

## WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

The Scriptures  
Matthew 1:18-25

Intro: Throughout this month of December I want to bring you a series of messages, answering the question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN? It might surprise some of you that there are more than one or two answers to that question. I am going to deal with five answers that are given in Scripture. This does not exhaust the list of answers, but I am going to limit myself to five just because there are five Sundays of December. And it is my prayer that these messages will make this Christmas season more of a blessing for you than you have ever had before.

Probably the most obvious answer to this question is one that is given in our text. See Matt. 1:20, 21. We all should know that the Lord Jesus Christ came to provide salvation for sinners. But even though that is in the text I have chosen for my message today, I am not going to speak about salvation until two weeks from today. Today I want to speak about the coming of the Son of God in its relationship to THE SCRIPTURES, and what this should mean to us today. So my text is not going to be verses 20 and 21, but verses 22 and 23. (Read.)

My first point, then, from Matt. 1:22, 23 is that the coming of the Son of God was:

I. THE SUBJECT OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

Matthew told about the birth of Christ here as though it came about to fulfill Old Testament prophecy. Look at the words of verse 22 again.

Look also at Matt. 2:1-6. (Read.) Matthew indicated the same thing in verses 5 and 6 that he did in verses 22 and 23 of the preceding chapter.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and told him that he did not need to think that Mary had been unfaithful to him. Why? Because Isaiah had predicted 700 years before this all happened that "a virgin" would conceive and "bring forth a son" whose name would be "Emmanuel." That prophecy was found in Isa. 7:14. Isaiah did not say that "Emmanuel" would be conceived by the Holy Spirit. That was not revealed to him. But we can see now that if this son of the virgin were to be "Emmanuel," God with us, it could be no other way. If Joseph had been the father of Mary's child, the child would not have been God! It is clear, then, that Isaiah wrote that which had been revealed to him by God. There would have been no

other way for him to know what was going to take place 700 years after his lifetime. Therefore, here and in Matt. 2:5 we are directed to what Isaiah wrote in the Scriptures, in the OT.

- Isaiah predicted something that had never happened before, nor has it ever happened since. John the Baptist was sent from God, but not in the same way that the Lord Jesus Christ came. John the Baptist was only a man. He had a human mother and a human father. Jesus Christ is unique in all of human history. He alone can claim to be the Son of God. He had a human mother or He could not have been a man. If He had a human father, He would have been only a man. But since He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, we can believe beyond any doubt that He truly was the Son of God.

Now in the second place I want to point out what also is very obvious and well-known to most of you, possibly all of you. It is that:

## II. THE PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED.

Read again Matt. 1:24, 25.

- Matthew is very brief in his account. More details are given in Luke's Gospel. Matthew simply wanted the Jews to whom he was writing to know that it was prophesied in their Scriptures that this would happen some time in the future, and it did! As unbelievable as it was, it happened. And, according to the prophecy given by Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, this One Who was destined to be the Ruler over Israel was born exactly where Micah said he would be born: in Bethlehem.

Isaiah said that He would be a son. Isaiah said that He would be Deity. Micah said that He would be born in Bethlehem. There was no reason to change anything that these OT prophets had predicted. It came to pass as they said that it would.

- In fact, if we would want to go back before Isaiah and Micah lived for the first prophecy of the coming of the Son of God, we could turn to Gen. 3:15 where we have a promise of God in which we learn that some person in the future who was called the seed of the woman, not the seed of a man, would ultimately conquer the Devil and put an end to the terrible things he has been doing throughout the history of the world. That particular verse probably was not understood by the people of God in OT times until after Isaiah made his prophecy about the virgin.

Dr. Joseph Alexander, who was a professor at Princeton Seminary over 100 years ago, point out in his commentary on Matthew that the word "fulfilled" which Matthew used in verse 22 originally meant filled full in the sense of something being done completely. We have here, as Dr. Alexander said, "the full performance" of the promise, of the obligation that God Himself made when He directed Isaiah to write this prophecy. The impossible became a reality, not in part, but totally! No part of the prophecy was omitted.

The whole promise of Matt. 2:5, 6 was not fulfilled, just part of it. The Lord is yet to rule over Israel.

We could say the same about the prophecy of our Lord's coming which is found in Isa. 9:6, 7. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," has been fulfilled. But we have yet to see the government upon our Lord's shoulder. So part of Isa. 9:6,7 was fulfilled when the Lord came the first time; part of it was not fulfilled.

But all of Isa. 7:14 was fulfilled, completely fulfilled.  
This is very important for us to notice!

After having pointed all of this out, what lessons can we draw from what Matthew has recorded for us in this first chapter of his Gospel? What practical lessons can we draw from this that will help us in this day in which we live, 2,700 years after Isaiah wrote this prophecy, and 2,000 years since the Lord fulfilled it?

### III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FULFILLED PROPHECY.

When we deal with a verse like this, we are dealing with doctrine. Isaiah was giving us doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ when he wrote this prophecy. He did not know our Lord's full name, but he knew that a Person who was both the son of a virgin and "Emmanuel" (God with us) would be born some time in the future. This is doctrine, what we now would call, the doctrine of Christ. This is not all that there is to the doctrine of Christ, but it is a very significant part of it.

But I hope we have learned this: ALL DOCTRINE CARRIES WITH IT PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE. Doctrines lead to deeds. Precept must be followed by practice. Creed affects our conduct. There are practical helps to be found in all of the doctrines of Scripture, especially in the doctrine of Christ.

Let me point out just a few of the practical lessons we can learn from Matt. 1:22, 23. If we miss these, we are robbing ourselves of blessings the Lord intended for us to have.

A. The trustworthiness of Scripture.

Many have recognized that fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest evidences we have that the Bible is the Word of God. What we have seen this morning is just one instance of fulfilled prophecy--two if you count what we have seen in Matt. 2. The person who closes his mind to the instances of fulfilled prophecy in Scripture is not really willing to be honest in examining the evidence. This is the point that I want to make this morning because this is what I believe Matthew was trying to tell his fellow-Jews. The Bible is true. It is the Word of God. What God promises to do, He does!

The Apostle Peter made this very clear at the end of the first chapter of his second epistle. He had been speaking of how he had seen the transfiguration of the Lord in the mount, and then had heard the Father speak from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Pet. 1:17). But then he added this to show that having the Word of God was even better than simply having the experience that he had, as wonderful as that must have been. Peter wrote these words:

We have a more sure word of prophecy;  
[or, the word of prophecy made more sure, or certain]  
**whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,**  
as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,  
until the day dawn,  
and the day star arise in your hearts.

Then let me finish the reading as it is in the NASB:  
For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will,  
but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

It is important to see that in the case of the Apostle Peter as well as with the Apostle Paul, their confidence in the truth of Scripture grew stronger and stronger the longer they lived. THE COMING OF THE SON OF GOD INTO THE WORLD IS THE GREATEST PROOF THAT WE HAVE THAT THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY! IT IS THE WORD OF GOD, NOT THE WORD OF MAN. THERE NEVER HAS BEEN, NOR WILL THERE EVER BE, ANOTHER BOOK LIKE THE BIBLE!

