

The New Birth

Joseph Carty / General

Holidays / Incarnation; Baptism

During this holiday season it is common tradition to talk about the incarnation of Christ. Today we also celebrate baptism. Both are connected with new births. Yet, if you think about it, they are opposite. The incarnation is the act of God taking on sinful human flesh. Baptism is the act of a human taking on the Spirit of God. Two radically different new births. We can only experience our new birth because Jesus experienced His. Thank you Lord!

For weeks a six-year-old lad kept telling his first-grade teacher about the baby brother or sister that was expected at his house.

One day the mother allowed the boy to feel the movements of the unborn child. The six-year old was obviously impressed, but made no comment. Furthermore, he stopped telling his teacher about the impending event.

The teacher finally sat the boy on her lap and said, "Tommy, whatever has become of that baby brother or sister you were expecting at home?"

Tommy burst into tears and confessed, "I think Mommy ate it!"

New Birth

- Two stories
- Essential for Christians

- Teaching of New Birth.

- One verse says this:

Luke 2:7 ESV

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- The other says:

John 3:3 ESV

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

- Two stories of

- New Births.

- Both of which

- essential for
 - Christian Salvation.
- In one story
 - God becomes like man!
- In the other story
 - man becomes like God!
- They are
 - equally phenomenal
 - equally awesome
 - equally powerful.

Incarnation

God takes on sinful human flesh.

John 1:1–3 ESV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

- Amazing
- Mysterious
- Unfathomable Miracle
- God takes sinful human flesh!
- God becomes man!?!

Romans 8:3 (ESV)

... By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

- The Son sent

“in the likeness of sinful flesh”

- Theologians argue
 - what that means...
- Reminds me of
 - other verse.

Genesis 1:26 (ESV)

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."

- Same word here...
 - "LIKENESS
- What does
 - this word mean?
- In what way
 - made in likeness of God?

- Physically?
 - Spiritually?
 - Mentally?
 - Emotionally?
-
- Some things:
 - dominion
 - procreation
 - stewardship
 - character
 - spiritually
 - physically??
-
- Incarnation
 - story of Jesus
 - becoming like us...

- He faced what we face:

- hunger
- thirst
- illness
- temptation
- sadness
- loneliness
- oppression
- hardship
- trials
- physically
- emotionally
- hardship

Hebrews 4:15 ESV

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are,

yet without sin.

- He experience life
 - like we do...
- One difference,
 - He never sinned!
- He was tempted
 - He could have sinned
 - (temptations in desert)
 - Didn't give in!
- Story of Incarnation
 - more than
 - story of Mary
 - had to give birth

- in a barn.
- Story of God
- becoming human!!!
- Can never fully understand.

Desire of Ages (Chapter 4—Unto You a Saviour)

We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall.

--

Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension.

--

It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin.

--

Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of

the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

- Sinful human flesh...
 - we can never understand
 - sacrifice of Jesus.
-
- Like another story...

It was like a beautiful tale from a storybook. The young couple had found each other and began their marriage together full of hope and anticipation. It all seemed so perfect. They were happy, with good jobs, a nice home, and a loving relationship. In time, they celebrated the incredible joy of the birth of their first and only child. They were loving, caring, and devoted parents. Life seemed rich and complete. They were a family.

Then the unthinkable happened. The beautiful little baby who had filled their lives with so much joy died suddenly. Their lives turned from hope and joyful anticipation to numbing emptiness and pain. They were devastated and agonized over their loss and wondered what they could have done to prevent such a senseless tragedy. Life no longer seemed complete. Instead of the excitement of new beginnings they were consumed by endings, darkness instead of light, as they struggled to hold their fragile love together.

It all seemed hopeless until a simple knock on their door changed their lives forever. There at the door, stood a Native man holding a small baby. He reached forward, handing the child to the couple. "Here, this baby is for you," he said and then he left.

I still feel my tears as I think about the young Native mother who

gave her own baby to fill the lives of the grieving couple.

The incarnation is our celebration of God's ultimate gift of love. God saw our pain, our devastation, our hopelessness, our brokenness, and our fragile love and he loved us so much that "...he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

- The incarnation
 - That is one birth...
 - That is a New Birth...

Incarnation

New Birth when...

God becomes like man.

Baptism

New Birth when...

Man becomes like God.

John 3:5 ESV

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

- The teaching of Jesus
- very simple.
- Through Baptism
 - Spiritual/Physical
 - Transformation!
- There must be
- such transformation
- in the human heart
 - represented by
 - complete New Birth.
- The water is not magic.
- Transformation already happened
- in the heart!

- Outward expression
- of inward change.

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- If we have become
- a true Christian
- we are transformed.
- Others can see
- we are not as world.
- Baptism
- is a outward symbol
- of inward change.

When Super Bowl LV kicked off between the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the Kansas City Chiefs, Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida looked full with the help of some fake fans.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the NFL had approximately 25,000 in the stadium for the 55th Super Bowl, far fewer than the 70,000 fans that attended the big game the last time it was held in Tampa.

To make up the difference, the NFL produced 30,000 cardboard cutouts of fans to fill most of the remaining seats.

Unlike other sporting events where the cardboard cutouts are all bunched together in some areas of the stadium, the fake Super Bowl fans were spread out to keep the real fans socially distant.

The NFL charged each fan \$100 to have their face placed on one of the cardboard cutouts. That's a cool \$3 million in revenue to make up for some of the lost ticket and concession sales.

- > The question is:
 - > What is your spiritual journey like?
 - > Are you a fake?
 - > Are you a cut-out Christian?
 - > You look like it, but do you live it?

Cycle of Likeness

At Creation

Humans are made in God's likeness.

At the Fall

We destroy the image of God in humanity.

At the Incarnation

God is made in likeness of sinful humans.

So that

At Baptism

We can be made back into the likeness of God.

A little boy asked his mother where he came from, and also where she had come from as a baby. His mother gave him a tall tale about a beautiful white-feathered bird. The boy asked his grandmother the same question and received a variation on the bird story. Outside to his playmate he said, "You know, there hasn't been a normal birth in our family for three generations."

Two New Births

- One of them
 - deformed image of Christ!
- Other one,
 - transformed image of man!
- He became like us
 - so we can become
 - like Him.
- What an awesome God.
 - Truth of Incarnation
 - Truth of Baptism.
- Let's praise God!
 - we call this

A young girl, unaccustomed to traveling, was taking a train ride through the country, and it happened that in the course of the day her train was obliged to cross two branches of a river and several wide streams. The water seen in advance always awakened doubts and fears in the child. She did not understand how it could safely be crossed. As they drew near the river, however, a bridge appeared, and furnished a way over. Two or three times the experience was repeated, and finally the child leaned back with a long breath of relief and confidence.

"Somebody has put bridges for us all the way!" she said in trusting content.

- There are lots of
 - dangers along life's journey.
- The good news is
 - God has provided
 - safe voyage
 - through this life.
- That safe voyage
 - only possible because
 - two New Births.

- One of Christ's
- One of ours.

The Great Exchange

Desire of Ages (Chapter 1—"God with Us")

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves.

--

He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share.

--

He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed."

- Thank you Jesus
- Thank you.
- For the New Births.

Appeal

- › Accept these New Births
 - › Accepts Christ
 - › Birth
 - › Life
 - › Death

- › Accept Transformation
 - › in Baptism

- If you already have
 - Praise God
 - who He is
 - what He has done.

Exported from Logos Bible Software, 9:40 AM December 23, 2023.