

The Presence of Christ at Christmas

Selected Scriptures

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:8-14

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Illustration: During the fall of 1775, a man who appeared to be a typical American farmer attempted to book a room in Baltimore’s most fashionable hotel. Concerned about the hotel’s reputation, the manager refused to rent the room. The man left and took a room in another hotel. Later, the manager learned he had refused a room to Thomas Jefferson, the then Vice-President of the United States. Immediately he sent an invitation to Jefferson, asking him to return to his hotel as his guest. Jefferson’s response was simple and to the point. “I value your good intentions highly, but, if you have no place for an American farmer, you have no right giving hospitality to the Vice – President of the United States.”

When Jesus came to live among men over nineteen hundred years ago, there was no room in the Inn. People did not recognize the One they met. Jesus is God, always was, and always will be. Yet, it was God, in the form of a man that was symbolically rejected by the innkeeper and was later to be rejected, hated, and even crucified by his fellow man.

Purpose: Every Christ follower must see at Christmas that Jesus came into our world to show us who God is

Transition: As we look at the Christmas story, we see God desired to have a presence with His people by sending His one and only Son to reveal who God is accomplish His redemptive and kingdom work.

Jesus has many titles, but we will look at just three today as they pertain to the importance of His birth in Bethlehem.

Son of Man – Jesus is 100% human and why that is important

- **Heidelberg Catechism - Question 16 - Why must Jesus be a true and righteous man?**
- **Answer: He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin. He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner he cannot pay for others.**
- The answer here is focusing on the need for a real human nature. Why? Because the penalty for sin requires suffering in body and soul. And only a human can do this.
- Jesus' birth from a virgin is important. If He had been born of a human father, Joseph in this case, Jesus would have had a sinful nature and since the sacrifice for sin had to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5), then Jesus had to be without the blemish of sin to be the sacrifice to pay for the penalty of the world's sins.
- **Jesus had to identify with mankind – Philippians 2:6 – 7; Luke 2:52, Matthew 8:24; John 11:35; Mark 1:35; John 6:15**
 - Jesus had all the characteristics of a human being
 - He needed his diaper changed as a baby. He needed his mom to breastfeed him for nourishment.
 - He may have skinned his knee as a young child playing and running in the dirt.
 - He grew up like any Hebrew boy in the culture and time in history

Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man

- He learned skills most likely from Joseph as a carpenter and builder.

Philippians 2:6 -7

Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men

- Jesus developed an understanding and compassion for man because of His human experience– Matthew 20:28; Matthew 11:19; Matthew 18:11
 - He loved human relationships!

Matthew 11:19

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

- He loved His fellow man

Matthew 18:11 – NASB

For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost

- Jesus had to face temptation which was common to man and yet be without sin - Hebrews 4:15 – 5:2; Hebrews 5:8; Psalm 103:10; 13 – 14

Hebrews 5:8

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

Hebrews 4:15 – 5:2

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. 5:1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

- Jesus had to be man to be the substitute on the cross to pay mankind’s debt of sin. - Hebrews 2:14; John 12:27; Hebrews 2:17 – 18

1 Peter 2:21 – 25

21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Hebrews 2:17 -18

17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

- Propitiation - “averting the wrath of God by the offering of a gift.”

Application: How comforting is it that we have a God who identified with mankind by living with him and experiencing all sin and temptation like man?

Transition: **Note:** It should be obvious that if Jesus is God, then He has always been God. There was never a time when he became God, for God is eternal. But Jesus has not always been man. The fantastic miracle is that this eternal God became man through the incarnation approximately 2,000 years ago. That's what the Incarnation was: God the Son becoming man. And that is the great event we celebrate at Christmas. Let's look next at the fact that Jesus is 100% fully divine.

Son of God – Jesus is 100% God and why that is important

- **Heidelberg Catechism - Question 17 - Why must he also be true God?**
- **Answer: So that, by the power of his divinity, he might bear the weight of God's anger in his humanity and earn for us and restore to us righteousness and life.**

Quote: "Here are two mysteries for the price of one — the plurality of persons within the unity of God, and the union of Godhead and manhood in the person of Jesus. . . . Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation." – J.I Packer – Knowing God

- There truly is no story more beautiful than the redemption story woven throughout the Bible culminating in the coming of Christ at Christmas. This is a story that no one could possibly imagine or write about on their own how a King came down from His throne, humbled Himself to be like His creation and then die an excruciating and horrible death to pay for the sins of those He created!!
- **To see Jesus is to see God – John 1:1;14; 14:9; Hebrews 1:1 – 3; Acts 2:22 – 24**

