

The God Man

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[0 : 00] All right, we're beginning our series today, Made Like Us, Christmas series, and we're going to be looking at today, going back in time a little bit, to a passage that you should be familiar with, if you remember the beginning of the Gospel of John.

We're going to spend most of our time in the book of Hebrews, but we're beginning with John, and I'll share why in a few minutes, but hope this becomes obvious as we read it. Father, as we come to your Word now, we come in need of your enlightening grace.

We pray for your Spirit to open our hearts and our minds to understand deep truth here. It is beyond our understanding and true comprehension what your Word says here about your Son.

But Lord, give us insight to understand what we can, and may what we understand not be mere fodder for our intellect, but may it inflame our lives, may it blow up our hearts, so that, Lord, we are amazed and worship and give ourselves to Him who is Jesus, who we know as the God-man.

Oh, Lord, move upon us now. May we hear your truth. May you correct us and guide us even as this Word goes forth, and help your servant.

[1 : 25] Help him. He needs your help to preach it clearly and coherently so that your people hear a clear sound on the trumpet. Let the Word of God go forth with your power.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. I want to back up to verse 1, then down to verse 14, which I think is on your screen. Verse 1, remember verse 1?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Now our text. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Verse 18. No one has ever seen God. The only God who's at the Father's side, He has made Him known. Amen.

That is the Word of the Lord to us today. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. As you know, many great discoveries have changed the world.

[2 : 43] The wheel. The personal computer. The iPhone. The internet.

Penicillin. Star Trek and the Dallas Cowboys. Had an effect.

It had an effect. It really did. But the greatest discovery is that Jesus is more than human. In reality, we didn't discover it.

God revealed it. We were not looking for anything like Jesus. All we had were myths where the gods appeared in human form for their own selfish purposes.

Myths and stories. But the reality of Jesus goes beyond our imagination and myths. When God reveals the identity of Jesus to us individually, our lives are forever changed for time and for eternity.

[3 : 57] When you see who Jesus really is. And every year, the world asks that question, doesn't it? Who is Jesus?

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Who is Jesus of Nazareth? I was in Barnes and Nobles. Just happened to be hanging around. And I strolled in. And if you go over to the rack, you'll see magazines with a more usually European-sized picture of Jesus on the cover.

And they're all asking whether it be Time, not Time, what's that one? And the Nature magazine, several of them are asking the same question.

Who is Jesus? I think I saw about three or four magazines with a picture of Jesus on the cover, supposedly. And who is he? Everybody's got an opinion.

People are generally not non-committal here. Who is Jesus? In the heart of the Christmas message and history is that the baby in the manger is God.

[5 : 05] Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Hail the incarnate deity. Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel.

We sing that every Christmas. And so in this Christmas series, I'd like to explore with you in the scriptures why God had to become human.

There's a very famous book written in the first, second century. Curdeus Homo. It's known by the Latin.

And it means Why the God-Man by Anselm of Canterbury. Classic book. Early on, the church is asking the question, why the God-Man?

Why that? Why that? Couldn't God? He even says in the book, couldn't God have done it some other way? Why did God have to become human to save us?

[6 : 06] Have you ever asked that question? I wonder why that way? Couldn't he just said... Couldn't maybe send an angel?

Why something so drastic? Something so unbelievable?

Something so amazing? I'm going to dive into that. I'm not going to answer all your questions. I know that for sure. It's above my pay grade in so many ways, but I want to go with the scriptures with you.

We speak of the incarnation, don't we? And I was here with the session yesterday morning. Do y'all remember chili con carne?

Who remembers? Do they still... And I asked the session. They said they still do. But in the stores, they make chili con carne. When I was a kid, there'll be a... Oh, in the can. Chili con carne.

[7 : 05] They still make that? I don't know. Do you know what that means, right? Chili with flesh. Con carne with flesh. The incarnation comes from that word.

It's God enfleshing. The enfleshing of God. That's what the incarnation is. The enfleshing of God. But Christmas isn't about family gatherings. It can include them, but that isn't the purpose.

Christmas isn't about giving gifts to people. It can include that, but that isn't the purpose. Christmas even isn't about being nice and generous to people.

It should encourage that, but that is not the purpose. At Christmas, we are celebrating the reality of God participating in our humanity in his own being.

[8 : 07] God became human for the purpose of saving humanity. But have you truly meditated on God becoming human and what it means?

