

Christmas LJC Birth OT 09-12-13b

Let's resume our investigation of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a great season for so doing. And as I mentioned at the close of our initial session, putting these truths into perspective and looking at what the Bible actually does emphasize is always good for our application – to put the emphasis where God puts the emphasis, to concentrate on those things that are salient and are manifest and made obvious and emphatic in the Scripture.

That's really going to be a safe place to concentrate. And what does the Bible say about the coming of the Lord Jesus? It was prophesied as early as the Garden, and interestingly you have a hint, you have a suggestion that there is going to be something perhaps unique about the birth of Christ in that account because back in Genesis 3.15, what does it say? I will put enmity, O serpent, between you and the woman. I will put enmity between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. And the concept of the seed of the woman is very contradictory in the mind of an ancient Near Eastern reader or listener because seed is associated with a man, ever has been. And to talk about the seed of the woman is really a converse proposition, and yet this is where it begins.

The earliest prophecy of the coming of the one who will be victorious over Satan is given in Genesis 3. There is going to be enmity between the serpent and the woman. And we attempted to tackle some of the concomitants of this when we went through Genesis many years ago, but it is by no means exhausted. You could spend quite a bit of time just thinking, your eye is drawn down to he shall bruise your head, you shall bruise his heel, and you start thinking about the Lord Jesus.

In our retrospective stance it is easy for us to see that, but just talk about the first phrase there, I will put enmity between you and the woman. If there was a period after that, how much time and emphasis have we put on that? Enmity between you, is this just women are going to be afraid of snakes for all the rest of history, or obviously there is more to it than that. The sentient consciousness whom God himself is addressing is obviously not a mere creature.

This is a creature who is going to have a seed, have a following, have those who follow after and are like him down through history. Seed means succeeding generations clearly, but before that I will put enmity between you and the woman. Well, the woman at first blush is Eve, and actually I don't have time to pursue that, but you can think about it.

Between your seed and her seed, and in your new King James, your seed and her seed, the second word there has capital S, because obviously later portions of the Bible refer back and say, Paul refers to this and he says he does not say seeds as of many, but seed as of one. He specifically says this is an allusion to the coming of the Lord Jesus. You have similarly the promise to Abraham in Genesis 17, where God tells Abraham in verse 6, actually Abram, he changes his name to Abraham in verse 5, I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make

nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you and their generations for an everlasting covenant to be God to you and so on. And of course Galatians 3.16 is the place where Paul refers back to Genesis 17, Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and to your seed who is Christ.

Now again, that concept we closed with last hour. Was God speaking exclusively and solely about the Lord Jesus when he talked to Abraham about his seed? Is it Jesus that is as multitudinous as the sand on the beach and the stars in the sky? No. What is Paul doing? We have to shake ourselves loose from our post-scientific, literalistic, materialistic, single meaning, it has to be literal and it has to be mundane and it has to be physical view and recognize the way the Bible speaks and the way biblical authors and prophets and apostles interpret Scripture, their model is a model for us.

And Paul says, look, there is significance in what God says to Abraham about seed singular and there are multiple significances. For example, there are people who try to argue today that because Muslims believe in Allah as the God of Abraham, they believe in the same God that Jews and Christians believe in, therefore Jews and Christians and Muslims are all party to God's salvation. Well, this is faulty.

And you can go to the same passage and say, there are not many seeds of Abraham, in Isaac shall thy seed be called, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. There is one name and it's Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not named in Judaism as the Savior and He is not named in Islam as the Savior.

And those people are L-O-S-T, lost. A lot of people try to make an argument and want to believe that, well, but the Jews, you know, they're still waiting for the Messiah, they're believing in prospect, aren't they saved? No, they are lost. L-O-S-T, lost.

They are headed for the lake of fire. I don't care if they are a first generation descendant of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. If they don't believe in the Lord Jesus, they are lost.

It makes no difference if you're Jewish. It makes no difference if you believe the Torah. If you believed the Torah, you would believe in the Lord Jesus.

And it's been true for 2,000 years. There is no special status associated with being a Jew in terms of God's salvation, God's blessing. The fact of their existence is entirely secular.

It is entirely prospective. God will rebuild a people for Himself out of these ancestors, but it says nothing about them or their salvation, that they are around as a national, cultural, racial entity. You can hardly use the word racial anymore, but they are descendants of the people of God.

