

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

TEXT: MATTHEW 1:18-25

Introduction:

1. I am going to speak this morning on the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, specifically the incarnation of Christ.
2. The word “incarnation” is not found in our English Bible, but the doctrine is – the eternal Son of God became a man.
3. First Timothy 3:16 says, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”
4. The incarnation of Christ is what we refer to as a “fundamental” doctrine. “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (I John 4:2, 3).
5. Therefore, those who deny the virgin birth and the incarnation of Christ are “not of God” (I John 4:3); they are not saved.
6. Our Lord’s birth was a virgin birth (Matt. 1:16, 18-25; Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:30-35).
7. At Christmas, we need to remind sinners – whether they are giddy holiday shoppers or unsaved coworkers or relatives or neighbors, etc. – that Christmas is about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.
8. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (I Tim. 1:15).
9. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

I. INCARNATION

1. John 1:14 says, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”
2. There could be no salvation without the crucifixion, and there could be no crucifixion without the incarnation.
3. The Son of God had to become a man in order to die on the cross for our sins. To be our perfect substitute, He had to be both a man and God – the God-man.
4. Romans 8:3 says God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”
5. Not “in sinful flesh,” but “in the likeness of sinful flesh.”
6. To be our perfect substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ had to become a man, but He also had to be sinless. He is the sinless Son of God.
7. First Peter 1:19 says we have been redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

8. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “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.”
9. First John 3:5 says, “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”
10. Our Lord said to the religious leaders in John 8:46, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” and of course no one could answer Him, because He is the sinless Son of God.
11. Hebrews 7:26 says He “is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”
12. This is the basis for the Christmas story. It is the basis for the Gospel.

II. CRUCIFIXION

1. When we study the Bible, we see the birth of Christ in the shadow of the cross (cf. Hebrews 2:9-18).
2. You may recall what Simeon said to our Lord’s mother in Luke 2:35, “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.”
3. That prophecy was fulfilled at Calvary as Mary stood at the cross and saw her Son suffer and die before her eyes – “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.”
4. The world prefers to celebrate Christmas without the cross. But Christmas can only be properly understood in the light of the cross.
5. J Vernon McGee preached a message entitled, “The Cross is God’s Christmas Tree,” and he was right.
6. Peter said in Acts 5:30, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.”
7. And Peter preached again, in Acts 10:39, “And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.”
8. Paul said Acts 13:29, “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.”
9. And Paul wrote in Galatians 3:13, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”
10. Peter wrote in I Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”
11. Yes, the cross is God’s Christmas tree, and if you remove the cross from Christmas, it is a meaningless holiday.
12. The world has tried to take God out of Thanksgiving. So who do they thank on the fourth Thursday of every November?

13. They thank themselves!
14. The Bible says, “For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...” (II Tim. 3:2).
15. Having changed the focus on Thanksgiving away from God to self, the world has changed the focus on Christmas too. They have attempted to remove all references to Christ.
16. I heard that the big Bloomingdale's department store put up a big wreath. Underneath the wreath, the sign says: “MERRY.”
17. The world wants to be merry without the cross.
18. Of course, many of the great Christmas songs refer to the cross:

- Thou camest, O Lord, with the living Word,
That should set Thy people free;
But with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn,
They bore Thee to Calvary.
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee.
- Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
- Lo! at midnight, who is He
Prays in dark Gethsemane?
Who is He on yonder tree
Dies in grief and agony?
Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!
'Tis the Lord! the King of glory!
At His feet we humbly fall,
Crown Him! crown Him, Lord of all!
- Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made Heaven and earth of naught,
And with His blood mankind hath bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel.
- Ring the bells, ring the bells

Let the whole world know

Christ was born in Bethlehem
Many years ago.

Born to die that man might live,
Came to earth new life to give,

Born of Mary, born so low,
Many years ago.
God, the Father gave His Son,
Gave His own beloved One
To this wicked sinful earth

To bring mankind His love, new birth.

- God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day;
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.
- Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone cold tomb.
O star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.
- I wonder as I wander out under the sky
How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die
For poor on'ry people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

19. But the world has replaced these great Christmas carols with silly, nonsensical songs about Santa Claus and snow and mistletoe, etc.
20. Like most people, I can enjoy some of these "secular" Christmas songs, but they are vastly inferior to the great Christian Christmas songs like "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "O Holy Night."

III. SALVATION (MATT. 1:18-21).

1. Herbert Lockyer, in his book *All the Doctrines of the Bible*, wrote, "No evangelical theme is more deserving of prayerful and careful study than that of *salvation*. The pre-eminent reason for a Biblical understanding of this basic doctrine is that it represents the supreme mission of the Master. Why was He, when He was so rich in heaven, willing to become poor on earth? Why did He willingly discard a garment of glory for the robe of our humanity? Paul answers these, and other pertinent questions associated with Christ's incarnation. He came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15)."
2. Isaiah 63:1 says the Messiah is "mighty to save."
3. What a wonderful salvation! What a glorious salvation!

4. Ours is a great salvation! Hebrews 2:3 says, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”?
5. It is great because we have a great Saviour! “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised” (Psalm 48:1).
6. We have been saved from the penalty of sin – eternal damnation.
7. We are being saved from the power of sin. Romans 6:14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” By the grace of God, we have victory over sin’s tyranny.
8. Some day we shall be saved from the very presence of sin – to spend eternity in heaven with the Lord.

CONCLUSION:

As now we celebrate His birth,
The coming of the Christ to earth,
May we, amid our joyous mirth,
Keep Christ first in Christmas!

Let’s sing of Him in carols sweet,
Let’s lay our best gifts at His feet
And make the season’s joy complete –
With Jesus first in Christmas!