

# Incarnation - Fact and Mode

by John Murray

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*The Incarnation is the union of God and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, where God became human to demonstrate His love and power, and to save humanity from sin.*

**Duration:** 49:54

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:2, John 1:18, Romans 8:3, Colossians 1:15, 1 Timothy 6:15

**Topics:** "Incarnation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the true nature of Jesus Christ's incarnation. He argues that the popular sentimental portrayals of Jesus do not align with the biblical depiction of him. The speaker highlights the contrast between the divine attributes of God and the human attributes of man, emphasizing the significance of God becoming man. He concludes by stating that the incarnation of God as man is a profound and humbling event that should be appreciated and desired by believers.

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## Transcript

O Thou who art the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone hast immortality, who dwellest in light unapproachable and full of glory, whom no man hath seen nor can see, we praise and bless Thy great Name. But also no man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

And grant that as we are confronted with the manifestation of His glory, we may rejoice that we have a revelation in Christ that is the exact transcript of Thy glory and Thy perfection, so that when we behold Him, we behold Him as the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth, that we behold Him who is the image of the invisible God, the first begotten of all creation. May we worship Thee, may we worship Thy Son in the power and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' Name.

...identities on the presupposition and back identity as God, His eternal subsistence as the only begotten Son, His creative activity at the beginning and His continued and uninterrupted providential agency in maintaining and sustaining all created reality. ...that we can understand and appreciate the fact and meaning of the Incarnation. The whole doctrine, the whole doctrine of the Incarnation is appreciated if it is conceived of as the beginning to be of the passion involved.

The Incarnation means that He who never began to be, but eternally was, who never even began to be, in His identity as the Son of God, who always was and ever continued to be what He eternally was. I say who always was and who ever continued to be what He eternally was, began to be what He eternally was not. And we therefore must take account of the significance of historical beginning, of historical factuality, for Him who is happy is the very author and sustainer of history.

So it is well to remember the sustained contrasts, the sustained contrasts which must obtain if we have a biblical view. The infinite became the finite, the eternal and super-temporal entered time and became subject to its conditions. The immutable became mutable, the invisible became visible, the creator of all became a creature, the sustainer of all became dependent, the Almighty became weak and infirm.

It is all summed up in the brief proposition God became man, God became man. And in that proposition the title God the title God must be defined in terms of all the attributes which belong to Godhood and the title man in terms of all the attributes which constitute manhood. So you have the conjunction of Godhood and manhood in their unabbreviated integrity in one person.

And so you have therefore a whole series of predications, a whole series of predications which are the opposite to one to the other. Infinite, finite, eternal, temporal, immutable, mutable, all along the line. And you must appreciate that conjunction of a whole series of, conjunction of that whole series of objects.

If we are properly to assess the stupendous fact of the Incarnation, it would have been humiliation. You see, it would have been humiliation for the Son of God to have become man under the ideal of the perfect and sinless world. Perfect and sinless world.

Humiliation because of the total discrepancy that is between God and His creation, between the majesty of the Creator and the humble status of the most dignified creature. To have brought both into such confusion, but it is still far more stupendous, it is more stupendous that the Incarnation was not a coming into a perfect and sinless world, but into a world characterized by sin, misery, and death. Into a sin, into a God cursed, because it was a sin cursed.

It was into this world of sin, of misery, and of death that He came. And these sin, misery, and death describe the situation into which He came. They also necessarily point to the purpose This is not an abstract or hypothetical Incarnation.

What we have at the center of our faith is an Incarnation that is actual in the very situation in which we find ourselves. Now the Apostle Paul draws our attention to this in a very striking formula which is without parallels in the whole witness of Scripture. As a formula, it is without parallels.

Romans 8.3 What the law could not do is that it was leaked through the flesh. God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and from my own matrix, I cross Amartya. I believe.

That's the formula I'm talking about. And from my own matrix, I cross Amartya. In the likeness of the flesh of sin And that maybe means, because I think the genitive Amartya is of quality, and therefore means sinful flesh.

In the likeness of sinful flesh. Flesh characterized by sin. And so flesh used, found out in the sense of human nature, entirety.

And so it is equivalent to in the likeness of sinful human nature. So Paul doesn't express it as awkwardly as that. He expresses it just more succinctly in the likeness of the flesh.

Now Paul could have used several examples which he uses himself elsewhere or which are used elsewhere in the New Testament. He could have said that he was made in the likeness of man. In Philippians 2, made in the likeness of man.

In the form of the anthropogenomenos. Made in the likeness of man. He could have said, made or born of a woman.

As he does elsewhere, Galatians 4.4. Made of a woman or born of a woman. He could have said manifested in the flesh. As he does in 1 Timothy 3.16. Manifested in the flesh.

Or he could have used the formula which he uses in this epistle earlier. Romans 1.3. Born of the seed of David according to the flesh. Or he could have used expressions which are found elsewhere for example.

Simply that he was made flesh. He became flesh. And so it is all the more reasonable that Paul uses in this instance a formula that has no parallel.

And he therefore must have used it with very good intent. It is a formula that approaches peril. It's a formula that approaches peril.

Formula that is as it were on the very brink of peril. Because of that expression *sarcos hamartia*. Flesh is sin, sin to flesh.

