

The Wednesday Word, Dec. 21, 2011: When God Became a Man

I really enjoy the Christmas season. Now, don't get me wrong, I don't believe for one moment that December 25th was Jesus' actual birthday and yes I agree with you that Christmas is way too commercialised and it's true that there isn't a red nosed reindeer to be found anywhere in the Bible - but I still like the idea of remembering the birth of Christ and singing about it.

At the heart of the Christmas season, we have the wonderful message of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. But who is He? The prophet Isaiah takes the guess work out of this matter for in Isaiah 9:6-7 we read,

‘- 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.’

This scripture is one of the most translucent declarations of the identity of Christ. Here we see clearly His dual nature (His humanity and deity). By the way, if we don't understand that Christ Jesus was both fully God and fully man, we will get confused not understanding that sometimes He speaks as God and at other times speaks as man. The child who was born is both the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father. Faith embraces this fact.

John Owen, the great Puritan says,

“---That the Mighty God should be a child born and the Everlasting Father a Son given unto us may well entitle him to the name Wonderful”

John Owen: The Works of John Owen: Volume One: Chapter 3: p47 The Banner of Truth Trust
So great is the mystery of Christ that He is at the same time the child born and the mighty God! We may not understand how He can be both, but Isaiah plainly states the fact of the matter. Look at your Saviour and worship: He is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father. You have to change the text (as indeed some have) to avoid the grand conclusion that Christ is indeed our God. It was our God who came to the manger. It was our God who purchased us with His blood.

Furthermore, do you see how the text declares Christ's eternity? Only God is eternal. Everything else has a beginning. But Christ is called the “Everlasting” Father! Some have rendered this “the Father of Eternity” while others say it should be translated “Author of Eternity.” Call it any way you like, it doesn't matter, His Godhead is proved.

Spurgeon throws some excellent light on the eternity of Christ on his sermon on this passage saying:

“He (Christ) is here pictured as the source and Father of eternity. Jesus is not the child of eternity but the Father of it. Eternity did not bring him forth from its mighty bowels, but he brought forth eternity. Independent, self-sustained, uncreated, eternal existence is with Jesus our Lord and God.

CHS: His Name, The Everlasting Father: Sermon # 724

As gospel driven believers, the incarnation is such a vital part of our message that we don't even have to wait until Christmas to mention and celebrate it. No indeed, in the gospel, we continually remember the wonderful truth of the birth of Christ. The good news is that the eternal God came here Himself and did something about our predicament. The Eternal One took on Himself flesh and blood and lived, died and rose again on our behalf. The Scriptures are clear on this matter. It doesn't, therefore, have to be a white Christmas this year to make us happy for our hearts are already rejoicing in the incarnation.

And that's the Gospel Truth!