

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 24 December 2023. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Deity of Immanuel

Isaiah 7:14

One of the most famous myths from Greek mythology is the story of **Achilles**. According to the legend, Achilles was the son of a sea goddess named Thetis, and of a human king named Peleus. He was the head of a tribe called the Myrmidons; and he was the greatest of the Greek warriors. In fact, Achilles was invincible in battle, because he was immortal—*except* in one part of his body. You see, according to the story, Achilles' mother had dipped him in the river Styx when he was an infant; and the waters of the Styx had made him immortal. The only problem was that Achilles' mother had failed to dip him *entirely* under the water. As she dipped him in the river, she held him by one of his heels; but she didn't dip that heel completely into the water. This means that *in his heel*, he was mortal. Well, you guessed it: during one of the final battles of the Trojan war, Achilles' enemy, Paris, shot him in the heel; and as the result of this wound, Achilles died. (This is where we get the expression "Achilles' heel." An "Achilles' heel" is a "fatal weakness" in the life of someone who otherwise seems invincible.)

Now, where did this idea of "an immortal being slain in the heel" come from? Is this the only myth of its kind? No, it isn't. Versions of this same basic story can be found in the myths of other ancient cultures, as well. In fact, in many ancient myths, the enemy whom the god-hero is fighting is some kind of serpent; and oftentimes, in the process of slaying the serpent, the hero is, himself, killed. Where did this idea come from? Do these myths have a common source? Yes! You see, these stories are simply perverted versions of a *truth* that all mankind once knew. These stories all go back to something that *God* said to mankind in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve listened to the lie of Satan, and ate the forbidden fruit, God spoke to the serpent (actually, to *Satan*, who had used the serpent); and He said, "***I will put enmity [war] between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.***" According to this prophecy, Eve would have a "***seed***"—a Descendant—who would, one day, "crush" Satan's "head." Yet, in the process of defeating Satan, this Man's own "heel" would be crushed. In other words, the Saviour of the world would, in the process of defeating Satan, *die* the death of a mortal man.

My friends, this is what Jesus Christ came to earth to do. He is the eternal, immortal God; yet, He took on human flesh, and became that "Seed of the woman"; and He allowed Himself to die on a cross, so that He could purchase our salvation, and thereby defeat Satan. Yet, none of this would have been possible if our Saviour had not been *born of a virgin*.

In the last couple sermons, we have been talking about the amazing prophecy that God gave through Isaiah—the prophecy that a virgin would bring forth a Son named Immanuel. We've talked about the historical background of this Immanuel prophecy. We've talked about the *mother* whom God used to give birth to Immanuel. Now, this morning, we will talk about the *Deity* of Immanuel—the fact that He is *God*; and we will see what His deity means for *us*. The title of this message is ***The Deity of Immanuel***.

Read Isaiah 7:14.

I. Immanuel's moniker

Throughout the Bible, Jesus is called by many names; and here in **Isaiah 7:14**, we find one of those wonderful names. The name "Immanuel" consists of three Hebrew words—*im* ("with"); *nu* ("us"); and *el* ("God"). The Messiah literally is "God with us"! Throughout the New Testament, the Apostles proclaimed, again and again, that Jesus is God in human flesh. Let's see what Paul said about this in **1 Timothy 3:16**.

Read 1 Timothy 3:16.

In this verse, we find several important truths about our Lord Jesus Christ. First, Paul says that Jesus' coming into our world was a "**mystery**." This word "**mystery**" comes straight from the Greek word *mysterion*; and *mysterion* means "something which was once hidden, which has now been revealed." What, then, is this "**mystery of godliness**"? It is Christ Himself! Throughout the Old Testament, Christ was hidden from view; but on the night He was born in Bethlehem, He was revealed to the world!

Now, please don't misunderstand: when I say that Christ was "hidden," I do *not* mean that He never appeared to Old Testament believers, or that nothing was known about Him. Christ appeared *many* times, in a human form, to Old Testament believers. Also, as the centuries went by, God gave more and more prophecies of the Messiah. God gave hundreds of prophecies of Christ's birth, life, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection. Yet, Christ was not revealed in *actual human flesh* until he was born in Bethlehem. Old Testament believers had an understanding of the Messiah's Person, and of His future ministry; but their understanding was far from perfect. It was hidden to their eyes. It was a mystery.

