

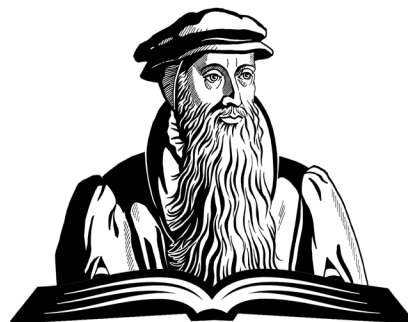
VIDEO SERMON SERIES

Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

Sermon #19, Lord's Day 14

The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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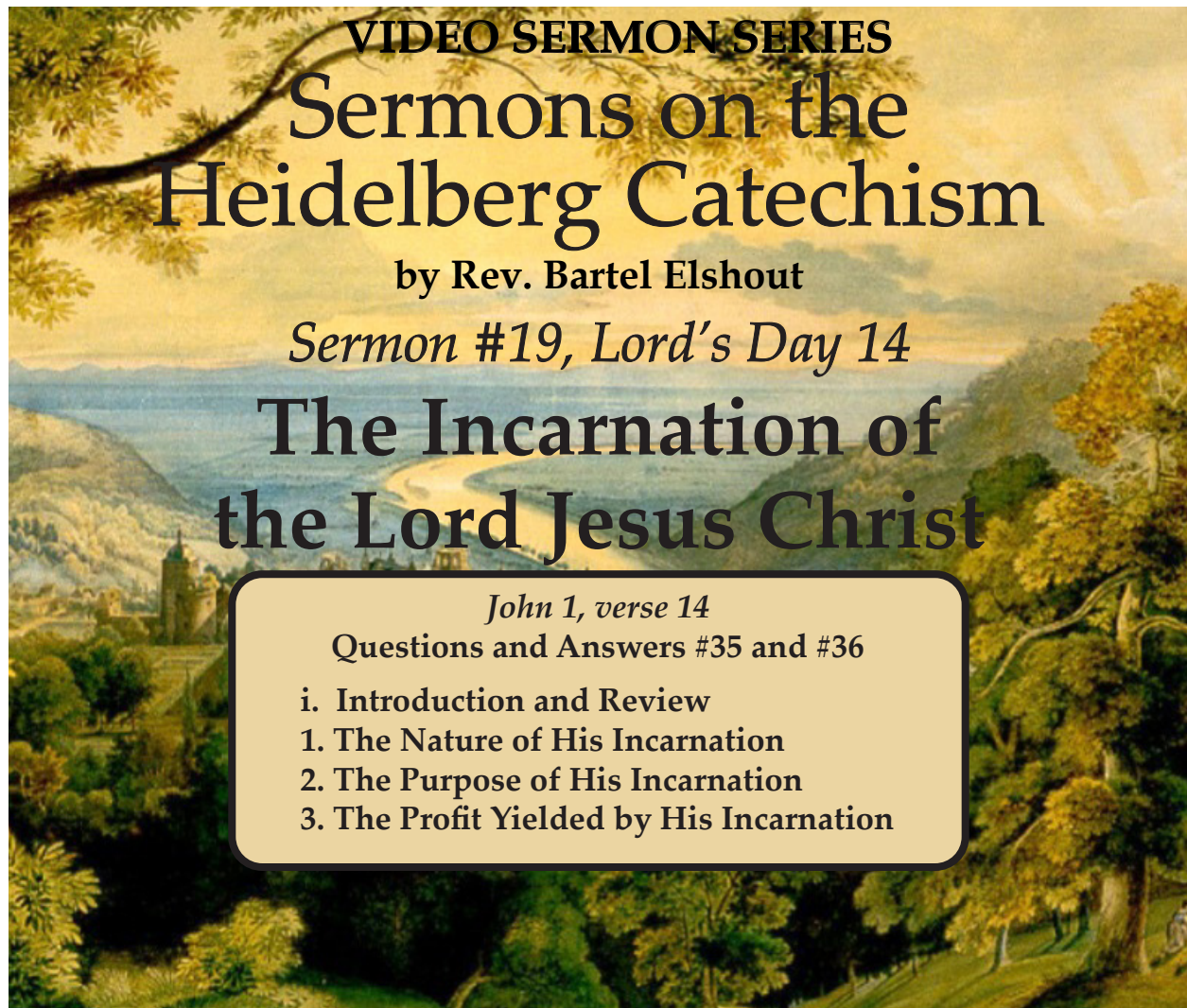
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Sermon #19, Lord's Day 14

