



A WONDERFUL DAY IN THE LORD  
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## December 20, 2021

We are leading up to Christmas right now, so after finishing our last series, I felt we should talk about the incarnation of Jesus Christ. We are going to spend the next five days on this and look at various aspects of the incarnation. More specifically we will look at five important components of the incarnation.

The first one is the fact that the incarnation, God becoming man when Jesus Christ took on flesh, was prophesied in the Old Testament. This was no afterthought on the part of God. God did not come up with a plan because He had to or because things didn't go well with His original plan, so He needed a plan B. We had known throughout all the revelation of Scripture that the Son of God was coming. More revelation was given as time went on and of course the fulfillment of that revelation is found in the New Testament.

Isaiah 9 really gives us great details about the prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ, the incarnation. Isaiah 9:2 says, "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land; The light will shine on them." Isaiah starts this particular section of Scripture by pointing out that people in darkness need light. That is what everyone needs. They need light if they are in darkness. So, a great light is coming right in the heart of darkness. That light will shine on them. He gives details beginning in Isaiah 2:6. This is a familiar passage to us, especially around the Christmas season. It says, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders." We find Isaiah prophesying that the Lord is going to come to set up a kingdom. The big picture is that Christ is coming to ultimately set up a kingdom even beyond the cross, redemption and our salvation, though all that is part and parcel of the whole thing, and it should not be minimized in any sense. He will set up a kingdom in which those who have been redeemed because of what Jesus Christ has done will rule and reign with Him and be His servants forever and ever. The Scriptures talk about that kingdom here and tell us several things about that kingdom that will be established by this coming of Jesus Christ.

Continuing with Isaiah 2:6, it says, "And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." We would look first at the words, "Mighty God." He is "Mighty God," so what we find out here is that the coming of Jesus Christ, this Messiah that the Jews anticipated and prophecy about here is God. There is no question about that. The Old Testament understood that and prophesied that. He is also "the Prince of Peace," so this kingdom that He is establishing as Mighty God is also established by He who is the Prince of Peace.

What do we know about that kingdom? Isaiah 9:7 says, "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness. From then on and forevermore, The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this." Once again, we have a

kingdom that He is establishing and that He will reign over, but it is a unique kingdom. It is a government of peace. No government in the history of humanity can be said that it is a government of peace. We are always at war. We are always at conflict. There are always those issues. There are personal issues also. There is peace needed between us and God. Peace needed in our own hearts. Peace needed between us and other people. Here He is speaking especially of government and there is a need for a government of peace and only the Prince of Peace could establish that.

We find also that He is one who reigns during this time as it says, "On the throne of David and over his kingdom." So, Christ is going to reign from the throne of David. We find this has a very Jewish emphasis here. The promise was given to David long ago that there would always be a King on his throne. The ultimate fulfillment of that is the kingdom which Christ Himself sits on the throne of David. So, the ruling of the kingdom of Christ in this time will be centralized in Israel, centralized in Jerusalem, and Christ will reign from David's throne.

We also find that the Scripture tells us that Christ's kingdom will be much different from anything we have ever seen before. Isaiah says, "To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness." This is to be a kingdom like no other. Today, we know that many of our systems are corrupt. We don't know if justice is fair, if it is righteous or just. This kingdom, however, will be a kingdom in which Christ reigns in justice and righteousness.

Finally, Isaiah 9:7 concludes saying, "From then on and forevermore." So, this is an everlasting kingdom. A kingdom that will be established by Christ and will be with us forever. No wonder the Jews anticipated and looked forward to the coming of their Messiah. It had been prophesied in the Old Testament that One would come who would bring them light and would bring them peace and would bring them justice and righteousness and would reign on the throne of David and this kingdom would be forevermore.

As we think of the Christmas season and the incarnation, remember it was prophesied in the Old Testament. Here is what that kingdom would look like when the Christ would come and what He would come to ultimately establish.

We hope this gets you off to a good start as you think of the incarnation.

## December 21, 2021

As we record these broadcasts, we are building up to Christmas and so this is Christmas week, and we are talking about the incarnation. Yesterday we looked at the Old Testament prophecy of the incarnation. It was no accident. God had planned this from all of eternity and it is revealed in the Old Testament. Isaiah 9 is perhaps one of the key passages in the Old Testament in the prediction of the incarnation.