Now, in a sense, Christ's incarnation is still very much a "mystery" to us. It's hard for us to *comprehend* how God, our Creator, could take on human flesh. Because it *is* so hard to understand, many false cults (such as the Jehovah's Witnesses) deny that Jesus is God in human flesh, and instead teach that He is merely an angel, or a lesser god who was *created* by God. This is why **1 Timothy 3:16** is so important. This verse is one of the clearest statements of Jesus' Deity *and* His humanity. The Greek word *theos* means "**God**"; and the words *en sarki* mean "**in the flesh**." By the way, the Critical Greek Text, upon which most modern versions are based, uses the word *hos* (which means "he") instead of the word *theos* ("God"). My friends, this is not what Paul wrote! Paul said that "**God was manifest in the flesh**."

Now, the "**mystery of godliness**" is just the opposite of "**the mystery of iniquity**"! In **2 Thessalonians 2**, Paul says that "**the mystery of iniquity**" (the Antichrist) will be "revealed" after the restraining hand of the Holy Spirit has been removed (in other words, after we Christians are taken out of this world, in the Rapture). Satan is hard at work to prepare the world for the Antichrist; and at the right time, he will be revealed to the world. However, the

Antichrist (whoever he may be), *will* be defeated. The “*mystery of godliness*”—the Lord Jesus Christ—has already come; and He already crushed Satan at the cross!

Now, there are several more truths about Christ that we find here in **1 Timothy 3:16**. Paul also says that Jesus was “*justified in the Spirit.*” In other words, by raising up Jesus from the dead, the Holy Spirit “*justified,*” or “proved to be true,” Jesus' atoning work on the cross. Paul also says that Jesus was “*seen of angels.*” (His earthly ministry was constantly witnessed and attended by angels.) He was also “*preached unto the Gentiles*” after His resurrection, when God opened the door of salvation to them. He was “*believed on in the world*” (and is *still* being believed on); and He was “*received up into glory*” on the day when He ascended up to Heaven. Jesus did *all* these things. However, the central truth of this verse—the truth on which all others is based—is that *God* took on human flesh!

Do you see why God mentioned this name “Immanuel” in the same prophecy in which He foretold the *virgin birth* of Jesus? You cannot separate the fact that *Jesus is God* from the fact that He was *born of a virgin*. If He had *not* been born of a virgin, He could not have been God in human flesh! Why not? To answer that question, let's go back to Gabriel's announcement to Joseph of Christ's birth.

Read Matthew 1:16-23.

There are a couple important things in this passage that I wish to point out. First, look at **verse 16. (Read verse 16.)** Did you notice how careful Matthew was with his wording? Up to this point in the genealogy, Matthew had said, “so-and-so begat so-and-so.” Each man in the genealogy begat a son, who begat a son, and so on. But then, in **verse 16**, the “so-and-so begat so-and-so” statements stop. We are now told that Jacob begat Joseph, who was “*the husband of Mary.*” We are not told that Joseph *begat* Jesus: we are told that Joseph was the “*husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*” In the Greek language, the pronoun “whom” is feminine, not masculine. This means that the word “whom” refers not to Joseph, but to *Mary*. Matthew is going out of his way to let us know that Jesus was *not* the biological son of Joseph. He was the son of *Mary*; and *Mary* was a virgin. Why is *that* important? Because if Jesus had had a human father, He would have been a sinner, and not the Saviour!

Read Romans 5:12.

We live in a world in which the virgin birth of Jesus is mocked and scorned. Most people consider the virgin birth of Christ to be an outdated story, which modern man is too advanced to accept. Even most professing Christian religions have long since abandoned the belief that Jesus was born of a virgin. Some “Christian” religions still officially have the doctrine of the

virgin birth on paper; but in practice, they ignore it, or deny it. However, regardless of whether man choose to believe this doctrine or not, our eternal destiny depends upon it. There would be *no Gospel*—no “good news” of salvation—if Christ had not been born of a virgin. Jesus would *not be the Son of God* if He had not been born of a virgin. He would *not be the Saviour* if He had not been born of a virgin. If Jesus had had a human father, He would *not* have been the sinless God-Man; and He would not have been qualified to die in our place, as our Sin-bearer. If Jesus had had a human father, He would have been a sinner, just like everyone else, because He would have inherited a sin nature from his human father.

