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How can the Practical Aspects of the Incarnation be Best Illustrated?

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How can the practical aspects of the incarnation be best illustrated?

Here several such illustrations may be offered:

- In the latter part of 1971 an American astronaut names James Irwin wrote a book entitled, *Moon Walk*, which described how he had once left a beautiful and hospitable planet called Earth (on July 26, 1971), and by way of a special vehicle (Apollo 15), had, thirteen days later, touched down upon a dangerous and totally inhospitable planet known as the moon. For three days he walked its rough surface and then returned home. If rightly understood, the incarnation could well be entitled, *God's Earth Walk*, for it relates the amazing story of how Jesus Christ once left a beautiful and blessed place known as Heaven, where He had constantly enjoyed being worshipped by all the angels (Heb. 1:6), and by way of a special vehicle (the body being prepared for Him in Mary's womb), had touched down upon a sin-loving and God-hating planet called Earth. For the next thirty-three-plus years He traveled its dusty roads, agreeing to eat our food, to drink our water, to breathe our air, to go to the cross and have His face covered with our spittle, and His ears filed with our curses in order to save us from our sins! THIS IS THE STORY AND GLORY OF THE INCARNATION!
- Dr. Walter Wilson, well-known physician and Bible teacher, in the Kansas City, Kansas, area told the following story on himself. He had just given a young university student a routine physical examination and felt constrained to share Christ with her before she left his office. To his surprise however, she refused the gospel invitation stating that, in her opinion, no educated person could ever accept the Bible message.

When asked why this was so, she responded: "Tell me, Dr. Wilson, do you believe in the virgin birth?" "Indeed I do," he replied. "Very well," she continued, "now let me ask you two questions. Let us suppose you tell me your physical examination has revealed that I am pregnant, but I respond by saying this cannot be, for I am a virgin. However, your findings are correct and I give birth to a baby boy. Now, Dr. Wilson, here are my two questions: First, would you believe I was truthful concerning my virginity, and, second, would you look upon my baby as the Son of God?"

Breathing a silent prayer for divine wisdom, Dr. Wilson answered: "Well, young lady, it would all depend on certain things. Let us imagine that I was present at his birth and watched in amazement as farmers in the area came to your bedside and worshipped him, followed later by the arrival of foreign astronomers bringing him costly gifts. Now, when he is twelve, I see him holding his own with America's greatest theologians and philosophers. Years later I follow him as he empties hospitals by healing the sick, disrupts cemeteries by raising the dead, reduces prison populations by changing lives, and reconciling enemies by his messages. Finally, if I could look in horror as this incredible man was murdered by his foes, and, in great sorrow, officially pronounce him dead, but then, miracle of miracles, actually see him walking

around several days later, then, young lady, yes. I would say, you are a virgin, and yes, your baby would be the Son of God!"

- While a student at the Moody Bible Institute my Christian service assignment one semester was to conduct a Bible class for a group of junior boys and girls in the south side of Chicago. In those days I was totally inexperienced in teaching (especially children) and was somewhat nervous as I prepared (for the first time) to tell them the Christmas story. How could I make them understand what really happened at Bethlehem? What illustration could I use? As it turned out I had little need to worry, for one of the little girls in that group offered one of the most precious and profound bottom line statements ever heard on planet earth regarding the incarnation. With incredible simplicity she said: "At Bethlehem, Mary was God's envelope, and Jesus was God's letter!"
- In his sermons, the great evangelist, D. L. Moody, often related the story of a young biologist who came across an especially large and active ant hill during his walk in a forest. Delighted with his find, the biologist sat down on a nearby rock, and taking out pen and notebook, began writing down what he saw. Soon, however, the entire ant hill was in an upheaval as the tiny creatures became aware of his presence. Frustrated, the biologist walked away wishing he could in some manner communicate with them, assuring the little creatures of his interest and that no harm would be forthcoming.

He concluded, however, the only way this could happen would be to take upon himself the body of an ant and thus become part of their existence, sharing his story in a way they could comprehend.

This is exactly what occurred at the incarnation. The infinite, holy, eternal, and sinless Son of God agreed to take upon Himself a finite and fleshly body that he, the lofty Creator, might personally communicate with us, his lowly creatures.

- The diamond/clay vessel illustration:

A perfect, priceless, and incredibly beautiful diamond is placed within a plain and lowly clay vessel. One day, for a brief moment, a tiny hole appears in the container, resulting in the immediate outpouring of a dazzling beam of glory that temporarily blinds those who happened to see it. This is, of course, exactly what happened in Luke 2 (Christ's birth), and Matthew 17 (His transfiguration).

A. The placing of the diamond (1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14)

B. The appearing of the hole (Matt. 17:1, 2)

A case could be made here that, in all the universe, the strongest object ever created by God was the earthly body of Jesus! Ponder this amazing thought: for thirty-four years this vessel of clay actually contained and confined the resplen-

dent glory of Almighty God Himself, only allowing for one brief moment a tiny ray to escape, which temporarily blinded Peter, James, and John!

- The Rolls Royce/ox wagon illustration:

The owner of a \$175,000 Rolls Royce “Gray Ghost” automobile is suddenly and mysteriously transported in “twilight zone” fashion to earth’s most remote area where the residents are still in the Stone Age. After recovering from the initial shock, the man notices their only means of transportation involves the hitching of oxen to crude wooden carts or wagons. Sitting in his Rolls, surrounded by luxury, the owner soon realizes there are two courses of action open to him.

- A. He can place the auto in gear and, using its awesome power, literally leave those simple natives in the dust.
- B. He can keep the motor running, ease the auto in neutral, and allow his magnificent machine to be pulled by a lowly oxen.

After some thought, the second option is decided upon. But why? For some reason, he feels a strong desire to know these people. He wants to travel at their pace, and befriend as many as possible. This is exactly what Jesus did when He came to our planet, carrying with Him all the glorious attributes in human flesh, agreeing to eat our food, drink our water, speak our language, and die for our sins!