The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ

John 1, verse 14

Questions and Answers #35 and #36

i. Introduction and Review

- 1. The Nature of His Incarnation**
- 2. The Purpose of His Incarnation**
- 3. The Profit Yielded by His Incarnation**

Introduction and Review

Boys and girls, there was once a king who wanted to prepare his son to follow him. He knew the day would come. And of course, his son had always lived in a very privileged environment. And his father knew that he could only be a good king if he would truly know his people. And so, he said, "Son, in order to prepare you to become king in my place, I want you, for a number of years, to dwell among the people. I want you to find, specifically I would like you to go to this mining village. Hide your identity, and just dwell among them, live with them, and work with them. That's what he did for several years. He was one of them. He labored with them, went to the mines. And suddenly, he disappeared, and people wondered where he went. And he returned. And then, the day came that his father abdicated the throne, and turned the throne over to him. And one of the things he did is, he travelled around his kingdom to meet with his people, including the village in which he had lived, including the people among whom he had dwelled. And they were overjoyed that they were favored with a visit by their new sovereign, and they were delighted to see him. But then, to their utter astonishment, as he spoke to them, he said, "Do you really know who I am? I am so-and-so." And then he unveiled the name by which they had known him. And they gasped in utter amazement. And they looked at him. They looked at their king, and they said,

“He’s one of us! He’s one of us! He dwelt among us!” And so, the bond of love they felt for that king was extraordinary. They honored him as their king. And yet, they realized there was a very special bond that united them with him. He had dwelt among them as one of them.

This is but a faint illustration of what happened in the fulness of time, when the Father sent his Son into the world, to dwell among us, to be one of us, in order that, through him, we could be reconciled with God, and be bound to him forever. And all of that is set before us in Lord’s Day 14 of our Heidelberg Catechism. So please turn with me to Lord’s Day 14 of our Catechism. And there we read:

Question #35: *What is the meaning of these words—“He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary”?*

The Answer is: *That God’s eternal Son, who is, and continueth true and eternal God, took upon Him the very nature of man, of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; that He might also be the true seed of David, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted.*

Question #36: *What profit dost thou receive by Christ’s holy conception and nativity?*

The Answer is: *That He is our Mediator, and with His innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God, my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth.*

And so, this Lord’s Day talks to us about the mystery of *The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ*. And “incarnation” is simply a word that’s derived from the Latin, and that literally means “coming into the flesh.” We read it together from John 1:1, “And the Word was made flesh.” That’s what we mean by *The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

First of all, we will consider, *The Nature of His Incarnation*. What does that mean? What happened? What happened at that sacred moment in Mary’s womb? *God’s eternal Son, who is, and continueth true and eternal God, took upon Him the very nature of man*. So, *The Nature of His Incarnation*. Secondly, *The Purpose of His Incarnation*, namely, that he might also be the true seed of David, *like unto his brethren, sin excepted*. And thirdly, *The Profit Yielded by His Incarnation*. Typical for the Heidelberg Catechism, the Catechism doesn’t just explain the doctrine, but it always makes it personal. And it asks the question as it often does, So what benefit do we derive from this glorious reality? Again, making it very personal, *What profit dost thou receive by Christ’s holy conception and nativity?* “Nativity” means “by his birth.” And of course, the Answer is, that *He is our Mediator, who, with His innocence and perfect holiness covers in the sight of God my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth*.

