

For a Child Will be Born to Us

The Wonder of the Incarnation

December 20, 2020

Isaiah 9:1-7

1 But there will be no *more* gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make *it* glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

3 You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.

5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the *battle* tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

7 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.

To the Glory of God

Now several years ago- the former television talk show host, Larry King was asked, “*Who is the most important figure in all of history?*” And without any hesitation, the man who has interviewed thousands of people replied, “*Jesus Christ.*” And then he was asked, “*If you could ask Jesus one single question, what would that question be?*” And again, without hesitation, King replied, “*Were You really virgin born?*” And when he was asked, “*Why would that be the one question you would ask Jesus?*”, King said, “*Because if Jesus was really virgin born, that would change everything; it would define all of history.*” So, they pressed him further and asked, “*Why would Jesus’ virgin Birth define all of*

History?” And King responded, “Because that means Jesus was everything that He said He was.”¹

Now, a few years ago- we spent nine years and ten months going over every verse of the Gospel Record that was written by a Gentile medical doctor named, *Luke*. And history tells us that the Apostle Paul commissioned this man to give us this amazing Record of the Birth, Life, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of an intenerate Jewish preacher, Jesus of Nazareth, whom both Paul and Luke loved and worshipped as God.

And in the first four verses of His Gospel Record- Dr. Luke told us why he was doing this when he said,

Luke 1:1-4

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

So, the *Purpose* for which the good doctor wrote his Account was so that the Roman dignitary- a man named, *Theophilus*- and everybody else who would read it- would,

... know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

So, Luke wants us to know the Truth about Jesus. And this was a *common* effort by those whom God used to write down the radical Revelation that we call the New Testament. For example, in **1John 5:13**- the Apostle John said,

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

... and in **John 8:32** Jesus Himself said,

... and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free

And so, it seems to me that “knowing” and “believing” the Truth about Jesus makes a person to be “Free”. And this “Freedom” is connected to having “Eternal Life”. And therefore, being ignorant; or being blind; or unaware; or

¹ This account was given by a man, who attends John MacArthur’s Church and who was a Producer on “*The Larry King Live Show*”

unlearned; or unbelieving; or uncaring about the Truth about Jesus- would indicate some form of “Bondage” that would *prevent* a person from having the kind of Life that never ends.

And so, “Eternal Life” is wrapped up in us being made “Free”. And being made “Free” comes about by “knowing” and “believing” the Truth about Jesus. And knowing the Truth about Jesus means “trusting in the written Record about Jesus that we have in the four Gospel Records.”

And so, in his effort to help us to “know” the Truth about Jesus; so we may be made Free; and have Eternal Life- Dr. Luke wrote down the single most amazing narrative that has ever been written down about any other person in any other book in the history of the world. And that narrative is found in **Luke 1:26-38**. So please go there and read this narrative with me.

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you."

29 But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

36 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Now this is perhaps the most detailed account of what the Bible says about the Birth of Jesus Christ- an amazing Event that is called, “The Incarnation”. Now the word, “Incarnation” had to be *invented* by the early Church because there wasn’t a word to describe when God became Man- because God had never become Man before and would never become Man again. So, they took the Latin word, “*Caro*” which means: “*flesh*” or “*meat*” and they put the prefix, “*In*” before it and they got the Latin verb, “*Incarno*” which is the “*in-fleshing*” or the “*fleshing*” of God.

And this word describes the single most amazing and magnificent Miracle that the world has ever or will ever see: the moment when God Almighty *inserted* Himself into His Own Creation and became a *part* of that Creation by taking on human flesh and becoming Man.

So, the “Doctrine of the Incarnation” claims that the ever-existing; eternal; second Person of the Trinity- “*God the Son*”- took on Humanity at a particular time in history in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. And the sacred Scriptures do not mince words about this. God becoming Man is a *central theme* of Biblical Christianity and thus- it is an *Essential Truth* of the Christian Faith.