Now we are looking at the anticipation of the Jewish people prior to the coming of Jesus. So, now we have the Old Testament saints, who believe the message of Isaiah, and it is because they believe the message of Isaiah that they anticipated the coming of the king, the coming of the Messiah. One of the premier places for that is in Luke 1 and the prayer of Zacharias. Zacharias was the father of John the Baptist and Zacharias had been told that John would be born, and he would be a forerunner of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

John is born when we come to Luke 1:67 and on. Zacharias prays a magnificent, beautiful prayer full of truths and theology and even prophecy. What we find here, in the first several verses, is that the Messiah had come to set the people free. He came to set them free physically from the bondage that they are in, at this time they were under the bondage of Rome. So, Israel would be set free physically by this coming Messiah. Zacharias talks about that.

When we come to Luke 1:76 he begins to talk about the spiritual liberation that is ours in Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. Here are the things we pick up on there. About five different things in this prayer. Luke 1:77 says, "To give to His people the knowledge of salvation." This says that when the Messiah comes, He is going to "give to His people the knowledge of salvation." The Old Testament people had a knowledge of salvation. There were people who were saved and there were people that were regenerated, but the full extent of salvation is not possible until Jesus Christ would come to this earth, live a perfect life, die on the cross and be resurrected from the dead. So, this knowledge of salvation is the full knowledge and extent of salvation that would be given by our Messiah.

Secondly, Luke 1:77 continues saying, "By the forgiveness of their sins." He would come to give forgiveness. Salvation is because we have been forgiven and forgiveness is only possible because of the finished work of Jesus Christ that began on this earth at the incarnation. When God became man, you could say He entered into time and space with us, and the clock began to tick towards the time when He would die for us, taking our sins upon Himself, that we would not have to be judged for those sins.

Thirdly, we have the visitation of God Himself. Luke 1:78 says, "Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us." This is very picturesque language here. Tender mercies, based upon the mercies and grace of God Himself, He will send the Sunrise. He doesn't say the Son or the Messiah here, He says the Sunrise. Remember in Isaiah He would come into a dark world and bring the light.

So, the Sunrise would shine upon us, and He will visit us. God will visit humanity and come to us.

Fourth, He would be the light. It says in Luke 1:79, "To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death." Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. I think of John 1:4 which says, "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." How desperately we who live in darkness need the Light. We need the Light of God that comes from above.

Finally, He brings peace. In Luke 1:79 it concludes saying, "To guide our feet into the way of peace." Again, in Isaiah He said He was the Prince of Peace and He had come to make a government of peace. Now Zacharias follows up to say, "To guide our feet into the way of peace." The way of peace is only possible because Christ has come to give us light, to give us peace, to make those who were the enemies of God the very friends of God and to direct us in our pathway.

The incarnation is far more robust than we think because of what Christ has come to give us. It is no wonder that Zacharias was excited about what was going. He believed Isaiah, he believed the prophecies and anticipated this. Now he prays about it even before the birth of Jesus which was yet to come just a short time later.

Five points of Zacharias' prayer:

1. The Messiah will give the full knowledge and extent of salvation. Luke 1:77
2. The Messiah comes to give forgiveness. Luke 1:77
3. The Messiah will be God visiting humanity. Luke 1:78
4. The Messiah will be the Light. Luke 1:79
5. The Messiah will bring peace. Luke 1:79

We will look at the birth of Christ in the next broadcast.

## December 22, 2021

We continue our series looking at the incarnation. We have looked at a couple aspects already:

### **1. Prophecy**

The incarnation was prophesied in the book of Isaiah as well as other places in the Old Testament.

### **2. Anticipation**

Prior to the incarnation, the saints at that time, many who knew the Old Testament prophecies had anticipated His coming with great excitement and Zacharias was one of those.

Today we are looking at the actual birth of Jesus. As we do so we are looking at the announcement by the angels of the coming of Jesus Christ.

We look to Luke 2 which is very familiar to those of us who are used to going to church and especially at Christmastime as it is the Christmas story. I am not going to read it all, but we are going to read portions as we dwell on the shepherd and angels at this time.

Luke 2:9 says, "And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened." We have the angels announcing to the shepherds the coming of Jesus Christ. They are going to give them good news.

Then it says in Luke 2:10, "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people.'" A couple things to point out here. Just think of the shock that had to be for the shepherds that night. They were minding their own business. They were out taking care of business tending the sheep as they often did. It was nighttime, nothing much happening. They were probably just sitting around, perhaps eating some supper or relaxing, we don't really know. Then suddenly something that has never happened before, the sky fills up with lights and an angel and the great announcement is given. Now, the angel tells them not to be afraid, saying, "I bring you good news." Good news is our word for gospel. So, the angel is bringing us a gospel. They are bringing us the good news of something transpiring not far from where they were. They wanted these shepherds to know that. Why God chose the shepherds we do not know. In that ancient time, shepherds were not important people, they were considered fairly low on the economic scale. They were not leaders or rulers or rabbis. They were common people and yet God chose to reveal to them first, outside of Mary and Joseph, that the Messiah had been born. So, it is good news, and the angels bring that good news to them.

