

## *Celebrating the Birth of Christ: His Humanity, His Deity, His Mission*

The word Christmas comes from two words: *Christ* and *mass*. The word mass means celebration.

Therefore when the two words are combine it means *the celebration of Christ*. Christmas should focus on the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

A Christian author writes, “The Church does not superstitiously observe days, merely as days, but as memorials of important facts. Christmas might be kept as well upon one day of the year as another; but there should be a stated day for commemorating the birth of our Saviour, because there is danger that what may be done on any day, will be neglected.”

Sadly, the importance and significance of the birth of Christ is being completely ignored by the great masses in the world today and even in the church. Why did Jesus come? What was the reason and purpose for His coming? Why did the Son of God leave heaven’s glory and come down to this sinful world? Why was He miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary? Why did He take upon Himself human flesh and dwell among men for 33 years?

The large majority of people in our modern world has brushed the birth of Jesus Christ aside, neglected it, and has failed to understand the importance and significance of the incarnation.

Instead they have been so taken up with the business of Christmas, with all the preparations, and buying, and baking, and all these things and the celebrations that this vital issue of why Christ was born has been forgotten.

What do we celebrate when we observe the birth of Christ? We celebrate three, fundamental things. First we celebrate his humanity. Christ is a man. He was not a phantom or a spirit. Jesus Christ was a real man, who was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

Secondly, we celebrate his deity. Jesus Christ is God. As the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Christ pre-existed before he was born a man. Jesus Christ is eternal and unchangeable. The word Incarnate derives from the Latin meaning "to make into flesh" or "to become flesh".

The incarnation represents the belief that Jesus, who is the non-created second person of the triune Godhead, took on a human body and nature and became both man and God. In the Bible its clearest teaching is in John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

Thirdly, at his birth we celebrate his mission in life. What was Christ born to do? I believe Luke 1:68 best summarizes the mission of Christ, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people."

We celebrate the birth of Christ because he was born to die for the sins of his people. Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The title of my message is, **Celebrating the Birth of Christ: His humanity, His deity, His mission.** Let us consider these three areas in more detail and see how they relate to celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

## **I. WE CELEBRATE HIS HUMANITY AT HIS BIRTH**

What kind of man was Christ?

### **A. He was an ordinary man in appearance.**

We read in Isaiah 53:2, “For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

Christ was not an handsome man. His physical appearance and features were not striking like King David or Absalom. There was nothing about Christ physically that stood out. From public view, Christ looked just like any, ordinary, Jewish young man.

The real Christ was not a Superstar according to the world’s standards. The Scripture makes it clear that, “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

## **B. He was a sinless man.**

Hebrews 4:15, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

**But was in all points tempted like as we are.** Christ was tried as we are. He was subjected to all the kinds of trial to which we can be, and he is, therefore, able to sympathize with us, and to aid us. He was tempted--in the literal sense; he was persecuted; he was poor; he was despised; he suffered bodily pain; he endured the sorrows of a lingering and most cruel death.

Yet without sin. 1Pe 2:22: "Who did no sin." Isaiah 53:9: "He had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth." Heb 7:26: "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Christ who "without sin" is able to assist those who are sinners, who put their trust in him.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Albert Barnes writes, “Who knew no sin. He was not guilty. He was perfectly holy and pure. In all respects, and in all conceivable senses, the Lord Jesus was pure and holy. If he had not been, he would not have been qualified to make an atonement. Hence the sacred writers are everywhere at great pains to keep this idea prominent, for on this depends the whole superstructure of the plan of salvation. The phrase "knew no sin" is an expression of great beauty and dignity. It indicates his entire and perfect purity. He was altogether unacquainted with sin; he was a stranger to transgression; he was conscious of no sin; he committed none. He had a mind and heart perfectly free from pollution, and his whole life was perfectly pure and holy in the sight of God.”

### **C. He was a man of sorrows**

Isaiah 53:3, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Only once in the New Testament do we read that Christ rejoiced in spirit:

We read in Luke 10:21 **“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit**, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Christ made this statement after the 70 disciples came back from their short term mission with success.

Often in the Scripture Christ is described as sorrowful in spirit. We read in Luke how the Rich Young Ruler went away because he was not willing to part with his riches and follow Christ, and Christ is sorrowful because of the young man's foolish decision. Christ looked out on the multitude and saw them as sheep without a shepherd, and this sight grieved him. He went to Lazarus when he was dead, and the Scripture tells us, “Jesus wept.”

Everywhere he faced the ignorance of men, not comprehending what he was saying. Christ grieved for lost people who did not know their right hand from their left. Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of

God constantly thought of going to the cross for the sins of his people. What an heavy burden for the Son of Man to carry. “He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

#### **D. He was a despised man.**

We read in Isaiah 53:3, “He is despised and rejected of men. ”

Christ was despised during his earthly ministry by most of the Pharisees.