The Bible clearly teaches that the sin nature is passed down through the seed of the father. It all started with our father Adam. **Romans 5:12** says, ***“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*** That phrase ***“all men”*** includes even Mary. Mary was a sinner, just as her father Adam was; and she acknowledged that fact. In **Luke 1:46-47**, when Mary was rejoicing that God had given her the privilege of bearing the Son of God in her womb, she said, ***“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”*** Mary acknowledged that God was *her* Saviour. This means that she acknowledged that she was a *sinner*. Only sinners need to be saved from their sin!

This raises a question, though: “Why did Jesus not receive a sin nature from *Mary*?” The answer is simple: **sin is passed down through the man, not the woman**. Jesus was a true descendant of Adam because He received *genetic material* from Mary, who was a descendant of Adam; yet, the *male seed* that contributed to Jesus’ humanity was not provided by any human father. God miraculously created that sinless seed, and placed it in Mary’s womb.

Jesus is *not* the biological son of Joseph; He is the Son of God. This means that He is the eternal God in human flesh. He is the Son of God, *and* the Son of Man. He is 100% God, yet 100% Man. If He were simply a man, we would have no hope of salvation, because He would have been a sinner. A sinner cannot take the punishment for another sinner’s sin. Only a *sinless man* could take the punishment for our sin; and only the *God-Man* has the prerogative to pay our fine for us. Because Jesus is both God and Man, He is uniquely qualified to be the *Mediator* between God and man. As God, Jesus is the Lawgiver; and as the Lawgiver, He had the prerogative to come into our race, become one of us, and pay the price for sin *which His own law demanded!* As Man, Jesus was uniquely qualified to die in our place, to rise again, and to be our Advocate before God the Father. As both God *and* Man, He is the only one who is able to be the “go-between” between us and God the Father. The Bible says, ***“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”***

We've seen Jesus' moniker (His name). He is called "Immanuel"—"God with us." However, there is something else that we need to understand about our Immanuel: and that is the *timing* of His coming.

II. Immanuel's moment of arrival

Read Galatians 3:22-24 / 4:1-5.

According to these verses, there was a definite time—a *right* time—for Christ to come to earth. The nanosecond that God caused Mary to conceive in her womb was the *right* time for Christ to come—and not a second before!

Now, a question that I have often been asked is, "Why did God wait 4,000 years after the Fall of man to send His Son to earth?" Ultimately, we do not know all the reasons for the timing of Christ's coming. ***"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God."*** However, God *has* revealed at least one important reason for the timing of Christ's coming. Paul says that the Law that God gave to Moses was ***"our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*** All those laws—all those "Thou shalt not's"—served an extremely important purpose. God's laws not only revealed God's standard of righteousness to us, but they also showed us that *we can't possibly be saved by trying to keep the Law*. As a holy God, He demands that we keep His law *perfectly*; but we *can't* keep it perfectly, because we are sinners. *This* is the lesson that the Law taught to Old Testament believers.

To this day, the Law is *still* the schoolmaster that brings men to Christ. When we look at God's Law, we realise that we *cannot* keep it. We can't even come *close* to keeping it. If the nation of Israel couldn't keep the Law perfectly, how can we? For 1,400 years, Israel was in "school" under the schoolmaster was the Law; and during those long centuries, the lesson that they learned from the Law was that they *couldn't keep* the Law. They failed to keep it both as a nation, and as individuals. What, then, were they to do? Well, those who *realised* that they couldn't keep the Law, and were sorry for their sin, clung to God's promise that He would send a Saviour one day to take away their sins. Though they never saw that promised "Seed," they believed that He *would* come, and deliver them from their sin.

But finally, the day came when God said, "It is time." The lesson of the Law had been learned, and many people's hearts were prepared for the Saviour. At long last, God sent the One for whom humble hearts had been waiting for centuries—the one whose name is called "Immanuel." And why did He send His Son? Paul says that He sent Him ***"to redeem them that were under the law."*** And this brings me to our last point.

III. Immanuel's mission

We've seen that the Messiah's name is "Immanuel." We've seen that He came into our world when "*the fulness of the time was come.*" Now, we will examine the Messiah's **mission**. Immanuel's mission was to defeat Satan; to destroy the power of sin; and to conquer death. God announced this mission to Adam and Eve all the way back in the Garden of Eden.