So, *The Nature of His Incarnation*, *The Purpose of His Incarnation*, and, *The Profit Yielded by His Incarnation*.

1. The Nature of His Incarnation

In 1 Timothy 3, verse 16—and so, boys and girls, that’s another “3, verse 16” verse. Everybody is familiar with John 3, verse 16: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” And of course, that speaks of the incarnation as well. Try to remember that 1 Timothy 3, verse 16 is another very remarkable text. Because, what do we read in 1 Timothy 3, verse 16? We read that, “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh”—God, eternal God, the Creator of this vast universe, manifest in the flesh. And I want you to notice something, something I think is often overlooked and misinterpreted. Notice what it does not say. It does not say, “reat is the mystery of divinity,” “Great is the mystery of theology”—all of which is true. No, it says, “Great is the mystery of godliness.” And the language in the Dutch Bible is identical. Because,

congregation, can you explain to me, why is it that in this fallen, corrupt, sin-infested world, why is it that there is godliness? Why are there, throughout this world, godly men and women, who are living godly lives? That can only be explained in light of the incarnation. If Christ had never come into the world to be the Savior of sinners; if he had not come in the fulness of time to accomplish redemption, there would not be a single godly person in the world. Because, by nature, we are all fallen sons and daughters of Adam. By nature, there is not an ounce of godliness in us. We are born with hearts that are hostile towards God and hostile towards his Word. But what has happened throughout the history of this world until this day, by God's amazing grace, fallen sons and daughters of Adam, sinners, are transformed by the grace and power of God, and they become godly men and women. And that's all the fruit, you see, that's all the fruit of the incarnation; that's all the fruit of the redeeming work of Christ.

And so, what that emphasizes is that the ultimate goal of redemption, the ultimate goal of salvation is not just to deliver us from hell, and to give us a place in heaven. The goal of redemption is to transform us in to godly men and women, and that's all the result of the incarnation. "Great is the mystery of godliness"—the mystery of godliness, that in this fallen world, until this day, wherever we go in the world, we find godly men and women who fear God. And none of that could have ever happened—if by the grace of God, you are a child of God today, there's only one reason why that has happened; only one reason why the Holy Spirit has taken hold of your heart and transformed you—all because, in the fulness of time, God's Son, the eternal Son of God, was made flesh. He came into the world to be the Savior of sinners.

We can duly say that that sacred moment, that sacred moment that happened in Mary's womb, that sacred moment, when the Holy Spirit, by his supernatural power, accomplished a genuine conception in Mary's womb. And that moment is the hinge on which all of human history turns. That moment, that astounding moment, when the eternal Creator, the eternal Creator of the heavens and earth literally entered history; when the Creator became a creature, in order to redeem fallen sons and daughters of Adam.

We read John 1, verse 14, that very special passage: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt"—and tabernacled—"among us." He dwelt among us. He walked among us. He was one of us, as we will see, like unto his brethren in all things. And congregation, what I'm trying to explain to you is that the eternal Son of God did not only become man to enable him to suffer and die. That's what he had to do, as Mediator. He had to bear the full consequences of our sin. And had he not been a man, he would have been incapable of suffering and dying. But there's much more that's going on. The meaning of the incarnation is infinitely beyond that. Because, what happens in the incarnation, congregation, something happens that will never be cancelled. Something happened at that moment that will endure forever. Because, at that moment, God and man are reunited. God and man are reunited in the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ; reunited with a bond that cannot be broken to all eternity.

And you see, congregation, that is precisely what we mean by "God's good pleasure." That's precisely why God sent his Son into the world. Because God's good pleasure is to bring fallen sinners back to himself, back into a covenant relationship with himself. And we know that God entered into that kind of relationship with the first Adam, our father. But we know that that relationship proved to be a breakable relationship. And so, before the fall, God and Adam were united, in this wonderful covenantal love relationship. But that relationship was breakable. Now, it is God's supreme wisdom that he sends this second Adam into the world in order to bring sinners back to himself. But now, God establishes a bond between himself and man in the person of his

Son. And that's why that bond cannot ever be broken. That bond will endure forever.