So, let me tell you what that means. You cannot be saved if you reject this Truth. Let’s go over this carefully: Having “Eternal Life” and being made “Free” comes from “knowing” and “believing” and “trusting” in the Truth that God chose to reveal about Jesus in the Scriptures. And *part* of that Divine Revelation- is the “Doctrine of the Incarnation”. So, “believing” and “trusting” in the “Doctrine of the Incarnation” is *mandatory* for our Sins to be forgiven and for us to be made Righteous- so we can go to Heaven. And Christianity is the only religion in the history of the world that teaches this Truth. Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism and all of the other “isms” out there- categorically *reject* this Essential Truth about Jesus.

So, the Christian Church is the only entity on earth that *teaches* this Truth. And true, born- again Christians are the only people on earth who *believe* this Truth. Because if you confess openly and publicly that Jesus Christ is “God Almighty in human flesh” (Lord) and if you believe in your heart that “God raised Jesus from the dead”- you will be saved (**Romans 10:9&10**). And yet every adherent to every other religion and human philosophy categorically *denies* the Truth about the Incarnation, which, by default means they aren’t saved and are yet, “in their sins”.

Now perhaps the best “summary statement” that is in the entire Bible about this profound Mystery was written down by the Apostle John as he was moved along by God the Holy Spirit when he said,

John 1:14a

And the Word became flesh ...

So, let's examine this inspired phrase for a moment.

The Word

Earlier, John wrote:

John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

So, the phrase, “**the Word**” that John uses here refers to the eternal Divine Son, Who was three things:

1. **He was *with* God**
2. **He *was* God**
3. **He was *in the beginning* with God**

And two things were true because of Who the Word was:

1. **All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.**
2. **In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men**

So, from “Eternity Past”² until He took on Humanity, the Son of God existed in *perfect* Love; *perfect* Joy; and *perfect* Unity with the other two “Persons” of the one, true, and living God. So, the Word was in *perfect* Fellowship with the Trinity. And like the Father and the Spirit, at that time, the Word was *pure* Spirit and had no material substance.

Became

Now the word, “**Became**” does not mean that the Word ceased to be God. In “becoming” Man, He did not *forsake* His Divine Nature, as if that were even an option. Rather, the Word became flesh by taking on human nature *in addition* to His Divine Nature. And this is a three- dollar theological concept called, “The Hypostatic Union” that teaches that Jesus had *two* natures- one that was fully

² The phrase, “Eternity Past” signifies that period of time before God created everything out of nothing (ex-nihilo); where only the three Persons of the Godhead existed in absolute Perfection.

Divine; and one that was fully Human- and that *both* natures existed *simultaneously* and *continually* within His one Body- without conflict or contradiction.

So, we must understand that it is *essential* to the Truth about the Incarnation (and very helpful throughout all biblical theology) to recognize that, Jesus being fully Divine and fully Human are *NOT* mutually exclusive. In other words- the Son of God didn't have to pick between being God or Man. The Holy Bible declares clearly and repeatedly that Jesus was *both*. And He was both- *at the same time!* So, the eternal Word "took on flesh" and "became" Human. And back in the fourth Century- the "golden tongued" preacher, John Chrysostom, wrote that Jesus was,

"fully God and fully Man in the same body at the same time- without conflict or contradiction"³

Flesh

Now the word, "**Flesh**" isn't merely a reference to the human body but to the *entirety* of what it means to be "Human"- *including* Body, Mind, Emotions, and Will. So, the eternal Word took on every aspect of what it means to be Human- while, *at the same time*, keeping *everything* He already had- that made Him fully Divine. **Hebrews 2:17** says,

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

So, in order to save sinful human beings, and absorb all of God's Just Wrath against our Sins (**Propitiation**), Jesus had to be made like us "**in all things**" with one notable exception: Jesus did *not* have a fallen or depraved Nature and thus- *Jesus never sinned*.

Now the Biblical Truth about the Doctrine of the Incarnation has fallen on hard times recently. According to a survey commissioned by *Ligonier Ministries* and conducted by *Lifeway Research*- at least half of those who stand in the pulpits of the American Church this morning, *reject* this Truth. But even among the 50% who *do* trust in what the Scriptures reveal about this subject- *most* of them are content to simply believe that at some point- 2,000 year ago- the Word became Flesh- and then leave it at that. It is rare today to hear anyone, who says they are saved, talk about the Incarnation, in any real depth, for even a little bit.

