



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



Dr. Eddie Ildefonso

*West Los Angeles Living Word Christian Center
Los Angeles, California*

*Professor, Covington Theological Seminary
Honduras, Pakistan, Zimbabwe Extensions
International Dean, Covington Theological
Seminary*

THE PROPHECY ABOUT CHRIST

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NASB)

⁶For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

THE INCARNATION OF Christ was prophesied repeatedly in the Old Testament. The prophecy of the incarnation truth was so prominent and significant that right from the birth of Christ we start reading in the New Testament that Christ’s coming “fulfilled” ([Matthew 1:22](#); [Matthew 2:15, 17, 23](#); etc.) Old Testament prophesies. In this article of our study of the incarnated Christ, we will focus on one of the main Old Testament prophesies given of Christ’s incarnation. It is not our intention in this study of the Savior to be exhaustive in covering all the Scripture references on every subject about Christ. Rather, our intention is to cover only some of the chief Scripture texts on each one of the subjects we address. This we believe will permit us to sufficiently emphasize the major points of each one of these subjects. Therefore, in this article on the prophecy of Christ’s incarnation, our text concerns only one of the many texts in the Old Testament that predicts the incarnation of Christ. But this well-known text is a gem. It is a magnificent prophecy of the incarnation. Part of it is even enshrined in classical music in George Frederic Handel’s great oratorio *The Messiah*.

This prophetic text evidences the fact that when prophets predicted future events, they did not always realize all that was involved in their prophecy. “**In this prophecy the prophet is plainly speaking greater things than he knew**” (Maclaren) (1). Prophets did not always know the full import and application of their message. They simply ut-

tered truths as they were given inspiration from God.

Also note that some of this prophecy of the incarnation of Christ is spoken as though it was already accomplished. It says a child “is” born and a son “is” given. This is like the phrase in [Revelation 13:8](#) which says of Christ, “**from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.**” With God a prophecy can indeed be spoken of in terms of fulfillment; for when God predicts it, it *will* come to past. Nothing will deter God’s prediction. When He speaks, it is as good as done; for His Word shall never fail.

To examine this great prophecy of Christ from our text in Isaiah, we will consider the advent of Christ ([v. 6](#)), the attributes of Christ ([v. 6](#)), and the authority of Christ ([vv. 6-7](#)) which are prophesied in our text.

A. THE ADVENT OF CHRIST

“**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us**” ([v. 6](#)). Here is the first advent of Christ, namely, His birth on earth. From these words of our text, we note the doctrine in the advent, the demotion in the advent, the day of the advent, the delight in the advent, and the duty from the advent.

1. The Doctrine in the Advent

“**For a child will be born ... a son will be given to us.**” The doctrine of the dual nature of Christ is seen in our text in that both the Deity and humanity of Christ are found in this prophecy of the advent of Christ. To study our text about this dual nature of Christ, we will look at the explanation of our text, the encouragement from this text, and the examples of this text.

The explanation of this text. “**For a child will be born**” speaks of the humanity of Christ; but “**a son will be given to us**” speaks of the Deity of Christ. “**For a child will be born**” says Christ’s humanity had a beginning. But “**For a child will be born**” says that Christ the Person already was in existence when His birth occurred. In the past, we also studied this fact of Christ’s eternal existence before His incarnation. Christ did not begin when He was born, He existed eternally before He was

born. The “**born**” part only concerns His manifestation in the flesh. But the “**given**” part covers all eternity. The gift had to exist before it was “**given.**”

The encouragement from this text. The dual nature of Christ being recorded together is a great encouragement to mankind. It tells us that Christ is not so heavenly that He is no earthly help. It says that Christ is not only the Lord of space but also the Lord of the shop and the sink. He is not only God of heaven but also God of the home. He is the Object of our worship as well as the Example for our walk. He is not only “**Jesus the Son of God**” ([Hebrew 4:14](#)) Who “**sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**” ([Hebrews 12:2](#)), but He is also One Who can “**sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are,**” ([Hebrews 4:15](#)). In view of these truths let us be encouraged to “**let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need**” ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).

The examples of this text. Our text is an example of what is seen periodically in Scripture, namely, the two natures of Christ being found together in a text. Some illustrations of Scripture texts beside our text in Isaiah which record the dual nature of Christ are [Matthew 17](#) where Christ’s humanity is seen in His paying a tax (nothing is more human than paying a tax), and His Deity is seen in the fact that the tax money was obtained by a miracle of Christ; [Luke 8](#) where Christ’s humanity is seen in His sleeping in a ship, and His Deity is seen in His stopping a storm on the sea when He awoke; [John 11](#) where Christ’s humanity is seen in His weeping at the grave of Lazarus, and His Deity is seen in His raising Lazarus from the grave; and [Romans 1](#) where Christ’s humanity is seen in the phrase “**a descendant of David according to the flesh**” ([Romans 1:3](#)) and His Deity is seen in the phrase “**declared to be the Son of God**” ([Romans 1:4](#)). Christ is both man and God. Scripture makes that clear and places these truths side by side at times to emphasize and verify His dual nature.

2. The Demotion in the Advent

“**For a child will be born to us.**” The incarnation of Christ was a great condescension for Christ. “**The ‘ancient of days’ becomes an infant of a span long; the ‘everlasting Father’ is a son given. Such was his**

condescension in taking our nature upon him; thus did he humble and empty himself” (Henry) (2). The Apostle Paul describes this willing demotion well when he said Christ **“but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:7-8).**

If Christ would humble Himself so greatly in order to save our soul, then we ought to be willing to be humbled if necessary in order to serve Him. No one ever humbled themselves as much as Christ did. To have to humble ourselves in order to serve Him is not asking us to do more than He did.

3. The Day of the Advent

Our text is in a dark setting. This tells us the day when Christ was born. We do not mean here a day on the calendar, but a day in regards to character. Christ was born in a dark day. Both before and after our text the context describes a dark day. In some verses before our text, the times are spoken of in Isaiah as **“distress and darkness, gloom of anguish ... driven away into darkness ... with contempt ... the shadow of death ... cloak rolled in blood ... burning and fuel for the fire” (Isaiah 8:22; Isaiah 9:1-2, 5).**

In some of the verses after our text, the times are described as **“The LORD raises against them adversaries ... and spurs their enemies on... they shall devour Israel ... LORD cuts off head and tail from Israel ... And the people are like fuel for the fire; No man spares his brother” (Isaiah 9:11-12, 14, 19).**

Terrible times existed when the prophecy of Christ was given, and these terrible times foreshadowed the terrible times in which Christ was born of Mary. The awfulness of the times of His birth are emphasized in **“Jesus was born ... in the days of Herod” (Matthew 2:1).** The **“days of Herod”** were very dark and dangerous days. This is confirmed by the atrocious deed of Herod in slaying **“...all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under...” (Matthew 2:16)** in his attempt to kill the young Christ child that was born of Mary.

Having Christ born in a day of great darkness manifests the great power of God to help us in difficult times. God does not give help only in sunny weather, but He can help us in the worst of times. **“God is ... a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1),** not just in good times. He can help us at any time.

4. The Delight in the Advent

“For a child will be born ... a son will be given to us.” Both **“child will be born”** and **“son will be given”** provide great delight for mankind.

The delight in the “born.” The birth of a child is normally a time of great rejoicing. Of course in our day of bloody abortion, this rejoicing fact is often forgotten. But normally the birth of the child is a joyous occasion. Every floor in a hospital, but one, is generally a place of sorrow, distress, sadness, and heartache. But the one floor that is different is the floor where the babies are born. What a delight when there is the announcement on this floor that a child is born. I know! So it is with the birth of Christ. The announcement of Christ’s birth to the shepherds was, **“I bring you great news of great joy” (Luke 2:10).** What great joy that birth has given to man. It has given the joy of salvation which cannot be equaled by any joy. And it provides joy in every realm of life. As an example, every year the celebration of Christ’s birth produces joy in the hearts of many folk all over the world.

