Classen Blvd. Baptist Church

SONday morning

December 15, 2024

<u>CALL to PRAYER</u> - Hebrews 4:15-16

Thank God for our sympathetic High Priest

Intro - The traditional religious calendar says this is Advent season. *Advent* = arrival / coming. Advent can refer to Jesus' First Coming or His Second Coming. And so, the Advent season is the countdown to the arrival of Jesus Christ. No one knows the day or the hour of Christ's coming; (either His 1st or 2nd coming). But there are certain essential elements that we do know and today we are going to talk about an essential. Without this essential you do not have Christianity; in fact, you wind up with the opposite of Christianity. The title of today message is The Spirit of Anti-Christ. This may seem an odd title during Advent, but the spirit of anti-Christ changes an essential about Jesus Christ's arrival. That essential is that Jesus Christ came, and is coming, in the flesh. Christianity is a flesh and bones religion. It is not ethereal or mystical, it is material. It is not fiction or fake...it is flesh & bone. Christianity is not a set of theoretical ideas; it is set in the tangible person & work of Jesus Christ. God became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is the flesh & bone image of the invisible God. The mystery of The Eternal God becoming material man is an essential part of the message of Christianity. Christianity is real and it corresponds to reality. It is about a real Person who really came and really lived... died... raised ...ascended... and is really coming again. He can really save you. A flesh & blood Savior that can redeem you body, soul & spirit. Our human existence is in the flesh and our Creator became incarnate - flesh. Our text today gives warning about those who want to mystify the material in Jesus' arrival. They want to separate what God has joined together. THE THE REAL WARNING

2 John 7 - The Spirit of Anti-Christ

THE WARNING

- > The Holy Spirit often warns us about deceivers & deception that creep into our religion.
 - 2 John 7 many deceivers...anti-christ (1 John 4:1)
 - 2 Cor. 11:3-4
- The deception is a distortion of Jesus Christ.
 The cults have the wrong christ.
 - They talk about "Jesus", but it is a different Jesus
 - They talk about the "gospel", but it is a different gospel. (Gal. 1:6-7)
 - You must probe beneath the surface of the semantics.
 - Define the terms and that will help ferret out the false.
- > There is an ancient heresy (that is still around today) called *Gnosticism*
 - Gnosticism claimed a special knowledge (*GR "gnosis"*) into spiritual understanding
 - They had the secret
 - o Gnosticism elevated the *spiritual* above the *material*
 - The flesh was seen as evil and irrelevant God would never be flesh
 - Gnosticism taught a different Jesus (gnostic gospels)
 - Cerinthus (heretic from Ephesus) taught that the spirit of christ came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him before his death. (John vigorously opposed Cerinthus)
 - Their "jesus" was some sort of an Avatar
 - "The Christ" was separate from Jesus and could switch to a different person/prophet)

- > I heard a form of this heresy on Christian radio yesterday
 - *"The real story of the night before Christmas"* Mary goes into labor on earth and then God the Father sends Jesus to take on a body at birth
- > Beware of the many distortions about who Jesus Christ is
 - 2 John 7 1 John 4:1-3
 - The spirit of anti-christ denies that Jesus is fully God and fully man in one Person
 - It denies the virgin conception and virgin birth
 - It denies that the 1st & 2nd Advent are in the flesh (only spiritual comings)
 - The spirit of anti-christ separates what God has joined together and it denies that God came, or is coming, in the flesh

THE REAL

- > Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God
 - Micah 5:2 He was born at Bethlehem, but He did not begin at Bethlehem
 - John 1:1-4
- God became flesh
 - o John 1:14
 - о 1 Tim. 3:16 NKJV
 - *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:*

God was manifested in the flesh. Justified in the Spirit. Seen by angels. Preached among the Gentiles. Believed on in the world. Received up in glory."

- Col. 1:15-17
- Col. 2:9
- Phil. 2:6-7
- > A body was prepared
 - Heb. 10:5
- Jesus was God incarnate from conception
 - o Luke 1:32-35
 - Even when Christ was but days old in the womb Elizabeth (and 6 month gestation John) recognized the incarnation (Luke 1:39-44) God in the flesh from the womb
- Why is this so important?
 - It is important because it is true but also because it is tangible
 - o 1 John 1:1-4
 - Christianity is a flesh & bones religion...not mythical but material.
 - A religion for humans about our God who became human
- > Jesus will forever and always be the God-Man
 - He is fully human (flesh & bones) right now at the right hand of the Father
 - When He comes again He will come in the flesh (He was, is, and is to come...in the flesh!)
- > There are two famous Advent hymns that sings of Christ coming in the flesh
 - #87 "Joy to the World" (2nd Advent)
 - #88 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (1st Advent)
 - Second stanza "...veiled in flesh the God-head see, Hail the incarnate Deity! Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Immanuel..."
 - Incarnate = in flesh
 Immanuel = God with us