It has been estimated that twenty percent of the Bible was prophetic when it was written. Many, many of those prophecies have already been fulfilled. And every fulfilled prophecy is a testimony that the Bible can be trusted.

But let me give you another practical application that we can make.

B. The centrality of Christ in Scripture.

That long list of names which you find in the first part of this chapter, plus our text, and that which follows in Matthew's Gospel, along with all of the other evidence in both the OT and NT, gives me the right to say to you this morning that the coming of the Son of God into the world proves that Christ is the One upon Whom all of Scripture is focused!

All of the OT anticipated His coming. The promises given to Abraham had to do with Christ. Take Christ out of the Old Testament Scriptures, and nothing is left. The same is true of the NT. Matthew wrote of Christ, and so did Moses. Abraham saw our Lord's day, and was glad. Isaiah saw the Lord Jesus sitting upon His throne in heaven, high and lifted up. And he spoke of Him.

So here is something that is very practical. I hope all of you are reading your Bible every day. I hope you have read it from cover to cover this year—or that you will have finished it by the end of this month. What should you be looking for when you read your Bible? There are many things that we need to learn. But Matthew would have us know that in reading our Bibles we need to be looking for Christ, learning of Him, worshipping Him, praising Him, and believing in Him.

Why did the Lord Jesus Christ come into the world? We are seeing today that one purpose was to make us depend upon the Word of God more and more, and see that Christ is the One Who gives life and power and blessing to the Word of God. The Bible is the written Word; Christ is the living Word; and the two are inseparable.

But let me add one other point:

C. The certainty of God's promises.

If the major promises, the promises concerning Christ, His first coming, were fulfilled in every detail, then we ought to know that this places the stamp of authenticity upon all of God's promises. All of His promises are true. If God fulfills the greatest, then we can be sure that He will fulfill all of the others, too.

Whether or not you have ever stopped to realize it, we live on the promises of God! If the promise concerning the virgin birth of the Son of God was fulfilled, fulfilled in every detail so that no part of it was unfulfilled, THEN WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT GOD WILL BE FAITHFUL TO ALL OF HIS PROMISES.

This is very practical, isn't it? What promises are you

depending upon this morning? That depends upon what you consider your needs to be. Was there some promise that brought blessing to you as you read your Bible this morning? Are you facing some decision in your life, and you need the leading of the Lord? Is there some sin you are struggling with, and you are looking to the Lord for deliverance? Are you fearful about the future? Are there members of your family that you are burdened about?

Remember: A promise is no better than the one who makes the promise. If you know a person to be a liar, you pay no attention to his (or her) promises. But it is different, isn't it, with the living God? He cannot fail. He has never broken a promise. Even when we are unfaithful, Paul told Timothy, He remains faithful to His Word, and to us. No one can take us out of His hands. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He works all of the circumstances in our lives together so that the result is "good."

Paul wrote this great verse to the Corinthians church:

For all the promises of God in him (Christ)  
are yea, and in him Amen,  
unto the glory of God by us (2 Cor. 1:20).

Or think of this verse which Paul also gave to the Corinthians when he exhorted them to be holy.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved,  
let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness  
of the flesh and spirit,  
perfecting holiness in the fear of God  
(2 Cor. 7:1).

The writer of Hebrews wrote this about Abraham:

And so, after he had patiently endured,  
he obtained the promise (Heb. 6:15).

The Apostle Peter said,

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great  
and precious promises, that by these ye might be  
partakers of the divine nature,  
having escaped the corruption that is in the world  
through lust (2 Pet. 1:4).

Without God's promises we would have nothing. Salvation is not what we do for God, but what God does for us. And what He does for us is found in the promises of Scripture. After all, prophecies are promises, the promises of God. Our hope for salvation is based upon God's promises. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" is our Lord's promise.

Concl: I hope you see the point that I have been making this morning. If Jesus Christ had not come, had not been born of the virgin, and had not been born in Bethlehem, then

our Bibles would have been discredited. But God wants us to believe His Word. He wants us to trust Him when He makes a promise. He may not fulfill His promise right now, but wait upon Him and you will always find that He is faithful. Abraham and Sarah waited for twenty-five years for a son, and when they were too old to have children, God gave them a son!

Some of you are going through deep waters just now. You have been praying for help, and so far you have not received what you have been praying for. Remember the birth of Christ. The fulfillment of that promise was a long time in coming, but finally Christ came. Continue to pray and to trust the Lord. He cannot and will not fail you.

One promise we are all awaiting is the coming of our Lord. Let me close by giving you this word of encouragement from Heb. 10:34b-37. The writer was comforting believers who were suffering, remind them that

...ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance.

Cast not away therefore your confidence,  
which hath great recompense of reward.

for ye have need of patience, that,  
after ye have done the will of God,

**ye might receive the promise.**

For yet a little while, and he that shall come  
will come, and will not tarry.

May the remembrance of God's faithfulness to His promise in the birth of Jesus Christ cause us all to trust the Lord more completely in the days that are ahead.

## WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

The Revelation of God

John 1:18

Intro: During this month of December in our Sunday morning services I am dealing with five answers to the question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN? There are more than five answers to this question, but I am dealing with only five because we have just five Sundays in this month. I might say, five of the most important answers to this question, but all of the answers are important. So with reference to the reasons for the incarnation it is impossible to distinguish between important, more important, and most important. All of the answers are, in a sense, abound together, and so it is hard to deal with one answer without getting involved in other answers.

The first answer which we considered together last Sunday is the one given in Matt. 1:22, 23. Let me read those verses for you again to remind all of us of last Sunday's message. Speaking of the birth of Christ, Matthew wrote,

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

The answer is this: Since our Lord's birth was prophesied in the OT, the birth of Christ give us one of the greatest reasons for believing that the Bible is truly the Word of God! If Christ had not been born, and been born in the way it was predicted, and where it was predicted that He would be born, the Bible would have been discredited! If the Bible were wrong on this major point, then the whole Bible would have been suspect. But prophecy was fulfilled. We have this proof that the Bible is the Word of God. And so the birth of our Lord in fulfillment of prophecy validates the teaching and the promises of all of Scripture.

This is evidence that a non-Christian cannot ignore, and it is evidence that is of immense importance to every child of God. If those great promises concerning the first coming of Christ have been proven true, then we can be assured that all of the other promises of Scripture are true, too.

Now I want to go on to a second answer to the question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

My text for today is the last verse of our Scripture reading, John 1:18. (Read.)

I. THE TEXT (John 1:18).

John described the birth of Christ in a way that is very different from the other Gospel writers. He simply said in verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh."

He obviously was speaking of Christ. That is increasingly clear as we read through John 1 up to this point. And when we add Rev. 19:13 where the second coming of Christ is described, it becomes even more certain that this title, "the Word," is name belonging to our Lord Jesus Christ. Rev. 19:13 says, "And his name is called The Word of God."

Our Lord is called "the Word" in two verses in John 1: Verses 1 and 14. Let us look at verse 1 for a moment to see what it teaches us about our Lord.

He was "in the beginning," and He "was the Word," speaking of what He always "was," in contrast with what He became, according to verse 18. This means that this Person Who had no beginning is God!

