

THE INCARNATION OF GOD THE SON

When people talk about the Incarnation, it is generally expressed by saying that God became a man. However, in reality, that is not accurate. It is **not** that God was no longer God and He was now a man. That would be a very unscriptural perspective on what actually happened. What we know and affirm is that God the Son has **never** stopped being God in any sense. He is, was, and always will be God – omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. So, more specifically, and this is the better way of stating it, the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, was made flesh and appeared in the form of a man. The doctrine of the Incarnation says that God the Son actually came in the flesh. He was still fully God, but He outwardly manifested Himself in the form of a man. It was a real incarnation, a time when Christ took on humanness and became Jesus Christ the God-Man. To state it another way, God the Son was **not** Jesus Christ before the Incarnation. He became Jesus Christ and Christ the Messiah at the virgin birth. [John 1:14](#) puts it this way,

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, the Incarnation was that supernatural and divine act whereby God the Son took on humanness – something He did not previously have, **but something that He will retain forever.** What happened at the virgin birth and with the Incarnation is that the glory of God the Son was veiled, hidden, and not seen. He looked like each of us. If you had seen Him in the manger or working with Joseph as a carpenter or walking in Galilee with His disciples or as a prisoner before Herod, you certainly would not have thought that He was the eternal God and Creator of all things. You would never have seen Him that way. His glory, His Godness, His deity, and His divine being were all hidden and veiled.

The implications of this doctrine are so far-reaching, so mysterious in nature, and so divinely important that we can never do it justice. **Everything** that we believe about our salvation and about our future as Christians is founded on the doctrine of the Incarnation. So, the implications are enormous – what Christ became and what He now is, and what He will be like in the future. And to make all of this even more difficult and challenging is the fact that we have clouded all of it with our embellishment of the Christmas story. All we normally see at Christmas is a baby in a manger, some shepherds in a field, some angels making an announcement, and some magi bringing this little baby some gifts – not to mention the commercial side of the holidays. So, from the time that we were little children, and with all of the expectations that the Christmas season brings, we have unknowingly obscured and masked this great doctrine. In some way, all of the Christmas festivities have hidden this great truth from us. Then to add to that, the Incarnation was a one-time event. It only happened once, and has never happened since, and will never happen in the future – and it happened solely to God the Son. So, we have no realistic benchmark by which to measure the eternal magnitude and relevance of the event. Just to picture God the Son as a baby in a manger is more than a modest misunderstanding of the greatness and indescribable significance of the actual sacrifice that He was making by becoming the God-Man. At best, we are far outside of the realm of natural human reason and understanding and far removed from things that we can fully comprehend and even appreciate.

The incredible truth that we are dealing with is that the second member of the Trinity, God the Son, gave up being God as He formerly was in order to save us, and **He will be that way forever.** That second

statement is the part that has literally crushed me in the past – the enormity, the magnitude, the vast extent of what Christ actually gave up to save us. God the Son became the God-Man, and He will forever more and always be the God-Man. It is not that He died, was resurrected, and then went back to being God the Son as He had always been – not at all, never. Right now at the right hand of God is the God-Man Christ Jesus. He is not there as He was prior to His incarnation. Even though He is still fully God, and has all of the attributes of His eternally being God the Son, there is something else – and it is a mystery. Before the Incarnation, He was with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as God the Son. That was His place in the Trinity, the place of His deity. However, today, right now, He is there as a Lamb that was slain, as our Great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us, and as the One who will forever be the God-Man who sacrificed everything to be a ransom for our sins. We cannot overemphasize the magnitude of this great doctrine.

