

Small Group Guide

Hebrews 2:5-18 -- Why a Man? The Purpose of the Incarnation

Before You Begin

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to give your group clarity of mind and openness of heart as you reflect on the truths of the Incarnation. Encourage members to have their Bibles open throughout the discussion.

Context and Overview

In this passage, the author of Hebrews addresses a question that confused many people in the first and second centuries -- not whether Jesus was divine, but whether He was truly human. Building on the glory of Christ established in chapter one, the author now explains why it was necessary for the eternal Son of God to take on real human flesh. The sermon organized this passage around three major themes: man's purpose, man's problem, and God's provision.

Key Takeaways

- Mankind was created with a glorious purpose -- to rule and have dominion over the earth alongside God. That purpose has not been cancelled; it has been secured through Christ.
- The fall of Adam introduced sin and death into the world, corrupting human nature and forfeiting man's right to rule. This is why the promise of dominion remains unfulfilled in our present experience.
- Christ became fully human -- not in appearance only, but in reality -- so that He could serve as our substitute, captain, brother, deliverer, and high priest.
- Because we are mystically united to Christ, everything that is true of Him in His glorified humanity is guaranteed to become true of us.
- The Incarnation is not merely a theological concept to admire from a distance. It is a living truth that should shape how we face suffering, temptation, sin, and even death.

Discussion Questions

Opening and Observation

1. Before this sermon or your own Bible study, how did you typically think about the Incarnation? Was it something you reflected on deeply, or more of a background assumption of your faith? What has shaped your understanding of it most?
2. The sermon noted that in the early church, it was Christ's humanity -- not His deity -- that people struggled to accept. Why do you think that was difficult for people then? Do you think modern Christians tend to underemphasize one side or the other?
3. Read Hebrews 2:5-18 together as a group. What words, phrases, or images stand out to you most on a first reading?

Man's Purpose -- Dominion

4. The sermon drew from Psalm 8:4-6 to establish that mankind was created to rule the earth as God's representatives. How does this shape the way you think about your own life and identity? Does it change anything about how you see your daily work, relationships, or responsibilities?
5. The preacher used the image of the gap between a human being and a microscopic amoeba to illustrate how vast the distance is between God and us -- and yet God loves us anyway. How does that image land with you? What does it stir in you when you consider that God's love for you is not based on your worthiness?
6. Genesis 1:26 and Revelation 20:6 both speak to mankind's calling to rule alongside God. How does knowing that this purpose is not lost but will one day be fully restored shape the way you think about the future?

Man's Problem -- Death

7. The sermon described the fall in terms of a rupture between creation and its source -- God. In your own words, how would you explain to someone why sin leads to death, both spiritually and physically?
8. The preacher described Adam's choice as inviting evil, corruption, and death into the world -- and said that Satan now wields death

through sin. How do you see the fear of death operating in the lives of people around you, or even in your own life? What does it look like practically to be enslaved to that fear?

9. The sermon pointed out that God's perfect justice and His perfect mercy seemed to be in tension -- justice demanding punishment for sin, and mercy seeking to forgive. How does the cross resolve that tension? Why is it important that both attributes of God are fully honored rather than one being sacrificed for the other?

God's Provision -- Deity in the Flesh

10. The sermon outlined five roles Christ fulfills through His Incarnation: substitute, captain, brother, deliverer, and high priest. Which of these five resonates most deeply with you personally right now, and why?
11. Regarding Christ as our substitute, the sermon said: "The mighty Son of God who made everything and sustains everything by his inexhaustible power. He humbled himself to become a human, to become lower than the angels who worship him. And worse yet, he humbled himself to a shameful and torturous death on a cross and bore the agonizing penalty for innumerable sins which were not his own, facing the full divine wrath of God. It was completely unfair for him to do this, and yet he did it all anyway because he truly loves us beyond description." Spend a moment sitting with that statement. What is your honest emotional and spiritual response to it?
12. The sermon pointed out the repeated phrase "crowned with glory and honor" in verses 7 and 9 -- first as a promise to mankind, then as a present reality for Christ. How does the fact that our head, Christ, is already crowned give you confidence about your own future glory, even when your present circumstances feel anything but glorious?
13. Regarding Christ as our captain, the sermon contrasted Him with Adam: "Adam, our progenitor, has invited sin to corrupt his nature and then passed on this corrupted nature to his offspring... And inversely, the exact opposite, the second Adam, Christ, our captain, has set a new and better example for us." What does it mean to you practically that you are no longer defined by what you inherited from Adam, but by what you have received from Christ?
14. The sermon described Christ's true humanity in vivid, concrete terms -- that He knows what bread tastes like, how refreshing cold water is, what fatigue and sleep feel like, and what it is like to grow up in a

