome and glorious self-giving work of God for you! God for us! Wow! Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! If Christ would not falter to become human and to die in your place, bearing up the condemnation of God, then He will not fail to bring you home, to transform you from your lowly estate into the unimaginable glory of the redeemed children of God. He will hold you secure and never lose you. He has ventured out of Heaven's gaze in order to draw you up in salvation and has closed to you as Savior. This is the promise of the incarnate Savior of mankind.

We will look at four questions today regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ into the world as human: What is the incarnation? Why did Jesus become Human? What did the incarnation accomplish? Now what?

1. What is the Incarnation of Jesus Christ?
  - a. "Incarnate" = "in flesh"
    - i. The eternal Son of God became Human
      1. Colossians 2:9
    - ii. The Master became the Servant in His nature
  - b. LORD and CHRIST Jesus was rich.
    - i. John 1:3
    - ii. Col 1:15-16
  - c. LORD and CHRIST Jesus made Himself poor.
    - i. Is 53 – Servant, Suffering, Offering, Substitute
    - ii. Matt 20:28
    - iii. Phil 2:6-8
      1. "form of God" is contrasted with "form of a servant"
      2. These two "forms" (*morphe*, the form by which something is seen for what it really is) are linked by three finite phrases:

- a. "He did not consider His state of being equal with God something to be taken for his own advantage"
  - b. "He poured Himself out" (lit., emptied *himself*, from *kenosis*)
    - i. He did not empty Himself *of anything*, but rather He Himself is thing emptied
    - ii. Therefore, He poured *Himself* out to become human
  - c. "He humbled Himself"
3. What happened at the Incarnation of Jesus?
- a. The Son of God poured Himself out to become the servant
  - b. He laid down His mastery, His rulership, and His unhindered communion with the Father, in order to take on "the likeness of humanity"
    - i. "form of a servant" is further modified and explained by "taking on the likeness of humanity"
    - ii. His servanthood lies in the humility that it took Him to go to the cross (v8)
      - 1. His Incarnation, the humble pouring out of His masterhood, and His humility to the point of bearing up the wrath of God in the place of His created ones epitomizes His "emptying" or His "pouring Himself out"
      - 2. Jesus came to die as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity (1 John 4:10)

## 2. Why Did Jesus Become Human?

- a. He came to die in our place, as our substitute
  - i. Matt 1:21
  - ii. 1 Tim 2:5-6
  - iii. John 1:29; 3:14; 12:27-32
  - iv. Acts 5:31
  - v. 1 John 4:10
- b. LORD and CHRIST Jesus did it for our benefit.
  - i. He did it FOR YOU
    - 1. Romans 5:8-10
    - 2. 1 Pet 3:18
    - 3. Col 1:21-22
    - 4. 1 Thess 5:9-10
    - 5. Is 53:10-11
- c. He did it for the glory of His Father
  - i. John 4:30-35
  - ii. John 5:30
  - iii. John 6:35-40
  - iv. Heb 12:2 – He rejoiced to bring many brothers to salvation

## 3. What Did it Accomplish?

- a. Revelation
  - i. Jesus revealed the Father to Humanity
    - 1. Heb 1:2
    - 2. John 1:18
  - ii. Jesus revealed the Father's Plan to All Creation
    - 1. 1 Pet 1:12
    - 2. 1 Tim 3:16
- b. Reconciliation
  - i. Spiritual – Man to God

1. Romans 8:1-4
2. Eph 2:13
- ii. Relational – Man to others
  1. Eph 2:11-16
- iii. Physical – Man to Creation
  1. Eph 1:7-10, uniting all things under Christ
  2. Rom 8:18-21
- iv. Emotional – Man to himself
  1. 1 Cor 4:3-4 – I do not judge myself, the Lord is my judge
  2. Gal 2:20-21

#### 4. Now What?

- a. Rejoice in Him! You are so significant to God that He became a human to save you!
  - i. Do not fear your circumstances in life. Jesus poured Himself out for you, you can trust Him!
  - ii. Do not fear this world, for your Savior is the eternal Son of God. He holds you secure. Trust Him.
  - iii. Do not despair of life. Jesus is near. He is near to you, more than near, His Spirit is in you if you believe in Him. You are not alone.
- b. To be incarnate is to enter into another's suffering so that they will benefit.
  - i. He has called us to be incarnate in this world for its benefit, AS HE HAS FOR US
    1. Jeremiah 29:7
    2. Ps 37:1-7
    3. Luke 6:27-28
    4. Mark 9:35
    5. Gal 6:10
  - ii. Humble ourselves as He has humbled Himself (Phil 2:3-8)
    1. Give up your rightful power for the sake of others
    2. Rivalry and Conceit are opposed to Christ
  - iii. It's time for you and me to pour ourselves out to become servants of others, even our own enemies. This is what it means to be incarnate.
- c. Trust in the God-Man, Jesus Christ
  - i. Jesus came to earth so that we might trust in Him and have eternal life (John 20:31)
  - ii. His great love for us impels our trust
    1. Trust Him
    2. Praise Him
    3. Pray to Him
    4. Receive His work on your behalf with great joy
    5. Abide in Him
    6. Draw near to Him
  - iii. Do you think that the eternal Son of God would go so far as to pour Himself out all the way from glory, to humanity, to death on a cross, and then hold back His love from you? Run to Jesus today! The great God and Savior, Jesus the Christ, who took on humanness though He was Deity, so that you and I might find peace and joy in the presence of God without blame, having become right with God through His glorious sacrifice.

Those who are in trouble and distressing fear, if they come to Jesus Christ, have this to ease them of their fears, that Christ has promised them that he will protect them; that they come upon his invitation; that Christ has plighted his faith for their security if they will close to Him; and that He is engaged by covenant to God the Father that he will save those afflicted and distressed souls that come to Him...by his own act, he has engaged to be responsible for them; so that if they have exposed themselves to God's wrath, and to the stroke of justice, it is not their concern, but his, how to answer or satisfy for what they have done. ~Jonathan Edwards, *Knowing Christ*

Conclusion:

Behold the brave little boy in the manger! Brave because he became a boy, a boy destined to die for the salvation of sinners whom He spoke into existence. Don't be mesmerized by the plastic little cherub in your nativity scene. That swaddled lowly child casts a long and bloody shadow to a brutal Roman cross. The eternal Son of God, Himself uncreated and supreme over all, poured Himself out to become the servant of His enemies, to die in our place and bear the just wrath of God for our sins. That's what Christmas means!

Behold the Joy-giver today! This is a God like no other who has come in such detriment to save you from your sins. Every other god in history worked to better himself or herself. The pagan gods always act with self-centered ambition and passion. Jesus poured Himself out *for you!* Rejoice for your sins are forgiven by His blood! Trust in Him, place your complete trust in Him and be saved! The Lord of all Glory, *in excelsis*, has come down to redeem you! Call out upon His name and trust in Him for salvation. He went all the way to ransom you back from His own just wrath, He will heed your honest call for salvation, for He was raised from the dead to forever intercede for you. Trust in Him today.

Andrew Peterson, *Gather 'Round, Ye Children, Come:*

Sing out with joy for the brave little boy who was God but He made Himself nothing  
Well He gave up His pride and He came here to die like a man  
So in Heaven and Earth below every knee would bow in worship  
Every tongue would proclaim, "Jesus, He reigns with the angels"  
So, gather round ye children, come  
Listen to the old, old story  
Of the power of Death undone  
By an infant born of glory: Son of God, Son of Man