

Living The Christian Life Series
“Lesson 12 – The Provision for Living the Christian Life”
Part Two of The Christmas Story

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Series Text: Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Applicational Text: Isaiah 9:6-7 *⁶ unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

Introduction:

Isaiah was known as the Messianic Prophet, writing almost 800 years before the birth of Christ, He was given information that gives cause for our celebration of Christmas, provides an explanation of the ritual of the Mosaic Law, and makes provision for us to Live the Christian Life effectively.

As mentioned in Part One of the story of Christmas it is timely to our current series we have titled “Living The Christian Life” in that it provides information, motivation, and enablement for us to live the Christian life effectively.

Remember the word “**Christmas**” is a compound of two words: “**Christ**”-the anointed one- the Savior (the Hebrew word Messiah), and the word “**mass**” meaning celebration. It is the celebration of Christ, and while it celebrates His birth, the nativity scene is only part of the true celebration of Christ. As we noted the word **Christ**, is the transliteration of the Greek word for Hebrew word Messiah. It means ‘**the anointed one-the savior**’ and is a reference to the role of the redeemer and the entire redemptive plan of God for mankind. The redemptive plan of God called for God to take upon Himself flesh and blood, become man, in order to redeem us from our sin. So, the redemptive plan of God

begins in Genesis and concludes in Revelation and the role of the redeemer is revealed in the four Gospel accounts. The word “**gospel**” is from the Greek word ‘**euangulion**’ which means “*good news of the victory having been won.*”

The four gospels are not given to us as four men’s views of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, but are given to teach us of the four aspects of Christ. Those four aspects of Christ (the Redeemer) are portrayed before the throne of God by four living creatures. Ezekiel tells us about them in the book of prophecies he wrote (Ezekiel 1:1-14) and the book of Revelation describes them (Revelation 4:6-9). They are described as a lion, an ox, the face of a man, and a flying eagle. The lion is a literary symbol of kings. The ox is a literary symbol of a servant. The face of a man is a literary symbol of humanity. The flying eagle is a literary symbol of deity. Matthew presents Jesus as the King of kings. Mark presents Jesus as the servant to humanity. Luke presents Jesus as the Son of Man. John presents Jesus as the Son of God.

Last week we were introduced to these four living creatures identified in Ezekiel 1:1-14 and Revelation 4:6-9. These four living creatures represent the four aspects of Christ: King, Servant, man, and God.

Let's look at the passage in Revelation again...

Revelation 4:6-9

- 6 *And before the throne [there was] a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, [were] four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.*
- 7 *And the first living creature [was] like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle.*
- 8 *And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*
- 9 *And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,*

Last week we introduced these four living creatures and studied the paradox between the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Matthew, written primarily to the Jews, presented Christ as King, and Mark, written primarily to the Romans, presented Jesus as Servant.

A second paradox is found in the comparison between the Gospels of Luke and John. The presentation of Jesus as a man in Luke’s Gospel seems to be a contradiction in John’s Gospel as he presents Jesus as God. However, as in our previous study, we will see that

Luke and John are not a contradiction but rather, each Gospel is a complement to the other.

Luke - Christ's Humanity

The Son of Man

The Gospel of Luke was written primarily to the Greeks and stresses the reality of the humanity of Jesus - The Son of Man. The face of a man, among the four living creatures, represents the humanity of Jesus Christ and is documented by the Gospel of Luke.

I John 4:2-3 says:

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and now already is it in the world.”

The Greeks denied the humanity of Jesus Christ, saying that he was not flesh and blood but a spirit that appeared to be flesh and blood. Therefore, Luke is careful to document the humanity of Jesus Christ in detail.

Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus from Adam through Mary and provides details concerning the birth and adolescence of Jesus. As you compare the genealogies found in Matthew and Luke you will notice that they are very different. Matthew traces his genealogy back to Abraham and David because his presentation of Jesus Christ as King must have ties to both Abraham and David. Luke traces his genealogy all the way back to Adam to establish that he was “The Son of Man.” You will also notice that the phrase *“the son of”* found in the King James translation in the genealogy found in Luke is always italicized, indicating it was not in the Greek text. The genealogy found in Matthew is the genealogy of Joseph. The genealogy found in Luke is the genealogy of Mary - Heli was the father of Mary. Luke emphasizes the concern and sympathy of the “Son of Man.”

Overview of The Gospel of Luke - Jesus as Man

Chapter 1:1-4 Luke states his reason for writing this gospel account:

It is written to establish the true humanity of Christ and that the Greeks might know for certain that the things which they had been taught were true.

Chapter 1:5-4:13 records the events concerning the birth and human temptations of the “Son of Man.”

As we have seen In Luke's account we have the genealogy of Jesus Christ through the Virgin Mary, a descendent of David through his son Nathan.

Because this is the Gospel that establishes the true humanity of Christ it goes all the way back to Adam.

Chapter 4:14-19:27 documents the ministry of the “Son of Man.”

The humanity of Jesus Christ is clearly depicted in this account as it begins with His temptations in the wilderness.

Luke documents the public ministry of Jesus Christ from His temptation in the wilderness to His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

The documentation of miracles, parables, healings, and teachings, included in this Gospel account focus on Jesus Christ the Man.

A primary message of this account of Jesus in His humanity is the emphasis upon His coming death and resurrection by which man, created lower than the angels, will be elevated to a position higher than angels.

