

# God Became a Man

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November, 20,2022

Last week we considered the phrase: But a body you have prepared for me. We looked at how Jesus had fulfilled the day of atonement typology.

As I reflected on the themes we have covered recently, I came back to the idea of Jesus having been given a body. Today I want to delve more deeply into the need for the incarnation to effect our redemption. The question I want to attempt to answer is: Why did God (the Eternal Word/Son) have to become a man?

Before I even get started, I need to state that the incarnation (God becoming man) will always have elements of mystery to it. We will always have things to debate, consider, question, puzzle over, and scratch our heads regarding the how and the how much, etc. For my purposes today, I am going to ignore God/man aspects and focus only on the human side—f that is possible!

As I read over some of the historical wrangling over the incarnation, it is apparent that once Rome got involved, politics overruled theology. And prior to that, it was philosophical frameworks that tended to raise discussion and questions. I would like to, maybe naively, suggest that it is best to let Scripture determine our thinking about Jesus and how who He was/is relates to us. I suggest there's more than enough there alone to keep us occupied!

## Contextualize theologizing

All of us who work on theology do it within a context. Much, if not most, of the theological thinking throughout the church age has focused on defending the deity of Jesus. This was because the context required that type of response. Various church councils spent much time and effort trying to figure out the nature of Jesus. However, the earlier theologians didn't feel the need to do so. "But the theologians whose Christology was more orthodox—Ignatius, Irenaeus, Origen, and even Tertullian—had not really tried to arrive at precise definitions concerning the union of the human and divine in Jesus Christ." (Justo Gonzalez, [A History of Christian Thought in One Volume](#), Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2014). Maybe it wasn't really necessary! Eventually the East and West would divide, with these issues being central to the theological division.

## Pre-creation Context

Other spirit beings already existed who were called "sons of God." (Gen. 6 & Job) These were created beings who apparently served God in some way. We aren't told what they were created to be or do. Some of them rebelled against God and formed an opposition party of some kind. The details are not clear, but the general structure laid out here is evident.

God, through the agency of the Son, created the cosmos as we have it today, apparently minus decay and death as we know it. I like to suggest that this was the project of the Son. As the Apostle Paul states: "For of (ex, out of) Him and through Him and to (eis, into or unto) Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom 11:36, NKJV). This is captured well in the Amplified Version: "For from Him (God) and through Him and to Him are all things. [For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him.] To Him be glory forever! Amen (so be

it)." (Rom 11:36, AMPC). "**For by Him** (Jesus) all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things were created through Him and for Him.**" (Col 1:16, NKJV)

The entire plan was in place before they started the creation process. Before, since, or from the foundation of the world appears 10 times in the NT. Afterthought was not part of the plan!

As the agent of the rebellion against God was a man, Adam, even so the agent of the defeat of the rebel forces and the restoration of the cosmos (this creation) back to God needed to be a man. Why is this the case? To understand this we need to look at how God handles order and authority.

### **Supreme Authority**

It is clear that supreme authority belongs to God. He is the highest authority, and none is His superior, or even His equal. As the Creator, God is, and always has been, the "owner" of the creation. "The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein." (Psa 24:1, NKJV). He is incomparable—and owner of all.

### **Administrative oversight**

Ownership and oversight, or agency, are not necessarily the same thing. God was, and remains, the owner, but He gave Adam oversight (dominion) over the cosmos. The spirit realm was superior to the material realm, but separate from it. Adam was to administer the creation (material realm) on behalf of and for the benefit of the owner. The Kingdom of God (the reign of God) over the material realm was placed in the hands of a man, Adam. **In the creation order, the material was lesser than the spiritual.** When he committed treason against the owner, he retained the oversight over the material, but was still subject to the spirit realm. Therefore, he became subject to another spirit being, to another master, who was not benevolent and kind.

### **The dilemma**

The man who had been placed in charge of the cosmos had turned it over to another master and had become contaminated by him. As such, he was no longer able to have fellowship with a holy God. He was now alienated from God, contaminated by sin, and subject to a harsh, demanding master. Where could help be found?

