THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST – ITS NECESSITY

Real Peace, Joy and Good Will towards Men

Richard Stetler

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made . . .

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."

John 1:1-3, 14*

*All Scripture in this booklet is quoted from the King James Version

What the Incarnation of Christ is Not

There are many ideas concerning the birth of Jesus Christ that are floating around theological circles, and in many churches. Sadly, many liberal theologians, who deny the supernatural nature of the virgin birth of Jesus, have many followers. We see the outworking of this denial in churches where their teachings of the gospel reflect more of a social and political gospel rather than the true gospel of Jesus Christ. For these liberal thinkers salvation comes through political might or social reform.

Then there are those who speak of the incarnation of Christ, but they have redefined what it is. John Hick is an advocate of one such notion that removes the supernatural aspect of the incarnation of Christ and ascribes to it merely a moral significance. According to Hick, God's moral attributes in Jesus means that "Jesus' compassion for the sick and the spiritually blind was God's compassion for them; his forgiving of sins, God's forgiveness; and his condemnation of the self-righteous, God's condemnation of them." He reduces the incarnation of Christ to merely a man, who has been embodied with certain moral attributes of God, a kind of super moral man. It is in this way that the life and death of Jesus Christ become an example of how we ought to treat others with the cross being reduced to an

example, or a mere metaphor for sacrificial love, not the substitutionary death of the Incarnate Word for the atonement of sin on behalf of His people. It is in this way the birth of Jesus Christ is nothing more than the birth of a super moral person, who received gifts and accolades from shepherds and wise men from the east, serving as examples, metaphors for people to give gifts during a certain time of the year. Whether you deny the Incarnation of Christ or redefine it, you end up with the same man-centered religion, where your hope and trust are put into man's efforts to bring about change through social and political reforms; guilt trips by the one; fear of punishment by the other – no change of the heart; no true salvation or redemption.

While there may be a certain level of truth taught by Hick and other false teachers, there is more to the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ than being a moral example to others; amongst other things, it begins with a proper understanding of the necessity of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Triune Godhead. Understanding the reason why the Incarnation is necessary will strengthen and give greater meaning to remembering and celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and why it has brought much joy, peace and goodwill toward men. Having a strong grasp of the necessity of the Incarnation of Christ is foundational to understanding the redemptive

nature of Christianity. It is essential to our salvation, not because it is the opinion of men, or the church, or because it is taught in our creeds, but because, primarily and fundamentally, it is revealed and taught to us by God Himself in His written Word, the Bible; it is a part of God's plan of redemption, which goes beyond what any man could ever conceive in His own imagination.

What the Incarnation of Christ Is

Notwithstanding, before we get into the necessity of the Incarnation we need to have a simple, biblically sound, overview at this point of what we are talking about when we speak of the Incarnation of Christ, so we are all on the same page as we begin, though we will get into exactly what the Incarnation means later on in this message. For now, just for clarity sake, we not only reject the idea of the Incarnation being only an embodiment of God's moral attributes in a mere man, we also reject two other general errors that have been expressed in one form another throughout the ages, which falsely held that the Incarnation of Christ meant that the Second Person of the Godhead either became two persons, one divine, the other human; or, the two natures, divine and human were mixed together. These are soundly answered and refuted with

Scripture. Drawing from God's word, Calvin beautifully summarizes the true nature of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, when he wrote concerning the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ; that is, when the "*Word became flesh.*" In reference to John Chapter 1, verse 14, Calvin wrote, "The plain meaning . . . is, that *the Word* begotten by God before all ages, and who always dwelt with the Father, *was made man*, whereby two natures were so united in one Person in Christ, that one and the same Christ is true God and true man. And that the unity of person does not hinder the two natures from remaining distinct, so that his Divinity retains all that is peculiar to itself; and his humanity holds separately whatever belongs to it. In other words, the Son of God became man in such a manner that he still continues to be that eternal Word, who had no beginning of time."

THE NECESSITY OF THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

With this brief introduction and understanding of the Incarnation of Christ, we are now able to look at the necessity of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. This subject has three aspects to it, which can be formulated in three questions, and are found in your sermon outline: first, what was it that made the Incarnation necessary? Second, was there some other way that could have been

employed for the salvation of God's people other than the Incarnation of the 2nd Person of the Triune God? Then third, was it necessary for our Redeemer/Mediator to be true God and true man? In answering this third question we will also gain a deeper biblical understanding of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

What made the Incarnation necessary?