What it means for you, for your family, for the world? Have you really let that sink in? Because Christmas means nothing if Jesus is not the God-man.

It means nothing if that's not true. This prologue here, verses 1 through 18 of John, we spent some time looking at that a few years ago.

This is one of the clearest statements here in this passage of who Jesus is. His deity. It's one of the best. It's just so amazing.

It colors the rest of the gospel. You've got to read the rest of John in light of these 18 verses here. Because John repeats thoughts and ideas throughout.

[9 : 14] We've been seeing that here and there. This is the... Our passage, actually, verse 14, is... I call that really the center of this gospel. No.

It is the most important statement there. Because without it, nothing else really matters. Without it, we have a dead Savior.

Because he was only man. So Matthew and Luke give us the birth narratives. John gives us the theology of Christmas.

I got a few points. Try to move this here very quickly. More than 15 minutes, I will tell you. First thing I want you to know is that Jesus has always been God.

Always been not like us. Always. This is the key statement. Like I said, Jesus is the Word. I read verse 1.

[10 : 14] In the beginning was the Word, right? Jesus is the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. And the Word... I'm sorry. And the Word...

Was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Verse 2. So there you have this idea here that verse 14 says, Now this Word has become flesh.

Hmm. Now, in order to be with someone, you have to be separate from that person. In order for the Word to be with God, the Word must be separate from God.

They can't be the same person. Make sense? I'm going above my pay grade here. I'm shooting above... I'm shooting high in the clouds, y'all. I know this.

But hang with me. I'll give you... I'll help you as best as I can. Because it's above me. All right. Yet the Bible clearly affirms that there's only one God.

[11 : 18] One divine being that we call God. But in three separate co-equal persons. Two of them are mentioned here. The God, meaning the Father, and the Word.

One being. Three persons. Two were mentioned. Our Jehovah's Witness neighbors will tell you in their translation of this text that the Word is a God.

Horrible. I have a copy of that Bible. The word was... The meaning was the Word, and the Word was a God. Now, what that does then is create two beings who are both called God.

And so how do they get around it? They say, well, one is the almighty God, and the other is just a mighty God. So we end up with two gods.

One greater, one lesser. It doesn't work. It's not biblical. It's not truth. The Trinity is bread and butter to Christian understanding of the Bible.

[12 : 31] It's not some theology you don't have to know. No, it's the nature of God. You have to know it. It's who God is. The Greek word...

I'm going to give you the ground, so forgive me, because I have to... It helps to use it sometimes.

The Greek word for word here is logos. L-O-G-O-S. We would chant it. Now, John chose that word for a reason, okay?

I'm trying to... Give me a minute to teach for a second. He chose that word for a meaning, for a reason. Because in that culture, the Greeks and the Romans worshipped this idea that they called the logos.

The logos, in their philosophers' understanding, was kind of a force. It was a force that answered the question, why is there chaos...

Why is there order instead of chaos? Why does the world work? Why does the moon... Why does everything turn and nature work the way it does? Why do we have order instead of chaos?

[13 : 35] And their answer was, the logos, the word. This thing, this... They call it a rational principle that holds the universe together. Now, that was important because John is writing to them.

And what John says, that which you worship in ignorance, that which you are waiting for, one philosopher said, at one point, the logos will come. And so, John is trying to...

He's doing good... That's good preaching. He's going into the culture, taking an idea, and showing them how Jesus fulfills it. That's what we're supposed to do ourselves. So, he's saying, listen, you Romans and Greeks, what you've been looking for that holds the universe together, the word, he became flesh.

But he was also talking to Jews, right? The genius of Scripture. He was also talking to Jews. And so, the Jews, they understood that God created the universe by his powerful word.

All in the... Go back to Genesis 1. All God did was... And God said... And God said, let there be... Let there be... Boom, boom, boom.

[14 : 47] And creation splaying into existence. God creates through his word. And so, the Jews reading this go, holy smoke.

That which created the universe has become flesh. Man, that's good preaching, y'all.

I wish I could preach like that. That's the word. So, both groups reading John's gospel in the very beginning of it slapped in the face in a beautiful way, by the way.

And sat up straight and listened as this gospel was being read to them. And they listened and they said, what? Are you kidding me?

Hebrews 1 picks it up. Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

[15 : 59] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. and the word became flesh.