To further describe the immensity of this event, God the Son knew that He was going to make this ultimate of all sacrifices before the foundation of the world. He made the decision in eternity past before time or man was even created, before the world even existed. [1 Peter 1:20](#) declares,

²⁰He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

When the Trinity determined to create life as we know it, God the Son knew full well what it would cost Him to become our Savior. God the Father knew, God the Holy Spirit knew, and God the Son knew. The sacrifice and the surrendering of Himself for what was going to be required of Him was more than could even be imagined – and yet He willingly and gladly accepted it. [Hebrews 12:2](#) says,

²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In order to give us everything, it would personally and eternally cost Him everything. What He voluntarily chose to surrender, to forfeit, and to give up is more than our mind can even conceive. This is difficult. Here is the essence of what took place at the Incarnation and at the virgin birth. What God the Son willingly chose to do was twofold. First of all, He chose to restrict and to limit the use of His divine attributes – **forever**. He would **only** use His divine attributes of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence as directed by God the Father. Secondly, He not only chose to restrict and limit His divine attributes, but He also chose to live eternally in a different form – in a form that would forever identify Him with those He came to save. I.e., by choosing to do these two things, He was choosing to never be the same after the Incarnation as He was before the Incarnation. What He was giving up to be our Saviour is much more than my feeble words can explain, and much more than we can even comprehend. I do not know how to say it exactly, but what actually happened is that God the Son forever gave up being God as He was previously. How does one say that or explain it? How can we understand what God the Son willingly chose to do? His love for us is much, much more than anything we can imagine. God choosing to never function as God into all of eternity so that we might be saved is more than just a mere sacrifice. It is the greatest sacrifice imaginable.

This was God in all of His divinity and deity forever becoming something else and willfully choosing to remain in the lesser state forever. It would be like you or me becoming an ant and being willing to

remain and live and function as an ant forever. Could you imagine doing that, or even worse, could you imagine asking your son to do that? Now, I know that is a terrible example, but in essence that is what happened. The eternal God became like us **forever** – and that was an incredible lessening and lowering and diminishing of His deity. However, having said all of that, **His incarnation is the very thing that makes what He did the most incredible event of all of eternity and creation. It is what makes Him to be the most exalted and glorious being of all eternity.** [1 Corinthians 15:28](#) declares this eternal choice of willing subjection to the Father when it says,

²⁸Now when all things are made subject to Him (God the Father), then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

In essence, He gave up being God as He previously was. That is so astonishing that it causes me to just want to fall down on my face and worship and worship and worship Christ! The magnitude of His **eternal** sacrifice is inconceivable. We know that God the Son possessed and has always possessed equality with God, but in the virgin birth He voluntarily and willingly chose **not** to hold on to that equality in any way. [Philippians 2:6](#) says,

‘who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

The New American Standard Bible says this,

‘who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

The New International Version and the English Standard Version say virtually the same thing. The Amplified Bible is the expanded translation that captures what happened the best. Listen carefully to how it describes this verse.

‘Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained,

It says that He was in the “**form of God**”, but chose not to retain His “**equality**” with God the Father. He chose not to cling to His favored position as the divine Son of God, the second person of the Godhead. He could have said, “*I am God, and I am not giving any of this up for anyone. I am going to hold on to what is rightfully mine*”, but He did not say that at all. To the contrary, He said the opposite. **He did not see His position in the Godhead as a prized possession to be used for Himself, but as the very instrument and means by which He could become our Saviour.** That is one of the most sublime and transcendent statements that I have ever written. It is one of the most exalted truths that we could ever understand, and it so magnifies the person of Christ that it causes me to want to weep and fall down before God in absolute brokenness and surrender.

