

## INTRODUCTION

1. This morning we are beginning a new series called “The Christ of Christmas.”
2. In this series we will be addressing the doctrine of Christ or to use a theological term, Christology.
3. In light of the Christmas season, I want to take advantage of this time to direct your thinking to the Person of Jesus Christ in our series.
4. Our message this morning will address *The Incarnation of Christ*.
5. Next week we will address *The Offices of Christ*.
6. Then the week of Christmas we will look at *The Deity of Christ*.
7. And finally, after Christmas, *The Return of Christ*.
8. When we talk about the incarnation of Jesus Christ we are referring to Him becoming “flesh.”
9. The word incarnation is (Lat. *incarnatio*), a term meaning ‘to enter into or become flesh.’<sup>1</sup>

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Lat. Latin

10. Theologically, it is the doctrine that in Jesus of Nazareth God took on human flesh and became the divine God-man.<sup>2</sup>
  
11. The term itself is not used in the Bible, but it is based on clear references in the New Testament to Jesus as a person “in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3; Eph. 2:15; Col. 1:22)<sup>3</sup> and that’s what we are going to look at this morning.
  
12. The Chalcedonian Creed at the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), the position was adopted that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man (*vere Deo, vere homo*).
  
13. The creed said: [He is] consubstantial with the Father as to his Godhead, and consubstantial also with us as to his manhood; like unto us in all things, yet without sin; as to his Godhead, begotten of the Father before all worlds; but as to his manhood, in these days, born for us men and for our salvation, of the virgin Mary, the mother of God, one

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<sup>1</sup>Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary*. Includes index. (1st ed.) (420). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

<sup>2</sup>Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible*. Map on lining papers. (1025). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House.

<sup>3</sup>Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Rev. ed. of: *Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary*.; Includes index. Nashville: T. Nelson.

and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, known in two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without severance, and without division; the distinction of the natures being in no wise abolished by their union, but the peculiarity of each nature being maintained, and both concurring in one person and subsistence. We confess not a Son divided and sundered into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only-begotten, and God-Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ.

14. This confession was adopted in all its essential features by the Reformers at the time of the Protestant Reformation.<sup>4</sup>
15. The verse were most familiar with that describes the incarnation is John 1:14.
16. The apostle John describing Jesus in his gospel immediately brings our attention to the Divine Son in verses 1-5 and in verse 14 reveals to us the human side.
17. **John 1:14 (NASB)** <sup>14</sup> ***And the Word became flesh,*** and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
18. This verse is “the most concise biblical statement of the Incarnation...The four words with which it begins, *the Word became flesh*, expresses the reality that in the Incarnation God took on humanity; the infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible

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<sup>4</sup>Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (266). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

(cf. Col.1:15); the Creator entered His creation” (John MacArthur).

19. Jesus was 100% God and 100% man and remains forever unblemished deity, which He has had from eternity past; but He also possesses true, sinless humanity in one Person forever (cf. John 1:14; Phil. 2:7–8; 1 Tim. 3:6).<sup>5</sup>
20. Let’s notice two truths this morning regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
21. First, *the Description of the Incarnation*.

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<sup>5</sup>Enns, P. P. (1997, c1989). *The Moody handbook of theology* (222). Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press.

## I. The Description of the Incarnation

In addition to John 1:14, “And the word became flesh,” there are other Scriptures that equally describe the incarnation of Christ.

Galatians 4:4 speaks of Jesus being...

### A. Born of a Woman

1. **Galatians 4:4 (NASB)** <sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, **born of a woman**, born under the Law.

This emphasizes Jesus’ full humanity, not merely His virgin birth (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:20–25). Jesus had to be fully God for His sacrifice to be of the infinite worth needed to atone for sin. But, He also had to be fully man so He could take upon Himself the penalty of sin as the substitute for man.<sup>6</sup>

Nothing in the history of the world had been as important as this sublime event. The Son who had shared God’s glory from the beginning (John 17:5) would now empty himself (Phil 2:7) and become obedient to the Father’s sending.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Ga 4:4.

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth L. Boles, *Galatians & Ephesians*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1993). Ga 4:4.

R.C.H. Lenski says, “The phrase that begins with ἐκ denotes more than the separation from the womb, it includes the entire human nature of the Son as this was derived from his human mother. The word γενόμενον is exactly the proper word to express this thought, even the tense is very accurate. The Son’s going out from God on his mission is seen in his becoming man. He did not cease to be the Son of God when he became man. He did not drop his deity, which is an impossible thought. He remained what he was and added what he had not had, namely a human nature, derived out of a woman, a human mother. He became the God-man.”<sup>8</sup>

2. The angel said to Mary in **Luke 1:31 (NASB)**<sup>31</sup>  
"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

When Gabriel tells Mary in the clearest and simplest way about God’s intent with reference to her, if ever the interjection ἰδοῦ, “lo,” was justified, it is so here. Three brief clauses present it all. Mary shall conceive, she shall give birth to a son, and that son’s name shall be Jesus.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Columbus, O.: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937). 199.

