

The Happiest Time of the Year
The Joy of Incarnation

Introduction

Why do we celebrate the birth of a child on Christmas? Yes, He became our Savior who paid with His own life the penalty for our sins, but it is more than that.

John 1:14

And 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 what is called the ‘incarnation’ – Deity becoming flesh.
- I used to think that the message here was simply Presence – ‘I’m here for you.’ If that was true, Jesus’ entire earthly ministry would have been simplistic “*I’m here for you*” statements, like much of modern preaching. Presence and acceptance IS important but more than that is needed.
- So why does the writer call God “the Word” here? Why not just say, “God became flesh”?
- The Greek word John uses here is *logos* – Greek for truth, message or idea
- The Word becoming flesh = the *embodiment* of an idea or truth.
- Like a father or a friend who says they care about you versus being there for you. Love has to be *modeled* to be *believed*.
- “Actions speak louder than words” is true.
- So Jesus was *born* among us and *lived* among us to express some things about God *to* us. Otherwise, He would have been born in obscurity and lived in obscurity before dying for our sins.

So what did God express by becoming human?!

- *And 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. (John 1:14)*
- *For the law was given through Moses, but **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)*
- The difference between the New Covenant and the Old is not just the Law vs. grace, but grace and truth.
- So the life and ministry of Jesus is **a constant back and forth between truth and grace.**
 - Forgiveness of the worst sinners when they repent – adulterer, tax collector, thief, murderer, etc.
 - Healing the untouchables – lepers.
 - And yet, penetrating truth: “*You have heard it said...But I say to you...*” – murder, adultery, revenge, etc.

Why does this cause us joy?

3 John 2-4

² *Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.* ³ *For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is*

in you, just as you walk in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

- Truth creates joy. You can always tell when you're walking in truth instead of a lie, because of inward joy. Not a temporary high – inward joy.
- Truth is not realized until it is embodied (becomes flesh).
 - This is why a lot of “Christians” don't have real joy – they are not living out what they say they believe.
 - *How are we going to make it? vs. God is my Source*
 - *“I'm financially independent”*
 - *I'm too tired to go to church vs. Jesus is on the throne, I'm worshipping Him on Sunday, and now I'm ready for Monday!*
 - *Everyone in Washington is corrupt vs. I'm an active citizen but my ultimate hope is not in this world*
 - *No one really loves me vs. I'm never really alone!*
 - We rejoice when truth is embodied – lived out.
 - If you're not seeing that around, become a part of a life giving church.

I want to end on the passage I've visited several times in this series

1 John 1:1-4

*That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled**, concerning the Word of life—² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ **And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.***

Here's the real Christmas message:

This God of grace and truth lived among us, died to liberate us from our sin, came BACK to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit, and is WITH us now!