

What If God Was One of Us?

During the Christmas Season, we especially consider messages about the birth of Jesus Christ. Of all the things we will examine about Jesus, thinking about His incarnation, taking on the form of a man, is a great place to start. We are full of wonder when we think of the humble stable, the world passing by, and the awe of the shepherds as the angels shouted in glory. We use the word *mystery* about Christ's birth cautiously because it is so overused as an excuse to not have to think. The greatest part of what happened at Christmas *was* the Mystery of the Incarnation, the fusing of the *divine* nature with *human* nature.

1. The necessity of the humanity of Christ.

Christ coming to earth as a baby was not just a quaint, sentimental notion. It was downright *necessary* for man's salvation. The commercial world plays on the sentimentality of the season and goes way overboard trying to cash in on it while grossly piling on misunderstandings. When you hear people missing the mark, you just want to tell them, "It's all about Jesus." As Christians, it is good to take time to contemplate what it even means to *say* "It's all about Jesus."

Anselm, for example, was an 11th c. theologian who dealt with this. He made a major move in the history of the church looking for the reasoning *behind* our faith. Anselm helped set the stage for the reformation by not blindly accepting the pronouncements of church leaders. In his day, it was a revolutionary question to ask when he wrote *Cur Deus Homo: Why God Man?* Or, *Why Did God Become Man*. Long before Anselm, the ancient pagans thought of their gods as capricious, arbitrary, and irrational. The God of the Bible was different. He was consistent with His nature. He did not contradict Himself from one day to the

next. There was reason behind His plan. While the Incarnation had been reflected upon by earlier theologians, Anselm uniquely framed the question in terms of *necessity and reason*: Why did God *have* to become man?

Since it was right that, as by man's *disobedience* death passed upon the human race, so by the *obedience* of Man should life be restored. And like as sin, which was the cause of our condemnation, had its beginning from a woman,¹ so should the Author of our righteousness and salvation be born of a woman; and as the devil, by the tasting of a tree overcame man whom he persuaded to do it, so by the Passion *on* the Tree, which he brought about, should *he* be overcome by Man.

¹Anselm is drawing on biblical typology that sees parallels between events, persons, or themes in the Bible. He is emphasizing the symmetry between the Fall (as described in Genesis) and the work of Christ, highlighting how redemption mirrors and corrects humanity's descent into sin. Anselm is not claiming that Eve's sin was greater or fundamentally different in nature from Adam's. Eve's role is significant because she is the one through whom the temptation first entered human experience, but, as pointed out at the beginning of the quote, Adam's sin is theologically central in terms of its consequences for humanity.

— Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, Why God Man? (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1093-1109)

The necessity of God becoming man stood in contrast to the Jewish sacrifices. The sacrifices of the Law were not a remedy, they were only a reminder.

Heb 10:3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year.

After baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist pointed that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take the sin of the world.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Jesus took care of sin, but why did He have to *become* a man to do that? Hebrews 2 opens with that question: Why does God bother with man?

Heb 2:5-18 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

Jesus, to redeem man, *had* to become man. No lamb from a flock of sheep could be conveniently sacrificed. No *finite* man on earth could offer *himself* in sacrifice. Only Jesus as the Son of God *and* the Son of Man had the capacity to provide Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that **he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.**

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, **in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**

...

14 Forasmuch then as **the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;**

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For verily **he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.**

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18 For **in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.**

As Adam gave birth to a generation of *sinners*, Jesus gave *new* birth to a generation of *saints*.

Rom 5:8-21 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

...

18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

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By His sacrifice He became the first man from among the dead. Because of His resurrection as a man, now our resurrection is secured.

1Cor 15:20-26 But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.
21 For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.
22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.
24 Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
26 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

2. The definition of the humanity of Christ.

In the incarnation, Jesus truly became one of us.

Phil 2:6-7 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

No reputation comes from a word that means that He emptied Himself of the use of His divine power and only exercised the power of the Spirit while He was here. He was truly human and was tempted, yet without sin.

Heb 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.
15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was

in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

He was *without* sin, but He was made *in the likeness* of sinful flesh.

1 John 1:1-5 which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

This was how Jesus was able to take our sin.

2Cor 5:21 For he **[God]** hath made him **[Jesus]** *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

3. The mystery of the humanity of Christ.

We can understand the logic of why Christ had to come in the flesh to take on the sins of the world. We can understand

the definition of the humanity of Christ. We can understand the concept of Christ becoming man for the purpose of sacrifice.

Gal 4:4-5 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Nevertheless, there is a *mystery* to the humanity of Christ. What was it like for an omniscient God to experience becoming a man? Knowing is not always just knowing *about* something. Knowing is also experiencing. What was it like for God who transcends all to experience humanity?

