

## MY RELATION TO THE INCARNATION

- It lasted 59 seconds, and gave birth to a century. Just over one hundred years ago, Wilber and Orville Wright made the first successful manned motorized flight near Kitty Hawk, NC. Actually, the pair of professional bicycle mechanics and self-taught engineers made four flights on December 17, 1903. The first was a mere hop of 12 seconds, but the last was an 852-foot jaunt of 59 seconds. And with their success the Air Age began. That relatively simple biplane gave way to Sopwith Camels and Curtiss Jennys, to DC-3s and 707s, to Gulfstreams and Lear Jets; to Delta and United Airlines; to massive airports like O'Hare and Heathrow. It even led the way to Gemini and Apollo, to a man on the moon and an international Space Station. All because two unlikely pioneers led the way to a complete change in our thinking.
- Perhaps you've seen film of some of the early attempts at manned flight, with mustached gentlemen in their Victorian suits flapping wing-like contraptions, peddling belt-driven propellers, and bouncing around ridiculously in useless gyrocopters. They are amusing now, but they weren't back then. Many people lost their lives in the search for the secret to flight. The reason they look so silly to us today is that they didn't understand the fundamental principle of flight. Today we understand that their flapping, running and jumping was useless. It wasn't until the Wright Brothers learned how to apply Bernoulli's Principle of Pressure Differentials using a curved wing edge that take-offs stopped looking like a clown act, and the course of human history was changed on December 17, 1903 at 10:35 a.m. Before that, those well-intentioned aviators could not have succeeded because they weren't dealing with reality. They had a faulty theoretical model, so they couldn't get their contraptions to fly!
- Every day, commercial airlines around the world carry about 3 million people. For most of those passengers, the most remarkable part of the trip is the in-flight movie – they don't even think about the amazing principles of aerodynamics that are keeping them in the air. But we owe an incredible debt to the Wright brothers and that single event that forever changed the course of history.
- There is an ironic footnote to the story of the Wright brothers and their "flying machine." When they finally achieved their dream, they telegraphed this message to their sister Katherine: "We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas." Katherine hurried to the editor of her local newspaper and showed him the message. He glanced at it and said, "How nice. The boys will be home for Christmas." He totally missed the big news – man had flown! Many people miss the "big news" of Christmas – it's not just that Jesus came, but it's why He came!
- **Colossians 2:8-10** <sup>8</sup> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. <sup>10</sup> And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:
- At Christmas, pastors often talk about the Incarnation. And the word "incarnation" is like the word "rapture." While the words themselves are not found in the Bible, they are accurate theological expressions that capture valid Biblical concepts. In the case of "incarnation," the English word is from a Latin root that means "the embodiment of deity or spirit in earthly form; an endowment of bodily human nature and form; the act of being personified; and especially the union of divinity with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ."
- The word "incarnation" accurately describes what God did when he came to earth as the man Christ Jesus – he was GOD PERSONIFIED in flesh! Jesus wasn't just part of God, a second God, a junior God, a third of God, another God, or a subordinate God – HE WAS GOD!
- The Bible is uncompromisingly MONOTHEISTIC (mono = one, theo = God). The God we serve is absolutely and indivisibly ONE. All the names and titles of Deity in Scripture refer to one and the same being. Any time the Bible seems to associate "plurality" with God, it is referring merely to His attributes, titles, roles, manifestations, relationships to humanity, or other aspects of God's self-revelation. This monotheistic view is the central doctrine of both OT Judaism and NT Christianity!
  - **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
  - **Mark 12:29-30** <sup>29</sup> And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: <sup>30</sup> And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.
- The **WORD** "trinity" is not found in the Bible, but more importantly, the **CONCEPT** of a trinity is not found in either Testament! No passage says that God is a holy two, holy three, or holy trinity, but over fifty verses call God the "Holy One"!
  - **Isaiah 47:4** As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.
  - **Mark 1:23-25** <sup>23</sup> And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, <sup>24</sup> Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. <sup>25</sup> And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

- The fact that GOD BECAME FLESH is one of the most wonderful and yet one of the most incomprehensible things about God. Jesus was like no other man! He had two natures – he was fully God and fully man. Most problems in people’s minds concerning the Godhead come from this great mystery. They cannot understand the dual nature of Christ.
  - 1 Timothy 3:16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
- When Jesus speaks of Himself, or when we read a Bible statement about Him, we must determine if it is describing Jesus as **GOD** or as **MAN**. When we see a description of two **NATURES** with respect to Jesus, it is not speaking of two **PERSONS**, but of SPIRIT and FLESH.

