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“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world,” John 6:33.

Jesus Teaches About His Deity

Lesson Aim: To encourage trust in the Saviour who was born at Bethlehem.

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Topic: Christ: Birth of; Christmas.

Jesus is God! That is the heart of the New Testament revelation. Angels announced it. He declared it. The writers of the epistles expounded upon it. Jesus is God! **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved,”** John 3:16-17.

Who is Jesus? The Bible answers, “God's only begotten Son.” His very name (Jesus) means “Jehovah saves.” He is the very essence of deity, **“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,”** Colossians 2:9. When He is present, men may say, “God is with us—Immanuel!”

How can the man called Jesus be the God of heaven? He bore a unique and unusual nature as “God's only begotten Son.” He came in the form of flesh and blood because humans are of that physical form, Hebrews 2:14-18. He was not born, however, after a natural conception. He had no human father. The conception of His human mother was a divine creative miracle. His human body was enlivened by the divine Spirit. He was, and is, God-Man.

That is what men are to remember at Christmas. Beware lest you get so enthusiastic about gifts, decorations, music, and parties that you forget Him. The Baby of the manger was the Christ of the cross. Bethlehem was the prelude to Calvary. He came into the world that He might give His life a ransom for men and thus become the Savior of all who believe. That is what

Christmas is really all about.

I. HIS NAMES

“Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS,” Luke 1:31. With such words the angel announced to Mary the coming birth of her Son. “Jesus” is the Greek form of an honored Hebrew name commonly pronounced “Joshua.” It means “Saviour.”

Jesus agreed with the name by which He was called. The angel had explained that He should be called Jesus because **“ . . . he shall save his people from their sins,”** Matthew 1:21. Jesus confessed that He had come so that **“whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,”** John 3:16. He declared, **“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,”** Luke 19:10. He further explained His ministry when He said, **“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved,”** 1 John 3:17. Jesus accepted the name “Savior” (Jesus) because He recognized that it expressed the purpose of His ministry upon earth.

II. HIS NATURE

The angel Gabriel explained to Mary concerning her future Son, **“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest . . .”** Luke 1:32. Mary had no idea that she was chosen to bear the Christ. She could not understand what the angel meant. He explained, **“ . . . that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,”** Luke 1:35. That statement perfectly describes His nature. He is “very God of very God.” He is the eternal Son of God, second Person of the divine trinity.

Jesus also proclaimed His divine nature. He referred to God as “My Father,” thereby making Himself equal with God, John 5:18. More specifically, He clearly stated, **“I and my Father are one,”** John 10:30. He shared the very nature of deity in all its perfection. That is why He is Immanuel — “God with us.” As God's Son, He bore the very nature of absolute deity. God the Father is no more God than God the Son whom we call Jesus Christ the Lord. Jesus agreed with the announcement of the angel. He is God.

III. HIS MINISTRY

The angel Gabriel spared Mary the agony of the rejection and crucifixion of her divine Son. He passed over those to speak of His glory.

“And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end,” Luke 1:32-33.

Jesus admitted himself to be “the Son of God, the King of Israel,” John 1:49. Though His kingdom was “not of this world,” He did acknowledge that His kingdom was coming, John 18:36. He considered Himself as a nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, Luke 19:12. He taught the disciples that one day they would share His kingdom, saying, “. . . **in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones . . .**,” Matthew 19:28.

Jesus also knew His ministry included making a sacrifice for the sins of the world. He said, **“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,”** Mark 10:45. As the hour of His suffering drew near, He pondered, **“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour,”** John 12:27. He came to save sinners by the sacrifice of Himself.

IV. HIS MYSTERY

Jesus was a unique person. It is not surprising that when God came into human history, He chose to come by a new and different way.

Mary, His human mother, was engaged to be wed, but the marriage had not been consummated at the time the angel Gabriel came with the announcement that she would bear the Christ child. She questioned, “How can this be since I am a virgin and have no husband?” The angel explained, **“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,”** Luke 1:35. There is the explanation of the virgin conception.

Surprisingly, Jesus made no reference to the manner by which His mother conceived. He knew Himself to have come from God. He affirmed that His words and works showed that He was the Son of God. That was enough. He never spoke of the virgin-conception miracle which God wrought in Mary.

V. HIS PRE-EXISTENCE

The divine Christ existed as the second Person of the divine trinity

before His birth as the son of the woman. He declared that He was living before Abraham was born, John 8:58. He affirmed that He shared the glory of the Father before the world was created, John 17:5. The Father loved Him before the foundation of the world, John 17:24. It was not His birth to Mary, by supernatural conception, which made Him the Son of God. He is the eternal Son of God.

Mary simply provided the human body which the eternal Son of God received when He came to earth. His incarnation was simply a change of form (Philippians 2:5-8), not the beginning of His existence. He was God's Son before the incarnation. He was God's Son during His earthly ministry. He is God's Son now that He has ascended. He will eternally be the Son of God, second person of the holy trinity, time without end.

VI. HIS INCARNATION

“Incarnation” is a form of a Latin term, *en carne*, which means “in flesh.” The incarnation of Christ refers, therefore, to Christ's coming in human flesh.

