

Incarnation- God With Us!

1. **Jesus, of the western gospel**, can get you forgive of your sins, keep you out of hell, and get you into heaven, but he does not have much to say to you about the mystery of your life today, about your humanity, you're loves and passions and delights and burdens and tears.
2. **When the incarnation is ignored or misunderstood it means the downsizing of Jesus Christ.** Jesus is reduced to promoting morality but has little else to offer in the pursuit of life.
3. The gospel in the Western model begins with the statement that God is holy (holy in the legal sense). Jesus comes to satisfy the holiness and justice of God. God's punishment for sin is poured out upon him.

Four Problems with the Western Packaging of the Gospel

1. **FIRST, THE OVERALL PICTURE HAS BEEN LOST.** Gone is the great dance of the Trinity and the astonishing vision of the Father, Son and Spirit reaching out to share their life and glory with us. In its place, we have a divine legalist who is extremely upset over human failure and sin, and we have to Jesus coming to rescue us.
2. **SECONDLY, THE CROSS HAS SUDDENLY REPLACED JESUS HIMSELF AS THE POINT OF ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE.** Jesus Christ, not the cross, is and always will be the center of the universe and all things within it. The cross is empty, the tomb is empty, but the throne is occupied! In the Western model, Jesus seems only connected to our life through our need of forgiveness.
3. **THIRDLY, JUSTIFICATION IS OVER-EMPHASIZED TO THE POINT OF REPLACING ADOPTION AS THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE.** The gospel here is all about being forgiven. It is true, of course, that forgiveness is part of the message, thank God, for we are all in need of forgiveness. But it is not the whole truth. **Forgiveness serves a higher goal, and that higher goal is our inclusion in the life of the Trinity.**
4. **FOURTHLY, THE OVEREMPHASIS UPON JUSTIFICATION AND THE VIRTUAL SILENCE ON OUR ADOPTION LEAVES US IN THE DARK ABOUT OUR TRUE IDENTITY.** When people speak of Christ as the

Mediator, they mean that he stands between an angry God and sinful people to straighten out the legal mess.

a. We are left in a state of forgiveness and with the promise of heaven after we die but we have lost our connection to the indwelling life of God. The long and short of that is that we are left clueless about the staggering reality that has overtaken human existence in Jesus Christ.

b. The devil comes along in the Garden of Eden and tempts Eve by saying "eat this and you will be like God!" There is the deception! We are not supposed to be like God, we are supposed to be human like Christ!

c. The truth is that this world belongs to the Holy Trinity and is permeated by the great dance of life shared by the Father, Son and Spirit. You have been included in the great dance through the work of Jesus Christ!

d. *We are trying to get out of the world, while God is trying to get into the world and we are missing each other in the process!*

Jesus: The Human

1. Both creation and the coming of Jesus Christ flow directly out of the Trinitarian life
2. We must make a transition in our thinking about the incarnation
3. The incarnation means the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Spirit entered into our world and set up shop
4. The cross must not overshadow the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension

Inside Adam's Skin: Jesus is the New Man

1. The full glory of Jesus is seen in what he is—an *integrated being*
2. The entrance of the fellowship of the Trinity into broken human existence means war
3. What emerges on the other side of the cross is a human being who is utterly right with God, the Father

Inside the Domain of Evil: Jesus is the Victor

1. The incarnation happens inside the circle of darkness, inside the circle of the lie
2. What happens when the very fellowship of the Father, Son, and Spirit set up shop inside enemy territory? All hell breaks loose!
3. The man, Jesus Christ, emerges from inside the domain of evil utterly and absolutely victorious over evil
4. Through Christ, we have become "*new creation*"
5. Don't stop with the "hooray for Jesus" model of Christianity
6. God not only did something *for* us in Jesus, God did something *to* us, *in* us, and *with* us
7. The gospel is not an *invitation*—it is a *declaration* of the truth
8. We are included now and forever in the great dance of the Triune God

The "SO" of God's Love!

John 3:16 (ESV) *For God "SO" loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

1. Perhaps the biggest word in the Bible—only has two letters: "s" and "o"
2. Question: "**Was it possible for Jesus to sin?**"
3. **Western Christianity quickly pours Jesus into His divine nature.**

James 1:13 (ESV) *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.*

4. We run into trouble by **trying to defend his deity, by abolishing his humanity.**
5. If was not possible for Jesus, then we do not have a suffering Savior who has been tempted as we and "*yet did not sin.*"

Hebrews 4:15 (NASB 2020) *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin.*

6. Without a human Jesus faced without genuine temptations, we do not have a victorious King who has overcome the evil one:

1 John 3:8 (CSB) *The one who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the devil's works.*

Colossians 2:14-15 (CEB) *He destroyed the record of the debt we owed, with its requirements that worked against us. He canceled it by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ When he disarmed the rulers and authorities, he exposed them to public disgrace by leading them in a triumphal parade.*

7. If it was not possible for Jesus to sin, all we have left is a stage play.

8. The "**SO**" of God's love—"God *SO* loved the world"—he risked his very nature. Why would God take such a risk?

John 3:16 (ESV) *For God "**SO**" loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

John 1:5 (ESV) *...the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*