They are not the people of God. They are descended from and related to the people of God.

Jews in this age, there is neither Jew nor Greek.

It makes no difference. You either believe in Christ, he that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. It is that simple.

And you get no special pass. You get no exception from lineage. It is the seed as of one, and it is faith in Christ.

And this is ultimately the point that Paul is making. But, the point is there is prophecy, there is emphasis in Scripture about the coming of the Lord Jesus, and He is prophesied to be the fulfillment of those early promises that there will be a human descendant. He is the seed of the woman in Genesis 3. He is the seed of Abraham in Genesis 17.

He is the Son of David in later prophetic Scriptures. Daniel chapter 9, the coming of Messiah the Prince. You remember at the end of Genesis where there is the Genesis 49.10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the people.

So it starts as the seed of the woman, seed of Abraham, seed of Judah. I don't have time to review all of the Scriptures. Paul summarizes the thrust of the Old Testament prophecies in Romans 1.3 when he says, Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.

That is as much as Paul feels like he needs to say about the birth of the Lord Jesus. He is born of the seed of David according to the flesh, Romans 1.3. And that is enough. The whole book of Romans.

It is Romans where he talks about, Whereas by one man sin unto the world, and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men for all have sinned. In Adam all die, and Christ shall all be made alive. All of these things and there is no explicit mention of the virgin birth.

He says he is born of the seed of David. That is as much as you need to know. He is the last Adam.

In Adam all die, and Christ shall all be made alive. But it is prophesied. It is alluded to many times in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Even some that you are not as familiar with like Haggai 2.9. The glory of the latter temple shall be greater than the former, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts. That there is a time when the return of the house of David and the house of God will be greater than what it was formerly.

Malachi chapter 3 of course. I will send my messenger. He will prepare the way before me.

The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. Even the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight. Behold he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

And he goes on to talk about the forerunner. Elijah will come and turn the hearts of the sons and the fathers toward each other and so on. And there is an indication of the divinity of the coming one.

In passages like Malachi chapter 3 and Isaiah. Unto us, here is your most famous Christmas passage probably. In fact, 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 Khaled.

Wonderful counselor. What? The mighty God. The prince of peace.

The everlasting father. Unto us a son and a child comes. And he is the mighty God and the everlasting father.

If that is not a prophecy of the incarnation of the divine God and the hypostatic union. He is a son and a child born to us who is the mighty God and the everlasting father. That is Old Testament scripture.

So there is abundant testimony throughout scripture to the status of the Lord Jesus as the God man. And the virgin birth is in some ways incidental to that truth. It is certainly related.

It is certainly important. But it is not a requirement to understand in order to accept the nature of the Lord Jesus as Savior. Jeremiah 23 is another passage.

Old Testament prophecy. The days are coming says the Lord that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness. A king shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell safely. Now this is his name by which he will be called. The Lord.

Our righteousness. Jeremiah 23 verse 6. This is the name by which he will be called. The Lord.

This son of David, this branch of righteousness will be called the Lord. It just doesn't get much plainer than that. The additional nature of the coming one is indicated in other prophecies.

We are told that he will be a king in passages such as the one I just gave you from Jeremiah. There are certainly allusions in the Psalms. You can see it in Psalm 2 and Psalm 45.

Isaiah 9, 6, and 7 which is what I just quoted. Unto us a child is born, etc. Yet at the same time he will be the suffering servant.

Isaiah 53. Despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

We hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we did not esteem him. You have the fact that he will be a light to the Gentiles.

Again, Isaiah is famous for this. Isaiah 42, 6. I the Lord have called you. This is the Messiah in righteousness.

I will hold your hand. I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people as a light to the Gentiles. Isaiah 60 verse 3. The Gentiles shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising.

The fact that he is growing up as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground. No form or comeliness that we should desire him. He has no beauty that attracts us.

He is despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He bears our griefs, carries our sorrows.

We esteem him stricken. He is wounded and bruised for our iniquities and transgressions. By his stripes we are healed.

This is the vicarious atoning nature of the work of Jesus Christ. Who comes in human form and yet he is the Lord. He is God with us.

Emmanuel. He is Yeshua, the one who saves. The deliverer.