He was "with God." This means that He and God are two distinct Persons. At the same time it speaks of the fact that there were no barriers between the Two, that Their fellowship was absolutely perfect. The expression means that there was no sin in "the Word" to hinder or forbid a perfect relationship between God and the Word. The Word was in every respects on equal ground with the God.

And so we are not surprised to read that "the Word was God." In this statement John was declaring two things:

- 1) The Deity of our Lord.
- 2) The eternal Deity of our Lord.

He not only was Deity, but He always had been Deity, and He had never been anything else!

This is theology at its highest and best. If we understand and remember and believe what John wrote in this first verse of his Gospel, we will never go wrong concerning our Lord.

But now I want you to take the truth of John 1:1 down to John 1:14. And I say this because John again referred to our Lord in verse 14 with the same title, or name, that he did in verse 1. Although here he said that this One Who is called "the Word" became something which He had not been before. He "became flesh." He became a man. He became a human being.

But here is one important thing about what John said in this verse about our Lord: HE CALLED OUR LORD "THE WORD" AGAIN TO TEACH US THAT IN OUR LORD'S HUMANITY EVERYTHING THAT WAS DECLARED OF HIM IN VERSE ONE CONTINUED TO BE TRUE WHEN AND

AFTER HE "BECAME FLESH." Our Lord's birth did not change His Deity. It did not change His relationship with God. He did not become a sinful man when He became a man. He was God in human flesh. He continue to be God when He became a man, and so we have in Him a unique Person: The God-man. That is why Paul called our Lord, "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim.2:5).

IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY CHANGE IN THE DEITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHEN HE BECAME A MAN, THE APOSTLE JOHN COULD NOT HAVE USED THE SAME NAME IN VERSE 18 THAT HE HAD USED IN VERSE 1. Verse 1 teaches the eternal Deity of Christ; verse 14 indicates that there was no change in that Deity when our Lord "became flesh."

Why is it important for us to believe that the baby Jesus was God in human flesh? Well, there are many answers to that question, too. But today we are concerned about what John teaches us in this verse. Our translators have put the words that I want you to notice in as a parenthesis, but it really isn't a parenthesis. It is the main point of what he was saying. In fact, it is the main point of his Gospel. John wrote, **"...and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."**

What is God's glory? God's glory is the manifestation of God Himself. It is the revelation of Who and what God is! John said that they saw God in Jesus. He was declaring here that Jesus Christ, the Word Who "became flesh," was the revelation of God--not a partial revelation, but a full and complete revelation of God, the Father!

Now we are ready for verse 18. (Read.)

John tells us here that no one has ever seen God, the Father. But then he added that, since the Word became flesh and lived and walked on the earth, "He hath declared him." The verb suggests a declaration, a manifestation of God, that is unique and forever. We have a manifestation of God in Christ which can never be improved upon, can never be surpassed, no, not even if God Himself were to become incarnate! This verb was constantly used by Greek classical writers in the interpretation of divine mysteries. That which had never been fully known before was now completely and finally revealed in Christ.

This leads me to say just a few words about the Bible.

## II. THE BIBLE, THE REVELATION OF GOD.

Why did God give us the Bible?

Again, as I have said before about the incarnation of Christ, and about the Deity of Christ, there is more than one answer.

But here I have no hesitation in saying that one of the greatest reasons for the giving of the Bible is to tell us about God!

The Bible is both a revelation from God, and a revelation of God.

As we read our Bibles every day our purpose should be to learn more and more about God. This is why the OT will never be out-of-date; it tells us about God. It tells us many things that you and I have not yet learned. The important thing about the story of Adam and Eve, about the story of Noah, about the story of Abraham (and right on through the OT), is what they teach us about GOD! We learn about God through His works. We learn about God through His words. We learn many wonderful things about God throughout the OT. The OT, and now the NT, is a God-centered, God-revealing BOOK!

But then let me say this.

If you and I could know everything about God that is revealed in the OT, as wonderful as that would be, going far beyond what we now know, YET OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WOULD STILL BE SERIOUSLY LACKING. IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE LORD JESUS CHRIST CAME THAT THE REVELATION OF GOD WAS FINALLY COMPLETED. BUT SINCE HE CAME, THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANY FURTHER REVELATION OF GOD. IF GOD, THE FATHER, HIMSELF WERE TO COME, WE WOULD HAVE NO CLEARER REVELATION OF GOD THAN WE NOW HAVE IN CHRIST.

Most of you have heard this before, but we need to hear it again and again. This is the second answer to our question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN? He became a man in order to complete the revelation which God has been giving of Himself from the time of creation on down through history. Without Christ the revelation of God would be incomplete. Everything given in the OT is true, but all of it is not as much as we are able to see and understand in Christ.

### III. THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST.

Why is Christ different--different from Moses, different from David, different from Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel, men who have given us wonderful truth about God?

They were all godly men, wonderful men, men to whom under God we owe a great deal. But they were only men, men to God to be sure, but only men. The Lord Jesus Christ is God, the Son! He has the same nature as the Father. He, as our text

says, "is in the bosom of the Father." This is like the relationship between a mother and her child, or like that between a wife and her husband, or like the Apostle John who leaned upon Jesus' bosom. It speaks of the closest, most tender, the dearest relationship that can exist between two persons. No one has been as close to the Father as the Lord Jesus. No one is loved by the Father like the Lord Jesus is. No one knows the Father like the Lord Jesus does. God has just one only begotten Son, and that is the Lord Jesus. This is why He above all other is qualified to "show us the Father," as Philip requested in John 14:8.

The writer of the book of Hebrews has said it all in the first words of his marvelous epistle. Listen to these words which you will find in Heb. 1:1-3:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners  
spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,  
Hath in these last day spoken unto us by his Son,  
whom he hath appointed heir of all things,  
by whom also he made the worlds [ages];  
Who being the brightness of his glory,  
and the express image of his person,  
and upholding all things by the word of his power,  
when he had by himself purged our sins,  
sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

All through history until the time of the coming of Christ God had been speaking, making Himself known at different times, to different men and women, in different ways. But His final word has been spoken in the coming of His Son. To see Christ is to see God. To know Christ is to know God. To trust in Christ is to be trusting in God. God and Christ are different Persons, but identical in their Deity. Therefore, the Lord Jesus could say, as He did, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Concl: Our text tells us that no one has ever seen God, that is, no one except our Lord Jesus Christ. Any person in the OT who is said to have seen God, saw our Lord, not the Father. Christ and the angels have seen God, but no writer of the OT ever saw God until he got to glory. Christ has not only seen Him and been with Him throughout eternity, but He is like God, exactly like Him. And so He is uniquely able to "show us the Father."

Years ago, in fact, over a hundred years ago, my friend, Charles Simeon, of King's College at Cambridge University, preached on John 1:18. The substance of his message is preserved on only three pages. But he concluded by making three points, and I want to borrow them from him as I conclude today.

After speaking of Christ in this verse, he said, "How glorious a person Christ must be!" (Vol. 13, pp. 212, 213). He said that Christ is not the Son of God by creation, as the angels are, nor by redemption as you and I are, but eternally --as the only begotten Son of the Father. There is not among men or angels another like our blessed Lord. And He came to earth as a man in order that we might more fully know the glory of our great God. Is it any wonder that Paul said what he did in Phil. 3:10, and that Peter said what he did in 2 Pet. 3:18?

