



## **Christology-Part 3**

### **The Incarnation**

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Because you know our topic of study tonight, our particular study tonight, is under attack. From the erudite professors to the truck drivers and the welders. From the not-so-long-ago symposium in Britain for the European theologians called *Why the Incarnation is a Myth*, all the way to the armchair philosopher who runs the website [jesusisabastard.com](http://jesusisabastard.com).

The topic of the incarnation is, I mean, it is the flashpoint of so much debate about who Jesus Christ is. It is the shibboleth of orthodoxy. It is the thing that puts you in one camp or the other. In the words of John in 2 John 7 and 8, he says it is the thing that is either going to put you in the Christ camp or the Antichrist camp. Here's how he put it:

Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the Antichrist. Watch yourselves so that you may not lose what we've worked for, but that you may win a full reward.

It seems that the more you dig on this topic, the quicker you run into the attack on Orthodox Christianity. As a matter of fact, what we talk about tonight became, in the early part of the 20th century, it became the real test of whether or not you stand with us on a host of other topics related to Christianity. They came to be known as the fundamentals of the faith. And at the top of the list there, at least second, if not first, was what is your view on the incarnation?

So this is an important topic, and one that we need to dive into tonight. But before we get started, why don't we ask God to help us along the way, enlighten our minds, get us entrenched firmly, as Paul said, in the truth so that we're not driven and tossed around by every wind of doctrine.

So let's pray together as we get started.

God, we thank you so much for the chance that we have to open up our Bibles, to look into the Scriptures, to take a systematic approach to thinking through, as we've revealed in the first night, kind of that chronological view of who Christ is, why study the topic, what about the pre-incarnate Christ.

Now, as we look at the actual biblical data on the incarnation, give our minds understanding. Help us to understand that everything is at stake here. Because if what the Bible says is not true, then he is indeed an illegitimate child. He's not even Joseph's son. We don't even know whose son he is. Some promiscuous young teenage girl gave birth to someone who has no claim to anything in Israel based on the law from 10 generations away, Deuteronomy says, from that person. He's to be excluded from the temple.

So, God, I pray that you would help us tonight to find our place in Scripture and in our theological construct that we might understand what your word says and then fearlessly proclaim it and defend it in



the world that just seems to want to attack it. You ask a person about the person of Christ you're going to get around to: where did this person come from?

So give us some clarity tonight as we study the incarnation, in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. Let us talk about the incarnation.

### A Simple Definition

Real quick on this. We won't take long on this, but if we had to define it, turn in your Bibles to John 1 again. We looked at this last week, but John 1:14, great statement. Let's just put it in our eyeballs again as we look at those statements in the text of your Bible and just get a simple definition from John chapter 1.

Obviously, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3, we looked at that last week, the *logos*, which was part of the Greek culture, the expression of God himself, that he was with God and he was God. Everything came into being through the *logos*, the one that is described here in verse 14, that the word, that was the topic, the *logos*, the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. Okay?

Now, knowing what we've already seen in chapter 1 of John 1 through 3, we could put it this way, that what we're saying is, as simply as we can say it, is that the second person of the Trinity takes on humanity. That's what we mean by flesh. He becomes a human being.

I mean, obviously there's all kinds of flesh on the planet. We're not talking about animals. We're talking about human beings that have that constitution that reflects the personhood of God, but is not God—intellect, emotion, and will in human corporal containers—that the second person of the Godhead becomes someone encased in flesh.

Now turn, if you would, to Romans 8 and look at this text with me. And I want to clarify when we see in Scripture statements like this. I mean, that's a super clear statement you just looked at, John 1:14. The Word, this one that we've established, is with God and was God, creates everything that ever existed—he becomes contained in flesh.

Well, that's pretty clear and forthright, but you'll find statements like this that might be a bit confusing. Let's clarify the context of this.

For God, verse 3, has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending His own Son. Now, this has caused some heresy throughout church history. But look at this phrase: in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

Now, here's what you need to understand about the construction of this sentence. We're not talking about in the likeness of flesh. He is contained in flesh. He's not a phantom. He's not pretending to be human. He is an expression of God. He is the second person of the eternal fellowship of the Godhead in a fleshly container, but he's in the likeness of what most fleshly containers are, and that is sinful.



So he's in the likeness of sinful human flesh. So the important distinction in the verbiage here, as we see in other parts of Scripture as you read the Bible, you need to understand that if there is that distancing from humanity, it's only because there's a part of humanity that the incarnation did not include, and that is sinfulness.

So let's put this down, just to make this clear. When we say he takes on humanity, he takes on humanity except for the sinful part of humanity, which is so characteristic of humanity throughout the Bible—this cursed humanity in which this principle of fallenness and sin and enmity with God exists. So much time is spent in the Scripture explaining that sinful principle within humanity.

And here we have someone who is in humanity, but they're in the likeness of sinful humanity—sinful flesh. He was in the flesh, but he was not sinful.

All right, the words. This will be real, real, real quick. In Greek, I'll just throw this up just so that you can see the distinction. And I do quote this oftentimes because it is so much theology with the word *sarx*.

But in, for instance, 1 John 4:2, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus has come," here's the phrase, "in the flesh," Jesus has come. Well, that Spirit's from God. I mean, to be with God, you've got to admit that he is in *sarx*. And that's just the object form of the word, highly inflected language, "in *sarx*."

Well, if you were to open a Latin Bible, which was the Bible of church history, right, Jerome translates the Greek into Latin because early on, by the second century, some of our most articulate church fathers, the church professors, were now preaching and teaching in Latin because, of course, everything had moved out west and the hub of teaching and exposition and explanation of Scripture was now in Latin. The Bible needed to be in Latin. It got in Latin and it stayed in Latin, right?

If you're part of the Roman Catholic Church, even to your grandmother's day, it was in Latin. You're, depending on how old you are, your mother's day. And they were still reading in Latin. So Latin was super important.

Well, in Latin, the phrase is, in 1 John 4:2, *incarnate*. That's the phrase. All of our theology, when we start thinking through systematically, what about Christ? They were reading and writing and defending the doctrine of *insarkey* from a Bible that read *incarnate*, so that's stuck. And then in English, of course, it's translated "in the flesh."

