

WHAT IS THE INCARNATION?

by William B. Evans

TO THE READER: A good learning technique is to answer the following questions BEFORE reading the booklet. After reading, you can refine your answers based on your reading. Then, when your group gathers, each can discuss his or her view and you can either affirm or modify what you wrote.

1. What difference does it make if Jesus' father was Joseph or God Himself? (5-9)
2. What connections are there between our understanding of Christ's personal identity and the work He came to accomplish? (6-8)
3. If a Jehovah's Witness came to your door, how would you explain that Jesus is God, which they deny? What verses in the OT and NT would you use? (10-12)
4. How did the church go about carefully considering a variety of options regarding its understanding of the person of Christ? What key truths were at stake in these debates? (12-18)
5. When the infant Jesus was born, what did He know? In other words, the infant was God, but did He at this time have *infinite* knowledge? (See Luke 2:52 and Philippians 2:5-8.) (18-20)
6. Read Hebrews 2:17 and Romans 5:12-21. Jesus is called the "Second Adam." What does this mean? (24-26)

7. Read Exodus 20:4. Should we allow any kind of pictures of Jesus? (25-27)

8. Portions of this study may perhaps strike us as unnecessarily technical exercises in systematic theology, but should it not be much more? How does the mystery of the Incarnation call us to praise and worship God? (28)

After going through these questions, read the text and fill in the answers in preparation for class, noting other questions you might have. [By the way, if you do have any other questions about what you read, write them down here so you remember them at class time.]

APPLICATION

GROUP: Take all the verses you have found proving Jesus is God and begin to put them together in a way each person would be able to present a logical defense to a Jehovah's Witness. Keep in mind, the JW's have "canned answers" for many verses, especially in John's Gospel, so look for as many as possible outside John.

Personal: Refine what your group has done in a way you are comfortable using with a JW. Write these down in the front of your Bible so you have them readily at hand. Begin to memorize as many of these verses as possible for your own edification.

NOTE: Any time a JW, or any cult, comes to your door, **don't** invite them in. Instead, set up a time for them to come back when you have had time to prepare your heart to share the truth with them. All cults deny the deity of Jesus and also have a distorted teaching of what He accomplished on the cross. It is also suggested you have someone else with you when you meet with them. There is a good reason Jesus always sent the disciples out two-by-two.

Extra: Many churches repeat the Apostles Creed in their services. Why not, as a group, memorize the more complete creed - the Nicene Creed?

For Further Study

A Theology of Matthew: Jesus Revealed as Deliverer, King, and Incarnate Creator, Charles L. Quarles. P&R, 2013.

God With Us: Exploring God's Personal Interactions with His People Throughout the Bible, Glenn R. Kreider. P&R, 2014.

The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship, Robert Letham. P&R, 2004.

Find this and more at www.pcabookstore.com.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
And of all things, visible and invisible.

And we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
Begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father
by Whom all things were made,
Who for us men and our salvation,
came down from heaven
And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary
And was made man,
And was crucified also for us under Pontoius Pilate,
He suffered and was buried;
And the third day He rose again
according to the Scriptures and ascended in heaven
And is seated at the right hand of the Father
And He shall come again with glory
to judge both the livind and the dead
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.

I believe in one holy Christian and Apostolic church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins
And I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come,

Amen