

Christmas at CL

What is Christmas all about? **Don't you just love the spirit of Christmas?**

The colors – the lights – the smells – the eggnog... the tree? the **Presents under the Tree?** The bells, the songs... the **Movies!**

The movies: **Rudolph?** **The Grinch?** **Cousin Eddie!** **How about Buddy the Elf?** *"Bye buddy I hope you find your dad"*

I love Christmas.... because... for us, **it is the celebration** of God's **most scandalous...** **tenacious** and **awe-inspiring love for us** and **all who are in the world**. This is the love made manifest in the birth of a helpless babe so long ago, a love that continues to promise that **in Jesus Christ, God has come to be with us** and **for us now and forever**.

In a dream the angel to Joseph...

Mt. 1:20-23 NIV "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because **what is conceived in her** is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** "The **virgin will conceive and give birth to a son**, and they will call him **Immanuel**" (which means **"God with us"**).

- **This is the promise of** Isaiah 7:14
- **This promise** is the **Doctrine of the Incarnation**

The doctrine of Incarnation is defined as the **eternal God**, represented as **Father, Son and Holy Spirit** would become man. God the Son would put on human nature and **be known** as **Jesus Christ**. He was actually called **Immanuel** which means, **"God with us"**.

This doctrine of God becoming man is **scandalous** to many who cannot embrace the reality of a **Holy God touching human flesh**.

And it is a **Stumbling-block** to the masses who **refuse to believe that the creator God HAS become man**. They stumble because if this is true, **God has become man**, then **every single person in the world** must **obey this one particular... Jewish man**. **Everything he says is law**. **Everything he did is perfect**. **Every claim He makes gives him absolute authority**.

if the Incarnation is true... He, this Man, Christ Jesus **has ultimate authority** over every pretense of man and every philosophy in the world.

This is why... **Christmas, which is the celebration of the Incarnation of Christ, is both wonderfully sweet and gloriously scandalous!** The Gnostics – God could not become a carnal God. Church Fathers... debated it.

Understanding and coming to faith about this doctrine is critical! We must not stumble over this.

Doctrine? YES! We have a **WOKE generation that is deconstructing truth!** **I read an article Jesus was the result of Mary being raped!**

Rob Morgan, A CHURCH WILL NEVER BE HIGHER THAN THE PULPIT IS DEEP!

So... decorate your trees, exchanged your gifts, put up your wreaths, but don't you every doubt that Christmas means **that the eternal God has come in the Flesh, in order to SAVE a eternally lost world.**

Christmas means God is With Us!

NTS - The Doctrine of the **Incarnation is essential to our hope in Christ...** why?

1) The Incarnation is God's Plan for Redemption.

a) God made known his plan from the beginning.

- i) Genesis 2, 3 - Adam and Eve sinned against God and as a result of their sin death entered the world.
- ii) God comes on the scene in Genesis 3:14, 15 confronting the serpent and proclaiming His plan.

Genesis 3:15 NIV 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.**"

- (1) So God says, "Someone is coming **through the line of the first woman**, Eve. And he will do battle with Satan and Satan will physically hurt him, but he will ultimately destroy Satan."

In this we are getting the first glimpse of the virgin birth.

- (2) In the rest of Genesis and the Old Testament the genealogies are given in a way that is patriarchal. "This man begat these sons, his sons begat these sons and more sons begat more sons..."

Jesus is called the Offspring NOT of a man, but of a Woman... Because **He is begotten the of God!**

b) The eternal God would come in the flesh.

- i) The word **Incarnate** comes from a **Latin Root Word** and literally means "**to be made flesh**"

Break it down further **carne** (word for "meat") comes from the Latin **carnis** ("flesh")

Catalyst Men had a Chili Cook off! There's **regular chili** and **there's chili con carne**. Chili that has Meat! And carne means meat, most men are looking for some meat in their Chili. Beef, pork, **I like venison!**

LOL: Men who who eats chili without meat? **Don't raise your hand!** I don't want to **shame you!**

- ii) This is the same word: carne, meat. So, **Incarnation means God came in the Flesh!**

So the next time you have a hot bowl of Chili you will remember if it has some meat in it then it is representing the glory of God in Christ! Perhaps we should skip the Prime Rib for our Christmas dinner and serve some Deer Chili!