And that's why—listen carefully—that's why the incarnation itself, that sacred moment, God and man were united in Mary's womb, the incarnation itself is not part of Christ's humiliation. The circumstances under which it happened, they were deeply humiliating. After all, think of it, that the eternal Son of God was conceived in the womb of a sinner. This was not an immaculate conception. He was conceived in the womb of a sinner, without being tainted by her sin. But you see, that incarnation itself, if the incarnation—listen carefully—if the incarnation itself, if that were part of his humiliation, you know what that means? That means that Christ would be forever humiliated. Because that incarnation is forever. He is forever Emanuel, God with us. That incarnation endures forever.

And that's why it's not only the incarnate Christ who suffered and died on Calvary's cross, but it's the incarnate Christ, the incarnate Son of God who comes out of the grave. It's the incarnate Christ who ascends into the heavens. It's the incarnate Christ who sits at his Father's right hand, ever to live to make intercession for us. It's the incarnate Christ who will come in the fulness of time to judge the living and the dead. It is the incarnate Christ who will forever dwell among his people, who will forever walk among them. He will forever be Emanuel.

2. The Purpose of His Incarnation

That's why the incarnation—and Wilhelmus á Brakel¹ makes that point very powerfully in his chapter on the High Priestly Office of Christ—the incarnation itself is God's good pleasure. The incarnation reveals God's purpose and intent. The incarnation reveals to us the very character of God. The incarnation reveals to us that it is God's good pleasure to be united to a creature that bears his image.

And that's why, when Adam and Eve sinned, God could not deny himself. That's why, as you know, he calls them out of hiding, and he tells them, You have broken your relationship with me. You have believed the lie of my enemy. You have forged a friendship with Satan. I'm going to break that friendship. I'm going to send the seed of the woman in the fulness of time, in order that we can be reunited together; in order that that broken bond can be restored, but now, in the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's why the Apostle Paul cries out in holy amazement, oh, "Great is the mystery of godliness." That's why we have this astonishing passage in the Gospel of John chapter 1, verse 14. It says, "And the Word was made flesh." That in itself is so significant that it doesn't say, "the Son was made flesh," which is true; but it says, "The *Word* was made flesh." And why is that so important? Well, again, boys and girls, when you think of words, so what do we use words for? Well, we use words to express our thoughts. Human life would not be possible without us having the ability to communicate to someone else what's on our mind and what lives in our hearts. So, by means of our words, we reveal something about ourselves. But that's because we were created in God's image. Because God himself is a communicating God. And so, when John 1 talks about "the Word was made flesh," the Word that was with the Father, the Word that is God himself, the Word by whom the worlds were created, the eternal and living Word of God. You know what that means, boys and girls? That if you want to know who God is; if you want to know how God thinks, look at his Son, look at his Son. Then it is so significant when he says, "the Word", that eternal Word, by whom the heavens were made, that eternal "Word was made flesh." And that means that

¹ Wilhelmus á Brakel (1635–1811), aka "Father Brakel", was a Protestant Reformed minister and theologian in the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands, famous for his 4 volumes, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*.

is the ultimate statement that God makes about himself, the ultimate revelation of his character, the ultimate revelation of his good pleasure—the Word was made flesh. Thereby God communicates, “This is my desire. That’s why I’ve sent my Son into the world, so that through him, you can again be reunited to me.”

That’s why it’s not accidental, as I’ve explained a number of times; it’s not accidental that the Son became man, not the Father, not the Holy Spirit, but the Son became man. Because it is the Son, it is in the person of the Son that the invisible God becomes visible. It is in the person of the Son that God reveals himself, that God is knowable. No man has seen God at any time. He that is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed himself to us (John 1:18). And that’s why it is in the Son that God brings sinners back to himself.

