

"What We Believe"

Session 8

Incarnation: God Comes

I) INTRODUCTION

- A) When Adam and Eve sinned against God they were given the promise that from their seed would come One who would soon crush Satan. This promise of a coming Messiah was carried dearly by all the characters in the Old Testament as God was progressively revealing Himself to humanity.
- B) This progressive revelation of God would find its greatest fulfillment in the Birth of Jesus Christ.
- C) **Hebrews 1:1-3** *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the Prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power..."*
- D) The progressive revelation of God, which was seen through promises, covenants and prophetic words was finally revealed in what theology calls the *Incarnation of Jesus Christ*.

II) What Is The Incarnation?

- A) The word incarnation means *coming in the flesh, or that God actually took on flesh or meat*.
- B) **John 1:14** *"And the Word became flesh (carne) and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten (uniquely given) of the Father full of grace and truth."*
- C) Christian incarnation means that God became a Man, nothing more and nothing less. This doesn't mean that that Man became a God, or that God lost His ability to be God when He took on the form of a Man, but rather that God became a Man, He was God also joined with humanity.
- D) Jesus was called the Son of God in that He was begotten by the Father, but also since Jesus was born of a virgin and didn't have an earthly seed from a natural father.
- E) **Matthew 1:18** *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows; After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with Child of the Holy Spirit."*
- F) In 451 A.D. a council met and decreed that Jesus Christ was one Person with two natures, divinity and humanity. This is why we call Him Jesus Christ. Jesus being His humanity and Christ being His divinity.
 - 1) Jesus—Savior or *God is salvation*. It's an earthly name taken from the name Joshua.
 - 2) Christ—This points to His anointed office, or that He is the anointed Messiah or the anointed One.
- G) One of the early Church fathers, Augustine, said "that Christ added to what He was not, but He did not lose what He (already) was."

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- H) The incarnation plainly tells us two things; 1) God became like us, 2) And that Jesus is totally unlike us.

III) How Did They Know Jesus Was Coming?

- A) For maybe as many as 5,000 years the children of Israel carried the promise of a coming Messiah dear to their heart. There are over 330 prophetic words given in the Old Testament about the coming of Jesus Christ that were either completely fulfilled or partially fulfilled in the life of Christ.
- B) They Knew He was coming;
- 1) **Genesis 3:15** *"And I will put enmity between you and the women, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*
- C) They knew how He would come;
- 1) **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."*
- D) They knew where He would come;
- 1) **Micah 5:2** *"But you Bethlehem, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting."*
- E) They knew when He would come;
- 1) **Malachi 3:1** *"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, says the Lord of Hosts."*
- F) In John 5:39, Jesus rebukes the religious leaders of His day because they knew all these passages and more, but didn't recognize the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ when He was standing right before them.
- G) **John 5:39-40** *"You search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."*

IV) How Human Was Jesus?

- A) Many years ago a man stood on the University of Washington campus with a giant sign that read "Jesus Farted." As you can suspect it created quite a stir among both Christians and non-Christians. Although many find this kind of statement offensive, and sacrilegious this man was doing it to show that Jesus was a Man like everyone else who lived a life like everyone else.
- B) Jesus would've most likely been seen carrying a lunchbox in one hand and a toolbox in the other. He would have calluses on His hands, burped, used the bathroom and blew boogers.
- C) Jesus wasn't an angel floating around with long flowing hair like our pictures portray Him to be. He wasn't a white American with blond hair, blue eyes and a perfect complexion. He wasn't the

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poster Child for Paul Mitchell hair products, with a halo over His head and a monotone voice like some sort James Earl Jones, or Charlton Heston Bible narrator.

D) Jesus was a dude, who worked hard, who understood what it meant to be a Man and live like a Son underneath a hardworking father.

E) Here are some things that make Jesus really Human;

1) He was born of a woman He had a normal body of flesh and bone Grew up as a boy
He had a family He obeyed His parents He worshipped God,
prayed and fasted He worked as a carpenter He got hungry and thirsty
He asked for information He was stressed He was astonished He was happy
He had compassion He had male and female friends that He deeply loved
Gave encouraging compliments He loved Children He had a brother He had
a human name He grew physically, socially and mentally He showed frustration
He celebrated holidays He went to parties He loved His mom He suffered
He cried He was forsaken He died

F) Throughout history and present day both the humanity and divinity of Jesus have been challenged.

1) Humanity—The human race, human nature and all human beings collective.

2) Divinity—The quality of being divine, a divine being or divine nature.

G) There are different groups that only acknowledge Jesus' divinity or that He was fully God and other groups that only acknowledge Jesus' humanity or that He was fully Man. What you don't find very often are those that seek to see Jesus rightly as being both fully Man and fully God.

H) Here is what some others have had to say about the incarnation;

1) "To be a Christian is to believe in the impossible. Jesus was God, Jesus was Human."

(i) Madeleine L'Engle

2) "Jesus Christ, the condescension of divinity, and the exaltation of humanity."