When we look at some of the details, we see this verse says, "great joy which will be for all the people." So, this is for everyone. Then Luke 2:11 continues, "for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Think about that. In the city of David, Bethlehem, there is the Savior, who is Christ, the Lord. He is born! Whether the shepherds understood that or not, I do not know. I do not know how much of the Old Testament they grasped. Maybe they had a good handle on that or maybe they didn't. Now, they are being given this announcement by the angel that the Messiah has come, and He is not far from them.

In Luke 2:12 it says, "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.'" So, they make this announcement. They tell the shepherds this is what they are to do: go and see this baby.

One thing we should notice is that the shepherds obeyed. I don't believe they knew a great deal of the theological background. Like I said, I don't know how much of the Old Testament they knew or how much of Isaiah they had read. They probably had some understanding, they were Jewish shepherds after all, but how much they understood we don't know. When the angels give them this information, that was outstanding, but we don't want to minimize the fact that they chose to obey. The shepherds could have said, this is weird stuff, we don't understand this or grasp this, and we are comfortable here. They could have asked, why should we leave these sheep and go into town and check this out? However, they obeyed and did as the angels said. We find that to be kind of an astounding thing.

We also see that in Luke 2:13-14 the angels break out in praise saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." Angels are worshiping here. They are excited. They are giving God glory and they are pronouncing once again: peace. All three messages this week have been wrapped around the peace that God is giving, but this is peace on earth among those whom God is pleased. This will not be a peace that all people will enjoy. It will only be for those with whom God is pleased. Those who receive this gift of redemption that Christ has come to give. It will be for those who receive this peace with God that Christ has come to give. Those will experience a peace that will be like nothing they had ever experienced before and a peace that would be everlasting and eternal. The angels had come to announce that; no wonder they were rejoicing. Once again, peace has come.

We have seen the prophecy, anticipation, and the announcement of the incarnation. Tomorrow we will look at the incarnation itself.

## December 23, 2021

So far, we have uncovered the following facts from Scripture regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ:

### **1. Prophecy**

The incarnation was prophesied in the book of Isaiah as well as other places in the Old Testament.

### **2. Anticipation**

Prior to the incarnation in the gospels, the saints at that time, many who knew the Old Testament prophecies, had anticipated His coming with great excitement and Zacharias was one of those.

### **3. Announcement**

The angels announced it on the great night of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Today we are going back to Luke 2 and taking a closer look at these shepherds as well as Mary and the fact that they rejoiced and treasured the incarnation.

Let's first look at the shepherds again. I mentioned last time about what a night that must have been for the shepherds. My imagination runs wild with some of this. We know nothing about these shepherds after this night. What we do know is that in Luke 2:18 it says, "And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds." When the shepherds proclaimed to others about what they saw others marveled. So, we know they went out and broadcast what they had seen. We know they obeyed the voice of the angel that told them to go and check on this incarnation, this birth of Jesus. They did that. We find in Luke 2:20 it says, "The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them." We know the shepherds are rejoicing and worshiping. They are worshiping God for what they have seen in Jesus' birth. We find them rejoicing throughout this whole section. I have to wonder though, what happened to these guys? We don't find them later in the life of Jesus. We don't find them at the cross when Jesus went to the cross some thirty years later. Of course, many of them may have already passed away, we don't know. I would like to know! That is one of the things I'm looking forward to finding out about when we go to glory. We really don't know, but we do know that on this particular night they are rejoicing, they are worshiping, they are marveling, they are telling other people about what they have seen. It's interesting to imagine what happened over the next twenty, thirty or forty years of their lives as they thought about that night. Perhaps they started to wonder if they just had a dream questioning if it was real or not? I imagine that in those times after they talked to one another and confirmed they were there and saw those angels, heard those words, and saw that baby in the manger they would be confident once again that it was real. Perhaps as they thought about it, as they reminisced and chatted that they would say that they lost track of Him, but we hear He is over in Jerusalem preaching. That same baby we saw all those years ago is giving a message of the gospel, a message of repentance, a message of the kingdom. A few years



later maybe they reminisce and catch up and hear that the Pharisees and leaders of the Jews were against Him and led Him to the Romans to be crucified and now we have heard He was resurrected from the dead. What do they know? No one has written a song concerning, *Shepherds Did You Know?* I don't know what they knew. They knew that night that something miraculous had happened. Something that had been prophesied, something they had been anticipating, a Savior, had been born that night. One day, we will know more about that life that they lived at that point and going further.

