

What Child Is This? He Is The Word Became Flesh

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[0 : 00] Well, a week ago, the Salvati family got into one of our vehicles and we went and got our Christmas tree. We got it on the other side of 31 and on our way back, we hit Christmas Tree Lane.

Anybody been there yet? Mm-hmm. Well, we were driving along looking at the lights and you can't help but notice the different nativity scenes in front lawns and plastic baby Jesuses all over the place.

And in two lawns in particular, we're going around the cul-de-sac and there are two signs, put Christ back in Christmas. And it started me thinking, well, how do you get Christ out of Christmas?

And I started thinking and realizing that it's not that hard to do. If you don't know who the baby is, and if you don't know why he came, Christ is going to leave Christmas.

And you make Christmas about something else. Something else becomes the central focal point of Christmas. Maybe it's Santa Claus. Maybe it's giving and receiving gifts, which is fun.

[1 : 10] But if it becomes the primary focus of Christmas, you're missing the point. Maybe it's about time off, time away. It's great at Christmastime.

But is that why Jesus came? Maybe it's about family. You think about Christmas and you think about family. And sometimes it's like, yay, let's get together with our family.

Other times it's like, no way, I don't want to be with those people. Sometimes it's Christmas, the central focus becomes about smells and sounds and tastes.

Sometimes the Christmas season, the primary focus becomes helping other people. But if you see that as the primary focus of Christmas, you're missing the point.

But Jesus didn't come so that we could see some new releases at Christmastime. So these things vie for our focus.

[2 : 20] And they can occupy kind of the center focus of Christmas. And we can't let that happen. The central figure of Christmas is, of course, Jesus.

Christmas is about Jesus. The incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. And Christmas is about Jesus. Jesus is about salvation. Our salvation.

Christmas, therefore, is about salvation. Our salvation. How do we put Christ back into Christmas? We refocus on who he is and why he came.

And that's what we're going to do this morning. And that's what we're going to do for the next few Sundays together. Our theme is, what child is this? Who is this baby in the manger? And this morning, we're going to be turning to the Gospel of John.

John chapter 1, verse 14. David read the whole prologue, verses 1 through 18. If you would turn in your Bibles with me to John chapter 1, verse 14.

[3 : 23] I'll read that for you. John is what's known as a gospel. It's a story about Jesus. And so if you're not familiar with the New Testament or the Bible, you want to get to the New Testament, just basically open up to the middle and go right.

You're looking for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I want to get to John chapter 1. Find that little 14. And here's what it says. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And we've seen His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father. Full of grace. Full of grace and truth. This morning, I want to answer the question, what child is this, by looking at John 1.14.

And we're going to have five answers from John 1.14 of who this child is. What child is this? This child is the Word made flesh.

This child is fully God, fully man. This child is fully present with us. This child is full of glory. This child is full of grace.

[4 : 33] This child is your salvation. That's what this child is. What child is this? First answer to the question.

This child is fully God. Verse 14, And the Word became flesh. And the Word. Now, if you're not familiar with the Gospel of John, John actually starts talking about this Word character earlier on in verses 1 through 5.

Would you look up there with me? We read this. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him. And without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life.

And the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it. Who is this Word that John is talking about? This Word who became flesh.

[5 : 43] Well, He was in the beginning. In the beginning was the Word. And we read that in the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God.

Now, I'm guessing there's something going on you that you know something kind of innately. But I want to draw it out just to make sure you're seeing it explicitly. When John says, In the beginning was the Word.

And the Word was with God. What he's saying is, This Word who is a person. Look at verse 2. He was in the beginning. This person, the Word, was with God.

He was distinct from God, but present with God in the beginning. That's what John is saying. In the beginning, the Word was the Word, and the Word was with God.

And as we read in verse 1, we read, And the Word was God. So this Word is distinct from God, present with God, and God.

[6 : 53] This Word of God is someone unique, distinct from, present with, and fully God. All of a sudden, here we are talking about Christmas and the incarnation of Jesus, and we are in the deep end of the swimming pool talking about the Trinity.

Because that's what John's getting at. God's eternally existed as three persons. Each person's fully God. There's one God. Did you notice how John reaches back to the beginning?

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. Why? Why is he doing this?

Why is he reaching back to the very beginning? Matthew doesn't start at the very beginning. The Gospel of Luke doesn't start at the very beginning.

They start at the beginning of Jesus' life, on earth. John starts way back in the beginning. I hope that when you hear those words, in the beginning, you go to Genesis 1.

[8 : 05] Verse 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So what John does that the other Gospels don't do, he brings us all the way back to creation.

And he's saying, in the beginning was the Word. This person who is distinct from but present with and God, he was at the beginning.

Do you remember how God created the heavens and the earth? Do you remember how God created light out of darkness? Do you remember how God created life out of a lifeless void?

Do you remember how he did that? He spoke it. He spoke it. In the beginning was the Word. When John talks about in the beginning was the Word, he's referring to a person, the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Son, who was the agent of creation.

[9 : 22] We read that in Colossians 1.16. We also read about that in Hebrews 1.2. If you look at Proverbs 8, he goes by the title Wisdom.

He is the Creator. And so John brings us all the way back to the beginning and he's helping us understand the Word who became flesh.

this child in the manger, do you know who he is? He's your Creator. He is fully God.

Verse 3 of chapter 1, all things were made through him, him being the Word. And without him was not anything made that was made.

Everything came from him. He's the Creator of all. Therefore, he's your Creator. So John brings us all the way back to the beginning of creation and helping us understand who this child is, this Word who has become flesh.