³ John Chrysostom; *The Homilies of St. John*.

And that is the result of real shallow and real bad Teaching and a result of allowing unsaved people to become Members and even Leaders of the Church. You can drive for many a mile to even find a single Church that *prominently* defends and celebrates the Doctrine of the Incarnation.

But even though we are among the few who believe all that the Bible teaches about Jesus- I don't think we should stop there. I don't agree that we have dealt with this Truth *sufficiently*- simply because we preach and teach that there was a time in history when God took on flesh and became Man. Because there is *another* powerful and important aspect of the Word becoming flesh that many of us have not pondered at all or not pondered very deeply or not very often. And that is- that during this time of the year- we have an opportunity to not only celebrate the fact that the Word became flesh 2,000 years ago- but that once God became Man in the womb of a virgin- Jesus *kept* His flesh!

In other words- just like the Doctrine of Original Sin has *two* parts and only one is usually taught and believed- so too, the Doctrine of the Incarnation has *two* parts and only one is normally discussed. We need to understand that the Incarnation was *not* merely a miraculous exception to the rule of logic and physics that only lasted 33- ½ years. No, the Bible goes on to say that once the Incarnation happened- once the eternal Word took on flesh and became Man- that Jesus remains *forever* as the God/Man. And so, He is glorious- not merely in that He assumed our human nature back then- but in that He *remains* our Elder Brother and *continues* to be the visible

Colossians 1:15b

... image of the invisible God ...

... or to put it in the Apostle John's language,

the Word *became* flesh.

... and that means that Jesus' Humanity was *not* a temporary costume. The eternal, Divine Son didn't simply make a "cameo appearance" 2,000 years ago. That isn't what the Bible teaches. Jesus joined our Humanity to His Divinity *forever!* And from that moment throughout all Eternity- Jesus will be "fully God and fully *Man*." For example, in **Luke 24:39-43** after His Resurrection- we read:

See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. While they still could not

believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "**Have you anything here to eat?**" They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate *it* before them.

... so, Jesus was fully Human *after* His Resurrection. And yet the inspired Record tells us that Jesus appeared and disappeared several times after His Resurrection- showing that while He was still fully Human- He was also fully Divine.

We get another glimpse of this on the mountain of His Ascension in **The Acts 1:9-11** that says:

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Here we see that Jesus went up into Heaven in a human Body. Now it was *glorified*- but it still was a Body. And it was the very *same* Body in which He died. And the Bible declares that Jesus now sits in God's Presence- *in His full Humanity*. And according to the angels- Jesus will return to this earth

... in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.

... which includes a Body.

Over in **Philippians 2:5-8**- the Apostle Paul speaks clearly about Jesus taking our likeness. But just as surely as He took it 2,000 years ago- He kept it and will *always* keep it. And in **Philippians 3:20&21**, Paul writes,

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

So, Jesus didn't cast off His human skin after He rose from the dead; or when He ascended into Heaven. He has a Body right now. It is a "*glorious body*,"; a *perfected* human body; and a body like we haven't yet experienced.

But one day, we *will* experience it- when He transforms us. But Jesus has a fleshly Body right now. And that means that Jesus' dual Nature is still *ongoing*.

Now it is true that the eternal Word was *always* God from Eternity Past. And it is true that the Word became Flesh only about 2,000 years ago. But it is also true that Christ's Incarnation- His Hypostatic Union- will never end. And the Apostle Paul makes reference to this in **1 Timothy 2:5** when he said:

For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Here Paul is teaching that *after* Jesus' Ascension into Heaven, He is called, "**the man Christ Jesus.**" So, Jesus' Work as the perfect Mediator between God and Man is not only dependent on His Death in history at the Cross- but also in His *continuing* Humanity right now and forever. And you simply don't hear this talked about very much in our day.

So, from cover to cover in God's Word- the Doctrine of the Incarnation is taught. And it is taught- not only in that God took on flesh at some point in the past- but the Bible also teaches that Jesus is fully Divine and fully Human *right now!* And the Word of God also teaches that Jesus will continue to be both God and Man- forever!