Even our word “religion” indicates that. Do you know what “religion” means, boys and girls? Do you know what the word “religion” means? Try to remember that. So religion comes from the Latin, and it literally means “to be reconnected.” Our word “ligament,” we have ligaments that hold our bones together, connectors; they’re called ligaments. And so, “religion” means to be reconnected, to be reunited. And that’s the purpose, the great *Purpose of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Oh, the wonder, the wonder. Paul writes of him in Colossians 1, verse 15: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature”—very God and very man.

And what’s so beautiful, too, congregation, is that God, by the gift of his Son, oh, he communicates, and he reveals, that though he is the infinitely glorious one, though he is the one whom the heavens cannot contain, his very nature is such that he desires to draw near to us. So, in his Son, in Christ, he comes so very near to us. Oh, the wonder of God’s good pleasure!

The wonder of what happened to Mary—we read it together. No wonder this young woman, sixteen, seventeen years old, was astonished, when the angel came to her and told her what would happen, that she would be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Christ (Luke 1:35). You see, if you read your Bible carefully, if you read the New Testament carefully, you can’t help but notice that those two are inseparable, the Spirit and Christ. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, of whom Christ would say later, That Spirit, he will testify of me (John 15:26); that Spirit will glorify me; that Spirit will take out of me and show it unto thee (John 16:14). It is that Spirit, the same Spirit who hovered over that mass that God had created in the opening verses of the Bible, that same Spirit who hovered, and who brought to life that which God created; who was the agent by which God brought the whole world into existence. That same Spirit miraculously overshadowed Mary, and wrought in her a genuine conception. He wrought that conception supernaturally.

And so, that means that the child conceived in Mary’s womb had Mary’s DNA. Ultimately, it means that that child had Adam’s DNA. He was made of the flesh and of the blood of the virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Well, congregation, this truth is so foundational to the gospel. That’s why I said the incarnation is a truth, is a reality on which the entire history of the world pivots. All history before that moves towards that moment, in the fulness of time, when that amazing event occurs; and all the history that follows it flows out of what happened in a city called Nazareth, when the Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin Mary.

That’s why, in the early Christian church, it was necessary for the church to come to grips with the identity of Christ; come to grips with the mystery of the incarnation; to safeguard it against errors that sprang up very, very quickly. And so, early in the history of the church, an error surfaced which is known as Docetism.² And what that means, that fancy word simply means that those who

2 Docetism, from the Koine Greek, *dokein*, “to seem”, *dókesis* “apparition, phantom,” taught that Jesus Christ was only a mere semblance, and did not have a true body, that he only seemed to be human, but it was an illusion.

believed that, they denied that Jesus' humanity was real. They said it was just an appearance of humanity. Just like in the Old Testament, Christ would appear in the form of a man. He appeared to Joshua, he appeared to Abraham, and various other times. But he only appeared as a man, that was not a real humanity. And so those in the early church who denied that, propounded an error called Docetism, that the humanity of Christ was only a matter of appearance. And that error was already rearing its ugly head, even when the Apostle John was writing at the end of his life. And what does he write in 1 John 4, verse 1 and 2? He says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God"—listen carefully—"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." So, John was saying this is really a litmus test—a litmus test for those whose Christianity is true and genuine, and is not. Those who confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, they are the ones who are instructed and indwelt by the Spirit of God.