<sup>9</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961). 65.

3. Paul wrote to the Romans describing his apostleship and being set apart to the gospel of God in **Romans 1:3 (NASB)** which is <sup>3</sup>concerning His Son, who was **born of a descendant of David according to the flesh.**

“Born” (ginomai) refers to Jesus being conceived and delivered normally, though His conception was in a virgin’s womb.

Being “a descendant of David” emphasizes that He is an actual historical figure. Many well known ancient writers, including the Roman historian Tacitus (*Annals* 15.44), the familiar Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities*, 2.18.3), and Pliny the Younger (*Letters* 10.96, 97) verify Jesus’ historicity.<sup>10</sup>

#### B. Coming in the Flesh

**1 John 4:2 (NASB)** <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that **Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is from God.

The Greek uses the participle of the perfect tense of “to come”; a more literal rendering would be, “confesses Jesus Christ (as) having come in the flesh.” The use of

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<sup>10</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Ro 1:3.

the participle characterizes the utterance as a fixed formula. The perfect tense is to show that Christ's coming in the past still influences the present.

*In the flesh*, or 'as a human being' (compare TEV), "in human form" (Goodspeed); or, where 'body' has the connotation of what is only human, 'taking his body here in the world,' 'with his very body.' For the noun see 2.16, meaning (4).<sup>11</sup>

### C. Appearing in Flesh

**1 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)** <sup>16</sup> By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: ***He who was revealed in the flesh***, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

"Revealed" (phaneroo), does not mean to bring into existence or to create but to make visible. This affirms His preexistence (cf. John 8:58; 17:5).

At the Incarnation, Jesus "although existed in the form of God...emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-

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TEV Today's English Version

<sup>11</sup>C. Haas, Marinus de Jonge and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Letters of John*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), c1972). 115.



servant, and [was] made in the likeness of men”  
(Phil.2:6-7, NASB).

“Our Lord Jesus Christ made the invisible God visible  
to human eyes” (MacArthur).

Jesus was one-hundred percent human.

“Flesh” does not refer here to sinful, fallen human  
nature, as it does in Romans 7. Rather it refers to  
humanness (Jn.1:14; Rom.1:3; Gal.4:4).

Jesus was “made in the likeness of men...and found in  
appearance as a man” (Phil.2:7-8).

This does not mean He was sinful but that He was fully  
human.

#### D. Our Likeness

1. **Romans 8:3 (NASB)** <sup>3</sup> For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.*

Take careful notice that the Lord Jesus did not come in sinful flesh itself but in “the likeness of” sinful flesh.

He did no sin (1 Pet. 2:22), He knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21), and there was no sin in Him (1 Jn.

3:5). But by coming into the world in human form, He resembled sinful humanity.

As a sacrifice for sin, Christ condemned sin in the flesh. He died not only for the sins which we commit (1 Pet. 3:18) but also for our sin nature.

In other words, He died for what we *are* just as much as for what we have *done*. In so doing, He condemned sin in the flesh.<sup>12</sup>

2. **Hebrews 2:14 (NASB)** <sup>14</sup>Therefore, since the children share in *flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same*, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.

The word “partook” (metecho) means to take hold of something that is not related to one’s own kind.

The Son of God was not by nature “flesh and blood,” but took upon Himself that nature for the sake of providing redemption for mankind.<sup>13</sup>

#### E. Body

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<sup>12</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Ro 8:3.

<sup>13</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Heb 2:14.

1. **Hebrews 10:5 (NASB)** <sup>5</sup> Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But **a body You have prepared for Me.**

This is a quotation of Psalm 40:6-8.

In the "body" which He assumed in Incarnation, Christ could say that He had come to achieve what the Old-Covenant sacrifices never achieved, the perfecting of New-Covenant worshipers.<sup>14</sup>

2. **Hebrews 10:10 (NASB)** <sup>10</sup> By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of **the body of Jesus Christ** once for all.
3. **1 John 1:1-3 (NASB)** <sup>1</sup> What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— <sup>2</sup> and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— <sup>3</sup> what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have

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<sup>14</sup>John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985). 2:803.

fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

F. Dying in the Flesh

1. **1 Peter 3:18 (NASB)** <sup>18</sup> For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been **put to death in the flesh**, but made alive in the spirit.
  