(i) Phillips Brooks

3) "You should point to the whole Man of Jesus and say, *That is God.*"

(i) Martin Luther

4) "He became what we are, that we might become what He is."

(i) Saint Athanasius of Alexandria

I) Many people wrongly say that when Jesus came the first time He was the Lamb of God and when He comes the second time He will be the Lion. Though in His first coming, His primary mission was to be the Lamb of God, that didn't mean that He wasn't still a Lion. And when He appears at the second coming as the Lion He will still be the Lamb of God. His judgments as a Lion will still be tempered with the tenderness of a Lamb, having deep compassion for His creation.

J) **Revelation 5:5-6** *"But one of the elders said to me, do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."*

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And I looked, and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain..."

- K) Thanks to Mark Driscoll in his book "Vintage Jesus" we get a funny, very normal look at Jesus' humanity as he gives us an overview of the Gospel of Mark;
- 1) Mark 1 Jesus yells at strangers to repent of their sin. He orders some guys to quit their jobs and follow Him, then He tells a demon to shut up, and a leper not to speak.
 - 2) Mark 2 Jesus picks a fight with some well mannered religious types.
 - 3) Mark 3 Jesus gets angry and grieves and then ignores His mom.
 - 4) Mark 4 Jesus rebukes the wind which causes a local uproar with the *greeners*.
 - 5) Mark 5 Jesus kills 2,000 pigs and sends the animal rights activists into a panic and leaves a shortage of bacon.
 - 6) Mark 6 Jesus offends some people and seems to need sensitivity training.
 - 7) Mark 7 Jesus offends some religious types who have questions for Him and then calls them hypocrites and goes on a lengthy speech about their lives.
 - 8) Mark 8 Jesus sighs in frustration, spits on a handicapped guy and calls Peter *Satan*.
 - 9) Mark 9 Jesus gets fed up with the people and asks how long He must bear with them? Then tells some others to cut off their hands, their feet and gouge out their eyes.
 - 10) Mark 10 Jesus tells the rich guy to sell all that he has and give his money to the poor.
 - 11) Mark 11 Jesus asks His disciples to steal a donkey that doesn't belong to Him or them, curses a fig tree and breaks up the temple business with a whip.
 - 12) Mark 12 Jesus tells people they're wrong and that they don't know their Bible, and tells other Sunday school teachers they are going to hell.
 - 13) Mark 13 Jesus threatens to destroy the temple.
 - 14) Mark 14 Jesus yells at His friends for taking a nap after He has run them all over the country for the past three years like some wild workaholic that needs to drink decaf.
 - 15) Mark 15 The religious folks kill Jesus for being the way He is which seems okay with most everyone except a few ladies.
 - 16) Mark 16 Jesus rises from the dead and the trembling disciples are astonished that He is sending them out to handle snakes while they offend the world with the Gospel of His life.
- L) This is a great look at the Gospel of Mark that helps us reconcile God and Man dwelling together in the person of Jesus Christ.
- M) While many Christians spend lots of energy trying to think about how to get out of this sick, broken, dark, twisted and demented world, Jesus gave up His privilege in Heaven to become a Man and not only suffer with us, but to suffer for us.

V) How Divine Was Jesus?

- A) Jesus claimed to be God.
- 1) **Luke 22:70** *"Then they all said, are You then the Son of God? So He said to them, You rightly say that I am."*
 - 2) **John 4:25-26** *"The women said to Him, I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. When He comes He will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak with you am He."*

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- 3) **John 6:38** *"For I have come down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*
 - (i) Jesus didn't say He was a way, a truth or a life, but *the way, the truth and the life*. Though Jesus was a Prophet, though He was a fighter for the marginalized of the earth, though He was a Preacher and Teacher, beyond all that, He was Fully God.
- B) Jesus performed miracles.
 - 1) **John 20:30** *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book."*
 - 2) **John 22:25** *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."*
 - 3) Jesus suggested that though people didn't believe in Him as a Person, they should believe in Him for the sake of the Miracles that He performed.
- C) Jesus said that He was sinless.
 - 1) Nobody in history past or in our present has ever been able to say with any credibility that He is totally sinless in His thoughts, motives and actions, except Jesus Christ.
 - 2) **John 8:7** *"So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, he who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her."*
- D) Jesus forgave sin.
 - 1) **Luke 7:48** *"Then He said to her, your sins are forgiven you."*
 - 2) Much of our earth's resources are spent trying to fix the problems of sin that originated at the fall in the garden. Only Jesus is able to forgive sin and create clean people by the power of His great name.
- E) For many of us we think that our humanity drives His divinity away. And then when we finally connect with His Divinity we somehow forget about our humanity.
- F) We must learn to allow His divinity to live alongside our humanity and never forget that it was because my humanity was lost that Jesus came in divinity.
- G) If we don't see the humanity of Christ we fail to become humble people. But when we see both His humanity and divinity alive in the incarnate Christ we become humble and filled with power to serve the earth like Jesus did.