

“God Incarnate”

From *Knowing God*, by J.I. Packer



“This Little Babe” (Robert Southwell)

**Come to your haven, you heavenly choirs, Earth has the haven of your desires!
Remove your dwelling to your God, a stall is now His best abode.
Sith men their homage do deny, come, angels, all their fault supply...**

**This little Babe, so few days old is come to rifle Satan’s fold;
All hell doth at His presence quake, though He himself for cold do shake,
For in this weak unarmed wise, the gates of hell He will surprise...**

**His camp is pitched in a stall, His bulwark but a broken wall
The crib his trench, haystalks His stakes, of shepherds He His muster makes,
And thus as sure His foe to wound, the angels’ trumps alarum sound.**

**My soul with Christ join in the fight; stick to the tents that He hath pight;
Within His crib is surest ward, this little Babe will be thy guard;
If thou will foil thy foes with joy, then flit not from this heavenly boy!**

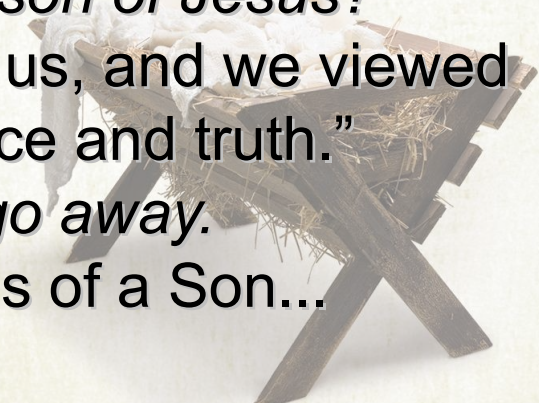


Finding Difficulties in the Wrong Places

- How can the crucifixion of a man atone for the world's sins for all time?
- How can we believe that Jesus rose from the dead to unending life?
- Can the claim that Jesus was born from a virgin be taken seriously?
- Isn't it incredible that Jesus walked on water and raised the dead?

The real difficulty is the claim that Jesus is God incarnate (made flesh)!

- **1 Cor. 15:47** "The first man was of dust out of the earth; the second man is out of heaven."
- *How can there be plurality of persons within the unity of God?*
- *How can there be both Godhead and manhood - for real - in the person of Jesus?*
- **John 1:14** "And the Word became flesh and took up residence with us, and we viewed the glory of Him – glory, as in, the only-child of the Father, full of grace and truth."
- *If the Incarnation can be grasped as a reality, the above difficulties go away.*
- **Heb. 1:2** "God... has spoken to us at the last of these days by means of a Son... through whom also He made the universe."
- "Tis mystery all, the immortal dies! Who can explore His strange design? ...
Amazing love, how can it be that Thou my God should die for me!" ~Wesley



Who Is This Child? (The Bible says little about His birth)

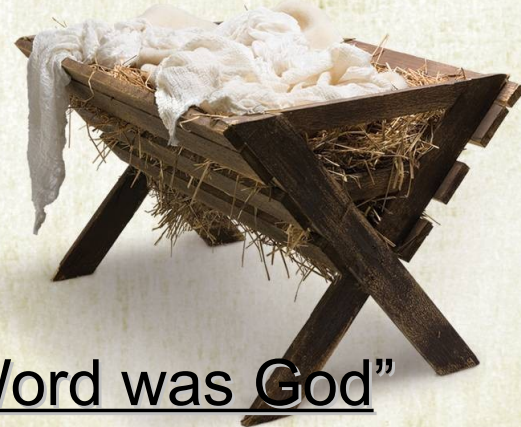
- **Matthew 1:18-25** “Now, about Jesus Christ, His genesis was like this: While his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before their coming together, she was found with a pregnancy which she was having from the Holy Spirit... but he did not know her [intimately] until when she birthed a son, and he called His name Jesus.”
- **Luke 2:4-7** “Joseph went to... Bethlehem... to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no space for them in the guest-room.



Who Is This Child?

