

TWO – THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

Last week we considered the person of the pre-incarnate Christ. We dwelt on the attributes of eternity and pre-existence of Christ. We also looked at several instances when Jesus had appeared to the Old Testament saints.

Today our focus is on the miraculous incarnation of Christ. John 1:14 – ‘and the Word became flesh’. What does this mean? What did it involve? Why did God do this? What is the application to living the Christian life today?

I. THE MEANING OF INCARNATION

- Though the word ‘incarnation’ itself doesn’t appear in scripture, the words “in” and “flesh” do. John 1:14
- John also wrote about Jesus coming in the flesh. 1 John 4:2, 2 John 7
- By this he meant that the eternal second person of the Trinity took on Himself humanity. He did not possess humanity before birth, since he ‘became’ flesh.
- His humanity however, was sinless – Romans 8:3 ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’.

II. THE MEANS OF INCARNATION

- The Virgin birth was the means of the incarnation. Once accomplished this is a lasting state for our Lord. It began at his birth and continues forever.
- Mary protested when Angel Gabriel announced this. But he explained how the Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her (Luke 1:35). The divine generation of the child is of greater emphasis than the method.
- In the genealogy, Mathew guarded the virgin birth. He recorded that Joseph was the husband but it was Mary’s child. The pronoun ‘by whom’ is feminine singular, indicating clearly that Jesus was born of Mary only.
- Gal 4:4 – ‘born of a woman’ – is not a very clear indication as it might just mean assuming humanity like Jesus assumed a position under the law as the next phrase says.
- What was the purpose of the virgin birth? God could have overshadowed both parents preserving the sinlessness of Christ? It served as a sign of uniqueness of the person who was born. How vastly this was known we are not sure, but it would fulfil prophecy that he came from no-where in the order of Melchizedek. This priesthood also needed to be uniquely different to the Levitical priesthood. Hence the definite but indirect connection to Joseph.

III. THE PURPOSES OF INCARNATION

Why did God send His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh? The scriptures give several answers to that question.

A. To Reveal God to Us.

- Only incarnation reveals the presence of God, although veiled – John 1:18; 14:7 – 11
- The only way man can see the Father is to know the Son – and the only way to know the Son is to study the record of His life in Scripture.
- Because He became a man, the revelation of God was personalized. Because He is God, the revelation is completely truthful.
- **John 1:18; 14:7 -11**

B. To Provide an Example for Our lives

- *‘That we should follow in his steps’*
- **1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6**

C. To Provide an Effective Sacrifice for Sin

- Sin requires death for its payment. God does not die. So the saviour must be human to submit to death.
- Death of an ordinary sinful man would not pay for sin eternally. So the saviour must also be God.
- **Hebrews 10: 1-10**

D. To Be Able to Fulfil the Davidic Covenant

- Gabriel announced that Jesus would be given the throne of David forever. – Luke 1:31-33
- To have an occupant of David’s throne requires a human being.
- To occupy the throne forever requires that the occupant never die.
- **Luke 1:31-33**

E. To Destroy the Works of the Devil – I John 3:8

- Note that this was done on Christ’s appearance. The focus is not on his resurrection as one might expect.
- Why was this necessary?
 - Satan dominates the world.
 - Christ had to destroy him on his own turf.
- **I John 3:8**

F. To Be Able to Be a Sympathetic High Priest – Hebrews 4:14 – 16

- Our high Priest can feel our weaknesses because he was tested as we are.
- God cannot be tried and tested so it was necessary that he become man so he could be a qualified high priest
- **Hebrews 4:14-16**

G. To Be Able to Be a Qualified Judge

- Jesus is the judge and he will judge the World – John 5:22,27
- All judgement will be executed by our Lord “because he is the Son of Man”.
- Why is it necessary for the judge to be human and to have lived on earth?
 - Human excuses
 - Divine Justice and truth
- **John 5:22,27**

Thus the Incarnation has ramifications in relation to our knowledge of God, to our salvation, to our daily living, to our pressing needs and to our future.