Let's now turn and look at Mary. Mary suffers from being either too highly esteemed or neglected altogether. As we think about Mary, we think about the fact that she was simply a young peasant gal that was highly blessed by God. He chose her to be the mother of the Messiah. She knew that she was virgin when she gave birth to the Savior. She knew she had a message from the angel. She knew that she was blessed. We have her song and her prayer in the gospel, but on this night even as the shepherds came and worshiped Jesus and said all they did, we find in Luke 2:19 that Mary was treasuring all these things and pondering them in her heart. It says, "But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart." Mary never seemed to totally grasp exactly what had taken place that night and that she was the mother of Jesus Christ the Messiah. She had to know something miraculous had happened. She had to know bits and pieces, but it doesn't seem she totally grasped it all until after the resurrection of her son. That again is something we don't quite understand. Even here we find Mary looking at these things and listening to the words of the shepherds and treasuring these things. These were precious to her and meant a great deal to her. Yet, we also find her pondering these things. What did they mean in totality? She knew something had happened. Obviously, she had given birth to the Messiah, but it seemed more than the Messiah. He wasn't simply one who would come and lead the people out of bondage. No, there was something more in that He would be the Godman. He would be the Savior of the universe. He would be worshiped even by these shepherds and angels. This is something she was pondering and treasuring, and now, all these years later, all these centuries later, here we are still pondering and treasuring what all this means. We haven't totally emptied the depth of the meaning of all of this. I think we will be pondering all of this perhaps forever. What happened on that night in which the Savior came to begin the process of going to the cross and to die for us? What a wonderful thing.

As we celebrate the Christmas season, may we ponder and treasure these things. Christ came to die for us in order to save us from our sins. It all began as He entered time and space on that night of the incarnation. I hope that gives you something to think about and something to ponder and something to treasure at this time of year.

## December 24, 2021

This is our last of five broadcasts that we are looking at together coming up to Christmas. We are looking at five components of the incarnation:

1. It was prophesied in the Old Testament.
2. It was anticipated by the saints in the gospels prior to the incarnation.
3. It was announced by the angels.
4. It was received and pondered by the shepherds who rejoiced and Mary who treasured these things.
5. Simeon and Anna worshiped.

We are looking at Simeon and Anna, two Old Testament saints who very much anticipated the coming of the Messiah. It would seem they knew much about the coming of the Messiah, the incarnation of Christ, more than perhaps almost anybody. So, the Lord puts them in the gospel of Luke to bring them to our attention.

In Luke 2:28, we find that they worship and that is going to be our final word today. They worshiped at the incarnation. Luke 2:28 says, "then he took Him into his arms and blessed God and said..." So, we find him taking the baby Jesus in the temple and he blesses God because of the incarnation. He knows what has happened. He knows who this is, this little child, is no little normal child. This is the gift of God to humanity. He blesses God. He worships God. The word "blessed" here is where we get our word for eulogy. It means "to speak well of." He is speaking well of God and praising God for what He has given at this time.

We look at Luke 2:29-30 which says, "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bondservant to depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation." He knows what he was seeing here. He wasn't just talking about the releasing of the Jews from bondage. He was talking about the salvation that the Messiah had come to bring. He had seen it! It would be many years, about three decades, before this would happen that Christ would die for them, but he knew what was coming. He knew he wouldn't be around, but he had seen it and he knew what was coming.

In Luke 2:31 he continues, "Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A Light of revelation to the gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." This is way before his time in a sense, although it was prophesied in the Old Testament that the gospel of salvation would be for the Gentiles as well, if you know your New Testament at all, the Jews were not prepared for that. Most Jews had very little interest in God's plan of salvation coming to anybody but Israel. Simeon was way ahead of his game here. He knew exactly why Jesus had come and it was not just for the salvation of Israel. It was for them, but it was also for the Gentiles, and he mentions that very particularly here.

He also knew Christ would be opposed, it says in Luke 2:34-35, "And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, the Child is appointed for the fall and rise'" of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." He said sorrow was coming because of this little one and it would pierce even into the soul of Mary herself. People will oppose Him. The amazing thing is that this incarnation that had been prophesied and anticipated and announced and rejoiced over and worshiped will also be opposed by the majority of people. "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him," John 1:11 tells us. The people did not want Him for the most part and we know that ultimately, He would go to the cross.

