

Jesus: God Who Was A Man?

Intro:

1. Hollywood stars try to “sell” themselves with aura of mystique of privilege and exclusion. Fashion, face-lifts, secluded mansions, exclusive parties all create an impenetrable strata far above the common people.
2. But God made Savior common, genuine and accessible to those who desire salvation. Jesus did not merely come **to** man but **as a man among men** (Jn 1:1-4, 14).
3. In spite of these efforts to “connect” with man a gulf often remains. For believers, a gulf which so elevates Jesus that His humanity is not fully admitted or appreciated. For unbelievers, God in human form is merely impractical mythology, superstition.

1. Jesus: the Fulness of the Flesh

A. Jesus was not *generic, culture neutral*:

1. Born of woman, under Law of Moses - Gal 4:4. A Jew, Israelite (Rom 9:4-5).
2. More specifically, tribe of Judah (Heb 7:14); lineage of David (Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8); a Galilean; raised in Nazareth and *victim of prejudice* for all of this.
3. Jesus had *roots* and was genealogically connected to Abraham and Adam.

B. Birth; growth and development:

1. Jesus is born to be a King (Lk 1:32-33) but enters the world amid humble circumstances and an insanely jealous civil ruler seeking to kill Him.
2. His childhood suggests total *normality* (Lk 2:51-52), gradual development in a humble, working class home.
3. The only anecdote suggests a stunt like any other 12 year old - Lk 2:41ff. This is quite different from the fanciful legends concocted about His childhood.

C. During His adult life Jesus covered the spectrum of human experience:

1. About **30** when His ministry began (Lk 3:23). Hungered and thirsted, hot and cold, laughed and cried, attended weddings and funerals, walked and rode, tired, slept, prayed, sang, worshiped. He got dirty and smelly, bathed, coughed, sneezed, burped, had aches/pains, had the usual viral and bacterial invasions and other common human maladies. Had to trim nails, get haircuts, wash

clothes, replace sandals, find lodging. Jesus suffered the inconveniences and indignities of the flesh. His heavenly heritage did not exempt Him.

2. Jesus had friends (some dearer); He faced enemies who lied about Him and opposed Him. He got angry with the dishonest and ungodly but had compassion on the “sheep with no shepherd.” He sharply rebuked, gently comforted and issued spirited challenges. He took notice of the young, elderly, women and other “disenfranchised” ones (sick, lame, blind, leprous, Samaritans, etc.). He was patient yet demanding; humble yet strong, gentle yet fierce, kind yet confrontational. In all things Jesus was truthful, dignified, gracious, selfless, generous.
3. What was Jesus? He was a **human**. Not a legend, apparition, hologram, illusion or figment of someone’s imagination. He was fully, totally man, though not *only* man. “*We have seen with our eyes ... our hands have handled ...*” (1 Jn 1:1ff).

2. Jesus: Temptations of the Flesh

A. God, in His natural divine state, cannot be tempted - Jas 1:13.

1. But Paul describes the incarnation as “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” (Rom 8:3). In His condescension Jesus made Himself vulnerable to temptation.
2. Heb 2:17-18; 4:14-16 - In Jesus God bridged the gap between humanity/deity. Jesus experienced fleshly existence not so **He** could relate to us but that **we** would have confidence in Him.
3. **Illus:** We relate to those who have faced our particular situation. Living in another culture to preach the gospel.

B. Jesus was tempted “*yet without sin*” (Heb 4:15).

1. Jesus did not know personal failure, guilt of disappointing God, or pain of hurting others. Jesus *succeeded* where we *failed*.
2. **Response: Illus:** Someone has to be anchored to safety in order to rescue the others. At some point we are going to have to suck it up, take responsibility for ourselves and desire to live a higher, nobler life for our own reasons.
3. *Question:* Who knows more about temptation, you or Jesus?

C. The bottom line: God didn’t just *tell* us what to do: He came and *lived it* with us and like us. *If this will not attract a man to God then no other motivation will!*

3. Jesus: Flesh That Died

A. Truly, Jesus was born to die; His ultimate purpose in entering the world was to

offer His sinless flesh as a sacrifice for sin.

1. *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ...”* (Heb 2:14).

2. Endured a travesty of justice and suffered an excruciating, humiliating and undeserved execution. No Elijah, no Enoch was He - spirited away from this wretched world in a blaze of glory. *He went out as a common criminal on a cross!*

B. Would death not suggest the **weakness** of God? Not if it was planned and executed down to the very last detail.

C. Jesus knew that this was His ultimate purpose: Jn 12:27, 32-33. But He agonized over His death and its consequences like we would (Heb 5:7-9).

Conclusion:

1. Jesus understands **me**, not because He told me He does but because He **showed me** that He does. He is not distant but within my grasp.

2. Jesus was the quintessential man, the ideal man. He was God saying in fleshly form, “Let Me show you how to live, how to speak, act and think.” Universal role model.

3. The death of Jesus demonstrates God’s grace, patience and power. The cross is an eternal testament of God’s love and concern for us.