The delight in the “given.” The word **“given”** speaks to us of a wonderful gift from God. Gifts bring delight, and no gift brings as much delight as this gift from God of His Son to us. We note this truth in the grace in the gift, the wisdom of the gift, and the motivation for the gift.

First, the grace in the gift. God gave Christ to man as the Savior from sin. The giving of Christ emphasizes the grace of salvation. Salvation was not a payment for some work we have done, but it was a gift. We do not earn salvation. It is all of grace. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).** Christ is the **“gift”** that makes it possible for us to be saved and have the great joy of salvation.

Second, the wisdom of the gift. This gift was exact-

ly what man needed. In fact, it was what man needed the most. Many times we are given gifts from our friends and relatives which we do not need and cannot use. But no gift was as needed, as valuable, as useful, and as fitting as the gift God gave to us in Christ. And we should not be surprised at this fact, for the wisdom of God was behind the selecting of this gift!

Third, the motivation for the gift. The gift was motivated by love, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16).** God loved us so much that He gave His **“only”** Son! What tremendous love it had to be in order to give such a terrific gift. The greater the love, the greater the gift. No love has ever been so great as God’s love for us; and, therefore, no gift has ever been so great as the gift of Jesus Christ. It brought the greatest delight of any gift ever given.

5. The Duty From the Advent

“Unto us” is said twice in our verse and these two words bring obligation **“unto us.”** When a child comes into a home, it is the obligation of that home to receive the child and take care of the child. However, so many fail in this obligation. Parents not infrequently forsake their children nowadays. As an example, some mothers have trouble getting the father of the child to provide support for the child. As a child coming into a home obligates the parents to receive and care for the child, so the birth of Christ obligates mankind to receive Christ and take care that due honor and service is given to Christ. When mankind is told of the gift of Christ for the salvation of their soul, they have an obligation to receive the salvation gift. Salvation is a responsibility. **“God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30).** When the shepherds were told of the birth of Christ, they had an obligation to visit Christ and see what the angels had proclaimed. The shepherds fulfilled this obligation promptly. Most people do not do so well in fulfilling their obligation towards Christ.

Most people, unlike the shepherds, ignore Christ and see no obligation whatever to receive Him as Savior and worship and serve Him as Lord. But those who refuse to take up the obligation which comes from the advent of Christ will spend eternity in hell forever lamenting their failure.

B. THE ATTRIBUTES OF CHRIST

“And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). These great names which the prophet Isaiah gave to Christ show some of the great attributes of Christ. They distinguish Christ as the Superior Being indeed. **“No living man ever filled out in their uttermost spheral meaning all these names but one, and his name is JESUS” (Joseph Parker).** We will look at each of these names separately in order to perceive better the great and glorious truths they give us of Jesus Christ the one whose incarnation is prophetically declared in our text.

1. Wonderful

Some think that the word **“Wonderful”** is an adjective of the word **“Counselor.”** But our English translations are justified in putting a comma after **“Wonderful”** to distinguish it as a separate name. While the word **“Wonderful”** can certainly modify **“Counselor”** (as well as all the other names), it can also stand alone both in the Hebrew and in the heart. In the Hebrew the word is found as a distinct name in [Judges 13:18](#) where Samson’s parents were introduced to a manifestation of God (which we believe was Christ) as **“secret”** (KJV translation of same word translated **“wonderful”** in our text).

In the heart every redeemed soul finds Christ to be **“Wonderful.”** Coming into the world in great humility to die on the cross for our sins is simply **“Wonderful”** to the sinner saved by the blood of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. Christ is **“Wonderful”** in His incarnation, in His love, in His sacrifice on the cross, in His saving and keeping power, in His help and faithfulness. Nothing is as **“Wonderful”** as Jesus Christ. If one does not learn this truth in this earthly lifetime, he will learn it in eternity but to his eternal shame and suffering.

2. Counselor

One of the ministries of Christ is that of counseling. His greatest ministry is that of a Savior, but Christ is also a counselor, and there is none better. **“He is called Counselor because He comes to us as the Revealer of the Father’s will. That is what is implied in His Divine title, ‘The Word’ ” (Ironside).** In regards to this matter of counseling, we note the essentialness of correct counsel and the excellence of Christ’s counsel.

The essentialness of correct counsel. Correct coun-

sel is very essential if we are going to walk in the right path. Scripture says, **“Where there is no counsel the people fall”** ([Proverbs 11:14](#)). This means that if correct counsel is not given or is not followed, people will make a mess of things. We note some prominent examples of this fact in Scripture. Adam and Eve listened to bad counsel from the devil ([Genesis 3](#)) and the evil results are still felt today. Joshua and the elders of Israel **“did not ask for the counsel of the LORD”** ([Joshua 9:14](#)) when the wily Gibeonites came to them in disguised dress, and as a result Joshua and the elders made a great mistake by making a treaty with the Gibeonites ([Joshua 9](#)). Saul made the tragic mistake of asking counsel from a witch instead of God, and it cost him his life. **“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the LORD; therefore he [God] slew him”** ([1 Chronicles 10:13-14](#)). King Rehoboam, the successor of King Solomon, listened to bad counsel; and as a result the kingdom of Israel split in two into the northern and southern kingdoms ([1 Kings 12](#)). All of these failures show the great essentialness of having and heeding correct counsel.

The excellence of Christ’s counsel. As we noted earlier, the name **“Wonderful”** can stand alone as a name, and it can also modify **“Counselor.”** Here we note that **“Wonderful”** certainly describes Christ’s counseling. He is the greatest counselor of all. And that is not surprising, for Christ is **“the wisdom of God”** ([1 Corinthians 1:24](#)). And when Christ was on earth, His wisdom was too much for His critics to overcome; and it stopped their mouths and actions ([Matthew 7:29](#); [Matthew 23:46](#); [John 7:46](#)).

Our day puts much emphasis on counselors and counseling. In fact, counseling has become big business—and often it is fraudulent big business. Few businesses are so filled with fraud as counseling. Psychologists and psychiatrists have literally fleeced victim after victim by fraudulent counseling. And all the emphasis on so-called **“Christian”** psychologists and psychiatrists has greatly diminished the awareness by people of the fact that Christ is the One Who through the Scriptures can give the best

counsel. Seek His Word in counsel. The Word of Christ is sufficient! The professional counselors of this world do not give the Word of God the honor it deserves in counseling. But that does not take away from the fact that Christ is the Counselor we need the most. He is superior for He is **“intimately acquainted with the counsels of God from eternity”** (Henry). None will ever seek counsel from Christ in vain. No one will ever regret that they adjusted their life to the counsel of God. Truly He is a **“Wonderful Counselor.”**

3. Mighty God

This name given to Christ in the prophecy of Him in our text emphasizes both the dynamics of Christ and the Deity of Christ. Christ is both **“mighty”** and **“God.”**

The dynamics of Christ. **“Mighty”** means that Christ is powerful. We learned in our first chapter of this book that His power was so great that He created the galaxies. Nothing was created unless He created it. Our earth and the galaxy it is in and all the other galaxies which comprise our universe were created by Christ. What great power that is! Our greatest nuclear power looks utterly frivolous compared to His power as the Creator.

