

Christmas Paradoxes – P2

Selected Scriptures

Pastor Bill Farrow

- We stopped the first part of the this message looking at the first of the Paradoxes:
 - The **Infinite One becomes an infant** – *God Becomes a Man*
 - We talked about it quite at length and we want to remind ourselves that when we use the term “Paradox” it is NOT speaking of a “contradiction”
 - It is speaking of the matter of something God does that escapes easy understating by the human mind.
 - It is confusing and does not seem to make sense...
 - But we see the fulfillment of them in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - He fulfills every OT prophecy given by an OT Prophet.
- We are led to the second of these Paradoxes this morning:

2) *A Holy One was formed in the Unholy, Sinful Flesh of His Mother*

- An antiphon for the Christmas season says,

*How can we find words to praise your dignity
O Virgin Mary,
for he whom the very heavens cannot contain,
you carried in your womb.*

- I want to show you **two passages in Isaiah** to begin with.
 - **Isaiah 7:14** is the first.
 - Here's **the prophecy**:

“Therefore, the Lord Himself,”

- - I like that.
- That means **of His volition, unasked** –

“the Lord Himself shall give you a sign.”

- Now, **mark it**, friends.
- The Lord is **going to do something unusual**.
 - **When it says** the Lord is going to give you a sign, that's **going to be something supernatural**, right?
 - It **has to be**.
 - Otherwise it **wouldn't be a sign** from God.
- **If** the Lord said,

"I'm going to show you a sign it's going to rain tomorrow."

- Well, that **may or may not be**.
 - You **could say**, "*Well, I mean maybe the Lord's got a better view of the cloud structure.*"
 - **But if** the Lord says, "*I'm going to give you a sign,*" it's **going to be something supernatural**.
 - **So watch**.
-

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive."

- Now, friends, you **don't have to know much to know that's supernatural**.
 - A child **born without a father**, "*A virgin shall conceive.*"
- **Many** have said, "*Almah can mean young woman.*"
 - And some of the **liberal translations translate it that way**.
 - No, *almah* **may mean young woman, yes**.
- In the Old Testament, *almah* is **pretty much always used as a virgin**.
 - However, the **Septuagint** **virtually always uses it as referencing a virgin**.
 - The **New Testament comment** is quoting this; **uses the word "virgin."**
 - And could you **imagine that it says this**:

*"The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. **Behold, a woman will have a baby.**"*

- **That isn't a sign**, that's going on **all the time**.

- The very language used indicates the supernatural.
- “The virgin shall conceive and bear a son,”
 - - now here is the amazing part - “and His name shall be called Immanuel.”
- You say,

“What’s so important about that? I know somebody named Immanuel.”

- I’ll tell you what’s important about that.
 - That only became a name because of that verse. **El, those two letters, E-L, that’s God.**
 - *El Shaddai, El Meqadishkem, El Elyon.*
 - *Bethel* is the house of God.
 - Those two letters mean “God.”
- **Immanuel** means “*God with us.*”
 - Notice **you have a paradox here: a son who is God.**
 - Now, wait a minute, **how can that be?**
 - A child **born of a woman who is God?**
- One can readily see where that **would be mysterious to following Prophets and Bible students!**
- **Another Paradox** is:

3) *An All Powerful One Vested Himself in Needful, Weak Flesh*

- There is an old Latin Carol (Named “*in Dulci Jublio*”) which makes reference to, “*Alpha et O, Matris in Gremio*” –
 - Translated that means “**Alpha and Omega, sitting in mommy’s lap**”.
 - A baby, among other things, is an incredibly **NEEDFUL person!**
- Like any of us...the Lord Jesus, **when** He wrapped Himself, **did not do so in a form that was inherently strong and able!**
 - **Rather** – not only did He wrapped Himself in blanket of the needy mechanisms that all men/women share

