

December 15, 2019 - Christmas #1 (19097-A)

God With Us, part 1

Philippians 2:1-11

I. Jn.1:14-18. Christmas is the time when Christians meditate on and proclaim the incarnation.

- A. This is the most profound claim in the gospel, the center of the Christian faith.
1. If the incarnation is true, then everything else said about Jesus makes perfect sense.
 2. All the other “difficulties” with what Jesus did (virgin birth, miracles, atonement, resurrection) dissolve if we assume this one reality.
- B. This is what drove the Church into the idea of the Trinity.
1. The Trinity “Three-ness” was agreed upon (at Nicaea, 325) because of what the Lord revealed about Himself as God in the flesh.
 2. There is only One God, yet three persons are called God in the NT
 - a) The Father is called God. 1 Peter 1:2
 - b) The Son (Jesus) is called God. Titus 2:13; Jn. 20:28; Col. 2:8-9
 - c) The Holy Spirit is called God. Acts 5:4; 2 Cor. 3:17
 3. *There must be something we can't understand about the one God.*
 4. *If it weren't for Jesus, his life, death, resurrection and ascension, the concept of the Trinity would never have arisen—and we would not understand what God is like ultimately.*
- C. This is what (more than any other single thing) separates Christianity from all other religions, specifically Islam and Judaism.
1. Religious pluralism fails at this point.

II. When we double-click on Jn 1:14-18 we get Philippians 2:1-11. 5 realities about the real Jesus:

- A. He has always shared the very essence of God. 5-6
1. He pre-existed in the form of God. 6 (Jn.1:1-5)
 2. He is equal with God. 6
 - a) equality = isos = equal
 - b) Col. 2:8-9. In him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.
- B. He deliberately restrained his prerogatives as God 6b-7
1. Made himself nothing/ emptied himself.
 2. Equality with God not to be “grasped”
- C. He permanently acquired a complete human nature. 7-8
1. He is not “half and half” He is body-soul-spirit human.
 2. Which means that he is one person with two complete natures.
 - a) The hypostatic union = Two natures of Christ.
- D. He obeyed the Father to the point of death. 8
1. On our behalf. Rom. 8:32/ Isa. 53:10
 2. This is how he fulfilled the Law on our behalf (Matt.5:17)
 3. *Do we complain about having to obey the Father, resist sin? Heb. 12:4*
- E. He became the human/divine Lord of all creation. 9-11. Matt.28:18-20
1. The Father “superexalted” Him.
 2. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord
 - a) **Isa 45:23** = a word about YHWH spoken of Jesus
 - b) In heaven (angelic world)
 - c) On earth (humans alive on earth)
 - d) Under the earth (departed humans)
 3. *Every knee will bow to Jesus. Enemies, and friends. Now or then.*
 4. *Note -- this is the Jesus who saves -- the Lord Jesus. Any supposed faith in another “Jesus” is not saving faith.*

III. Why Christmas? Why did God become one of us?

A. So that we could enter his unified life. Trinitarian love 1:27-28a; 2:1-4

1. In one Spirit, confidence in the gospel. 1:27
2. The same mind (Christ's) 2:2-4
3. *Living for one another rather than off of one another.*

B. By trusting his sacrificial grace: death on a cross. 2:5-8

1. By faith (pistis = trust) alone, apart from works. Rom.3:28
2. We can know the facts about Jesus, work hard for him, and still not actually be converted because we aren't trusting him to save us by grace alone. It is one thing to know and believe that God in Christ died for our sins. It is another to trust Him personally for this reality.
3. John Wesley's conversion. Working hard for God, but not converted to Christ...

C. Through experiencing his loving authority. Don't be afraid. 2:9-11

1. His authority is what enables him to forgive sins. **Mk.2:10**
 - a) Son of Man has *authority on earth* to forgive sins...
2. His authority is what enables us to make disciples. **Matt.28:18-20**
3. He authority is what draws us to rest for our souls. **Matt.11:27-30.**

IV. Salvation is not a theory we believe, but a Person we trust. And that Person is the Savior, Christ the Lord. That is why the angels called Christmas Good News. Luke 2:10-11.