The cross loomed ahead for this little one and Luke 2:38 tells us, "At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." This is Anna, an older lady that spent most of her time in the temple serving God. She knew the Messiah was coming too and when she saw the little baby, she came up and said that we are waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. She knew that this little one would bring redemption. The release from bondage, spiritually speaking, of all those who would come to Him. That cross was looming ahead. We have a baby here, just eight-days old in the arms of Simeon and with Anna blessing Him. What a precious sight that had to be. They knew why He had come. They were rejoicing over that, and they also knew that most would oppose Him, and a cross loomed ahead for this little one because that cross was necessary for our redemption.

As we consider the incarnation, we also must take a beeline to the cross. He came to this earth so that one day He would die on that cross for us. But He didn't stay in that grave, He was resurrected.

So, the incarnation, that which we often celebrate at what we call the Christmas season is so full of Christ and why He came for us. May we celebrate this year, many traditions, may we enjoy them and have many good times together, but may we not forget that Jesus Christ came for us. He came to die for us that we might have everlasting life. That should give us a time of great rejoicing as we think about why He has come. Have a great season but remember Jesus Christ at this time.

December 27, 2021

This is our last series production for A Wonderful Day in the Lord for this year, 2021. It has been a long year. It has been a tough year in many ways, but in other ways it has gone very quickly. What I would like to do to finish out 2021 is to stay with the issue of the incarnation. Last week we looked at the incarnation itself, the coming of Jesus Christ as the great Godman. I'd like to spend these next five days looking at the implications of the incarnation. What does it mean to us? How does it apply to us that God became a man? In some respects, almost everything that we believe and trust in goes back to what Jesus Christ did when He came to earth as our Savior. I'd like to pick out five different implications of the incarnation that are expressed very clearly in the New Testament.

The first one, is that He has come to explain to us more fully who God is. There are three different ways that the Godhead is explained or revealed according to Scripture:

**1. Nature**

Romans 1:18-20 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." So, Scripture teaches in numerous places—Psalms 8 and 19 and various different places—about the fact that we know much about God on the basis of what we see in the world around us. The nature and universe around us reveal the glory of God. So, we do have some understanding of God from nature.

**2. Old Testament Scriptures**

The Scriptures in the Old Testament are replete with information about who God is and what He does. It is such a joy to read much of that Scripture especially in places like the Psalms that reveal so much about our God in those wonderful Psalms.

**3. Jesus Christ**

A fuller revelation about God is found in Jesus Christ. We pick that up in John 1:14 which says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." "The Word" here is going back to John 1:1-2, the logos, which is Jesus Christ the Son of God. He became flesh. This logos became flesh. He lived among us, and "we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father." So, there are some aspects of the glory of God that is seen in the person of Jesus Christ when He was here on earth in the flesh. In some sense, the glory of God was veiled so that when Jesus was in a human form, we did not get to see the full manifestation of the wonder of God, but there are aspects of the glory of God seen in the

incarnation, in the Son of God. John 1:18 goes on to explain this further saying, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." What a wonderful verse of Scripture. The Scriptures are clear that no one has ever seen the full glory, the full manifestation, of God. It is not possible for a human to see the full manifestation of God and live. He lives in indescribable light. He cannot be seen by human beings. So, when Jesus Christ came in the incarnational form, it says here that He never ceased to be God. John 1:14 says it this way, "the only begotten God." What a wonderful phrase that tells us He never ceased in any sense to be God. He was always God. He is the begotten Son of God. He is fully God and the only begotten God "who is in the bosom of the Father." So, for all of eternity, He has been in the bosom of the Father, in this particular way of expressing it. Jesus Christ has been with the Father forever, and He has been with Him at that time, but now He has come to earth. He has come in the incarnational form and one of the reasons He came, it says, is that "He has explained Him." The word "explained" there means exegete. That means He gives a full understanding of God. So, if we want to see the Godhead, if we really want to understand who God is, the best place to look is at Jesus Christ. As we read the gospels, epistles, and the book of Revelation, we see through that window of Jesus Christ the revelation of the full Godhead. Christ has come to reveal to us who God is.

So, that is one of the great reasons that He came, to give that revelation, to exegete God, and let us know what God is like. The full manifestation, the full understanding, the fullest that we have now is found in the understanding of who Jesus Christ is. That is one of the reasons He has come and that is the first implication of the incarnation.