This is who the Son of God always was from all eternity. The word, the logos, no beginning, no end. Creator, sustainer of all that he surveys and he surveys everything. He sees it all, saints. Everything that is knowable, touchable, unknowable, everything that exists in this we call the universe was spoken into existence and created by the logos, whom we know became flesh.

seeing Jesus, now come, let's get practical for a minute, just a little, I hope that was practical too because if your mind's blown, it served this purpose.

Seeing Jesus this way encourages greater reverence and worship in our lives. Do you see Jesus like this? You know, we, there was, Jesus is my homeboy has become too common.

[17 : 21] That was actually an article in Christianity Today magazine some years ago. Jesus is the eternal Son of God who always existed, who never had a beginning nor an end.

The Son of God did not begin in a manger. Christmas is not the beginning of the Son of God. but now, Jesus is God forever in human form like us.

The lagas has become human. The Son of God did not begin in a manger but as Jesus he was born in one. Are you with me? The Son of God did not begin in a manger but as Jesus incarnation he begins in one.

He doesn't appear to be human but as we read from our confession has truly taken upon himself human nature while remaining who he always was.

So, Jesus did not cease being the Son of God when he became human. Jesus is merely taking the human form the humanity that the Son of God assumed and took upon himself.

[18 : 58] So, I don't know. I know. That's why Jesus has a human birth. He ate, he slept, he wept, he bled, and he died.

Human. Very human. But still the eternal self-existent creator, sustainer of all things.

The Lagos. The baby in the manger truly is God. The second person of the Trinity. Not the Father, the second person, the Son.

of one substance and equal with the Father. C.S. Lewis called this the grand miracle in his book on miracles.

He said, the central miracle asserted by Christians is the incarnation. They say that God became man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this.

[20 : 02] If the thing happened, that is the incarnation, it was the central event in the history of the earth. The very thing that the whole story has been about.

C.S. Lewis, the great Christian apologist during the World War II era in particular, he was right. Everything history points, it comes to the incarnation.

And then what happens after that? It explodes out. All of history before Christ pointed to him. And then at this moment, on what we call Christmas Day, when Mary gave birth, there that baby, history explodes outward from him now.

Because it's all about him. Sustaining, creating, sustaining all things. But it's all about him and he bears our humanity.

God in the Old Testament had promised to send a Savior, even as far back as the Garden of Eden. Remember, Genesis 3, 15, God says to the woman, I will put enmity between you and the woman, to the devil, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

[21 : 22] He, singular, not they. The offspring he's talking about is a singular person, a he. He shall bruise your head, devil, and you shall bruise his heel.

And the word bruise there, don't get it twisted. Crush. And what did the devil do?

Crushes his heel. The thing that he puts on the devil, the thing that the devil attacks. That's all he can get.

He can get. God promised a redeemer. Psalm 2, 79, I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, you are my son, today I have begotten you.

Ask of me. I will make the nations your heritage, the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

[22 : 26] A son is coming. A king's son is coming, the psalmist saw. And so when Isaiah 42 later writes, the prophet writes, behold my servant whom I uphold, my chosen and whom my soul delights.

I have put my spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands wait for his law.

God promised a conquering king, a savior who would reign and rule over the nations and bring justice, true justice, treating people right. He would do it.

Righteousness and justice, the same word, he would bring it. But here's the thing, no one understood that God himself would do it.

No one understood. They were all looking for a great king, a great man to come forth, but Jesus is something totally different. different. Yes, he's human, but what was not clear to them was that God himself was stepping.

[23 : 43] Now, this is a bad illustration, but go with me anyway. God himself would step on, put on our humanity.

This is a bad illustration, but go with me. He would put it on and keep it on. It's more than, I said it's bad because it's more than that.

But I want you to see, I want you to have a visual. God steps into our humanity, born like us, absorbing our humanity. It's who, he is human forever, and God forever.

Jesus will never take off our humanity. It's almost something that Paul got beside himself in 1 Timothy 3, 16. He says, great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.

He, meaning God, was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up to glory.

[24 : 50] He calls that a mystery, a mystery. We use the word differently than the ancients did. We say a mystery is something we just don't understand. A mystery in the scriptures means something God had not revealed.

He kept secret in the past, Old Testament, and now in the New Testament, he has revealed. That's what mystery means. And so, what is that mystery?

