**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**The Incarnation – Part I**

***Genesis 1 – 1 John 3:8***

 **December 3rd, In the Year of Our Lord 2023**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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 We are at that time of year, the week after Thanksgiving, when I know everyone is making or has made plans for Christmas. We all have seen retail stores put up Christmas displays many days before Thanksgiving. Our capitalistic society with retail stores depends on these yearly sales to make a year end profit. They offer for sale every item a person could materially want. This fulfills the cultural tradition of gift giving that was carried over into the Believer’s Church from the Romans who converted to Christianity in the 4th century. Every society needs traditions. However, many of us within the Church know that God has already given us the greatest gift of himself as Jesus the Christ (Messiah). This gift is summed up in John’s Gospel. . . "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (3:16).

 Believers know that John 3:16 identifies the greatest gift of Love which is also expressed in 1 Corinthians 13. I have often said that love cannot be created in a test tube. Neither can joy, kindness, gentleness, hope, patience, self-control, to name a few more divine qualities of God’s nature. Which means a person cannot buy any of these off the shelf at the retail store in December or any other month of the year. No. These gifts are afforded to all humanity through God’s grace.

**Why did God graciously make plans for Christmas, . . .**

 **I mean the “Incarnation”?**

 Let’s define the word “Incarnation” and set the stage. Understand that there has been a merger of worldviews and beliefs to arrive at the current way and the timing of December 25th in the Western world. Many churches in the East observe Christmas on January 6-8, depending on the Julian Calendar which was largely abandoned in the 16th century in favor of the Gregorian Calendar of which the West operates.

 So, the word “Incarnation”. Most people kind of know what it means by expressing their view that it is a day when Jesus was born. Well, that is true, but there is a lot more represented in the word “Incarnation” and a vastly different meaning than the word “Christmas” represents in a capitalistic secular world.

How is the Incarnation defined? Encyclopedia Britanica records the following:

Incarnation, central Christian doctrine that God became flesh, that God assumed a human nature and became a man in the form of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. Christ was truly God and truly man. The doctrine maintains that the divine and human natures of Jesus do not exist beside one another in an unconnected way but rather are joined in him in a personal unity that has traditionally been referred to as the hypostatic union. The union of the two natures has not resulted in their diminution or mixture; rather, the identity of each is believed to have been preserved.

Wikipedia says. . .

Incarnation literally means embodied in flesh or taking on flesh. It refers to the conception and the embodiment of a deity or spirit in some earthly form or the appearance of a god as a human. If capitalized, it is the union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ. In its religious context the word is used to mean a god, deity, or divine being in human or animal form on Earth.

**Why did the Incarnation have to happen?**

**1 John 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**

 The simple answer is. . . Adam and Eve exercised their “free will choice” that God had created in them and ate from that forbidden tree (Genesis 3). God had told Adam that he would die if he ate from the forbidden tree. Adam and Eve spiritually died first, and they physically died years later when their temporal bodies failed to support life. This means that they chose to be separate from God’s leadership and manage their own lives. They wanted to be the boss. People managing their own lives apart from God brings death and destruction. We see this in the 20th c. after the Age of Enlightenment was in full effect. In the 20th c., at the hands of atheistic leaders and governments. . . over 200 million people died in wars.

Adam and Eve’s sin is often referred to as the “Fall”. The Fall created a separation in relationship between God and people. Therefore, the Fall created a need to reestablish the relationship between fallen humanity and God. Adam and Eve incurred a debt to God by rebelling against Him. God had established what we can call a life-covenant with Adam and Eve. This life-covenant is chronicled in Genesis 2:17. However, despite God warning Adam, they ate from the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil. They adopted the idea (works of the Devil) from the serpent (Satan the great deceiver) that they could and wanted to be like God (Genesis 3). This broke the relationship creating a need for people to have the opportunity to be reestablished in their relationship with God.