"How glorious a person Christ must be!"

Secondly, Mr. Simeon said, "How precious ought the Scriptures to be to us!" It is in our Bibles that we learn of Christ, and, learning of Christ, we learn of God. If the OT saints delighted in the Scriptures and in God having access to far less than we do, how it ought to shame us that our delight in God and in Christ and in the Word falls far short of the delight that they had in all three. If we did not have our Bibles, think of how lacking we would be in all that pertains to the eternal joy and blessedness of our souls! Speaking of the Scriptures, Mr. Simeon said, "Let us then search them with diligence, and treasure them up in our hearts; nor let a day pass without our digging into these invaluable mines."

The third and last thing that Mr. Simeon said was, "How inexcusable are they who are ignorant of God!"

There are many who profess to know God who actually know very little about Him, and who have little, if any, fellowship with Him. And what a tragedy that we are often more interested in what will please ourselves than in what will please the Lord.

Just think of the millions of people who will celebrate Christmas this year without the slightest idea of what the birth of Christ means. They will sign the carols, but not one bit of the truth will they understand. How many people will sing The Messiah again this year, and be far more moved by the music than they are by the words of Scripture which Handel put to music?

God has given us an awareness of His existence in our hearts. We see the evidence of God's handiwork in creation. He has given us His Word, and He has sent His Son into the world. He has given us daily reminders in our world today that things are dreadfully wrong. And yet the masses do not know Him. Nor do they know His Son. And, consequently, they do not know what sinners they are, how unfit for the God in whose presence they shall stand some day.

How wonderful it would be if, by the grace of God, all of us would resolve that in the coming days we would seek by prayer and the Word to seek our Lord more zealously that the glory we see in Christ might be displayed more in our lives to the honor and praise of God, our heavenly Father.

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned  
Upon the Saviour's brow;  
His head with radiant glories crowned,  
His lips with grace o'erflow, (repeat).

No mortal can with Him compare,  
Among the sons of men;  
Fairer is he than all the fair  
That fill the heav'nly train, (repeat).

He saw me plunged in deep distress,  
He flew to my relief;  
For me he bore the shameful cross,  
And carried all my grief, (repeat).

To him I owe my life and breath,  
And all the joys I have;  
He makes me triumph over death,  
And saves me from the grave, (repeat).

To heav'n, the place of his abode,  
He brings my weary feet;  
Shows me the glories of my God,  
And makes my joys complete, (repeat).

Since from his bounty I receive  
Such proofs of love divine,  
Had I a thousand hearts to give,  
Lord, they should all be thine, (repeat).

--Samuel Stennett, 1787  
Trinity Hymnal, #143

## WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

Salvation

Luke 2:10, 11

Intro: When the Son of God became a man, He did so to confirm the trustworthiness of the Old Testament Scriptures. When the Son of God became a man, He did so to complete the revelation of God which God had been giving of Himself since the beginning of time. The most-repeated answer to the question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?, is the answer we are going to consider today. The Son of God became a man in order to provide salvation for people. It is stated very clearly in the 10th and 11th verses of Luke 2.

It was an angel who told the shepherds,

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings  
of great joy, which shall be to all (the) people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David  
**a Saviour**, which is Christ the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator, became a human being in order to save human beings.

In the passage we considered two weeks ago, Matt. 1:18-25, we had those words spoken by the angel of the Lord to Joseph when he was trying to decide what to do with Mary after he found out that she was expecting a child. The angel said,

Joseph, thou son of David, fear not  
to take unto thee Mary thy wife:  
for that which is conceived in her  
is of the Holy Spirit.

And she shall bring for a son,  
and thou shalt call his name JESUS:

**for he shall save his people from their sins**

(Matt. 1:20b, 21).

These passages make it clear that the birth of Christ should never be considered apart from the death of Christ. It was to die on a Cross that the Son of God was born as a man! But we can be thankful that His body to did remain in the tomb. He was raised from the dead and shortly afterwards He returned to heaven where He now awaits the time when He will enter this universe again to take His church to heaven. More will take place after that, but in speaking of the death of Christ I want to make it clear, in case there is anyone present who does not know, that Jesus Christ is a living, glorified, triumphant Savior! All arguments concerning where Christ was buried would end if His body were still in the tomb. But it is not there! He is risen! He has conquered death and the grave! Therefore, we have every reason to sing, "Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

Before we look into the necessity that the Son of God become

a man in order to die, let us briefly note some other Scriptures which tell us what Luke 2 tells us about this reason for the coming of the Son of God into the world.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

The Apostle John said in 1 John 4:14,  
And we have seen and do testify  
that the Father sent the Son  
to be the Saviour of the world.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 1:15,  
This is a faithful saying,  
and worthy of all acceptation,  
that Christ Jesus came into the world  
to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Our Lord Himself said,  
For the Son of man is come  
to seek and to save that which was lost  
(Luke 19:10).

As the time of our Lord's crucifixion drew near, we learn from John 12:27 that He prayed this prayer:

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.

When our Lord was speaking to Pilate when Pilate was examining Him, He spoke these words:

To this end was I born,  
and for this cause came I into the world,  
that I should bear witness unto the truth.  
Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice  
(John 19:37b).

The most important issues of life are to be seen in the birth, death, and resurrection of the Son of God Who became a man.

At the time of our Lord's arrest, Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. The Lord rebuked Peter with these words:

Put up thy sword into the sheath,  
the cup which my Father hath give me,  
shall I not drink it (John 18:11).

And we cannot overlook that most familiar of all NT verses, John 3:16. (Repeat.) God gave His Son in birth, death, and resurrection, "that whosoever believeth in him...." None of the saving work of Christ would have been possible if He had not become a man.

But now let us go to our text: Luke 2:10, 11. And I want to

direct your attention to what the angel said that "Christ the Lord" would be:

## II. A SAVIOR.

- What should we learn from this title which is given to our Lord many times in Scripture? What is a savior?

I have four dictionaries in my study. I like to consult more than one when I am looking for a definition. In this case, I looked up the word savior in each one, and there was one thing that they all had in common. All four of them said that this was a title which belonged to Jesus Christ.

Now this would mean that the Christian faith is unique in its promise of salvation. There are many religions in the world, hundreds of them. But the idea of salvation, or of a Savior, belongs to the Christian faith. A savior is one who saves (obviously), who rescues, who delivers. But, what is it that Jesus Christ saves us from, what does He deliver us from, how does He rescue us?

In answering that question I take you back to Matthew 1, and verse 21--the latter part of the verse: "For he shall save His people **from their sins**"! Peter, preaching in Jerusalem after the ascension of Christ, said,

- Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities (Acts 3:26).

Jesus Christ came to save sinners. And the Bible teaches us that "all have sinned." Therefore, the message of Christ is a message that should be of interest to every person who has ever lived--or who will be born at any time in the future. He saves from sin's penalty. He saves from sin's power. And ultimately He will save us from the very presence of sin in our lives.