So when we talk about the incarnation, we're talking about this phrase from 1 John 4:2, that it's in other places as well, that Christ has come in the flesh—which presumes pre-existence—and that he lives in humanity. He takes on a human container, and that whole concept, that whole part of theology comes from the Latin phrase, 1 John 4:2, *in carne, in sarce*, "in the flesh," which is not hard to remember, as I often jokingly say, because we like that in Spanish too, right? *In carne, carne asada*, right? That's how we know. Flesh, meat, so you know, but that's not the Greek word.



A lot of our vocabulary in English and any kind of discipline comes from Greek, and a lot of it comes from Latin. And in theology, a lot of our language came from Latin because that was the dominant language of the church for so many years.

Good enough? No questions there?

All right, let's take a look at this.

### The Incarnation Foretold

Take your Bibles and turn to Luke 24, the end of the book of Luke, when Christ, the resurrected Christ, now at the end of his earthly ministry—he's already died, he's resurrected—he's talking to the guys on the road to Emmaus. And it's a really weird discussion because they don't know it's him, they're talking about him, "Don't you know what's going on?" And Jesus has this conversation with them, and he says this, which should just brighten our eyes when we think about studying the left side of our Bibles, because he says this in verse 25, "FF," by the way, you understand what that little designation means. Anytime you see that, "FF."

If there's one F, if you see a scripture reference with one F behind the number, you often see A and B, or if you're here at our church, sometimes C and D behind a verse number. That's the parts of the verse. Like if I'm preaching on one verse, which I try to preach on more than one verse every weekend, you might see verse 10A, verse 10B. That means the first part of the verse, the second part of the verse, and if there's a C, the third part of the verse.

When it's an F, that's not the, you know, whatever that is, A, B, C, D, E, F, 6 part of the verse. That's not what it means. That means "and the next verse." And if there's two F, it means "and the following verses." So that, because I couldn't fit it into the box. So I have to resort to some traditional forms.

But in commentaries that you read, most of you, you all knew that, right? Was that news to anybody? Tell me a few hands. Ah, that's good. I don't want to waste your time. But FF means the following verses. One F means if it was Luke 24:25F, it would be 24. It would mean 24 verse 25 and 26. Okay, enough.

You're there. Killing time. So you're all there.

Verse 25: And he said to them, O foolish ones—Christ now, resurrected Christ, talking to the guys on the road to Emmaus—O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Now he's looking back at the Old Testament. Was it not necessary that the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed one, the ultimate king, the ultimate priest, the ultimate prophet of the Old Testament, the one that they were putting their hopes on—don't you know that he should suffer these things and enter into his glory? Cross before the crown. Don't you know that's how it worked in the Old Testament?

And beginning then, wouldn't you like to be here for this discussion? With Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Okay?



And not getting it. And yet, you should put in the margin, which probably isn't there even in a study Bible, Romans chapter 16 verses 25 through 27. Because that makes it clear, as do other passages, but this says it so powerfully.

Speaking of Christ, talking about preaching Christ, it says, "according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages, but has now been disclosed through the prophetic writings made known to all the nations."

In other words, there is a legitimate, significant, strategic concealing of these matters. And then when Christ comes, a lot of these passages open up. That's why even Paul says to the Corinthians, the veil still hangs over the Jews today when they read the law and they don't see the glory of God in the face of Christ because they don't see it.

But when the Spirit of God comes in the hearts and minds of people, they start to see how the Old Testament's full of references to Christ. And there are ways to see that without playing fast and loose with Old Testament passages, but the Bible says it was done in a bit of a cryptic way so that it wasn't super, super clear. It was still somewhat incognito. Christ comes, though, could point back to it, and then it's like, "Oh, I get it, I get it." He opened their minds to understand the Scripture and see himself in that.

So he chided them, but I'm thinking to myself, can't chide them too hard because you said this was somewhat of a mystery kept hidden in secret, okay? But if he says, look at that again in verse 22, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, then I know all over the Old Testament there is truth about Christ.

So when it comes to the incarnation, I know this, right? The incarnation foretold. It was, okay? It was foretold. It is there. And I should be able to go back to the Old Testament, I should be able to see some references to it.

Now, there's some great studies on that. Will Varner wrote a book, which I don't have the title, I shouldn't have started that sentence, on so much of Christ in the Old Testament. Kaiser, a book I often recommend to you—Walt Kaiser, who's been to our church and preached here out at Gordon-Conwell Seminary, wrote a book on the Messiah in the Old Testament. And you can look at those books and start to see where all those references would be, and we start to understand, okay, maybe these are the passages Christ was pointing to.

But I know this, when it comes to the incarnation, there's a couple that make it into every Christmas play, and those seem pretty clear, right?

So let's look at those together. Let's start with this one, Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6. And it is much debated, and I get it. If you've had any kind of second-tier level discussions or reading or study on passages like this, there is some debate, and there's a little ambiguity. And people are saying, now, wait a minute, I'm not quite sure.



But the preponderance of evidence weighs in favor of, yes, we must be talking about the incarnation. I know because Christ said, if you read the Old Testament, Moses and the prophets on forward, you'll know, I'm there. I'm all over the place. So where is he in Isaiah 9? These are the most obvious.

Now, again, you could say, well, there's a historical reference here to a child being born. But I'm telling you what, it's a lot like, you know, Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28 talking about the fall of Satan from heaven. Yeah, there's a human king in view but something's going on there that could not possibly be the human king.

And here's another example of this child that's going to be born and probably was a child in Isaiah's day but these words in verse 6 go beyond anything that you can say, yeah, that's all he's talking about. He's talking about something more than that.

And the Lord himself—I'm sorry, yeah, verse 6: "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders." I don't care what child you pick in Isaiah's historic setting, that's not true of any of them. Not possibly true that the government of everything in Israel or anywhere else hung on his shoulders, not even Hezekiah. Certainly not if we think it's Hezekiah. We can't say this.

"And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor." Okay, maybe. "Mighty God." Sorry, Hezekiah, good guy and everything, but "Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Now you've just transcended from anything historical to something that must speak of Christ.

