

Front Page - 2018 12 - December

God Manifest In Flesh

Introduction

- 1) When seeking to substantiate the mystery of godliness, “God manifest in flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16), it is my opinion we must primarily restrict ourselves to the writings of the Old Testament and three of the gospels. A number of times in the book of Acts there were debates concerning the Lord as to whether or not He was the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 17:2; 18:4, 19). They did not have the epistles of the New Testament but for their evidences they were restricted to the observed and known life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and glorification of the Lord. They could not turn to passages such as Paul’s writings when he wrote, “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:5) and, “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. 3:16). Consequently, in our evidences we will seek to stay within the gospels.
- 2) It is reported that when the atom was in the process of being discovered, man sought to find a word to describe the tininess of it. He discovered that every word he knew, such as diminutive, minute, etc., were all alike in that they indicated something too big. When we consider the ever increasing wonder of any of the divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we soon realize the intimidating realization that every distinguishing attribute of each individual of the Trinity is beyond comprehension. That is, every manifestation of power or wisdom, every declaration on any subject, every prerogative being exercised, they are beyond the comprehension of any mind be it celestial, terrestrial or infernal. Furthermore, neither shall we, with glorified bodies, in the eternal ages comprehend the wonder of the Lord for He Himself said, “All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father” (Lk. 10:22). Yet, while we are in these earthly bodies, there is a stupendous need for the Holy Spirit to liberate us from the restrictions of spiritual blindness and to be enlightened to the wonderful world of Divine activities of mercy, love and grace. It will not be a sudden eureka moment, but is the result of a life lived in musing on the infinite wonder of God.
- 3) Our stated belief is that He who came into this world, was the full and perfect manifestation of God (Jn. 14:9), a statement which is in agreement with and set in contrast to all other humanity (Jn. 6:46). Christ is totally unique among the divine persons and humanity. Neither the Father nor Holy Spirit ever became a human being, and no human being ever lived solely for the glory of God. Our wonderful Lord, the Son of God, took on humanity becoming a real perfect human being, the only man the world has ever seen who was God’s perfect “specimen” of humanity. To consider the mystery of godliness is to enter the truth that the transcendent God became localized:
 - a) As a Nazarene He walked the streets of Galilee, Nazareth and Jerusalem (Matt. 2:23).
 - b) Being man, He worked as a carpenter. His mother’s name was Mary and He had brothers and sisters (Matt. 13:55-56).
 - c) He was the gentle teacher holding a child in His arms (Mk. 9:36).
 - d) He is seen as a sympathizer going to the home of bereavement, and we bow in wonder that the hand of God was touching the dead body (Lk. 8:54).
 - e) Wonder of all wonders:
 - i) The carpenter of Nazareth was the Creator of the universe (Mk. 6:3; Jn. 1:2).
 - ii) The Jew sitting in the Temple was the Jehovah who gave the ancient oracles (Lk. 2:46; Gen. 15:1).
 - iii) The Almighty God knew weakness as man yet was still the Almighty God (2 Cor. 13:4; Gen. 17:1).
 - iv) The omniscient asked questions yet was still the omniscient God (Matt. 16:13; Psa. 139:1-5).
 - v) The Source of Life died (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 4:14), and yet was still the God of life (Rev. 1:18). This is the mystery of godliness, the man Jesus was God in all His fulness.
- 4) The following are some of the comparisons between the Old and New Testament which attest to this fact. In pondering on the infinite wonder of God the Son, among other reasons, the Lord entered our world to reveal

Front Page - 2018 12 - December

God Manifest In Flesh

to humanity the perfect Revealer of God (Jn. 1:14) and the Father (Jn. 14:7). It is a matter of fact that when our Lord said, "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father", it was a declaration of His deity, for only deity could fully reveal deity. This human appearance was not as when the angels appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18:1-10), but He entered this sphere a real human being which is evident from the genealogies of Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. John states by the Holy Spirit the same truth of His humanity in writing, "The Word was made flesh" (Jn. 1:14).