Now, if He is a Savior.... Let me state that another way: If He is the Savior, then His claim to save is a claim to deliver us, to rescue us, to save us, so that we are no longer in danger. One of my dictionaries (in fact, the newest one) says that a savior is one who delivers us from "dire circumstances" (The American Heritage Dictionary, p. 1093). What I am saying is that if a person tries to save someone who is drowning, but does not save them, he is not a savior. If a person tries to save a person in a building that is on fire, but does not save him, he is not a savior. For a person to be called a savior means that he saves, really saves, delivers from whatever the danger might be.

Jesus Christ is a true Savior. He does not just try to save. He does not assist us in saving ourselves. HE SAVES! He saves totally. He needs no one else's help. He has had no failures. All whom our Lord has sought to save, He has saved. IT IS NO WONDER THAT THE DICTIONARIES GIVE THIS TITLE TO OUR LORD ALONE.

Our Lord saves us from sin's penalty--which is eternal death in an eternal hell. He saves us from sin's power in our daily lives, so that we no longer are in bondage to our sin. And we have the prospect that some day, when we are with the Lord, we will no longer be even capable of sinning. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR, A COMPLETE SAVIOR. He saves us from sin's penalty of death, and gives us eternal life. And He is the only One Who can do this for us! He is called the Savior because He saves us by Himself, and He saves us eternally.

I hope all of you understand this. If you have any questions about salvation, be sure to talk to me after the service this morning. We preach Christ not just as a Savior, but as the only Savior, and as the complete Savior.

Now, with all of this in mind, let me point out to you:

### III. THE MESSAGE OF THE MANGER AND THE CROSS.

If our sins required that the Son of God become a man in order to save us, what is the message to be seen in the birth of Christ and His death. You cannot separate those two events: His birth, and His death.

Let me give you a fourfold message which we need to understand if salvation is to mean anything at all to us.

#### A. The awfulness of sin.

God never does anything unnecessarily. If He sent His Son to die in order to save sinners from their sins, i.e., the consequences of their sins, then sin must be terribly bad in God's sight.

Think of Who Jesus Christ is! He was and is God, the Son. He never committed any sin in thought, word, or deed. He was perfect! My salvation required that the very Son of God Himself be my Substitute, take my sins upon Himself, because nothing short of His death would be sufficient.

We live in a world where sin has practically been eliminated from our vocabulary--BUT NOT FROM OUR CONSCIENCES! And yet remember that everything that the Bible condemns is still sinful! Adultery is sin. Homosexuality is sin. Drunken-

ness is sin. Dishonesty is sin. Pride is sin. Stealing is sin. We can be guilty of sin in our minds without ever doing it outwardly. It was S-I-N that made the incarnation necessary; it was S-I-N that made it necessary for Jesus Christ to come and to die.

NO PERSON CAN UNDERSTAND WHO CHRIST WAS, AND WHY HE DIED, AND EVER AGAIN MINIMIZE THE AWFULNESS OF SIN. This is in itself a call for our repentance, and for us to turn in faith to Christ that we might be saved from the penalty of our sins.

But the manger and the Cross give us a second message:

B. The awesomeness of God.

"Awesome" is a word that has entered the vocabulary of our young people. I don't know how some of you may have used this word, but I want you to know this morning that this is a word which belongs to God alone! He is the only One Who is awesome. God is awesome because when we really understand Him, when we know even a little of His righteousness, His holiness, how He cannot tolerate sin in any form, then we begin to understand the awfulness of sin, and our hearts will be overwhelmed with the majesty, the glory, the power of the living God!

Do you know why people can play around in sin, and not worry about it? It is because they are ignorant of God. Last week I told you that one reason the Lord came to earth was to give us the completed revelation of God. If you want to know what God is like, then get acquainted with Jesus Christ. And you can only become acquainted with Him as you get acquainted with the Bible.

Do you remember the story of the feast of Belshazzar? He was having a great time sinning until God reached down and wrote on the wall of that banqueting place! Then his appearance changed, his thoughts began to drive him mad, and His bones shook and appeared to come apart. Cf. Dan. 5. Men feel very sure of themselves until they are confronted with the living God. Revelation 6 tells us that with the opening of the sixth seal, kings, great men, the rich, chief captains, and mighty men, as well as slaves and free man, hid themselves and cried for the rocks and mountains to fall on them to hide them from the face of the One Who was sitting on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! All careless behavior suddenly comes to an end when men are confronted with the living God!

The third thing that the manger and the Cross teach us is:

C. The helplessness and hopelessness of man.

Why would God go to such limits to save man? Because of man's helplessness and man's hopelessness without God. The manger and the Cross forever put an end to any idea of salvation by works. We are unable to atone for a single sin. If man is left to himself, his doom is certain. By himself he not only is powerless to save himself, but he does not even want to be saved. In contrast with man's helplessness and hopelessness we have "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." He came to provide salvation for lit., "all the people." His work is of such infinite worth that if God suddenly were to decide to save every single person who has ever lived, that could be done. Man is dead, blind, corrupt, and weak! And yet Rom. 5:6 tells us,

For when we were yet without strength,  
in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Finally, in the manger and at the Cross we see:

D. The love and grace of God.

I call your attention again to Romans 5, this time to verses 7 and 8:

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:  
yet peradventure for a good man  
some would even dare to die.  
**But God commendeth his love toward us,**  
in that, while we were yet sinners,  
Christ died for us.

Some might die for a good man, but man is not good. Man has not earned it, so salvation cannot be a reward. The only way to explain the manger and the Cross is by looking into the heart of God. John 3:16 tells us the same.

The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:9, 10,  
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.  
Herein is love, not that we loved God,  
but that he loved us, and sent his Son  
to be the propitiation for our sins.

Concl: Horatius Bonar, an older brother of Andrew Bonar, wrote several poems which have been set to music. One of them in our Hymnal (#403) says what I have been trying to say to you this morning. Let me read the verses to you. It goes like this:

Not what my hands have done, can save my guilty soul;

Not what my toiling flesh has borne  
can make my spirit whole.  
Not what I feel or do can give me peace with God;  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears  
can bear my awful load.

Thy work alone, O Christ, can ease this weight of sin;  
Thy blood alone, O Lamb of God, can give me peace within.  
Thy love to me, O God, not mine, O Lord, to thee,  
Can rid me of this dark unrest, and set my spirit free.

Thy grace alone, O God, to me can pardon speak;  
Thy pow'r alone, O Son of God,  
can this sore bondage break.  
No other work, save thine, no other blood will do;  
No strength, save that which is divine,  
can bear me safely through.

I bless the Christ of God; I rest on love divine;  
And with unfalt'ring lip and heart,  
I call this Saviour mine.  
His cross dispels each doubt; I bury in his tomb  
Each thought of unbelief and fear,  
each ling'ring shade of gloom.

I praise the God of grace; I trust his truth and might;  
He calls me his, I call him mine,  
My God, my joy, my light.  
'Tis he who saveth me, and freely pardon gives;  
I love because he loveth me, I live because he lives.

It was through the manger and ultimately at the Cross that  
Christ was bridging the awful gulf between a holy God and  
guilty, defiled, helpless sinners.