And if it speaks of Christ, look at the context: a child is born and he's called. Two things here: Mighty God. God. El. That stands for Elohim and the compound there, Mighty God. Isaiah doesn't use that. Isaiah doesn't use that for anything but God, the God, Yahweh God.

So whatever this child is we're talking about, he's called an appellation, a title that refers to God. It's a very special word for Isaiah. And he calls him Everlasting Father. That's something I'm not going to pick for my kid's name, right? Everlasting Father.

That seems to me—everlasting God, those words, child. So I've got just in that verse some sense of everlasting Father and mighty God, the heroic, powerful God—that's what the words mean—going to be born.

And if it can't possibly refer to anybody in the historical context, what are we talking about? Perhaps this is one of the verses that Christ pointed back to that said, if you want to start in Bethlehem, let's start here. How about this one? Let's call it God. That's one eternal, born to us.

If this child is born to us with the title God and eternal, I'm starting to see a picture of the incarnation in the Old Testament. That's why Handel clearly inscribed this in, you know, obviously our most famous traditional English Christmas cantata, right?

How about this one? Let's go to Isaiah 7. This, I would say, would be the second most familiar Christmas verse from the Old Testament.



“Therefore,” this is verse 14, “the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,” okay, “and shall call his name Emmanuel.”

What does Emmanuel mean? God with us.

Now we’re starting to use a Hebrew word. I’ll talk more about this later. And I know this is off-debated here. Like the RSV in the old days, they called that “young woman.” I can talk more about that in the next slide here.

But there is some young woman. I can prove to you that that’s probably one who has not had sex, who is having children. That’s bizarre. And the result of that weird birth is God’s with us now.

Another birth reference and another object of that birth, result of that birth, being something divine, something relating to deity. Those were head scratchers for rabbis.

And when I go to Jerusalem, I get a chance to share the gospel with somebody. I remember one day choking back the smoke from the bus driver as I sat there outside the Jerusalem walls showing these passages to the guy going, okay, what do you make of this, right? I mean, these are passages you’ve got to deal with.

“Well, we’re not really sure.” And I’ve had that discussion with well-versed Jews. I know they’ve got their walk-arounds and work-arounds on them. But it became very clear from a New Testament perspective: the incarnation was not news. It wasn’t new.

Emmanuel, God with us. Birth. Virgin shall bear a child. Emmanuel is the result. God with us.

All right.

### The “Virgin Birth” (What We Mean)

Now, let’s get into this bizarre world. The virgin birth. Did I put that in quotations on your worksheet? Did I? Okay, good.

And I wanted to because I’m talking about the Protestant view of the virgin birth. Okay? I don’t have to get your speed on that, right? We’re not Roman Catholics here.

I know some people, I wonder if they think that we’re Catholics. We’re not Catholics because what we are all about is *sola scriptura*. And that means that our base of authority and our source of information and data about God is the Scriptures. And that’s the whole epistemological difference between us and Roman Catholics.

Catholics now, the magisterium and all the doctrine that comes *ex cathedra* from Rome and the Pope—those through the ages as the church kind of develops its doctrine—that’s their second source of authority. Ours is the Scripture.



And what has grown up around Mary is a whole set of doctrines that are not found in the Bible, but you can't argue with the Catholic about it. The Roman Catholic's going to say, "Well, we believe it because the church is God's source of authority, and God speaks through the church, and through history, the dogma and doctrine that develops through the church."

Well, when we talk about the virgin birth, that means this to us, and that means this to you. And some people don't even think that. Now, do Catholics believe, Roman Catholics believe that Jesus was born of someone who had not had sex? Absolutely.

But when they say virgin birth, they mean something different than what we mean. And that's why I put it in quotes because I want to make it clear. What I'm talking about is a virginal conception. That's what I'm talking about. That Christ was born, right, without the aid of Joseph or some guy, you know, lives off the back alley in Bethlehem somewhere. There was no man involved in the conception of Jesus.

Not Bethlehem, of course, because she lived in Nazareth, which, by the way, is where the incarnation took place. We often think the incarnation took place in Bethlehem. It didn't. The virgin birth may have, but when we talk about the virgin birth as Protestants, what we mean is the virginal conception.

Now, they believe in that, but they take it further. And just to give you a little taste of what they mean, here's the Catholic Catechism, the Catholic Church, section 499: "We confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth. Christ's birth did not diminish the mother's virginal integrity."

That's a part of the doctrine of the virgin birth. It's not what we mean. And some of you go, "Oh, I never even thought of that." Well, then good. I didn't need that for you.

But some of you come from a Catholic background, and if you know anything about the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption of Mary, the virgin birth—these are kind of packaged doctrines that mean something very different than what we mean as Protestants.

For instance, you want to talk about the perpetual virginity, which has to be in the mind of your Catholic friends. All you've got to do is look at passages like Matthew chapter 13, verses 53 through 56, which they dismiss out of hand like, "Well, it's not something else." We can't get around this.

Look at this with me. Some of you already turned there. Some of you have given up on me. Some of you are offended. Some of you are Catholics. I don't know.

But take a look at this with me if you're still with me, and that is Matthew 13:53–56. Matthew 13:53–56.

Which, by the way, if you say, well, this is no big deal. The Lateran Council in the seventh century said, if you do not affirm the perpetual virginity of Mary and that she gave birth in some miraculous way to where she was still in all anatomical ways virginal, okay—now you're starting to get it. Some of



you didn't get it before. You're getting it now—then you are damned to hell. That's the official teaching of the church. It's never been revoked. It's the dogma of the church. If you do not affirm that Mary maintained her virginal integrity physically and throughout her entire life, "let the one who denies that be anathema."

So it is a big concern.

Matthew 13:53 though says:

And when Jesus had finished these parables he went away from there. And coming to his hometown, that's Nazareth, he taught them in their synagogue so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is this not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"

Okay, there's a passage you've got to do some fancy footwork with to get around the fact that Jesus had brothers and sisters, right? Had brothers and sisters.

Not to mention, I got a little problem in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 3, and you don't need to turn there unless you want to. But how in the world is it that when the expressed command of Scripture is, do not deny sex from your partner, right? If you're a wife, you need to be sexually responsive and active with your husband. And if you're a husband, you're supposed to be sexually responsive and active with your wife.

