

Belgic Confession Chapter 18 – Why did Jesus have to be a Baby?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The nativity, the birth of Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary, was so essential that you could not be saved without it. You can be saved without Christmas trees, Santa Claus, and fruit cakes. They have no value to your salvation or your sanctification. **But you can't be saved without believing in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

You will hear today why the incarnation was so essential.

Our headings are:

Prophecies of the Incarnation

Principles of the Incarnation

Profanations of the Incarnation

Our goals are: **That you will see the extent of Christ's work to save you, and you will then be willing to humbly serve him.**

Article 18: The Incarnation:

So then we confess that God **fulfilled the promise made to the early fathers and mothers** by the mouth of the holy prophets when sending the only and eternal Son of God into the world at the time appointed.

The Son took the **"form of a slave"** and was made "in human form," truly assuming **a real human nature**, with all its weaknesses, **except for sin**; being conceived in the womb of the **blessed virgin Mary** by the power of the Holy Spirit, **without male participation**. And Christ not only assumed human nature as far as the body is concerned but **also a real human soul**, in order to be a real human being. **For since the soul had been lost as well as the body, Christ had to assume them both to save them both together.**

Therefore we confess, (against the **heresy of the Anabaptists** who denied that Christ assumed human flesh from his mother) that **Christ shared the very flesh and blood of children**, being the "fruit of the loins" of David "**according to the flesh**," "**descended from David according to the flesh**"; the "fruit of the womb" of the virgin Mary, "**born of a woman**"; the "**seed of David**"; the "**root of Jesse**"; "**descended from Judah**," having descended from the Jews according to the flesh; descended from Abraham, having assumed descent from Abraham and Sara, and made "**like his brothers and sisters**," yet without sin. In this way Christ is truly our Immanuel—that is: "God with us."

Prophecies of the Incarnation

1. Consider examples of prophecies of Jesus' coming into the world as a true human being from other human beings.

a. Let's start from the beginning with the first rendition of the Gospel.

Genesis 3:15 - And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And **between your seed** and her Seed...

b. God made the same promise to the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.

Genesis 22: 18 -"In **your seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...

c. Isaiah pronounced the sign of the Lord to King Ahaz and to Israel as a whole.

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: **Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son**, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6...**unto us a Child is born**, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.

d. Jeremiah in Jeremiah 23:6; Daniel in Daniel 7:13; Micah in Micah 5:2; Zechariah in Zechariah 13:7; and Malachi in Malachi 3:1. **These all speak to the fact that Jesus would be incarnated.**

2. Consider some examples of the New Testament confirming these Old Testament prophecies were about Jesus.

a. Simeon was a man known for his eminence and piety. He was probably the son of the Jewish scholar Hillel, and was the first one called Rabban—a special scholarly title. Simeon was not an uneducated man who could easily be fooled by superstitions or customs.

Luke 2:25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was **Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation** of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it **had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit** that he would not see death before he had seen **the Lord's Christ**.

b. Before Jesus was born Herod asked the Jewish scholars to confirm details about Messiah from the Old Testament.

Matthew 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them **where the Christ was to be born**.5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for **thus it is**

written by the prophet: 6 'But you, **Bethlehem, in the land of Judah**, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler...

c. Apostle Paul confirmed Jesus was the "Seed" of Abraham.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, **"And to your Seed," who is Christ.** [29] And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

d. Jesus was also called: "Fruit of the loins of David" according to the flesh, "born of the seed of David" according to the flesh, "the seed of David," "born of a woman," "a shoot from the root of Jesse," "the offspring of Judah," having descended from the Jews according to the flesh, and "from the seed of Abraham"—for he "assumed Abraham's seed."

Principles of the Incarnation

1. Jesus had to be born as a full man, with a real body and a reasonable human soul to be the "suffering servant" who would be fit to die for man's sins.

He did not have a sinful body, but he had a weak body. (How humiliated he was!)