So, in AD 451, there was a synod known as the Council of Chalcedon. They also had to deal with erroneous teachings about the natures of Christ. Because, what we need to understand is that when that incarnation happened in Mary's womb, Christ's divine nature did not change. He remained what he had always been and always will be—the eternal Son of God. What happened was that something was united to that human nature that never was united to it before. That's why it says, "And the Word was made flesh." So, he assumed our human nature. So, the Council of Chalcedon dealt with two errors. There was a man by the name of Nestorius.³ And he was so intent on preserving the genuine nature of God and of man, that he denied that there was any real connection between those two natures, no union between them. Then, there was another bishop by the name of Eutyches,⁴ who erred on the opposite end. He taught that Christ was a mixture, that the divine and the human were mixed in his person. And so, the Council, as they considered this, they came to the following conclusion: they rejected both errors, the error of Nestorius, and of Eutyches. They said the two natures of Christ are fully distinct. His divine nature is one hundred percent divine; and his human nature is one hundred percent human—truly and fully distinct. Secondly, they said those two natures are unchangeable. In other words, that the divine nature of Christ is not somehow compromised by the fact that he is united to the human nature. So those natures are distinct, they are unchangeable, and yet, they are firmly united together. That's the teaching of the Word of God.

And so, the Catechism goes on to say, *That He might also be the true seed of David, like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted*. That statement itself is so very significant. There's a remarkable statement in the very last chapter of the Bible, a statement that is made by the exalted Christ himself, that connects to that statement. But turn with me to Revelation 22, verse 16. And there, we read—here, Christ is speaking, the exalted Christ is speaking: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." And now, notice what he says about himself. This is one of those "I am" statements." He said, "I am the root and the offspring of David." I am the root and the offspring of David. Dear congregation, that statement is so very important. There, Christ, as it were, gives a summary of all the teaching of the Word of God about himself. And he's

3 Nestorius of Constantinople (c. 386–c. 451) was an early Christian prelate who served as Archbishop of Constantinople from 428 to 431. He was from the Catechetical School of Antioch, and several of his teachings on Christ and on Mary were condemned as heretical and he was deposed by the Council of Ephesus.

4 Eutyches of Constantinople (c. 375–454), was a presbyter and archimandrite famous for his vehement opposition to Nestorius, adopting a view that the two natures of Christ fuse together to form one single divine nature, i.e. Monopohysitism. This view was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon and the Third Council of Ephesus.

saying, This is who I am. I am David's God, and I am David's son. I am David's God, as to my divine nature; and I am David's son, as to my human nature. That's who I am. "I am the root and offspring of David"—the true seed of David—*like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted*.

Well, congregation, you know that all through the Old Testament, there is the promise that such a Savior would come. And we know how Satan went out of his way to prevent that from happening; went out of his way to destroy the seed and the house of David. And he almost succeeded through Athaliah, who thought she had succeeded in destroying the house royal (2 Kings 11:1). There was another moment, where it appeared that the house of David would come to an end. That's when Hezekiah had become deathly ill, and he had not given birth to his son. That's why he wept so bitterly—Hezekiah a man who feared God; a man who wholeheartedly believed in God's promises; a man who longed for the coming of the Messiah, who knew that God had promised that out of the house of David, the Messiah would come. And here, he was about to die without his son. And God then hears his prayer, and He extends his life, and he gives birth to his son, who initially proved to be an exceedingly wicked son—Manassas. And yet, even that man was transformed by the grace of God, and so the line of David was not broken (2 Kings chapters 20 and 21).

Just this week, I heard someone quoting the late Reverend den Butter,⁵ who recently passed away; who wrote a book also about Israel, and God's purposes with Israel.⁶ And I think I referenced it in my prayer. And I was struck by this statement. He said, "What do we see in the Old Testament? We see in the Old Testament that Satan goes out of his way to keep Christ from coming to Israel. And he failed." But he says, "Now, what we're seeing is that that same Satan is trying to prevent that Israel will come to Christ." And that's why that nation is the target of his anger, the target of all of the violence that he actually garnishes against that nation. That's why God has supernaturally preserved that nation, and will supernaturally preserve it. Because, not only has Christ come to Israel, but we know that, ultimately, Israel will come to Christ, all as a result of the incarnation. That too must and shall happen, according to the Word of God.

