

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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The Incarnation

Introduction

Clarification

- 1) What is the incarnation? Simply put, to accommodate our anxiety and nervousness, in coming face to face with God, God became a man. When God manifested Himself at Sinai the people pleaded with Moses not to let God speak to them lest they die and Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12:19-21). To accommodate this intelligent fearfulness of being close to God, He graciously not only came amongst men, but became an actual human being, a man of flesh and blood with brothers, sisters, aunt, uncle and cousin (Mk. 6:3; Lk. 1:36). When Belshazzar was having his drunken feast the hand of God began writing on the wall. Suddenly the merriment began to die away. God was speaking to man and man was afraid. If God in the full blaze of His glory was suddenly to appear, we can be sure that if the shepherds were afraid when the "angel of the Lord" (Lk. 2:9) appeared, we would be stricken with terror at God's appearance. Therefore, in laying aside the outward manifestation of His glory the Lord became a human being, just like us, and therefore all anxiety was gone when being with Him.
- 2) At Christmas we often sing, "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail incarnate deity". What does that actually mean? In a simplified way it means that while never divesting Himself of an iota of deity, God became a human being. No one can see God, who is invisible, but man saw Jesus who is the Christ (understanding that the name "Jesus" was his "christian" name, the term "Christ" refers to His position as God's appointed prophet, priest and king), and when man saw Jesus, he saw the invisible God who had become visible, the transcendent God who became localized. Jesus the Christ, while perfectly and fully God, was so close and identifiable with humanity that man approached Him without fear. Little children had no fear of him (Matt. 19:13), those who were blind in the street felt free to call on him (Matt. 9:27). Great are the truths of the Psalmist, "Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" (Psa. 113:6); "Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Psa. 136:23).
- 3) Having become a man, it was the means whereby God manifested to humanity His infinite power to liberate from demonic powers and every miracle was an earthly diminutive of what He does spiritually and more richly. For instance, the cleansing of the leper deformed by that disease was a shadow of the cleansing He provides to the guilty and the wholeness He provides to the spiritually deformed.
- 4) Paul expressed one of the greatest phrases in all the scriptures when he wrote, "Great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

5) So complete is His humanity that he stands a paradox, an enigma, to His deity.

- a) God is from everlasting (Psa. 90:2). Jesus, the human, had a birth (Matt. 2:1), yet never ceased to be the Eternal God.
- b) God is omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-9). Jesus was localized, yet never ceased to be the omnipresent God.
- c) God is Sovereign (compare the “I will’s” in Gen. 3:15-16; 6:7). Jesus was a servant (Phil. 2:7), yet never ceased to be the Sovereign of the universe.
- d) God cannot die (He ever liveth, Psa. 90:2; Rev. 15:7). Jesus died (Jn. 19:18), yet was the God who cannot die.
- e) God never wearies (Isa. 40:28). Christ was weary (Jn. 4:6), yet was the God who never wearies.
- f) God never sleeps (Psa. 121:3-4). Christ slept (Mk. 4:38), yet was the God who never sleeps.
- g) God cannot be tempted (Jam. 1:13). Jesus was tempted (Heb. 4:15), yet was the God who can never be tempted.

The Distinction Between Condescension and Incarnation

Normally when we think of the coming of the Lord into the world we think of it as one step. I am aware that some present it as seven steps building on Philippians 2:6-7, but this is dealing with the Lord’s pre-existence and earthly sojourn to the cross. Philippians 2:7 does teach that there was at least two major steps, His condescension and then the incarnation. The difference between them is the condescension deals with the coming of the Lord down into this world, whereas the incarnation deals with His taking on humanity.

Illustration: Some years ago Queen Elizabeth 2nd visited a coal mine in the north of England. She left the glory of Buckingham palace, the priceless jewels and magnificent gowns, and she came down to the coal mines. However, she never became a miner, living as a miner, working as a miner, or experiencing the real world of a miner. It was a superficial coming amongst the miners. When our Lord came down it was not like that. He not only came down, but became one of us, a human being. He became a real human being living in a dusty dirty town with the bleating of sheep in the streets; the tinkling of metal cans as beggars begged for alms; the lowing of cattle in the temple precincts; ate at our tables, sat with people in the synagogue; and went to school in the synagogue. He sat on the floor as they did and knew the experiences of daily life. This was no superficial coming down, it was real and it brought Him into a place He had never known before. It was the wonder of this which caused Paul to write, “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.” (2 Cor. 8:9).

