

# BASIC BIBLE THEMES

## SESSION 4: INCARNATION

### TEACHER

**Background Scripture:** John 1:1-18; 3:16; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 2:5-18; 4:14-16; 1 John 1:1-4; 4:1-3

#### Main Ideas:

- One of the most important doctrines of Christianity is the Incarnation, God coming to us in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.
- The word “incarnation” means “enfleshment” or becoming flesh.
- In Christianity, it is the doctrine that in the one person of Jesus, there is the union of human nature with the divine nature.

#### Learning Goals:

- Remember that Jesus, God-in-the-flesh, came to live among humanity.
- Understand how this truth affects our lives as Christians.

#### 1. Engage Interest

A. Introduce this session by briefly reviewing the Bible account of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. Here are several ways you might present this material:

1. You might display a creche (a Nativity scene) and read Luke 2:1-20.
2. You could read a poem about Christ’s birth or sing a stanza of “Silent Night.”
3. You could show a short segment in a video on the birth of Christ, or play a tape of Christmas music as the group gathers.

B. Have someone pose as a reporter from a radio or television station and go around the room asking the question: Who is this Jesus that we hear so much about at Christmas time? If possible, have a microphone or a video camera to add some credibility.

#### Presentation Option

Begin by asking the members of your group to respond to this question:

- If Jesus came to our church and said the same things He said as He went about Galilee and Judea preaching and teaching, do you think He would be accepted? Why?

#### 2. Explore the Word

A. Write these three reasons God chose to become incarnate, which you can display. Unveil them one at a time.

1. God wanted us to see what He was like, not just hear about Him.
2. In the person of Jesus, God has come to redeem us from our sins.
3. In the person of Jesus, we see what God originally intended for us to be.

Then, divide the participants into small groups. To each, assign one of the following Scriptures:

- John 1:1-18
- 1 John 1:1-4
- 1 John 4:1-3
- Philippians 2:5-11
- Hebrews 2:5-18
- Hebrews 4:14-16
- Colossians 1:15-20

Ask each group to answer this question:

- According to this passage, why did God come to us in the person of Jesus?

Then, have them paraphrase (write in their own words) the scripture in one or two sentences.

B. Invite your participants to do the following:

- Examine in detail the phrases in John 3:16 to show why Jesus came into our world. ("For God" . . . the Beginning, the Originator of salvation's plan; "so loved" . . . the reason for the Incarnation; "the world" . . . everyone, that means you and me; "that he gave" . . . the act, the proof of God's love; "his one and only Son" . . . fully God, fully man; "that whoever" . . . God's invitation; "believes in him" . . . our part of the plan; "shall not perish but have eternal life" . . . God's covenant with us)

### **Presentation Option**

Invite the adults to examine some of Jesus' own words about why He came into the world by looking at these scriptures and discussing the questions that follow.

- Matthew 10:34
  - What is there about this saying that makes it hard to understand?
  - Why do you find this saying hard?

(Note: These are not the same question. The first is asking about the content of the saying. The second is asking about the participant's reaction to the saying.)

- Matthew 20:28
- John 12:47
  - How did Jesus demonstrate this? (Think of events recorded in the Gospels.)
  - How have we seen these demonstrated in our time, if we have?

### **3. Examine Life**

A. Work through the material in the first part of the Session Content by using the following questions. You can do this like an open-book exam. Or you might divide into groups and assign a question to each group.

- What do we mean when we talk about the Incarnation?
- Did the Son exist before His birth to Mary that first Christmas?
- Did God change His divine nature into that of human nature?
- Does the Bible explain the how of the Incarnation?

B. Divide your group down the middle. Have one group list proofs of Jesus' humanity and the other group list proofs of His divinity. Give each group a sheet of paper to record their work. Then, discuss both lists.

**Presentation Option**

Share this quote with your group: “One pastor said a few years ago that the trouble with Christians is that nobody wants to kill them anymore!”

Then, ask them the following:

- What do you think that statement means?
- How do you feel about the statement?
- Do you agree or disagree with that pastor’s opinion? Why?

Next, display this open-ended sentence, and ask the participants to complete it:

- If we are to be genuine followers of Jesus, we must be willing to . . .

Finally, divide the group into three smaller ones. Ask each group to consider one of the situations listed below, answering these questions:

- What is the “normal” (or “sane”) course of action?
- What is the “Christlike” (or from the world’s perspective “insane”) thing to do?

Situation 1: It is pouring down rain, but you are warm and dry in your late-model car. Driving through a not-too safe part of town, you see an elderly woman hobbling along the street with much difficulty, a cane in one hand and a bag of groceries in the other. What will you do?

Situation 2: Last night your neighbors had a loud and rowdy party. You wanted to go over and give them a piece of your mind, but you didn’t. Now they want to borrow your vacuum to clean up the mess left by their party. What will you do?

Situation 3: Your grandmother is being kept alive by a life support system. The medical bill is nearly \$10,000 per month to keep her alive. Local law allows you to discontinue life-support if you choose. What will you do?

**4. Exercise Your Faith**

- A. Share this statement from the last sentence of the Session Content with your adults: “Jesus embodies the promise of a God who will go to any length to get his family back.” Then, ask several persons to give a brief testimony of how God sought them out and brought them to a personal relationship with Him.
- B. Close the session by singing the chorus, “There’s Something About That Name” (No. 148, *Sing to The Lord*).

**Presentation Option**

Ask your adults to think of a situation in life that is causing problems for them. Challenge them to think seriously about these questions:

- How would this problem situation change if you made a genuine attempt to apply the teachings of Jesus and live out what He taught?
- What can you do differently during the coming week to turn this problem situation right-side-up with the help of Christ?

Give them several moments to consider these questions silently. Close with a prayer of commitment, asking God to help the adults carry through on what they have decided to do.