With Christ being **“Mighty,”** we should be encouraged to bring our needs to Him. Nothing is **“impossible”** ([Luke 1:37](#)) with a **“Mighty”** God. When the leper came to Christ early in Christ’s earthly ministry, he recognized the power of Christ when he said, **“You can make me clean”** ([Mark 1:40](#)). The leper also saw what mankind needs to see, namely, it was not a question of Christ’s power to heal but rather of His will to heal that decides if He heals a person; for the leper said, **“If you are willing, you can make me clean”** (Ibid.). If Christ does not do as we request, it is not because He is weak, but because it is not His will. His purpose may be not to heal, but that does not reflect negatively on His power.

The Deity of Christ. **“God”** of the name **“Mighty God”** is an Old Testament affirmation of the New Testament truth of the Deity of Christ. Old Testament prophecy plainly gives testimony for the Deity of Christ! One cannot read the Bible honestly without coming to the dogmatic conclusion that Jesus is God. **“He had to be who He was in order to do what He did”** (Ironside). When Christ was born, the wise men of old recognized His Deity; for they **“worshiped**

him” ([Matthew 2:11](#)). All men need to recognize His Deity not only to worship Him but also to obey Him as their Supreme Authority.

4. Everlasting Father

The name “everlasting Father” instructs us in another two significant attributes of the person of Christ. We will look at them under the headings of the eternal existence of Christ and the paternal expression for Christ.

The eternal existence of Christ. The name “everlasting Father” can also be translated “Father of eternity” or “Father of the Ages” or as the Septuagint translated it, “Father of the world to come.” Regardless of which translation you prefer, the name gives support for the eternal existence of Christ. A person cannot be Father of eternity (as the name can be translated) without possessing eternal life. Neither can a person give eternal life (as Christ does to the sinner who comes to Him for salvation [[John 10:28](#)]) unless he possesses eternal life as does Christ. You cannot give what you do not have! Therefore, Christ had to have the character of eternity. Christ is the One Who is justifiably described as “which is, and which was, and which is to come” ([Revelation 1:4](#)). He is typified by Melchisedec who “having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually” ([Hebrews 7:3](#)). “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” ([Hebrews 13:8](#)) is the great “I AM” ([Exodus 3:14](#)) always existing in the present tense.

The paternal expression for Christ. The term “Father” is not used here in reference to Christ’s relationship to the Godhead; for Christ is God the Son, not God the Father. Rather, the term is used here in reference to Christ’s relationship to “us.” His father relationship is seen in that He is both the Head and Helper of the redeemed.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NASB)

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

First, the Head. As Adam was the father or head of all mankind physically, so Christ as the second Adam is the father or Head of the redeemed

spiritually. “So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit.” ([1 Corinthians 15:45](#)). “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#)). Charles Wesley, the writer of the Christmas carol “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,” expressed this truth in one of the verses of the carol which says, “Second Adam from above, reinstate us in Thy love.” As the Head spiritually, Christ “is head of the church” ([Ephesians 5:23](#)). “He is the head of the body, the church” ([Colossians 1:18](#)). Calling Christ the “Father” in this manner is not unique. Many other instances in Scripture respect this general use of the term father. Abraham is called the “father” of the Jews ([Romans 4:1](#)); Isaac is called “our father” ([Romans 9:10](#)) by Paul.

Jesus told the unbelieving critics when He was on earth, “You are of your father the devil.....” ([John 8:44](#)) and He said the devil was the “father” of lies ([Ibid.](#)). So Christ does not have to be God the Father to be called a “Father.”

Second, the Helper. Here we look at the fatherly care and compassion Jesus Christ has for His people. He is the Head of His people but not a disinterested Head. The principle is stated in [Psalm 103:13](#) which says, “Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.” The principle was applied by Peter when he said, “Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” ([1 Peter 5:7](#)). Christ is the “Father of His people, with all the attributes of that sacred name, such as guidance, love, providing for His children’s wants” (Maclaren). All the five names in our text can be put in this category of fatherly care. Hence, to the disappointed, Christ is “Wonderful”; to those needing direction, He is the “Counselor”; to the frail, He is the “Mighty God”; to those orphaned by sin, He, through salvation, is the “Everlasting Father”; and to the disturbed, He is, as we will see next, the “Prince of Peace.”

5. Prince of Peace

Christ is truly the source and champion of true peace. When the birth of Christ was announced by the angel to the shepherds, “...on earth peace...” ([Luke 2:14](#)) was part of the announcement. When Christ was incarnated, the great Prince of Peace was indeed “on earth.” There is no true peace anywhere apart from Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ must be the “Prince” or

there will be no “Peace.”

Christ gives peace in at least three important areas. They are peace with God, peace of God, and peace from God. These three phrases “**peace with God,**” “**peace of God,**” and “**peace from God**” all appear instructively in the epistles of Paul.

Peace with God. “**We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ....**” ([Romans 5:1](#)). Christ “**...made peace through the blood of His cross...**” ([Colossians 1:20](#)) to provide the means whereby the sinner may obtain peace with God. This peace with God is the most important peace of all. Giving this peace was the primary purpose of the incarnation. Be at war with anyone else but God. Better to be at peace with God and not at peace with anyone else than to have peace with everyone else and not have peace with God.

Peace of God. “**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus**” ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)). All the trouble and turmoil that besets us can be tranquilized through Christ. Make Him the Prince of your life; and though troubles beset you before and behind, He will give you that “**peace of God**” that calms and comforts as nothing else can do. Men frequently turn to drugs and booze to try and calm their troubled spirits and circumstances, but that only aggravates their troubled hearts. Christ does just the opposite.

Peace from God. The phrase “**peace from God**” is found at the beginning of all of Paul’s epistles ([Romans 1:7](#); [1 Corinthians 1:3](#); [2 Corinthians 1:2](#); [Galatians 1:3](#); [Ephesians 1:2](#); [Philippians 1:2](#); [Colossians 1:2](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:1](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:2](#); [1 Timothy 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#); [Titus 1:4](#); [Philemon 1:3](#)). And each time the “**peace from God**” is associated with Jesus Christ. While the phrase “**peace from God**” can apply to the *salvation* of the soul and the *serenity* of heart, we are especially using it here to apply to the peace God can give to *society* at large through Jesus Christ. When Christ “**will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into**

plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war” ([Isaiah 2:4](#)). It is Christ, not the United Nations, that we need in the world for peace. But the world despises Christ. He is driven out of all peace negotiations. No wonder our world lacks peace. It will always lack peace until Christ becomes the Prince. Israel will lack peace until Christ is accepted as their Prince, the Messiah; and other nations will lack peace until they submit to Christ as the “**Prince of Peace.**” Recognizing and submitting to Christ as a “**Prince**” (ruler) leads us right into our next main point for this teaching which concerns the governmental authority of Christ.

C. THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

“**...And the government will rest on His shoulders;....There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this**” ([Isaiah 9:6-7](#)). The prophecy in our text of the incarnation of Jesus Christ goes all the way from the cradle to the crown. It covers both the first and second advent of Christ. The first advent had the cradle and cross in view, the second advent focuses on the crown. A “**child is born**” and “**a son is given**” point to the first advent while “**the government will rest on his shoulders**” points to the second advent. The authority of Christ is especially seen in the “**government ... on his shoulders.**” Our text speaks of the certainty of the government, the carrying of the government, and the character of the government.

1. The Certainty of the Government

“**The government will rest on his shoulders**” ([Isaiah 9:6-7](#)). Christ’s rule is more than a possibility. It is a certainty. We note the command for the certainty and the comfort from the certainty.

