

Why on Earth Did Jesus Come?

If God Became a Man

Selected Texts

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If God Became a Man¹

Introduction

One of the great assertions at Christmas is that Jesus is not only fully man but that he is also fully God. The New Testament has a number of statements affirming the deity of Jesus. For example:

- John 1:1 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and *the Word was God.*” John is clear that Jesus is the Word, and therefore Jesus is God.
- John 1:18 – “No one has ever seen God; *the only God*, who is at the Father’s side, he [i.e. Jesus] has made him known.”
- John 20:28 – “Thomas answered [Jesus], ‘My Lord and *my God!*’”
- Romans 9:5 – “To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, *who is God over all*, blessed forever. Amen.”
- Titus 2:13 – “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of *our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*”
- Hebrews 1:8 – “*But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.’*”
- 2 Peter 1:1 – “Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of *our God and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

The great British apologist, C. S. Lewis, once wrote that the deity of Jesus Christ is “not something stuck on that you can un-

¹ Much of the material for this message is from John Blanchard, *Why on Earth Did Jesus Come?* (Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2010).

stick, but something that peeps out at every point, so that you would have to unravel the whole web to get rid of it.”²

Lewis is right. Everything about Jesus points to the fact that he is not only fully man but that he is also fully God.

Imagine a group of friends getting together to talk with you about your Christian faith. They have a general idea about what the Old Testament says about God, but they struggle with the concept that God ever came to earth in human form. Then someone asks you, “If God became a man, what kind of a man would he be?”

You are on the spot. How would you answer that question?

Lesson

In this lesson, I would like to suggest some answers you might give to the question, “If God became a man, what kind of a man would he be?”

I. If God Became a Man, He Would Be Able to Explain the Old Testament

First, if God became a man, he would be able to explain the Old Testament.

The Old Testament has many hundreds of statements like, “And God said. . .” (Genesis 1:3; 1 Kings 3:11; etc.) or, “The Lord said. . .” (Genesis 4:6; Exodus 3:7; etc.). So God could obviously give a perfect explanation of what each of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament said and meant.

This is exactly what Jesus did!

Over the centuries, countless theologians had put their own spin on Old Testament teaching, but Jesus brushed all of that aside and told his hearers on several occasions, “You have heard that it was said. . . . But I say to you. . .” (Matthew 5:21-22; cf. also 5:27-28; 5:33-34).

² C. S. Lewis, *The Case for Christianity*, Touchstone Books, 40-41.

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At a later time, Jesus had a meal with two men who were trying to understand the Old Testament. We read that Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45).

On a different occasion he went much further and said that all the Old Testament writings “bear witness about me” (John 5:39), clearly claiming that the only way to understand the Old Testament was to see that it pointed to him.

In fact, it is accurate to say that no-one in all history has been able to explain the Old Testament as clearly and accurately as Jesus did.

II. If God Became a Man, He Would Live a Perfect Life

Second, if God became a man, he would live a perfect life.

The Old Testament says that God is “majestic in holiness” (Exodus 15:11) and “filled with righteousness” (Psalm 48:10). In other words, God is perfect.

So was Jesus!

The Bible says that Jesus was “tempted in every way, just as we are,” but then stunningly adds, “yet he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15, *NIV*).

The Bible repeatedly affirms that Jesus “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21), that he was “without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19), and that he was “holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26).

Have you ever tried to live a perfect life? I have tried, and I have failed miserably. I used to start my attempt at perfection on Mondays. However, even by my reckoning, which was flawed at best, I rarely made it to lunch time on Monday before blowing it. I was simply incapable of doing anything that approached perfection.

However, Jesus was completely different. There is no record of a single moral failure in his life—ever! In that regard, Jesus is remarkably unique as no one else in all history has a perfectly unblemished record. In fact, his moral life is exactly what we would

expect from God himself—perfection.

III. If God Became a Man, He Would Know What Everybody Else Was Thinking

Third, if God became a man, he would know what everybody else was thinking.

The Bible tells us that God is “a God of knowledge” (1 Samuel 2:3), and is “perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16). Furthermore, God “knows everything” (1 John 3:20).

The same kind of thing was said of Jesus!

The Bible says that Jesus “knew all people” (John 2:24) and “knew what was in man” (John 2:25). Elsewhere we read that Jesus possessed “all treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2:3).

My wife sometimes says that she knows what I am thinking. And, frankly, she is usually right! But, sometimes she is wrong!

However, Jesus never ever made a mistake about knowing what everybody else was thinking.

IV. If God Became a Man, He Would Be Unchangeable

Fourth, if God became a man, he would be unchangeable.

When I say that God is unchangeable I mean that “God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.”³

So, God said of himself, “I the Lord do not change” (Malachi 3:6). One of the Psalmists concurred, and said of God, “But you are the same, and your years have no end” (Psalm 102:27).

The same words were applied to Jesus!

In fact, the writer to the Hebrews applied exactly the same words to Jesus in Hebrews 1:12, “But you are the same, and your

³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 163.

years will have no end.” He also said that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). And John recorded Jesus as saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13).

V. If God Became a Man, He Would Be Able to Solve Any Food Supply Crisis Immediately

Fifth, if God became a man, he would be able to solve any food supply crisis immediately.

God did this in the Old Testament. For years he miraculously sent food (quail and manna) overnight to meet the needs of his people as they wandered in the desert after their escape from Egypt (see Exodus 16).

On a different occasion, during the ministry of Elisha, God also supplied the needs of at least 100 men with a few loaves of barley bread (2 Kings 4:42-44).

Jesus also solved a food supply crisis!

