

TTS Essentials – Session [5]: The God-Man NOTES

Welcome back to TTS! Did you have a good summer?

Thanks for coming – it's much appreciated.

Let's get the boring stuff out the way first!

- FIRST: About TTS itself.
 - **Remember the website:**
 - Notes are provided every Monday.
 - Term details, directions, etc.
- SECOND: Looking ahead...
 - **The Sunday Foundations Sessions:**
 - Sun 15th Sept – S17 here at Freedom.
 - Sun 29th Sept – S18/19 here at Freedom.
 - **TTS Essentials:**
 - Wed 4th Sept – S5 at my house.
 - Wed 18th Sept – S6 at my house.
 - **TTS Virtues:**
 - Sun 8th Sept – at Gill's house.

[2] The Doctrine of the Incarnation – A Primer

DISCUSS: What do we know about the Incarnation? [[SONG: TGTM]]

- Etymology:
 - The word itself derives from Latin.
 - *In* (in) + *Carō* (the flesh)
 - *Incarṅāre* (to embody something; to make into flesh).
 - R.E. teacher – chilli con carne!
- Defining what we mean:
 - **The doctrine of the Incarnation refers to the second person of the Trinity (the eternal Son of God) adding to himself a human nature and entering into his own creation, making himself known as Jesus of Nazareth.**

[2A] For the majority of Christians, this doctrine is simple orthodoxy.

- **It's something we talk about regularly.**
 - At Christmas:
 - “God of God, light of light / Lo, he abhors not the Virgin’s womb / Very God, begotten, not created” [O Come All Ye Faithful]
 - “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see / Hail the Incarnate Deity” [Hark the Herald Angels Sing]
 - In Church:
 - *Hymns:* e.g. “My life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Saviour and my God” [Before the Throne] / “Tis mystery all the Immortal dies” [And Can It Be] / “From heaven you came helpless babe, entered our world your glory veiled” [GK’s Servant King]
 - *Sermons:* “100% God, 100% man”
 - *Faith Statements:* an essential, ‘closed-hand’ doctrine.
 - Even vaguely familiar to Biblically illiterate pop culture:
 - “This holiday is about humanity” / “You know, I thought it was about being born half-God, or something” [Rick + Morty]
- **Because it's so familiar, it might even seem self-indulgent to study this at all! It's SO obvious, surely we know it already?**
 - God's purpose in the Incarnation:
 - **LOOK:** 1 Tim 1:15 – Christ was born to die.
 - How this doctrine is taught in Scripture:
 - Titles of Jesus – Son of God, Messiah, Lord.

[2B] Whilst it's great that we're so familiar, there's much more to this.

- **On the Church's understanding:**
 - Ligonier's *State of Theology* 2018 poll of UK evangelicals.
 - 93% believe in the Trinity.
 - 74% - Jesus is “first + greatest of God's creations”.
- **On those easy answers from Scripture:**
 - **LOOK:** Rom 5:10
 - Not just about Christ's death – also about his life.
 - Also, the titles of Jesus aren't that simple.
 - Son of God \neq God the Son.
 - Messiah \neq divinity.
 - Kyrios \neq God – **LOOK:** 1 Pet 3:6 (Re: lexicons)

- **On those oh-so-familiar Christmas carols:**
 - What if I told you...
 - The words to OCAFY were *literally* fought over.
 - Indeed, the NC is perhaps the single greatest achievement of the early Church.
 - Not some mediocre inheritance, but a great heritage of blood, sweat, tears, and providence.

THIS week:

How do we even know these words to be true?

How is the Incarnation taught in Scripture?

What's God's purpose in becoming man?

[3] The Doctrine of the Incarnation – OT Background

[3A] To get a sense of the task before us, consider the disciples...

- **Born and raised as faithful, religious Jews.**
 - **LOOK:** Deut 6:4-9
 - Daily prayer – morning and night.
 - Bookends life itself – re: Rabbi Akiva + Roi Klein.
 - Definitive of Israelite religion – against all others.
- **AND YET – what were they saying at the end of their lives?**
 - **LOOK:** 2 Pet 1:1 + 1 Cor 8:6
 - What on earth has happened?!
- **Jesus must have been like a nuclear explosion!** [Cat+Pigeons]
 - Familiarity is our enemy here.
 - We can't see the drama, the enormity of what's happening.
 - **LOOK:** Luke 2:17-18; 33; 47 – they were amazed.

Our job today is to let that nuclear bomb go off all over again!

- Where shall we begin?
 - **LOOK:** Matt 1:21-22 / Matt 2:16-17 / Matt 8:16-17 / Matt 26:55-56 / Luke 22:37 / John 19:36 / Acts 3:18.
 - **DISCUSS:** What do you notice about all these texts?
 - “*This was to fulfil...*”

We stumble upon this eerie consensus amongst the first Christians.