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation

Hebrews 1:1 – 3

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

- **To satisfy God's wrath and bearing the weight of sin**

Exodus 34:7

7 Keeping steadfast love for thousand, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty

Ezekiel 18:4

The soul who sins shall die

Matthew 27:46

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

- The judgment was to have God the Father pour out his wrath, and instead of pouring it out on us, he pours it out on him. That necessarily involves a kind of abandonment. That is what wrath means. He gave Him up to suffer the weight of all the sins of all of his people and the judgment for those sins.
- We cannot begin to fathom all that this would mean between the Father and the Son. To be forsaken by God is the cry of the condemned, and he was condemned for us. So, He used these words because there was a real forsakenness. – John Piper
- To be a sacrifice of infinite worth and value for mankind - Romans 5:6 – 11; I John 2:2

Romans 5:6 – 11

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- “For” verse 6 – “in behalf of, for the sake of, for one's safety, for one's advantage” – blueletterbible.com – Strong's concordance

I John 2:2

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

- Jesus died so that the whole world would have an opportunity to have a relationship with their Creator and that they could be forgiven and rightly restored to fulfill the purpose God created them to be.

Illustration: The Glory of Christmas – Page 44 – Max Lucado

- Applications
- God has forgiven us 100%, not 99% or 85%.
- We can have the benefit of a clear conscience when we listen to what God says about us. We can pillow our head at night knowing we are good with God and He is good with us!! What a satisfying feeling. There may be some people who will not reconcile with us, but we know, always know that if we come to God on His terms we are forgiven and the shame is removed. We may have to endure the consequences of our actions but we are free and justified in His sight. That gives us great perspective with our emotions and our mental health.
- We feel loved by God – Walmart on Monday – candles.
 - **Prayer for forgotten candles, Foreknowledge of God, God is concerned about the details of our life – Matthew 6 and He wants to provide and bless us.**
 - Losing your keys. You will find your keys the last place you put them.

Application: Are we more apt to follow and obey God out of a motivation of love because of the love He had for us even before we came to Christ?

Transition: Our last descriptive name for Christ is this;

Son of David – Jesus is worthy of all praise as the coming King

- The proof from the genealogy of Joseph and Mary that Jesus is the Son of David – Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:31; Romans 1:3; Matthew 21:15

Matthew 1:1 – Joseph’s lineage

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham

Luke 3:31 – Mary’s lineage

The son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David

Romans 1:3

Concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh

- The prediction that Jesus would be the Son of David - 2 Samuel 7:12 – 13

2 Samuel 7:12 – 13

12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever

Isaiah 9:6 -9

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

- The zeal of the Lord assures us of God's intense love, unstoppable devotion, and relentless commitment to accomplish His purpose in our lives. God's unrivaled jealousy for His people – Israel.
- The power is in the title Son of David – Matthew 15:22; 20:30; Philippians 2:7 – 11; Revelation 22:16; Psalm 8

Matthew 15:22

And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

Matthew 20:30

And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"

- Lord – sense of Deity
- Son of David – Messiah; the long-awaited Deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Philippians 2:7-11

7 But emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

- Jesus willingly limited Himself of the powerful resources of His deity and walked among men as a human being, experiencing everything a human being experiences. Hunger, thirst, fatigue, etc.
- But as these verses and Revelation say, The Son of David is and will be exalted to everlasting praise and power on this earth in the future.

Revelation 22:16

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Application: Do we take focused time in our prayer life and in our worship to carefully praise and honor Jesus as Lord and King?

Transition: Our summary of today’s message;

Key Thought: How hard is it to grasp that Jesus is 100% human and 100% God, lived among mankind, and will rule and reign someday as the Son of David?

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Welcome to our World – Chris Rice

Fragile finger sent to heal us

Tender brow prepared for thorn

Tiny heart whose blood will save us

Unto us is born

So wrap our injured flesh around You

Breathe our air and walk our sod

Rob our sins and make us holy

Perfect Son of God

Welcome to our world

Conclusion

The gift of Jesus at Christmas keeps on giving more and more gifts much like a gift box that has other gifts nested inside of it. Don’t miss out on the true Christmas spirit and all of its meaning this year!!

Questions to Ponder This Week

- 1. Are you grateful that Jesus lived among us and identifies with us in love?**
- 2. Do you live and serve Christ out of a pure motivation of love?**
- 3. Do we honor and praise God by standing on God’s Word and behaving in a way that shows we reverence Him?**

