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QUESTION #9 – What are the purposes of the incarnation?

Why did Jesus Christ, the second member of the Godhead, become a man? Why did Jesus Christ take to Himself fleshly humanity and become a human? When we carefully search the Scriptures, we discover there were many reasons why Jesus Christ came to this earth in the flesh:

Reason #1 - To reveal God to man in concrete ideas, examples and realities. Jn. 1:18; 14:7-11; Col. 1:15

Dr. Charles Ryrie makes a good point when he writes: “Because He became a man, the revelation of God was personalized; because He is God, that revelation is completely truthful” (*Basic Theology*, p. 244).

Reason #2 - To provide an example and pattern for our lives. I Pet. 2:21; I Jn. 2:6; Jn. 13:14-16

Every believer is expected to pattern himself after Jesus Christ. Christ left an example for us to follow and He has given us the power to follow His example.

Reason #3 - To provide a complete and final sacrifice for sin. Heb. 10:1-10

Again Dr. Ryrie’s words are worth considering—“Without the Incarnation, we would have no Savior. Sin requires death for its payment. God does not die. So the Savior must be human in order to be able to die. But the death of an ordinary man would not pay for the sin externally, so the Savior must also be God. We must have a God-man Savior and we do in our Lord” (p. 245).

Reason #4 - To destroy the work of the devil. I Jn. 3:8

It is clearly revealed in the Word of God that Satan did not want Jesus Christ born (Rev. 12:4). As soon as Christ was born, Satan, working through the political forces of Herod, attempted to kill Him (Mt. 2:1-16). Satan knew that once Christ was born, he was defeated in that sin could no longer dominate, death could no longer reign and ultimately Satan and his forces would be destroyed. The presence of Jesus Christ on this earth was the ultimate threat to Satan and his demonic army. In fact, Christ’s presence caused those forces to fear (Lk. 4:34, 41; 8:28). Once Christ got to Calvary and arose from the dead, Satan knew that his hold on sinners and this sinful world was beginning to slip away. He knows now that it is just a matter of time until he and his forces are cast into eternal fire (Mt. 25:41).

Reason #5 - To be the perfect High Priest forever. Heb. 4:14-16; 7:23-28

Jesus Christ is the perfect High Priest who can identify and sympathize with our weaknesses and infirmities. He represents us perfectly before God the Father in that He completely understands our limitations and ministers in our behalf not only as a priest who offered a sacrifice, but as a priest who was our sacrifice. As the perfect high priest he had to be human and perfect.

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He had to experience things as a human, but be totally exempt from human failure and sin. This is the perfect high priest who can legitimately represent us before God the Father.

Reason #6 - To be King of the Jews, sitting on the Davidic throne. Lk. 1:30-35

It is very clear from II Samuel 7:12-14 that God promised a king and a kingdom to come through the line of David. It is also clear from II Samuel 7:16 that this Davidic throne would be established forever. David's response to this news clearly demonstrates that he knew the profound implications of this promise (i.e. II Sam. 7:18-29). It is clear that O.T. prophets understood that the Messiah would come for the purpose of reigning as King, on the throne of David (Is. 9:6-7). This text of Isaiah makes it very clear that being the reigning Davidic King is certainly a critical reason for the incarnation. In order for a king to sit on a throne forever, reigning in perfect righteousness, He must be the God/man.

Reason #7 - To provide redemption for mankind. Jn. 1:29; 3:16; Rom. 3:24; Is. 53.

It is clear from such passages as these that Jesus Christ came into this world to provide a redemptive means of salvation for sinful humanity—both Jew and Gentile. To suggest, however, that this is the only reason He came into the world is not accurate Christology. This is certainly a critical reason He came into this world, but not the only reason He came into this world.

Reason #8 - To be the judge of all humanity. Jn. 5:22, 27

Jesus Christ will judge everyone—believer (II Cor. 5:10) and unbeliever (Rev. 19:2, 11; 20:11-15). In order for Him to give a judgment that is perfectly just and true, a judgment based on all the facts, He must know all the facts and that means He must be God. In order for Him to give a judgment that is perfect in view of what a human experiences and decides to do, He must be human. Perfect eternal judgment of humans requires a perfect judge. This issue is resolved in the Person of Jesus Christ.

It is clear that the incarnation of Jesus Christ has far reaching and deep theological ramifications. When considering these things, we conclude that the entire plan and program of God, in every phase, hinged on the incarnation of His Son. All of God's program rests upon His Son.

QUESTION #10 – What is the connection between the virgin birth and the incarnation?

It is important that we realize that the “virgin birth” of Christ is not the same as the “incarnation” of Christ. **Certainly the virgin birth is an important part of the incarnation, but it is very clear from preceding texts that the incarnation of Jesus Christ has much more in view than just the birth. The incarnation has to do with the entire person and work of Jesus Christ and the entire program of God.** The reason why this becomes such a critical distinction in theology is because there is a faulty theological teaching which not only places a major emphasis on the birth, but also in neglecting to grasp the true meaning, places a major emphasis on Jesus' mother, Mary.

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Pope Pious IX invented a new theological concept in A.D. 1854 which taught that the virgin Mary was sinless from the moment she conceived Jesus Christ until the moment she went to heaven. He named his theological idea the Immaculate Conception. Primarily, this is a Roman Catholic belief that attempts to place the emphasis for Christ's perfect person on Mary's sinlessness. Xavier Leon-Dufour, a theologian of Catholic belief, writes: "The mystery of virginity implies a total purity... This is what gives meaning to the immaculate conception of Mary.

To be sure, giving birth to the Son of God was indeed a special privilege for Mary, as clearly stated to her by Gabriel (Lk. 1:28) and also by Elisabeth (Lk. 1:42). But any attempt to equate Mary's virginity with Christ's sinlessness is pure heresy. Mary's virginity enables God to be Jesus' Father, not a human. But it is not Mary's virginity that produced Christ's purity. There are several reasons why the concept of the "immaculate conception" is false:

1. Mary is not responsible for giving birth to a Holy Child, the Spirit of God is responsible for it. (Lk. 1:35)
2. There is none righteous and all fall far short of God's glory. Rom. 3:10-12, 23
Mary is a sinner like every other human.
3. Christ, Himself, taught that every person must be born again. Jn. 3:3
4. Mary, herself, admitted that she needed a Savior. Lk. 1:46-47
5. No human work, not even virginity or special pregnancy makes a person righteous before God. Eph. 2:8-9

QUESTION #11 – What is meant by the "perpetuity of the incarnation?"

The simple meaning of this phrase—perpetuity of the incarnation—is that Jesus Christ became a man forever. In other words, when Christ chose to become a human through the incarnation process, He took to Himself a human body forever. Some have suggested that Jesus became a man for a certain period of time and then ceased to be a man. But the testimony of Scripture makes it very clear that even though He will be seen in all of His glory and majesty, He is in human form and will be in that form throughout all eternity. Now this matter is not just interesting theology, there are several important reasons why we must adhere to this teaching.

Reason #1 - Because it is essential to the integrity of Christ's manhood.

Mr. John Miles explains this point in excellent fashion: "If he is not a man forever the question is raised as to whether He was ever really a man. At the incarnation Christ did not become two Persons. He was one Person with two natures. To say that He ceased to be a man is to do violence to His whole Person" (Doctrine, Second Semester, p. 6).