However, fallen mankind is totally depraved and does not have the spiritual authority or power to reestablish, on their own, a regenerative relationship with God. God has to make the first step. God’s Holy Spirit constantly is knocking on the heart door of every person’s consciousness (John 16:8, Rev. 3:20). The biggest movement God accomplished in reaching out to fallen humanity is the Incarnation. The primary mission of the Incarnation was to pay the debt for sin that fallen mankind could never pay. The price of breaking the life-covenant with God is life. This is a primary reason atheists refuse to acknowledge God. No God. . . no accountability or judgement of their sin. Without confession which restores a person’s relationship with God and their neighbor, we have death and destruction in the world. God’s judgement preserves and restores life relationships. America’s judicial court system operates on this Godly principal.

However, due to God’s grace, He freely extends His love by incarnating himself as Jesus the Christ (Messiah) detailed in John 3:16, for the primary mission to pay the price for breaking the life-covenant Himself. God does this by willingly going to the Cross and paying the life-price in our place. We then can access the value of the paid debt through surrendering our spirit to God’s Holy Spirit conviction in a cut-heart experience allowing God’s Holy Spirit to indwell our hearts and minds. This is called rebirth of spirit (John 3).

**Reviewing the Need, the Why for the Incarnation**

Believers know that Adam and Eve’s one-time life-covenant breaking event represents to all of humanity the same “free will choice”. Adam and Eve were the first people that sinned and sin entered because they, like we, surrendered to its appeal. “Me first”, no one else. . . is a universal ongoing pandemic! Sin was/is out there to be chosen every second of every day. God does not manufacture sin. Fallen people manufacture sin. The opposite of God’s love choice is the choice for sin and death. So, is it true that all of humanity throughout history from Adam sinned? Yes. We see this immediately with Cain murdering his brother, Abel (Genesis 4).

 However, God’s great grace and love did not give up on humanity. God immediately made it possible for all people, who sinned against God, to be given an opportunity to return to Him. First, God declared that the “seed” (Hebrew: *zera* noun masculine singular offspring) of Eve would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). This was demonstrated with the Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. And will be finalized at the Great White Throne judgement (Revelation 20).

In addition, God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden, so that they would not eat from the *tree of life* and live forever in their fallen state. Therefore, all people eventually rebelled against God and are in need of a Savior.

The pharisee of pharisees, who became the Apostle Paul, writes to the Believers in the city of Rome quoting David and Solomon from the Old Testament who lived one thousand years before.

**Romans 3:9-10** 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

**Ecclesiastes 7:20** Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

 **Psalm 14:1** For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. (Psalm 14:3, Psalm 53:1)

 So, does God, our Creator, who created people in His image leave us in our no-goodness/lostness state forever with no opportunity to return to Him? No! We see Paul also quoting the prophet Joel.

**Romans 10:13** for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

**Joel 2:32** "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

**Acts 2:21** AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED. (Peter speaking at Pentecost.)

**We are all Adam and Eve**

All humanity is born with the same “free will choice” as Adam and Eve. But we need to understand that because Adam’s (Adam the father) failure in family leadership, by omission, he relinquished his role to Eve. . . and therefore, led the way and set the rebellious example that was passed to their children, Cain and Abel. Cain was a tiller of the ground, and it was the ground God cursed that had to be worked to produce food (Genesis 3:17). Therefore, Cain knew that sin was there and he succumbed. God tells Cain and all of us that *sin is crouching at our door* *and has a desire for us* (Genesis 4:7). And we, like Adam and Eve, eventually choose the opposite of God’s desire for our lives. Parents need to see that when they make a choice against God’s will for their lives and their families, they are setting the example and making the choice for sin to enter into their children.

**Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- **. . .** 15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. **. . .**19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

**1 Corinthians 15:21-22** 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

**James 1:15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

**Was there a Jewish expectation for the Incarnation?**

The Jews did not have a worldview of the Incarnation. They did not belief in a Messiah who would imbody the full deity of God and, at the same time, be fully human. And they did not have any expectation of God becoming flesh with the mission to be physically crucified on a cross for the sins of the world. No, No, No. The Jews were looking for a *deliverer* like Moses who would defeat their enemies and set up Jerusalem as the theocratic capital center. (1 Samuel 2:35)

**When is the first time Jesus is identified in Scripture?**

We see the word *God* in Genesis 1:1. In Hebrew, the word is Eloheem and is parsed as a noun, common, masculine, plural absolute. Eloheem in used thirty-two times in chapter 1. And is used throughout Genesis in the plural form.