And that would be enough- since God' Word is true and inspired and infallible. But even though few, if any, teach this today- all throughout Christian history- the issue of the Eternal Word taking on human Flesh and then keeping that Flesh- has been a cornerstone of both Teaching and Preaching in the Christian Church. For example:

Justin Martyr (b. AD 100)

Second-century apologist Justin Martyr was explicit in affirming that after the Resurrection Jesus ascended in

*"... the flesh in which He suffered."*⁴

Justin also taught that it was possible for flesh to exist in Heaven.⁵

Tertullian (AD 155-240)

That logic continued into the Third Century with Tertullian- who wrote,

⁴ Translated by Marcus Dods. From *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1*. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.)

⁵ *Fragments on the Resurrection, ANF*, vol. 1, 9

“Jesus is still sitting there at the right hand of the Father, man, yet God . . . flesh and blood, yet purer than ours.”⁶

Augustine (AD 354-430)

In the 5th Century, Augustine spoke of

“that one grand and health-giving miracle of Christ’s ascension into heaven with the flesh in which he rose”⁷

Origen (AD 184-253)

This renowned philosopher-theologian, who died in AD254- was *condemned* by the Church in the 6th Century for implying that

“after the Resurrection the body of the Lord was ethereal”⁸

John Knox (AD1514-1572)

The Scottish reformer John Knox writes in the *Scots Confession* that Jesus returned to Heaven in

“the self samyn(sic) body”⁹

Karl Barth (AD 1886-1968)

The 20th Century theologian, Karl Barth wrote that Christ’s humanity is

“to all eternity...a clothing which He does not put off. It is his temple which He does not leave. It is the form which He does not lose”¹⁰

From the days that the New Testament was given by inspiration until the present day, Christians, from every Age, have rightly celebrated that Jesus is *forever* the “God/Man.”

But even though we possess the single greatest Miracle that the world has ever known- which we call the “Incarnation”- from all the noise coming from the pulpits today- you would never know that. The pulpits of the modern American Church are filled today with Politics and with Social Issues and with Moral Pronouncements and American Patriotism- but they are *not* filled with God.

⁶ *On the Resurrection of the Flesh, ANF*, vol. 3, 51

⁷ *The City of God, NPNF*, 1st series, vol. 2, 22.8

⁸ *The Anathemas Against Origen, NPNF*, 2nd series, vol. 14, 10

⁹ *The Works of John Knox*, vol. 2, 102

¹⁰ *Church Dogmatics, Vol. IV: The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part 2*, 100–101

They are not filled with the Wonder and the Awe and the Fear (reverential Respect) of a God,
Who took on flesh and became Man.

And the result is that today many modern Church goers are left with very general and very vague and very shallow *generalities* about God- that leaves their heads empty; and that leaves their souls unconcerned; and that leaves their flesh unmoved and unbroken and unbowed about the infinite Majesty and Worth and Wonder of the spectacular Glory of God.

And the result of that being true is that today God's people are groaning under the weight of Worldliness and Skepticism and Doubt like never before. The attraction of Sin *dominates* the new- found "Sensuality" of the modern Church that applauds the multi-colored lights; and rock concerts; and celebrity pastors; while we are being inundated with scandal after scandal as Church leaders are being exposed in the most grievous of Sins.

And so, we must struggle to once again, "Behold our God!" We must *recapture* the Wonder and Awe and godly Fear of this great God, Who took on flesh and became Man. We must weed out every vestige of Man-centered theology and preaching; and we must expose it; and kill it; and drive it from us so that we may once again "**behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ**". And then we must, "Love what we see"; and, "Be changed into what we see" (**2Corinthians 3:18-4:6**). And the only way I know to do this is two-fold:

1. We must earnestly beg God for a *revival* of the "Fear of the Lord"; for an *awakening* of a "Hunger for God"; and for a *renewal* of a "Love for the Truth"
2. We must read and study and preach and teach and herald and proclaim and believe and trust and love the deep and profound Truths of God's Word and embrace them as our own

500 years before the incarnate God was born of a virgin- the Prophet Isaiah was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to write the infallible Passage that Brother Andy just read to you. And the last two verses say,

Isaiah 9:6&7

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 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.