- **But as especially needful being in the youngest form a person can be in!!**
- Pretty much **every need we can think of** a newborn as needing we can be **sure that Jesus needed!**
 - That was **quite a change for the Creator and Master of all, the One Who needed NOTHING from anyone/thing outside of Himself!!**
- A further thought here is that this **very needy form He assumed**
 - His **being in a stable, a manger** with His companions two poor humans and a few animals, **at least at first!**
- Yes!!
 - The **first Christmas was a poor one:**
 - a manger, a stable.
 - **Our Christmas** is a **dazzling display of wealth beyond belief** as millions of people spend millions of dollars to **effectively ignore the true meaning of Christmas.**
 - But we **ought to recognize** that **once the “wise” men came** to worship Jesus, He was **no longer completely destitute!!**
 - Interestingly, **today fools have parties** of wickedness, largely **ignoring all that Jesus came to accomplish.**
 - **The babe** of Bethlehem was **born a Savior to give men all that they need**, spiritually speaking.
 - **But today**, He has been **replaced by what is an essentially a huckster named Santa Claus,**
 - who **takes what’s valuable and gives essential tinsel in return.**
 - **That’s the paradox to Christmas.**
 - Who does it belong to?
- A **further Paradox** speaks of this great One Who is coming and says that...

4) *He who looks down on all creation looks up to see a necessary, created human mother.*

- **Just think** of this for a moment:
- The **most high looks up from** a cradle.
 - He **vests Himself in the most helpless and needful form** any human can have at any time!!
 - Of this moment **even the pagans wrote with longing and tenderness:**

*Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem....ipsa tibi
blandos fundent cunabula flores, occidet et serpens, et
fallax herba veneni occidet*

- (Begin, little boy to recognize the face of your mother with a smile....For you, your own cradle will bear delightful flowers; the serpent will die, and the plant that hides its venom) – *Virgil 4th Eclogue*.
- Remember that **this was One** Who had, for all eternity been **all that was needed** and One Who was **completely separate** from sin and from wickedness.
 - Yet, this **Paradox tells us** that this One Who had **been so utterly separated** was **willing to make Himself** akin to a sinner.
 - **This Paradox, BTW, is partly why the RC Church has unrightly, even heretically *elevated Mary to such a high position and station!***
 - They could **make no sense of this apparent contradiction!**
 - They **could not (and perhaps would not) reconcile themselves to the existence of contradicting ideas...**
 - **At this early point** in His human life, Christ **depended completely** on Mary
 - Mary **acted as a Mother would act** – seeing to it **that her son had and did what he should**
 - and Christ acted as son would act – **in submission and dependance**
 - Mary **exercised behavior** as the one who cared for and

- In their human minds, this went on and even extended **His manner into post incarnation matters**
- **BUT**...these are ideas that Christ Himself upon His Second Coming would make right!

• And another paradox...

5) *He who in-dwelt, was present in and over all creation is born homeless and ends up Living in a Mysterious Place*

- Let me give you another one – fifthly - the **paradox of Messiah’s home.**
 - Micah 5:2 - don’t need to look it up - says,

“Though thou be little among the sons of Judah, Bethlehem Ephratah, out of thee shall He come forth who is to be ruler over My people.”

- Where was Jesus **to come from, said Micah?**
 - Bethlehem. Bethlehem.
- Then Hosea came along and said in **Hosea 11:1,**

“Out of Egypt have I called My Son.”

- The prophets of then or after must have scratched their heads and said,

“Micah says Bethlehem. Hosea says Egypt.”
Hmmmmmmmm....my my.....

- But just to make it worse, Isaiah said something.
 - What did Isaiah say?
 - Chapter 11, verse 1,
 - only his was a veiled statement.

“There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse. And a natsar shall grow out of his roots.

Natsar means “sprout.”

- That's **interesting**, because there was a town in the New Testament known as **Nazareth**, "*sprout town*".
 - **That's what it means.**
 - There will be **a shoot out of Sprout Town**,
 - **Not to make** a joke,
 - But that was sort of like calling Him "*a hick from Hicksville.*"
- So **the prophet says Bethlehem**.
 - The prophet **again says Egypt**.
 - And **a third says sprout town, Nazareth**.
 - Well, **how can they resolve these things?**
- Again I say to you, **men didn't write the Bible**, or at the very least, they never **would have** written that.
- Look at **Matthew 2**. Watch.

Absolute fulfillment.