How is it then that you're going to maintain a doctrine that we have zero evidence for in Scripture that is actually in contradiction to what the Bible commands of a godly woman? And I thought Mary was godly. And if she was godly, right, really godly, then she's having a lot of sex with her husband, right?

That's another sermon, and don't get me started on that one. But that's what the Bible teaches.

So, I'm anathema, as far as the Catholic Church goes. I don't know about you, but I do not believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary.

What I'm talking about is the virginal conception, okay?

### [Matthew 1: The Virginal Conception](#)

So, let's turn to Matthew chapter 1 and start to think through the virginal conception. And by that we mean virgin birth. Now, that's what we mean by virgin birth. And Protestants have been using the phrase virgin birth to talk about this.

Now, if you didn't catch this, Catholics do believe in the virgin birth—by that, I mean the virginal conception of Jesus—but they mean a whole lot more than that. We don't believe all that extra stuff that doesn't come from the Bible. We believe what the Bible says, and the Bible does say that she was virginally conceived.



Verse 50—I'm sorry, verse 18. Is that what I said?

Now the birth of Jesus took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed—engaged, right—to Joseph, before they came together, that's kind of a euphemistic way to say they hadn't had sex, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Weird, really weird.

And if, by the way, you have gone a couple levels deep in this with some people, they'll say, well, you know, Zeus and some of the old Greco-Roman gods, and there were stories of this, and even Cicero wrote about this kind of weird thing. That's nonsense, right?

Yeah, that's like trying to compare your life to, you know, to a *Toy Story* or something, right? Yeah, there are all kinds of myths about all kinds of weird things, right? About people getting burned by the sun because they flew too close to it.

If you're trying to make a comparison between, well, the Bible authors got this idea from Greek mythology, you're crazy. They're just two totally different genres. There's no intersection of that.

I mean, you've got to take this at face value. The Bible teaches that something very bizarre happened without any reference to weird Greco-Roman mythology or any kind of Roman imaginative daydreams about myths and concepts.

So here's what the Bible teaches. They haven't had sex, verse 18, and she's now pregnant, and it says that this child is from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband, Joseph, being a just man, a righteous man, and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

So this isn't two frisky, engaged people, oops, having sex, and she's pregnant now. Let's hurry the wedding up so she can still fit in her dress, right? That's not what's happening here.

This is, wow, my fiancé's pregnant and we haven't had sex. I guess this is over. Of course, you've heard the stories in that day. Your betrothal was like a contract, like marriage. So you had to go through a process to give her a certificate divorce to put her away.

But because, it says here, he didn't want to shame her. Because she—well, this is really weird. I don't understand it. She seems to be a godly, pious woman. But we'll do it secretly and quietly.

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. You know, not a moment too soon. I mean, this is time for some clarification.

Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife. For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Yeshua, Joshua, the Grecian form, the Roman Latinized form, Jesus. And he will save his people from their sins.



All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Oh, wow, we just read this: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,” which means God with us.

When Joseph woke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded. He took his wife. But he knew her not until she had given birth to a son.

Oh, wow. How would that read if they never had sex differently, right? Just to throw that in. “He knew her not at all, ever, because she was going to be perpetually a virgin.” No. “He knew her not until she had given birth to a son.” And they called his name Yeshua.

Now, right there, all the ambiguity about the word, the Hebrew word *Alma* in Isaiah 7:14 is a word that liberals will say, well, that word can represent a young woman who is just of marrying age but has had sex. Well, that’s true. It can. And you can have references to it like that.

And they’ll say, well, if you really meant someone who’s never had sex, they would use this word. And that word, there is a technical word for a woman who is put away and is not able or not allowed to have sex.

That’s a context, though, that if you look carefully through the Scripture, there’s at least three examples of that word for virgin where they have had sex, clearly. So that argument kind of goes away.

And though the word is maybe a little bit broader and not as technical as we might want it in Isaiah 7, Matthew reads this and says, this is the fulfillment of that, which I think if he’s saying that under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that’s probably what Jesus was talking about in Luke 24, right? One of the things, I’m assuming.

So, let’s put it this way. It fulfilled prophecy, just to point back to the previous page. If it was foretold, this kind of bizarre non-sexual birth, this non-sexual or virginal conception is something that the Bible predicted, and it was how it actually happened.

And it’s described as, very broadly, as something, a product of the Holy Spirit, obviously housed in Mary. But whatever it is, it’s something bizarre.

### [Luke 1: Another Witness](#)

Let’s look at another reference to the virginal conception of Jesus in Luke chapter 1. Let’s turn there.

Luke chapter 1. I don’t know if I can put this in another way to show you why it has been the shibboleth or the litmus test of orthodoxy because of this observation, which we could have already made at this point from Matthew 1.

But let’s go to Luke chapter 1. Start in verse 26.



In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God. We learned about him by name in the book of Daniel. Important, our angel, messenger. He was sent from God to the city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin, right? That's a very specific word—betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph. Someone hadn't had sex, and she's engaged. And Joseph was of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

Trying to make this clear, she was a virgin.

And he came to her and said, greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. And he will be great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High. That's another Daniel reference. Gabriel's very familiar with that phrase from Daniel. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end. Another reference to Isaiah.

And Mary said to the angel, how will this be? If there's any confusion, here comes clarity: since I am a virgin.

And the angel answered her, it's not going to be Joseph and it's not going to be anybody else. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. That's all the clarity we get on how this worked.

Therefore, the child will be born to you. Therefore, I mean, you can't read that, forget all the wording, without saying this was a miraculous event, the suspension of natural law.

During the liberal fundamentalist crisis in the early part of the 1900s, when schools were being blown apart and churches were being divided into one camp or the other, it came down to often the question, do you believe in the virgin birth?

Because what that meant was, do you believe that God supernaturally conceived Jesus? And if you do, then you're assuming that there is a supernatural intervention into the common, into the linear, into the temporal, into the natural order of things, and that God can and has suspended natural law; that Christ is divine.

And that if he's done that, then the actual act of the God-breathed nature of Scripture, well, that's possible too—that God can take someone like the Apostle Paul or Isaiah and can, with the Holy Spirit, conceive of a book that is his book in his revelation, exactly what he wanted to say, just like he can take Mary and the Spirit can conceive this child and they can have this product that is divine and not natural.