The command for the certainty. “**Will be**” is the Divine command that orders and assures that Jesus Christ will rule and reign. There is no doubt in this text; it is a statement of absolute certainty about Christ reigning. When God says, “**Will be,**” it is as good as done. Nothing is more certain than a Divine “**Will be.**” We have many scoffers who doubt God’s Word, but “**Will be**” will eventually silence every scoffer. Powers will rise and fall, but none will prevent the coming reign of

Christ. Sometimes conditions in this world are so vile that it looks like evil has a lock on government. But Christ will prevail. He “**will**” rule on the “**throne of David**” ([Isaiah 9:7](#)).

The comfort from the certainty. Our text gives great comfort to God’s people about the future. The entire content of our text promotes comfort, but it is especially the certainty that permits the contents of our text to give strong comfort. God’s blessed promises can be a source of great comfort to God’s people because they carry the certainty of God’s Word. God’s promises are not wistful thinking but “**Will be**” predictions that nothing can stop.

For that reason Peter could speak of the Divine prophecies in Scripture in terms of the “**prophetic word made more sure**” ([2 Peter 1:19](#)). Man’s promises lack the certainty of God’s promises and, therefore, cannot comfort as God’s promises do.

2. The Carrying of the Government

“**The government will rest on his shoulders** ([Isaiah 9:6](#)). The expression which speaks of having the government upon one’s shoulders reflected the fact that in those days “**government was regarded as a burden, to be borne on the back or shoulders, and was sometimes symbolized by a key laid upon the shoulder** [see [Isaiah 22:22](#) for a reference to this symbolism]” (Rawlinson). Jesus Christ is certainly able to carry the government upon His shoulders. After all, He created the galaxies and sustains them and controls their every movement. He Who can govern the universe will not have any problem bearing the government of earth upon His shoulder.

Many men have tried to carry the government upon their shoulders and have miserably failed, but Christ will not fail. His shoulders are stronger than the shoulders of anyone else.

3. The Character of the Government

Our text gives seven characteristics of the government to show the excellent character of Christ’s government. He exercises authority over men with the greatest of character both in His administration and conduct. He will have the best and most successful government, and He will not use His authority over men corruptly as so many rulers do. Excellence will characterize the policies of His govern-

ment and nobility will characterize the deportment of His government. The character of His government will certainly be a tremendous improvement over the governments of the world past, present, or future; and that includes our own country whose government is becoming increasingly inefficient and iniquitous.

The seven characteristics of Christ’s government which we can see in our text are the **progressiveness, peaceableness, pedigree, prudence, purity, perpetuity, and power of the government.**

The progressiveness of His government. “**To the increase of His government ... there will be no end**” ([Isaiah 9:7](#)). The largeness, luster, and the length of it shall increase. It shall become increasingly greater in size, serenity (peace is included in the increase, but we will examine peace separately), splendor and in span (it will last forever). His rule will spread from Zion to be over the whole earth as it is over the whole universe ([Ephesians 1:22](#); [Matthew 28:18](#)). No ruler in the past ever had a government of progress like that. No ruler on earth ever had a kingdom of such size and splendor and peace and power. All other rulers came to the place where their rule began to decrease either by opposing forces or by their death. Neither will happen to Christ. His government will never diminish. He is eternal and no opposition will survive.

The peaceableness of His government. “**There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace**” ([Isaiah 9:7](#)). The peace aspect of His government is included in the “**increase,**” as we just noted; but we look at peace separately here to emphasize the great peace that shall characterize the government of Christ. When He rules from the “**throne of David**” (*Ibid.*), the entire world will be at peace. That has never happened yet under the rule of man. We have already learned from our text for this chapter that Christ is the “**Prince of Peace**”; therefore, we should expect His government to be one characterized by great peace. “**Wherever his government is there shall be peace; and as his government increases, the peace shall increase**” (Henry).

As we noted earlier, the more we allow Christ to rule in our hearts individually, the more peace it will bring to our hearts. Just as the increase of His government will bring an increase in peace in the world, so the increase of His government of our lives will bring more peace to us. Self-will in the heart of man is a great dis-

turber of peace. It tries to rule our life and not let God rule it. So many people in our world have no peace in their heart because they will not submit to the rule of Christ. **“There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21).**

The pedigree of His government. Christ’s government will be on the **“throne of David” (Isaiah 9:7).** Christ was born in the lineage of David and therefore rightfully inherits the throne. No one has a right to the throne of David now except Jesus Christ. Later in this teaching we will study the genealogies of Christ as given in Matthew and Luke and will note from them that Christ had the pedigree for the throne. These genealogies give Christ the lineage that qualifies Him to sit on David’s throne. Christ will take the throne not by fraud and evil as so many thrones are taken today, but by due right.

The prudence of His government. **“Over his kingdom, to establish it” (Isaiah 9:7).** **“To establish it”** speaks of the efficient organization of Christ’s administration of **“his kingdom.”** Christ will have an orderly administration and government. It will not be a government characterized by confusion and inefficiency as so many governments are including that of our own nation. **“Everything is, and shall be, well managed, in the kingdom of Christ” (Henry).** Where Christ rules there will always be order and efficiency. This is true individually, too. So many lives are a confusing mess. People often live in a helter-skelter way in which they waste their time, their wealth, and their energy because they have little **“order”** to their life. But **“God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33).** A disorderly life is not a life ruled by Jesus Christ but a life ruled by self.

The purity of His government. **“To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness” (Isaiah 9:7).** The meaning of the Hebrew words translated **“justice”** and **“righteousness”** will help us here in learning about the purity of Christ’s government. The Hebrew word translated **“justice”** means **“to bring matters to the rule of right; to administer justice, as a magistrate or governor” (Wilson).** The Hebrew word translated **“righteousness”** means **“to be just, righteous”** and is translated **“righteousness”** 128 times compared to **“justice”** only 15 times in the KJV. So we have

two main thoughts here from the meaning of these words regarding the purity of Christ’s government. One has to do with the courts of the government (**“justice”**) and the other with the conduct of the government **“righteousness”**.

First, the courts of the government. **“To establish it with justice.”** With the word **“justice”** meaning **“to bring matters to the rule of right, to administer justice” (Wilson),** we learn that this government will be fair and equitable in its courts. It will not be like our nation whose courts permit freedom for pornography under the freedom of speech part of the constitution but then refuse freedom for religion even though the constitution says that the government shall make **“no law [about religion] ... prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”** In Christ’s government there will be no perverted decisions in courts because of clever lawyers and corrupt judges. His government will show justice—a welcome relief to the injustice in our country and even greater injustice in other nations of the world.

Second, the conduct of the government. Unlike most governments in the history of man, the government of Christ will be holy. Righteousness (the meaning of “justice”) will be the hallmark of Christ’s rule. Corruption will not control the government. There will not be under-the-table payoffs or vile conduct of the Head Ruler (as is so often the case in many lands including our own) or deception with the citizenry. The government will be absolutely pure. It will be faultless in character.

The rule of Christ always brings righteousness. Whether it is Christ ruling the nations or Christ coming into the heart in salvation and ruling in an individual life, He always produces holiness where He rules. The evil that predominates in government and in people today plainly reveals that Christ is not enthroned in the land or in individual lives.

The perpetuity of His government. **“From then on and forevermore” (Isaiah 9:7).** The rule of Christ will never end. **“He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:33).** The millennium rule lasts for one thousand years, but that is not the end. New Jerusalem replaces the world under His reign (**Revelation 21:5**), and the rule of Christ will continue forever for His people. There will be no more elections and no more suc-

cessors to the throne. Christ will sit on the throne forever. Nothing can be better for mankind.

The power of His government. “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isaiah 9:7). At the beginning of the mention of the government of Christ in this prophecy we read “will be.” Here at the end of our text, we read “will accomplish this.” With all the opposition to the reign of Christ, it will take great power to overcome the forces and influences of evil and bring to pass “will be” and “will accomplish this.” But the government of Christ has that power. This power is found in the “zeal [holy jealousy] of the LORD.” This guarantees His government coming to pass. “This zeal of the Lord of hosts will overcome all opposition” (Henry). Great zeal produces great power. There is no zeal so great as “the zeal of the LORD of hosts.”