December 28, 2021

We are looking at some implications of the incarnation. What specifically does the New Testament tell us concerning why Jesus Christ came in human form? We found the first reason last time:

1. Jesus came to explain God.

By coming to the earth as a man the Lord lived among us and revealed to us the nature and person of God in ways that even the Old Testament and nature couldn't do. It's a full picture, as much as we can possibly handle in this lifetime, of who God is. We see that in Christ.

2. Jesus came to defeat the devil.

We are looking at Hebrews 2:14-15 today. Hebrews 2:14 says, "Therefore since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." He tells us here that Christ took on human form, He shared in the flesh and blood of humanity, and "He likewise also partook of the same." Why? "That through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." The devil, apparently, has the power of death. Somehow God has allowed that to happen because of sin and because He is the god of this age therefore, he has power in relationship to death. Christ has come to render him powerless. One of the great truths about the coming of Jesus Christ is that He has come to set us free. You will know the truth, it is said in the gospel of John, and the truth will set you free. Jesus says in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." We find that Christ comes to set us free.

Free from what?

**1. Set us free from the bondage of sin.**

The bondage of sin so that sin need not to eternally condemn us and that we might ultimately be with Him.

**2. Set us free from Satan.**

Satan who is the God of this age. The Prince and power of the air. He is our father according to other Scriptures until we come to the true Father through Jesus Christ.

**3. Set us free from death.**

Death is awaiting all of us and as a result, we live in a perpetual uncertainty that often leads to fear. Hebrews 2:15 says, "and might free those who through fear of death were subjected to slavery all their lives." We try to get around that and try to minimize that, but the fact is that we all know we are going to die. Everybody knows there is a future after death; we just don't know what it is. So, people try

to minimize the implications of being dead by saying things such as: well, we cease to exist, or we return to some kind of universal fireball, or something else. Some people might say that: maybe we all just get to go to heaven, and we have paradise no matter how we have lived. Yet, we know there is no certainty of any of those kinds of things. The only certainty we have of the future after death is found in the revealed revelation of God in the Scriptures and what we find in the book of Hebrews. For example, in Hebrews 9:27, it says, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment," which tells us that we are all appointed to die and after that comes judgment. That means we stand before an almighty and righteous God at the point of death and that ought to send fear down our spines. If we don't know what that looks like in the future. If we don't know what we truly face after our death when we face God and His judgment, that ought to give us fear. So, it does in Hebrews 2:15. There are people who fear death all their lives. We fight death with every step, don't we? Even when we are old and sick and can hardly handle life, most of us will fight it to the very last breath. There is a fear of death, but Christ has set us free from that by coming to be a man on this earth and ultimately it says here, He goes to the cross. He dies for us that we might be free from the fear of death.

So, the Christian has no need to be afraid of death. It is still our enemy. 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that. We will fight death. It is an enemy, not a friend, but we do not fear death as we would have if we did not know Christ. We know when we stand before God at the judgment that we stand there in the righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself and we are set free from that fear. That is why Paul also says in 1 Corinthians 15:55, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" While death is our enemy, John also says, "O death where is your sting?" the sting of death has been taken out because Jesus Christ has come. If Jesus Christ had not come at the incarnation and ultimately gone to the cross to die for us, then death would still be our enemy and we should fear death, but as believers we no longer fear death. That stinger is gone because of Jesus Christ.

According to this passage this goes back to the incarnation!

## December 29, 2021

We have been looking at the implications of the incarnation. So far, we have looked at the first two:

1. Jesus came to reveal God to us.
2. Jesus came to defeat death and take the fear of death away from us because He has also defeated the devil.

The third implication is that Jesus came to be our great sympathetic High Priest.

We are looking at Hebrews 4 that talks about this in the clearest detail. Have you ever had someone come to you when you were going through a difficult trial? They said to you, "I know how you feel." Yet, if that person has not gone through the things that we are going through they do not know how we feel or what we are going through and that can be a bit disingenuous and we might even recoil against that and say, "No, you don't know. You have not been there. You haven't seen what I have seen. You haven't felt what I felt. You really don't understand." So, that could have the same idea with God. If God is so different than us; He is so holy, powerful, and knowledgeable, then how can He understand in any sense what you and I go through? How could He empathize with us? He is wholly other.

