



Lesson Title: The Why's of the Gospels—Why the Incarnation?



Key Concept: The Gospels' themes are often obscure to us, but God has a reason for including them. The incarnation was a miracle, and it has critical implications for how we see God and how God sees us.



Scriptures:

So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

(John 1:14 *New Living Translation*)

¹⁴So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. ¹⁶So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. (Hebrews 4:14–16 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:19–20



Lesson Thoughts:

The word incarnation comes from the Latin verb *incarno* which translates as “to make into flesh.” The term has been adopted by Christianity to describe how God, as deity, became humanity. God did not just robe himself in flesh, but he became fully human. This fully human man was also fully God. This is the miracle of the incarnation.

John's gospel helps explain that Jesus was fully human. He addresses the false teaching, held by some, that Jesus was never fully human and therefore did not suffer on the cross. The gospel of John proclaims that the Word is God. And the Word became flesh. This God became flesh, became human. John wants readers to know that Jesus was human and not a ghost who never suffered on the cross. This belief minimizes what Jesus did for all humanity and takes away the miracle

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of the incarnation. John reiterates in his first letter that Jesus was fully human, and declares if anyone refuses to confess that Jesus is in flesh that person has the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:2–3). John uses strong language to indicate how important the incarnation is to our understanding of God.

This understanding of God has implications for us today. Jesus has made his home among us. The Greek word for “home among us” alludes to the Old Testament tabernacle where the visible glory of God’s presence resided. This visible presence of God is now captured in one individual, Jesus Christ. No longer is the presence of God restricted to the glory cloud around the tabernacle, but it is alive and fully present in Christ Jesus. The book of Hebrews explains that Jesus, who is the incarnation of God, not only came to be present, but was tempted in every way that we are tempted. Jesus understands our weaknesses and temptations and experienced all our afflictions and overcame them. His experience on earth gives us confidence that we can go boldly before God with all our troubles, and he will understand. Furthermore, the incarnation is our ultimate example of the first among us to show what it truly means to be human as God intended (Colossians 1:19–20; Romans 8:29).

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Why do you think God became human?
- 2) How does the belief that Jesus is not human take away from the incarnation?
- 3) Do you believe Jesus was tempted in all things (fame, power, lust, vanity, etc.)? Explain.
- 4) Do you believe Jesus experienced all things we experience (loneliness, depression, suicide, anxiety, failure, abandonment, abuse, etc.)? Explain.
- 5) What does it mean to be “truly” human?

Next Lesson: Redemption

Notes and Reflections

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- 1) Read Psalm 139. What do you notice about the chapter? Does it bring you hope?

- 2) In what ways can you overcome your personal afflictions like Jesus overcame his?

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Notes and Reflections, cont.