We are told in Psalm 22, prophetically through David's words there, that he is going to be a reproach of men and despised by the people and that he is going to have his hands and feet pierced. Isaiah 53 verse 9. He will make his grave with the wicked and the rich at his death because he has done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth. We are told in Deuteronomy that he will be a prophet like unto Moses.

Deuteronomy 18, 18. He will perform priestly functions. Again, we find this in Isaiah.

When his soul is made an offering for sin. Isaiah 53, 10. He is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands in Daniel 2, 44 and 45.

That breaks in pieces and consumes the kingdoms. So there are many important truths, identifying truths, that were easy to recognize in the coming of the Lord Jesus and to see their reflection and their fulfillment in that Old Testament sense. So when you come to the mystery of the Word being made flesh and tabernacling among us, as John says in 1.14 of his Gospel, this doctrine or mystery of the Incarnation is a central and much-emphasized truth.

John, of course, devotes a great portion of his Gospel to that truth. Paul reflects it in 1 Timothy 3.16. For example, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh.

Does Paul understand that the Lord Jesus Christ was God incarnate? Absolutely. God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world and received up in glory. 1 Timothy 3.16. Just as an aside, I've mentioned many times that I think there is a knee-jerk translation of the word angelos, to mean

angel, like in Acts when the girl doesn't open the door for Peter and she thinks it is his angel and its messenger.

I would argue for a similar misunderstanding of 1 Timothy 3.16. 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 and received up in glory. All of these talk about the Incarnation and the intrusion, the eruption, I-R-R-U-P-T-I-O-N, of God into human affairs.

Seen by angels seems oddly out of place in the middle of this list. God the Son was seen by angels before He ever came to earth. He's been seen by angels ever since He went back to the right hand of the Father.

Why would seen by angels be included in Paul's list? What is it that happened when God was manifested in the flesh, justified or vindicated or identified as such by the Holy Spirit, the signs and miracles? Jesus said, if you don't believe these things, you're blaspheming the Spirit because He's the one that is authenticating. His witness testifies. If you don't believe me, Jesus said, believe the works, for they testify of me.

They were done in the power of the Spirit. God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, meaning identified and vindicated and shown to be who He was by the Spirit, seen by messengers, seen by testifiers, message deliverers. These are the apostles, in my view.

These are the disciples. Ye shall be witnesses unto me, Jesus said. And they are the Angeloi, the disciples.

Peter, James, John, these guys are the messengers. Jesus lays great emphasis on the fact that you've been with me from the beginning. You will testify.

Our New Testament is based on the testimony of these Angeloi, preached among the Gentiles. These first generation Jews who were disciples and witnesses of the Lord Jesus testified amongst their brethren and He was preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world and then received up into glory. 1 Timothy 3.16. Romans 8.3, 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.

Now, if you want to give yourself a puzzle to work on, you remember our memory verse, did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant, came in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient. That same idea, coming in the likeness, is here in Romans 8.3. God did what the law could not do by sending His own Son in the likeness, not just of flesh, in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin. He condemned sin in the flesh.

These are the important truths. Why is it that the Lord Jesus can be our substitute? By the way, the passage I am comparing Romans 8.3 to is Philippians 2.6-8, which is a part of our long Philippians 2 memory section, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal

with God, or did not consider equality with God a thing to be seized and held on to, like a robber would of his plunder, made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men, in the likeness of sinful flesh. These are the emphatic truths related to the Incarnation.

Because of these, you have the word made flesh in John 1.14, dwelling among us so that we behold His glory. It is a central truth. The virgin birth is not put forward as a central truth, but remember 1 John 4.2, By this you know the Spirit of God.

Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. This, of course, puts to rest a lot of your docetic and other Gnostic heresies that said that Jesus was not really in the flesh, that He wasn't human, He was an apparition, He was a hallucination. Other versions of this heresy say that there was just a normal man and then the Spirit of God came down and He became the Messiah long enough to die on the cross and then the Spirit left Him.

All of your Gnostics think that anything material is corrupt and it's only the ephemeral, ethereal, insubstantial things that can be righteous. Therefore, you don't have to worry about what you do in your body because that doesn't really count, because all of the flesh is corrupt and it's just a bunch of nonsense. Guys tried to write this up and pass it off as truth in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

It was rightly rooted out from Christianity and now liberal scholarship wants to go back and say, oh, well, this was all a part of Christianity until it was weeded out. It was never a part of Christianity. It was never a part of the teaching of the apostles.