Christ Came Down

In the scriptures we read that Abraham went down into Egypt (Gen. 12:10), a geographical going down. The Lord told the parable of a man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho (Lk. 10:30), it also was a geographical and vertical going down. The coming down of the Lord was much more than a geographical journey. It was not the first time He had come down, in fact He came down in four levels:

- a) He came down without taking the appearance of humanity:
 - i) He came down after man had sinned (Gen. 3:8)
 - ii) He came down to commission Moses (Ex. 3:2)
 - iii) He came down and manifested His frightening power and glory (Ex. 19:16)
 - iv) He came down and manifested grace in letting man see Him as they ate and drank (Ex. 24:11)
- b) He came down and took the appearance of humanity:
 - i) He came down to warn Abram of coming judgment on the world in which he dwelt (Gen. 18:17-18:28)
 - ii) He came down to encourage Joshua (Josh. 5:13)
 - iii) He came down to meet with Abram in the heat of the day, but He was not a human being but had the appearance of one (Gen. 18:1-2).
- c) He came down unseen:
 - i) He came down when speaking to Moses at the burning bush, speaking about His people in their slavery. They did not see Him being there watching and having begun the work of deliverance (Ex. 3:8).
- d) He came down to take on humanity when He:
 - i) Condescended to be a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9)
 - ii) Took part of the same as those whom He would call His brethren (Heb. 2:14)

How Did He Come Down?

When the Lord came down He came with that which He had been in attitude before, the “Servant of Jehovah” (Phil. 2:6-7). Notice how that He became a servant before entering humanity. As the “Son” for the Father sent the Son (1 Jn. 4:14); as the Arm of the Lord (Isa. 53:1); and as the Lord (Mal. 3:1) for He was the LORD (Jehovah).

Why Did He Come Down?

There were many reasons the Lord came down, among them being:

- a) To destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn. 3:8)
- b) To take away our sins (1 Jn. 3:5)
- c) To prove the genuineness of our belief (1 Jn. 4:2)
- d) That we might live through Him (1 Jn. 4:9)
- e) To be the Saviour of the world (1 Jn. 4:14)
- f) To be the propitiation (1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10)
- g) To seek and to save that which was lost (Lk. 19:10)
- h) To redeem them that were under the law (Gal. 4:5)
- i) To show the Father and God:
 - i) No man hath seen God, the Son hath declared Him (Jn. 1:18)
 - ii) He that hath seen me hath seen the Father (Jn. 14:9)
- j) To reveal divine truth and remove distortion of the truth:
 - i) He was a man by whom truth came (Jn. 1:17); who was the truth (Jn. 14:6); and who told the truth (Jn. 8:40, 45, 46). Thus, the distortion of the truth of the Sabbath was clarified. He came down with the intimate knowledge of the truths of God, truths that no earthly mind can naturally know or understand, irrespective of standing.
- k) Preparatory reason to be fitted to be our High priest and Advocate (Heb. 5:8). Before the incarnation the Lord never knew what it was to hunger, sorrow, or be tempted, but by living as a human being dependant on God, He learnt by experience the difficulty of the pathway of obedience.
- l) Vocationally, to do the will of God (Heb. 10:9); to do it perfectly (Jn. 17:4; 19:30); having the right motive for doing it, love for the Father (Jn. 14:31); abolish death (2 Tim. 1:10); and destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14).
- m) Evangelical reason, "Not to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). To deliver His people from the government which enslaved them, sin (Rom. 6:14) and the fear of death (Heb. 2:15); to bring His people unto Himself (Rom. 5:10); and to bring His people to an inheritance their eyes had never seen (1 Pet. 1:4).

What Was Manifested When He Came Down?

What did he manifest of Himself when He came down?

- a) The wonder of His love and infinite mercy and grace, for in making Himself of no reputation (Phil. 2:7) He manifested His love, thoughtfulness, concern and willingness to be for others all that they needed Him to be.

What was manifested of God by His coming down?

- b) A revelation of God and the Father in His:
 - i) Love: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 Jn. 4:10)
 - ii) Mercy, for as the Dayspring who has visited us, He was sent "To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk. 1:78)
 - iii) Kindness to Titus. Paul wrote, "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared" (Titus 3:4).
 - iv) Grace: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

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