The hopeless state and helpless condition of mankind

The answer to that question is understood by having a correct view of man. This will take us to Romans Chapter 3, beginning with verse 10, we read, "*There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one*" (vs. 10-12). Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the apostle Paul quotes from several Old Testament passages to make the point that God has assessed man's condition and determined there is not a soul, neither Jew nor Gentile, no, not one, that is righteous; there is no human being who remains under the curse of their sin nature that understands the spiritual things of God (Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 1:14); in fact, there is none that has the desire to seek after God. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah furthers this point, when he writes in Chapter 17,

verse 9 of his prophetic book, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*" The heart is the seat of man's wants and desires; therefore, if it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, then it will by no means seek after God; nor, desire to do so, as required by God, that is, by Spirit and Truth (John 4:24).

We also learn from Scripture that this condition of man is not something he grew into as a result of his social or economic conditions, or upbringing; it is an inborn condition. How many of you had to teach your children to be selfish, or throw a fit when they did not get what they wanted, or to lie? Those things are not taught; they are the outworking of our inborn sin nature. In Genesis 8:21 we read of the Lord's assessment of the spiritual condition of a man's heart from a very early age; that is, "*. . . the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*" David, in his psalm, Psalm 51, also confesses that he was conceived and born with a natural disposition towards sin. To further this point, we read in Ephesians Chapter 2 that without Jesus Christ, the natural man is a "*son of disobedience,*" and a "*child of wrath*"; naturally inclined to rebel against God and authority and to hate God and his neighbor. It is who we are, sinners from birth, and from the Scripture we just read, we know that man is not inclined to seek after God, or to change his status

before God. In fact, Job 13:23 tells us that just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin tone and the leopard cannot change his spots and make them stripes; so also man is unable to change who he is, a sinner. Job furthers this point when he asks in Chapter 14, verse 4, "*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"* Then, he answers his own question with, "*No one!"*

Now, we understand that without Jesus Christ all mankind is in a destitute, naturally depraved state and condition; seen by the only true living holy God as not being righteous before Him, having neither the inclination nor the ability to do what is right before Him. Thus, the natural man stands before God a guilty sinner, unfit to be in His presence; hopelessly condemned to eternal darkness, deserving only of God's eternal wrath against our sin; and helpless to help himself. Going back to Romans Chapter 3, we read in verse 19, "*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*" Man's guilt before God; and his lack of desire and ability to redeem himself from his guilt was the primary reason for the Incarnation. In fact, it is what made the Incarnation of Christ necessary. If there was no fall of Adam, then there would be no need for God's people to be saved from their sins; no sin guilt or punishment for our sins to be paid,

which would make the Incarnation of the Second person of the Trinity, God the Son, unnecessary.

Was there some other way that could have been employed for the salvation of God's people other than the Incarnation of Jesus Christ?

As we come to the realization of the hopelessness of our natural condition before God, we are moved to ask the question that is asked in the Heidelberg Catechism, question 12, "Since, then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how may we escape this punishment and be again received into favor?" The answer given in the Heidelberg Catechism is based upon Exodus 20:5, Psalm 5:5-6 and Romans 8:3-4 and says, "God wills that His justice be satisfied; therefore, we must make full satisfaction to that justice, either by ourselves or by another." This leads us to the second question raised concerning the necessity of the Incarnation, which is, "Was there some other way that could have been employed for the salvation of God's people other than the Incarnation of Jesus Christ?" This issue centers around the thought as to whether it was necessary for the Second Person of the Godhead to become incarnate in order to redeem us from our sin and save us from our well-deserved condemnation; that is, "Was there no other way to

satisfy the justice of God and bring about our deliverance from the power of sin, the Devil, and the world?" In answering this question, we will look at the proposal that if man desired to redeem himself, could he? Then, if man is not able to redeem himself, what are the alternatives for man to be redeemed?

CAN MAN REDEEM HIMSELF?

