

Chapter 3

THE INCARNATION OF THE SON

*The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us
(John 1:14).*

*God was manifest in the flesh
(1 Timothy 3:16).*

Contemplate the wonder of the incarnation. The infinite God became a man. The Bible describes it in simple language: “The Word was God. . . . And the Word was made [became] flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1,14). The eternal One stepped into time (Galatians 4:4). The God who never had a beginning and who always existed was born as an infant (Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6). The Almighty rested in the arms of Mary as a dependent baby. The Creator of all things lay in a receptacle built for feeding animals (Luke 2:12). The One who was “high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1) was greeted by lowly shepherds.

Perhaps the most wondrous fact of the incarnation is that it made the death of the immortal One possible. Man’s sin deserved and demanded death (Romans 1:32; 6:23), thus dooming man to an eternal destiny separated from the God of life (Isaiah 59:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). So God lovingly devised a way to provide salvation for sinful man without compromising His just and righteous character. Serving as man’s substitute, He would Himself pay the

death penalty for sinful man. To do this, God must become a man “that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Hebrews 2:9). The immortal One could not die, but God took upon Himself our humanity and the God-Man could die and did die for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 3:18).

Yes, He was born to die. His purpose for coming into this world was to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15; John 3:17). He accomplished this saving work not in Bethlehem’s cradle, but on Golgotha’s cross. His birth made His death possible; His death made our salvation possible. The Bible describes it this way: “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Let no one misunderstand the significance of the incarnation. God became flesh, and God became a man, but He did not become the Son. He became a partaker of flesh and blood and was made like His brethren (Hebrews 2:14,17), but He did not become the Son of God by His incarnation. John taught that the eternal Word became *flesh* (John 1:1,14). Paul used similar language to communicate the fact that the Son “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3). He who always was the Son of God became the Son of David by human birth. The eternal God became a man, born of the house and lineage of David. The eternal God did not become the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus once posed a question to the Pharisees that they could not answer: “What think ye of Christ [the Messiah]? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them . . . If David then call him Lord [in Psalm 110:1]; how is he his son?” (Matthew 22:42-45). The Pharisees were silenced by this question, but years later another Pharisee, Paul, whose eyes had been opened by God’s grace, gave the answer. Paul preached the gospel

of God that centered in “his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:3-4). In His humanity He is the Son of David. In His deity He is the Son of God and thus is David’s Lord. His resurrection was the final proof that He was everything He claimed to be.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not become God at the incarnation, nor did the incarnation mark the beginning of His divine Sonship. The incarnation was the point in time at which God’s eternal Son assumed our humanity without ceasing to be God. The Son of God became the Son of man, that we, the sons of men, might become the sons of God (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26). May we ever be filled with wonder and praise because of the condescending love and grace by which He stooped so low in order to raise us so high. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1).