They would love to make it so and it's another fabrication and fallacious argument. Hebrews 2, verse 14. What is important about Christmas? What is important about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that we celebrate on this occasion? Hebrews 2, verse 14.

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same, so that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Because we partake of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same. The author of Hebrews, who I think is Paul, doesn't go into the details of how he partook, but he did partake.

He shared in the same, so that through his death. Now, what does it tell you about the death that Christ died? Have you heard or had contact with the idea that Jesus died spiritually for our sins? It was his spiritual death on the cross that saves us? That's what I was taught when I was growing up. What do you do with Hebrews 2, verse 14? Inasmuch as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in flesh and blood, so that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death.

That doesn't track if we're talking about a spiritual death as the means of salvation. Christ bore our sins in his spiritual essence on the tree. Is that what it says? Christ bore our sins in his own

body on the tree.

The incarnation, the coming of the God-man as our Savior and our mediator and our substitutionary atoning sacrifice is central, a central truth of Scripture, to which the virgin birth contributes. But of which that particular detail is not a central part. Hence the absence of emphasis, the absence of mention of it elsewhere in the New Testament.

2 John 7. I don't have to give a chapter because it's just one chapter essentially. 2 John 7. Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

Lots of emphasis on the central truth of the incarnation. This is why we have the emphasis in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke on the humanity of the Lord Jesus. Turn with me, and this will be my closing thought I think, to Luke 3, the genealogy.

Many more things we could say, but we'll finish up with this. After the narratives that begin that Gospel, the first two chapters, you come to chapter 3 and move down to verse 23. Jesus Himself began His ministry at about 30 years of age, being as was supposed the Son of Joseph, the Son of Heli, the Son of Mathath, the Son of Levi, the Son of Melchi, the Son of Jannah, the Son of Joseph, the Son of Mattathiah, the Son of Amos, the Son of Nahum, the Son of Esli, the Son of Naggai, the Son of Maath, the Son of Mattathiah, the Son of... You know, they don't read this at Christmas candlelight services very often, and it's a shame.

Let me point out, and I would read all the way through this just on the principle of the thing, but you know my point. But if you don't mind marking your Bible, I'll show you something interesting that you might want to mark. Jesus Himself began His ministry at about 30 years of age, being as was supposed.

That's a real interesting word in Greek, presumed to be. And if you want to do a little exercise, look that up in Strong's and see where else it is used. And there is a presumption, not necessarily factual.

That's what that word is used for. But you notice in your New King James there, they do a good job of distinguishing for you what exists in the text using normal type and what does not exist in the text using italics. Notice how a lot of these Son of, Son of, the Son is in italics.

Let's do a little exercise here. Let's begin at the beginning there in verse 23. Jesus Himself began... Notice His ministry at is in italics.

Jesus Himself began, and will supply at least at, about 30 years of age, being as was supposed, the Son of Joseph. And notice Son of is the real... There is an actual word there. You have *Hwios* in the Greek text.

He was supposed to be the *Hwios* of Joseph. Notice Heli, Son, is in italics, because *Hwios* is not present there. But Heli is the *Hwios* of Mathat.

You have Hwios in there. So let's assume for the sake of argument that Heli is Mary's father. This is the, I think, pretty much the prevailing view that we have here in Luke, the genealogy of Christ through Mary.

You look up in your New King James, that's what this is labeled, and I think it's correct. So operating on that conclusion, He was supposed to be the Hwios of Joseph. But in fact, He is of Heli.

This is just a genitive. We'd say a genitive of source or some such. He is of Heli.

Heli is the Hwios of Mathat, right? So circle the Son of right there next to Mathat. Now we're going to do... I love this being an English major. We're going to do some math.

We're going to count. Son of Levi, that's a missing Hwios there, right? Son of Melchi, that's a missing Hwios. Son of Jana, that's a missing Hwios.

Son of Joseph, that's a missing Hwios. But when you get to verse 25, Son of Mattathiah, Hwios is present again, right? Do you see it? You've got Son of Mathat in verse 24, then you've got Italic Son, Italic Son, Italic Son, Italic Son, and then you've got Hwios again in verse 25. So how many have we gone there? If Mathat is there, then Levi is one, Melchi is two, Jana is three, Joseph is four, Mattathiah, at the fifth mark, we've got another Hwios, right? So circle that one.