Oh, that God’s people had more zeal for the work of Christ. Let people be fired up with zeal and their exploits for God will be greater. When Christ cleaned out the Temple in Jerusalem during His earthly ministry in His first advent, Scripture says, “His disciples remembered that it was written, “ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME” (John 2:17). If God’s people had that kind of zeal today, a lot of churches would be cleaned up, too. But most church members have not even been nibbled on by “the zeal of Your house” let alone been “eaten up” by it.

The phrase, “zeal of the LORD,” shows up several other times in the Old Testament. [2 Kings 19:31](#) and [Isaiah 37:32](#) both say, “For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” If the “zeal of the LORD” is for you, no enemy can overcome you.

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Pastor Gary C. Fleetwood
*Chime Bell Baptist Church
Windsor, South Carolina*

*Professor, Covington Theological Seminary
Aiken, South Carolina Extension
Dean, Covington Theological Seminary
Country of Romania*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The significance of the virgin birth, or the Incarnation, cannot be measured or overstated. It is not something where someone can simply read a few verses, make a couple of inspirational statements about Christ, and think that they have in any way captured the essence of this transcendent event. The Son of God and His atoning work is one of a kind. And to make it even more significant, the entirety of the Christian faith is founded on the doctrine of the virgin birth. What God did when the Son of God was made flesh and appeared as a man was the only time that this has occurred or ever will occur. This is a once for all unique event, and it establishes God the Son as the most unique being in all of eternity. Without the virgin birth, there would never have been any salvation to offer. There is no one to compare Him to because there is no one else like Him. This is something that has occurred only once to the most unique being in eternity, and therefore there is no legitimate point of reference that anyone can relate to at all. It is simply difficult to comprehend.

[John 1:14](#) declares,

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is the most concise statement given in Scripture on the Incarnation – “**the Word became flesh**”. God took on humanity, the infinite became finite, eternity entered into time, the invisible God became visible. [Colossians 1:15](#) says,

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation

The Creator entered His creation. He “**became flesh**”, became fully man, but at the same time remained fully God. In fact, the **primary title** that Jesus used of Himself when He was on the earth was not calling Himself the “**Son of God**”, but rather the “**Son of Man**”. The established premise is that this event is something that God has done, something that God has sovereignly initiated, and something that God has willingly revealed. Absolutely nothing can be known about this event or its significance other than what God has placed in the Scriptures.

[Philippians 2:5-8](#) is one of the four major passages which speak about this event outside of the gospel stories found in Matthew and Luke.

⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

In this passage Paul is not describing the Incarnation to simply provide some theological truth to the reader. In v5, he is saying that there is something in Christ that needs to be seen and emulated. He is the

supreme example of someone who was self-denying, self-giving, self-sacrificing, and who had a selfless love as He lived out His life. He made the greatest personal sacrifice that could ever be imagined in order to save men from an eternal judgment. And God the Father desires every believer to have that same attitude as well. In [I Timothy 3:16](#) Paul calls the virgin birth a “mystery”.

¹⁶And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

After His resurrection He appeared to the two men on the road to Emmaus, He appeared to His disciples for forty days and ate with them, and He asked Thomas to look at His hands and His feet that had been pierced. He was manifesting Himself in a resurrection body, not some kind of spirit form. [Mark 16:19](#) says,

¹⁹So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

How did He ascend and how was He received up into glory? Did something happen to Him physically as He ascended so that He reverted back to His Trinitarian pre-Incarnate state? He was received up in His resurrection body, and He remains there today in that same resurrection body. In [John 21](#), He had just been on the beach cooking breakfast for His disciples, and then He was received up into glory. It was the resurrected God-man that ascended into heaven. [Acts 1:9-11](#) gives the account,

⁹Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

In [Acts 7:54-56](#), Stephen is speaking as he is about to die,

⁵⁴When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. ⁵⁵**But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,** ⁵⁶and said, “**Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!**”

What Stephen sees is the God-man. He sees Christ in a resurrected body that is different than the spirit form He had prior to the Incarnation.

Now, the point of all of this is simple. When He ascended into heaven, He was in a different “**form**” than He was before He first came to earth in the Incarnation. Without question, this is the ultimate of all sacrifices and one that cannot be fully comprehended. Before the Incarnation He existed as one of the unique and undefinable beings of the Trinity, but today, right now, He is there as a Lamb that was slain. He is there as the Great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for every believer. He is there with “humanness” – something He did not possess prior to His Incarnation. [Romans 8:34](#) and [Hebrews 7:25](#) declare,

³⁴**Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us**

²⁵**Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**

One of the amazing truths of what took place in the virgin birth is that God the Son knew that He was going to make this ultimate of all sacrifices before the foundation of the world. He made the decision in eternity past before anyone, any creature, or anything was even created – before time even existed. When the Trinity determined to create life as men know it, each member of the Godhead knew full well what it would cost the Son of God to become the God-man.

Yet because of those who never deserved what they have received, because of the worth and value of their life, and because of how much He knew that He would love them and how much He wanted them to love Him, He made an irrevocable choice, a Trinitarian choice, and an everlasting choice that He would make the ultimate of all sacrifices in order that those whom the Father would give to Him might be saved. He made the decision in order that every believer and every saint throughout all of the ages might fully, completely, and eternally enjoy all the riches of who He is and all of the riches of His kingdom forever. **In the process, however, he would be the one who suffered the greatest loss imaginable, and it would be forever.** This was more than God the Son sacrificing His life in a one-time event, but encompassed sacrificing the exercise of His “Godness” forever. In order to give His people everything, it would personally and eternally cost Him everything. What He voluntarily chose to surrender, to forfeit, and to give up is more than the mind can conceive.

What actually happened was divinely ordained, divinely understood, and sovereignly accomplished. Nothing was haphazard, nothing was flippant. The atoning work of God the Son was the most glorious of all sacrifices – and it began with a humble and supernatural birth in a stable to a peasant girl. God the Son became the God-man, and in the process gave up being God as He previously was – **forever**. Wayne Grudem in his book [Systematic Theology](#) defines the biblical teaching about the person of Christ in this way. He says,

“Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.”

Jesus Christ is still fully God in every sense of the word. That is clearly understood. He will always be God – fully divine, fully omnipotent, and fully omniscience. He remains eternally immutable, but in His Incarnation He has voluntarily chosen not to exercise His divine attributes unless directed by the Father. He has chosen to **function** within His humanness and in utter dependence on His Father. It is in His human-

ness that He has fully identified with men and accomplished what only He could accomplish.

This is not in any way demeaning God the Son, but to the contrary this exalts Him and honors Him beyond words. The magnitude of His sacrifice for those who did not deserve anything but death and wrath and judgment and the Lake of Fire is more than can be comprehended or appreciated. No living believer has ever been to heaven, has ever been God, and has ever been omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, or holy. To the contrary, all men are sinful, defiled, unholy, unrighteous, and proud.

So, just to picture God the Son as a baby in a manger is more than a mere misapprehension of the magnitude of the actual sacrifice. In the virgin birth, God the Son became the God-man forever. It is the word “forever” that is astonishing. He made the ultimate of all possible sacrifices. As God the Son, there was no position that was higher or greater. So to descend, to move down, to lower Himself, to willfully function as less than God Almighty – what can be said. It is almost unthinkable, unimaginable, beyond belief, and inconceivable. He had never been defiled with anything. He had never been exposed to germs, or hunger, or thirst, or weariness, or cruelty, or death. Yet, here He is experiencing all of that and more. He is God in a stable with sheep and smelly goats. He is God hanging naked on a cross, being mocked, being spit on, and beaten unjustly and unmercifully. Eternity cannot measure what He accomplished.