3. The Profit Yielded by His Incarnation

And so, he became like unto us in all things, sin excepted, and as our substitute, as our Mediator, because that's the final question. So what does this mean for us? How do we profit from this glorious truth about the incarnation; from this *holy conception and nativity*? Namely, it says, *That He is our Mediator*. And congregation, in order for that broken relationship between God and man, for that broken relationship to be restored again, he had to become our Mediator; he had to become our substitute. Paul writes of this in Galatians 4, verse 4: "But when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." He became subject to all that pertained to the fall of Adam. So, in his humanity, before his glorification, he endured all the consequences of the fall. He had a weak body, in that sense. He knew what it was like to grieve. He knew what it was to be weary. He was made like unto us in all things, sin excepted, so that he could be our perfect substitute; so that he could be the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world; so that he could be our Mediator.

And so, what does a mediator do? We talked about that when we considered Lord's Days 6 and 5.

⁵ Paul den Butter (1938–2023), was a Dutch Reformed minister in the Christian Reformed Churches of both the Netherlands and Canada from 1964 until his retirement in 2005, when he returned to the Netherlands with emeritus status in the CGKN. He published extensively in church magazines and books, with an intensive study of the Old Testament and the writings of English and American Puritans.

⁶ *Joshua: A Book of God's Faithfulness*.

A mediator is the one who brings two parties together that are at odds with each other. So when there's a labor dispute—we've just had a lengthy dispute with the UAW, and then mediators got involved to try to bridge the gap that separates the employer and his employees. And a successful mediator will achieve precisely that. But those mediators, they have no connection to either party. But not so with this Mediator; not so with the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, Jesus Christ, as Mediator, fully represents his Father's interests, and at the same time, fully represents the interests of his people. And all, so that, through his perfect sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, he could restore that broken covenant relationship between God and man.

That's why this is so important, congregation, that's why this is so immensely comforting also for God's children. Because, dear believer, your salvation is so secure in him, so absolutely secure. As impossible as it is for those two natures ever to be separated, so impossible it is for you ever to be separated from God. That's why Paul could cry out triumphantly at the end of Romans 8: Nothing, nothing "shall...separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus" (verse 39). You see, that bond that unites the divine and the human nature, that bond is the everlasting warranty of your salvation. Because, in him, God is forever united to us, and in him, we are forever united to God, in him. Oh, he is—he is the very bond that unites God and his people. Oh, thanks be to God for such a Mediator, for such a Savior. *What profit dost thou receive?—That He—He, the Emmanuel—He is our Mediator.*

Well, congregation, is he, is he yours? Do you need such a Mediator? Do you need such a Savior?—a Savior to reconcile you with God; a Savior through whom you, a fallen, wretched, hell-worthy sinner, through whom you can be reconciled to God and be restored into his favor. And that's why that Mediator, in his perfect humanity, had to suffer and die in your place. That's why he had to be wounded for your transgressions. He had to be bruised for your iniquities. That's why the chastisement of your peace was upon him. Because only through that sacrifice could you be reconciled with God. But what he accomplished as Mediator, what he accomplished as Emmanuel is so perfect and so complete, that nothing is more secure than your salvation and your redemption.

Dear, congregation, God is so desirous that his people understand this; so desirous that they would rejoice in the fact that we have such a Mediator; that we have such a High Priest. Paul says that we have "such a High Priest" (Hebrews 7:26)—such a High Priest, who meets all qualifications; such a High Priest, who has given himself as a perfect sacrifice; such a High Priest who has paid the price for my sin; such a High Priest, who has quenched the wrath of God; such a High Priest, who has met all the requirements of God's law; such a High Priest, who triumphantly cried out, "It is finished."

