

God Becomes One of Us

Ever since humans were created by God, God has been seeking to dwell in their presence. And ever since the beginning, this has ended in disaster. It has been such a disaster because when God dwells in the midst of humans, it has exposed humanity's hatred toward God. Consider in redemptive history the many ways in which God has dwelt with humanity:

1. Garden of Eden (stationary but expanding) – Adam and Eve eat from the tree (rebellion)
2. Tabernacle (traveling in the Exodus) – Israelites craft the golden calf (rebellion)
3. Temple (stationary in Jerusalem) – Kings steer Israel toward worship of other gods (rebellion)

As if it weren't hard enough to believe that God could or would dwell with humans in such a way, the Gospel leads us to perhaps the most staggering of claims: *God would come to dwell with humans as a human.*

Big Idea: God started the rescue mission by becoming one of us.

I. He Takes on Skin

John 1:1-5,9-14

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 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.

Matthew and Luke open by describing the historical details of Jesus coming into the world. John opens his Gospel with theology by giving us the most direct and controversial statements about Jesus: Jesus is the God who created the world. Not only that, but Jesus is part of the Godhead: "He was in the beginning with God". This is an introduction to the Trinitarian nature of God, existing as Father, Son, and Spirit. Here we get a specific focus on Jesus as the "Word of God" which created the world. This means that since God spoke the universe into being, Jesus is the means through which creation happens.

John 1:14 *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.

God has written himself into the world that we all live in as one of us. He has written himself into the story of humanity as the main character – the subject at hand. He came in person to reveal himself to us and show us the meaning and the nature of the glory of God.

II. He Dives in to Our Suffering

Hebrews 2:5-15,18

5 Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. 6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? 7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, 8 putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. 9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." 14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery...18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted

The author of Hebrews gives us some of the reasons/purposes of God coming in the flesh as Jesus:

1. to die for sinners (2:9 "taste death for everyone")
2. to destroy the devil (2:14 "he might destroy the one who has the power of death")
3. to deliver sinners (2:14 "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery")

God must become a human and take on mortality in order to suffer and die. So God will use the weapon of Satan (death) in order to destroy him and free his slaves.

III. He Humbled Himself to Death

Philippians 2:5-11

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

God is humble and came to serve humanity. Because we could never be like God, although we are made in His image, he came to be like us so that he could enable us to be like Him.

God became a human. He was born, he cried, he laughed, he labored, he learned, he grew, he wore clothes, he ate, he drank, he talked to people. The puny pleasures of this juicy fruit world were dangled before him by Satan, and he didn't flinch. He was everything that we couldn't be. He showed us the meaning of humanity. The incarnation is the beginning of the Gospel.

We often think that God is detached from the suffering and pain that we experience, in varying degrees. Or we may think suffering, pain, and evil is the biggest obstacle to our believing in God. The incarnation shatters such notions.

God started the rescue mission by becoming one of us.