And everything that related to God doing what he said he does in Scripture without denying it, setting it aside, or explaining it away—that became the test of orthodoxy.



Do you believe in the virgin birth?

And they set up all the other things that related to that called the fundamentals. Now, you know the word today, fundamentalist, doesn't mean what it meant then. Fundamentalist means, well, I don't know, how do you hear the word used? Usually it comes with the word legalist, right? And comes with a lot of other pejorative phrases.

You know, oh, you're the uptight, legalist, fundamentalist type Christians. That's not, you know, we need to, at least in our minds, in the historic understanding of church history, and this is recent church history, we need to recover that word and recognize that when we talk about the fundamentals and the fundamentalists of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, we are of the heritage of that.

You've still got a pastor that's preaching the Bible and believes that Jesus was supernaturally conceived. I am a fundamentalist, right? How can you be? You don't preach with a tie. It's not what fundamentalist means. You understand that.

Fundamentalist means that I believe in God's supernatural intervention into time and space to do things like write the Word of God, right, without error, to conceive Jesus, a holy person, breaking into time and space in Mary's body. I believe in all the things that relate to that, like a supernatural resurrection, the miracles that Jesus performed, the fundamentals of the faith.

Usually came down to one question: do you believe in the virgin birth?

It is a suspension—and I believe in the suspension of natural law.

And it's not the book of the week, it's not the book of the week, but if you are struggling with that, if you are struggling with that and you're kind of the pop level reader and want to read something, read Lewis's book on miracles just called *Miracles*, creatively enough.

If you want to go a couple levels deep, read the book *In Defense of the Miraculous*. I think it's by InterVarsity Press or Baker Academic Press. But that is a compilation of authors. There are a variety of authors in defense of miracles. You can look it up on Amazon, those of you with your Blackberries and laptops. And I forget, editor starts with a G. I think Habermas might be the co-author of that. But anyway, both of those are good to read.

What I'm saying by this, okay, is that Jesus, even though he was conceived supernaturally, was fully human. And that of the 46 chromosomes that you need to be a human being, 23 of those were instantaneously created.

And that in Nazareth, Jesus was created, right, by Mary—this is our assumption—and God putting those other chromosomes and everything else that's necessary in the zygote in her womb to create human life that was not normal human life because it was without sin and it was holy and it was to be considered then the son of God, the holy one.



And when you start saying stuff like this and thinking through what really happened there in Nazareth, when God became a man, they'll say, well, if 23 chromosomes were donated by Mary's, you know, ovum, then, you know, and there was no sperm cell from some human man, how could this be a human being?

And my question is to you, how could Adam possibly be a human being, right, when God provided all 46 chromosomes for him instantaneously? How human was Adam? Too human for my tastes, right? I mean, there is a joke there underneath there somewhere.

Adam and Eve, fully human beings, and God did it all for them. God then, for Christ, provides half of the recipe, and we have an actual human, not a phantom, not something that isn't really fully human, but was done in a miraculous way.

Now, some people say, well, could Jesus have been born of a man and a woman? Right? We talk about Jesus born of a woman. Yes, he is born of a woman, and we're assuming half of his ingredients come from the Holy Spirit instantaneously creating all that's needed to create a human being.

Could he have done that with a man and a woman? Could he somehow have extracted whatever is a part of that sin principle that makes people fallen and sinful and created Christ?

And the answer, I don't know, because now we're talking theoretical possibilities, and a lot of theologians will say, well, it could have, and maybe it could have, but that isn't the way it happened, right? That's not the way it's presented.

And I think there's some advantages to God doing it this way to prove from the very beginning this is no normal child.

If this is not true, the way the story is presented, then Jesus is a bastard.com, though they try to do it in a backhanded way, then they're right.

And as I stated, Deuteronomy says that if there's an unbiblical union, which I'm assuming includes fornication, you can't even enter the temple, right, for 10 generations if he is an illegitimate child.

So there's no middle ground here again. You know, we talk about Lewis's lord, liar, lunatic thing. Again, we have a problem. Either he's an illegitimate person who was not born in wedlock and wasn't even—I mean, it's not a rape. She doesn't claim to be raped. And it's not her betrothed husband.

We've got a promiscuous teenage girl who has a child out of wedlock and you've got a whole different thing now. You've got a very bizarre religious system and organization begun from a very, you know, seedy beginning, pardon the pun there. And see, there's a lot of latent jokes that are under the surface.

Sorted, let's call it that. Nefarious.

It's either or. Your world's apart. This is not a good Jewish boy born in a good Jewish home, right? It's either miraculously conceived or you got a mom that's messing up pretty bad.



The passage I quoted a couple times there tonight is Deuteronomy 23:2: “No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the Lord, even to the tenth generation. None of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord.”

Oh, by the way, another argument I wrote down as I was prepping this is the man with the withered hand. Three of the synoptic gospels all describe the man’s hand was withered. Matthew 12 is the Matthew reference to it. Jesus reaches out and heals him. It’s controversial because he was on the Sabbath.

But my question is, is the muscle inside his forearm where the cells are instantly created by the word of Christ—the creator of all things, who keeps proving he’s the creator of all things by speaking words and creating things that are whole and mature with the appearance of a history and age it never had—were those cells human cells?

See, and the answer is yes. Why? Because there’s no disconnect between God creating something that’s human instantaneously. That doesn’t make it unhuman.

And it seems there’s so much misunderstanding about the incarnation when it comes to that whole thing. If this was a union of the Holy Spirit, then he wasn’t fully human. And we’ll look at this when we talk about the nature of Christ and all the controversies through the generations.

### [A Comment on the Genealogies](#)

One more comment. I didn’t know where to throw this in, so I’m throwing it in right here. And this is a handout I’m going to give you: a comment on the genealogies. I didn’t put it plural. I should have. There’s two genealogies of Christ, in Matthew and in Luke.

And I get this question from time to time, and it is a bit of a complicated answer. So I’ve got some handouts here, and I’m going to have a couple volunteers at the front table pass these out to you. And you can get those out. Let me have one of them, though. There we go. Thank you.

