



### Advent Week 3: God's Love is Incarnational

John 1:14; Luke 2:1-7

*God's love is so great that He entered our existence in the person of Jesus Christ to show us what He is like.*

#### I. Deconstructing our image of God

- What is your personal image of God? Jesus?
- What preconceived notions have you had about his character?
- What does he look like?
- How does he act?
- What influences have formed your image?
- Has it changed over time?

#### II. Reconstructing our image of God

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling [*tabernacled*] among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”  
John 1:14

If we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus.  
God = love  
Jesus = God  
*therefore* Jesus = love

#### ***Jesus is love embodied***

If we want to know what love does and how love acts, we study Jesus.

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” John 14:9

#### A. Jesus came in humility

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”  
Luke 2:1-7

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled [humiliated] himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!”  
Philippians 2:5-8

“One of the clearest statements of faith concerning Jesus of Nazareth is that simultaneously he is fully divine and fully human: *perfectus Deus, perfectus homo*. The words are easy to say, yet they contain a great mystery. The humanity and divinity of Jesus do not subsist side by side and independent, like chalk and cheese. Instead, humanity and divinity coincide in a single person so that the actions of Jesus are simultaneously the actions of human being and the actions of God... We are dealing here with a reality that is beyond our immediate experience... [Therefore], a clear understanding of the wonder of God’s enfleshment is necessary if we are to come to grips with the equal wonder of our own divinization.” – Michael Casey, *Fully Human, Fully Divine*

#### B. He is “WITH US”

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, [Yeshua] because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet [Isaiah 7:12-14]: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel!” (which means “God with us”).  
Matthew 1:21-23

Immanuel = literal translation is the “WITH US” God

#### C. Because he is WITH US, we can be like Jesus (love embodied) to others

### Discussion Questions

1. Describe your personal image of God and/or your Jesus, along with any preconceived notions you’ve had over the years. What does he look like? How does he act? What influences have formed

your image? Has it changed over time?

2. Read Philippians 2:5-8. What does it mean for Jesus to be fully God and fully human at the same time?

3. Think of a situation or relationship in your life where you could invite God to be “with” you, so that you can do/be more than you are able on your own. Ask Him to fill you with His Spirit and accompany you.

4. Do you have margin in your life so God can use you (like Jesus, love embodied) in everyday situations? If not, what would it take to create that margin?

**Resources:**

*America's Four Gods: What We Say about God--and What That Says about Us* by Christopher Bader and Paul Froese. Content is based on findings from the 2005 Baylor Religion Survey.

The Baylor Religion Survey, 2021 and past results can be accessed here: <https://www.baylor.edu/baylorreligionsurvey/>

*Fully Human, Fully Divine: An Interactive Christology* by Michael Casey

*God With Us: Reflections on the Incarnation* by Charles Spurgeon

*On the Incarnation* by Saint Athanasius

*The Case for Christmas* by Lee Strobel

*The Jesus I Never Knew* by Philip Yancey

*NET (New English Translation) Bible* – has excellent notes on the original Greek and Hebrew words, available on Bible apps or print format

Video clip of Jesus's birth comes from “The Bible Series,” episodes available online or DVD available on Amazon