Is your faith for your salvation in the incarnate, crucified,  
risen Christ? If so, you are saved. If not, you are still  
under the judgment of God and you need a Savior. There is  
only One, not many. His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Come  
to Him right now, trust in Him alone. He will save you and  
never will cast you away.

## "GLORY TO GOD"

Luke 2:13, 14

Intro: I am sure that many of us have known these verses (8-14) since childhood. The appearance of the angels to the shepherds is surely among the most familiar of all of the events connected with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Angels were the heavenly messengers who carried to earth those "good tidings of great joy." The angels did not choose to come to the shepherds; they were sent to the shepherds. And, as we all know now, their message had to do with the birth in Bethlehem of One Who was "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

After the angel had given his message to the shepherds, suddenly he was joined with "a multitude of the heavenly host," i.e., many more angels than they could count. Luke said that they were praising God as they sang,  
 Glory to God in the highest,  
 and on earth peace,  
 good will toward me.

Or, as the last part of the verse probably should be rendered, "...and on earth peace among men with whom He is well pleased."

This is what has been called the beginning of Christian poetry. It is the basis of that now-famous Gloria In Excelsis Deo. The angels were not only proclaiming their own praise to God, but they were calling upon those with whom God is wellpleased to join with them in a glorious anthem of praise to God. They wanted both the earth and the heavens to resound with the praise to God. Perhaps this is what Paul had in mind when he wrote Phil. 2:9-11, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him...."

The writer of the Gloria is, as far as I know, unknown. But whoever he or she was, one of the verses seem to suggest that the shepherds would say to the whole world,  
 Come to Bethlehem, and see  
 Him whose birth the angels sing;  
 Come, adore on bended knee  
 Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

This is a part of the Christmas message that is not often emphasized. The birth of Christ is a call for the whole world to worship Him and to sing "glory to God in the highest" for sending His Son to earth to be the Savior of sinners.

After the shepherds had gone to see the baby Jesus, verse 20 of this chapter tells what they did. (Read.)

Let me ask you today if this is the reaction that the birth of Jesus Christ has prompted in your heart? I am sure that you would agree with me that although our Lord and His Father Who sent Him are still the objects of praise in heaven, yet very little praise is given to Him on earth. And, as I have mentioned before, people sing the carols and even the words of Handel's Messiah without ever realizing where those words come from, or what they mean.

And it is especially amazing when the message of the coming of Christ is the message of peace—"peace on earth among men with whom God is wellpleased." I have heard several people, men and women, speaking of peace during these holidays, but they say nothing about Christ, or about the need to be pleasing, to be acceptable with God. We really are saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. By the grace of God may we make sure that, at this time when we remember the birth of our Savior, we renew our praises to God for all that He has done for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Even as we sing the carols, and the great hymns of the church, let us notice the words, AND THEN SING THEM TO GOD FROM OUR HEARTS!

During this Christmas season I have asked you to join with me in considering the question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

So far, we have had three answers to that question:

- 1) He became a man to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament which said that He would come. The fulfillment of those prophecies is added confirmation of the truth of Scripture, added proof that the Bible is really the Word of God.
- 2) He became a man to complete the revelation which God had been making of Himself since the beginning of time. That revelation is now complete.
- 3) He became a man to provide salvation for sinners. Our text for that was the 11th and 12th verses of this second chapter of Luke which we considered together last Sunday.

Today we come to a fourth answer. In many respects it probably should have been considered first, because there was nothing that was more important to our Lord than that. Not even could our salvation be placed before what we have in those words, "Glory to God in the highest."

Charles Wesley wrote that hymn, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." But in that great hymn he directed us to glorify Christ--and I certainly have no objection to that. We need to glorify Him constantly. One verse of that carol goes like this:

Christ, by highest heaven adored,

Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb:  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail th' Incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King."

The only objection that I have to that verse is that "the herald angels" did not sing, "Glory to the newborn King." They sang, "Glory to God in the highest..." It is right for us to worship Christ just as we worship God, but we need to be careful to observe carefully what the Scriptures have to say. The angels were saying that the birth of Jesus Christ was an occasion for angels in heaven and saints on earth to glorify GOD! Jesus Christ became a man so that He could glorify God on the earth! This is what I want you to learn, or to re-learn, today!

#### I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN, TO GLORIFY GOD?

This is a tremendous subject, one about which we can continue to learn more and more as long as we live. And it has special importance for all of us who know the Lord because of instructions we are given in Scripture. For example, listen to 1 Cor. 1:31:

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink,  
or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

In that same book of 1 Corinthians, 6:20, Paul concluded a passage by saying, "...therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

And so all that we can learn from Christ about glorifying God will be of great importance for all of us. Christ glorified God perfectly, and in ways that we will never be able to glorify Him, but still there is much that we can learn from Christ Who is our Example in this.

When the angels sang this song they were announcing to the shepherds, in the first place, that

#### A. Christ came to do in everything what the Father wanted Him to do.

There were others who wanted to do the Father's will, but no one was able to do it perfectly like the Lord Jesus did. He is the only One Who has ever been able to say, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29b).

This had the greatest priority in our Lord's life. Nothing, NOTHING, was more important to Him than the will of the Father.

- Our Lord never sought His own pleasure first, nor His own comfort. He only did what the Father wanted Him to do. He only said what the Father wanted Him to say. He only went where the Father wanted Him to go. Inwardly and outwardly our Lord's first and only purpose on earth was to please the Father. It had never been done before, but our Lord did it, and did it perfectly!

Let me call your attention to a verse which is impossible to understand unless you understand this. Please turn to Heb. 12:1, 2. How can we explain that term "the joy that was set before him" when it obviously had to do with the Cross?

Every testing in our lives is a test of our obedience to our heavenly Father. The same was true with our Lord. Even His disciples sought to keep Him from the Cross. But the joy of the Lord was to do the Father's will, even though it meant the Cross. The ultimate goal of the Son was to return to the Father, to be seated at His right hand, and to get back there without ever disobeying Him, or dishonoring Him, in any way.

- One of the most wonderful studies in all of Scripture is the relationship between the Father and the Son. I think that the Apostle John had that relationship in mind when he wrote in 1 John 1:3,

That which we have seen and heard  
declare we unto you,  
that ye also may have fellowship with us:  
and truly our fellowship is with the Father,  
and with his son Jesus Christ.  
And these things write we unto you,  
that your joy may be full.

When our Lord was in heaven before He became a man there was never a time when there was any strain, nor any breach, in His fellowship with the Father. The same was true when He became a man!

Oh, that you and I would seek by the grace of God to cultivate that kind of a relationship with God! What a difference it would make in our lives if pleasing God had the greatest priority with each one of us.

- When the Lord was summarizing His life of earth as He prayed His high priestly prayer recorded for us in John 17, He said this in verse 4:

**I have glorified thee on the earth:**  
I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

I call your attention to those three words, "on the earth." The Lord did what had never been done before. And He became man for that specific purpose. You can roll up all of the other answers to our question, and wrap them in this. The Son of God became a man in order to show that it is possible to live a life pleasing to God even in a world like this! He faced in His life more troubles, and greater troubles, than you and I will ever have to face. And yet, in it all He pleased God!