Where could a man be found who would not be contaminated by sin, alienated from God, and not subject to a harsh master? None of his offspring could fill the bill either, since they were descended from him. The answer is found in the incarnation of the Son.

### **Jesus before the creation**

In eternity past, **Jesus existed as co-equal with the Father and the Spirit.** Among His titles, revealed in the NT, were the Word and the Son. We are told He was "in the form of God" and had equality with God (Phil. 2:6, my wording). He asked the Father to give Him "the glory which I had with You before the world was." (John 17:5)

### **The Incarnation**

The answer to the above dilemma is that the eternal Son would become a man. One that was

- free from the contamination of sin,
- in harmonious relationship with the Father,
- and outside the dominion of the adversary.

#### **1. Lower than the angels**

When Jesus became a man, He switched realms. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:9a). When Jesus became a man, he forfeited the benefits of the spirit realm and became subject to the constraints of the material realm (Phil. 2:7-8). He lived a "normal" human life on earth, doing His miraculous works by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. "I can of Myself do nothing." (John 5:30a) "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Mat 12:28, NKJV).

## 2. Fully human

"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. **For both He who sanctifies (Jesus) and those who are being sanctified (you and me) are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them (us) brethren.**" (Heb. 2:10-11)

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, **He Himself likewise shared in the same**" (Heb. 2:14a)

"Therefore, **in all things** He had to be made like His brethren" (Heb. 2:17a)

## 3. But sinless

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**" (Heb 4:15, NKJV)

It is safe to say that Jesus was not subject to the adversary in His life here on earth. It is sin, the failure to obey and submit to the authority of God, that makes one subject to the adversary. "Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that **I do nothing of Myself**; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for **I always do those things that please Him.**" (John 8:28-29). Since Jesus lived in perfect submission and obedience to the Father, he could boldly say, "For the ruler of this world is coming, **and he has nothing in Me.**" (Joh 14:30b, NKJV)

## 4. Subject to death

Jesus, in obedience to the plan laid out before the foundation of the world, went to the cross and surrendered Himself to death, giving His life/soul (psuche) a ransom for sin. "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, **and to give His life a ransom** for many." (Mat 20:28, NKJV)

"And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death**, even the death of the cross." (Php 2:8, NKJV)

The adversary couldn't imagine someone loving others so much that He would be obedient to the predetermined plan to die for humanity. He believed he had gotten the victory over man again. He got Adam to commit treason, and he thought he got Jesus because of His weakness as human, subject to death. But Jesus' death was voluntary, not a defeat by the adversary! What the enemy thought to be a victory for him, with the result being the cosmos forever under his dominion, turned out to be his demise. "which none of the rulers of this age knew; **for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**" (1Co 2:8, NKJV)

"Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. **No one takes it from Me**, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. **This command I have received from My Father.**" (John 10:17-18)

#### **5. Resurrected to newness of life**

The resurrection moved Jesus back into the spiritual realm. This is not necessarily clearly stated in Scripture, but I would suggest that it is implied by the next section.

#### **6. Glorified at the right hand of the Father**

Jesus is still a man! There is a man at the highest place of authority, except for the Father Himself. "**But this Man**, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, **sat down at the right hand of God**," (Heb 10:12, NKJV). "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Mat 28:18, NKJV). **Whereas Adam had authority only over the material realm, Jesus now has authority over the material and spiritual realms: "in heaven and upon the earth."**

Six times after His ascension, Jesus is call "the man." (Acts 2:22; 13:38; 17:31; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rom. 5:15; Heb. 10:12)

A Man, the firstborn among many, is now the most important being in charge of the entire cosmos and every created being. He is the most glorious of all.

**A man had moved into the spiritual realm, therefore opening it up to all humanity.**

#### **5. Shared glory and rulership with us**

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, **to him I will give power (authority) over the nations—**" (Rev 2:26, NKJV)

**"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."** (Rev 3:21, NKJV)

All those who overcome will be part of His management team, ruling over all together with Him. Order will be restored to the cosmos: God the owner, humanity the management. As it was in the beginning, so will it be throughout eternity.

This is our try out time for where we will be on that team! Follow His example, lay down your life for the Father, live in obedience to Him, and practice for your future role.