



**“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” Matthew 3:17.**

## **The Divine Son**

**Lesson Aim:** To study Articles 6, 7, and 8 of our Doctrinal Statement.

**L325. Date:** December 1969. **Text:** Matthew 1:18-25; Hebrews 1:1-4.

**Topic:** Christ: Nature of; Doctrine: Studies In.

**INTRODUCTION—“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,” I Timothy 3:16.**

In these words the Scriptures place Christmas in its proper perspective. It was a wonderful day when Jesus, the Son of God, was born of the virgin mother. But it was not an event in itself, isolated from the rest of God's redemptive purpose. It was part of a redemptive plan which began before the creation.

In His advent, the Infinite became an Infant. Salvation became personalized in a Saviour, the son of peasant parents, born in the little town of Bethlehem. The Christian faith finds one of its tenderest spots: by the side of His manger-bed.

Jesus Christ is the heart and life of the Christian religion. “It owes its life and character at every point to Him. Its convictions are convictions about Him. “ Its hopes are hopes which He has inspired and which it is for Him to fulfill. Its ideals are born of His teaching and His life. Its strength is the strength of His spirit.”—James Denny.

The Christian is personally related to Christ. He has received forgiveness and salvation (Acts 4:12) on the merits of His sacrifice (Ephesians 1:7). In Him one is made a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). By Him believers have access to the Father (John 14:13; 15:16; Hebrews

10:19.25). No wonder those who trust and serve Him are called “Christians”—“duplicates of Christ.”

Today's lesson comments go beyond the records of the birth of Jesus who is the Christ of God. A larger view is taken of the Son of God before His birth in human flesh, His incarnation, and His position and work after ascension back to heaven. In this way it is hoped the place of Christmas in God's redemptive plan will be the more clear to each one who reads.

## EXPOSITION

### I. THE PRE-INCARNATE SON

His birth in human flesh was not what made Christ the Son of God. He was the Son of God in eternity before the incarnation. Eternally God has been a tri-person in His very nature. The three persons are Father, Son, and Spirit. What happened in the birth of Jesus was that the Second Person of the divine trinity, the Son of God, was born into human flesh by a virgin mother and so became the Son of Man.

Genesis 1:1 begins, **“In the beginning God. . .”** John 1:1 reads, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”** Writing of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle John states, **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you,”** I John 1:1, 3. These passages testify that He whom we know as Jesus of Nazareth is really the eternal Son of God whose existence pre-dates the creation of all things. It was He who was born of Mary at Christmas time.

In His pre-incarnate state, the Son of God shared an absolute equality with God. Philippians 2:6 points out that one of the miracles of His love was that He did not count equality with God a thing to be selfishly grasped and held on to, but surrendered in the incarnation. He was at that time “the express image” of God's divine person, Hebrews 1:1. If He was “all the fulness of the God head bodily” in the body of His flesh, how much more was He in glory!

There in eternity, He shared the glory of God. He is said to be “the brightness of his glory,” Hebrews 1:3. Mind you, He was not in the brightness of God's glory but was Himself that brightness. He laid it aside in the incarnation. No wonder He prayed in the days of His flesh, **“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,”** John 17:5.

How great is that glory? Great enough that the heavenly city will need

neither sun nor moon to shine on it eternally, “for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof,” Revelation 21:23. This is what He gave up to become Mary's baby and our Saviour!

As the divine Son of God in eternity before time, Christ shared in creation of all that exists: “by whom also he (God) made the worlds,” Hebrews 1:2. **“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”** John 1:3. He was involved in the divine counsels which resolved to create the very man whom He later would redeem by His own death, Genesis 1:26.

This explains why He could say that He lived before Abraham (who had died almost 2,000 years before Jesus was born!), John 8:58. He said the Father loved Him before creation was done, John 17:24. He was born to Mary because the Father “sent” Him into the world, John 17:3. From eternity before time into eternity after time is ended, He is the same — “yesterday, today, and forever,” Hebrews 13:8. Only He could ever say of Himself, **“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last,”** Revelation 22:13.

Let it lay upon your heart, then, that Christ did not begin existence when He was born of Mary. You and I began our existence when we were born in human life. But not He! He was the eternal Son of God, second Person of the divine trinity of God, before He became son of Mary and foster-son of Joseph. This is what makes Christmas a marvel of grace. Do you catch the thrust of it when John writes, **“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth,”** John 1:14. But His existence as the Son of God did not depend upon His birth in human flesh.