Read Genesis 3:1-15.

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they went from being God's trusting, loving, loyal servants, to being His enemies. They were now allies of Lucifer! In shame and remorse, they tried to hide from God; but they couldn't hide their sin. God called Adam and Eve from out of their hiding place, and asked them why they had eaten the forbidden fruit; and they both tried to blame someone else. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. Of course, their excuses were not accepted; and their puny fig leaf aprons weren't accepted, either. God proceeded to place curses on Adam and Eve for their sin. But first, He placed a curse on the serpent. For his role in deceiving our parents, the serpent was cursed with the loss of limbs. From that time onward, the serpent would crawl on its belly. From thenceforth, the serpent would be feared and hated, and would be the very symbol of sin. Ultimately, though, God was speaking to *Satan*—the one who had used the serpent to deceive Adam and Eve.

Now, look closely at what God said to Satan in **verse 15**. First, God told Satan that He would put "*enmity*" (war) between him and Eve. What does this mean? It means that God, in His mercy, redeemed Eve, and brought her back into *His* family; and from that time forward, there was a spiritual war between Satan and Eve, as Eve endeavoured to serve God. Secondly, God said that there would be war between Satan's "*seed*" and Eve's "*seed*." What does this mean? It means that Satan's "*seed*" (*his* children) would be at war with God's "*seed*" (*God's* children). Human history has been one long record of the war between those who belong to Satan's family, and those who, by faith, have become part of God's family. Actual bloodshed began on the day when Cain (the very first man born in human history) murdered his godly brother, Abel. Satan's children have been persecuting God's children ever since then!

However, there is another meaning to God's words, "*I will put enmity between...thy seed and her seed.*" The Hebrew word for "seed" can refer either to *multiple* seeds, or to *one* particular seed. The ultimate "Seed" of the woman is a particular *Person*; and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ! In **Galatians 3:16**, Paul points out that the "seed" of Abraham is Jesus Christ!

With this in mind, please notice what God said about the “Seed of the woman.” He says that His *“heel”* would be *“bruised”* (literally, “crushed”) by the serpent. In other words, Christ, in His humanity, would be killed. One day, Satan would succeed in stirring up an angry mob to crucify the Son of God. Yet, by being “bruised” on the cross, Christ fatally “bruised” Satan's *“head.”* Through His sacrificial death for our sins, Christ defeated Satan.

By the way, the Hebrew text clearly says *hu yeshuphka rosh*—“**he** shall bruise thy head.” The Catholic Bible mistranslates this phrase as “*she* shall bruise thy head.” Why did they mistranslate this? To make it look as though *Mary* is the one who conquered Satan! Folks, this is a damnable lie! *Mary* is *not* our Saviour: Jesus Christ is our Saviour! *He* is the only one who was qualified to pay the penalty for our sins, because He is the sinless God-Man!

Satan has been trying to derail God’s plan of redemption ever since the Garden of Eden; but Christ, by His death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection, broke the power of sin, and conquered death. The way that Christ conquered sin was by *taking* our sin, and our death penalty, upon Himself! Because Christ is a both Member of the **Godhead** *and* a Member of the **human race**, He is able to represent us to God the Father! And because He is both our **Judge**, *and* the **sinless representative** of our race, He had the right to take our guilt upon Himself, and serve our death sentence in our place!

Read John 3:14-16.

When Jesus uttered these words, “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,*” Nicodemus knew exactly what Jesus was talking about. Fourteen hundred years earlier, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, the people had complained (as they often did) against God and Moses. They said, “Why have you brought us out into the wilderness to die of hunger? There is no bread or water in this place; and our soul loathes this light bread.” Think of that! They actually had the cheek to complain about the manna that God miraculously provided for them every single day! For their sin of complaining and ungratefulness, God sent venomous serpents into the camp; and people were dying like flies. The people ran to Moses, and pleaded with him to ask God for mercy. Now, God *could* have simply taken away the serpents, and have healed those who were dying on the spot; but He didn’t. Instead, God commanded Moses to do something very unusual. He commanded Moses to make a serpent out of brass, and to place it on a pole, and to lift it up in the midst of the camp; and those who were dying were commanded to look at the serpent on the pole, and live. Those who believed God’s word, and looked at the serpent, were healed, and lived.