We all know and affirm that Jesus Christ is still fully God in every sense of the word. We know that and we fully affirm that. He will always be God – fully divine, fully omnipotent, fully omniscient, and fully omnipresent. He was all of those things in His pre-incarnate state before the virgin birth, in His humanity as our Saviour, and in His eternal state as our King of Kings and Lord of Lords He is still fully God. He never lost His “Godness”. He never lost His divine attributes. However, He has chosen simply not to

exercise those attributes. For instance, talking about the Second Coming ([Mark 13:26](#)) He says this in [Mark 13:32](#),

³²**“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father**

[Hebrews 1:3](#) says that He “**upholds all things by the Word of His power**”. The word “**upholds**” is in the present tense, active voice which simply means that He is always upholding everything. The Interlinear Bible actually translates the word as “**sustaining**”. Right now, Christ Jesus the God-Man is upholding and sustaining all things by His divine being and His divine power. In other words, God the Son is not only the **Creator** of the universe ([John 1:3](#)), but He is also the **Sustainer** of the universe – and He always has been and always will be. He was fully God in the Incarnation, He was fully God as the Christ, He was fully God in His death, and He is fully God now in His high priestly role before the Father. He has never ceased to be fully God. When He was in the womb of Mary, He was still fully God and upholding all things by the Word of His power. When He was on the cross and dying, He was still fully God and upholding all things by the Word of His power. When He was in the grave, He was still fully God and upholding all things by the Word of His power. While He is at the right hand of God the Father as our Great High Priest, He is still fully God and upholding all things by the Word of His power. When He returns in the clouds of heaven and leads us into the Millennium and into the eternal state, He will always and forever be fully God and will always be upholding all things by the Word of His power.

He is God and will forever be God, **but He has voluntarily chosen not to exercise those divine attributes unless directed by the Father**. He has willingly and gladly chosen to **FOREVERMORE function** as the God-Man and in a state of utter dependence on His Father. It is in His humanness that He has identified with us and is now sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Then to deepen and widen the magnitude of these events before us, we must understand that all members of the Trinity were involved in this in some way. Can you imagine what it would be like for you to ask your son to make the greatest sacrifice that anyone could ever make – one that would severely impact their life for eternity? God the Father knew exactly what the cost would be and what His Son would eternally give up. I do not know what to say or how to say it. Everytime that I think about this doctrine, I am overwhelmed at how much God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit love me. For the Triune God to knowingly choose to do what they did so that we might forever be with them – it humbles me as no other doctrine.

In my terribly feeble and limited understanding of these events, this doctrine of the Incarnation is the most exalting and God honoring doctrine that I have ever studied. It exalts Christ, honors Christ, extols Christ, and glorifies Christ as no other doctrine can. It should cause us to worship Him and adore Him more than we ever have. The doctrine is not about Christmas trees and opening gifts and singing carols. This is about God the Son, this is about an eternal sacrifice with ramifications and implications and consequences beyond words or understanding. This is the most Christ honoring doctrine of eternity, and the magnitude of His sacrifice for us who did not deserve anything but death and wrath and judgment and the Lake of Fire is more than my feeble mind can comprehend or appreciate. I have never been to heaven, I have never been God, I have never been omnipotent, or omniscient, or omnipresent, or

immutable, or holy and without any measure of sin or sinfulness in my life. To the contrary, I am sinful, defiled, unholy, unrighteous, and proud. So, I have no clue as to what Christ has done – none at all. I can only bow down in humble reverence at the throne of God and the feet of Christ.

Jesus was literally giving up his life as God to become like us forever, and that could only happen through a virgin birth. If God, just for us, was willing to give of Himself and all of His privileges and His unlimited power, and ultimately His possessions, should not the same thing characterize our lives as well. He was willing to sacrifice everything for us, and too often we are not willing to give Him hardly anything at all. We desperately cling to our time, our possessions, and our rights. We find reasons to not read our Bibles, reasons why we continue to live for ourselves and our personal goals, and reasons why our personal priorities in life are more important than our priorities towards Christ - and we literally miss out on His life. Jesus said these words in [Matthew 16:25](#),

²⁵For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

This is without question the supreme act of giving your life away. The cross was simply the earthly culmination of this great sacrifice that was already decided in eternity past and will fully and completely extend into eternity future. This was the ultimate of all sacrifices, and only God the Son could have done it - and He did it in the Incarnation. [Romans 11:33](#) aptly places it all into perspective when it declares,

³³Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!