

**Sing beforehand:** Versification 7-2:1

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth<sup>i</sup>. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>ii</sup>. By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

Psalm<sup>iii</sup> of praise 7:10, 14

Prayer

- **Doxology:**
- **Worship:**
- **Confession:**
- **Supplication** (for pardon of sins):
- **Thanksgiving:**
- **Intercession**  
(for the need of the congregation, the church, authorities, sinful world and appeal to the promises of God)
- **General supplication:**
- **Illumination of the Holy Spirit** (necessary for the ministry of the Word):

Psalm 86:1

Scripture reading: Hebrews 2

Scripture text: Hebrews 2:17 Catechism Lord's Day 14

**<sup>17</sup>Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.**

Since the beginning of our history the Lord promised us 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 those 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 look once more 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 himself God.

- He was since the beginning
- He will be unto eternity
- Yet, in His counsel of redemption God decided that the Son of God had to become man to redeem men from their sin.

Since long ago already, the heathens had in their false religions the knowledge 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 when the Lord Jesus was born, they no longer believed that a divine being could be born of man.

Which 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)<sup>iv</sup>
- He wrote the same to the converts in Rome
  - He writes that through His 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 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 Jesus Christ was born – His birth was the true taking on 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 this world, and that she was to call 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 NKJV)

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 original sin as we are
- He was, and is holy God
- He is the immaculate Lam 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 emphasises that Christ is God, elevated above all and praiseworthy forever! He confirms it with the word: Amen!
- We read the same in John 1:1

<sup>1</sup> **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 the elect humans.

The Lord beautifully reveals why Jesus became man.

- It is written that Jesus became man like other men, 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 was also 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 of the Lord Jesus' Incarnation: <sup>15</sup> **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 could 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 continuously be repeated.

But when He sacrificed Himself, Jesus atoned for our sins once 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 men 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 of 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)**
- **Christ Jesus 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 wrought man's redemption
- By His knowledge this Servant God, the Just, justified many; and our guilt was on Him. Isaiah (53:11) predicted it.

Do you believe all of this? Do you truly believe that the Lord Jesus became 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:

**Question 35.** What is the meaning of these words "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary"? **Answer:** That God's eternal Son, who is, and continues (a) true and eternal God, (b) took upon him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, (c) by the operation of the Holy Ghost; (d) that he might also be the true seed of David, (e) like unto his brethren in all things, (f) sin excepted. (g)<sup>v</sup>

**Question 36.** What profit dost thou receive by Christ's holy conception and nativity? **Answer:** That he is our Mediator; (a) and with His innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God, my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth. (b)<sup>vi</sup>

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 116:1,4

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.<sup>vii</sup>

**Amen.**

<sup>i</sup> Psalm 124:8

<sup>ii</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:3

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.genevanpsalter.com/music-a-lyrics>

<sup>iv</sup> <sup>4</sup>But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, Galatians 4:4 KJV

<sup>v</sup> (a) Rom.1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: Rom.9:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (b) 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. Rom.1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; Col.1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (c) Gal.4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. Luke 1:42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Luke 1:43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (d) John 1:14 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. Matt.1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Matt.1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and 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. (e) Ps.132:11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. Rom.1:3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 2 Sam.7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: Acts 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; (f) Philip.2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: Heb.2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Heb.2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (g) Heb.4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

<sup>vi</sup> (a) Heb.7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Heb.7:27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. Heb.2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (b) 1 Pet.1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 1 Pet.1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 1 Pet.3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 1 Cor.1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 1 Cor.1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Rom.8:3 For what the

law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Rom.8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Isa.53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Ps.32:1 <<A Psalm of David, Maschil.>> Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

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vii 2 Corinthians 13:14