

## FROM EXTRAORDINARY TO ORDINARY TO MAKE THE ORDINARY, EXTRAORDINARY

### I. Various Scriptures

A. Last Monday, on my way to officiate a funeral north of Newark, I sat at a traffic light. I saw a Red Baron Pizza truck turn past me. I wondered about the driver, who he was, how he ended up with that job, did it provide for his family. I admire anyone who does their job faithfully and well, no matter how ordinary it may be.

B. The funeral I conducted was for a woman I did not know. There wasn't even an obituary. Her elderly husband wasn't able to make the trip from Florida to lay his wife to rest. While only 3 were expected, 20 people came. This mother, grandmother, aunt, and friend was loved. Her life could be described as ordinary.

C. Most of us here might consider our lives as ordinary. We aren't famous. We're known by a handful of family members and friends. Books won't be written about us and stories told about us will not long endure. But if Christ is Lord & Savior of our lives, our futures will indeed be extraordinary beyond the pale.

D. As we all prepare to celebrate Christmas in a week, even the best of our celebrations may be considered ordinary. News organizations won't show up at our houses to interview us about our Christmas gatherings. But even if our celebrations fall into the category of ordinary, what we'll be celebrating falls into the category of extraordinary. The incarnation is about how the Extraordinary One became ordinary in order to make what was ordinary, extraordinary.

E. Let's begin with the Extraordinary Son of God: **John 1:1-3** (ESV) *1 In the beginning (Think eternity past) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.* **Colossians 1:15-17** (ESV) *15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (The Son of God had an extraordinary life long before the Bethlehem feeding trough!)* **Hebrews 1:2-3a** (ESV) *2 but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. 3a He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. (Raise your hand if that sounds extraordinary to you!)*

F. Now listen and watch how the Extraordinary becomes ordinary: **John 1:14** (NKJV) *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.* **Luke 2:6-7** (ESV) *6 And while they were there (in Bethlehem), the time came for her (Mary) to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn Son (Jesus) and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.* **Isaiah 53:2** (NASB) *2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. (God the Son became the Son of Man!)*

G. So what do some of the pillars of the faith have to say about all this? Let me read their quotes and then take some paraphrase-like liberties:

1) Athanasius said: "He became what we are that He might make us what He is." (My paraphrase: "He (The extraordinary Son of God) became what we are (an ordinary human) that He (The Extraordinary One) might make us (ordinary ones) what He is (i.e. extraordinary)."

2) C.S. Lewis said similar to Athanasius: "The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God." (My paraphrase: "The (Extraordinary) Son of God became (an ordinary) man to enable (ordinary) men to become (extraordinary) sons of God."

3) Augustine said: "He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute." (My paraphrase: "He (The extraordinary Son of God) was created of (an ordinary) mother whom He (The extraordinary Son of God) created. He (The extraordinary Son of God) was carried by hands (of ordinary parents) that He (The extraordinary Son of God) formed. He (The extraordinary Son of God) cried in the manger in wordless infancy (like an ordinary baby), He the Word (The extraordinary Son of God), without whom all (ordinary) human eloquence is mute."

4) Charles Spurgeon, without paraphrasing: "Infinite, and an infant. Eternal, and yet born of a woman. Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast. Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms. King of angels, and yet the reputed Son of Joseph. Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised Son."

5) **J.I. Packer, without paraphrasing:** “The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation.” **(The incarnation is about the Extraordinary One becoming ordinary, in order to make what was ordinary, extraordinary.)**

**H. Philippians 2:5-11 (ESV) sums all this up in masterfully:** *5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**I. God the Son became the Son of Man, and remains fully God and fully man. His birth was announced by an extraordinary choir of angels to ordinary shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night. While the Holy Spirit brought forth Jesus' extraordinary conception, it happened with an ordinary Jewish virgin named Mary. While Jesus was the extraordinary heaven-born Prince of Peace, His earthly parents were ordinary--Mary a wonderful mother and Joseph a good father who taught his extraordinary Boy to be an exceptional, howbeit, ordinary carpenter. When this extraordinary Messiah entered into His ministry, He chose twelve ordinary men to be His disciples. Through these ordinary men, He would commission them with the extraordinary Gospel, sending them to all the world to proclaim and make disciples of other ordinary people like themselves. And finally the Extraordinary One, aimed His extraordinary mercy, grace, and love to the ordinary likes of us--to make us a part of His extraordinary family forever!**

**J. So to close, let me give you a picture of the extraordinary future awaiting us. It should fill your hearts with extraordinary hope and anticipation. Revelation 21:1-8 (ESV)** **1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **(Sounds extraordinary to me!)** **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” **(This is even more extraordinary!)** **5** And He who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also He said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” **6** And He said to me, “It is done! **(Already and not yet!)** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. **7** The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be His God and he will be My son. **8** But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

\* Close with Prayer...

### **[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)**

#### **[John 1:1-3 \(ESV\)](#)**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

#### **[Colossians 1:15-17 \(ESV\)](#)**

**15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. **17** And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

#### **[Hebrews 1:2-3a \(ESV\)](#)**

**2** but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. **3a** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.

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### **Quote by Athanasius**

"He became what we are that He might make us what He is."