Then, continuing in verse 25, Son of Amos, that's Italic, Son of Nahum, that's Italic, Son of Esli, that's Italic, Son of Nagai, that's Italic. Get to verse 26, Son of Maath. Circle that.

We've gone another five generations, and we've got Hwios. Then you keep going, Son of Mattathiah, Italic, Son of Semei, Italic, Son of Joseph, Italic, Son of Judah, Italic, Son of Joannes. We went another five, and now we've got Hwios again in the Greek text.

Keep going, Son of Resa, Italic, Son of Zerubbabel, Italic, Son of Sheltiel, Italic, Son of Neri, Italic. Verse 28, Son of Melchi, we're back to Hwios, another five generations. Isn't that interesting? Every five generations we get Hwios.

Then, Son of Adi, Italic, Son of Kossam, Italic, Son of Elmodam, Italic, Son of Ur, Italic. Then in verse 29, Son of Jose, we've got Hwios. Interestingly, another five generations back.

Then, Son of Eleazar, Son of Jorim, Son of Mattath, Son of Levi, all Italics. Verse 30, Son of Simeon, there's Hwios again, another exactly five generations. Then, Son of Judah, Italic, Son of Joseph, Italic, Son of Jonan, Italic, Son of Eliakim, Italic.

And at the fifth, just as we begin to expect, here's the Son of Meleah, and it's Hwios. Son of Menon, Son of Mattathias, Son of Nathan, Son of David, Son of Jesse, Son of Obed, Son of Boaz, Son of Salmon, Son of Nashan, and all of a sudden we skipped. We didn't get a Hwios where we should have.

Where should we have had, following this five pattern that's been consistently going back,

where should we have had another Hwios? Son of David. And we didn't. Nor did we have one at Son of Jesse.

Nor did we have one at Obed or Boaz or Salmon or Nashan. You've got to go all the way up to Amminadab before you get another Hwios. So, how many is that? We had Meleah, and then we went, Menon is one, Mattathias two, Nathan is three, David is four, Jesse is five, Obed is six, Boaz is seven, Salmon is eight, Nashan is nine, and at ten, at Amminadab, here we've got a Hwios again.

So, actually I think at Jesse we would have expected to have a Son of, and that's the missing Hwios, is at the beginning of verse 32. So at Amminadab we get a Hwios, and we're kind of back on solid ground here. We take four steps to Ram, Hezron, Perez, Judah, and at number five, Jacob, there's Hwios.

Then Isaac, Abraham, Terah, Nahor, and you get to Serug, five back, and there's another Hwios. Then we've got Reu, Peleg, Eber, Shelah, Canaan, Arphaxad, Shem, Noah, Lamech, and all the way back to Methuselah, and we've skipped another Hwios in the chain there. Then you have Enoch, Jared, Mahalal, Canaan, and then Enosh, you get a Hwios, and that's the end of the Hwios.

Seth, Adam, and God are all of. So is there a significance to this? Of course there is. What is the significance? That is the question.

And since I only discovered this this morning, I haven't totally developed my understanding of it. But one thing I will suggest to you is, what is the number five always associated with in the Bible? Remember our study of the significance of numbers? What is the number five? What did Moses give Israel? The Pentateuch? The five books of the law? Remember when we talked about the five loaves and the two fishes? You've got the law, the prophets, and the writings. Symbolically speaking, this is Jesus distributing the Word.

He is the Word incarnate. He is the bread of life. He is bringing the message from God the Father, and the quantity of that which is rejected and not accepted and consumed is a reflection of the spiritual status of the crowd.

How many baskets did you take up? Do you not yet understand? Five is... How many commandments were there? There were two tablets of how many commandments? Five and five. Five related to God, your vertical relationship. Five related to man, your horizontal relationship.

It's the number of God's dealings with Israel through the law, right? Where does the pattern of five break? It breaks at David, and it breaks again up before Abraham. You get to Serug, and then all of a sudden you have another break going back. And of course this is going to take you back to the days of Shem and Noah and all the way back to Methuselah who was the last generation before the flood.

