

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

A CHILD OF PRESENCE

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-14

Christmas carols as we know them now were abolished by the English Puritan parliament in 1627. They were considered to be a part of a “worldly festival,” which they considered the celebration of Christmas to be. As a result, there was a scarcity of Christmas hymns and carols in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Charles Wesley’s “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” was one of the few written during this period.¹

Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord! Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the virgin’s womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th’ incarnate Deity, pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the new-born King.”

This great Christmas hymn proclaims the importance of Christ’s incarnation. The birth of Jesus revealed His humanity and reminds us that He understands and identifies with us in every way. Today I would like to answer three important questions...

WHAT IS THE INCARNATION?

1. The definition

The word incarnation means “in flesh” and denotes the act whereby the eternal Son of God took to Himself an additional nature, humanity, through the virgin birth. The result is that Christ remains forever unblemished deity, which He has had from eternity past; but He also possesses true, sinless humanity in one Person forever (cf. John 1:14; Philippians 2:7–8; 1 Timothy 3:6).²

“the hypostatic union”

Hypostatic union (from the Greek: ὑπόστασις, “hypostasis,” translated essence) is a technical term in Christian theology employed in mainstream Christology; to describe the presence of both human and divine natures in Jesus Christ. It became official at the Council of Chalcedon, which stated that the two natures (divine and human) are united in the one person (existence or reality, “hypostasis”) of Christ.²

¹ <http://schaefer-family.com/hymns/hark.htm>

² Enns, P. P. 1997, c1989. *The Moody handbook of theology*. Moody Press: Chicago, Ill. cf. confer (Lat.), compare

- ▶ Christ has two distinct natures: humanity and deity.
- ▶ There is no mixture or intermingling of the two natures.
- ▶ Although He has two natures, Christ is one Person.

2. The description (John 1:1-14)

- ▶ “the Word became flesh”
- ▶ “and dwelt among us”
- ▶ “we beheld His glory”

3. A demonstration

The Old Testament repeatedly promises that God is present with His people, to secure their destiny in His covenant. The Tabernacle and Temple were intended to be symbols of that divine presence. The term for tabernacle is mishkān, which comes from shākan, meaning to dwell rest, or abide. From that root the term shekinah has also come, referring to the presence of God’s glory. The child born was to be the Shekinah, the true Tabernacle of God (cf. John 1:14). Isaiah was the instrument through which the Word of the Lord announced that God would dwell among men in visible flesh and blood incarnation—more intimate and personal than the Tabernacle or Temple in which Israel had worshiped.³

- ▶ God’s plan revealed.
- ▶ God’s love displayed.

Jesus was a living, breathing, human-being. He was completely, fully man. He was also fully, completely God! (Luke 2:40-52)

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FROM THE INCARNATION?

- ▶ Jesus identifies with you. (1 John 4:2)
- ▶ Jesus understands you. (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16)

WHAT IMPACT DOES THE TRUTH OF THE INCARNATION HAVE ON YOUR DAILY LIFE? (Philippians 2:5-8)

- ▶ The incarnation teaches us to **live humbly**.
- ▶ The incarnation teaches us to **live selflessly**.

Matthew 28:20b (NASB95) “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NASB95) “The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”