One observation relative to one of His names is that He is called the “**Second Man**” or the “**last Adam**”.

[I Corinthians 15:45 and 47](#) says,

⁴⁵And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁷The first man (Adam) was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man (Jesus Christ) is the Lord from heaven.

What this means is that as the God-man, as fully God yet fully man, Jesus Christ demonstrated exactly how God wants His family to live their lives. As part of His sacrifice, He became the perfect example and willingly and fully submitted Himself to whatever the Father wanted Him to do. Whatever God the Father wanted Christ to do, that is exactly what He did. He lived His entire earthly life, every moment of it, every day of His life, and every breath in complete and utter dependence on God the Father. He lived in utter faith, obedience, and dependence on His Father. Some of the verses that demonstrate this are as follows and include something else that is indescribable. The depth of this is staggering.

[John 5:30](#) - **³⁰I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.**

[John 5:36](#) - **³⁶But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish - the very works that I do - bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.**

[John 6:38-40](#) - **³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

[John 8:28-29](#) - **²⁸Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”**

In each of these verse there is another aspect of this eternal sacrifice that has not yet been addressed. It was not just that God the Son loved us and wanted to have fellowship with us, but also that **God the Father is the One who initiated this salvific work**. In eternity past

God the Father knew exactly what the virgin birth would cost His Son. God the Father loved those who were unworthy so much that He was willing to allow His only Son to forever become the God-man in order that those who deserved nothing but eternal judgment might personally live, that they might have eternal life, and that they might be able to have an eternal fellowship with the Godhead that is totally, completely, and judicially without sin or condemnation. God the Father knew exactly what the cost and the suffering and the sacrifice would involve. His Son would descend from His exalted place and become the God-man, Jesus Christ. Personally, I am overwhelmed and astounded at how much God loved the unlovable and the extent to which He would go in order to save them. It crushes my pride and arrogance to even think that I have ever “sacrificed” anything for Christ.

In light of the profound reality of Jesus’ full deity as God the Son, His Incarnation becomes the most profound humiliation possible. For Him to change in any way or to any degree, required that He descend, and that He take on a different and inferior form. Without forsaking His being God or diminishing His eternal “Godness”, the Creator was taking on the “form” of the created. The Infinite was becoming finite; the sinless was taking sin on Himself. The very heart of redemption is revealed in [II Corinthians 5:21](#),

²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

In [Philippians 2:6\(b\)](#), it states that God the Son,
...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.

Though He continued to fully exist as God after the virgin birth, He refused to hold on to His divine rights as God. I.e., He never used His power or authority for His personal advantage. He could have, but He did not. He could have called down ten thousand angels at the cross, but He chose not to exercise that divine attribute. That was the choice that the Incarnation set into motion. He was willing to suffer the worst possible humiliation rather than demand the greatest honor,

privilege, and glory that were rightfully His. Nor did He use His sovereign powers to oppose the purpose of why He was on the earth. As the second person of the Godhead, He still retained all of the rights, privileges, and incommunicable attributes of the Godhead which He would never lose.

The Revised Standard Version translates [Philippians 2:6 \(b\)](#) this way,

...did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.

What that translation draws out is the fact that because Jesus possessed “equality” with God, He was not holding on to or clinging to that “equality”. He chose not to cling to His favored position as the divine Son of God. He could have said, “*I am fully God, and I am not giving any of this up. I am going to hold on to My divine and eternal rights and privileges.*” However, He did not say that at all. To the contrary, He said the very opposite. He did not see His position in the Godhead as a prized possession to be used for Himself. [Philippians 2:7](#) says,

⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

The first phrase, “**made Himself of no reputation**”, comes from the Greek word “*kenoo*” which means to empty completely. In theological terms, this is called the **kenosis**, or the self-emptying. This “emptying” has been a source of great theological misunderstanding because it often gives the impression that what the Second Person of the Trinity did was to “abandon” the very attributes that made Him God. However, that is not at all what took place. He is, has been, and always will be fully God. He has NEVER lost any of His attributes. What He has done is limit the use and power of those attributes unless directed by the Father to do so.

The technical definition of the Greek word “*kenoo*” from [The Word Study Dictionary](#) by Zodhiates means “*to empty oneself, to divest oneself of rightful dignity by descending to an inferior condition*”. Obviously,

being fully God in heaven is much superior to being the God-man on earth. What Jesus Christ “emptied” Himself of were the advantages and privileges that were rightfully His as deity, and in that decision He refused to assert any of these divine attributes and rights on His own behalf. He never chose to use His powers as God the Son for His own advantage and benefit. His voluntary suffering on the cross is the undeniable testimony to the outworking of that decision. He emptied Himself of that privilege, and He chose not to use those eternal privileges that were rightfully His as God the Son. He did not hold on to the power of the Godhead, even though there were plenty of times when He exercised His omnipotence (walking on water, feeding the 5000, etc.). He simply did not assert His power for His own gain and advantage. He did not empty Himself of being God. He will always be fully God. In fact, it is impossible for Him to stop being God. There is no place in Scripture where it says that “God became a man”. What it says is similar to what is given in [Philippians 2:7-8](#) that,

...taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man....

The use of the word “kenoo” in [Philippians 2:7](#) is of great theological importance because it refers to Jesus Christ “emptying” Himself at the time of His Incarnation. It is then that He begins His self-humiliation in v8 which reads,

⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

[Philippians 2:7](#) says that Jesus came “in the likeness of men”. The word for “likeness” refers to that which is made to be like something else, and not just in appearance, but in reality. Jesus became a man in reality, in “likeness”. It was not that He just appeared to be like men, but rather that **He actually became just like us**. He had all of the attributes of humanness. In the virgin birth what happened was that Jesus took upon Himself all of the

frailties, limitations, problems, and suffering that were the inheritance of the Fall. Please do not think of Jesus as less than fully human. He was born of a woman, and in a fleshly body just like anyone else. He ate what they ate, drank what they drank, travelled as they travelled, and wore the clothes they wore. He grew and developed like other children. He became hungry and thirsty; He suffered pain, felt sadness, became tired, and needed sleep. And even though He was completely without personal sin, He was nevertheless “**tempted in all points just as we are**” ([Hebrews 4:15](#)).

In [Philippians 2:6](#), in His pre-incarnate, eternal state, i.e., before the actual Incarnation, He was spoken of as being in the same “**form**” (*morphe*) as God, as being “**equal with God**”. He had to be equal with God the Father to have the same “**form**” as God. But while He was in the “**form of God**” (at the same time, concurrently), He **also** took on the “**form of a bondservant**”, the “**likeness of men**”, and the “**appearance as a man**”. Rather than actually emptying Himself of something, what happened at the virgin birth is that He actually took on something. He was still fully God, but whereas in the past He was in a Spirit form, now He was in the “**likeness of men**”. In every way He appears the same as those He created. He hurts, He hungers, He thirsts, He weeps.

The doctrine of the Incarnation does not say that a new person was formed, that the divine nature and the human nature became united and so formed a new person. It was not that at all. Rather, it was that the second person of the Godhead, the One who was fully God, He became flesh and took on humanness. Prior to the Incarnation He did not have a human nature. After the Incarnation, and forever more, He did. Right now, at the right hand of God the Father, is the God-man Christ Jesus. He is NOT the same as He was before the virgin birth, but is there with “humanness”.