1. Adam as a 'type' of Christ [Rom 5:12-15]
2. David spoke concerning Jesus in the Psalms [Acts 2:25ff – cf. Matt 22:43]
3. Moses and the Israelites drank from the 'spiritual rock', that is, Christ [1 Cor 10:1-5]
4. Moses chose to suffer for the Christ [Heb 11:26]
 - a. (A reminder that the Bible can be weird sometimes!)

Christ was somehow present in the story of the patriarchs, in the ebbs & flow of sacred Israelite history.

- Re: Moberly + Stained Glass Window.
 - The disciples could finally see what previously they were looking at as through a glass darkly.
 - What could they now see? The promise and nature of Christ running through all the OT.

BUT – where did they even get this idea from?

- **LOOK:** John 8:48-59
 - **DISCUSS:** What strikes you about this passage?
 - [1] Jesus is placing *himself* within the story of the patriarchs.
 - [2] Note the crowd's reaction – he clearly isn't saying something mundane! (E.g. pre-existent angel, mere figure of speech, etc.)
 - [3] Why do they react this way?
 - *Ego Eimi* – I AM. →→ More on this later! ←←

KEY QUESTION: Was Jesus' teaching totally unprepared for? The OT laid two important foundations. (Re: stained glass!)

[3A] The OT's 'Ambiguous Monotheism'

- **The LORD God is One** – but exactly *how* the LORD God is one is at times mysterious and unclear.
 - Contra Islamic and Jewish apologists – there's much more going on than simplistic Unitarianism.
 - Something the ancient Christians noticed almost immediately.

- **Christophany – the “it couldn’t be” moment!**
 - NOTE: they’re not necessarily ‘doctrine proper’.
 - BUT – we do receive them as gift, hope & treasure!
 - They were received as such by many ancient Christians.
 - (E.g. Justin Martyr in *Dialogue With Trypho* LXI, Origen in *De Principiis*, etc.)
- **Key Examples:**
 - Gen 32:22-31
 - Jacob’s wrestler.
 - Josh 5:13-15
 - The warrior of the LORD.
 - Dan 3:24-26
 - The fourth man in the fire.
 - Gen 18:1-8 – the three angels.
 - [a] The framing of the narrator – Gen 18:1.
 - [b] Abraham’s reaction – Gen 18:2.
 - [c] The divine name – Gen 18:22ff, one stays w/Ab...
- To a lesser extent, **the role of Wisdom.**
 - **LOOK:** Prov 8:22-31 – cf. 1 Cor 1:23-24
 - “With you is Wisdom, who knows your works and was present when you made the world” [Wisdom 9:9]
 - “Put your neck under her yoke, and let your souls receive instruction; it is to be found close by” [Sirach 51:26]

[3B] Second Temple Expectation

- In particular, from the Book of Isaiah.
 - The ‘Fifth Gospel’ [John Sawyer].
 - Jesus’ Gospel [Wright].
 - “He should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet because he describes all the mysteries of Christ and the Church so clearly that you would think he is composing a history of what has already happened rather than prophesying about what is to come” [Jerome, *Prologue to Isaiah*]
- **Something’s coming** – “*I am about do a new thing...*” [Isa 43:19]
 - **LOOK:** Isa 7:13-14
 - God will be an Immanuel God – how?

- **LOOK:** Isa 9:6-7
 - In a miraculous child – Israel’s Mighty God + Prince.
- **LOOK:** Isa 30:19-20
 - Israel’s Teacher God won’t hide himself forever.
 - “No longer shall they teach each other... for they shall all know me” [Jer 31:34]
- **LOOK:** Isa 40:1-2 / 40:3-5
 - Be comforted – why? / Prepare the highways!
- **LISTEN:**
 - “For I know their works and their thoughts, and **I am coming** to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory, and I will set a sign among them” [Isa 66:18-19]

This was one of the most exciting, most significant expectations of all Second Temple Judaism – “I AM COMING!”

- Jesus undertook a symbolic action through which He intended to evoke, and to enact, the long-promised return of YHWH to Zion. ... [The] fulfilment of YHWH’s promises and purposes, in their rich variety and tight thematic unity, was about to occur. ... He would Himself act and speak as their embodiment, bringing the promises to fulfilment and the purposes to fruition [Wright – Jesus and the Victory of God]

[4] The Doctrine of the Incarnation – NT Teaching

Then we come to the NT – there’s excitement and anticipation again!