As a Man, Jesus ...		But as God, He ...	
Was born a baby	Luke 2:7	Existed from eternity	Micah 5:2 John 1:1-2
Grew mentally, physically, spiritually and socially	Luke 2:52	Never changes	Hebrews 13:8
Was tempted by the devil	Luke 4:2	Cast out devils	Matthew 12:28
Hungered	Matt. 4:2	Was the Bread of Life and miraculously fed crowds	John 6:35 Mk. 6:38-44, 52
Thirsted	John 19:28	Gave living water	John 4:14
Grew weary	John 4:6	Gave rest	Matthew 11:28
Slept in a storm	Mark 4:38	Calmed the storm	Mark 4:39-41
Prayed	Luke 22:41	Answered prayer	John 14:14
Was scourged and beaten	John 19:1-3	Healed the sick	Matthew 8:16-17 1 Peter 2:24
Died	Mark 15:37	Raised His own body from the dead	John 2:19-21 John 20:9
Was a sacrifice for sin	Hebrews 10:10-12	Forgave sin	Mark 2:5-7
Did not know all things	Mark 13:32	Knew all things	John 21:17
Had no power	John 5:30	Had all power	Matthew 28:18 Colossians 2:10
Was inferior to God	John 14:28	Was equal to God; was God	John 5:18
Was a servant	Philippians 2:7-8	Was King of kings	Revelation 19:16

- This was the crucial error of the Jews in rejecting their Messiah, because there were two streams of prophecy that referred to His coming. One stream spoke of His **deity**, while the other spoke of His **humanity**, and the Jewish scholars could not reconcile the two – they could not understand how the Messiah could be divine and yet human. **So, they missed the very Messiah that their own Scriptures prophesied would come!** It is only in the New Testament that we see how God reconciled these two prophetic streams. **THE MIRACLE OF THE INCARNATION IS GOD’S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION!**
- The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: **a virgin’s womb and an empty tomb**. Jesus entered our world through a door marked 'No Entrance' and left through a door marked 'No Exit.'
- Modernists may deny the virgin birth, scientific knowledge may not be able to account for it, and spiritual ignorance may state that it is of no real consequence, but the Biblical importance of it cannot be over-estimated! **IT IS ON THE VIRGIN BIRTH THAT BIBLE DOCTRINE HANGS!** If Jesus Christ was not virgin born, He was not sinless; if He was not sinless, then He Himself needs a Savior; if He Himself needs a Savior, then He cannot be our Savior, and the entire plan of redemption crumbles and falls. **Salvation depends on the incarnation!**
  - Isaiah 9:6** For 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, **The mighty God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
  - 1 Timothy 2:5** For there is **one God**, and **one mediator** between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**;
  - Matthew 1:23** Behold, a virgin shall be with **child**, and shall bring forth a **son**, and they shall call his name **Emmanuel**, which being interpreted is, **God with us**.
- The fact that Jesus was actually, totally, fully, completely the Almighty God is what we call the doctrine of the “ONENESS.” But why is believing in the Oneness of God so important? **WHAT IS MY RELATION TO THE INCARNATION?** What does it have to do with me? **To put it simply, because Jesus brought the fullness of God TO humanity, we can now experience the fullness of God IN humanity.**
  - John 14:16-18** <sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup> Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth **with you (INCARNATION)**, and shall be **in you (SALVATION)**. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you comfortless: **I will come to you**.

- One thing made the incarnation necessary – the fall of man! Because we sinned and therefore came under God’s eternal death penalty, we needed someone to redeem us. However, all of Adam’s descendants would be born in sin, so they would need redemption for themselves. No man was qualified to be a redeemer!
- God’s law dictated that sinful man must be redeemed by a sinless man. Since no man of Adam’s race was sinless, only God was left to redeem mankind ... but God was not a man! **THE ONLY WAY GOD COULD REDEEM US WAS TO BECOME A MAN LIKE US.**
- However, if God was to become a man, it must be without sin; otherwise, He Himself would be a sinner, and unable to save others. God’s answer was the miracle of the virgin birth, in which God clothed Himself with a body of flesh, but did not inherit a fallen human nature. By the virgin birth, God brought a sinless being (Jesus Christ) out of a sinful being (Mary).
- In becoming a man, Jesus Christ did not cease to be God. He was God before, during and after His incarnation. But through the virgin birth, the eternal God **ADDED** to His divine nature a sinless human nature, becoming the GOD-MAN.
- **HERE IS MY RELATION TO THE INCARNATION:**
  - At the INCARNATION, God **ADDED** to His already existing divine nature a human nature.
  - This makes it possible for us, in SALVATION, to **ADD** to our already existing human nature a divine nature!
- **2 Peter 1:3-4** <sup>3</sup> According as his **divine power** hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: <sup>4</sup> Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- **2 Corinthians 5:19-21** <sup>19</sup> To wit, that **God was in Christ**, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For he hath **made him to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**
- **BECAUSE JESUS TOOK ON MY NATURE, I CAN NOW TAKE ON HIS NATURE!**