- (1) John 1:1-3 ESV In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **He** was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

- (2) John 1:1-12 ESV He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.** God's Plan!
- (3) **Jesus came in the flesh** - John 1:14 ESV And the **Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- (4) **NEW** John 1:18 NLT No one has ever seen God. **But the unique One, who is himself God,** is near to the Father's heart. **He has revealed God** to us.

Logos (Word) of God, became a living voice of God, He revealed God, Explained God accurately so that we might Hear God, See God and Know God!

This was God's Plan – Immanuel would Come – So that God would be WITH US!

2) **The Incarnation was Promised by the Prophets.** (note: over 300 OT prophecies fulfilled in Jesus)

- a) **Born of a Virgin** Isa. 7:14 NIV Therefore the Lord himself will give you a **sign**: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and she will call him Immanuel. (God with Us!)

Two Prophetic Signs:

- A son (male) born of a woman.
- The woman would be a virgin.

The Jewish leaders through the generations were looking for these two signs!

- b) **Born in Bethlehem** Micah 5:2 NASV as for you, **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the **days of eternity** (don't miss this).

3rd sign: He would Born in a little no nothing town called Bethlehem.

Note: He is coming forth from eternity... I doubt Micah knew what he was saying here.

So we're looking for an eternal son born of a woman, mother to be a virgin, and he is to be born in the town of Bethlehem.

- c) **Showing up in the Temple** Malachi 3:1 ESV Behold, I **send my messenger**, and he will prepare the way before me (John the Baptist). And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly **come to his temple**; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.
 - i) This prophecy gives us a **time frame**.
 - ii) **Malachi is the last prophet** before Christ and final book of the Old Testament.
 - iii) **Important historical fact.** The Babylonians destroyed Solomons temple when they took the Kingdom of Judah into captivity 6 centuries before Christ. But around 20 years before Christ, Herod the Great built the Jews a Temple in Jerusalem. was the temple in Jerusalem destroyed? 70 AD.

(1) That means he had to have come before 70 AD. The prophetic timing!

Here are 5 signs of the Incarnation

1. A redeemer will be born of a woman
2. The woman would be a virgin
3. He would be born in Bethlehem.
4. His coming will be announced by a prophetic messenger.
5. He would come to the Temple in Jerusalem preaching, teaching, healing and ruling over his enemies.

3) The Incarnation Provides Power Over the Devil.

- a) Before Christ we were hopelessly enslaved under the power of sin. Sin had authority over fallen man!

Galatians 4:4-7 But when the **set time had fully come**, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **to redeem those under the law**, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "*Abba, Father.*" **So you are no longer a slave**, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

- b) Jesus through the Incarnation came to destroy the work Satan began against us in the garden when he took us captive through sin.

1 John 3:8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.**

4) The Incarnation Secures our Provision for Eternity.

- a) We cannot Compromise. We Must believe that Jesus the Eternal God has come in the flesh.

1 John 5:11,12 ESV And this is the testimony, **that God gave us eternal life**, and **this life is in his Son**. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does **not** have the Son of God **does not have life**.

2 John 7-11 HCSB Many **deceivers** have gone out into the world; **they do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh**. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. **8 Watch yourselves** so you don't lose what we have worked for, but that you may receive a full reward. **9** Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching but goes beyond it, does not have God. The one who remains in that teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your home, and don't say, "Welcome," to him; **11** for the one who says, "Welcome," to him shares in his evil works.

- b) God could have saved us from Heaven by the power of His Word, yet He chose to save us by sending Jesus down to our level. On Earth, Jesus dwelt among us and so that He could set us free.

Conclusion: Jesus the Son of God came in the Flesh. He did not become God! He was already God.

The One present in Heaven would not Be Contained by Heaven! In fact, **the God of Heaven, uncontained by Heaven was Received in a Manger?**

As an Infant Nestled in a Virgins Arms God initiates His Plan to bring us back to His own arms, so that we might share eternity with or God.