In fact, Jesus solved a food supply crisis not only once but twice! He made five loaves and two fish feed well over 5,000 people in such a way that “they all ate and were satisfied,” with “twelve baskets full” of scraps left over (cf. Matthew 14:13-21).

On a different occasion, Jesus used seven loaves and a few small fish to meet the needs of over 4,000 people, and the leftovers filled seven baskets (cf. Matthew 15:37-38).

VI. If God Became a Man, He Would Be Able to Heal Sicknesses Whenever He Chose to Do So

Sixth, if God became a man, he would be able to heal sicknesses whenever he chose to do so.

In the Old Testament, God’s power to heal was such that he told his people, “I am the Lord, your healer” (Exodus 15:26). God was able to stop plagues as he chose (see the Ten Plagues of Egypt).

Jesus was also able to heal every kind of sickness at will!

One of the features that first capture a new reader of the Gospels—the books that tell the life story of Jesus—is how often he healed people. He also healed many people. He healed the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the leprous, the paralyzed—in fact, at one point we find Jesus “healing every disease and every affliction” (Matthew 4:23). His healing power went beyond the physical and included delivering “all who were oppressed by the devil” (Acts 10:38). Jesus often healed people to the point of being physically exhausted.

VII. If God Became a Man, He Could Bring the Dead Back to Life

Seventh, if God became a man, he could bring the dead back to life.

God did this in Old Testament times. He used the prophet Elijah to bring the widow’s son back to life (cf. 1 Kings 17:17-24).

God also used the prophet Elisha to restore life to another child (cf. 2 Kings 4:8-37).

Jesus also brought the dead back to life!

In fact, Jesus brought the dead back to life several times! He brought at least three people back to life, including one man who had been buried for four days (cf. Luke 7:11-17; Matthew 9:18-26; John 11:1-44).

The reason Jesus could bring the dead back to life is because he possessed power over death.

VIII. If God Became a Man, He Would Control the Natural Elements

Eighth, if God became a man, he would control the natural elements.

The best-known Old Testament example of God controlling the natural elements happened at the Red Sea. God held back the

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sea so that the Israelites could cross over on dry ground to the other side in order to escape from their Egyptian captors (cf. Exodus 14:1-31).

On a different occasion, God held back the water of the Jordan River so that the people of God could cross over on dry ground into the Promised Land (cf. Exodus 3:1-17).

Jesus demonstrated the same control over the natural elements!

When Jesus and his disciples were caught in “a windstorm” on the Sea of Galilee and the disciples thought they were certain to be drowned, Jesus “rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm” (Luke 8:24). Is it any wonder then that the disciples “were afraid,” and said to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?” (Luke 8:25).

IX. If God Became a Man and Was Somehow Put to Death, He Would Come Back to Life

And ninth, if God became a man and was somehow put to death, he would come back to life.

This is obviously true, since he is “the eternal God” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Yet this is exactly what Jesus did!

After Jesus was publically executed on a Roman cross and buried in a grave that was guarded by Roman soldiers, he appeared time and again to his followers. In fact, the Bible says that Jesus gave “many convincing proofs that he was alive” (Acts 1:3, *NIV*) before he was “taken up into heaven” (Mark 16:19).

There is more evidence for the resurrection of Jesus than any other ancient historical incident. Over the last century several notable individuals have undertaken the task of proving the resurrection of Jesus to be false. But in every case of which I am aware, they have all become convinced that the resurrection of Jesus is in fact true.

I am also struck by the recent opposition to Jesus (and Christianity) by the so-called “new atheists.” They argue that there is no proof for God. The problem, as I see it, is that they are looking for scientific proof for the existence of God, when in fact the evidence is not scientific but historical. A lawyer in a homicide presents historical evidence to set out his case. Oh, he may use some scientific evidence to support his case, but fundamentally, he is trying to prove that the person in custody was at a particular time and place, and therefore committed the murder. Similarly, in looking at the evidence for Jesus, one must look at historical evidence.

Conclusion

Frankly, to any fair-minded person the nine matches are impressive.

As you know, there is a lot of controversy about profiling people. A profile is simply a list of characteristics that belong to a certain person. These characteristics are then fed into a database to see if there is a match.

If a profiler were to pull together all the biblical data we have on God, and then look for a match among all the sixty billion people who have ever lived on planet earth, he would find just one match—Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

Jesus really was God. He really did become a man.

The question is: why did he do it?

Jesus said that “the Son of Man [i.e. Jesus] came to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

Jesus came to save people who were lost because of their sins—and that includes all of us. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. He eventually died on a Roman cross to pay the penalty for sin, but not his sin, for he had none. He paid the penalty for sinners like you and me.

And so this Christmas I invite you, if you have never done so, admit to God that you are a sinner. Recognize that you deserve to pay the penalty for your own sin. Ask Jesus to pay the penalty

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for *your* sin.

If you turn from your sin and trust in Jesus Christ, you will find that God will forgive you and grant you the gift of eternal life.

I pray that you will do so today. Amen.

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*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

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PRAAYER:

Our Father, thank you for Jesus. As God—the Second Person of the Trinity—he left the glories of heaven and became a man.

If there is anyone here today who wants Jesus to pay the penalty for his or her sin, pray this simple prayer quietly with me:

O Lord, I know that I am a sinner. I have broken your law. I am a slave to sin. If I die in my current state, I will go to hell for all eternity. Jesus, I believe that you have paid the full price for all of my sin in order to forgive me. I repent of all my wrongdoing and sin. Receive me now into your kingdom.

Father, will you answer this prayer that has just been prayed? Would you grant the gift of faith and repentance? Would you receive each believing and repentant sinner into your kingdom?

And for all of this I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

CHARGE:

Now, brothers and sisters, go and give an answer to those who wonder what it would be like if God became a man!