Why did God choose to heal the people in this way? Because He was giving them (and us) a powerful illustration of salvation! That serpent on the pole was a picture of *Christ*, who would

one day take our sin upon Himself. Ever since that first sin in the Garden of Eden, the serpent has been a symbol of *sin*; and the Bible says that as Christ hung on the cross, *He* was “***made sin for us.***” Christ didn’t actually *become* a sinner; but our sin was laid upon Him, as though it *were* His own. The *brass* of which the serpent made was a picture, as well. Throughout the Bible, brass is used as a symbol of God’s judgment. The serpent of brass, then, is a picture of how Christ would take the *judgment* of our sin upon Himself, by taking our *sin* upon Himself.

You see, *Satan’s* plan was to “get back” at God by enticing man (the jewel of God’s creation), to sin against Him. *Satan* knows that he will end up in the Lake of Fire one day; and he wants to drag us all to hell with him! Now, according to God’s law, we *do* deserve eternal death in hell; however, God had a plan to *undo* what *Satan* did. God made a way for us to be redeemed. God sent His Son to pay our penalty, so that we might go free.

However, there *is* one requirement, on our part, to *receive* the gift of forgiveness of sins, and salvation. We must *look to Jesus*, and live! “Looking” is simply a picture of *faith*. To “look” to Jesus means to *trust Him, and Him alone*, to save you. If you are trusting in Mary, or in some saint, or in sacraments, or in good works of your own, to get you to Heaven, you are trusting in the wrong thing; and you are still condemned! However, if you will look to Christ in faith and repentance, and trust that *His* sacrifice is all you need, you will be saved!

My friends, Jesus is “the Second Adam from above.” Our father Adam messed everything up when he sinned. He brought sin and death upon us all. However, Jesus gives us the gift of righteousness and eternal life! Those who believe on Jesus *immediately* receive the gift of eternal life (a relationship with God, which lasts forever); and one day, they will receive a new body, which has no more sin nature in it. This is the ultimate promise of salvation!

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 45-57.

In these verses, Paul is comparing the kind of body that Adam had after the Fall to the kind of body that Christ had after His resurrection. He says that “***the first man*** [Adam] ***is of the earth, earthy; the second man*** [Christ] ***is the Lord from heaven.***” Therefore, he says, “***as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.***” In other words, because we who are saved have been placed “in Christ,” we will one day receive a *heavenly* body, just like Christ’s! We will no longer have the “earthy” body of the first Adam, but the “heavenly body” of the Second Adam!

Brethren, the resurrection of our bodies is the ultimate item in the "salvation package." Christ, the "*last Adam*," has earned this privilege for us by rising from the dead. Because *He* has conquered death for us, *we*, too, will one day receive a glorious, sinless, immortal body, just like His! This "resurrection body" that we will receive is called a "*spiritual body*." It will be a real, physical body; yet, it will have spirit-like qualities. Christ, in His resurrected body, was able to appear suddenly in the middle of rooms with locked doors and windows; and apparently, we will be able to do such things, too! Apparently, whatever atomic forces are binding us in our mortal bodies will *not* bind us in our resurrection bodies!

However, the best part about our resurrected bodies is that they will be "*incorruptible*." "*Flesh and blood*," in its present condition, "*cannot inherit the kingdom of God*," because these bodies that we have right now are sinful, and mortal. However, on the Resurrection Day, we who have placed our faith in Christ will rise to sinless immortality; and we will have bodies fit to dwell in Heaven for all eternity, with the Lord! And it is all because of what Jesus, our Immanuel, has done for us!

Conclusion: As we close this morning, I would ask, "Do *you* know Immanuel?" Do you know Christ *personally*? His name means "God with us," because He came down to this earth to dwell among us; but does He dwell in *your heart*? He isn't going to *force* His way into your heart: you must *let Him* come in! You must open the door. Jesus said, "***Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.***" If you have never repented of your sin and asked Christ to save you, now is the time to do so! Let Jesus come in, and sit on the throne of your heart! Should you be saved already, I would ask, "Are you serving Christ with all your heart?" If not, love Him with all your heart, Christian! Let Him have first place every day of your life!