Now we know that based upon Romans Chapter 3, we cannot make satisfaction to God's justice; on the contrary, "we daily increase our guilt." Notwithstanding, if it were possible that man was able to redeem himself it would be either by his works, or by paying some monetary ransom. First, can the sinner redeem himself by his works? In Isaiah 64:6, we learn that "*we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags . . .*" Whatever good we do from our perspective, it is nonetheless corrupted by sin, and is from God's perspective "*like filthy rags.*" In other words, our works of righteousness are of no use for our redemption from sin. Even if we did all that we were commanded to do it would not be enough to ransom our soul, which is what we learn from Luke Chapter 17, where Jesus tells us that all we could say is, "*We are unprofitable servants: We have done that which was our duty to do*" (v. 10). Then, again, in Romans Chapter 3, verse 20, we are told flat out, "*by the deeds of*

the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight," – in God's sight.

Second, there is no amount of money that can purchase our redemption, contrary to the Roman Catholic practice of indulgences. The Lord tells us in Psalm 49, verses 6 through 9 that no amount of money or wealth can ransom a man's soul. This includes paying indulgences or putting money in the offering plate, or through some other means; God is not a man that can be bribed or paid off so you can continue in your sins. In fact, there is not enough wealth in all of creation put together to ransom the soul of one sinner; much less, for others also! Thus, we see that man cannot save himself, either by his works or by purchasing salvation by his wealth.

Can any other creature satisfy God's justice on our behalf?

Since man cannot save himself, can any other creature satisfy the justice of God on our behalf so we might be righteous before the Lord? Again, Scripture teaches us that no mere creature can make satisfaction to God's justice. In Hebrews 10:4, we are told, "*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*" It is not possible because God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man has committed. Besides, no mere creature can bear the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and redeem others

also, as Heidelberg Catechism #14 so carefully expresses it. The Old Testament sacrifices were evidence of this fact, since they needed to be done daily. This also means that any animal sacrifice during a mythological earthly millennial period is worthless – the very thought is blasphemous and another gospel made up in the evil minds of those under the delusion of the Zionist Talmudic doctrines; that have absolutely no Biblical grounds for their teachings; their false teachings.

At this point we might be moved as Job was to ask, "*How can a man be righteous before God?"* (9:2) If man cannot make satisfaction for his guilt before God, and no mere creature can make satisfaction for man's sin, then man is in a hopeless situation, isn't he? The answer is, No – not entirely! The good news is that there is another way, the only way; that is, through a mediator (a kinsman redeemer). However, the qualifications of a mediator or kinsman redeemer are that he must be able to bear the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, and redeem others also. This leads us to the last question before us:

Was it necessary for our Redeemer/Mediator to be true God and true man?

The simple answer is, yes. The only way that a mediator can bear the burden of God's eternal

wrath against sin and redeem others also is that he be true God and true man. The qualifications of a mediator to redeem sinners are given to us in the Heidelberg Catechism #'s 14-17 and summarized as follows; a mediator must be "of the same nature as sinful man, yet a true and righteous man, who is also more powerful than all creatures to endure the eternal wrath of God, and redeem others also; that is, one who is also true God." Since no mere man fits this qualification, by the grace of God alone, a mediator between God and man must be provided; one who is both true man, and true God, which points to the necessity of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ had to be a true and righteous man, because God would only accept a perfect offering. Even the slightest flaw, the smallest of sin would have made His sacrifice void, worthless; just another crucifixion of a sinful blasphemous man. Not so of Jesus Christ, who was that true and righteous man; that perfect flawless lamb, if you will, that would be the only acceptable offering before the Lord to atone for the sins of His people; His Chosen people from every kindred, tongue, people and nation. We read in Hebrews Chapter 2, beginning with verse 9, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for*

every man. [10] For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. [11] For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one . . . " [then, v. 17] "Wherefore, in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." The necessity of the Incarnation was laid upon Jesus so we might not have to taste death; but that we, by faith, might have life in Him, who is that perfect Mediator, a true and righteous man, a man without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus the Christ also had to be true God, so that when our sins were imputed to Him and the wrath of God bore down upon Him on the cross He would not curse God as a mere man would, but rather "that by the power of His Godhead He might bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath" (Heidelberg Catechism #17). Throughout the New Testament, we read in these historical eyewitness accounts that Jesus Christ was not only a true and righteousness man but was also true God. John Chapter One, the first 14 verses is proof enough of this truth. However, in Philippians Chapter 2, this truth is explained further. We read beginning with the last part of verse 5, "*. . . Christ Jesus, [6] who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to*