So, a Child will be born. God will become Man. And Isaiah was moved along to call the Child Who will be born four names:

1. **Wonderful Counselor**
2. **Mighty God**
3. **Eternal Father**
4. **Prince of Peace**

Now you could be called, “Wonderful Counselor” or even “Prince of Peace” and still *not* be God. But Isaiah says here that the Child Who will be born of a woman; the entirely human Child Who will be born will also be called,

- ✓ **Mighty God**
- ✓ **Eternal Father**

And there is simply no confusion about this. This Child will be God. And yet He will be “born”. And this Mystery is the “Doctrine of the Incarnation”. And then Isaiah went on to say,

... And the government will rest on His shoulders ... 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

... which of course is describing Jesus setting up the Kingdom of God through His Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; Ascension; and His ongoing present-day Ministry (Intercession); along with His Second Coming. But then Isaiah finished his prophecy by saying,

... From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

... showing that what began 2,000 years ago when the Word became Flesh- *continues to this day!* So, not only are souls constantly being birthed into the Kingdom as God’s Word is being proclaimed throughout the world; and not only is Jesus ruling and reigning right now at the Right Hand of the Father until all His enemies are made a footstool for His Feet; and not only are the souls who are held captive by satan at his will being set free

by the ongoing Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ;- but right now- in addition to operating in full Deity- also operates in full Humanity- and throughout the endless eons of time- Jesus is now and will forever be- “fully God and fully Man!” So, not only is the Incarnation *true*- it is also *permanent*!

But notice at the beginning that Isaiah said

For a child will be born to us...

A Child will be born to us. To who? To “**us**”. So, who is “**us**”? Well, some would say that “**us**” here is the nation of Israel. But Israel has categorically *rejected* this Child. They do *not* serve Him today; *nor* do they follow Him. The Jew today finds no Delight in Jesus. Orthodox Judaism calls Him a “fraud” and a “hoax”- an “imposter” and a “blasphemer”. Why? Because Jesus said He was God. And since that is humanly impossible- they reject Him.

And the Bible teaches that Blindness has come upon Israel to this day like the veil that was upon Moses’ face. And they are blinded in part- so that God could save you and me. So, are you using that time of Israel’s Blindness well or are you wasting it? Are you quickly coming to this Child so that He may save you?

Others would say that the “**us**” in Isaiah’s prophecy is “the world”. And these people take great comfort in the part of the Bible that says, **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...**

And that portion of Scripture may give these people a warm and sweet feeling. They may even get teary eyed when they think of that sweet little Baby in the manger. Because, they say, that shows that Jesus was God’s gift to all Mankind.

Well, yes, He was. But I would encourage you to *finish* that verse. Because Jesus went on to tell Nicodemus in **John 3:16**:

... that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

And it is the *second* part of **John 3:16** that teaches that Jesus is of absolutely no value to you at all- unless you have believed **in** Him; unless you have believed **on** Him; unless you have put your Faith and Trust in Him; unless you have bowed at His Feet and surrendered all to Him.

Because even though it is true that God so loved the world that He gave us Jesus- if you don’t believe the inspired Record of Who Jesus is and what Jesus did- then you are yet “in your Sins.” If you don’t *know* the Truth- you will not be “made free”. And if you do not *believe* the Truth- you cannot have Eternal Life.

And part of that inspired Record is that Jesus is the Word made flesh. And that makes Jesus to be God. And that means that He is *entitled* to; and *deserving* of your Service; and your Praise; and your Adoration. That means it is *correct* to worship Jesus; and it is Sin not to. And if you don't believe this- you are not saved.

So, the “us” in Isaiah's prophecy is zeroing in only on those who believe. If you do not believe- then this Child is not for you. So, the Child is born for those who believe. So, do you believe? And please allow me to tell you how you can know you believe. In **Luke 6:46-49**, Jesus Himself said,

Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.

