



Some thoughts on the incarnation

April 2025

Questions

- Why did Jesus (Son of God) have to come at all? Couldn't God have just fixed everything?
- And even if Jesus did have to come, why did he have to come as a baby? Why couldn't he have just appeared?
- Why did Jesus have to die?

“Incarnation”

The Son of God – the second person of the Trinity – Jesus Christ – came into this world, being born of a human mother, and became a human being, but so that he now has these two natures – fully divine (is still God), yet also, since his conception and birth, fully human (a man) – without any compromise or limitation to either of these two natures although he remains the one person.

Two key passages

- John 1:14–18
 - The Word became flesh and dwelt among us
- Galatians 4:4–5
 - Born under the law



John 1:14 – The Word
Became Flesh and
Dwelt Among Us

John 1:14-18

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Incarnation

Divinity

- The “Word” – v.14
- “Glory as of the only son of the Father” – v.14
- “because he was before me” – v.15
- “who is at the Father’s side” – v.18
- Identified as Jesus – v.17

Humanity

- “became flesh and dwelt among us” – v.14

Question

Why did the Word have to become
flesh and dwell among us?

Answer

- “full of grace and truth” – v.14
- In Jesus, through his coming into this world and becoming a man, is revealed the grace and truth of God

Question

Why did Jesus have to come into this world at all? What was his purpose?

Answer

To seek and save the lost.

- Mt 1:21
- 1 Tim 1:15
- Mt 9:13
- Jn 3:17
- Rom 4:25

Nature of sin

Rebellion against God and the absolute rejection of him and his word.

- Gen 3:3-4
- Is 1:2 - Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Children, have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.
- Rom 1:18-25

Nature of sin

Nature of sin is such that:

- Inability of will to seek after God – we do not want to and cannot do so
- Rejection of truth resulting in a futility of understanding

Sin repugnant to a righteous God

- 1 Jn 1:5
- Rom 8:7-8

Consequences of sin

- Breaks communion with the Lord
 - Gen 3:22-24
 - 2 Cor 6:14-18
- Provokes the wrath and judgment of God
 - Gen 3:16-20
 - Ps 5:4-6
 - Rom 6:23
 - Lev 26:27-33
 - Ps 11:5-7
 - Heb 9:22
- The nature of sin is such that no one is qualified to offer the appropriate sacrifice. We need someone to step in on our behalf.

Two-fold problem

- Our wills – do not have the desire to seek after God or to repent of our sinfulness. Need God's gracious intervention
 - Do not want to be saved
- Our minds – do not see ourselves as sinners or in need of salvation, nor what to do about it.
 - Do not know that we need to be saved or how to be saved
- Need grace and truth.

Grace

- Not even inclined to seek after God
 - God needs to act to turn our hearts and minds towards him
- Cannot save ourselves because are not able to keep the law of God
- Limitations of the law – more was required
 - “grace upon grace” – v.16
- Need someone – a human being – to represent mankind and take the penalty for us
- This is what Jesus provides through his incarnation

Truth

- For salvation – need to understand the truth
- How know the means of salvation?
- Need to go to the “Word”
 - Jn 1:12-13
 - Jn 14:6-7

Those questions again!

Why did Jesus have to come at all?
Couldn't God have just fixed everything?

- No. Because God's justice and righteousness requires that sin be punished – a penalty is due. To do otherwise is contrary to God's character and would be to deny himself.

And even if Jesus did have to come,
why did he have to come as a baby?
Why couldn't he have just appeared?

- Because man's sinfulness requires it. It had to be a human being that paid the penalty for mankind's sin.

Concluding remarks

As we come to this time of Easter – it is important that we remember that in the incarnation of Jesus the grace and truth of God is revealed – in which both the righteousness and the love of God are revealed to the world, and the only means by which justice of God is met, and the redemption of mankind is achieved.