### **Quote by C.S. Lewis**

"The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God."

### **Quote by St. Augustine**

"He was created of a mother whom He created. He was carried by hands that He formed. He cried in the manger in wordless infancy, He the Word, without whom all human eloquence is mute."

### **Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon**

"Infinite, and an infant. Eternal, and yet born of a woman. Almighty, and yet hanging on a woman's breast. Supporting a universe, and yet needing to be carried in a mother's arms. King of angels, and yet the reputed Son of Joseph. Heir of all things, and yet the carpenter's despised Son."

### **Quote by J.I. Packer**

"The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation."

### **Film Clips & Other Links**

#### **The Grand Miracle by C.S. Lewis (Doodle)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv4kx2QP4UM>

#### **The Doctrine of Incarnation - D.A. Carson**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UOMTr1b6lo>

#### **New Birth, Impossible Without Incarnation - John Piper**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzYCpsYMOT4>

#### **The Importance of Affirming the Incarnation - Erwin Lutzer**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLdiKbPKYGQ>

**Dogs Go to Heaven - Mark Lowry :-)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-va3qeGYHA>

**Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)**

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

### Bonus Stuff

#### Quote by Wayne Grudem

"[The incarnation] is by far the most amazing miracle of the entire Bible--far more amazing than the resurrection and more amazing even than the creation of the universe. The fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become man and join Himself to a human nature forever, so that infinite God became one person with finite man, will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe."

- Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, p. 563.

#### Quote by Charles Hodge

"A Christian is one who recognizes Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, as God manifested in the flesh, loving us and dying for our redemption; and who is so affected by a sense of the love of this incarnate God as to be constrained to make the will of Christ the rule of His obedience, and the glory of Christ the great end for which He lives."

#### C.S. Lewis On The Incarnation

The central miracle asserted by Christians is the Incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this. . . .

In the Christian story God descends to re-ascend. He comes down; down from the heights of absolute being into time and space, down into humanity . . . down to the very roots and sea-bed of the Nature He has created.

But He goes down to come up again and bring the ruined world up with Him. One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated burden. He must stoop in order to lift, he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulders.

Or one may think of a diver, first reducing himself to nakedness, then glancing in mid-air, then gone with a splash, vanished, rushing down through green and warm water into black and cold water, down through increasing pressure into the death-like region of ooze and slime and old decay; then up again, back to colour and light, his lungs almost bursting, till suddenly he breaks surface again, holding in his hand the dripping, precious thing that he went down to recover. He and it are both coloured now that they have come up into the light: down below, where it lay colourless in the dark, he lost his colour, too.

In this descent and re-ascent everyone will recognise a familiar pattern: a thing written all over the world. It is the pattern of all vegetable life. It must belittle itself into something hard, small and deathlike, it must fall into the ground: thence the new life re-ascends.

It is the pattern of all animal generation too. There is descent from the full and perfect organisms into the spermatozoon and ovum, and in the dark womb a life at first inferior in kind to that of the species which is being reproduced: then the slow ascent to the perfect embryo, to the living, conscious baby, and finally to the adult.

So it is also in our moral and emotional life. The first innocent and spontaneous desires have to submit to the deathlike process of control or total denial: but from that there is a re-ascent to fully formed character in which the strength of the original material all operates but in a new way. Death and Rebirth--go down to go up--it is a key principle. Through this bottleneck, this belittlement, the highroad nearly always lies.

The doctrine of the Incarnation, if accepted, puts this principle even more emphatically at the centre. The pattern is there in Nature because it was first there in God. All the instances of it which I have mentioned turn out to be but transpositions of the Divine theme into a minor key. I am not now referring simply to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. The total pattern, of which they are only the turning point, is the real Death and Re-birth: for certainly no seed ever fell from so fair a tree into so dark and cold a soil as would furnish more than a faint analogy to this huge descent and re-ascension in which God dredged the salt and oozy bottom of Creation.

- C. S. Lewis, Miracles (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 112, 115-17.

### **Mary Did You Know**

By Mark Lowry & Buddy Green

Mary, did you know  
That your baby boy will one day walk on water?  
Did you know  
That your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?  
Did you know  
That your baby boy has come to make you new?  
This child that you've delivered  
Will soon deliver you

Mary, did you know  
That your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?  
Did you know  
That your baby boy will calm a storm with his hand?  
Did you know  
That your baby boy has walked where angels trod?  
And when you kiss your little boy  
You've kissed the face of god

Mary, did you know?  
The blind will see  
The deaf will hear  
And the dead will live again  
The lame will leap  
The dumb will speak  
The praises of the lamb

Mary, did you know  
That your baby boy is lord of all creation?  
Did you know  
That your baby boy will one day rules the nations?  
Did you know  
That your baby boy is heaven's perfect lamb?  
This sleeping child you're holding  
Is the great I am

### **The Christmas Harmonica**

"Thanks for the harmonica you gave me for Christmas," Johnny said to his Uncle Rodney the first time he saw him after the holidays. "It's the best Christmas present I ever got." "That's great," said Uncle Rodney. "Do you know how to play it?" "Oh, I don't play it," Johnny said. "My mom gives me a dollar a day not to play it during the day, and my dad gives me five dollars a week not to play it at night."