So those who merely “hear” are *not* those who “believe”. But that also means that those who “hear” and “accept” that what they hear is true- are also *not* those who believe. Jesus said here that only those who “act” on what they hear are true believers. And the Acts that we are to carry out is building our spiritual House on Solid Rock. And building our house on Solid Rock refers to *hearing* the Truth; and *believing* the Truth; and then *loving* the Truth; and then *obeying* the Truth about Who Jesus is; and what Jesus has done; and what Jesus has said.

And from “knowing” and “believing” the Truth- we are made “Free”. And we are made “Free” from loving and valuing and treasuring things that are passing away. And we are made “Free” to love and value and treasure God in Christ. And that Freedom produces in us- a powerful Ability and Desire to *follow* Jesus; to *obey* Jesus; to be *near* Jesus; and to do only what brings Him Glory.

And so, “building our House on the Rock” is believing what the inspired Record says about Who Jesus is; and what Jesus did; and what Jesus said. It is being gifted with a Love for God that makes all other Loves look like Hate by comparison. It is being set “free” from trying to *earn* Salvation by the religious things we do.

So *biblical* Belief; *true* Belief; the type of Faith that these verses describe is *not* simply “agreeing about the existence of God.” No, *true* Belief or what is

called, “Saving Faith” is not “mentally agreeing with some facts about God”- such as that God exists; or that Jesus was born- in the *same way* that you “believe” that Britney Spears has marriage trouble; or that Bill Gates is rich; or that Democrats raise taxes.

No, “*true* Belief” or “Saving Faith” is much, much more than a warm feeling that you may get periodically- such as when you remember good times in your life; or that special feeling you get when *The Star Spangled Banner* plays; or the feeling that you may get on Christmas morning. True belief or Saving Faith is not sentimentality. Saving Faith- the kind of Faith that it takes to be saved and to behold God in His Glory and to treasure Jesus Christ- is a Gift from God.

So, this kind of Faith is not something that is *inherent* inside of fallen human beings. You’re not born with it. You don’t already have it- Saving Faith must be given to us. And that means you can’t “work this kind of Faith up”. It isn’t attached to your Will- power or your Efforts. The Bible says this kind of Faith- this “Saving Faith”- the kind of Belief that allows this Child to be given to you- is a Gift from God. Here’s how the Apostle Paul described it from **Ephesians 2:8b**:

... you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God...*

So, this Child was given to those who have been gifted by God to believe. And the Bible declares that if you *truly* believe in Jesus; Who is the Word made flesh- then you will *love* this Jesus. And if you love Jesus- you will *follow* Him; and you will *obey* Him; and you will live your life to His Glory- not your own. So, the Faith that saves- *always* and in all cases- produces a powerful Love for Jesus.

Believing in Jesus causes you to love Jesus more than anything and everything in this life. You will love Him more than your own ambitions; your own ways; your own plans and thoughts. You will love Jesus more than your wife; and your husband; and more than your children. You will even love Jesus more than your own life. You will love Jesus more than your money; or any of your possessions. You will love Jesus with all your heart; and with all your soul; and with all your mind; and with all your strength. So, if you truly believe- you will love. And you will love God most of all.

But what is interesting about this kind of Love is that Jesus Himself said that if you *love* Him, then you will *obey* Him. Obey Him, how? Obey what He says. So, the ongoing struggle to *obey* Jesus is interwoven around

loving Jesus. You cannot possibly separate the two- so much so that we actually *prove* our love *for* Jesus by our obedience *to* Jesus.

After all, why *would* you obey someone unless you honored Him? And why *would* obey someone unless you respected Him; and valued Him? When you obey Jesus- you prove that you value Who He is; and what He stood for; and what He said. But why *would* you humble yourself; and obey someone with whom you had no knowledge or relationship or intimate connection or allegiance?

So, if your life reflects a life of ongoing disobedience to the Words of Jesus Christ, then we can rightly conclude that it is because you do not love Jesus. And if you don't *love* Jesus you don't *respect* Him; or *value* Him; or *esteem* Him worthy enough to obey. So, if you do not love Jesus- then at least in *this* sense- you really don't believe in Jesus.