And I think if you map these uses and omissions of the Word, it is indicative... You remember what Matthew does? He organizes the genealogy into groups of 14. There are three groups of 14. From Abraham to David is 14 generations.

From David to the carrying away to Babylon is 14 generations. From the carrying away in Babylon to the coming of the Lord Jesus is 14 generations. And there are obvious and manifest and well-known gaps in those generations.

They are organized into 14s for a reason. Same thing here. This is not just a list.

It is suggestive. It is indicative. And I think you have this little bump in the road right at the very beginning.

He was supposed... He was presumed to be the Huyas of Joseph. But he was in fact of Haley, the son of Mathath. And this is where the pattern begins.

And there is a strong clue at the beginning of this genealogy that it is Mary's genealogy. I have never seen this pointed out anywhere. But you look at the break between Joseph, who he is presumed to be the Huyas of, and Haley, who is the actual son of Mathath.

And then you get these sets of five, going all the way back to David. And David and Jesse, of course, that sonship is significant because... Why? All of these are firstborn sons, right? That is your lineage. It is typically the firstborn son.

Is David the firstborn son of Jesse? He is the lastborn son, isn't he? He was the youngest. He was out with the sheep. All of the other sons were passed over.

So in the sense of Huyas for purposes of inheritance, is David the Huyas of Jesse? Not in that sense. He is last card Charlie. So I am just suggesting to you, and I apologize for pointing this out without pulling the curtain away and revealing a big answer, but I think it is very significant.

And it is another aspect. It is another way that the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, emphasizes to us that there is an essential component of humanity that comes to the fore when we think about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is His human origin that is documented for us in Matthew and in Luke.

It is emphasized. It has got neon signs on it. This is the truth that is picked up in the preaching of the apostles, in the teaching of the apostle Paul in his epistles.

It is emphasized in the Old Testament. Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given who will be called the mighty God and the everlasting Father.

Before and after His birth, that incarnation and hypostatic union is emphasized. And interestingly, the Bible is at some pains to not draw undue attention to the virgin or the virgin birth. He is the seed of the woman.

She was a virgin when He was conceived and when He was born. But what is the central and emphatic and necessary truth that actually makes a difference? We do not have an advocate who is unsympathetic to our situation. He was tested in all points like as we are.

He partook of our flesh. He has walked a mile in our moccasins. He knows what it is like to be dust.

And this is why we are comforted and encouraged by the knowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ, who partakes of our existence and has lived the life that we live in time, subject to the vagaries and the sufferings of human flesh, intercedes for us and is coming again to rescue us from this mundane, mud-based existence and to make us like Himself. And I don't think there is anyone looking forward to that more than the Lord Jesus Himself. He knows what we are going through.

And when the Father announces the day and He returns to take us to Himself, we do not know what we shall be like, but we shall be like Him. And we will no longer be subject to this likeness of sinful flesh. He has already been here and the death that He died, He died to sin.

The life that He lives, He lives to God. And that is the great message of Christmas and the great message of the Incarnation is that it is the means by which God redeems us out of time, out of corruption, out of fallenness and hopelessness and into the eternal realms. He has done it already with His own Son.

And how shall He not freely with Him give us all things? So it's a fascinating set of truths to think about, especially at this time of year. And having taken a brief look at them, I want to wish everybody a happy holiday season that we'll all be able to come back refreshed and energized to resume our studies in the book of Isaiah on December 27th. We'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You most of all for sending Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be like us, to, through that likeness, serve as our sacrifice, as our Savior, as prophet and priest and king, and now as our mediator and our intercessor. And one day to return again as our Savior, not only to deliver us from sin, but to deliver us out of this present evil age, to deliver us from the inhibitions and the corruption and the limitations of our fallen flesh, and to bring us to those realms where we will have an unfettered and uninhibited look at Your glory and at those things that You have for us in the eternal future.

We pray that we will, through our understanding of these things, be lights that shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We recognize that even as Jesus was despised and rejected of men, that as we become like Him, we share that fate in many respects, and even though we are in the world, we are not of it. And we pray that our communion with You, through the Spirit and through the Lord Jesus, will be a sustaining and comforting and strengthening factor each and every day, and that our motivation to live our lives, to please You and to reflect Your glory, will only be strengthened in the days ahead.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.