

## **The Mystery of the Incarnation**

### **1 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)**

16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

This year we are bringing a Christmas series on the Mysteries of Christmas.

This morning we are going to look at the mystery of the incarnation. Christmas is not just about the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. It is about the birth of a King and more than a King. Something much bigger is taking place that Christmas night than simply the birth of another baby, no matter how important.

That night 2000 years ago, God came down to earth. But do we understand the significance of that statement. God is not a man like us. He is the creator God. I have stretched my brain trying to think of a way to explain the greatness of God but there is none. An ant might as well give instruction the greatness of the USA as me to describe the greatness of God.

But it is a necessary part of understanding Christmas. For if we just see the birth of this baby as like any other birth, then we have missed the whole story.

Please bear with me this morning. For me to explain the incarnation is like me explaining nuclear fission. I can do better with the incarnation, because the Bible has a lot to say about God.

- I. God is magnificent in majesty and glory.
  - A. All the things that man is trying to figure out and understand are but elementary to God.
    - 1. I watch various programs where we try to show how smart man is, but they are still searching and researching.
    - 2. It is because every time they discover the answer to one question they end up with 10 more questions.
    - 3. When I was a kid, science thought they would find all the answers and now they would just like to know all the questions.
  - B. Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.
  - C. Ps 139:13-16 13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous--and how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in

the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. NLT

II. Jesus put on flesh but was still all that God is.

- A. John puts it best with what he tells us in his gospel chapter one. 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- B. The writer of Hebrews tries to tell us about Him. Hebrews 1:1-3 (NKJV) 1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
- C. Paul tried to help the Colossians know this when he wrote in Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

III. But why did He do that?

- A. Because God needed to provide the perfect sacrifice.
  - 1. The only way for God to bring back the rebels (and we know we are all rebels) was by providing a covering for their sin.
  - 2. John 3:16 (NKJV) 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
  - 3. John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"
  - 4. Heb 10:5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me."
- B. He came to be the only perfect human.
  - 1. He kept all the commandments, not only in action but in thought and

desire.

2. He came and did exactly the will of the Father.
3. God requires perfection. Mt 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

C. He came to identify with us, and be one of us and suffer and die like us.

1. Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

IV. What does He want from us.

- A. That we believe all that the Bible says of Him.
- B. To admit that we are a sinner and need the sacrifice that He provides.
- C. To believe that He died on the cross in our place and for our sins and that the third day He was raised again.
- D. That He today sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven and that one day He is going to return and put an end to sin and rebellion and bring in everlasting righteousness.

“But made Himself of no reputation.” The meaning of the words is explained in those which immediately follow. So far was the Son from tenaciously insisting upon His personal rights as a member of the blessed Trinity, He voluntarily relinquished them. He willingly set aside the magnificent distinctions of the Creator, to appear in the form of a creature, yes, in the likeness of a fallen man. He abdicated His position of supremacy, and entered one of servitude. Though equal in majesty and glory with God, He joyfully resigned Himself to the Father’s will (<430638>John 6:38). Incomparable condescension was this. He who was by inherent right in the form of God, suffered His glory to be eclipsed, His honor to be laid in the dust, and Himself to be humbled to a most shameful death.

“He who is God, can no more be not God, than he who is not God, can be God” (John Owen).

None of Christ’s divine attributes were relinquished, for they are as inseparable from His person as heat is from fire, or weight from substance. But His majestic glory was, for a season, obscured by the interposing veil of human flesh. Nor is this statement negated by <430114>John 1:14 — “we beheld His glory” (explained by <401617>Matthew 16:17), in contrast from the unregenerate masses before whom He appeared as “a root out of a dry ground,” having “no form nor comeliness” (<235302>Isaiah 53:2).

“And took upon Him the form of a servant.” That was the great condescension, yet is it not possible for us to fully grasp the infinity of the Son’s stoop. If God

“humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!” (<19B306>Psalm 113:6)

how much more so to actually become “flesh” and be amongst the most lowly. He entered into an office which placed Him below God (<431428>John 14:28; <461103>1 Corinthians 11:3). He was, for a season, “made lower than the angels” (<580207>Hebrews 2:7); He was “made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). He was made lower than the ordinary condition of man, for He was “a reproach of men, and despised of the people” (Psalm 22:6).

*The humanity of Christ was real.*

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AW Pink, Gleanings in the Godhead