



# ADVENT GUIDE



# 03

## WEEK THREE / INCARNATION AND IMPLICATIONS DECEMBER 11 - DECEMBER 17

**A**t one point in history, God made a promise that became a reality in the coming of Christ. His coming is known as the Incarnation in which He took on human flesh to rescue humanity through His life, death and resurrection. The Incarnation and its impact on us are the focus of our time this week, and we are looking at them through the lens of John 1. There is a common temptation to gloss over this text because of our familiarity with it, but we should come with a renewed look at what the Lord spoke through John. So before moving into the text, hit pause and ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding and eyes to see Jesus magnified through the words of the apostle.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. JOHN 1:1-5; 14*

John opens his Gospel with the same three words Moses opened with in Genesis: “In the beginning.” This isn’t accidental or insignificant; rather, it is intentional and profound. What makes this breathtaking is that John’s “In the beginning” refers to a time before Genesis 1:1. As we read the rest of John 1:1, it becomes clear that he is referring to the origin of history before creation, when God and “the Word” existed eternally face to face. Then, when the Father decided it was time to create, it was the Word Who spoke creation into being. Through the Word, God brought into existence what had not previously existed.

The eternal Word “became” a man named Jesus. He Who eternally existed as God became human for humanity’s redemption. In this, He did not cease to be God. He came as fully God and fully man – on a mission of grace and truth, reflecting the glory He shared with the Father to the blind and broken world.

In John’s description of Jesus coming to earth, he does something strategic to draw us back to the Old Testament again. He says that glory resides within the flesh of the Son. In response to this, the Jewish reader would have said: “Hold on. What about Exodus 40:34, which states, ‘The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle?’”

John would say that’s the point. Glory no longer resides within a building but within Jesus Christ Who, full of glory and truth, literally “tabernacled” among us. The place where glory overflows and worship is poured out is no longer about geography or buildings. It’s about God Who became man in pursuit of you. He came to reveal the glory of the Father through your redemption, but this redemption did not come without a price.

The price paid is known and cherished as the gospel, and 1 Corinthians 15 puts it as straight forward as any passage: the gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus according to the Scriptures for the forgiveness of sin. Christ’s death on the cross absorbed the weight of God’s wrath against sin, thus displaying eternal glory, and Christ’s resurrection proclaimed victory over death. This gospel is the fulfillment of the promise God spoke through the prophets of old. God is reliable because the plan of salvation revealed in the Old Testament did not begin in the Old Testament. Salvation through Jesus Christ was not a reaction to sin entering the world. God’s redemptive purposes are rooted in eternity. Salvation through Jesus Christ is an eternal plan that began even before “In the beginning,” which brings us back to John 1.

When we look at John 1 through the lens of 1 Corinthians 15, we see John being intentional about his choice of words. John calling Jesus the “Word” was a strategic spear thrown at his audience. The Greek word is *logos*, and the Greeks used it commonly when speaking about their gods. The Greeks believed their gods were detached from the pain of the world. Unlike those gods, the *logos* of the Bible felt fully the pain of the world. In attaching Himself to humanity, Jesus suffered the punishment of the cross so that we would not eternally suffer the punishment of our sin.



We are born blinded by the darkness of sin, but when our faith is transformed by Jesus, light invades the darkness. Thus verse 14, to “have seen his glory,” is to see Jesus for Who He is: the loving, compassionate source of infinite joy Who both created the world by His Word and was sent to awaken our soul through His gospel to the glory of His Father.

There are two primary implications to highlight. First, Christ has redeemed us from our sin, but this does not mean our struggle with sin has ended. We still battle daily to become who we are, new creations and conquerors in Christ. This battle will rage until Christ returns and deals sin its decisive and final blow. Second, in John 17 Jesus prays to the Father, “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” The Church is a sent people following the model of Jesus. He left heaven for earth to enter into humanity and integrate into society. We are to see life through the same lens.

As Jesus was sent to humanity with a mission, we are sent to humanity to carry out His mission. We have been sent to “incarnate” into our cities and through our jobs, homes, coffee shops, homeless shelters, etc. We are to integrate counter-cultural living into our city. Jesus shows us that neither of these implications can be taken in isolation. Rather, our holiness is stirred up by our mission, and our mission is accomplished in our holiness. This is the mission of the bride of Christ in the joy of Christ until the day we walk by sight and not by faith.

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How would you explain the phrase, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us?”

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2. In what ways has God integrated you into society? What practical steps can you take to live as a person sent to reveal Christ?

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3. At the heart level, what holds you back from seeing yourself as a sent person? How are you strategically fighting for holiness in those areas?

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4. How would you explain the gospel, its effect on your life and how your transformation produces mission? Suggestion: take your time and write it out.

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5. Whom has the Lord placed in your sphere of influence to whom you can be a messenger of the gospel?

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# FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

DECEMBER 11 – DECEMBER 17

Take a minute and think back to last Christmas. Was there a time when you looked at a box sitting under a Christmas tree and only wanted to know one thing: What is in there? You knew it was for you but also knew you couldn't open it. Now think about the joy of finally opening, seeing, touching and holding the unwrapped gift.

This is what the story of Jesus is like in the Bible. The Old Testament promises that the greatest gift ever, the Savior, would come. Last week we talked about some of the things God said about the promised Savior through the prophets. While He revealed some things about what the Savior would be like, God didn't tell everything. He faithfully kept His promise by sending His own Son, Jesus, into the world. He has come, and we now know about Him – about His life, His death and His resurrection – and how He came into the world to save sinners. When we hold this gift, we hold eternal life.

As a family, spend time with God. Read John 1:1-5 and talk about the following questions.

1. Are there any unfamiliar words in this passage? Is there anything you don't understand?

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2. Whom is this passage talking about? What do we learn about Jesus from it?

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3. Do you remember how the Savior was described in Isaiah 9:2? How does this passage show Jesus as the fulfillment of that prophecy?

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4. How and why is Jesus the greatest gift ever?

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5. What does the birth of Jesus show us about the nature and character of God?

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6. How does the first coming of Jesus give us confidence in His second coming?

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Close your time by praying as a family. Parents, ask your kids how you can be praying for them. Kids, ask your parents the same thing. Check in with each other about ways you have seen God's faithful answer to prayer over the past few weeks.

***See Appendix C for a list of ideas for Family Activities.***





*O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

