

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 8 - Number 8

The Week of November 27, 2022

When God Became Jesus

God Appeared

Titus 3:4-7

*Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let every heart prepare a throne
and every voice a song.*

The wonder of the Advent season is the miracle of the Incarnation: *God became flesh*. Incomprehensibly so, yet truly, Mary's womb was overshadowed so that what was conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit. The marvelous reality is that from conception onward the transcendent God who is over all took on humanity.

During the four Sundays of Advent we are going to explore the miracle of the Incarnation in its immeasurable grandeur. The story of Christmas is the story of how the eternal God became the embodied Jesus. We will begin this series by looking at one section in Paul's letter to Titus that summarizes the story of Christmas and the basis of our redemption.

READ TITUS 3:4-7

As you read it, mark it accordingly:

- Draw two circles around the first word.
- Place a Δ over *God* and every pronoun that refers to Him.
- Place a \dagger over every reference made of Jesus Christ.
- Draw a circle over every reference to the Holy Spirit.
- Bracket each preposition in the sentence.
- Draw a square around each action proscribed to God alone.
- Double underline the words *so that* in verse 7.

⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Icebreaker

What is your favorite Christmas carol/song and why? (BTW, this passage is believed by many to have been part of an early Christian hymn.)

EXPLORING THE PASSAGE TOGETHER

1. Before discussing verses 4-7, consider verse 3. What uncomfortable truths does it tell us about ourselves and all humanity? Take a moment to put Paul's description of your life before Christ in your own words.

2. Read verse 4. What attributes in God moved Him to appear (the word *epiphany* comes from the word Paul uses) in human flesh?

3. What did you have to do to receive the washing of regeneration and renewal?

4. Why do you think we are inclined to take credit (even partial credit) for what God has done to save us?

5. What difference does it make that God saves us out of His great mercy, and not because of anything we do?

6. Paul says that believers are "heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Think for a moment about the present and future blessings of eternal life.
 - What blessings of eternal life are we promised in our present life? You may want to read John 5:24, 17:3, 1:4.

 - What blessings of eternal life are we assured to obtain in the future? You may want to read Romans 2:7-8, John 10:28-30, Matt. 25:46, 1 John 1:1-4.

7. How should this passage challenge or encourage us if we are feeling...
 - Proud:

 - Worthless:

 - Hopeless:

8. How can you apply the truth of this passage in an area of your life?

You may choose to sing or read this timeless carol:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

by Phillip Brooks

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
While mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wondering love
Oh morning stars together, proclaim thy holy birth.
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to men on earth.*

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

An Advent Prayer

by John Birch

In this Advent of expectation
draw us together in unity,
that our praise and worship
might echo in these walls
and also through our lives.

In this Advent of expectation
draw us together in mission,
that the hope within
might be the song we sing,
and the melody of our lives.

In this Advent of expectation
draw us together in service,
that the path we follow
might lead us from a stable
to a glimpse of eternity.