King James Version 1611 AD **Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

‎ Leningrad Codex WTT 1008-9 AD **Genesis 1:1** בְּרֵאשִׁ֖ית בָּרָ֣א אֱלֹהִ֑ים אֵ֥ת הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וְאֵ֥ת הָאָֽרֶץ

Also found in Dead Sea Scrolls 4Q7 50 BC Strong’s **0430** אֱלֹהִים 'elohiym {el-o-heem'}

So, what is the significance of the plural form of the word Elohiym / Eloheem?

In the New Testament Gospel of John 1 we read. . .

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him,

and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

 Therefore, Scripture declares, in detail, identifying that Jesus was God the Creator who created all things. That and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters (Gen. 1:2). All of these verses of Scripture tell us that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Trinity) are in one Being at the beginning of Creation. This means that the Incarnation was God’s omnipotence (all-powerful), omniscience (all-knowing) and omnipresence (present everywhere) on display. At the Incarnation, our God the Father, Creator of life, came to be one of us in human form known in history as Jesus of Nazareth. And, at the same time, God the Father maintained His presence everywhere else. Note that Jesus displayed for us our own human weaknesses in saying that He could do nothing without the Father (John 5:30, 8:28-29), and He did not know all things like when the Second Coming would take place (Mark 13:32). Paul describes Jesus: do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:4-8)

I know, these are all miraculous claims that defy the law of physics as we know them. So, let’s consider other things that we do not know or understand. The Incarnation represents the fact that the Creator of life, the originator of life. . . can occupy life and resurrect life.

The origin of the universe, the Milky Way, our solar system and the earth. . . all of which are fine-tuned to operate as we see from our vantage point here on earth. And the earth has a unique environment that nurtures life as we know. All of these things are miracles in progress that scientists seek constantly to understand. Scientists publish statements about the observations they make. No scientist has ever created life or even been able to assemble the basic elements in order for them to come to a state of life which means sustain and replicate.

Dr. James Tour at Rice University in Houston, Texas, issued a challenge to any origin of life research scientist in the world to answer a list of five basic questions regarding their attempt to create life in a laboratory. He set a time of sixty days to share their life long research. Dr. Tour stated that if they were able to answer one of the five questions, he would take down all of his work from social media. So, guess what happened? Nothing. Not one of the ten leading scientists in the world met the challenge.

<https://evolutionnews.org/2023/08/origin-of-life-james-tours-sensational-60-day-challenge-to-ten-top-researchers/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmykRoelTzU>

 How complicated can it be? I mean what are the odds for such things to happen like the creation and the Incarnation? We have God’s Word, the Scripture, that witnesses Eloheem’s creative power and authority (Genesis 1). What are the odds that God could become a man and live among us? I do not have a number, but it is a really big number. The point being that the odds are astronomical and beyond mathematical probability. So, there must be a power and authority pulling the levers of history and life to make things happen.

For you scientific geeks out there. . . you can read Dr. Douglas Axe’s book “Undeniable” (page 57) that details research by Michael Denton (Evolution: A Theory in Crises 1985) that functional proteins in their amino acid sequences required for the origin of life are more rare that 1040. When Dr. Axe conducted laboratory experiments, he found only one good protein sequence for every 1074 bad one. So, how big a number is this? What do we have to compare? The standard scientific answer to how many particles (protons/Neutrons) there are in the universe is about 1080 in the observable universe. And scientists know that once a good sequence is formed, there is a limited about of time for it to replicate. Dr. Tour explains this time requirements in a pre-biotic earth which is very short (1-6 months on a mild to hot day) for replication. Considering Evolutionists claim that their process takes millions of years. . . it is statistically improbable for a random undirected origin of life process to happen. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYiguQYCSio

What does all this mean. It means that unless someone is purposely designing and causing things to happen, they are not going to happen. In other words. . . without a Creator God intervening, there is not any universe, not any creation of earth that would support life, not any creation of people, and not any Incarnation or Resurrection. Here I cite what Albert Einstein famously remarked in a letter to Max Born: "I am convinced that God does not play dice."(Dec. 4, 1926). <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Probability>

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. **3** Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. **AMEN**