That God would take up our cause, himself he would put on our flesh, become one of us, and as Paul describes it, manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit.

Why? That's the resurrection. When Jesus rose again from the dead, the Spirit of God said, see, we told you. Seen by angels.

You see that throughout Christ's ministry. Proclaimed among the nations. The apostles went forth to proclaim him, believed in the world, here we are. And why isn't he here now?

[25 : 56] Taken up into glory. Temporarily taken up into glory. Because he's coming again. There's that mystery.

What's the implication of this incarnation? What's an implication? Because he forever bears our humanity, we have confidence that God values us as human beings.

Do you hear me? God values you as a human being. Your humanity is precious to him. You and all your human weakness belong to him.

Don't be afraid or ashamed of being human. Sin is the issue, not humanity.

does that mean we should therefore treat other human beings better than we do? Should we care about justice for all people?

[27 : 06] If our humanity is so important that the Son of God would assume it and never take it off, how should we treat one another?

I'll leave that to you to think about. Last point, Jesus reveals God in his humanity. That hit me.

I was thinking about that. Wow. Why made like us? Because he reveals God in our human flesh.

God you see, the text says he dwelt among us in becoming human. Verse 14, he dwelt among us. It means literally he tabernacled among us.

The idea comes from the Old Testament. The Israelites used to carry around a portable tent, a portable temple throughout the wilderness wanderings. They called it the tabernacle. It was where the Ark of the Covenant and the furnishings of the temple that would later be built were put.

[28 : 11] It was the place where God revealed this presence among his people. And now Jesus is that tabernacle. He is the place where we meet with God.

And more, just like the early tabernacle, he is the place where we see the glory of God in unique form. We see the glory of God uniquely in God the Son.

And we get to experience him. They couldn't touch God. They couldn't even stand his presence.

They couldn't go into the tent.

But listen to what John says in 1 John. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and have touched with our hands concerning the word of life.

The life was made manifest. We've seen it. We testified to it and proclaimed to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us.

[29 : 16] That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you. He said we saw it and we touched him. Do you understand how mind-boggling crazy that is for a Jew?

God told Moses, you can't see my face and live, bro. You better back up on that. I feel you. I understand. But you can't see me. And John says we saw the word made flesh.

And then he says we touched him. We touched him. Your faith is grounded in the reality of eyewitness experience.

Is that grounded in somebody in a cave writing down some letters or some words. It's not grounded in some secret place off somewhere. No, it's grounded in time and space and history where people saw him, touched him, experienced him.

God reveals himself uniquely in Jesus because we can see and experience him in Jesus. Why made like us so that we could experience him in our own bodies, in our own senses.

[30 : 44] But even more he says we see the fullness of the Father's grace and truth in Jesus.

Full. Full. Verse 14. Full of grace. And truth. God has always been gracious saints.

That means he's always accepted people not because of their ability to do for him or to please him because we can't. But he's always accepted us because he chose to love us.

It's always been by grace. The Israelites were accepted by grace. Deuteronomy 7. For you are a chosen people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession.

Out of all the peoples who are the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you.

[31 : 42] In other words, it was nothing in you because you had such great potential. He's talking to Israel. I didn't choose you because you were all that. No.

He says, for you were actually the fewest of all peoples. But it's because the Lord loves you. And it's keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed them from Egypt.

He says, because I love you. I made a promise to your fathers. And by the way, they weren't worthy either. I chose them. Abraham was a pagan worshipping the false gods.

He's from Iraq. He would be an Iraqi today. God chose him. But now in Jesus, this grace is even clearer than ever before.

For in his, in grace, he became one of us. We who were sinners in rebellion, he became one of us to rescue us and transform us, though we do not deserve it.

[32 : 48] Full of grace. And then he reveals God's truth as one of us as well. See, back up, in Jesus, we see the grace of God, but we also see the truth of God.

Truth is reality. He embodies God's reality, God's truth. We see in him the truth about God, but also the truth about ourselves and all of creation. He shows us that we were meant, what we were meant to be in our humanity, faithful to God.

He kept the law in our place, guys. He's what we were supposed to, what Adam was supposed to be, Jesus is and more, to make us what we're supposed to be.

As the God-man, he preached and taught us the truth. If you're looking for the truth about who you are, you must go to Jesus to know it. If you go anywhere else, you will find some knowledge, but it will always be incomplete to know who you are.