You and I might say, "But the Lord was the Son of God as well as being a Man. He was not a sinner by nature like we are." That is true. But can you see that our Lord is our great encouragement in our lives? He has come to save us, and saving us He is making us like He is. We will not be like Him completely until we are in heaven, but we are becoming more like Him day after day if we are walking in fellowship with Him. We are being changed by the Spirit of God. We are being changed by the Word of God. We see this in 2 Cor. 3:18. All of this means that the more you and I are like Christ, the more we will be able to glorify God in what we are, in what we say, in what we do, and even in what we think.

But let me give you one other answer to the question, What does it mean to glorify God?

B. We glorify God with our praises.

That is how the angels glorified God. And verse 20 tells us that is how the shepherds glorified God. The Lord Jesus glorified God by causing the angels and the shepherds to glorify God with their praises. We glorify God with our praises, but we also glorify God when we are the instruments which Christ uses to cause others to glorify Him. Whenever a person say, "I thank God for you," you are an instrument for God's glory. Cf. Phil. 1:3.

But let me point out one occasion when the Lord Jesus gave thanks to the Father. Please turn to Matt. 11:25, 26.  
(Read.)

What does the context show us?

The Lord had been speaking about the mighty works that He had done in Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, saying that if such mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, or in Sodom, they would have repented, and those places would still have been in existence. But those cities did not repent, and so they were coming under a more severe final judgment. This had to do with the ways of God.

We are faced with the ways of God every day we live. Sometimes God's ways are hard to take. They were not easy for the Lord. The Lord knew what it was to preach and to work and to see people turn away in unbelief. It was His love for the Father and His desire to do the Father's will that caused people to hate Him. And He expressed His full agreement with the Father in what the Father was doing.

What was the Lord praying about? He was praying about the purposes of God in salvation. And He was saying that He was thankful that the Lord was working the way He was working, and for one reason: **BECAUSE THAT WAS THE WAY THAT GOD SAW WAS GOOD.**

This actually had to do with the doctrine of election, didn't it? See verse 27 in this connection. The more we know of the Father and the Son, the more we will realize that They are absolutely good and right in all that They do, and, therefore, they should be glorified for what They are doing!

What peace and joy would be ours if we would only seek to glorify God with our praises even when we do not understand His ways with us. Our Lord glorified the Father with His praises.

Let me mention one more thing:

II. THE GLORIFICATION OF THE FATHER IS THE CONDITION OF PEACE.

The world wants peace today, but the world does not want God. People want peace, but they do not want God. They want peace to please themselves, but they are not interested in pleasing God. And so our rejection of God and of Christ puts us farther away from peace every day with live. What we need is peace with God, and then we can enjoy the peace of God. But peace comes only to those men and women, boys and girls, in whom God delights. And He delights only in those who are trusting in His Son.

Concl: There is a message here for the Christian, and for the one who is not a Christian.

We as Christians need to check on ourselves. What is our purpose in living--to please ourselves, or our loved ones? Or is it to glorify God by seeking to please Him in all that we do. That is the way to be the greatest blessing to those we love, and it is the way of peace.

For those who do not know the Lord, you will never have peace until you know the Lord. Trust Christ today.

## WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

The Kingdom

Luke 1:30-33

Intro: On the past four Sunday mornings I have been considering Scriptural answers to the question, WHY DID THE SON OF GOD BECOME A MAN?

The four answers we have examined are:

- 1) To show the absolute trustworthiness of the Scriptures. Our text was Matthew 1:22, 23:
 

Now all this was done,  
that it might be fulfilled which was spoken  
of the Lord by the prophet, saying,  
Behold, a virgin shall be with child,  
and shall bring forth a son,  
and they shall call his name Emmanuel,  
which being interpret is, God with us.
- 2) To complete the revelation of the Father. Our text was John 1:18:
 

No man hath seen God at any time;  
the only begotten Son,  
which is in the bosom of the Father,  
he hath declared him.

And along with that verse we looked at the 14th verse in the same chapter:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,  
(and we beheld his glory,  
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)  
full of grace and truth.
- 3) To provide salvation from sin. Our text was Matthew 1:21, the words spoken to Joseph by the angel of the Lord:
 

And she shall bring forth a son,  
and thou shalt call his name JESUS:  
for he shall save his people from their sins.
- 4) To glorify God. Our text was Luke 2:12, 13. These, too, are the words of the angel of the Lord, this time to the shepherds:
 

And suddenly there was with the angel  
a multitude of the heavenly host,  
praising God, and saying,  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace, good will toward men.

I want to conclude this series today, but if I were to take additional time I would speak on:

- 5) Hebrews 2:14, 15:
 

Forasmuch then as the children  
are partakers of flesh and blood,  
he also himself likewise took part of the same;

that through death he might destroy  
him that had the power of death,  
that is, the devil;  
And deliver them who through fear of death  
were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

6) Hebrews 4:15, 16:

For we have not an high priest  
which cannot be touched with  
the feeling of our infirmities;  
but was in all points tempted like as we are,  
yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly  
to the throne of grace,  
that we may obtain mercy,  
and find grace to help in time of need.

7) Philippians 2:5-11. (Quote.)

Perhaps I can take these up at a later time.

But to conclude our series I want to consider with the you  
Luke 1:30-33.

First of all let me summarize for you

I. THE REVELATION GIVEN TO MARY (Luke 1:30-33).

There are two passages in the Gospels where two people were  
told separately that our Lord's name was to be "JESUS."  
Those two people were Joseph and Mary. And both of them were  
informed of this by an angel. In Matthew 1:20, 21 (which we  
considered two weeks ago) it was "the angel of the Lord" who  
told Joseph. (See above on p. 1 of the notes.) In our text  
for today it was the angel Gabriel who appeared to Mary and  
told her what we read in verse 31. Perhaps it was the same  
angel who told both of them.

The name JESUS, as we all should know by now, means, Jehovah  
is Savior, or salvation is of the Lord. The title of the  
hymn, Jesus Saves, was probably taken from the meaning of our  
Lord's name.

So the idea that the Son of God was to save was inherent in  
the name given by the angel Gabriel to Mary. But with that  
one point of similarity, the emphasis to Mary was different  
from that given to Joseph. To Joseph the emphasis was  
definitely upon our Lord's work as a Savior; to Mary the  
emphasis was upon our Lord's work as a Sovereign, a King.

See that in verses 32 and 33.

The one had to do with our Lord's first coming; the other had

to do with His second coming. Most of the Jews who knew the Lord and were living during His ministry on earth were expecting the Messiah to be a King. In fact, the last question that the disciples asked the Lord before His ascension, according to the Scriptural record, was, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Cf. Acts 1:6). Their question was not IF He would, but WHEN He would! They believed in the establishment of a kingdom on earth, and they believed that the Messiah would be the King over that kingdom.

They were right about the fact, the hope, the prospect, but their timing was wrong (like a lot of prophetic teachers from that day until this). Our Lord did not respond by saying that they were mistaken about the kingdom, and that there would be no kingdom. He simply said that it was not a matter of revelation for them to know the time. The Father had determined when that would be, and He would bring it to pass at the right time.