But it is also clear from the Bible that if you truly believe- then you follow. You don't lead; you don't wander off; you don't walk side by side- you follow; you submit; you bow; you humble yourself to the One, Who is greater; and more important; and much more glorious than yourself. Believing in Jesus means that you deem Him to be so important that you alter your life; and your speech; and your will; and your body; and you change your way of thinking so that you are in submission to Him. And you verify that you are pleasing Him by obeying His Word. Or you don't.

So, the Word of God is clear. If you do not *follow* Jesus; if you do not strive to *obey* Jesus- you really don't *love* Jesus. And if you do not *love* Jesus- then you really do not *believe* in Jesus. What we must understand is that if Jesus Christ is *worthy* of our Belief- then He is not worthy of our Love; or our Submission; or our Service. So, if Jesus Christ is not worthy enough for you to humble yourself to Him and follow Him- then why would you waste any Love on Him?

So, this Obedience; this Following; this Service; this Honoring; this Valuing; this Respecting; this Love is what is called "Worship". And Worship is not the Song Service on Sunday morning in Church. No, you *worship* Jesus as you strive to *obey* Him- every hour of every day. You *worship* Jesus as you struggle to *follow* Him. Because the effort to obey; the effort to follow- proves the Value that you have assigned to Jesus. And if you have assigned great Value to Jesus- then your effort to obey will also be great. Little effort to obey signifies little Value.

So, genuine, biblical "Worship" can be defined as,

The ongoing Struggle against the lusts of your flesh (by the Power of the Holy Spirit) to be found *humbly* and *joyfully* submitted to the Authority of Scripture (in your daily life)- all to the Glory of God

...and the *intensity* of this ongoing Struggle is predicated on the Value that you have placed on Jesus. Those who see Jesus as the “Treasure of the Universe”- put forth white hot Passion and Energy into their Struggle to obey. And they receive the fullness of Joy. Those who are bored with Jesus; and would much rather do *anything* other than delight in Him- will have little or no intensity in their struggle to obey. And they have no Joy in Jesus at all.

Isaiah also said,

And the government will rest on His shoulders

And that tells us that there is coming a new “World Order”- but not like the Sociologists have planned. You see, the day is coming when all work will cease. Every news broadcast; and every sports game will come to a halt. Everybody’s plans will be suddenly interrupted. Because, you see, this Child that was born in a manger, 2,000 years ago- is coming back to this earth.

The Bible says that the day is coming when the sky will split; and the Heavens will burst open; and Jesus will come back to this earth- riding on a white horse- with the armies of God behind Him. And He will have a vesture that covers Him that has been dipped in Blood; and His Name is called the Word of God. On His Thigh is a name written,

“King of all other kings and Lord of all other lords.”

When this Child comes back to this earth- He is going to establish a new Order in the world. But He isn’t going to go to the United Nations to ask permission to rule. No, He already *owns* the world and everything that is in it. And so, every knee will bow to Him; and every tongue will confess,

“Jesus Christ is Lord!”

... to the Glory of God the Father!

So, have you bowed your knees to Jesus? Have you bowed your heart? Have you bowed your head? Is Jesus your Government? Do you get Orders from Him? Do you hear from Heaven on how you should live? Has Jesus become your all in all?

Finally, Isaiah said,

For a child will be born to us...

Who would have thought that when Mary talked with the angel that day, that all this would come to pass? This young girl, Mary, was a virgin. She had never known a man. Mary had been promised to a man named Joseph. Both Mary and Joseph were direct descendants of King David. Their families had held on to the Promise that one day Messiah would come; and that the day would come that the enemies of Israel would be vanquished and that another King like David would come and rule Israel; and the Glory of the Lord would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. But that Promise seemed so distant, so vacant, so unfulfilled.

A quiet Discouragement had settled over the land. The pagan soldiers of Rome had come into the Promised land and had utterly taken over. Once again Israel had been overrun by the unbelieving dogs. Once again, the Promises of God seemed so far away. When will the Deliverer come? When will God visit us again? When will these Gentile soldiers leave our land that God gave us?