There's something else that's beautiful, here, with which we're going to end. Notice where it says here, *and with His innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God, my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth.* This is profound, congregation. Do you know what the Catechism is saying here and it echoes the Word of God?—that Christ's mediatorial work began the moment he was conceived. The moment he was conceived, everything he did, he did in our place. And so, when did your sinnership begin? When does our sinnership begin? It begins the moment we are conceived. The moment a child is conceived in its mother's womb, that child is under the wrath of God. The moment that happens, a sinner is conceived. And the reason why we actually begin to commit sinful deeds is because we are sinners by birth. Our sinnership begins at our conception. And the Catechism is saying that the reason why his mediatorship begins in Mary's womb, the reason why it begins at his conception is because he, in my place, covers in his sight my sins, *even wherein I was conceived and brought forth.* In other words, this Mediator is a

complete Mediator. That means this Mediator has accomplished a redemption for you, believer, that covers your entire human existence, from the moment you were conceived until the moment you die, all of it is covered in the sight of God. Because he was conceived with perfect innocence and in perfect holiness, he was conceived in his mother's womb.

What a comfort that is. What a comfort that is, because the painful discovery that every believer makes—it's not just my sinful actions that get me into trouble, but that painful reality that I am a sinner at the core of my being. That's why I sin, because I am a sinner. And then, this glorious truth that Christ is a complete Savior, and that for your sake, to save you, and to redeem you, he was conceived in the womb of a sinner, conceived in Mary's womb, so that he could cover your sins your sinful root, your original sin, your sinful core, so that he could cover it completely, and accomplish for you a full and complete redemption.

And that's the beauty of the sacrament of baptism. Because what baptism signifies is that our children need a Savior the moment they are conceived. That's the testimony of baptism. Baptism communicates to us visibly that God has provided a Savior, God has provided a Mediator that covers everything in the sight of God, even my sin in which I have been conceived and brought forth. Oh, what a Savior! Oh, what a Mediator we have! Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. And then, the Apostle Paul, he was a humble man—he said, I only see through a glass darkly. I only know a little bit. And he said, this Christ is so glorious, this Savior is so magnificent. My words are inadequate. I don't even begin to know how to begin to describe the beauty and the preciousness of that Savior. Oh, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15). First John 4, verse 9: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."

Congregation, we need such a Mediator. Is this Christ precious to your soul? Is this the Savior you need? He is the Christ who fits your soul as a key fits a lock. By nature, we don't need him. That's the work of the Holy Spirit, who uncovers our sin, for one reason, to make room for this precious Mediator. That's his work, so that we will recognize, this is exactly the kind of Mediator we need. This is the one through whom I can be reconciled with God. This is the one through whom I can be restored into his favor. Oh, congregation, is this Christ precious to you? Do you need such a Christ? Do you need such a Christ, who is a complete Savior who saves us to the uttermost? Because, God forbid that you would end your journey without this Mediator. Because, apart from this Mediator, your sins, in which you were born and conceived, those sins can damage you. Those sins provoke God to wrath. Apart from this Mediator, you will find God to be a consuming fire. But thanks be to God that God continues, precisely because of who he is, God continues to draw near to us in the preaching of the gospel, to unveil to us that Mediator whom he offers freely, fully, without money and without price, and whom he declares, "If you believe in my Son, I, against whom you have sinned, if you believe in my Son, I will pardon you, I will restore you into my favor." And so, I'm sending you home with the question that Christ asked of his disciples: "What think ye of Christ?" Amen.

Let's pray.

Our faithful God, we give thee thanks that we could be in thy house tonight. Our Lord, we have considered tonight that overwhelming and profound mystery of godliness, that God has been manifested in the flesh, and thy Son has come in the fulness of time, to become our Mediator, so that through him, we might be reconciled with thee; that through him, we could be restored into an unbreakable and everlasting covenant relationship with thee. O Lord, it is indeed inexpressible,

unspeakable, how precious, how glorious, how magnificent this Savior is, whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. And Lord, may we seriously consider that question also presented to us, What do we think of this Christ and of this Mediator? Lord, we pray that by grace, our confession would be with the bride when she was asked to describe her bridegroom, and she said, “He is white and ruddy, he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and he is altogether lovely. Go with us into this new week. Bless the labor of our hands. Keep us safely from harm and danger. Gather with us again this coming Lord’s Day, and we ask it all in Jesus’ name. Amen.