- a) So complete is His humanity that He stands a paradox, an enigma.
 - i) God is from everlasting (Isa. 40:28), Jesus had a conception and birth (Lk. 1:26-31)
 - ii) God is omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-9), Jesus was localized (Lk. 19:1; Jn. 11:54)
 - iii) God is Sovereign (2 Chron. 20:6), Jesus was a Servant (Phil. 2:7)
 - iv) God is a spirit (Jn. 4:24), Jesus was a true human being, complete with a body (Jn. 19:38, 40; 20:12); soul (Jn. 12:27); and spirit (Jn. 11:33)
 - v) The Almighty God (Gen. 17:1) knew weakness as a man (2 Cor. 13:4), yet was still the Almighty God.
 - vi) He was the all knowing God (Psa. 139:2-5) yet asked questions (Matt. 22:41), but was still the all knowing God.

Some Scriptures which teach the deity of the Lord

- 1) In the Old Testament Isaiah wrote, "Prepare ye the way of the LORD (Jehovah), make straight in the desert a highway for our God (Elohim) (Isa. 40:3). Years later Malachi wrote, "BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord (Adon), whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD (Jehovah) of hosts" (Mal. 3:1). Several observations are made:
 - a) The coming One is Jehovah, Adon, Elohim and that coming One was Jesus the man. This indicates that Jesus is Jehovah, Adon and Elohim.
 - b) Malachi says, He shall prepare the way before "ME", and the speaker is the Lord of Hosts. Then these scriptures are taken up by the Holy Spirit who gives the fuller meaning of the prophecy by applying them to Jesus the man (Matt. 3:3, 13).
- 2) Matthew records how the Lord went into the "Temple of God" (Matt 21:12). Note it is the temple of "GOD" (capitalized for emphasis) and just prior to that entrance into the temple He had said, "In this place is one greater than the temple" (Matt. 12:6). How could mere man be greater than the Temple of God? Then applying the term "temple of God" to Himself, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19). So that there would be no misunderstanding, it is recorded, "He spake of the temple of His body" (Jn. 2:21). The temple was the place in which God dwelt. He was greater than it because He was God and His body was the dwelling place of God.
- 3) Jehovah is the King of Israel. "Thus saith the LORD (Jehovah) the King of Israel (Isa. 44:6; Psa. 74:12; Zeph. 3:15). Is Jesus ever presented by God as the King of Israel? The one who God calls the Lord, "My King" (Psa. 2:6), in the following verse still speaking of the King God said, "Thou art my Son" (Psa. 2:7). This was spoken concerning Jesus (Acts 13:33) and at His inauguration as High Priest (Heb. 5:5). Jesus is declared by God to be the King, thus bearing evidence that Jesus is God. Man also acknowledges Christ as King (Jn. 1:49; 12:13).

Experiences in which the Lord declared or manifested His deity

- 1) When the Lord was being tempted by the Devil, the response from the Lord was, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7). Clearly, Jesus was being tempted yet He referred to Himself as, "The Lord thy God". This for some creates a problem for James wrote, "God cannot be tempted" (Jam. 1:13). It is not a

Front Page - 2018 12 - December
God Manifest In Flesh

contradiction but indicates the completeness of the Lord's humanity in that while His deity and humanity cannot be divided, He never used His deity to perform a miracle or overcome temptation. Had He used His deity He would never have been a suitable High Priest to me for I am not God.

- 2) In order to be forgiven it is only the one who has been offended that can forgive.
 - a) The distinction between personal forgiveness and seeking forgiveness for another. At the cross man was offending God by the rejection of His Son and the Lord asks the Father to forgive them, but He was offended by the sins of man against Himself being God so only He can forgive them.
 - b) The distinction in relationships. "But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" . . . then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house" (Matt. 9:6); "When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mk. 2:5). "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mk. 2:7) Christ was claiming a prerogative of deity and if He was not God, then this was a dreadful wickedness in letting the man think his sins were forgiven.

. . . . Rowan Jennings

