



Jesus, Son of Adam

So this is Christmas... And I'm thinking about the Immanuel mystery of the Incarnation. The greatest of all the holy mysteries. Immanuel. God with us. With us in our humanity. God who has become one of us.

What if God were one of us? In Christ he is. In the Incarnation we can rightly speak of the humanity of God. O holy mystery! Don't be casual with this mystery.

Unless we enter deeply into the mystery of the Incarnation our Christianity may remain shallow, uninspiring and legalistic. Apart from the Incarnation, we will essentially think Christianity is about rules and rewards and where you go when you die. Presenting the gospel in the 21st century must begin with ...the beginning: the Incarnation. The breath-taking mystery of God joining us in our humanity.

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

The New Testament opens—not with a miracle, or even the Christmas story—but with a genealogy. Think about that. Jesus is introduced to us with a genealogy. Which means Jesus has ancestors.

Luke traces Jesus' ancestors all the way back to Adam. Like every human, Jesus is a son of Adam. That's what it means to be human. Christ is fully God and fully human. Early Christians taught,

We...confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man (Council of Chalcedon).

Jesus is the Son of God and a son of Adam. Christ affirms the acclamations that he is the Son of God, but when describing himself he exclusively uses the term "Son of Man."

Interestingly, the term Son of Man in Hebrew is *Ben Adam*—Son of Adam. It's even more interesting when you consider that *adam* (man) is from the word *adamah* (earth). In the mystery of the Incarnation God has fully and forever united himself with the

earthy creation called humanity. (Further, the word human is related to *humus*; earth or soil; and is also related to the word *humble*.)

Yet far too many Christians today essentially deny the full humanity of Christ. They're accidental heretics. So be amazed and let it take your breath away, but don't deny it: God in Christ has become fully and forever human.

God chose to redeem humanity by doing the unthinkable: In the fullness of time God became human—and was found wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

Because of what God has accomplished through the humanity of Jesus Christ, we can have a better hope than escaping humanity, we can actually be human.

The problem with religious attempts to escape our humanity is that it forces us to be other than what we are.

Such distorted religion makes us **inhuman**. And from being inhuman, it's all too easy to become **inhumane**. And thus the dark side of religion with its crusades and inquisitions.

Once you understand the Incarnation (that God is with us in humanity) you can never again look with contempt upon your fellow sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.

According to Jesus, how we treat the most marginalized of humanity (the impoverished, the imprisoned, the immigrant, and the infirm) is indeed how we treat God (See Matthew 25).

The implications of the Incarnation are staggering. Humanity has failed at being human. We know this from history. But through his life and his cross, through his Incarnation and his Resurrection, Jesus recovers our humanity for us.

Jesus is our Savior. The Savior of Humanity. The Savior of the World.

So whatever you do this Christmas season, be conscious of being fully alive and fully human, and that this is possible because of what Christ accomplished in his Incarnation. In so doing you glorify God as a redeemed son of Adam, as a redeemed daughter of Eve. □