Even the parables recorded from Luke's perspective emphasize the humanity of Jesus.

Chapter 19:28-23:56 tells about the rejection of the “Son of Man”

In these chapters, Luke records the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and His encounter with the religious leader's rejection of Him.

His humanity is in view as He weeps over Jerusalem and the destruction that was to come because of their rejection of Christ.

Chapter 24:1-35 provides information concerning the victorious resurrection of the “Son of Man.”

Yes! Following the agony of the cross, victory is assured as Jesus tells about His pending resurrection, His ascension, and His victorious second coming.

So Luke writes concerning the humanity of Jesus in which He could live as a man, be tempted as a man, and provide salvation for all mankind.

Hebrews 4:15-16 says:

15 *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.*

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

God became flesh to fulfill the law and to example for us the life which we need to live. He was born of a virgin to bypass the imputed sin of Adam. He was tempted in every way we are tempted but refused to commit sin in order to qualify as the sacrifice for our sins. Jesus Christ was the "Son of Man."

John - Christ's Deity

The Son of God

As we have noted, Matthew was written primarily to the Jews. Mark was written primarily to the Romans. Luke was written primarily to the Greeks. However, John is not written to one group of people but to the entire world in order that all might believe.

While Luke wrote to establish the humanity of Jesus, John wrote to establish the deity of Jesus. together they present God, in his incarnation, by which the Spirit became flesh and dwelt among us. The Flying Eagle is a symbol of deity and is identified in the four living creatures to manifest that aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 1:1 says;

"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God"

John 20:31 says;

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

John writes to establish the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He presents Jesus Christ as the Son of God. John is the only Gospel writer to record the great **"I AM"** passages found in 6:35; 8:12; 10:7; 11:25; and 14:6. This phrase establishes Christ's claim to be God.

Matthew traced the genealogy of Christ from David, through Solomon to Joseph because that was the line through which the Messiah was promised. Although Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus, because he accepted Him as his son - he was rightfully in line for the throne from David through Solomon and bypassed the Coniah curse which prevented any physical seed of that line from sitting on the throne.

Mark does not present a genealogy of Christ because He presents Jesus as The Faithful Servant and there was no genealogy kept of slaves.

Luke traces his genealogy through Mary back through David to Adam because he was presenting Christ as the promised seed of the woman, root of the offspring of Jesse.

But you will find no genealogy in the Gospel of John, because John is presenting Jesus as God, who was and is without genealogy, because He is eternal in His existence.

Overview of The Gospel of John - Jesus as God

Chapter 1:1-14 introduces Jesus Christ as God and indicates that He became flesh.

This Gospel account begins, *"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."* It continues. *"...and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us..."*

Chapter 1:15-34 Records the testimony of John The Baptist concerning the "Son of God."

John, the Apostle, provides the testimony of John The Baptist to confirm this is in fact God walking among man.

Chapter 1:35-12:50 covers the Public Ministry of the "Son of God."

Then John presents the public ministry of this God man in Chapter 1:35 through Chapter 12:50.

In this section Jesus identifies Himself as the Son of God and goes beyond that and claims to be the Great **"I AM"** - a title used only of God Himself.

This claim to be the **I AM** results in the Jews understanding His claim but rejecting it!

Chapters 13 - 17 documents the Private Ministry of the "Son of God."

In this section John records the Private Ministry of Jesus with His disciples and those who believed on Him.

Chapters 18-19 reveals the substitutionary sacrifice of the Son of God.

The purpose of the coming of God in human flesh and blood was to become the substitutionary sacrifice for all who will accept Him. Chapters 18 and 19 document

that reality as He sets aside the function of His natural attributes and becomes subject to death, even the death of the cross.

Chapter 20 proclaims the victory of the “Son of God” over death and the grave.

Ah, but He has authority over death, having paid for the sins of man, He rises victoriously over death and asserts that He is God!

Chapter 21 details the ‘Master Plan’ for the ‘Son of God’

It is here in the final chapter Jesus reassures His followers that He not only has an exit plan, but a plan to return for His ultimate victory

Conclusion:

Just as Matthew and Mark blended the roles of the Servant-King, Luke and John blend the roles of the God-Man.

He was born of a virgin to bypass the imputed sin of Adam. He kept himself unspotted from the world and was thus qualified to go to the ‘slave market of sin’ and, with his own blood, redeem us “*...whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life....*”

- Matthew presents the Lion of the Tribe of Judah - King of Kings!
- Mark presents The Faithful Servant!
- Luke presents The Son of Man!
- John presents The Son of God!

The Servant King was the God Man

Revelation 4:6-9

- 6 *And before the throne [there was] a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, [were] four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.*
- 7 *And the first living creature [was] like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature [was] like a flying eagle.*
- 8 *And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

Conclusion:

So, have your manger scene it is a vital prop of the Christmas Story...*and the word became flesh*. Decorate your Christmas tree and remember the gift He gave...*and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all*. But don't forget the empty tomb...*for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door...and said, He is not here for He is risen as He said*. Remember His promise to come again...*I go that I might prepare a place for you...I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am there ye may be also*. And don't forget His intercession as He sits at the right hand of the Father and intercedes on your behalf...*we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous and He is the propitiation for our sin*.

Make The Christmas Story Personal:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

(Romans 12:1 is your part of the story)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Tell Me The Story of Jesus!

“Merry Christmas”