



*why* CHRISTMAS?

## LUKE 1:26–35

WHY THE INCARNATION?

DECEMBER 10, 2023

### SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Joey continued our Advent series this week, tackling the question "Why the incarnation?" which is a complex yet paramount question worthy of our attention. The incarnation is the teaching that Jesus is both 100% God and yet 100% human—the God-man who took on flesh.

Pastor Joey said the incarnation in and of itself is simply news—excellent news, but news all the same. It is a historical fact that impacts all of creation.

And to properly understand the immensity of this news, we, like last week, must understand the overarching story of redemption God has been telling since the beginning of creation.

**Creation:** Where heaven and earth meet in the garden, God with his people, mediating his good rule of creation through the people he created as they spread the glory of God around the globe.

**Fall:** Because Adam and Eve chose to build their own kingdoms, heaven and earth are ripped apart. Death, desperation, and eternal separation come upon all humanity. Mankind led the rebellion; only mankind can make it right.

**Law:** God moves toward mankind first, choosing Israel and rescuing them from slavery. He gives the Law to Israel as a way for them to respond to his faithfulness with their own faithfulness to his commands. God dwells with his people in the Temple, the place where heaven and earth come together. But Israel rebels anyway, forsaking God's faithfulness.

**Incarnation:** God comes in human flesh, perfectly, wholly God and yet fully human, to reverse the rebellion through his own death, and to reunite heaven and earth meet in his own self.

**Redemption:** All those who return to God by faith in Jesus are restored to a right relationship with God and are indwelt by the Spirit of Jesus, becoming little microcosms of heaven-and-earth within themselves and in the gatherings and communities they create.

**Consummation:** One day, Jesus will return to judge the world and usher in the new and perfected heavens and earth. God dwells with us, and we dwell with him. The creation project itself is finally back on track!

The incarnation is at the crux of that story and is news that bursts on the scene both then and now. Only a human could be able to pay the penalty for sin, and yet only God could be holy enough to cover the offense. With Jesus' incarnation, we have the perfect God-Man who can save us completely.

This is the miracle of the incarnation and the good news we have all been waiting for. And just like any news, it demands a response. In this case, this news demands and inspires us to worship afresh the God-man who descended for you and for me.

Following Pastor Joey's lead, let's explore the incarnation more deeply so so we can live in light of it more freely and fully.

## DISCUSSION

We live in a time where we are inundated with news, tainting our experience to what the Good News of the incarnation may have felt like. But let's explore the idea of news so we can refresh our responses.

- What is it like to hear someone say, "This is breaking news?"
- What are the different responses we may have when we hear "breaking news"?
- What distinguishes news that gets our attention from news we ignore?

When it comes to the Bible's story, the incarnation news is BIG news. And yet it can sometimes feel like a complex and arbitrary truth.

- Do you think the incarnation is difficult to grasp? Why or why not?
- Reading the story outline in the summary above, how does the storyline of Heaven and Earth being restored and meeting again in Christ Jesus change how you view the incarnation?

In essence, the incarnation is necessary because humankind must pay the debt of sin but cannot; only God could cover our debt, but he's not the one who incurred the penalty.

- How does understanding this reality change the way we hear the "news" of the incarnation?



*This document can be used for either personal or group reflection.*

*Group facilitator: you do not need to ask every question but can select the best ones for your group dynamic.*

When it comes to hearing good news, we usually respond in one of the following ways:

- We rejoice and accept the change the news brings.
- We are indifferent and ignore the change the news brings.
- We reject and resist to the change the news brings.

- When it comes to how you experience the good news of the incarnation, which one are you most prone to in this season of life?

For those struggling to receive this news with joy, you are not alone. Instead of feeling shame, let's explore:

- What different thoughts or emotions keep you from rejoicing and accepting the change this news brings?
- What factors or circumstances are influencing that response in your life?
- What might God be promoting you to change to better help you move towards rejoicing?
- How can this group help you rejoice and worship the good news of the incarnation for you this week?

Finally, in closing, when it comes to receiving good news, we usually can't wait to pass it on.

- Who is someone in your life you care to share and celebrate the good news with, and how can you rejoice with them this week?

**Close in Prayer**