The eternal God took on flesh and appeared in the world as a man. There was nothing that changed in His personality as the Son of God. There was simply a change in the “**form**” in which He appeared. There was a

change in how He manifested Himself, but there was no change in His deity. He was still fully God, and He will always be fully God. Here is the point once again. We must be careful never to say or give the impression that what happened was that God became a man, i.e., that He was no longer God, but was now a man. That is gravely unscriptural and full of error.

The doctrine of the virgin birth at once tells us that a new person did not come into being. Jesus Christ was still the Second Person of the Godhead. It can be illustrated this way: when a husband and wife come together, a child is born. The child is a new person that never existed previously. A new person comes into being. But that is not what happened in the Incarnation. This was not a new being created for the first time. This was still the Son of God, but what happened is that the Son of God took on flesh. He came in the likeness of flesh. [Romans 8:3](#) says,

³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

In the Incarnation, notwithstanding the fact that He was fully God, God the Son chose to take on Himself the essence of a “**bondservant**”, the “**form**” (*morphe*) of a servant. So, in order to be a servant, He had to become a man and appear in the likeness of a man. By doing this He emptied Himself of the proper recognition that He had within the Trinity. When He entered the world, because He was in the form of a man, no one recognized who He was. He took on a form that veiled His deity.

Now, at the virgin birth there are several things that God the Son gave up, or emptied Himself of, in order to initially become like those He would save. What did He actually give up, what did He empty Himself of? First and foremost, **He did not empty Himself of His deity**. That is who He was, and He can never lose His deity. What He emptied Himself of was the exercise of **His privileges** as God.

The first thing He emptied Himself of was His **glory**. He set aside the full expression of His glory and what He truly was. Just think of all of the things that He subjected Himself to and the things that He submitted Himself to in order to become like men. He submitted to being misunderstood, to being denied, to unbelief, to false accusations, to reviling, to being hated, to persecution, to being beaten while blindfolded, to having His beard plucked from His face, to being spit on, and to being crucified. He was defamed, dishonored, discredited, and eventually murdered. [Isaiah 53:3](#) says,

³He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

What He was in heaven in all of His glory, He gave up when He came to earth in the virgin birth. He was surrounded by angels, and now He is surrounded by donkeys and sheep. It is not that He forfeited His glory, but simply that it was veiled and hidden in His humanity. In fact, in heaven His glory may actually be greater simply because we will visually see ALL that He gave up to become the God-man and our Savior.

His glory was briefly manifested to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, but it was not witnessed again until His resurrection and ascension – and then only by those who belonged to Him. True believers are the only ones who see His glory. When talking to an unbeliever, they do not see anything in Christ – nothing. In fact, He is a nuisance to them, someone they do not even want to talk about. Only a true believer is able to see the glory of who Jesus Christ is. In fact, it is a good way for someone to know and understand if they are a believer. If Christ is not eminently glorious to them, then the grave possibility exists that they may never have been saved.

Secondly, He emptied Himself of the **sovereign position** He had as God. Once again, He did not empty Himself of His deity, but He did give up His Trinitarian position as He had known it prior to the virgin birth. Before the Incarnation He functioned in the Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He had

eternally existed in the throne room of God as fully God. However, as the God-Man, He was now on earth, born in a manger, living in a poor village as the son of a carpenter and not as the Son of God in heaven. After His resurrection, He went to heaven in a resurrection body as our great High Priest, but not as He previously was prior to the virgin birth. The prevailing but mistaken notion is that Jesus Christ became the same after His ascension into heaven as He was before the virgin birth, but that is not accurate. He is not there as He previously was, and that is exactly the point relating to the indescribable sacrifice that He made.

Thirdly, He emptied Himself of His **divine authority**. Listen to how He expressed it in [John 5:30](#),

³⁰I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

He did not stop being omniscient, or omnipotent, or immutable, but what He did do was that **He chose NOT to exercise the full limit of those attributes during His earthly life and ministry**. He said, “*I will only do what the Father shows Me. My desire is to do what My Father wants Me to do, and what He asks Me to do, and that is what I will do – no matter what the cost to me personally.*” He chose not to use His divine attributes unless His Father directed Him to do so. He completely waived His rights as God the Son.

An important point to understand is that God the Son had NO obligations to any of humanity. He was not under some kind of divine constraint where He had to do anything salvific in nature. He owed men nothing. To the contrary, they owed Him everything. However, in His divine sovereignty He fully understood man’s condition, his plight, and his utter hopelessness apart from Him. He had to become like men in order to save them. And what He chose to do was to become a “**bondservant**”. A bondservant owned nothing, not even the clothes on

his back. Jesus owned no land, no house, no gold or jewels. He owned no business, no boat, and no horse. In fact, He had to borrow a donkey for His journey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Even the tomb He was buried in was a borrowed tomb. He refused any advantages. The One who had created all things claimed nothing as His own. A bondservant was required to carry other people’s burdens. And Jesus willingly carried the burden that no other man could carry – the sin-burden for all who would believe. [Isaiah 53:6](#) says,

And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

There was no one else on whom God the Father could place man’s sins. No one was available. He could not have done it in heaven, for the sacrifice for sin had to be accomplished on earth by someone who had lived a sinless life on earth as a man. Jesus simply and completely waived all of His rights as the Son of God and became a bond-servant so that He could be that divine sacrifice.

[Matthew 20:28](#) says,

²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

All of this needs to be seen as a **move downward** – a move from heaven to earth to a cross to a grave. It is a great move, but it is still downward to a lesser position. It is the greatest sacrifice that has ever been made – the act of God becoming the God-man, forever.

Of extreme importance in the discussion is the fact that **the Incarnation was permanent**. The Son of God of eternity past is today the God-man in heaven, and will be that way forever. Once again, Wayne Grudem in his book [Systematic Theology](#) states this,

“All of these texts indicate that Jesus did not temporarily become man, but that his divine nature was permanently united to his human nature, and he lives forever not just as the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, but also as Jesus, the man who was born of Mary, and as Christ, the Messiah and Savior of his people. Jesus will remain fully God and fully man, yet one person, forever.”

R.C. Sproul states, “*The human nature of Christ is now in heaven. It is still perfectly united to the divine nature.*” That is not a small thing. It is the sacrifice of Christ that is the heart of the virgin birth – and until someone understands what it was that He actually became in order to be their Saviour, they will never fully appreciate their salvation. Why is this so important to understand? It is because if someone does not genuinely appreciate or understand what Christ has accomplished on their behalf, then in all likelihood, their willingness to live their life for Him, their willingness to yield their life to Him, and their submission to His Lordship will not be seen as that important or meaningful. This is not something mystical, but rather one of the most important truths that can be studied. Theology is for living. It is the depth of these truths that God uses to actually transform the believer into Christlikeness.

At this point it is important to address the issue as to why Jesus did not have a sinful nature, and that is a question that is directly related to the doctrine of the virgin birth and what actually transpired in that event. When Paul speaks of Jesus coming to live as a man, he is very careful not to say that he took on sinful flesh, but rather he says that God sent His own Son in the “likeness of sinful flesh”, and for sin, or on account of sin, because of sin. [Romans 8:3](#) says,

³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

He was outwardly and visibly the same, but He was inwardly and fundamentally very different simply because He did not have a sinful nature. [II Corinthians 5:21](#) says that He “knew no sin”. [Hebrews 4:15](#) says that “He is yet without sin”. [I Peter 1:19](#) calls Him a lamb “without blemish and without spot”. [II Peter 1:22](#) says,

²²“Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth”

When Jesus died, [I Peter 3:18](#) declares,

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God....

