

“God Comes Near”—*Incarnation: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries, Part 1*
ECO Essential Tenets Study for BYF - July 19, 2026
Dr. Clay Brown, MDPC Adult Discipleship Pastor

1. Announcements and Prayer

2. Review of July 12 Lesson on “God Is—*Trinity: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries, Part 2*”

- Characteristics or attributes of God
- Analogies/mistakes/errors/heresies of importance (especially the really fun ones)

3. Today’s Lesson on the Incarnation:

- The astounding claim being made about Jesus: 100% God and 100% human at the same time
- The evidence in Scripture and in the life of Jesus for this claim

4. Section II.B, “Incarnation,” *Trinity and Incarnation: The Two Central Christian Mysteries*, ECO Essential Tenets

This is the second great mystery of the Christian faith, affirmed by all Christians everywhere: that **Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly human**. As to His divinity, He is the Son, the second person of the Trinity, being of one substance with the Father; as to His humanity, He is like us in every way but sin, of one substance with us, like us in having both a human soul and a human body. As to His divinity, He is eternally begotten of the Father; as to His humanity, He is born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit. As to His divinity, His glory fills heaven and earth; as to His humanity, His glory is shown in the form of a suffering servant, most clearly when He is lifted up on the cross in our place.

We confess the mystery of His two natures, divine and human, in one person. We reject any understanding of the communication of attributes that must result in a blending of the two natures such that Jesus Christ is neither truly God nor truly human. We insist upon sufficient distinction between the two natures to preserve the truth of the incarnation, that Jesus Christ is indeed Immanuel, God-with-us, not one who used to be God, nor one who has merely been sent from God. Rather, in His coming we have seen God’s glory, for Jesus is the exact imprint of God’s very being and in Him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. **The divinity of the Son is in no way impaired, limited, or changed by His gracious act of assuming a human nature, and that His true humanity is in no way undermined by His continued divinity.** This is a mystery that we cannot explain, but we affirm it with joy and confidence.

This mystery of the incarnation is ongoing, for the risen **Jesus, who was sent from the Father, has now ascended to the Father in His resurrected body and remains truly human**. He is bodily present at the right hand of the Father. When we are promised that one day we will see Him face to face, we acknowledge that it is the face of Jesus of Nazareth we will someday see. The one who, for us and for our salvation, was born of Mary, died at Calvary, and walked with disciples to Emmaus is the same Jesus Christ who is now ascended and who will one day return visibly in the body to judge the living and the dead.

Jesus promised His disciples that He would not leave them comfortless when He ascended into heaven, but would ask the Father to send them the Holy Spirit as a comforter and advocate. **We are able to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God only through the work of the Holy Spirit.** He comes to us as He came to the gathered disciples at Pentecost: to kindle our faith, to embolden our witness, and to accompany us in mission.

5. The Astounding Claim about Jesus: Fully God and Fully Human at the Same Time

- “Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly human.” (Essential Tenets above)
- Divinity and humanity both compared and affirmed
 - Second person of Trinity; but like us in every way but our sin, with human soul and body
 - Eternally begotten of the Father; but also born of the virgin Mary and conceived by the Spirit
 - Jesus not a “used-to-be God” or just a messenger from God, but in actuality “God with us”
- Key: his divinity doesn’t work against his humanity, and his humanity doesn’t work against his humanity
- “This is a mystery we can’t explain, but we affirm it with joy and confidence.” (Essential Tenets above)
- Several affirmations because of this claim:
 - We affirm Jesus knows what it means to be human (fatigue, laughter, the satisfaction from a nice meal, pain, hunger, deep community, and temptation, just to name a few) because he has personally experienced it
 - We affirm the physical body as blessed by God, not as a barrier separating us from God
 - We affirm the resurrection body everyone in Christ will receive in the new heaven and earth will in some way resemble the resurrection body of Jesus, since he is the Prototype
 - We affirm Jesus is still truly human, truly God, at the right hand of the Father as our Advocate and Intercessor

6. Lots of Scripture to Review and Discuss

- Matthew 1:18-25
- Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20
- John 1:1-18; 3:1-17; 8:12-58 (and all the “I Am” sayings); 14:1—16:33 (“Farewell Discourse”)
- Acts 2:14-41; 13:16-43
- Romans 1:1-6; 5:12-21
- Philippians 2:1-11
- Colossians 1:15-22
- Hebrews 1:1-14; 4:14-16; 7:23—8:12
- 2 Peter 1:12-18
- 1 John 1:1-3

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *As you read the selection from the Essential Tenets on Incarnation, what jumps out as the most important statement it makes?*
- *As you read the selection from the Essential Tenets on Incarnation, what seems most confusing or different?*
- *Of the Scriptures offered and discussed, which one speaks to you the most? Why so?*
- *What are the most common objections you’ve heard about the astounding claim being made about Jesus? Try to see it from the objector’s perspective: what is so difficult about accepting the Jesus being presented?*
- *In your day to day life, how does Jesus being a real human being make an impact on you? What does it say to you about God? What does it say to you about your own humanity?*

8. Closing Prayer

July 26	“God Comes Near”	<i>Incarnation: One of Two Central Christian Mysteries Part 2</i>
August 2	“God Saves”	<i>God’s Grace in Christ</i>
August 9	“God Chooses/Sends”	<i>Election for Salvation and Service</i>
August 16	“God Gathers”	<i>Covenant Life in the Church</i>
August 23	“God Entrusts”	<i>Faithful Stewardship of All of Life</i>
August 30	“God Forms”	<i>Living in Obedience to the Word of God</i>
September 6	Stand-Alone Bible Study	(Labor Day weekend) TBD