Matthew 12:24, “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”

Some of the Pharisees believed Christ was a devil.

In addition, Christ was despised by the mob during his trial with Pontus Pilate.

We read in Mark 15:12-14, “And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.”



How cutting those words must have felt to Christ as he listened to the people spray their venom out, “Crucify him! Crucify him! We have no other king but Caesar.” Christ was despised and rejected of men.

Yet he bore it as a lamb going to the slaughter. Christ restrained himself. He did not lash out against his enemies or strike them down.

But the Scripture tells us... “who for the joy that was set before him **endured** the cross, despising the **shame**, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

We celebrate the birth of Christ because he was human like us but without sin, and he voluntarily suffered and laid down his life for the sins of his people.

## **II. WE CELEBRATE HIS DEITY AT HIS BIRTH**

We read in Isaiah 9:6, “**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, Counselor, **The mighty God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah draws our attention to the human and divine natures of Christ. We read in verse 6, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:*”

As a man, Christ was born. His lineage was traceable back to King David. As God, He was not born but was given. He is the Son from all Eternity. Isaiah emphasizes the deity of Christ by describing Christ as *the mighty God*. Christ is the eternally unborn Son of the Living God. Scripture provides evidence that the child of Bethlehem is none other than the eternal God. Christ’s life did not begin when He was born. Jesus existed before all time. Jesus could say “that before Abraham was I AM.”

In the Gospel of John chapter 1:1-3 Christ is described as the Preexistent Word, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

We read in verse 14, “And the Word was made 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.”

Not only did these Biblical writer's affirm Jesus to be God but this was also a claim that Our Lord made Himself. As we read through the N.T. Gospel narratives we discover that Jesus claimed to be God many times. He did so at the risk of His own life.

He made an astounding declaration in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one."

Immediately when He made that statement the Jews took up stones to stone Him.

John 10:32-33 "Jesus answered the Jews and said, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

The Jews knew exactly who Jesus was claiming to be, God, and they wanted to kill him for his blasphemy. Christ was declaring to the Jews that he was God in the flesh.

Later in his life when Christ was put on trial and stood before the Counsel of the Sanhedrin we read how the high priest interrogated Christ in Mark 14:60-62, “And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? **And Jesus said, I am:** and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Jesus answered the high priest that he was indeed the Son of God, the Christ.

His claim to be God is further revealed in the fact that He received worship as God. The Scriptures makes it clear that the worship of any created being is nothing less than idolatry. Jesus said Himself, “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him alone shall you serve.”

We read Jesus receiving worship from men. We read the shepherds and angels worshiping before Him at his birth.

In Luke 24:50-53 Christ is about to ascend into heaven and we read, “And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. **And they worshipped him**, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.”

We celebrate the birth of Christ because of his humanity and deity.

### **III. WE CELEBRATE HIS MISSION AT HIS BIRTH.**

We read in Luke 1:68, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.”

*He hath visited.* The word here rendered visited means properly to look upon; then to look upon in order to know the state of anyone; then to visit for the purposed of aiding those who need aid, or alleviating misery. Comp. Mt 25:43. In this sense it is used here. God looked upon the world-- he saw it miserable-- he came to relieve it, and brought salvation.

**And redeemed.** That is, was about to redeem, or had given the pledge that he would redeem. This was spoken under the belief that the Messiah, the Redeemer, was about to appear, and would certainly accomplish his work of redemption.

Albert Barnes writes, "The literal translation of this passage is, "He hath made a ransom for his people." . Men are sinners. They are bound over to just punishment by the law. The law is holy, and God, as a just governor, must see that the law is honored and the wicked punished; but if anything can be done which will have the same good effect as the punishment of the sinner, or which will be an equivalent for it--that is, be of equal value to the universe--God may consistently release him."

If he can show the same hatred of sin, and deter others from sinning, and secure the purity of the sinner, the sinner may be released. Whatever will accomplish this is called a ransom, because it is, in the eye of God, a sufficient reason, why the sinner should not be punished; it is an equivalent for his sufferings, and God is satisfied.

The blood of Jesus -- that is, his death in the place of sinners--constitutes such a ransom. It is in their stead. It is for them. It is equivalent to their punishment. It is not itself a punishment, for that always supposes personal crime, but it is what God is pleased to accept in the place of the eternal sufferings of the sinner.

We celebrate the birth of Christ because without the birth there would be no perfect life lived, no atonement on the cross, and no resurrection from the dead. The incarnation was necessary in God's plan of redemption for sinners.

“It was great condescension that He who was God should be made in the likeness of flesh; but much greater that He who was holy should be made in the likeness of sinful flesh.” MATHEW HENRY

In closing, celebrating the birth of Christ involves celebrating his humanity, his deity, and his mission to redeem his people from their sins. During this Christmas season, let us rejoice in who our Savior is and what he has done for his people. Let us pray!