

# The Incarnate Christ and the Disciple

By Richard Ross

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Written prophecies concerning the birth of Christ go back thousands of years (the first prophecy was announced by God in the garden of Eden). Ask a history teacher, “How many babies have been born, perfectly fulfilling prophecies of their birth written thousands of years earlier?” Be ready to share the answer with your group.

### Assignment Two

Study Exodus 34:29–35. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: Does Scripture seem to indicate that the veil was sufficient to cover up the glow on the face of Moses? Now study Matthew 17:1–2. Does Scripture seem to indicate that Jesus’ clothes were sufficient to cover up and hide the glow on His body? How does the glow from being in the *presence* of God differ from the glow of actually *being* God?

### Assignment Three

Interview one adult and one teenager. Ask: When the leader of a new movement dies, does the movement that leader started usually grow or shrink? Prepare to share their answers with your group.

### Scripture to Memorize

*“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David.”* Luke 1:32

### Session Goal

Consistent with God’s Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will have a greater heart desire to be a disciple of Christ because of new insight into His power and glory during His days on the earth.

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Richard has written or compiled twenty-four books for youth leaders and parents. His most recent book is *The Senior Pastor and the Reformation of Youth Ministry* (lifeway.com). You can connect with Richard through RichardARoss.com, Facebook.com/rossrichard, and Twitter @richardaross.

## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

The most extensive study of church teenagers revealed that a large percentage believe God is nice but not very important. They believe He mostly stays out of the way until they need Him to show up and solve a problem. Which of these two statements sounds more like you?

1. I believe Jesus is a nice friend. He mostly lets me do whatever I want. He stays out of my way until I get in a jam. Then He shows up to fix things and make my life happier.
2. I believe Jesus is God and thus is more powerful and glorious than anyone can know. He is the absolute King and Ruler over my life. He does not exist primarily for me. I exist completely for Him.

Can the birth, transfiguration, and crucifixion of Jesus reveal more of His glory and greatness? Keep reading.

## The Birth of Jesus

### Discussion Questions

About 350,000 babies are born every day. How many of them are the fulfillment of written prophecies going back hundreds or thousands of years? How many are born to virgins? How many are born while the sky is full of angels?

**Read** Isaiah 9:6–7; Luke 1:31–33; and 2:13–14 out loud.

### Studying the Passage, Isaiah 9:6–7

**Verse 6. a child will be born to us.** Writing over 700 years BC, Isaiah was one of those who prophesied the birth of King Jesus. **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.** Writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah knew Jesus would be no ordinary child. He would be God in human form. Thus, He would be glorious.

### Studying the Passage, Luke 1:31–33 and 2:13–14

**Verse 31. you will conceive.** An angel announced to Mary that she would give birth to Jesus. He also announced that the baby would be conceived by the Holy Spirit and not by a human father (Luke 1:35).

**Verse 32–33. He will be great . . . called the Son of the Most High . . . God will give Him the throne . . . He will reign . . . His kingdom will have no end.** The Father did not *make* Jesus great at the time of His birth. Christ had *been* great from all eternity past. Speaking through His angels, the Father just *declared* the greatness of His Son.

**Verses 2:13–14. a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.** This phrase also can be translated “the multitude.” That might mean that every angel that existed gathered at the birth of the Son. “When he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’” (Hebrews 1:6).

### Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report how a history

teacher answered this question: “How many babies have been born, perfectly fulfilling prophecies of their birth written thousands of years earlier?”

## The Transfiguration of Jesus

Read Matthew 17:1–6 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 1. Jesus took with Him Peter and James, and John.** These three had seen Jesus almost constantly since He called them to be apostles. His appearance had never upset them before.

**Verse 2. He was transfigured.** This phrase means “transformed or changed in form.” Speaking of Christ, the Bible says that “in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” (Colossians 2:9). During the transfiguration, some of that deity began to burst out and become visible to the apostles. **His face shone like the sun.** This is the same expression John used later when he saw Christ ascended and in heaven (Revelation 1:16). **His clothes became white as light.** Not only did the face of Jesus radiate glory; His entire body did. That glory could not be contained. His dazzling glory burst through all His clothes, causing them to glow. Luke 9:32 says, “They saw His glory.”

### Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now answer these questions: How does the glow from being in the *presence* of God differ from the glow of actually *being* God? How does comparing Exodus 34:29–35 and Matthew 17:1–2 make this clear?

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 6. the disciples . . . fell on their faces and were terrified.** The fact that they fell facedown suggests the apostles were experiencing adoration toward the glory of Jesus. But the original language here says they also experienced terror.

### Discussion Question

You have seen your best friend thousands of times in scores of situations. How much would that friend’s appearance have to change to cause you to fall to the ground terrified? If your friend’s appearance changed that dramatically in an instant, would you wonder if you were seeing something out of this world?

## The Crucifixion of Jesus

### Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on two interviews. They also can answer this question: Is the death of an important leader usually a good thing or a bad thing for nations or movements that are moving forward?

Read John 17:1–2, 5 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verse 1. Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son.** These words, spoken by Jesus, point toward the approaching crucifixion, which was only hours away. The Romans could have executed prisoners inside the prisons, but they crucified in public - in part, to humiliate their prisoners. Jesus knew such humiliation was not the whole story. He knew His Father could and

would glorify Him as He paid the price for man's sin. **that the Son may glorify You.** The Son always desired that any glory that came to Him would flow to triune God.

**Read** 2 Corinthians 5:14–15 out loud.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 14. the love of Christ controls us.** Jesus did not stay limp and lifeless long. Now millions follow Him with their highest allegiance. No one can match His power.

**Verse 15. He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him.** Because Christ died and rose again, millions across the centuries live for Him alone. Enemies of God live for themselves, but those who are redeemed live for Christ. He increasingly reigns in the believer.

**Read** Luke 23:38 out loud.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 38. an inscription over Him, “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”** Pilate could not know the full truthfulness of this sign he had placed on the cross. Jesus *was* the King and He *is* the King and He *will be* the King forever and ever. Even at the moment of Christ's death, a sign proclaimed His supreme kingship. Because of His death, the lost are liberated, Satan's minions are defeated, death is destroyed, sin is vanquished and judgment is averted.

### **Discussion Questions**

How does this lesson help prepare you for a year of discipleship study? How does the majesty of Christ while on the earth motivate you to be His follower?

### **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

**Since Last Week**

5 minutes

**Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

**Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

**Prayer**

7 minutes

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

The Son of God has always existed and always has been a glorious being, just as the Father and the Spirit have been. The Son clearly revealed His glory as He spoke all creation into existence. Even before He came to earth, Old Testament writers spoke of the greatness and glory of Christ.

Forty days after the resurrection, that glory was on special display yet again. Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives and then walked into the throne room of heaven. His Father enthroned the Son at His right hand. From that throne, the Son now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Only once will He leave that throne. On the day of His second coming, He will split open the heavens and slowly descend to earth. All of mankind will see Him and will declare His greatness—some in great joy and some in great terror. The King will take the redeemed to a new earth where He will reign forever and ever.

Christ clearly was glorious in eternity past, and He clearly will be glorious in eternity future. But He even revealed that glory during the brief time He was on earth in human form. Angels filled the night sky to proclaim His birth. On the Mount of Transfiguration, some of His deity began to burst through His skin and clothes. Even that brief release of His glory caused those closest to Him to fall down in terror. But no event in the earthly life of Christ revealed His dazzling glory the way His death on the cross did.

Christian leader David Bryant wrote: “The Cross will forever remain the high watermark of all manifestations of Christ’s supremacy. At no point will Jesus ever appear to Christians to be more exalted than when He became the sacrifice for our sin. Nowhere will He ever blaze forth in victory more vividly than when He was vanquished on Golgotha’s tree. To worship Him as He deserves, focused on Him as supreme upon His throne, we must learn first to marvel at Him supreme upon His Cross.”

Why become a disciple? Why follow Christ with abandon? Why count all things as loss for His greatness? Because He is worthy to be followed. He is worthy of all adoration. He is worthy of the sacrifice of all things. He is God, and He is the clearest revelation of God. He is not a mascot, but a Monarch. He does not exist primarily for you; you exist completely for Him. You are not to live preoccupied with you but consumed with Him.

In the power of the Spirit and for the glory of the Father, follow the glorious King Jesus as His disciple this year.

### **Follow up Question**

*In what ways do you have a greater heart desire to be a disciple of Christ because of new insight into His power and glory during His days on the earth?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.