## II. THE INCARNATE SON

Many have borne witness to the incarnation of the Son of God. Prophets of the Old Testament spoke of His coming. They told He would come in the nation of Israel, the tribe of Judah, the town of Bethlehem, the family line of David, and His mother would be a chaste virgin so that His conception would be a miracle.

This was in fulfillment of the promise in Genesis 3:15 that one born to a woman would gain victory over Satan. It was also in fulfillment of what Isaiah promised of a child born to a virgin mother (7:14). Once and again an event which occurred in the life of Jesus carries the footnote, **“This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets . . .”**

And so it was that the angel of the Lord appeared to a virgin woman in Nazareth telling her that she should bear a son who would be the Christ of

God. She was but a young girl, perhaps no older than her mid-teens. And she was engaged to marry a man named Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth.

Mary had no idea that a miracle would cause conception. She hesitated about the word of an angel for her wedding date was not yet near. But the angel explained that God would perform a miracle by the Holy Spirit and create the new life in her.

The conception of the Lord Jesus was supernatural. The angel promised, “. . . **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 was no human father of Jesus. In point of fact, there was no divine father in the sense that coitus of any supernatural kind occurred. God simply performed a creative miracle and life was in Mary's womb.

The development of Mary's baby was according to normal process. The birth was as any other birth. His development from infancy, to childhood, to adulthood was just as any other person. But His conception was a miracle of God.

Matthew saw that the events concerning the birth of Jesus was a fulfillment of what was predicted by the prophet Isaiah (7:14), Matthew 1:22-23. But Mary did not realize it; Joseph did not realize it; none of their contemporaries realized it. Both Mary and Joseph hesitated because they stumbled at this point. Looking back from the vantage point of completed revelation, we can see it clearly. It was evidently a miracle of God.

And what was the purpose of it all? At this point the Bible leaves no room for doubt. Examine these passages: “**For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,**” Luke 19:10. “**For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved,**” John 3:17. “**I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,**” Matthew 9:13. “**This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. . .**” I Timothy 1:15.

This was the announcement made to Joseph, “. . . **thou, shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins,**” Matthew 1:21. And the angels announced to shepherds in the fields, “. . . **fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**” Luke 2:10-11.

It was for this purpose He came—to save men. It was for this purpose He died—to give His life a ransom for many. It was for this purpose He rose again—to carry captivity captive. “**For if, when we were enemies, we were**

**reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life,” Romans 5:10.**

### III. THE POST-INCARNATE SON

Having completed His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven from whence He had come. The Bible does not dwell at length upon this event. He led the disciples to the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem. After speaking words of assurance and instruction, He lifted up His hands to bless them. While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. They watched Him go until a cloud received Him out of their sight. Thus He returned to the Father.

Following His ascension comes His enthronement. What happened to Jesus Christ when He arrived in heaven? He was welcomed and given a place at the right hand of God. This is customarily the place of highest honor. Again, the Bible makes it positive that is His position now.

**“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God,” Mark 16:19. “. . . When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” Hebrews 1:3. “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever; sat down on the right hand of God,” Hebrews 10:11-12. “. . . 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,” Hebrews 12:2. “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him,” I Peter 3:22.**

But what is He doing there in the presence of God? He is representing our interests there in the presence of the Father. So He is our “high priest” before God, Hebrews 8:1. **“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us,” Hebrews 9:24.** So with confidence we can say, **“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins,” I John 2:1-2.**

What kind of a representative is He there? He is one who is touched with the feelings of our infirmities because He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,” Hebrews 4:16.**

So for over 1900 years He has been there in the presence of God representing us and making valid to us the benefits of His atonement made on earth. And so He shall continue until time comes for Him to return to earth in the triumph of God's kingdom. At that time, **“. . . He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that believe. . .”** II Thessalonians 1:10.

CONCLUSION—It becomes evident, in view of these truths, that Christmas is but one part of the ministry of our blessed Lord Jesus.

Christmas is a wonderful season. The star in the sky, the angels singing, shepherds amazed with wonder, wise men coming from afar, the baby in a manger all call up precious associations in our hearts.

But look at Christmas in view of all that Jesus is and has done. The incarnation takes on a new glory in view of His preexistent state with the Father. The birth is an even greater marvel of grace in view of the sacrifice which He made on Calvary. His coming in humility, weakness, and human likeness is the more remarkable in the light of His second coming with clouds, angels, and the glory of the Father.

Jesus is no longer the infant in His mother's arms. He is no longer the victim on a Roman cross. He is now what He was before coming to be born to Mary—the Lord of Glory!