You have to go to Jesus, the creator, and realize the image of God that you bear in him. See, the world became flesh.

[34 : 09] This is why he had to become flesh, to do all this for us. And there's more. We're going to talk about more of it. God. But he gives us the greatest revelation of the eternal God as the God-man.

God is made known, verse 13 says, through him. Because we had no hope of knowing God. No hope at all. God had to do something so we could know him, truly know him, and find life in him. He chose to do this, become one with us in our humanity. He contextualized himself in the incarnation so we could better understand and worship and love him and know him and experience his love.

Well, one more thought on that. If Jesus reveals God through our humanity, this could imply that on a lower level, as you follow Jesus and I follow Jesus, he uses us to reveal God too.

He uses us to reveal God in truth and grace as well. As you grow in understanding the grace of God giving you in Jesus and the truth of God revealed in Jesus, embracing both, God transforms you so that when people see you, they see the image of the living God.

[35 : 46] The more we grow in grace, the greater picture people see as we point them to Jesus, the true image of the living God.

You see, it has to be grace and truth. You have to grow in grace and truth. you see, if you grow in truth without grace, you become a Pharisee.

I know the truth. I believe champion for doctrine. I know the truth. And yet, you have no kindness, no humility, no compassion. You have rocks in your heart. That's not the gospel.

But if you grow in grace without truth, you become a coward. Malleable. Whatever people say, the loudest voice you will go with.

And we think we're winning people to Jesus and being gracious by letting go of the truth. No, we're being chicken. And we're blown away by every wind of doctrine.

[36 : 55] Let me tell you something you probably haven't noticed before. Go to Revelation, I think it's chapter 21. You know what God says, certain people will not be in the kingdom. You know what one of them is?

Cowards. I was blown away. Cowards are excluded from the kingdom? It's the word of God. I ain't making this up.

Grace without truth. Because you're too afraid to stand for truth. When you stand for truth, you get in trouble. Always. You always get in trouble at some point.

You will get in trouble. You stand for truth without grace. You're hurting people. You're a Pharisee.

Either way, we're leading people astray. Christmas is about Jesus, who's about grace and truth.

If we're celebrating Christmas, we have to celebrate all that Jesus is. Son of God, God in human flesh, full of grace and truth.

[37 : 57] And as we allow him to fill us with his grace and truth, the world will get a better picture of who God is, of who Jesus is. And that's what he meant to happen.

Well, that's, yep. I started late, so you got to cut the brother break. My wife and I were, years ago, we wanted to, after we had three daughters, we realized the only way to get a son would be to adopt.

Because, I don't know, girls just love us. So we started that process, but in the middle of that process, somehow, Sandy got pregnant. And out came Joanna, our fourth daughter.

So we were like, okay. But you know what we found in that process of adoption? Now, we live in the D.C. area, and some of you have adopted, and you might know more about this than I do, probably, if you've done it.

But we found out it was expensive, for one thing. It wasn't cheap to adopt in the D.C. area. I don't know if that's true around the world, but it was in D.C. It wasn't cheap. And if you wanted to get a child from another country, it was even more expensive, and more involved, and more, I mean, there was so much involved with that.

[39 : 16] It was crazy. One more reason God became flesh. It says it in John 14, John 1, excuse me, it says so beautifully that to all who believed in him, he gave the right to become children of God.

We are adopted children of God. It's because we've seen and embraced the God-man.

More, he's embraced us. He's taken a, Christmas is an adoption mission. God has come, and it's a cross-cultural adoption.

He's crossed the universe, as it were. He's bridged the gap between sinners and that which is holy. To carve out children for himself through the greatest adoption agent the world has ever seen, Jesus.

Are you a child of God? Celebrate the God-man because you could never have become a child of God if Jesus had not become one of us.

[40 : 30] The Son of God, the Son of God had not become one of us. The Son of God had not become one of us, and we called him Issa. We called him Yeshua. We called him Jesus.

Okay, I'm going to pray now, and I'm going to go lay down. Father, you know I'm shooting above my head, but your word tells us these things, so you want us to know it.

So Lord, drive it home, drive the truths home of this passage of who Jesus is, his nature as the God-man. Drive it home, and may we worship him and give ourselves to him and reflect him more and more as the days go by in this Christmas season.

Oh God, reveal yourself in us. Reveal yourself to us. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.