- Matthew 2:1,

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east."

- And **why did they come?** Matt. 2:5,

"Because they said in Bethlehem of Judea, 'For thus it is written by the prophet: "Thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel."'"

- He was **born in Bethlehem**, because **that's what the prophets said**.
- So **what about Egypt?** Oh, what about Egypt?
 - Look at **Matt. 2:13**.

"And when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, said, 'Arise and take the young child and His mother and flee into'" –

- **what?** –

“Egypt. And be thou there until I bring thee word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, departed to Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled, which is spoken by the Lord to the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt have I called My Son.’”

- There’s **Hosea 11:1** fulfilled.
- Isn’t it **amazing** that God even orders the political situation of the Herods to force the issues to fulfill prophecy?
 - He makes the wrath of men to praise Him.
- You say, “**What about Nazareth?**”
 - Well, that’s in **Matt. 2:23**.

*“He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it **might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets**. He shall be called a Nazarene,”*

- ...or a sprout.
- Why didn’t He settle in Judah?
 - Why did He settle in Nazareth?
 - I’ll tell you why.
- In a fit of anger, Herod, who was *always changing his will* - he had a problem with his will, he was **always changing it**.
 - So, in a fit of anger, he had **changed his will shortly before his death**,
 - He had **put Archelaus ...**
 - ... who was **the worst of all of his living sons**, in charge of Judea.
 - And he **moved Antipas to rule in Galilee and Perea.**
- When he did that, he **imposed upon Judea the worst possible ruler**.
 - In fact, Archelaus had slaughtered 3,000 Jews at one time in a particular execution.
- And you know why Joseph really didn’t go there?
 - **Matt. 2:21** says,

“He arose, took the young child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard Archelaus did reign in Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.”

- **If Archelaus doesn't take over Judea, Joseph goes there and Jesus would not have been from Nazareth.**
 - Do you get it?
 - God **has ordered every event in history** to fulfill His prophecies.
 - There is **no way that Isaiah could know** what was **going to go on hundreds of years later.**
 - And by some **“whim”**, Herod changes his will
 - and **orders** what he orders,
 - and **it fulfills absolutely the Word of God.**
- All the **paradoxes are beautifully resolved.**
- And for our **6th Paradox** to consider:

6) *He to whom all things in heaven and on earth belong, is born in poverty and neediness.*

- Look at **Isaiah 9.**
 - And you **know Isaiah had problems with this.**

Isaiah 9:6:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.”

- **I can handle that.**
 - But he **goes on...**

“The government shall be upon His shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace.”

- **How could a child be born who is** “The Mighty God”?
 - **There's the paradox.**
 - **How could This Child be a child who will live in time who is the Father of Eternity?**
- The **paradox is clear.**

- There's a **child**;
- He is **human**; He is **God**.
- A woman will bring forth a son, the One **Who actually made the woman who brought forth that Son**.
 - **Could it be?**
 - **If Scripture is true, it better be.**
- Look over at **Luke chapter 1, verse 30**.

*“And the angel said to her, ‘Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus. **He shall be great, shall be called the Son of the Highest.**”*

- There's **none higher than the One Whose Son that very One is/will be**.

“And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

- Interestingly, **Mary had the same problem the prophets did**.

*“Then said Mary unto the angel, ‘**How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? Never had a relationship with a man, how could I have a baby?**’*

The angel answered and said unto her, ‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.’”

- Now, you see, **the prophecy was**,

“Mary, you’ll have a baby, but it won’t be just an ordinary baby,. it will be a holy thing.”

- **Is any baby ever born into the world holy?**
 - **No**. This is **unusual**.
 - And the **Son of God** –
 - son, **not in the sense of offspring**;

- son in the sense of incarnate servitude.
- He is **God**; He is **man**.
- In **John 1** we read...

“And the Word became flesh and dwell among us.”

- Listen, Jesus the man is the Jehovah God of the Old Testament.
 - I was reading a book while preparing for this message that just clearly outlined that.
- Just to compare a couple of things that were most fascinating,
 - Isaiah 6:3. You remember the vision that Isaiah had?

“In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.”