There’s a problem with the two genealogies. And the problem is, at least at first glance, they don’t match. And at the 10th glance, they don’t match. They don’t match, right?

So you’ve got to figure out how in the world did these two books get laid side by side from the beginning of the church. And it’s like no one cried foul and everybody seemed to be cool with it. How is the genealogy in Luke and Matthew—how do those fit?

The first thing you’ve got to do to even compare them is flip Luke’s upside down, right? And if we’re just going to take the lineage from David to Jesus, because we’re going to try to explain a claim to the Davidic throne, that’s the whole point. Does this kid named Jesus find his way back in human lineage to David because he’s called the son of David? And that’s the promise of 2 Samuel chapter 7, that he would have a child ultimately who would lead and reign on the throne.



Well, then we've got to work our way back to David. But as you see here, on the first page of this, page 313, they don't match. As a matter of fact, right out of the gate, they don't match.

David, now in Matthew's list, starts with Solomon. That was David's son, was it not? David has a child with Bathsheba who dies. So X that one out, no name in Scripture for him, has another son, and his name is Solomon, and he becomes the next king of Israel. Now, from that, we trace a lineage all the way to Joseph in Matthew's gospel.

Now, that's interesting because Joseph didn't provide 23 chromosomes for this. But for Matthew, this was important. The paternal, patristic, if you will, lineage of David gave him to the Jewish audience that Matthew wrote to that claimed to the Davidic throne.

Luke's list goes David to Nathan. If you really know your Old Testament, that was, we assume, one died—Solomon—there's one in between. The fourth son between, and David had plenty of wives—between this whole polygamy thing on TV and not a new thing. Don't get me started on that. David has another son named Nathan, fourth child.

And now we get the list, and on we go from Nathan. And it seems to end with, if you look on page 314, a lot more names in that list, and it ends again with Joseph. How did that work? That's weird.

Well, the wording in Luke 3:23 is an interesting phrase. Matter of fact, your ESV reads this: "Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about 30 years of age, being the son," in parentheses, "as was supposed," in parentheses, "of Joseph, son of Heli." Okay?

Now, the case made by this short little essay, which I think is convincing, and I am in agreement with it, is that that parentheses needs to be extended, because there is no repeating of the word *huios*, or son, right? In a genitive case, there's no repeating of that.

Literally, it reads, and being the son of, right? And here's where I think the parentheses should go: "as was supposed of Joseph," right, in parentheses, "of Eli."

Now, read the article, and you'll have to do it with a cup of coffee, right, because you got to pay attention. It's a short little essay, but it will get you thinking about this, because it is one of the things. This is the hard one to answer at the door. I get a lot of questions at the door, and I've gotten pretty good over 20 plus years in ministry to answer most of them in a paragraph. This one does, I can't do it in a paragraph. So you've got the essay.

Now what I'm going to do is I'm going to be up at the door and I get that question on Sunday. I'm going to look for one of you who read this article to come over and I'll do a little T.O. at the door, a little hand off there. And then I'll say, "Oh, here's one of our Compass Nighters. They can answer that question for you." And then I'll get back to shaking hands with other people.

This comes from Gundry and Thomas' *Harmonies of the Gospel*. The one I copied it out of, though there are several editions to it, was the 1978 edition, Moody Press. Okay?



Is that helpful for anybody? Tell me that you've run into the problem of the genealogies and that's bothered you. Someone here, please. Yeah, okay. I'm going to solve that problem for you. Chicken and a solved genealogical problem. That's worth coming tonight.

All right, leave that for your homework.

### Philip Melanchthon and a Pastoral Turn

Okay, Philip Melanchthon. Melanchthon. He's a top-notch systematic theologian, right? He was Luther's guy. Matter of fact, he was one of the first systematic theologians of the Reformation.

This guy, by the way, you know how smart he was? He graduated with a bachelor's degree at age 14 from college. He got his master's degree, right? It took me several years from bachelor's to master's. He did that in one year. He had his master's degree by 15, right? I don't think my kids are on that track yet, right? That's a smart guy.

He ended up teaching Greek at the Wittenberg University in Germany as a young, you know, budding professor. Of course, he intertwines his life with Martin Luther. And he, I mean, you want to talk about someone who could sit down and talk about the incarnation for ours? Oh, Philip Melanchthon can do that.

Here's a quote from him. I'll give you that background just so you can understand the quote:

We do better to adore the mysteries of deity than to investigate them. To know Christ means to know his benefits and not as the scholastics teach to reflect upon his natures and the modes of his incarnation.

That's a guy that could teach this in his sleep and knows that there's a lot of mystery to it, and he can talk about the issues and the problems.

So for a guy that appreciates the intricacies of the incarnation, what I'd like to spend the rest of the night doing is think through why the incarnation and maybe kick our minds into a little bit more of a pastoral, devotional mindset as to why this is so important that Jesus Christ, God the second person of the Trinity, becomes a human being, taking our cues from Melanchthon.

### Why the Incarnation?

A. To Fulfill All Required Human Righteousness

Matthew 3:14 and 15. Matthew chapter 3:14 and 15.

Some of you don't need to turn there because you've got this one memorized because I seem to quote it about once a quarter around here.



John is out baptizing. Christ comes on the scene. Here he is. Oh, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” He’s coming up. He’s standing in line for the baptismal service. That’s going to make you nervous.

John says something very appropriate, knowing who Jesus is. He says—John, I’m sorry, verse 14—John would have prevented him saying, “I need to be baptized by you,” right? “And do you come to me?”

And Jesus answered and said, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to do,” or I’m sorry, “thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”

I’m not sure if he understood that. I would think maybe he did. He understood something of what the Lamb of God was supposed to do as a substitute. But either way, that was convincing, and he consented. Okay?

Here’s the reason the God of the universe in Nazareth became a tiny little zygote in the womb of a virginal young teenage girl that was engaged to be married. The reason is, number one, is to fulfill all required human righteousness.

You and I, if we’re ever going to hang out with God, and when we’re dead, you either get God and his blessings, or you get cast out and you don’t get his blessings into outer darkness, and you get retribution for your sin—if we’re going to want, we want to hang out with God, not to be, you know, sacrilegious, but if we’re going to have God and any of his blessings, we need to have a human righteousness that knows how to respond as an adult, as a teenager, as a child. I need righteousness that I don’t have.