We come to this passage of Scripture and the Lord wants us to know that He does sympathize and understand because Jesus Christ has been there. He has been there because He was incarnate. Hebrews 4:14-15 says, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." When Jesus Christ was on earth, He faced the same kind of temptations as you and me. That does not mean He had every detail and type of temptation or every circumstance possible, but every *kind* of temptation. Every issue of temptation, and everything that temptation of sin can come against and bombard us with, Jesus faced. He faced it in its full fury because He was the holy Son of God, and He had the devil working against Him as well. So, He was constantly under the bombardment of the highest level of temptation possible. Our passage tells us He faced all that temptation without sin. So, no matter the level of temptation that came His way, He never faltered, never failed, and never gave in. Although He has been where we have been and has felt what we have felt to the highest intensity possible, He never faltered and never failed. That should give us great comfort.

In fact, it goes on to make an application of this in Hebrews 4:16. It says, "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." The first part of this verse tells us that because Christ



has been there and He is our Great High Priest, we can go to Him and to the Father through Him. We can draw near with confidence to the "throne of grace." What a beautiful way of expressing it. The ***throne of grace***. Coming before God Himself, His throne, described as grace, through Jesus Christ our High Priest is a precious promise and opportunity. He says we can do so with confidence.

The second part of Hebrews 4:16 tells us what we find when we approach that throne of grace and we come before God the Father through Jesus Christ our High Priest. We find, at that point, that we receive mercy. Mercy is the idea of coming before Him and receiving help at our greatest point of need. That is probably the true distinction between grace and mercy. *Grace* is God *giving* us what we *do not deserve*, and *mercy* is God *not giving* us what we *do deserve*. We come to the Lord in this moment of great need, when we are really at our lowest ebb, and what do we find there at the *throne of grace*? We find mercy! We do not find condemnation. We find mercy with God reaching out to us to help us at that time. It says, "find grace to help in time of need." So, mercy removes that pain and grace gives us the positive of God's wonderful grace when at our point of need.

We find that the implication of the incarnation is that Jesus Christ understands. He knows what you are going through. He knows the temptations. He knows the struggles and He is there to understand and sympathize, but more than that, He gives us mercy and grace in our time of need.

What a beautiful picture! I trust that gives us a wonderful day in the Lord!

## December 30, 2021

We have been looking at the implications of the incarnation. So far, we have looked at the first three:

1. Jesus came to reveal God to us.
2. Jesus came to defeat death and take the fear of death away from us because He has also defeated the devil.
3. Jesus came to be our sympathetic High Priest.

The fourth implication is humility. Christ came to give us the perfect example of humility. In Philippians 2:3-4 we read, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." As Paul writes these words, he is calling for the people at the church of Philippi to exercise humility and humbleness. We are self-absorbed people by nature. We focus on ourselves and our needs. Our lives are more important than what is true of anybody else's lives. For us to go counter to that is not normal. As the Scriptures exhort us to consider others more important than ourselves, and to humble ourselves, and to serve others; that is a great exhortation. It is very humble and one we should follow and obey. Wouldn't it be great to have an example of what that looks like? We can interpret this in many different ways, so an example would be great. Paul understands that, through the inspiration of the Spirit, and he gives us the absolute perfect example of humility, which of course is found in Jesus Christ.

In Philippians 2:5 it says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." This is how we should think, and this should be our attitude: the attitude that Christ had. We continue in Philippians 2:6 which says, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." Paul starts out by telling us that our Savior, the Son of God, existed at the highest level possible. He existed in the form of God, and He was God. For all of eternity, it's important to understand this, the Son of God has controlled this universe, ran this universe, and had been at the very top of all things. Everything in this universe He created, so He is the highest being in the universe within the Godhead. He is at the apex of all things. So, we start with that. Who could be higher than Him? No one!

Then He laid that aside for us in Philippians 2:7, "but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." We have this picture here in Philippians 7 that even though He existed as the very greatest being of the universe, He laid that aside. That did not mean that He ceased to be God. He was always God. He is still God. He never ceased to be God. At the incarnation He takes on human flesh and human nature. That is a humbling thing for the Almighty God of the universe to do. He

laid aside those things and He became a man, in fact, the word "bond-servant" here in Philippians 2:7 had to do with a slave, a *doulos* in the Greek. So, He became a form of a slave.

He goes on in Philippians 2:8, "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." This humility that Jesus underwent included obedience. In His incarnational form, we find the Son of God, the very God of the universe, being obedient to the Father. He had been sent by the Father. He was under the will of the Father. He did as the Father led him. Christ allowed that to happen. He voluntarily put Himself in that position. That is the ultimate of humility, isn't it? To be the greatest being of the universe and yet humble Himself to the point of obedience!