- And the word “*Lord*” all through here is Jehovah.
- You can always tell the word Lord is Jehovah, it is capitalized.
- In verse 3,

“Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts.”

- Now, here Isaiah is having a vision of Jehovah - God. Now I want you to notice John 12:39, listen.
 - Here quoting from Isaiah is our Lord.

*“Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said **he’s** blinded their eyes, hardened their hearts. They should not see with their eyes, understand with their heart, and be converted. And I should heal them.”*

- These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.
 - Of whom?
 - Of Christ.
 - Notice some grammar here, the antecedent to “*His*” here and also the antecedent to “*Him*” in 41 is Christ.

*⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of **Him**.*

- Now what does that say?
 - The passage Isaiah 6, “*I saw Jehovah,*” is referred to Christ in John 12.
 - Jesus is Jehovah.
- In Isaiah 40, you have amazing prediction regarding the work of John the Baptist.
 - And I want to show you just this illustration.
- Verse 1-3

“Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned. She hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”

- Hmm, Prepare ye the way of the Lord - capital letters again - Jehovah.

“Prepare ye the way of Jehovah.”

- Matthew chapter 3, here came John fulfilling the prophecy, preaching.
 - Verse 3, Matthew 3: “*For this is He.*”
 - And he’s preaching about Christ.

“This is He that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.’”

- As it turns out...Who is the Lord that is the Jehovah of Isaiah 40?
 - It is the Jesus of the gospels. Jesus is Jehovah.
- Look over at Leviticus 19:3, “*Keep My Sabbaths. I am the Jehovah, your God.*”
 - And in Matthew 12:8, Jesus said, “*For the Son of Man is Jehovah of the Sabbath.*”
 - He is the Jehovah, the Old Testament.
- Joel 2:32,

“It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, on the name of Jehovah.”

- Romans 10:13, Paul points to Jesus and says,

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

- And he applies that passage to Jesus.
 - He is Jehovah.
 - There is the paradox.
 - He is God, He is man.
- Think about it.
 - Think about what the multitude of prophets wrote.
 - In Genesis 3:15, the Messiah would be the seed to the woman.
 - In Daniel 7:13, He would be the Son of Man.
 - In Psalm 2:7, He would be the Son of God.
 - Again over in Genesis 22:18, He will be the seed of Abraham.
- How could one person be all of that:
 - the seed of the woman,
 - the Son of man,
 - the Son of God,
 - the Son of Abraham,
 - or the Son of David?
- I’m just amazed at the amazing complex of paradoxical prophecies.
 - How can God be man and man be God,
 - and yet be the Son of Man and the Son of God?
 - How can one be the Son of Man, and yet have no human father,
 - and be born the seed of a woman when a woman has no seed
 - and be the Creator of that woman at the same time?
 - **No wonder** the prophets wondered.

- Perhaps what we can see as the BEST reason for it is that God did it so there couldn't be a counterfeit.
 - Jesus was all of these.
 - He was God and He was man, the Word made flesh.
 - He was the seed of the woman, virgin born without a human father.
 - Galatians 4:4 says,

“He was born of a woman.”

- He was the Son of Man.
 - He said Himself in Luke 19:10,

“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

- He is the Son of God.
 - Read Hebrews 1, verse 2 and verse 5.

² *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

⁵ *For to which of the angels did He ever say:*

*“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You”?
And again:*

*“I will be to Him a Father,
And He shall be to Me a Son”?*

- Matthew 1:1 said,

“He is the seed of Abraham and the seed of David.”

- He was everything and all the paradox resolves in Him.
 - Boy, when you start getting into the nature of Jesus Christ and His person,
 - it becomes the most amazing, complex of fulfilled prophecy imaginable.
- Listen to Matthew 22.

- Jesus absolutely nailed the Pharisees to the wall in this particular passage.
- Matthew 22:41, the Pharisees were always asking Him questions, and so He thought He'd ask them one.

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them” –

- Matthew 22:41 –

“saying, ‘What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?’”

- People have come to me quite a number of times and said,

“I don’t understand how Christ can be God and the Son of God.”

- Don’t worry about it. I don’t understand it either, I just believe it.