

Lesson # 2 -- The Greatness of the Birth of the Lord Jesus.

Introduction

- A. It is important, when we refer to the birth of the Lord Jesus, that we distinguish between His birth and the Incarnation.
- B. By the Incarnation we refer to one of the greatest events of all time. This was when the eternal Son of God took upon Himself human nature. While remaining totally God, the Lord Jesus added to His divine nature a normal human nature through being born of the virgin Mary.
- C. The Incarnation was necessary if redemption were to become a possibility. The human race had sinned. Only a member of that race could atone. The Lord Jesus had to assume the nature and body of His own created race in order to die as man's Substitute and Redeemer.

I. The Prophetic Anticipation of the Incarnation.

- A. The Lord Jesus was to be born of a woman to defeat Satan.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. Gen. 3:15 NIV

Comment: This is the first announcement of the birth of the Savior. It was made to Satan in the Garden of Eden. God stated His plan -- the offspring of the woman (Jesus Christ) would crush Satan's head but in that act, what Satan had done through sin, would cause the Savior intense pain.

- B. The Lord Jesus was to be born of a virgin and be God-with-us.

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Is. 7:14

Comment: In this prophecy two great truths of the Incarnation are stated. We are told how the Savior was to be born -- of a virgin; and the meaning of that birth -- God would be "with us" in Him.

- C. The Lord Jesus was to be born of divine initiative and rule forever.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end ... Is. 9:6,7.

Comment: Note the emphasis in this verse upon the child being born and the Son -- not being born -- but given! Through a listing of His names and work we are taught how unique He would be. This prophecy points out the movement of divine sovereignty in infinite power, love, mercy, and grace.

D. The Lord Jesus was to be born out of eternity into our time.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Micah 5:2

Comment: Here it is prophesied the Savior was to be born in Bethlehem and in that act come out of eternity into time. The amazing accuracy of such statements, with such profound insight, underlines the truth that the Bible is divinely inspired.

II. The Biblical Description of the Incarnation.

A. The Lord Jesus was to become the Son of Man although He was the Son of God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. Luke 1:31,32

1. The virgin birth was necessary for at least two reasons.

a. While no natural member of the human race could atone for sin (due to the effect of the Fall), only a person in that race could represent mankind. The Lord Jesus, in order to be our Savior, had to join our race and possess all the fullness of genuine humanity.

b. The Lord Jesus had to be born of a virgin in that every other person was represented in and fell in Adam. The Lord Jesus did not have a human Father. His conception was brought about by the Holy Spirit. The person born of Mary was the Son of God. By the virgin birth He could become a member of the race without being represented in Adam and therefore without sin.

2. Through the Incarnation the Lord Jesus, while remaining the one eternal and infinite person, came to possess two complete natures -- one divine and one human.

B. The Lord Jesus was to be born in time to keep the law -- although He was eternal and the Lawgiver.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal. 4:4,5

1. These verses remind us of the "distance" "travelled by the Lord Jesus in becoming a member of our race. In His infinity He also became finite. For one of us to become an insect, while remaining a person, would only involve "travelling" in the realm of the finite.
  2. The Lord Jesus was "made under the law." This is a description of His office. He came to fulfill the law of God as our Representative. What we could not do -- He did for us. (Matt. 5:17; Rom. 8:3,4; 10:4)
- C. The Lord Jesus was to limit Himself to human resources although infinite in nature, attribute, and ability.

Who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Phi. 2:6,7 NAS

1. The question raised in this passage is related to the meaning of "emptied himself." The answer, although incomprehensible in implication, can be stated simply. The Lord Jesus "emptied Himself" of all manifestations of heavenly glory -- chose to lay aside the independent use of His attributes, and limit Himself to only those resources available to any believer. This included total dependence on the Father through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the acceptance of a life in which He would grow, learn through suffering, and eventually terminate in His sacrificial death.
  2. This passage therefore explains why the Lord Jesus did not know the time of His return (Mark 13:32), could be tempted (Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 5:7-9), and said that He could do nothing of Himself (John 5:19,30).
- D. The Lord Jesus was to become vulnerable to pain and death although He was absolute in holiness and the source of life itself.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (the Lord Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy (render inoperative) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Heb. 2:14

1. The emphasis here is on the Savior "partaking" of the flesh and blood of the race so that He might be able to "render inoperative" the work of Satan -- and be our High Priest.
  2. Because Jesus Christ united Himself with us in Incarnation He was able to take up our cause, atone for sin, and thereby defeat our enemy.
- E. The Lord Jesus was to learn obedience through suffering although He was perfect.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Heb. 5:8,9

1. Through the Incarnation the Lord Jesus could meet the qualifications demanded of a priest -- that of being able to have compassion on the wayward in that He Himself was characterized by and understood weakness.
2. Because of the voluntary limitations of the Incarnation, the Lord Jesus had to learn the will of God on a day-by-day basis. This is one reason He prayed.
3. The perfection referred to in V9 is not moral but legal or official. It reminds us that the obedience of the Savior reached its goal in the Crucifixion. (Luke 13:32; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:10)

### III. The Biblical Explanation of the Incarnation.

- A. In His perfection the Lord Jesus grew in maturity.

And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him . . . and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. Luke 2:40,52

- B. In the Incarnation the eternal Word, the Lord Jesus "tabernacled" among us and was the display of the Father's glory.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

- C. Through the Incarnation the Savior entered a period of poverty -- for our sake.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. II Cor. 8:9

- D. In Jesus Christ Incarnate dwelt all the fullness of God -- bodily.

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell . . . For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. 1:19; 2:9

- E. As Incarnate the Lord Jesus had one goal -- to do the will of His Father.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me . . . Then said I, Lo, I come in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, of God. Heb. 10:5,7

- F. The reality of the Incarnation was and is a test of orthodoxy.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God, Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, but is that spirit of antichrist . . . . I John 4:2,3

IV. The Purpose of the Incarnation.

A. The Lord Jesus came to fulfill the law of God.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. Matt. 5:17

B. The Lord Jesus came to give His life as our ransom.

For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

C. The Lord Jesus came to call people to repentance.

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Matt. 9:13

D. The Lord Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

For the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost. Luke 19:10

E. The Lord Jesus came to bring light into our darkness.

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. John 12:46

F. The Lord Jesus came that all who believe would have eternal life.

I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10

The Lord Jesus came to defeat Satan and set the believer free.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. I John 3:8

Conclusion: " ... God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ....  
II Cor. 5:19