It is, as the reformers like to say, an alien righteousness to me. It’s not mine. But I need it to be fulfilled.

And this should be old news for you because we were studying not long ago Romans chapter 8 and verses 1 through 4 couldn’t say it any better. I do want you to turn to this one. Look at this one with me, Romans chapter 8:1–4, just to drive it home.

Christ is going to do the right thing. He’s going to get baptized.

Did the thief on the cross get baptized? Answer? No.

How in the world can God let the thief on the cross into heaven, which Jesus promised he would go to heaven that very day? How can he let him into heaven when he didn’t do what John the Baptist kept telling everybody in Judea to do? This guy was sitting there probably mocking when he heard about that old wild guy eating insects in the desert. And that guy’s crazy. And he didn’t do what God told him to do.

How is it that he gets to go to heaven? Because Jesus did what he was supposed to do. And that righteousness was going to be credited to him.



And so for all the sins of the man on the cross who was dying next to Jesus, who should be condemned for shining on John the Baptist, he doesn't get condemned. There is no, therefore now, no condemnation, Romans 8:1, for those who are in Christ Jesus. The thief on the cross gets to be placed into Christ Jesus. That's the baptism that matters. That means that his files go into the big manila folder of Christ's files that say perfect human righteousness.

For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. Thief on the cross has sinned. He should die. He should be punished for his sins.

For God, we've already read this tonight, has done what law weakened by the flesh could not do. We couldn't even do it when we tried. And he did it by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. And for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

So all the punishment that the guy next to him on the cross deserved, Christ was going to take for him in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. How? Well, Romans 4 had talked about it by having his righteousness credited to me.

And now, by the way, the response of that is, and if the thief on the cross lived very long after that, he would walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit—which, by the way, even the short period of time he had on the cross, he started to show that he was going to follow the Spirit by rebuking the other criminal on the other side of Christ, right?

So the point, though, is all of the law was fulfilled for him because Christ had fulfilled all of the law.

God, in his economy and his decisions and how he planned it all out, from the just perspective of heaven could not do that without human righteousness being fulfilled. All the requirements of human righteousness had to be fulfilled in a human container. Christ did that for us.

Now, don't leave Romans 8 because I want you to look again at verse number 3. It's not just to fulfill all human requirements of righteousness, but verse 3 said—and we've already read this twice already—God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. And for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

That's what the cross was all about.

#### B. To Perfectly Pay the Penalty for Human Sins

Letter B. He had to perfectly pay the penalty for human sins. And to perfectly pay the penalty for human sins, human had to suffer. Human had to have the justice received, meted out to his account.

I've given you the illustration in years past about the impound yard. You don't pay your parking tickets. Eventually, you get your car impounded by the cops, right? So you go down, and your car is impounded, and they say, "Well, you know what? Here's the problem. Because of your traffic or parking sins, your car is here in our impound lot."



Christ is going to come and exchange his car for your car so your car goes free. That's a car for a car. And because you and I are driving Ugo's and Datsun's, right, Christ now comes with a Porsche. How about that? I can throw in the Porsche tonight. And redeems all of us because of the infinite worth of what he exchanges for us.

So the penalty that we've racked up was paid by the infinite worth of the Son of God in human form being exchanged for human beings to incur the penalty with an infinite worth so that we, though we are temporal, and there's only so many of us, our sins could be justly paid for—or as I put it, perfectly paid for.

One more passage on this, please. Hebrews 2:14. Hebrews 2:14. Big word. Love that the ESV has put it back into English here and not watered it down, right? I shouldn't use the word watered it down or spelled it out. It's good that the word is there. It's a bit foreign to our ears, but it's helpful.

How is it that God would have to become a man? Verse 14:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. He not only exchanges and frees all the cars that he has chosen to die for, but now the whole arrangement of the thing has been destroyed, and he is now destroyed. The person who is, in this context here, subjected us, enslaved us to punishment and to slavery or the fear of death.

For surely, verse 16, it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. He therefore had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service to God. And here's the important part that I want to underline: and to make propitiation for the sins of the people. To make propitiation, satisfaction, a just payment for all the sins of the people.

It had to be a people, right? A person has to pay for the people. So he had to be made like his brothers in every respect—not only to be a faithful high priest, but to make propitiation for sins of the people.

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Which, by the way, you don't have to turn the page, leads us to our next point. And that is in verse 17, and we kind of rushed over it there, but he might become—well, let's read the whole verse.

Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might—and he's got two reasons—one is to make a propitiation for sins, the other is that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God.

Okay, now this is important. Jot this down.

C. To Perfectly Represent Mankind



And the picture here is the high priest, who the high priest stands in between the people of Israel in the Old Testament economy and God. And because he's made atonement through the symbolic atonement—I should say—through the sacrifice of animals, now he stands before God and represents them as the holiest Joe they've got.

And so now the people are accepted before God because there's a mediator that stands in the gap. He becomes the faithful high priest in the service of God. He represents mankind.

The reason you and I never have any doubts—should not have any doubts—about our justification and our future glorification is because the one who has lived my life for me and died the death and paid the penalty that I should have died, it's all paid in full, now stands and represents me.

That even when rightfully Satan or anyone else might want to point out my sin and shortcomings, he stands as the perfect representation of humanity. And I'm a part of that because I'm in Christ by faith, and I've got it made.

Because human representation—which is also divine—but that human representation stands in my gap, in the stead for me, so that I'm okay.

It's almost an arrogant doctrine. But I can be at peace and at perfect peace and at rest even though I'm a sinner and fall short of the glory of God because righteousness has been fulfilled, sin has been paid for, and I'm perfectly represented as one who is like me in every regard. And by that, I mean in my humanity.

You're still in the passage. Look at verse 18, which gets a bit more personal here. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Now it gets a bit more devotional. Check this out—to sympathetically help me. He can sympathetically now help me. There's something mysterious about that, but in the person of the Spirit, who is called the Spirit of Christ, he comes now in the Spirit of God to aid me in my everyday living because he lived a human life just like me.

