

The Ordo Salutis

The Order of Salvation

A Study

As of: 3/14/2021

Step 4: The Incarnation

John 1:1-3, 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Incarnation is what the beginning of verse 14 says,

... the Word became flesh ...

The ever- living; always existing; never-created Word- became flesh. That which was pure Spirit- took on human flesh. The Word that was WITH God and that WAS God- BECAME flesh.

The word, “Incarnation” didn’t exist until the Church created it as they were trying to grasp what John said right here. The word itself comes from an ecclesiastical Latin verb, “*incarno*”- which is comprised of two other word, “*in*” meaning: “*into or made into*”; and “*carno*” which means: “*flesh*.” So, the Incarnation is the “*fleshing of God*”; or what John said,

... the Word became flesh ...

The verb, “*incarno*” was taken from the Latin Vulgate of **John 1:14**:

***"et Verbum caro factum est"* (and the Word was made flesh)**

Now before this moment- God was always *outside* of His Creation. He was *separated* and *distinct* from what He made. And this is part of what made God to be “Holy”. But now- in the Incarnation- God has inserted Himself into the Creation that He made. So, let’s examine John’s inspired Statement:

The Word

The word, “*Word*” here refers to the Eternal, Divine Son, Who was “**in the beginning with God**” and Who Himself *is* God (**John 1:1**). So, from “Eternity Past” until He took on Humanity, the Son of God existed in perfect Love, Joy, and Harmony in the Fellowship

of the Trinity. Like the God the Father and God the Spirit- God the Son was pure Spirit and had no material Substance. But at the Incarnation, the eternal Word entered into Creation as a Human. He became a first-century Jew.

Became

The word, “**Became**” does not mean that He ceased to be God. In becoming Man, God the Son did not forsake His Divine Nature, as if that were even an option. Rather, He became Man by taking on a human Nature- ***in addition to***- His Divine Nature. It is essential to the Incarnation — and very helpful throughout all Theology — to recognize that Divinity and Humanity are not mutually exclusive. The Son of God didn’t have to pick between being God or being Man. He could be both at the same time. The eternal Word became Human.

Flesh

The word, “**Flesh**” isn’t merely a reference to the human body but the entirety of what makes up Humanity: Body, Mind, Emotions, and Will.

Hebrews 2:17

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

These two Verses teach that to save human beings- Jesus had to be made like us “**in all things**” except our Sin. In the Incarnation, everything proper to Humanity was united to the Son of God. The Son of God did not only become “like” Man- He actually became truly and fully Human.

The Word Became Flesh

So, the eternal Son of God, without ceasing to be God, took on a fully human Nature. This is what Christians have long called “the Incarnation.”

Luke 1:26-38

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

36 And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife,

25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

What a magnificent Truth and Fuel for Worship this is! Jesus didn't just become Man because He could. This was no circus stunt, just for show. He became Man, in the words of the ancient Creed,

"for us men and for our Salvation."¹

The eternal Word became frail human flesh and blood to save us from our Sin and to free us to marvel at and enjoy the unique union of Divinity and Humanity in His one spectacular Person.

The Incarnation is part of the Way in which God brought about the fulfillment of His Decree (Step 1) to magnify the Glory of His Grace- by saving unworthy rebels- by what He alone does for them. Nobody but God could do what was needed to rescue sinful Man from

¹ The Nicene Creed (AD325)

God's just Wrath. And part of that Rescuing of sinful Man; and part of that Magnification of the Glory of God's Grace- is God taking on human flesh and becoming Man- to live and act and suffer and die as Man- so He may deliver all of Humanity from the Wrath of God.

So, the Incarnation is not only the way in which Jesus "became" Immanuel- "*God with us*"- but it's also an eternal Testimony that He and His Father are now unswervingly for all those, He alone, has saved!