God's law said that if man sinned, man had to die. Animal sacrifices were not sufficient.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, **God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh**, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the **righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled** in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Philippian 2:7 but made **Himself of no reputation**, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Do you know how a rich father feels if he has to go to jail to bail his son out for a petty theft? He has to swallow his pride and **do what he needs to** do to free his son. It is humiliating. Imagine how humiliating it was for the Jesus who never did anything wrong (every father would have some sins of which he is ashamed) to have to give up much of his glory (take a low reputation) to become man to save his bride who **deliberately walked away from him and committed spiritual adultery.**

2. Regarding his body:

a. Jesus' family line is listed in Matthew and Luke.

b. Jesus was the oldest of Mary's many children. Christ's human nature was from Mary, a virgin. Christ was real flesh and real blood. Christ had appeared before (pre-incarnate form) but never from going through process of taking human flesh from a human. He miraculously appeared to Adam in the Garden in the cool of the day, to Abraham in his tent in the heat of the day, to Moses on the mountain and in the burning bush, to the 3 Hebrew boys in the fire, etc. **But, when the time was right, he took on a full human nature.** He had to have a fully human nature to take on the full responsibilities of the covenant.

Matthew 1:24...**she had brought forth her firstborn Son.** And he called His name JESUS.

Galatians 4:4- But when the fullness of the time had come, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman**, born under the law,

c. Jesus was seen, felt, and touched by those around him. He was like his brothers.

John 1:14 - And the Word became 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.

d. He was circumcised on the 8th day.

e. Jesus had to obey and suffer in our nature. He had to become your scapegoat.

Hebrews 4:15 - 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.**

Yes, the love letters were not enough. Jesus had to make a personal appearance.

1John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ...

Jesus showed other evidence of humanity. Briefly:

f. He grew tired – especially after long hours of working.

Mark 4:38 - But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

f. He was hungry.

Matthew 4:2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

h. He was thirsty. He asked for water from the woman at the well and on the cross.

John 4: 7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

i. He was sad and disappointed especially when he disciples were stubborn.

Mark 3:5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts

j. He cried when Lazarus died. (John 11) More, he surely cried if he were hurt as a child.

3. Regarding his human soul...Jesus grew in wisdom and stature.

He had to nourish his soul.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Profanations of the Incarnation

1. Anabaptists (some Baptists today) deny that Christ took on real human flesh of his mother, but rather they believe Christ's human flesh was miraculously created.

If you believe that Jesus did not take on human flesh from his mother but it was miraculously created, then he is not a natural descendant of Adam and therefore not fit to die for your sins. A real man sinned; a real man had to die.

2. Others believe Jesus was purely human, having no Divine nature.

But if Jesus were fully human only and not God, then he would not have had the power to release the whole world from sin. One perfect ordinary man could only die for one ordinary man. If Christ were only fully human, then the whole world would still be their sins. But praise God he is not but he is God also.

3. Others believe he was purely a ghost...a spiritual being only.

If Jesus were only a spirit and not fully man, then he would not be either fully God or fully man. He would not be fit to redeem man. Jesus had to be man and **feel the pain of betrayal and the nails to be fit to die** for the world. Jesus had to be **God to bear the immense weight of man's wickedness.**

The truth is: He was truly human and truly Divine, two natures in one person.

Conclusion:

Jesus' coming was prophesied and was so specific that it **left man without doubt as to who he would be.** He was recognizable. Ask Simeon! More, Jesus **taking on a human body and a reasonable soul was necessary.** If he were not fully human, he would not be fit to die on the cross as a substitute for man.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Seeing the humiliation and suffering of Jesus in your nature for you (He paid the debt he did not owe, you owed the debt you could not pay.), how then shall you respond? You respond in service. **You serve because you are saved; you don't serve in order to be saved – which is liberal "imitation" Gospel!**

2. You must respond with humility. *Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself** and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

3. But humility is not just a state of mind; it is seen! You show your humility by how you serve the Lord – the zeal you have for his worship. You show your humility by how you serve each other!

Finally, if you are not a Christian, hear this: Jesus came to die for sinners...all kinds of sinners. It doesn't matter how bad you are or how embarrassing your sins have been. He came and lived and died for the sins of the world. You can get him to count your sins as his sins (and set you free) if you only ask him with a sincere heart.