

Look to Jesus this Christmas. Receive the reconciliation that he bought. Don't put it on the shelf unopened...Open it and enjoy the gift. Rejoice in him. Make him your pleasure. Make him your treasure. —John Piper

The Baptist Catechism (Keach's Catechism)

1677

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Q. 79. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

(Exodus 20:15)

Q. 80. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment requires the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward state of ourselves and others.

(Prov. 27:23; Lev. 25:35; Deut. 15:10; 22:14)

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbids whatsoever does or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbor's wealth or outward state.

(1 Tim. 5:8; Prov. 28:19; 23:20-21; Eph. 4:28)

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE FULNESS OF TIME

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

(Galatians 4:4-5)

At this time of the year, I find myself experiencing mixed feelings. I can rejoice that many will acknowledge the birth of Jesus who perhaps never give it a thought at any other time. Yet, that is countered in the thought that so much of which is declared in the Word of God is hidden by the traditions that have developed over the many years since. In examining these, we find that the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is buried and or overshadowed by all the added attractions. Of special note is the commercialism that has come to be part of the season. Many experience nostalgic feelings of past happiness while others experience sadness at remembrances of past tragedies. Neither of these has much, if anything, to do with the birth of Christ. If there is something good to be observed, it is that there seems to be an increase of well-wishing expressed that is missing at other times of the year.

Among true believers it is to be noted that the incarnation of Christ our Lord is an essential element of the Gospel. Scripture declarations of the Gospel invariably either refer to the incarnation or imply its necessity. Such is the case with our text. In its context here it is Paul's summary thought to the Galatians of their deliverance from under the condemnation of the Law. Certainly, it was the time appointed in which that determined from all eternity was brought to pass. The redemptive purpose of

God is clearly declared along with the ultimate result of His people being declared to be sons. But how many pause at this point and meditate on the fact that He was “made of a woman.” It is in this way that we are reminded that the whole of the earthly ministry of Jesus, the Son of Mary and the Son of God is the Gospel. Indeed, He is the Gospel. Do we remember here the reference to the seed of the woman in Genesis 3? How many pause at this point to remember the prophecy of Isaiah that “a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)?” But this text is incorporated into messages and readings at all times of the year.

There are many other such references to the incarnation. It is to be noted that the Apostles incorporated the thought of the incarnation into their prayer quoted from Psalm 2 and made a distinct reference to that being realized in the opposition being directed at their preaching. We quote a portion of that prayer: *The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. (Acts 4:26-28).* We should safely assume that they had

preached Him as the incarnate One declared of old.

Early on in His ministry, Jesus had declared His Sonship and the prophesied relationship to His people. John 3:16 is perhaps the most quoted scripture of all. Few would choose it as a text for a Christmas sermon. Yet, the fact that God “gave His only begotten Son...” is not quoted so much at this time of the year. Who could miss the reference again to, *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalms 2:7)*. Furthermore, there is failure to connect with yet another declaration from Isaiah. *For 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 called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)*. He is both the Son of God and the Son of man by His own declaration. And we would connect this with the words given to the shepherds, *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)*. Many are moved with compassion and tenderness as they contemplate the manger scene. Few are brought to thoughts of this being the King of kings and Lord of Lords. The message of John 3:16 not only declares the purpose of God in sending His Son, but it also declares His sovereignty and the assurance of success.

Again, we are reminded of the words of John in declaring the incarnation of Christ our Lord. The Angels declared glory to God in the Highest and we thus read, *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the*

Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14). The Apostles heard the account of the birth of Christ and John was one who beheld that glory to the fullest. Paul would very strongly reinforce the thought of the incarnation in his words to Timothy: *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)*. In passages such as this, we are clearly and preciously taken from the manger to the throne. We are taken from the incarnation to the consummation. In his second epistle to Timothy, having made reference to the eternal purpose of God which was given us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, preciously declares, *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Timothy 1:10)*.

That time so preciously referred to in the first two chapters of Luke and the first chapter of Matthew is the beginning of the “fulness of time” having come. Neither that birth nor any other event in the earthly ministry of our Lord deviated from the time appointed. All happened as it had been declared in the prophecies of old and in full accord with the will and purpose of God. It is indeed the time of salvation accomplished. To be sure, all true believers celebrate the birth of Christ. They do not reserve it for one day in the year. God manifest in the flesh, God with us, Jesus our savior and Lord is always celebrated and is a source of delight. The message is found throughout the Word of God. The fruit of the Spirit is Joy. *bhs*

Discontent never made a rough path smoother, a heavy burden lighter, a bitter cup less bitter, a dark way brighter, a sore sorrow less sore. It only makes matters worse. —J.R. Miller

God’s silences are His answers. If we only take as answers those that are visible to our senses, we are in a very elementary condition of grace. —Oswald Chambers

“A Child Is Born, a Son Is Given”

Mark W. Evans

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given” (Isaiah 9:6). “A child is born” speaks of the Savior’s humanity. Jesus is truly man --- body and soul. As man, He was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her. Believers in Christ know Him as the One who is touched with the feeling of their infirmities, their elder Brother, the Friend of Sinners, who gave Himself a sacrifice for their sins, tasted death for them, arose from the tomb bodily, and is now bodily at the right hand of the Father.

Isaiah also said of the Lord Jesus, “a Son is given.” He did not say “a Son is born,” but that “a Son is given.” The second Person of the Godhead, God’s Son, took to Himself human flesh. The Gospel of Matthew revealed Christ’s Deity with these words from Isaiah 7:14: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Jesus Christ is one Person in two distinct natures -- truly man, yet truly God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that He is “the eternal Son of God, who became man, and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one Person, forever.”

The first coming of Christ was precisely as the Father planned, even before the world began. “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days for you” (I Peter 1:20). He was not born in a palace, but in a hovel intended for livestock. There was no room in the inn. His mother wrapped him in swaddling clothes, the rags of poverty. His crib was a feeding trough. His entrance into the world was the beginning of His humiliation. Isaiah prophesied: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:3-6).

In His estate of humiliation Christ went to the cross. There, in His sinless humanity, He sacrificed Himself as the only acceptable substitute for sinners. Being God, He satisfied infinite justice for the sins of His people through the atonement of His precious blood. He conquered death, arose from the tomb and is reigning at the right hand of the Father.

We can trust God, no matter how dire the circumstance. For in the gospel the direst of circumstances—our deserved condemnation and an eternity in hell—have already been emptied of their threat and power. – Dane Ortlund

When life overwhelms us, when the bottom is falling out, this is where Scripture takes us: to God. We do not achieve internal calm by securing external calm. We find internal calm by looking to God. – Dane Ortlund