



session 2 group study guide

the incarnation of God

message

Comprehending that Jesus was fully God and fully man at the same time is not an easy idea to grasp. It is easy to recognize that something can have multiple forms—like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly; or water being a solid, liquid or gas in its various states—but understanding that Jesus was simultaneously God and a human being is difficult to fathom.

In his Gospel, John provides us with one explanation of this dual-nature of Jesus Christ. As you read the following verses from John 1, keep the following questions in mind: (1) What does “the Word” symbolize? (2) What characteristics does “the Word” have?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it . . .

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-5,10-14).

dig

1. Who is “the Word” in these verses? Why does John refer to Him this way?

2. What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?

3. John 1:5 reads, “The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” What is this verse saying? Who or what is the darkness? Who or what is the light?

4. Read Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. Unlike Matthew or Luke, John does not begin his Gospel with an account of Jesus' birth, but rather with what sounds more like Genesis 1. Why do you think he does this?

5. According to John 1:1-3, what part did Jesus, the Word, have in the creation of the world?

6. What does John 1:10-13 tell us about how Jesus was received into this world? What promise does it provide to those who choose to accept Him?

apply

Many people get confused when they try to figure out exactly who Jesus really is. Is He God, or is He man? The answer is both! To grasp this truth, we have to remember that our finite minds cannot always comprehend an infinite God. Perhaps the best way to understand is to learn what the word “incarnation” means and how it is described in Scripture. The word “incarnation” literally means “embodied in the flesh.” Jesus Christ was a man—an actual, physical man—but at the same time He was God in the flesh.

How was Jesus fully *man*? He was born of the flesh. Mary, His mother, physically gave birth to Him. There was a time and a place in which He was delivered into this world. He ate, slept and breathed, just like any other human being. However, the Bible also teaches that Jesus was fully *God*. From the beginning of time, He was in existence and was the creator of all things. He had the ability to know the secrets of the heart, to forgive sins, and to perform miraculous deeds.

Fully God, fully man.

1. Look up Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 4:14-15 and Philippians 2:5-8. List the godly and human attributes of Jesus described in these verses.

godly

human

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2. Hebrews 2:17 says, “For this reason he had to be made like his brother in every way.” Why would the all-powerful, all-knowing, King of kings and Lord of lords decide to come and deal with hunger, aching muscles, stress and B.O.? Why would Jesus do this?

reflect

1. Each Christmas, we are reminded that God’s gift to us is Jesus in the flesh. Your gift to God should be your very life. What areas of your life do you still need to give to God?

2. What comfort can you receive from knowing that Jesus has lived life as a human being?

3. Why is understanding the incarnation an important part of seeing the big picture of the Christmas story?

4. When you think of Jesus, do you tend to think of His godly traits or His human traits? Why is it important to remember both aspects?

5. Look back at the list of godly vs. human areas of your own life that you made in the starter activity. Choose two items from your “human” list and write down some ways that you will work to give these areas over to God.

meditation



For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

HEBREWS 4:15