- **LOOK:** Matt 2:1-12
 - What do the Magi do?
 - **They worship!** *Proskuneo* – re: Matt 4.
- **BUT ALSO:** Isa 60:1-6 + Micah 5:2-4
 - **Matthew builds his nativity narrative around this same prophetic expectation – framing Christ’s birth as the glorious appearance of God Himself!**
 - “He comes without pomp, without violence, without money, without sword and muskets. He disregards the great and mighty cities, Jerusalem the most holy, Rome the most powerful, and others of the king, and chooses for his birthplace the poor and lowly Bethlehem, so that one might judge, from the very place of his birth, what a Governor he would be: poor and mean before the world, but rich in spirit and all heavenly gifts” [Luther – Festival of the Epiphany House Postil on Matt 2:1-12, Second Part]

When Jesus begins his ministry, he does three amazing things.

[4A] He constantly alludes to this same prophetic expectation.

- *“He will raise a signal for a nation far away, and whistle for a people at the ends of the earth” [Isa 5:26 – cf. 43:6]*
 - →→ *“Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth” [Mk 13:27]*
- *“The nations roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away, chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind” [Isa 17:13 – cf. Ps 107:28-29]*
 - →→ *“He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be Still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm” [Mk 4:39]*
- *“A pleasant vineyard, sing about it! I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. ... If it gives me thorns and briers, I will march to battle against it. I will burn it up” [Isa 27:1-4]*
 - →→ *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. ... Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned” [John 15:1+6]*
- *“And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD ... I will bring to my holy mountain... for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the LORD God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather to them besides those already gathered” [Isa 56:6-8]*
 - →→ *“I have sheep that do not belong to this fold...” [John 15:16]*

[4B] He casts himself in the role of the LORD returning in glory

- **LOOK:** Matt 5:27-28 – **Lawgiver**
- **LOOK:** Matt 25:31-33 – **Judge** (Ezek 34:17)
- **LOOK:** John 10:14-16 – **Shepherd** (cf. Ezek 34:11-12)

[4C] He describes himself in a manner proper of the LORD alone

- **Sometimes in *subtle* ways:**
 - **LOOK:** Matt 26:18 – the Teacher of Isa 30
 - **LOOK:** John 2:19-21 – the Temple (cf. Ezek 43:6-9)
- **Sometimes in shockingly *explicit* ways:**
 - **LOOK:** Mark 2:1-5 – the Forgiver of Sin
 - **LOOK:** Mark 14:61-64 – the Son of Man (cf. Dan 7:14ff)
- **So we’re taken full circle to John 8:58 – the I AM sayings!**

- **DISCUSS:** What other I AM sayings do we know?
 - In John: (1) Bread of Life [6:35-48]; (2) Light of the World [8:12]; (3) the Gate [10:7]; (4) Good Shepherd [10:11ff]; (5) Resurrection + Life [11:25]; (6) Way, Truth, Life [14:6]; (7) True Vine [15:1ff].
 - Raymond Brown: some synoptic examples, too.
- **LOOK:** John 8:58-59
 - **DISCUSS:** What is Jesus doing?
 - Definitely Exo 3 – but again, Isaiah as Jesus’ Gospel!
 - Compare John 13:19 with Isa 43:10.

Isa 43:10 – Greek Septuagint

Hina gnote kai pisteusetete kai sunete hoti ego eimi.

2962 3588 2316 2532 3588 3816-1473 3739 1586 2443
 κύριος ο θεός και ο παῖς μου ὃν ἐξελεξάμην ἵνα
 the LORD God, and my servant whom I chose. That
 1097 2532 4100 2532 4920 3754 1473
 γνῶτε και πιστεύσητε και συνήτε ὅτι ἐγώ
 you should know, and should trust, and should perceive that I
 1510.2.1 1715 1473 3756 1096 243 2316 2532
 εἰμι ἐμπροσθέν μου οὐκ ἐγένετο ἄλλος θεός και
 am. Before me [³did not ⁴exist ¹another ²God], and

John 13:19 – Greek NT

Hina pisteusetete hotan genetai hoti ego eimi.

19 ἀπ’ ἀρτι᾽ λέγω ὑμῖν πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι, ἵνα ὅταν γένηται,
 From this time I tell you, before it comes to pass, that when it come
 20 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν,
 to pass, ye may believe that I am [he]. Verily verily I say to you,

This was the atomic bomb. This is the nuclear explosion.

And how did the early Christians respond? RIDICULOUSLY.

- John 20:28 / Rom 9:5 / Phil 2:5-7 / Col 1:15-16 / Titus 2:13 / Heb 1:3 / Heb 1:8 / 2 Pet 1:1.
 - Most famous of all – **LOOK:** John 1:1.
 - NOT: *kai theios en ho logos* (and the word was divine)
 - NOT: *kai logos en ho theos* (and God was the word)
 - BUT: *kai theos en ho logos* – the Word is God himself

[5] The Doctrine of the Incarnation – God’s Purpose

Does this amaze you? The God of GIGAWAN did this...!!

