

THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

According to Paul

A QUESTION FOR LATE DECEMBER: What did Christmas 2014 mean to you?

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

[5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

PAUL UNDERSTOOD ONE THING ABOUT JESUS:

Jesus is God

B. B. Warfield (Benjamin Breckinridge) (November 5, 1851 - February 16, 1921) was the principal of Princeton Seminary from 1887 to 1921. He is considered the last great Princeton theologian before the split in 1929 that formed Westminster Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church):

“Paul is led, not to inform his readers but to remind them, in a few quick and lively phrases . . . of what we may call the whole doctrine of the Person of Christ. With such a masterly hand . . . has he done this, that these few purely incidental words constitute one of the most complete statements of an essential doctrine to be found within the whole compass of the Scriptures. Though compressed within the limits of three short verses, it ranks in fulness of exposition with the already marvelously concise outline of the same doctrine given in the opening verses of the Gospel of John. Whenever the subtleties of heresy confuse our minds as we face the problems which have been raised about the Person of our Lord, it is pre-eminently to these verses that we flee to have our apprehension purified, and our thinking corrected.”

V6 - he was in the form of God

- Warfield: “Who was before in the form of God,” are his words: and they are words than which no others could be chosen which would more explicitly or with more directness assert the deity of the person who is here designated by the name of Christ Jesus.
- “Form”
 - Anything that shares all the essential qualities that make God, God is, in fact, God

V6 - who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,

- **Isaiah 46:9 (ESV)** remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,
- Nothing is equal with God, except God

PAUL UNDERSTOOD TWO THINGS ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS:

1. In being born, Jesus did not grasp his divinity but emptied himself

- V6 - did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped
- V7 - but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men

2. In being born, Jesus began His journey to death on a cross

- V8 - And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - **1 Timothy 1:15 (ESV)** Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners
 - **1 Corinthians 15:3 (ESV)** Christ died for our sins

PAUL AS AN EXAMPLE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS:

A QUESTION FOR LATE DECEMBER: What did Christmas 2014 mean to you?

A QUESTION FOR LATE DECEMBER: What will 2015 look like for you?

Two NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

A. Like Paul, let us be resolved to apprehend the person and work of Jesus more in 2015

B. Like Paul, let us be resolved to be more like Jesus in our serving of others in 2015

Emptying by addition

Jesus emptied himself by adding to himself; he added human nature to his divine nature

We are not God, but this idea of emptying by adding is helpful in terms of thinking how we might serve those around us in 2015

- Add a relationship or two that might subtract from your emotional reservoir
- Add a volunteering role in a church ministry that will subtract from your leisure time
- Add a few names to your prayer list that might subtract from your hours of sleep
- Add the giving of gifts to those in need that will subtract from your income
- Add a kind deed to a neighbor which might subtract from your energy levels

NEXT SUNDAY: January 4, 2015. THE WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST: What the Word is and was. John 1:1-4