be equal with God, [7] but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (vs. 5b-8). The fact that Jesus Christ was true God made it possible for Him to bear in His manhood the burden of God's wrath. He did what the Old Testament sacrifices could never do. Again, in Hebrews Chapter 10 we are told that God used the sacrificial ordinances of the Old Testament to point sinners to the need of the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ centuries later to satisfy the justice of God. In doing so, Jesus saved sinners from the wrath to come and redeemed them from their bondage to sin, washing them clean from the pollution of sin so that they might stand before God in the imputed righteousness of Christ. All of this was also necessary in order for God to fulfill His promise to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15; and was fulfilled in Jesus Christ's one atoning sacrifice on the cross shedding His precious blood, as we are told in Colossians 2:8-15; esp. verse 14 (see also, Hebrews Chapters 9 & 10).

So it is that we now see that there was no other way to atone for our sins and redeem us from our bondage to sin than for the Second Person of the Godhead to leave the glory of heaven and take upon Him the very nature of man. We also see that those, who believe that Jesus was just a

mere man embodied with certain moral attributes of God, are clueless as to who Jesus really was and is, and what He accomplished for sinners, like you and me. The Jesus these false teachers and preachers have conceived from their imaginations is no savior at all; not to mention, they are clueless as to their own helpless condition and the hopeless state they are in; under delusion that person can be righteous be God that a person can be righteous before God by their works; declaring, in essence, the death of Jesus Christ was worthless, as the apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:21. Unless the Lord is pleased by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of their understanding, grant them repentance and give them faith to believe, they and all who follow them, will die in their sins being condemned to the eternal torment and misery of hell (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ – The Foundation of our Joy, Peace and Good Will Towards Men

Beloved in Christ, let us rejoice and give thanks to God the Father for His great everlasting love and rich mercy; who, in His infinite wisdom and grace, sent God the Son, the Eternal Word, the Lord of Glory (1 Corinthians 2:8), to take upon him the very nature of man, for sinners like you and me. Though Jesus Christ left the glory of heaven to become true man, He remained no less true God, to pay an infinite ransom for His people enduring for us the

eternal torment and death of the cross; the eternal wrath of God, which we rightly deserve to suffer ourselves (1 Peter 2:24: Isaiah 53:6, 11).

The necessity of the Incarnation ought to reassure our hearts and encourage each one of us throughout the whole year, so that we may rejoice in the greatness of God's gift of His love, which is shown to us in the Incarnation (Romans 5:8-10). Moreover, in that joy and confidence, let's be bold in our stand against the secular humanists, who seek to rob us of the meaning of the first Advent, the Incarnate birth of the Son of God, undermining the very foundation of our joy, peace, and good will toward men; distracting us with Christianized pagan annual festivities.

Therefore, let's not be timid, or intimidated in our proclamation of the Incarnation of Christ, for without the Incarnation there would be no Advent of our Savior, there would be no real joy, no peace with God, much less peace among men, and we would not know the undeserved and unearned good will that God had toward sinners, like you and me. God gave us the greatest gift of all; Jesus Christ; Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary in the city of Bethlehem about 2,000 years ago (Romans 5:8-10). God, the Father, according to His grace alone, sent His only begotten Son to take on the very nature of man, both of body and soul, to fully satisfy the justice of God, free His

elect (His adopted kinsmen) from the bondage of sin; and by the operation of God, the Holy Spirit, Christ's righteousness is applied to us who were purchased by His shed blood so we might stand before God holy and without blame. The Holy Spirit, then, gave us the gift of faith and a new life in Jesus Christ, enabling us to be able to spread that joy, peace and good will to others as we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ with thankful hearts, filled with the love of God for others, who are hopelessly condemned under the curse of sin, and helpless to help themselves; not focused on our own wants, desires and needs; especially during these very troubling times throughout the whole world, as God pours out His righteous and just judgments upon wicked, rebellious people who refuse to repent of their evil works in their hatred towards God and His redeemed people, as revealed in the Book of Revelation (16:8-11).

May our Faithful Father fill us with the Holy Spirit, the Living Water of Life, so that we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ with boldness and courage to the glory of the only true God, the living Triune God; Father, Son, Holy Spirit – To Whom belong all glory, honor, wisdom and power, forever!

AMEN!

Beloved in Christ:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: [7] Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. [8] Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. [9] For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. [10] And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: [11] In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: [12] Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. [13] And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; [14] Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; [15] And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. [16] Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: [17] Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. [18] Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [19] And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

Colossians 2:6-19 KJV

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