And therefore it is all the more striking that Paul should have used it. When Paul says likeness or majority when he says likeness he is not suggesting in the least degree the unreality of the flesh of Christ. Not at all.

The unreality of the flesh. Because elsewhere he is so very emphatic in saying in this very epistle for example that he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh. There you see is an unmistakable predication that Christ is flesh.

Integrity of that designation. Why does he use the word likeness? He uses the word likeness in order to obviate obviate any suggestion. Sinfulness is belonging to the flesh of Christ.

Since he was using *sarcos hamartia* he was compelled to use a word like *omae omae* or its equivalent because Paul could not say in sinful flesh exarchy. He couldn't have said that. So he had to use this qualification the likeness.

But then why does he use sinful flesh? Why does he use such an expression? *Sarcos hamartia* when it comes so close to the peril of suggesting that Christ was sinful why does he use it? He uses it no doubt for the purpose of enunciating this great truth. That that flesh in which Jesus came that flesh in which Jesus came is the flesh that in every other instance is the flesh of sin. In every other instance it is the flesh of sin.

Sinful flesh. And sorrow of what Paul is saying is that the Father sent him in that very sinful flesh. And sorrow of what Paul is so interested in in saying is that the Father sent him in that very nature in that very identity which in every other instance is sinful.

Every other instance is sinful. Jesus came by a mode that was supernatural and therefore by a mode that was consonant with his supernatural identity. As the Son of God.

Consonant with his supernatural identity as the Son of God. He came by a mode that guaranteed his sinlessness. Guaranteed his sinlessness.

But this is I think Paul's main interest here. But he came in a way that preserved fully organic and genetic connection with us sinful men. He came by derivation from He came by derivation from human nature that was itself not only sinful but human nature that is to be characterized that sin belongs in every identity.

He was made of the seed of David. He was made of a woman and therefore made of a seed and of a person itself sinful. And it is just this.

The Son of God came into the closest relationship to sinful humanity. He came into the closest relationship to sinful humanity. And it is possible for him to come without thereby becoming himself sinful.

Without thereby becoming himself sinful. That is to say continuity is preserved to the fullest extent that was possible becoming implicated in the sin that characterized humanity. So Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of God came into the world not only inseparable from creaturehood the limitations inseparable from creaturehood these limitations would have been inevitable if he had become man under the most ideal conditions.

He came into the world not only with the limitations of fleshly human creature but he came into this world bearing all the marks of that sinful situation into which he came. In other words, sin and evil sin and evil conditioned the context and circumstances of his incarnation from the very beginning from the moment of his begetting by the Holy Spirit and his conception by the Virgin from the very beginning sin and evil conditioned the context and circumstances in the likeness of flesh and sin. And furthermore as I suggested a moment ago the situation is not only one conditioned by sin, misery and death but there is in his very coming an index to the path of salvation.

I submit that it is inconceivable that God would have come in the likeness for any other purpose than that of redeeming. And since he came for the purpose of redeeming as Paul indicates in that very text and for sin, in the next phrase since he came for the purpose of redeeming from sin the marks which the vicarious endurance of sin impressed upon his human nature the marks which the vicarious endurance of sin impressed upon his human nature were inseparable from his manifestation his manifestation in flesh. We of course think particularly of Gethsemane and Calvary but we must never isolate Gethsemane and Calvary from the total coming in which Jesus' manifestation in the flesh occurred.

We must never isolate them and consequently over the whole course of our Lord's manifestation in the flesh in this world of sin of misery and of death there was the unparalleled reproach and shame unparalleled reproach and shame that we must take account of what the Prophet His visage was so marred more than any man His form more than the sons of men His visage, I repeat, was so marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men We read the 22nd Psalm likewise and the 69th Psalm and ponder some of the descriptions and you will see in these Psalms likewise Psalms 22 and 69 even more gruesome more gruesome than you find in Isaiah 53 We are no authentic portrait of our Lord of this we may be sure that it did not correspond to the jewel of the Word the product of pure sentiment the sentimentality which contradicts contradicts every indication given to us of what the vicarious endurance of sin involved He has no form of humbleness that when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should

desire Him He is despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief He hid as it were all faces from the wildest and disdained Him not Well, that was a frightening fact of His immolation immolation We generally speak of this as the virgin birth as the virgin birth Now, of course, the Jesus birth and there must be all tampering all that is involved in that expression but we must not allow that particular expression to obscure for us what was really involved in the incarnation of the Son of God When we speak about the virgin birth we have no warrant no warrant for thinking that there was anything abnormal about the way in which Jesus, the infant Jesus emerged from Mary's womb We generally use the word birth as to the actual emergence from the womb and it is not in this simple event of emergence from the womb to append as miracle of the incarnation besides not in that incident in that mere event of emergence that the miracle of the incarnation Because we have no warrant whatsoever for thinking that the actual emergence from the womb was by supernatural means Every indication that we have in the scripture points to the usual time of embryonic development approximately 9 months or 40 weeks embryonic development and it was when Mary's full time was come that she brought forth her firstborn son supernatural in connection with the incarnation goes back much further than the actual evolves much more than the simple expression birth in fact denotes One day our carnal beings will have to be taken up into a car It's not the best point to be answered

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