

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 6 JULY 2014 EVENING SERVICE

Sing before: Scripture Versification 7-2:1

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 107:10, 14

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 86:1

Scripture reading: Hebrews 2

Scripture text: Hebrews 2:17; Catechism Sunday 14

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

(Hebrews 2:17)

Since the beginning of our history the Lord promised that we would one day be delivered from the sin and misery we allowed ourselves to fall into. Initially these promises were few and vague. But as history proceeded the Lord added to these promises and each time He made it clearer that the Redeemer would be one of Eve's descendants. (in other words a human)

Let us again look at the Son of God's incarnation.

1. **The manner of His incarnation.**
2. **The meaning of His incarnation.**
3. **The benefit His incarnation holds for us.**

1. The manner of His incarnation.

The eternal Son of God is God Himself.

- He was there since the beginning.
- He will be there eternally.
- Yet, in His counsel of redemption God decided that the Son of God had to become man to redeem man from his sins.

Many years ago the heathens already knew in their false religions that Someone would be born of God and that He would one-day come to save mankind.

- They just did not know that He would restore us in our relationship with God.
- Over time their religions decayed to the extent that even when the Lord Jesus was born, they no longer believed that a divine being could be born of man.

This is why the apostle Paul went to great pains to convince the heathens that the Redeemer was indeed born of a woman.

- We read that he wrote to the churches in Galatia that when the time appointed by God had come, He sent His Son. That He was born of a woman and from birth He was subject to the law. (Galatians 4:4)
- He wrote the same to the converts in Rome.
 - He wrote to them that through the prophets the Lord foretold the gospel of the Lord Jesus in Holy Scripture.
 - His Son is the subject of this gospel.
 - As man He was from David's lineage,
 - On the grounds of His resurrection from death He was appointed by the Holy Spirit as the Son of God with power, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Romans 1:2-4)

That is why Christ was born – His birth was the true taking of the very nature of man.

- Can we comprehend what a shock it was for Mary when the angel told her that she would become pregnant and deliver God's Son into the world, and that she was to name Him Jesus. (Luke 1:31)
- The angel told her how it would happen: "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.**" (Luke 1:35)

Many of the things surrounding the conception of the Lord Jesus we find puzzling, but these are the very things, which in faith, we must accept.

- We must accept that God reveals to us that His Son took upon Him our human nature, perfect and without blemish.
- He was not tainted by the original sin as we are.
- He was, and is holy God.
- He is the immaculate Lamb of God who was born as man to sacrifice Himself in order to justify us.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ did not deprive Him of His divinity. He is always eternal and omnipotent God.

- We read of it in Romans 9:5. The Holy Spirit reveals that Christ is a descendant of the patriarchs. Christ was born of them as man – but then the Bible emphasizes that Christ is God, elevated above all and praiseworthy forever. He confirms it with the word: “Amen!”
- In John 1:1 we read the same: **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

2. The meaning of the incarnation.

There is no creature or being able to deliver us from God’s judgement, save the Son of God. There is also no plan of salvation which can excuse us from God’s wrath, save the one according to which the Triune God determined that the Second Person of the Godhead would become man, and would bear the punishment of God on behalf of the elect humans.

The Lord clearly reveals why Jesus became man.

- It is written that Jesus became man like any other man, because we are people of flesh and blood. This He did to thereby destroy the one who has power over death, namely the devil. (Hebrews 2:14)
- It also was not just a matter of becoming man. He had to become like us in all respects, so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest before God, to atone for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:17).
- God’s justice would never have allowed a Mediator who was not subject to the feebleness that all people suffer under. Which is why the Bible writes the following about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus:
For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
(Hebrews 4:15)
- Exactly the fact that Jesus is and remains eternal and true God, but nevertheless took on a human nature, makes Him a suitable and qualified Mediator. We can only be redeemed by a High Priest who is holy, guiltless and without blemish, separated from sinners, and elevated above the heavens.
- The justice of God demanded that it had to be One who was unlike other human high priests because they had to first atone for their own sins before being able to atone for the sins of the people, and this atonement had to continually be repeated.

But when He sacrificed Himself, Jesus atoned for our sins once and for all. (Hebrews 7:26, 27)

3. The benefit of the incarnation.

Everything we have said up to now is true, but we must know what benefit these things hold for us. The Bible teaches us much in this regard, and if we miss it, then we miss true faith and being children of God. Let us look at a number of things the Lord teaches us with regards to the meaning of Christ’s incarnation.

- We know that the Son of God came and gave us understanding to know the true God, and we are in the true God, in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)
- And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3)
- Jesus humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant and becoming equal to man when He appeared as a man. (Philippians 2:7)
- You know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot, (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)
- Jesus Christ became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: God condemned sin in the flesh. (Romans 8:3)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God left the highest heaven and became a man.

- As a man He endured much trouble and suffering.
- But in this He was the Servant of God who worked man's redemption.
- By His knowledge this Servant God, the just, justified many, and our guilt was on Him. Isaiah (53:11) already predicted it.

Do you believe all of this? Do you truly believe that the Lord Jesus became a man to justify you? Do you merely say so, or do you truly believe that He bore the punishment for your sins?

If this is indeed your faith then you can rejoice with David saying: **Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.** (Psalm 32:1)

Let us read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's day 14:

Sunday 14

35. Q. What do you confess when you say: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary?

A. The eternal Son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God,[1] took upon Himself true human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,[2] through the working of the Holy Spirit.[3] Thus He is also the true seed of David,[4] and like His brothers in every respect,[5] yet without sin.[6]

[1] John 1:1; 10:30-36; Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Col. 1:15-17; I John 5:20. [2] Matt. 1:18-23; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14. [3] Luke 1:35. [4] II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3. [5] Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:17. [6] Heb. 4:15; 7:26, 27.

36. Q. What benefit do you receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

A. He is our Mediator,[1] and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin, in which I was conceived and born.[2]

[1] I Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 9:13-15. [2] Rom. 8:3, 4; II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4, 5; I Pet. 1:18, 19.

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 116:1, 4

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

Amen

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