We are not quite done. There is yet something more. The verse says, "...becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Think about that. The Lord of the universe humbles Himself to be obedient to the Father. We can grasp that to some degree, but can we grasp it to the point of death on a cross? Puny human beings, mankind that the Lord had come to save were part of putting Jesus Christ on that cross. The Lord allowed people to do that. Of course, that was under the sovereignty of God Himself who ordained that Jesus would do that, but human beings, these puny little beings that He had created, were instrumental in putting Him to death on the cross. That is the ultimate of humility.

We are never going to have a better example of what it means to be humble than the example of Jesus Christ Himself, and we would never have had that example if He had not come as a man. So, one of the implications of the incarnation is that Jesus Christ came to show us what it is like to be a humble servant of Almighty God.

We will look at the final implication of the incarnation next time.

## December 31, 2021

This is our final broadcast for the incarnation series as well as for the 2021 year.

We are completing our look at the five implications of the incarnation:

1. Jesus came to reveal God to us.
2. Jesus came to defeat death and take the fear of death away from us because He has also defeated the devil.
3. Jesus came to be our sympathetic High Priest.
4. Jesus came to show us what it is like to be a humble servant of Almighty God.
5. Jesus came to show us how to run the race of life victoriously and with endurance.

Looking at Hebrews 12:1 it says, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." All of us know that life is hard. I think we are fooling ourselves to say that it is not. It is difficult, and it is exceedingly difficult at times for Christians specifically because we who are children of the Light, according to Scripture, live in a world of darkness. We are surrounded by that which does not go well with the nature that God has given us of Light. So, we face this world system in a unique way. It can be very difficult at times and often very discouraging, so we are not surprised to find that sometimes in Scripture we are given ideas, pictures, principles, and teachings concerning how we can run this life in such a way that honors God. In this passage, which speaks of an implication of the incarnation, we find that some of the things that mess us up in this life are sins which "entangle us." They trip us up. You can't run a race and have your shoelaces tied together. The sin trips us up and entangles us along with our other issues that cause us to get sidetracked. Hindrances and so forth weigh us down and keep us from moving forward as we should. Sin makes life hard, and the world system is permeated by sin. Not just our sin, but the sin of the system around us, and the sin of others. We must face all of that and we know that it is there.

What should we do? In the incarnation, Jesus Christ came to show us how to live life as it should be lived. In Hebrews 12:2 it says, "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." We are to fix our eyes on Jesus, the name given to the incarnational son of God. Jesus is our trailblazer. He is the author. He is the one who leads us forward and shows us the way. As we picture what Jesus had done when He was on earth and all that He was going through, including the crucifixion, He had in front of Him the joy that was set before Him. Jesus knew that one

day the trial of this world would be over, and He would return to the right hand of the Father; to all the joys that He had prior to becoming man, so He had His eyes on that. Christ was willing to go to the cross for us, but He did not fixate on the struggles of this world, the darkness and sin of this world, even when He was going through excruciating pain, suffering, and shame on our account. He was fixated on that which was before Him, and the joys that were there as He would come and one-day return to the right hand of God.

Hebrews 12:3 continues saying, "For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." The phrase "consider Him," means to think about this and really give this thought. So, think about what Christ went through. What Christ went through is far more than anything that we will ever go through. Though we might think our trials are the worst; Christ went through so much more than we would ever possibly go through and could ever consider. So, we should consider that hostility of sinners against Him. Here is why, the second part of the verse says, "so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." As we fixate on Jesus and focus on what Christ has done and how He has lived the life as we should live the life, that gives us the ability to run with endurance the race set before us. So, even though when there are times when we are tired, struggling, hurting we do not grow weary and lose heart.

I hope that this last year, which has been a difficult year for many of us, I hope you did not lose heart, or lose your way, or faint along the way. However, if you did, you still have the example and strength and power of Christ to lift you back up and send you on the way to walk as He has walked before us.

As we look at this final implication of the incarnation, He does not want us to grow weary and lose heart. He wants to give us the ability to run a difficult race in such a way that we come to the end of that race, that finish line, victorious.

I hope this little series and all that we have talked about throughout this past year has given you a wonderful day in the Lord and a wonderful year in the Lord. As we look forward to 2022, we will begin a new series, *Our Riches in Christ*. I believe the content of this new series will also give you a wonderful day and life in the Lord. I trust it will. I hope you can join us in 2022 as we continue our walk through the Scriptures.

May the Lord bless you!