2. **1 Peter 4:1 (NASB)** <sup>1</sup> Therefore, since **Christ has suffered in the flesh**, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

So the incarnation is pictured as God becoming flesh in Jesus Christ; Jesus being born of a woman, Jesus coming in flesh, Jesus appearing in flesh, Jesus coming in our likeness, Jesus having a physically body, and Jesus dying in flesh on the cross.

All of those passages and truths reveal the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what does the incarnation mean?

Let's go further and now look at...

## II. The Explanation of the Incarnation

In God becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, we learn that Jesus was “subject to all the conditions of human existence” (Wescott).

In other words, the Scriptures reveal first of all, as we have already noted, that...

A. Jesus was Born

**Luke 2:7 (NASB)** <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

He was born the same way all people are born...of a woman, though His conception was conceived in a virgin by the Holy Spirit.

B. Jesus Grew Physically

**Luke 2:40-44 (NASB)** <sup>40</sup> **The Child continued to grow and become strong**, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. <sup>41</sup> Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when **He became twelve**, they went up *there* according to the custom of the Feast; <sup>43</sup> and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, **the boy** Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, <sup>44</sup> but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they

*began* looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

C. Jesus Grew Mentally and Physically

**Luke 2:52 (NASB)** <sup>52</sup> And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

D. Jesus Became Wearied

**John 4:1-6 (NASB)** <sup>1</sup> Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), <sup>3</sup> He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. <sup>4</sup> And He had to pass through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So He came\* to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; <sup>6</sup> and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being *wearied* from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

E. Jesus Became Thirsty

**John 4:7 (NASB)** <sup>7</sup> There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

F. Jesus Became Angry

**John 2:14-17 (NASB)** <sup>14</sup> And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*. <sup>15</sup> And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; <sup>16</sup> and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." <sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume Me."

“As John recorded this cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the synoptic gospels record a temple cleansing at the end of Jesus' ministry during the final Passover week before Jesus' crucifixion (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45, 46)” (MacArthur, MSB).

G. Jesus Became Hungry

**Matthew 4:1-2 (NASB)** <sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, **He then became hungry.**

H. Jesus Slept

**Matthew 8:24 (NASB)** <sup>24</sup> And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; ***but Jesus Himself was asleep.***

I. Jesus Became Sad

At the tomb of Lazarus, **John 11:35 (NASB)** says, Jesus wept.

J. Jesus was Tempted

**Hebrews 4:15 (NASB)** <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but ***One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.***

No one can truly **sympathize** with someone else unless he has been through a similar experience himself. As Man our Lord has shared our experiences and can therefore understand the testings which we endure. <sup>15</sup>

Jesus was sinless. He was able to be tempted according to Matthew 4, but was not able to sin.

K. Jesus Suffered

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<sup>15</sup>William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Heb 4:15.



**Isaiah 53:4-6 (NASB)** <sup>4</sup> Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

L. He died (Jn.19:30)

On the cross, prior to His death, He said in **John 19:30 (NASB)** "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Jesus' humanity doesn't mean He ceased being God.

**Colossians 2:9 (NASB)** <sup>9</sup> For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

In John 1:14, the word "became" does not "mean that Christ ceased to be the eternal Word when He became man. Though God is immutable, pure eternal 'being' and not 'becoming' as all His creatures are, in the incarnation the unchangeable (Heb.13:8) God did become fully man, yet remained fully God. He entered the realm of those who are time and space creatures and experienced life as it is for those He created" (John MacArthur, John 1-11, 39).

Cryil of Alexandria (15<sup>th</sup> century church father) said, “We do not ... assert that there was any change in the nature of the Word when it became flesh, or that it was transformed into an entire man, consisting of soul and body; but we say that the Word, in a manner indescribable and inconceivable, united personally ... to himself flesh animated with a reasonable soul, and thus became man and was called the Son of man.... The natures which were brought together to form a true unity were different; but out of both is one Christ and one Son. We do not mean that the difference of the natures is annihilated by reason of this union; but rather that the Deity and Manhood, by their inexpressible and inexplicable concurrence into unity, have produced for us the one Lord and Son Jesus Christ” (cited by MacArthur, John 1-11, 39-40).

### **CONCLUSION**

1. What are the implications of the incarnation?
2. The incarnation reveals the heart of God toward sinners.
3. Why did Jesus come?
4. **John 12:35-36 (NASB)** <sup>35</sup> So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. <sup>36</sup> "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you

may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

5. Have you believed in the Light, the Lord Jesus Christ?
6. He became man, dwelt among us for 33 years, suffered on the cross for our sins, died, and rose from the dead on the third day so that we could be forgiven of all our sin.
7. Have Jesus forgiven you of your sin?
8. I want to invite you to bow your head as we pray.
9. If you have never asked Him to save you, will you do so now?
10. Let's pray.
11. Lord's Supper.