All that changed when the angel came to Mary to announce that God had chosen her to bear the Incarnate God. And the angel told a frightened and bewildered Joseph,

Matthew 1:21

you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Isaiah prophesied that this child would be born. This shows the Humanity of Jesus Christ. We have to remember that Jesus was not some glorified Prophet. Jesus was not just a good Man. Jesus was not a Man, Who really tried hard to do good things. No, the Bible declares that Jesus was God Himself- manifested in the flesh. The Bible reveals that Jesus was the incarnate God; that He was Immanuel- that God wrapped Himself in flesh and came down to be with us.

Jesus was born of Mary. Jesus was Human. He had Eyes that wept and Feet that grew weary. His Hands touched thousands and healed them. He hungered and thirsted. He bled when beaten and cried when wounded. Jesus was a Man. He walked the earth and wept over the sin of the land. He felt the sting of rejection and He felt the pain of betrayal.

Some say that Jesus came so that we might love each other. But people love others without Him. Some say that Jesus came to bring world Peace- but Jesus said that many would be persecuted and hated because they came to Him. The Bible says that Jesus came to destroy the Works of satan and to save God's people. Save us from what?

Some say today that Jesus came to save us from Despair; from being in last place; from not having riches and perfect health. Others say that Jesus came to save us from that low paying job and those feelings of insecurity. Still others say that Jesus came to save us from unfulfilled ambitions; and living in a blighted neighborhood.

But Jesus came to save us from something much more *serious*; and much more *important*; and much more *eternal* than any of that. Jesus came to save us from our sins. Jesus came to *save* us; to *rescue* us; to *heal* us; to *delivers* us- *from the Wrath of God!*

But why is God so mad at us? Because we have broken His Commandments and rebelled against His Will. And so, the Wrath of God is bearing down on all the ungodly like a freight train going at 300 miles an hour and we are chained to the railroad tracks. God's Wrath is sure. It is certain. And only those who believe in this Child will escape.

Jesus came to save His people from their Sins. But people tell me all the time that they go to the mountains to get close to God. People tell me that when they want to "get with God", they go to a brook; or they go fishing; or they go hunting; or they go gardening. But I tell you that that the only way to get close to God- is to go to this Child. No one may come to the Father but through Jesus Christ. The mountain that you climb to get with God is going to melt at His Coming. The animals and the brooks and streams of the earth all bow at His Feet. The storms and the hurricanes obey His Command and the trees of the field all clap their hands at His Glory.

The only way to get close to God is through this Child that was given. You cannot climb up to Heaven any other way. The real reason that people go to these places is to find some measure of Peace in a very busy world. But I tell you that until this Child becomes your all and all- you will never know Peace.

So, I beg you to behold this Child this morning. I plead with you to love this God/Man; and serve Him; and follow Him; and obey Him. I tell you that if you will believe the Gospel- you will be made "Free" to know that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully Man; and you will have Eternal Life. And once you see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- you will never regret expending all your energies and giving all your talents and all your strength your entire life- to make Jesus known to the world.

- ✓ To Abraham, Jesus was Melchisedek
- ✓ To Jacob, Jesus was the Stairway to Heaven
- ✓ To Moses, Jesus was the Rock that followed behind them

Jesus was:

- ✓ Mary's Deliverer
- ✓ Joseph's Fulfillment
- ✓ David's High Tower and Rock and Mighty Fortress; his Shield and Buckler
- ✓ Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life
- ✓ Jesus is the Resurrection
- ✓ He is the Darling of the Trinity
- ✓ The Proof of God's Love

... and every king will bow when Jesus comes back. Every human Government will relinquish Authority and give Allegiance to Him. Presidents and Prime Ministers will bow. Movie Stars and Rock stars and sports stars will bow. All the CEO's of all the Corporations of the world will bow. Every ruler will bow. School teachers and Principals will bow. Those nine black robed Justices on the Supreme Court will bow. The ACLU will bow. All atheists will bow. All agnostics will bow. Every Muslim, Buddhist, and Jew will bow. All angels will bow. All those in heaven will bow. And we shall see the Crown of Glory fly through the midst of Heaven and sit upon the Head of this Child, Who was given- Jesus Christ- and He will reign forever and ever!

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

