

The purpose of the incarnation of Christ

God never does anything without a purpose. He doesn't do things out of the ordinary just because He can. He has a purpose in election, a purpose in doing things for His power and glory to be displayed, a purpose in our redemption, a purpose in whatever happens in our lives. Sometimes that purpose has been revealed to us, and at other times it remains a mystery to us. In the same way there was a purpose for his incarnation – Him having become flesh.

Philippians 2:5-11

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 himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1) The incarnation affects our relationships

- Philippians 2:5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus
- The heart of the incarnation of Christ is that He humbled Himself not only taking on human form, not only becoming a servant, but even lower than that, by dying on a cross like a common criminal
- He demonstrated the heart of relationships by doing that.
 - Our foundational relationship in life is our relationship with God. If that relationship is shaky, then all other relationships will be shaky
 - Humility is a key trait in all relationships in the same way He humbled Himself
 - Servanthood is vital. If we aren't ready to serve others our relationships won't stand
 - Servanthood puts the other person's needs above your own and seeks to serve the other person for their best, even if you don't get anything out of it yourself.
 - Jesus came not to be served but to serve, and He got nothing out of it in this life. He ended up dying as a criminal on a cross
- In giving Himself to die on the cross he broke the wall of sin that separated us from God reconciling us and mending the relationship between us and God that was broken by Adam
 - Romans 5:10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!
- It is also through His death on the cross that He destroyed the wall of hostility between people
 - Ephesians 2:14-16 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.
- It's clear that one of the primary purposes of the incarnation of Christ is wholesome relationships with God and one another.
 - As a man Jesus demonstrated the relationships that He expects of his followers
 - He had an intimate relationship with The Father reflected in His prayer life, His submission to the Father's will, His dependence on the Father, his oneness with the Father, The Father's affirmation of Him
 - He had a close loving relationship with His disciples and at the end of His life commanded them to love one another as he had loved them.
 - His love for the poor and the needy, the marginalised and the outcast with whom He related with love and compassion
 - Then we ought not to leave out His love even for His enemies. He freely and willingly ministered to Romans, who were the oppressors of the time, and He called on the Father to forgive those who had crucified Him.

2) The sacrifice of the incarnated Christ

- Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!
- Jesus' death on a cross was to rectify the effects of the fall
 - It wasn't a random act under Roman rule, but it was preordained by God
 - Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.
 - All the sacrifices point to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross
 - Adam was covered with animal skins in the Garden of Eden
 - Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac
 - The sacrifice of the Passover
 - The Atonement sacrifice
 - Prophecies pointed to Jesus dying on a cross
 - Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
 - Psalms 22:16-18 Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.
 - Jesus' name was chosen intentionally as it means "God is Salvation"
- It was therefore God's purpose for the incarnated Christ to die on a cross for the salvation of the world
- So why did God become a man to die on a cross for the sins of the world? Why didn't he just forgive us our sins and save us by His Word?
 - Romans 5:19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
 - If God merely forgave us our sin, then He wouldn't be just as the wages of sin is death. Sin had to be paid for.
 - If God merely judges us for our sin then He isn't merciful, and mercy is one of His characteristics
 - He therefore instituted the system of sacrifice to sacrifice an animal for the sins of the people
- The previous sacrifices of animals were merely pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. They were insufficient in themselves to save man
 - Hebrews 10:1-4 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
 - Hebrews 10:12-14 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
- As animals aren't equal in worth to people they couldn't atone for our sins. Sin came in through a man and only man could atone for sins, but it had to be a sinless man as a man with sin has to already be judged for his own sin.
 - No person on this ever has been sinless and so mankind is in a dire predicament of being under the judgment of God without hope, unless God, who is sinless, becomes a sinless man to take the judgment of sinful man upon Himself to make sinful man righteous by His sacrifice

3) The supremacy of Christ

- Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- The ultimate purpose of the incarnation is that Jesus will be exalted to the highest place and worshipped and acknowledged by all to God's glory
- Matthew 10:32-33 "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.