community with faces He recognized. Why does the genuine, physical humanity of Jesus matter for your faith? How would your relationship with Him be different if He had only appeared to be human?

15. Regarding Christ as our deliverer, the preacher said: "If you are ever sure that God is calling you to a place of potential or even certain death, if you are confident this is where he's leading you, as provocative as this sounds, go." Is that a statement you find yourself able to agree with? What would need to be true in your heart for that kind of courage to be real rather than theoretical?
16. As our high priest, Christ makes propitiation for sin and also comforts us in temptation. The sermon said: "When we utterly fail and fall so deep into sin that we feel we have no hope of forgiveness and redemption, he reminds us that it is finished." Have you ever been in a place where you doubted whether your sin was forgivable? How does the reality of Christ's priestly work speak to that doubt?

Practical Applications

Consider choosing one or two of the following to commit to as a group or as individuals before your next meeting.

Deepen Your Theological Understanding The sermon encouraged believers not to be content with only a surface-level understanding of the Incarnation. This week, spend at least thirty minutes reading about one aspect of the Incarnation that you find difficult or unfamiliar. Classic resources such as Athanasius's "On the Incarnation" or a trusted systematic theology text are excellent starting points. Come prepared to share one thing you learned with the group.

Examine Your Relationship to Death and Fear The sermon described the pagan tendency to be enslaved to the fear of death, clinging to this life at any cost. Honestly assess your own heart. Are there areas of your life where fear of loss, suffering, or death is driving your decisions more than faith in Christ? Bring this before God in prayer and ask Him to replace that fear with the confidence that comes from Christ's resurrection.

Practice Identifying with Christ's Humanity This week, when you encounter a moment of temptation, exhaustion, grief, or frustration, pause and remind yourself that Jesus has experienced something comparable in

His earthly life. Speak to Him from that place of shared experience, and ask Him for the comfort and help the passage promises He is able to give.

Reflect on Your Identity as a Child of Glory The sermon said: "Your salvation is the very process in which God is molding you into a truer version of yourself, the person you were always meant to be." Write down three ways your current habits, attitudes, or priorities reflect a person who believes they are being brought to glory -- and three ways they do not. Bring that honest self-assessment to God and ask Him what He wants to address first.

Share the Hope of the Incarnation The sermon closed with a challenge to spread this news to those who do not yet have this promise and hope. Identify one person in your life who does not know Christ. Pray for them by name each day this week, and ask God for a natural opportunity to share with them what the Incarnation means and why it matters.

Closing Reflection

Close your time by reading aloud together the closing words of the sermon's prayer:

"Thank you for your incarnation, Lord Jesus. Thank you for taking on flesh and becoming what we are. May you forever be praised and glorified by your people whom you've bought."

Allow a few moments of silence, then invite anyone who would like to pray aloud to do so before closing.

Suggested Scripture for Further Study

- Psalm 8:4-6 -- The dignity and calling of mankind
- Genesis 1:26 -- Mankind made in God's image to rule
- Romans 6:23 -- The wages of sin is death
- Philippians 2:5-11 -- Christ's humility in taking on human form
- 2 Peter 1:4 -- Partakers of the divine nature
- Isaiah 8:17-18 -- The passage the author of Hebrews draws from in verse 13

- Psalm 22 -- The psalm of the suffering servant, quoted in verse 12
- Psalm 23:4 -- Walking through the valley of the shadow of death without fear