There is a really dumb song out there with the words that ask the question, "What if God was one of us, just a slob like one of us?" It really sounds blasphemous to suggest that God be a slob, like one of us, but there is something accidentally true about the song.

Jesus got tired and retreat to rest.

Jesus wept, hungered, and thirsted.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness (yet without sin).

Jesus was strengthened by the angels in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus said and did everything perfectly yet was misunderstood, hated, and forsaken.

Look again at Philippians 2.

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

I cannot look into the depths of God's experience of a man and see to the end of it. I know this though, that God became flesh and dwelt amongst us and died

amongst us and for us.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

One of Us, by Eric Bazilian (question from a lost man)

If God had a	was one of Us?
Name,	Just a slob like
what would it	one of Us?
be and -	Just a stranger
would you call	on a bus, trying to
it to His face	make His
if you were	way home...
faced with Him	
in all His	If God had a
Glory,	face,
what would	what would it
you ask	look like and
if You had just	would you
one question...	want to see
	if seeing meant
and yeah, yeah	that
God is great	You would
Yeah, yeah	have to believe
God is good	in things like
Yeah, yeah	Heaven and in
yeah yeah yeah	Jesus and the
	Saints
	and all the
What if God	Prophets and...

This is not representative of Biblical theology, but it is representative of man's craving for the divine and not being fulfilled by what man can conceive. The fact of the matter is that Jesus did not come to us in His glory. In the incarnation Jesus stooped so low in humility. On a scale from God to man, Jesus came to us in the opposite of God's perfection. In God's perfections we think of His omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and His holiness and unfathomable love. Besides His perfect and infinite strength, there is His *perfect*

weakness as a man. He became one of us! He took on the form of one of us slobs. If we could see Him as people did when He came, would that mean we would necessarily believe? In our sinful humanity, God is an inconvenient truth. We are happy to believe in Him if it means keeping Him tucked away in a manger. We would rather have an Easter egg hunt at the cross than to behold Jesus *on* the cross. The cross becomes our inconvenient truth where we are confronted with our imperfection, our sinfulness, and our inability to save ourselves. Would mankind welcome their salvation with open arms if it was staring them in the face? After all, there were crowds that shouted Hosanna one day but then there were the crowds shouting out "Crucify Him" a few days later.

John 1:10-11 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

What would it look like if God became one of us? Isaiah wrote about that.

Isa 53:1-11 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten

of God, and afflicted. **[What would it look like if God truly became one of *us*? lost mankind would reject Him.]**

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. **[But if we accept Him, He becomes our Savior.]**

That song falls way short because it only asks some questions and by them makes some implications. It doesn't provide any answers, but what do you expect of a song from the world,

anyway? I am afraid that even though Christ came down and walked amongst us, many people did not want to see Him and believe in Him. But, what more could God do!? The people cried out, show us a sign.

Matt 12:38-40 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

After all the miracles, after all the sermons, after all that Jesus said and did, He would still be rejected by some people. Some people looked at Him like He was just a stranger on the bus, having no form nor comeliness that we should desire Him. The thief on the cross finally looked at Him and beheld Him as God. There was only one sign that would count. Here is your one sign: the resurrection! That's it folks. That's your one shot. If you don't get this, you done missed the boat. There's nothing else coming to save you. Besides coming to earth as a man to die for your sins, there is nothing more that God could do to provide you with salvation. God became man and only as the God/Man He died and was raised again for your justification.

John 12:31-32 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

If you have received gifts in the name of Christ at Christmas but have not received Christ then that suggests that you have just used Christ for your worldly gain. Here is God's Christmas gift to you. Jesus became one of us so that we could become one with Him. Gift giving at Christmas is a wonderful illustration of the spirit of Christ when you realize that it commemorates God's grace giving us His Son. You can receive the gift of salvation from Christ today!

If you have received Christ as your Savior, then you can bow before the cradle and the cross in adoration of the One Who stepped into this world to be one of us and knows us as we are. Will you be blessed not only with the gift of salvation but also with the gift of living your life for Him? If you could ever give a gift to Jesus, would it ever be a bottle of alcohol, pornography, or a gambling trip? Wouldn't it be the same thing if gave *yourself* to Jesus, loaded down with these temptations? For Christmas this year, don't be so in love with your sin that you won't give it up for the Savior you love.

1. The necessity of the humanity of Christ - Heb 10:3, John 1:29, Heb 2:5-18, Rom 5:8-21, 1Cor 15:20-26
2. The definition of the humanity of Christ - Phil 2:6-7, Heb 4:14-16 , 1John 1:1-5, Rom 8:3, 2Cor 5:21
3. The mystery of the humanity of Christ - Gal 4:4-5, Phil 2:8, John 1:10-11, Isa 53:1-11, Matt 12:38-40, John 12:31-32, John 12:46, Rom 4:25