

God at Work

Scripture Reading — Philippians 2:5-11

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet ...
Matthew 1:22

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Bishop Shelby Spong, in his book *Christianity Must Change or Die*, takes to task the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the teaching that the Son of God became human. His argument? He says Paul thought Jesus became God's Son at his resurrection. He says Mark came up with the idea that Jesus became God's Son at his baptism. And he says Matthew came up with the idea that Jesus became God's Son at his conception. Was Jesus the Son of God? Was Mary a pregnant virgin? Nonsense, says Spong! For Spong, nothing is at stake if we throw out these teachings.

But Spong is wrong. *Everything* is at stake. What's on the line is redemption itself.

We have discovered that scandal is rampant in the Christmas story. It seems to touch everyone who becomes part of the Advent drama. The reason is simple. There's a deep, powerful scandal in the Christmas story that touches God himself. It's the scandal of a God who is willing to come to earth in human flesh. It's the scandal of a God who is willing to empty himself and take the form of a servant. It is the scandal, as Lauren Winner describes it, of the "Incredible Shrinking God!"

This, in fact, is the key scandal of Christmas. It's the core of the Christmas story. Do you believe that by this divine visit the world is redeemed?

Prayer

Lord, help us lay aside our pride and embrace a humility that mirrors the sacrifice of your Son. Break down our defenses and help us embrace the wisdom of the incarnation. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Seasons](#), [Christmas](#)

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