

Jesus, God incarnate

There's a famous novel written by Mark Twain called "The Prince and the Pauper". It's about a young prince who meets a pauper – an extremely poor person – who looks identical to him. They swap clothes for fun, but the prince ends up being trapped in the slums facing the hardships of the life of the poor while the pauper is stuck in the palace attempting to navigate the demands of royal life. Through his experiences in poverty, the young prince learns and identifies with the common people of his kingdom in a way that he wouldn't have been able to from the palace. God, in the same way, became a man and identified with humanity in every way.

Philippians 2:5-8 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!

1) The deity of Jesus

- We never take a man and exalt him to the status of God.
- Jesus was first and eternally God before He became a man
 - Philippians 2:5-6 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God.
- Jesus is the Creator of all that exists
 - John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.
- Jesus wasn't created, but originated with the Father in heaven
 - John 3:13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven —the Son of Man.
 - John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.
 - John 8:23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."
- Jesus existed eternally before the creation of the world
 - John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.
 - Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- It was the Creator Himself who became flesh – incarnated – became a man
 - John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

2) The humanity of Jesus

- Philippians 2:7-8 He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man...
- When the Bible says that Jesus was found in appearance it doesn't mean that he merely appeared to the world in the sense of a ghost without substance.
 - He was made in human likeness and appeared to the world in that likeness. In other words He was a real man that looked like a real human being with human traits.
- Jesus' human qualities
 - He was born of a real human mother in a real place
 - He got hungry and thirsty like everyone else
 - He became tired and slept
 - He got angry
 - He experienced sadness and wept
 - He was tempted in every way

- Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are —yet he did not sin.
 - Because Jesus lived as a man, He can empathise with everything that we experience in life, including death
 - Jesus had to also face death and deal with the agony surrounding it

3) The purpose that God became a man

- Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!
- When Adam and Even sinned, God introduced the just law that if they sin they would die for that sin.
 - Genesis 2:17 You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.
 - Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death.
- God, in His holiness and justice, has sentenced every person to death as every person has sinned.
 - Romans 3:23 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- No person can atone for their own sin as sin can't atone for sin.
 - God won't just forgive and overlook sin because sin has to be paid for by death according to God's just law.
- God is also merciful and instituted a system of sacrifices to atone for our sins so as not to put us to death.
 - These sacrifices were inadequate for two reasons:
 - They were temporary acts of forgiveness to prevent God from destroying His people
 - The blood – life – of animals wasn't equivalent to human life and so could appease God, but could not fully restore sinful mankind to relationship with God and grant Him eternal life
- Only a completely and absolutely sinless man could atone for the sins of a sinful mankind
 - Someone who didn't have to pay for their own sins and wasn't themselves under the wrath of God
- However, as no such person existed, man was doomed to eternal damnation, unless God did something that no man could do
 - God, in all His perfection and omnipotence, became a man. A man completely righteous and without sin.
 - 1 John 3:4-5 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- The primary purpose that God became a man was to take away our sins in His sacrifice on our behalf, reconcile us to Himself, and make us the righteousness of God in Him.
 - This was something that no sinful man could do for Himself
- Romans 8:1-4 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.