

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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The Incarnation

Introduction

The twin doctrines of the condescension and incarnation of our Lord are like the opening of a beautiful flower on a summer morning which opens to reveal four beautiful avenues of thought:

- a) The Foreshadows From The Old Testament
- b) The Historical Narratives
- c) The Doctrinal Teachings
- d) The Practical Aspects

1) The Foreshadows From The Old Testament

- a) The Old Testament records foreshadows of the coming of the Lord into the world by fathers who sent their sons.
 - i) Jacob was an old man who left the family shepherding mainly to his older sons. At home with him was Joseph until one day, Jacob sent Joseph to see how his brethren were. A father sent a son!
 - ii) Years pass and Israel was at war with the Philistines. The young men fit for war had gone and among them was the sons of Jesse, but not all. At home with Jesse was David, until one day Jesse sent David to see how the war was going. A father sent the son.

Several fore-gleams of the Lord are seen:

- i) Both the sons went forth at the father's behest. (Gen. 37:14; 1 Sam. 17:17-18)
- ii) Both sons went down. (Gen. 39:1; 1 Sam. 21:9)
- iii) Joseph was loved by the father. (Gen. 37:3)
- iv) In both cases neither of the fathers knew that which lay ahead for their sons, and neither of the sons knew that which lay ahead of them. As in all shadows there comes a point of failure, and this is where this shadow fails. Had Jacob or Jesse known the mockery (Gen. 37:8; 1 Sam. 17:28, 30, 43-44); the danger zone (1 Sam. 17:40, 48-49); the imprisonment (Gen. 39:20); the false accusations (Gen. 39:17-18; 1 Sam. 17:28); the attempt on his life (1 Sam. 18:11; 19:10); and being sold (Gen. 37:28, 36) the loved son would experience; I do not think they would have willingly sent them. God and Christ knew that which lay ahead when He was would come into this world, and yet God sent His Son, and Christ willingly came. Wondrous grace and love.

- b) Another lovely picture is that of the little bird which was used for sacrifice (Lev. 1:14). The natural habitat of the bird is not on the earth, they are made to “fly above the earth in the open firmament of Heaven” (Gen. 1:20). Consequently, for it to be taken to be a sacrifice, it had to come down of its own volition. Man could not make it come down, so our Lord came forth gladly and voluntarily.

2) The Historical Narratives

- a) In the beginning chapters of Matthew and Mark there is the historical account of His birth. There is no specific mentioning of either of these two doctrines. We are told He was born by a work of the Holy Spirit but not told of it being an incarnation, although His name “Emmanuel”, “God with us”, could be a veiled reference to it.

3) The Doctrinal Teachings

- a) From the historical there is developed the doctrines of His condescension and incarnation for the Lord will speak about His being the Son who was sent by the Father:
- i) He “came forth from the Father” (Jn. 16:28)
 - ii) “I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me” (Jn. 8:42)
 - iii) “The word was made flesh” (Jn. 1:14)
 - iv) He was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3).
- b) There is added a spiritual aspect for the incarnation, and it has several avenues of thought. John gives three reasons the Lord came into this world:
- i) “That we might live through Him” (1 Jn. 4:9)
 - ii) “To be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn. 4:10)
 - iii) “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 Jn. 4:14)
- c) The Lord had to become a human so that He could function as our High Priest and Advocate. (Heb. 5:5-8; 1 Jn. 2:1)

4) The Practical Aspects

- a) When we have the Lord doing something and it is a doctrine, then there are practical implications. It may be that in reading Paul’s words: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7), one would think Paul was teaching the condescension and incarnation, but the context will not allow that interpretation. The passage is dealing with lowliness and consideration of others. It begins with: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind” (Phil.2:3), “Let this mind be in you” (Phil 2:5), and then Paul will give us examples of four men who were characterized by lowliness and thoughtfulness of others. They are:
- i) Christ (Phil. 2:5-8)
 - ii) Timotheus (Phil. 2:19-20)
 - iii) Paul (Phil. 2:24)
 - iv) Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-26).

The condescension and incarnation of the Lord teach that we ought to be humble and considerate of others.