But it is very interesting to see that one of the reason for the incarnation, one reason that the Son of God became a man, was so that He as a man, as the God-man, could rule as a king upon the earth! And this was the emphasis that was made in the revelation given to Mary.

Actually the revelation given to Mary was quite complete. We have her Son's humanity mentioned (see verse 31), and His Deity (see verse 32). We see that in His humanity He was born into the family of David (see verse 32). And, although this may not all have been perfectly clear to Mary, we have our Lord's first coming in verse 31; His second coming in verses 32, 33.

So we have in these verses our Lord's Person--that He was both God and man. We have His first coming during which He would provide salvation. We have His second coming for the purpose of reigning as King.

But now, lest there be some question in some of your minds about "the kingdom," let me speak for a moment about:

## II. THE IDEA OF THE KINGDOM IN SCRIPTURE.

### A. A future, literal, earthly kingdom.

We are told in our text that "the Lord God," speaking of the Father, "shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Anyone who is acquainted with the OT knows that "the throne of David was a real, literal, earthly kingdom. David was king over the whole nation of Israel. There certainly were

spiritual aspects to the kingdom of Israel, but it was a real kingdom. Israel was a nation among the nations of the earth. And this is the kind of a kingdom that the angel Gabriel was speaking about since our Lord was to "reign over the house of Jacob for ever! The angel was not speaking about the church, but about Israel, about an earthly kingdom over which our Lord would reign.

When the kingdom was given to David, the Lord told him,  
 And thine house and thy kingdom  
 shall be established for ever before thee:  
 thy throne shall be established for ever  
 (2 Sam. 7:16).

Earlier in that same chapter when the Lord was speaking of David's son who would succeed him, He said, "...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (2 Sam. 7:13b).

If you have read your Bible through this year, you probably have just read this past week the 19th chapter of the Book of the Revelation. In that chapter we have our Lord's second coming described. He comes as a victorious rider upon a white horse. It is mentioned in the latter part of that chapter that He will have four names:

- 1) "Faithful and True" (v. 11).
- 2) "A name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (v. 12).
- 3) "The Word of God" (v. 13).
- 4) And this is the one that is of importance to us today: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (v. 16).

This title suggests that the kingdom of our Lord, the kingdom of David, His reign over the house of Jacob, is going to be much greater than the reign of David, or Solomon, or any of the other kings of Judah or Israel. The Lord's kingdom is going to be one in which He will be the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords. And we should not be surprised at that because in Rev. 11 15 when the seventh angel blows his trumpet, there will be "great voices in heaven, saying,"

**The kingdoms of this world  
 are become the kingdom of our Lord,  
 and of his Christ,  
 and he shall reign for ever and ever.**

Therefore, our Lord will one day reign as King over the nation Israel, but His kingdom will extend to every nation on the face of the earth. Then, and not until then, will we have world peace. He will reign with rod of iron, and the nations will have no choice but to submit to His rule. He will rule in righteousness. All of this is yet to come. So you can see that I believe that the prophecies of the Book of the Revelation are yet to be fulfilled.

But let me add another word about this literal kingdom.

Revelation 20 speaks of our Lord reigning for a thousand years. A thousand years is a millennium. If you believe in the future reign of Christ on the earth, you are a millennialist. If you believe that He is coming before the millennium begins, you are a pre-millennialist. If you believe that Christ is coming after the millennium, you are a post-millennialist. If you do not believe in a literal millennium, you are an a-millennialist.

There are godly people who hold to all three views, but personally it is my conviction that the coming of Christ is pre-millennial. How can we reign with Him if He is not here? Twice it says in Rev. 20 (vv. 4, 6) it speaks of living and reigning with Christ for a thousands years. That settles it for me. You either have to spiritualize those prophecies, or say that they have already been fulfilled, not to have to admit that there will be a reign of Christ upon the earth.

Now let me leave this idea of a literal kingdom, and speak of the kingdom in a spiritual sense.

B. A present, spiritual kingdom.

One mistake, I believe, that some people make in interpreting the Scriptures, is to make a word like kingdom mean the same thing every time it is used. Just because the word kingdom is sometimes used in a spiritual sense, it does not mean that it is never used in a literal sense, and vice versa.

For example, Paul said in Rom. 14:17,

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,  
but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

He was obviously speaking of a work of God, a rule of God, in the hearts of people. And we should remember what our Lord said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, 5,

Verily, verily I say unto thee,  
Except a man be born again,  
he cannot see the kingdom of God

And,

Verily, verily, I say unto thee,  
Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,  
he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The Lord was speaking to Nicodemus about being saved, about being born again, about entering the kingdom of God. If you are saved, you are in the kingdom of God right now! Sometimes in Scripture you will find the term kingdom used of those who profess to be Christians. That is another subject in itself. But I want you to see today that the word kingdom

is used in the Bible in a literal, earthly, sense; it is also used to speak of those people who have actually been saved, or who profess to be saved. The one does not exclude the other, and we always need to determine from the context of a passage just how this word, or any other word, is used.

When the Lord's reign on earth begins, every person in His kingdom will be saved. Matthew 25 makes this clear. However, it appears that many will be born during the millennium, during our Lord's reign upon the earth, who will not be saved. They will revolt against the Lord when Satan is released from the abyss. The Lord will execute judgment against them, and finally bring in "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1).

Now let me return very briefly to:

#### IV. GABRIEL'S MESSAGE TO MARY (Luke 1:32, 33).

She was told that her Son would be "great." He would be great as a Person. Never before had God and man been joined together in the same person. He would not only be the son of Mary, but He was "the Son of the Highest." He would be "great" because of the role He would have in the salvation of sinners, and in the fulfillment of God's purposes in the earth. The church would not be appointed to bring in the kingdom; it would be given unto Him by the Lord God. It would be David's kingdom, the kingdom of Israel redeemed and transformed. While we can see from Rev. 20 that there would be a final rebellion against the King, yet the promise is that He would be an eternal King, and that His reign would never come to an end.

I am sure that no one has a clear picture of all of the details of our Lord's reign, but I want you to see today that JESUS was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago because it was God's purpose that eventually after His death, after His resurrection, and after His present time in heaven, He would come to the earth to reign as the heir to David's throne, that all of the promises given to Abraham and David would finally be fulfilled. The man Christ Jesus is destined to reign upon the earth. His reign is the only valid hope that we have that some day the world will be at peace.

Concl: I have tried to keep this as simple as I possibly could feeling that we need to get the basic ideas about the kingdom in Scripture well in mind. I have not talked about the rapture of the church. I believe that is the most imminent of events involving our Lord. But that is another subject. The very language of Gabriel here indicates an excitement even with him concerning the eventual exalta-

tion of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Ruler over Israel and all of the nations of the earth.

To know the truth that I have been speaking about today is to help us to keep our vision clear of the things which lie ahead. To say that Christ will eventually be King of kings and Lord of lords, does not for a moment deny that He is sovereign now. He is sovereign! There is none greater than He. But the world is yet to realize that He is Sovereign, and that day is just as certainly coming as the fact that He has already come to provide salvation for all who will put their trust in Him.

Let us worship and praise Him now as the Sovereign of the universe, and as the coming King! But let each of us make sure that we personally have experienced in our own souls the saving grace of Christ.