John 3:16 speaks volumes about the incarnation. “God” is the Initiator of the incarnation. “Loved” is the motive behind the incarnation. “The world” is the stage of the incarnation. “He gave” is the nature of the incarnation. “His only begotten Son” is the Person of the incarnation. “Whosoever believeth” is the beneficiary of the incarnation. “Believeth” is the reasonable response to the incarnation. “Should not perish but have everlasting life” is the benefit of the incarnation.

In the incarnation, Jesus “came down from heaven,” John 6:33. His coming was the expression of His own will and the will of the Father who sent Him, John 6:38. That He found it necessary to become incarnate indicated that He is different from other men. **“He that cometh from heaven is above all,”** John 3:31. Other men are of the earth, earthy. The Son of God is not of the earth; He came down from heaven in order to be born upon earth. **“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world,”** John 6:33.

VII. HIS COMMISSION

Jesus was sent into the world by God the Father. He often referred to God as “Him that sent me,” John 4:34; 5:24; 5:30; 5:36-37; 9:4; 14:24. Occasionally, He referred to Himself as the One whom the Father had sent, John 17:3; 20:21. He recognized and freely admitted that He was in the

world by the commission of the Father.

Do not understand that to mean that He was unwilling to come, but was sent by the Father anyway. It was not so. There is a blessed harmony in the holy trinity. God the Father sent. God the Son came. God the Holy Spirit bore witness. Jesus came willingly to perform His redemptive ministry.

Consider the authority which resided upon Jesus during His earthly ministry. He did not act merely as the second Person of the divine trinity. He ministered under the unanimous authority of the Godhead. No wonder He said, **“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth . . .”** Matthew 28:18.

VIII. HIS DEITY

Jesus bore the absolute essence of deity during His earthly ministry. He was no less God when He became man. He plainly declared, **“I and my father are one,”** John 10:30. When Philip requested, “Show us the Father,” He replied, **“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”** John 14:9. Jesus was so perfect deity that to see Him was to see the Father.

How could that be? The Apostle Paul explained it in these words, “He was in the form (absolute essence) of God, but willingly emptied Himself of divine manifestations in order to come in the fashion (likeness, appearance) of a man. It was a change in appearance only and not a change in nature. The absolute totality of deity abode in Him during His incarnate state.” (Read Philippians 2:5-8 and Colossians 2:9.) It was a miracle of grace that is beyond explanation. It is also a fact as true as any expressed in the Holy Bible. He is, in the fullest sense, God-Man. **“I and the father are one,”** John 10:30.

IX. HIS REVELATION

In His incarnate ministry Jesus was the revelation of God. God had revealed Himself in many ways through previous generations. Nature, visions, dreams, written law, supernatural insight, and prophetic inspiration were common, but God reserved His most perfect revelation of Himself to be expressed in the person of His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son . . .,”** Hebrews 1:1-2. The revelation was so complete and perfect that

Jesus could truthfully say, “. . . **He that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . .**,” John 14:9.

In what way is the revelation of God by Jesus Christ different from previous revelations of God? All previous revelations had shown men things **about** God. Jesus showed them God Himself. It is the difference in someone's telling you about a person and in actually introducing you to that person. The prophets, for instance, told men about God. Jesus is **IMMANUEL** — God with us! No better revelation of God will ever be given until believers are in heaven with Him, freed from the limitations of flesh, and able to see His face. Jesus is God in person!

X. HIS SACRIFICE

Jesus came into the world for a specific purpose. **“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him,”** I John 4:9. John received from the Lord Himself his insight into the purpose of Jesus' ministry. Jesus, too, taught that it was for that purpose that He came.

Jesus saw Himself as the fulfillment of the type represented by the brass serpent in the wilderness. **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life,”** John 3:14-15.

Jesus saw Himself as the fulfillment of the type pictured in the manna which fell in the wilderness. The true bread from heaven was not the manna; He said, **“I am the bread of life . . . This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die,”** John 6:35, 50. What did Jesus mean? He explained, **“. . . the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,”** John 6:51.

Jesus came into the world to save men by the sacrifice of Himself. He knew that was His mission. Because of His sufferings upon the cross, one can be made free from sins. He personally announced that His death was a “ransom” (payment to secure release) for sinners, Mark 10:45.

XI. HIS ASCENSION

Jesus predicted His return to the Father in heaven. He announced to His disciples that “after a little while” He would “go unto him that sent me,” John 7:33. They would wonder about His absence. Seeking Him, they would not find Him, John 13:33. The disciples were distressed by that word. Jesus said, **“. . . If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the**

Father . . .,” John 14:28. The resurrection message which He sent to the disciples was, “. . . **I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God,**” John 20:17.

It happened just as He announced it would. There in the presence of the Father, He sat down at the right hand of God. From thence He will return in great glory.

“God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him,” I John 4:9.

The Son of God, eternally equal to the Father and the Spirit, came down from heaven to be the Savior of men. He was born in normal human flesh, to a normal human mother, who was a chaste virgin in the strictest sense of the word. (She afterwards was a normal wife to Joseph and bore several other children by normal conception.) While in human flesh, He did not surrender one iota of His divine nature.

He perfectly revealed to men what God is like. He died upon the cross to make atonement for sin. He arose from death to provide salvation. He ascended back to the Father from whom He will return one day.

God sent forth His Son to be the Savior of the world. That is what Christmas is really all about.