- b) However, this is all very interesting, but what was it that constrained Him to come down? As I think on this I begin to worship as I appreciate the wonder of the love that brought Him forth from the Father and caused God to send His Son (Jn. 3:16). Well may our hearts sing:

*On such love my soul still ponder, love to rich, so full so free,
Say, while lost in holy wonder, why O Lord, such love, to me?*

[The World The Baby Was Born Into](#)

Dr. Luke informs us that when the Lord’s coming was announced to the shepherds, it was night, a time of darkness (Lk. 2:8). It was not just a dark scene physically but it was also a characteristic of humanity. Man universally had three great needs:

- a) A prophet to reveal the mind of God to him.
- b) A priest to offer the ultimate sacrifice to God and represent Him before God.
- c) A king to rule over him for God.

His needs were capsulated in the words of Job who said: “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!” (Job 23:3) and man’s universal lamentation was: “Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both” (Job 9:33). In reading the history of the world at the end of the Old Testament period and the intervening years, it is readily seen that ancient world was marked by:

- a) Spiritual Confusion, for was there one true God, a supreme God? The Ephesians had one major Goddess, “Diana”. In Athens there is reputed to have been 30,000 gods and goddesses. Rome had its major ones like Isis, Adonis, Orpheus, etc. Man lived like the animals he worshipped and life was marked by eat, sleep, work and ignorance of beyond death (Psa. 115:8). There was fulness of religion but it was a world of spiritual night leading to eternal darkness.
- b) Moral Degradation, since the knowledge of God and His attribute of holiness was almost non existent, man lived in open perversion of sensuality and lust. No one could be trusted for it was a world of deceptive backbiting and back stabbing among the elite. Human life meant nothing and a life was spared or not spared by the direction of the emperors thumb. There was no true justice for bribery was rampant. There was pleasure and excitement to the full, but it was a world of spiritual night leading to eternal darkness.
- c) The longing for decency and human betterment could be found among people who thought deeper than the immediate. They pondered how can things be changed, and the uncontrollable, “whatever it is within me” that causes me to do that which is known wrong? Some tried living by the law, others self flogging, others searched for secret knowledge, others for the fine arts, but nothing worked. They were striving but did not know the cause of the problems, and when all was done, they knew disappointment and frustration.
- d) In the mercy of God there was a few who still believed God’s pledge of a coming Messiah. Two of them are specifically mentioned, Anna and Simeon. Concerning Anna we read that she: “departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Lk. 2:36-37), or Simeon who was: “just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Lk. 2:25). For now, four hundred years there had been a waiting, and yet nothing apparently was happening. To make matters worse not once in four hundred years had God ever sent one prophet! God was silent.

Then one night, how applicable, as shepherds watched their flocks, suddenly a great light shone about them, and an angel, possibly Gabriel, for He is called an angel (Lk. 1:26, 28), appeared and spoke to them. In the midst of the darkness, the glory of the Lord shone about them and they heard the most beautiful words (Lk. 2:8-14).

“Fear not:

For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord

And this shall be a sign unto you; “Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

Then, suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

“Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, good will to all men”

What a night this was, God had fulfilled His promise, the Desire of Nations had come (Hag. 2:7). Their Messiah had come into this world, the Consolation of Israel had arrived (Lk. 2:25). Glorious message to be shouted from the mountain tops, the darkness was to vanish, the Dayspring had arrived (Lk. 1:78). He who alone can provide salvation and satisfaction, He alone is the great King who had the right to rule, He alone had the abilities to fully not only speak for God, but being far superior to the Prophets, He spoke being God. He alone could be a perfect and perpetual High Priest. What a night this was! Men now could know the truth, for He who was the Truth had come into the world (Jn. 14:6). He was the Light of the world and men (Jn. 8:12; 1:14). He is the way back to God (Jn. 14:6) through whom men can be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20). All made possible by the Babe in Bethlehem and the fulness of His all sufficient and eternally efficacious sacrifice. We with that celestial choir can triumphantly sing:

*Joy
to the
World*



Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

. . . . Rowan Jennings

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