

Christmas 2010

We're familiar enough with the story. A baby is born in Bethlehem. Wise men visit and give him presents. Throw in some random angels, shepherds, animals, perhaps Santa Claus and a Christmas tree or other decorations – there you have it: Christmas! The Bible says surprisingly little about this day. Only 2 of the 4 Gospels cover it and they do so in a couple of chapters each. Easter gets all the ink. But as long as we're here, we're going to look at one of those two Gospels: Matthew – and maybe we'll save Luke for next year about this time.

Matt 1 – 2

- I. Sample Prophecies Fulfilled in the Genealogy:
 - A. The Messiah had to be a descendant of Abraham. See Gen. 12:1-3, 22:18.
 - B. The Messiah had to be a descendant of David. See 2 Samuel 7:11b-16.
 - C. The Messiah could not be a biological descendant of Jeconiah. His lined was forbidden because of his wickedness. See 2 Kings 24:8-9, Jer. 22:28-30.

- II. The Virgin Birth: Why is this doctrine important? There are at least three reasons:
 - A. It shows that God is ultimately responsible for our salvation. We cannot save ourselves.
 - B. It allows for the uniting of full deity and full humanity in the one Person of Jesus Christ.
 - C. It makes possible Christ's true humanity without inherited (or "original") sin.

- III. Why did Jesus come?
 - A. He came to Save Us from Our Sins. (1:21)
 - B. Sin is our real problem
 - i. Our problem is not lacking the right formula of good works.

Titus 3:5 NKJV not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

- ii. We do not need to escape from an otherwise endless cycle of reincarnation.

Hebrews 9:26-28 NKJV ²⁶He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

- iii. Our problem is sin, not ignorance. Thus, there is no state of enlightenment that will solve this bottom-line problem. We need to be reconciled to God.

Second Corinthians 5:19-21 NKJV ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

IV. The Deity of Christ

- A. Jesus is truly God.
 - i. Quote Colossians.

Colossians 2:9 ESV For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

- B. He is worthy of our worship; and in the Bible no one is ever to be worshipped except God alone.
 - i. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, they had the following exchange:

*Matt 4:9-10 NKJV*⁹*And [Satan] said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."*¹⁰*Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

- ii. In Acts 10 Peter refuses the worship of Cornelius the Roman.
- iii. In Rev 19 & 22 Angels refuse the worship of John the Apostle.
- iv. Yet, Jesus accepts worship throughout the NT, every time it is offered.

Conclusions:

When God the Son became the man Jesus of Nazareth, He was making Himself totally vulnerable to all the sin and wickedness that the human race might decide to send His way.

We know how the story ended. They nailed Him to a cross and His enemies mocked Him as He died.

The way the Bible frames it; this was an integral part of God's plan. God knew what was going to happen. This was the method God chose to make Jesus the sacrifice for sin that would thereafter make salvation available to the world – after He rose, ascended into heaven and left us with a promise of His return.

God made Himself vulnerable to us on that first Christmas when Jesus was born. It cost Jesus His life.

The proper response for us is to make ourselves vulnerable to His loving lordship. In a sense it will cost us our lives as well. When we submit to Him, we receive forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in the bargain. We also acknowledge that He owns us – that our lives are no longer our own.

Just as people and angels in heaven worship Jesus, the only right response for us is to worship Him as well. He first came as that baby in the manger. He is coming again, but that will be as our glorious King and the judge of the living and the dead.

End with prayer expressing faith in Christ, acknowledgement of sin, and worship.