

I. THE CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS: GAZING ON THE BEAUTY OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. The celebration of Christmas would not be complete without the glorious songs surrounding the birth of Jesus. The Songs of Christmas invite us to come and behold the face of Jesus Christ. There is something mysterious, majestic, paradoxical, surprising, and heart-warming about the fact that the Son of God is born among men.
1. It would have been humiliating enough if Jesus had come down from heaven as an earthly king, and yet, he was born as a baby. Can you imagine God as a fetus, floating in Mary's womb?
- B. There is a majesty and beauty to the day on which Jesus was born. Christmas is unique in that ordinary people (shepherds, children, seniors, people from all walks of life), not just prophets, priests, and seers were able to look upon the face of the Son of God.
1. Babies never intimate anybody. They are approachable. (Even complete strangers feel it like it's okay to touch and hold babies?!) God became touchable, reachable, and touchable to us.
 2. People could go to Bethlehem and see Jesus. It's an historic event on a cosmic scale. God became close enough and small enough that we could wrap our minds around to some extent.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁷
But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

C. Hark the Herald Angels Sing

*2. Christ by highest heav'n adored Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come Offspring of a Virgin's womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see Hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with man to dwell Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!"*

Words: Charles Wesley (1739), a leader of the Methodist movement. wrote over 4,000 hymns. His brother was John Wesley.

Music: Felix Mendelssohn

1. Three young Englishmen gathered with 60 other people for New Year's prayer meeting in London in 1793 – Charles Wesley, his brother John, and a friend, George Whitefield. They continued in prayer until 3am and were impacted by the Holy Spirit. These 3 men were part of the First Great Awakening that touched 1000's of people.

II. THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

- A. Paul had been to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12) and many amazing things had been revealed to him, and yet, he says that there is no question that the greatest and most mysterious of all things is the magnitude of what happened when God became a man.

And without controversy [NIV: Beyond all question] ***great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)***

1. Even the angels long to look into these things. They are probably amazed and baffled!

To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:12)

2. Numerous prophecies foretold it, angels declared it to the shepherds, wise men came bearing gifts, and yet, 2000 years later it is still the greatest mystery the world has ever known: Immanuel.

- B. Immanuel is a Hebrew name that means: God with us.

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14)

- C. Isaiah prophecies about Jesus, about 700 years before Jesus was born.

1. There are over 300 direct and indirect prophecies about Jesus in the Scriptures:
That a son would be born, given from God (Isa. 9:6) (700 B.C.)
Born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
From the lineage of King David (Isaiah 16:5)
Despised and rejected by men (Isaiah 53:3)
Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12)

- D. Scripture teaches us that:

1. Jesus Christ is truly God.
2. He is truly human
3. He is one person
4. There are in Him two distinct natures, divine and human.

- E. Jesus is not only God, the divine King and Maker of all things, He is now our brother! What made God agree to become a man forever?!

1. Right now, in the Triune Godhead, there is a human being, a flesh-and-blood human body. At the center of the throne, there is a man, a descendant of King David.
2. This mystery brings us to worship and contemplation.

III. JESUS CHRIST IS FULLY GOD

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; (Colossians 2:9)

A. There was never a moment when Jesus “became” God. He always was from the beginning.

Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” (John 8:57-58)

B. Jesus is fully God. He is not partly God or less than the Father or the Holy Spirit.

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

*And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28)
I and My Father are one.” (John 10:30)*

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? (John 14:9)

IV. JESUS CHRIST IS FULLY MAN

A. Jesus was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:18). This makes it possible for Jesus to be fully God and yet fully human in one person.

And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

1. Jesus took on human weaknesses and limitations. He had a human body, mind, and emotions. He was born as a baby in a manger and was dependent on humans for His wellbeing.

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. (Luke 2:40)

B. Jesus played with other children. He had to learn to speak, read and write. He might have gotten hurt. He had to get haircuts. He had to eat and sleep.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)

C. 25 Questions for Mary from Max Lucado’s book “God Came Near”:

1. What was it like watching him pray?
2. Did you ever feel awkward teaching him how he created the world?
3. Did he ever come home with a black eye?
4. Did you ever scold him?
5. Did he ever have to ask a question about Scripture?
6. Did you ever catch him pensively looking at the flesh on his own arm while holding a clod of dirt?

7. Who was his best friend?
8. What did he and his cousin John talk about as kids?
9. Did you ever think, That's God eating my soup?

V. MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN

- A. A mediator is one who represents two parties to one another in order to bring about reconciliation. Jesus alone is uniquely able to become the Mediator between God and men. Jesus can empathize with and represent both sides.

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, (1 Timothy 2:5-6)

- B. As a Mediator, Jesus reveals God to humanity (John 1:18; 14:7-11). We can know God truly. In the face of Jesus Christ, we can have knowledge of the glory of God.
1. Jesus' divinity also shows us that salvation comes from the Lord, not from created man (Jonah 2:9). It does not originate from man, nor can it be accomplished by mankind burdened with the weight of sin.
 2. Allen Hood: "The Incarnation revealed the passionate, zealous, pursuing heart of God."
 3. Jesus had to be fully God in order to bear the full penalty for all the sins of all those who would believe in Him. Any finite creature would not be capable of bearing that penalty.
 4. Because Jesus is God, He could die for the sins of the world. Because Jesus is man, He could represent us to the Father. In this sense, He is a High Priest, our Mediator, the One who goes between God and us. How can we connect with a God that we cannot see, a God that is completely holy? It is only through Jesus Christ.
John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- C. Jesus sympathizes with us.

Heb. 4:15-16 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1. Jesus was tempted: to live for Himself, to do what He wanted, yet He did what the Father wanted. He was tempted to become prideful (Luke 4, Matthew 4), to take matters into His own hands, to take the easy way out and skip obedience, yet Jesus never sinned. Jesus was without sin and he never committed sin.
 2. Because He became like us a way has been made for us to become like Him!
- D. As we behold Jesus, we are transformed into His image
Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

1. Transformation does not come from a 5 point sermon or a self-help book. True inner transformation into the image of Christ only comes from an encounter with the living God.