“[We] are lost in the deepest amazement that such a nature, pre-eminent above all others, should have divested itself of its condition of majesty and become man, and tabernacled amongst men... But of all the marvellous and mighty acts related of Him, this altogether surpasses human admiration, and is beyond the power of mortal frailness to understand or feel, how that mighty power of divine majesty, that very Word of the Father, and that very wisdom of God, in which were created all things, visible and invisible, can be believed to have existed within the limits of that man who appeared in Judea; nay, that the Wisdom of God can have entered the womb of a woman, and have been born an infant, and have uttered wailings like the cries of little children!” [Origen, c. 220sAD – DP, VI.1-2]

“[Let us] marvel that things divine have been revealed to us by such humble means ... He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God. He manifested Himself by means of a body in order that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father. He endured shame from men that we might inherit immortality. He Himself was unhurt by this, for He is impassable and incorruptible; but by His own impassability He kept and healed the suffering men on whose account He thus endured. ... [So] many are the Saviour’s achievements that follow from His Incarnation, that to try to number them is like gazing at the open sea and trying to count the waves. ... [Everything] about it is marvellous, and wherever a man turns his gaze he sees the Godhead of the Word, and is smitten with awe.” [Athanasius, *De Inc.* VIII.54]

So we’re forced inexorably, inevitably, into three conclusions.

[5A] FIRST: God is God and God is Christlike

- **“God is Christlike, and in him is no un-Christlikeness at all”**
[Michael Ramsey]
 - Do want to know what God is like? Look to Christ
 - Do you want to know a Word? Look to Christ!
 - Do you want assurance? Look to Christ!
 - Do you want forgiveness? Look to Christ!
 - Do you want justice? Look to Christ!
- **This should total our theology.**
 - Like the Trinity, we cannot think Christianly without this.
 - “The name of Jesus is not only light but also food; it is also oil, without which all food of the soul is dry; it is salt, without whose seasoning whatever I set before us is insipid; finally, it is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, rejoicing in the heart, and at the same time medicine. Every discourse in which His name is not spoken is without savour” *Inst.* II.16.1
- **There is not a single doctrine capable of being understood without Christ as the engine.**
 - Creation / Marriage / Gender / Anthropology / Election / Assurance / Apologetics, etc.
 - “There is a direct line of logical entailment from the premise that Jesus was God... to the conclusion that Christianity, and Christianity alone, was founded by God in person; and from all this to the conclusion that God must want all human children to be related to Him through this religion which He has Himself founded for us” [Hick, 1982, *God Has Many Names*]
- **Not just doctrine, but life itself.**
 - Prayer, Suffering.
 - “God, the God I love and worship, reigns in sorrow on the Tree / Broken, bleeding, but unconquered, very God of God to me. / In the life of one an outcast and a vagabond on earth / In the common things He valued, and proclaimed of priceless worth / And above all in the horror of the cruel death He died / Thou hast bid us seek Thy glory, in a criminal crucified.” [G.A. Studdert-Kennedy – *The Unutterable Beauty*]

[5B] SECOND: The God-Man is our Champion

- *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself”* [2 Cor 5:19]
 - God’s modus operandi – Isa 52, exalting the Son, for us.
 - *“For the Creator of the world is truly the Word of God: and this is our Lord, who in the last times was made man, existing in this world, and who in an invisible manner contains all things created, and is inherent in the entire creation, since the Word of God governs and arranges all things; and therefore he came to his own in a visible manner, and was made flesh, and hung upon the tree, **that he might sum up all things in himself**”* [Irenaeus – Adv. Her. V.XVIII.3]

[5C] THIRD: This is the Fulfilment of God’s One Promise

- **The Incarnation was no accident...**
 - It was inevitable conclusion of God’s eternal plan.
 - It was planned and prepared for, the whole time.
- **RECALL:** Gen 2:8 – God walks with us in the garden.
 - God’s menacing, mysterious promise to Satan:
 - *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel”* [Gen 2:15]
- **LOOK:** Exo 29:45 – God’s salvation plan = God With Us.
 - **LOOK:** Ezek 37:24-28

THEN WHAT HAPPENS?

“Mary will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins’. All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call him Immanuel” [Matt 1:21-22]

- The eternal Son of God leaves the splendour of heaven.
- The Creator of all things enters his own creation.
- He adds to himself a human nature.
- He tabernacles amongst us.
 - *“And all the flowers looked up at him, and all the stars looked down”* [Chesterton]

AND NOW THE SECOND ADVENT:

“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away’. And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new”

[Rev 21:3-5] / *“In Christ two natures met to be thy cure”* [George Herbert]