[I John 3:5](#) declares,

⁵And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

So, how could Jesus not have a sinful nature? It was because of the Incarnation, because of the virgin birth. It was because the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and not Joseph. In [Luke 1:35](#), the angel answers a question that Mary had asked and says,

³⁵And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

The Son of God was given His humanness by Mary, but because the Holy Spirit came upon her, Christ fully retained His sinless divine nature. He was not born like every other person. If He had been born in the ordinary way of a father and a mother, then surely He would have been like every other person. He would have been in the direct line of Adam, and if that had been the case, then He would not have been the God-man, but simply a man, and a sinful man at that.

The divine nature could not unite, it could not bond or merge with anything that was sinful. I.e., that which was sinless could not unite with that which was sinful. The divine nature could not unite with the sinful nature. Paul addressed this in [Romans 7:21-25](#),

²¹I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²²For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

The “law of sin in his members” is what Jesus Christ did not have because of the virgin birth. That is what

all men were given though Adam – the law of sin in their members. However, Jesus did not unite with this law of sin. He united with a physical body, but NOT with a sinful nature.

Now, it is important to understand that simple physical humanness is not sinful, and that is what Jesus Christ was given by Mary – humanness. It includes all that makes someone human – personality, eyes, a mind, hair, feet, hands, the ability to think and reason, etc. The Son of God received his **humanness** from his mother because she was the only source for it. **An earthly father was not involved**. What he retained from Mary was a physical body only – legs, arms, feet, hands, eyes, ears, speech, feelings – but not the sinful nature which would have come from Adam.

In [Romans 8:3](#), man's flesh is called "sinful flesh", but why? It is because of Adam's sin, and the life of Adam is transmitted to all humanity through blood. Human flesh can only be sustained by blood. If there is no blood, the flesh dies. The life is in the blood. So, if the root source is tainted, if the root source Adam who is the progenitor of the human race is corrupted and polluted, then what he passes on is corrupted and polluted. All men come from what [Acts 17:26](#) called "one blood" – Adam's blood. [Romans 5:12](#) says,

¹²**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin (both spiritual death and physical death) and thus death spread to all men....**

Christ could partake of Adam's flesh which is not inherently sinful in and of itself without the blood. Hands are not sinful, eyes are not sinful, and feet are not sinful in and of themselves. So, Christ partook of flesh, but He **did not** partake of Adam's blood – and that is critical to understand. He did not have one drop of Adam's blood in his veins, and therefore He did not genetically partake of the life of Adam, which is in the blood. And therefore, He did not share in Adam's sin as the rest of humanity.

The whole plan of redemption rests on the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of **innocent** blood, there is no remission of sin ([Hebrews 9:22](#)). His blood had to be different than Adam's blood. It had to have a different **source**. [Acts 20:28](#) says,

²⁸**Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**

[Romans 5:9](#),

⁹**Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.**

[Ephesians 1:7](#),

⁷**In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.**

[Ephesians 2:13](#),

¹³**But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

[Colossians 1:14](#),

¹⁴**in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**

[Hebrews 9:12](#),

¹²**Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

[Hebrews 10:19](#),

¹⁹**Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,**

[I Peter 1:18-19](#),

¹⁸**knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

[Revelation 1:5](#),

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

There is a fundamental principle found in [Leviticus 17:11](#),

¹¹**For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make**

atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

Human life is in the blood. Remove a man's blood and he will die. Stop the heart from pumping blood to the body, and it will die. Physical life is in the blood. Once the blood fails to reach the different cells and members of the body, the person promptly dies. Physical life is in the blood.

All men are related by blood, and specifically the blood of Adam. We all have a common origin in Adam – no matter our race, Jew or Gentile, pagan or cultured. All men are related by the blood of Adam to one another. [Acts 17:26](#) says,

²⁶And He has made from one blood (Adam's blood) every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth....

The one thing which relates all men to one another is the blood that flows through their veins. All men are of "**one blood**", and that "**one blood**" came from Adam. It is important to understand that **it is the blood that is required to make atonement for the soul.** In the same way that the original sin of the First Adam corrupted the blood of the entire human race to follow, so the pure sinless blood of the Last Adam makes atonement for the sin of the world. The Hebrew word for "**make atonement**" means to cleanse, disannul, forgive, pardon, purge (away), put off, and to reconcile. So, if man's sins are to be forgiven, pardoned, and put away, then it has to be through divinely innocent blood.

All men are of the seed of Adam. All are descendants of Adam. Jesus Christ, however, is the only one ever referred to as the "**seed**" of the woman, and that is in [Genesis 3:15](#) when God was talking to the serpent and referring specifically to Christ.

¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

So why did God refer to Christ as "**her Seed**"? It was because He did not come from Adam, but was to be born of a virgin. He was born of a woman, and thus His blood did not contain the **seed** of Adam, or in theological terms, the **sin** of Adam.

What medical science has determined in recent years is that the blood which flows in the arteries of an unborn baby is **NOT** derived from the mother, but is produced independently of the mother within the fetus. It comes directly from the father. The blood does not begin to develop until the male sperm has actually entered into the ovum and the fetus begins to develop. The mother provides the fetus that carries all of the nutritive elements for the growing of the little body, but all of the blood which forms within that baby is formed in the embryo itself. From the time of conception to the time of birth, not one single drop of blood ever passes from the mother to the child. Theologically the implications of this are absolutely staggering. God knew this before He ever created man. He fully understood that the blood of the unborn was uniquely a by-product of the father and not the mother, and so there was the necessity for the virgin birth and the transfer of divine blood to the sinless Son of God within the womb.

So, in order to produce a sinless man who would still be genealogically the son of Adam, God provided a way whereby Christ would have a human body derived from Adam, but have divine blood derived from a completely separate and unique non-human source. It is plainly taught in Scripture that Jesus partook of human flesh, but without partaking of Adam's blood, and thus not partaking of the effect of Adam's blood on the human race. [Hebrews 2:14](#) says,

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

Notice that the human children are said to be "**partakers of flesh and blood**". That is how all men

have originated. The nature of Jesus Christ, however, is NOT that of flesh and blood. Man's is, but His is not. He did not originate with flesh and blood, but man did. **Men were created, He was not.** The word for "**partaken**" in this passage means to share fully. In theological terms it means that all men share fully in Adam's nature, and that they have been made partakers of Adam's sinfulness. However, when speaking of Jesus, it says that He "**shared in the same**". The word for "**shared in the same**", or "**took part**" (as it could be translated) as applied to Christ, is an entirely different word from the word "**partaken**" as applied to the children. What the phrase "**shared in the same**" implies is that the person has taken part in something completely outside of themselves. The word means to take hold of something that is not naturally of one's own kind. So, Jesus Christ willingly took on something that was not naturally a part of Him, but he never actually partook of Adam's blood, and therefore did not inherit Adam's sinful nature. He only took the humanness, the flesh part, whereas the blood was the result of the supernatural conception in the virgin birth. Christ remained sinless, and therefore His blood was pure, uncontaminated, spotless, unblemished, not corrupted, and innocent. To be conceived by the Holy Spirit was the ONLY way that this could be accomplished. The Holy Spirit was the one who contributed the blood, and it is sinless blood, divine blood, and precious blood. Jesus' body was from Mary, but His blood was from the Holy Spirit. The sinless, supernatural blood was the only price of redemption that God could accept.

In every way, the virgin birth is a mystery – God in human flesh. This is the supreme act of God. Man was entirely excluded, and Joseph is there to remind us of that fact. It was entirely the work of God – entirely, even before the foundation of the world and before time began. So, may we never lose sight of the fact that it all happened so that sinful men like ourselves might be saved and that our sins might be forgiven. **The Son of God was made in the**

"likeness of men" so that men might be made in the **likeness of God**.



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Email: admin@wlalwcc.org
Web Site: www.wlalwcc.org