1) This is God the Son

- **John 1:14** “And the Word became flesh and took up residence with us... the only-child of the Father, full of grace and truth... 18 ... God the only-child who exists in the bosom of the father... 3:16-18 God loved the world so much that He gave His Son - His only-child so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life... but he who does not believe is condemned... because he has not believed in... the only-child Son of God.”
 - “I believe in God the Father... and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord...”
 - *Not a separate God, and not other-than God, but personal deity, and inseparable from God as His “Word”*
- **John 20:31** “These things have been written so that y’all may believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God, and that, as y’all believe in Him, you may have life in His name.
- **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word... with God, and the Word was God”
- **Psalm 33:6 & 9** “ It was through Yahweh's Word that the heavens were made... For He spoke and it began to exist... He commanded and it stood.”



Seven assertions concerning Word of God

- 1) ETERNAL “In the beginning was the Word...” (John 1:1a)
- 2) PERSONAL “...And the Word was with God...” (John 1:1b)
- 3) DIVINE “...And the Word was God.” (John 1:1c)
- 4) CREATOR “Through Him all things were made” (John 1:3)
- 5) LIFE-GIVING “In Him was life...” (John 1:4)
- 6) REVELATORY “...that life was the light of men” (John 1:4)
- 7) INCARNATE “And the Word became flesh...” (John 1:14)

This is what it means to be the “only-begotten Son of God”



Who Is This Child?

1) This is God the Son = the Word of God (John 1:1 & 14-18, 3:16-18, 20:31)

2) This is God made Man

– *Still God, begun to be man, A real, human baby, experiencing real, human life.*

- **Hebrews 2:17-19** “...it was necessary to be made like His brothers concerning all things, in order that He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest... for the propitiation of the sins of the people, for He... having been tested... is able to come to the rescue... nail down in your minds that the One so commissioned - and the High Priest whom we acknowledge - is the Messiah Jesus.”
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** “...Jesus, the Son of God... we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all things, in the same way, without a sin. Let us therefore keep approaching the throne of grace with openness in order that we may receive mercy & find grace...”
- **Definition of Chalcedon:** “...our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man... begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten... of Mary... not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and... God...”
- *“Our God contracted to a span; Incomprehensibly made man.” ~Charles Wesley*

Born To Die (Purpose of the Incarnation)

- The N.T. does not encourage us so much to philosophize about the Incarnation but rather to worship God for lovingly saving us by means of Jesus' incarnation. "Not simply a wonder of nature, but a marvel of grace"
- **Phil. 2:5-8** "Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, while existing in God's form, did not consider being equal to God a prize to be clutched, but rather, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And while He was found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death – even death by crucifixion."
- "[T]he N.T. knows nothing of an incarnation which can be defined apart from its relation to atonement... Not Bethlehem, but Calvary, is the focus of revelation, and any construction of Christianity which ignores or denies this distorts Christianity..." ~James Denney
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."
- The Incarnation is integrally linked to the Crucifixion and is all purposed to save us.



The Christmas Spirit: “He Became Poor”

- “**Kenosis**” comes from **Philippians 2:5-7** “...Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation/ἐκένωσεν/emptied himself [of glory], taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.”
- **Jesus experienced agony to give us the hope of glory: Luke 12:50** But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! ... **22:44** And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. **Matthew 27:46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** “You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”
- *How can we reproduce in our lives the temper of Him who for our sakes became poor at the first Christmas? How might you spend yourself to enrich someone else?*



The Babe & The Bride (Amos Wilson)

Connection of the saints and me: Who Abraham, too, longed to see,
His birth in time – Eternity, The finite in infinity.
The Word – ineffable to say, This inexplicable display,
The past and future dawn this day, Here, born in filth and bloody hay.
All-innocence all guilt to take, His birth and dying hell to shake,
All bonds, but bonds of love, to break, This Maker-babe all earth remakes!
The infant kings would kill – defame, The world's whole sins to Him were blamed:
This Helpless is the help I claim, Immortal mortal – Christ! The same.
This child's crooning, curled hand, Would be disjointed for the damned.
These kicking feet, untaught to stand, Were shattered – splinted, iron slammed!
The Astral King – here laid in straw, Cursed to a cross in raging raw.
Yes! At His form the devils claw, But at His cry they shrink in awe.
His natal bed He trades for stone, His dying breath for sin atones,
His crying breaths are trumpets blown! And heaven's hosts for Him have shone.
O Precious Babe! Your weeping side, Would wounds of woe and spears divide.
Yet hell is damned, and death has died, Washed in the blood, I'm born Your bride!