And another passage, of course, that you know, I trust, is chapter 4. I didn't put this one on the overhead, but chapter—listen to me—that takes me back. It's called PowerPoint now. Remember the overhead projectors? I taught a lot of lectures on that.

Hebrews 4:15 and 16. You're in Hebrews 2, so just two pages away, a page away. He says, we don't have a high priest—look at it with me.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



Here's the thing. I don't have to worry that Jesus does not understand the problems that I face. And you know what a lot of us do? We say, "Well, he didn't sin, so he doesn't really understand my temptation."

Do you understand it's just the opposite? Do you understand—now follow me—it's just the opposite.

If you think, I can't really pray to God for help in the midst of my temptation, because the temptation I'm facing, I've fallen to it many times, and he can't understand because he's never fallen to it. And I hate that about the way people think. They think that about righteous people too who haven't been entangled in the sins that they have. They think they can't understand because they've never done it.

You do understand that it's the person that hasn't done it, who has been tempted, who really is more familiar with the temptation that you're facing than you are.

To quote a guy who doesn't have as cool a painting as Philip Melancthon, let me quote Leon Morris. He's dead now, and he had really bad glasses, but listen to this quote. I had to put this one up.

The man who yields to a particular temptation has not felt its full power. He has given in while the temptation has yet something in reserve. Only the man who does not yield to a temptation, who as regards that particular temptation is sinless, knows the full extent of that temptation.

So can you stop thinking that Jesus doesn't understand your temptations? Because he knows exactly what you and I are facing.

Because it's like the Bible answer programs. I'm going to do another one tomorrow. And I jokingly say, I got the same 14 questions all the time. Right? Maybe 20.

Same thing with temptations. No temptation has overtaken you except that which is common to man. I mean, it's like Bible questions. There's only really just a set of temptations that we face as human fallen people.

Right? And I should say, a sinless person can be tempted, but that we fall to. Christ was tempted with all of those things, and he didn't sin. He knows the full weight of the temptations.

And the Bible says, because of that, he can sympathetically help us. We often think the Holy Spirit, they can't understand. They can.

D. To Be the Perfect Judge

A few more, quickly, because we're out of time.

John 5:22. If you want to write both of these down, Acts 17:30–31 is another one. Acts 17:30–31. Same idea.

But take a look at this in John 5. John 5:22.



The Father judges no one. Wait a minute, man. Every passage I look at talks about God is going to judge the world. Well, he will, but he's going to judge it by someone, as Acts 17 says.

The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Talk about, I mean, arrogance if you're not God. Look at that.

Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my words and believes in him who has sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.

Now there's two phrases—Son of God, Son of Man—more on that later. But because he's now a human, he's in a human container, he's a genuine human being, he now gets to judge.

Don't marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice. The human God-man will call, and out of those tombs—this is verse 29—they'll all come out.

Those who have done good, which are regenerate hearts, like the thief on the cross, started then to do some good—they are going to be those regenerate to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Put it this way. One reason he's a human being, and by that I mean God has taken on human form and lived as a genuine, bona fide human being, is to be the perfectly apt judge. He is going to have complete integrity in his judgment because he lived as a human being.

#### E. To Reveal God's Attributes

John 1:18. I'll just read that one for you because we're out of time.

No one has ever seen God; the *monogenēs* God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Wow. Throw that one at the, you know, JW at the door. That's a big statement. The *monogenēs Theos*. And that he uses again in John 3:16. Only he says the *monogenēs*, the one and only Son.

The one and only God who is at the Father's side has made him known. In other words, Christ is going to live among us and he is going to be the exact representation of the nature of God. He is going to reveal God's attributes to us.

#### F. To Be a Template for Living



1 John 2:5–6, right? If we say we’re in him, we should walk as he walked. We should live as he lived.

1 Peter 2:21—that’s not on the overhead—but that’s another one. You’ve been called, right, to follow Christ because you’ve suffered in Christ. Because Christ suffered, he’s left you an example that you might follow in his steps.

#### G. To Be a Visible King

He’s a template for living and he’s a visible king. Don’t have time to look at all this, but Luke 1, the government was going to rest on his shoulders. He’s going to reign on the throne of his father David.

He is going to be a physical, visible king—not only in the millennial kingdom, more on that another time—but the throne of God is going to be among men.

And if you read those passages carefully in Revelation 21 and 22, the thing that we see, the light that illuminates it, is the Lamb. See? The Lamb in the center of the New Jerusalem.

Oh, I know the dwelling of God is among men, but God can’t be seen. Never has been seen, can’t be seen. But the one we’ll see will be God, and the one we’ll see is the light of the Lamb that will illuminate the place.

#### Book Recommendation

Book of the week. Next week, I’m going to do an easier one, but this one’s a little bit tougher, but it’s a good one to have. And if you’re an ambitious reader—I mean, it’s not that hard to read, but it’s going to cover all kinds of topics.

Millard Erickson—some of you know his name from writing a real standard theology that a lot of Bible schools use—Millard Erickson wrote a book called *The Word Became Flesh*. And it’s a big book. It’s 663 pages. But you’re going to see a lot of good stuff about the incarnation of Christ.

See, and you thought I was bad for going long. Can you imagine if he were here speaking tonight? It would be terrible. Millard Erickson.

All right, let’s pray together. I’ll let you go. Then you can read your genealogies in Matthew and Luke tonight before you go to bed. I may put some of you to bed, but to sleep maybe, but it’ll be good.

Let’s pray.

God, thanks for our time together. Thanks for this learning experience. Thanks for your word. Thanks for all that you do for us. We love you very much.

Thanks for sending your son to be our king. We haven’t seen him, but we love him. As Peter said, we can’t wait to see him face to face.



And we just want to see him at the center of that throne there in the center of the New Jerusalem. We'll see him before that, but God, we look forward to that.

What a great thing that will be to see the incarnate Christ face to face. So we look forward to that, God. It'll be an amazing day. We won't be high-fiving or anything like that. We're going to be like John, maybe, and Patmos, just face down.

But we'll get a glimpse, and we'll see him, and we'll recognize that he is the embodiment. All the fullness of deity dwells in him.

What a great, great day that'll be. We look forward to it.

In Jesus' name, amen.