[10 : 40] So the child is the Word of God, the Creator, the one and only Son, verse 14, the second person of the Trinity, the one who created all things, the one who created you.

What child is this? This child is fully God. That's answer number one. You see, Christmas is about the incarnation of Jesus, and the incarnation of Jesus, it's about your salvation.

Answer number two, not only is this child fully God, this child is fully human. what we're talking about is the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, the incarnation of Jesus.

And so when you hear the word incarnation, be thinking infleshing, the infleshing of the second person of the Trinity. The Word became flesh.

God has always existed as a triune God. That's the way He's always been. And the second person of the Trinity has always existed as the Son.

[11 : 46] The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they've eternally existed in a triune communion forever. In Luke 135, we read about how Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was enfleshed.

God the Father overshadowed the Virgin Mary and by the Holy Spirit, she conceived this baby who's named Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, enfleshed into a human being.

So here's what John is getting at. The Word became flesh. The uncreated Creator took on flesh. He became a human being. God became man.

Paul in Philippians 2, 6, and 7 addresses it this way, the enfleshing of the second person of the Trinity, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man, taking on flesh.

God became man. This week, as I was studying, I came across this quote, and I thought it was very helpful. Kind of explaining the incarnation and how the second person of the Trinity remained fully God when he became fully man.

[13 : 23] It says this, remaining what he was, he became what he was not. Remaining what he was, he became what he was not. Remaining what he was, the Word, fully God, John 1, 1 through 3, he became what he was not, fully man.

The Word became flesh. So, here's what this means about the person of Jesus for us. The person of Jesus has two distinct natures.

He's fully God and he's fully man. And, when we talk about Jesus being fully man, it's possible to think that because he was fully man, somehow he ceased to be fully God.

That's just not true. The 33 years Jesus lived on this planet, he was fully God. He did not cease to be, in essence, God at any point in his life.

In fact, to this day, he remains fully God and fully man at the right hand of the Father. God. So, we can't make the mistake that, thinking that when Jesus became a man, somehow he became less God.

[14 : 39] No, he's fully God. And the other side of it is this. If we understand Jesus to be fully God, we can start thinking, well, somehow he was less man.

He wasn't fully man if he was fully God. Somehow he's less human. human. He was fully human in every way.

But you might be thinking, maybe you're familiar with the teachings of Christianity and you start thinking, well, I know that what the Bible teaches is that Jesus never sinned and, you know, to err is human, to sin is human, and so, obviously, he's not fully human if he never sinned.

Well, that assumes something. But let me just remind you, of this, sin is not always, it's not always been essential to our humanity.

Sin has become a part of our human experience. It has become part of our nature because of the fall. Paul talks about it in Romans 5. We've inherited the sinful nature from Adam.

[15 : 48] But it wasn't always the case. When God created Adam and Eve, he created a man and woman in his likeness without sin. And so, they had sinless communion with God and each other in the garden.

It's possible to be human without sinning. And then, there's going to come a day when all of us who put our faith in Jesus, when we are, when our faith becomes sight.

And we're in the presence of Jesus himself. And our indwelling sin is removed from us. We are going to experience sinless communion with God and each other and even ourselves.

And we're going to be fully human. And so, to think that sin is necessarily essential to our human experience, forget some things.

So, when Jesus was born and became fully human, even though he was without sin, he was fully human. Actually, I just want to be honest with you, he became fully human because of our sinfulness.

[17:09] It was because that we were sinning and sinning against God that the second person of the Trinity took on flesh and dwelt among us. This indwelling of the second person of the Trinity as a man was part of God's plan of salvation from the beginning of time, from before the foundation of the world.

God had set this rescue mission in motion. Galatians 4, 4-5, we read this, but when the fullness of time came, when it was right according to plan, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. Jesus came in order to save. It's in His name to save a people from their sins. So when we read that phrase, the Word became flesh, and we think about the second person of the Trinity becoming a man, it's amazing in itself that God would do that, right?

What other God has done that? But He didn't do it just to do it. He became a man in order to save. To save you. To save me. To offer salvation to our city, and to our nation, and to our world. So one of the things that this means is this.

[18:45] This Christmas, Christmas is bigger than a shopping season. It's bigger than a shopping season. This is about God becoming a man in order to save sinners.

That's what it's about. The Savior of the world, He came in order to broker peace. He's the perfect mediator between God and man.

He's fully God and fully man. And in order to reconcile us sinners to a holy God, He became a man. Remaining what He was, He became what He was not.

In order to offer us salvation. All part of God's plan. Christmas is about the incarnation of Jesus and the incarnation of Jesus is all about your salvation.

The third answer to the question. We've looked at this child's fully God. He's fully human. This child is God fully present with His people.

[19:56] The word became flesh and dwelt among us. That word dwelt is a really interesting word in the original language of the New Testament. It literally means to pitch a tent.

Like, you know, you go camping, you strike up your tent, pitch a tent, to dwell among, to tabernacle. That's what that word dwell means. And John is being very intentional.

He's wanting to bring something to our minds when he says the word became flesh and pitched his tent among us. You know, there's one way you can summarize the entire Bible.

And you can summarize the entire Bible by saying it like this. The Bible is the story about God dwelling with a people. It's about a holy God dwelling with a sinful people and of what God had to do in order to provide grace upon grace so that a sinful people can be in His presence.

So the Bible is a story of God dwelling with His people. You see it in Adam and Eve in the garden. Adam and Eve were in God's presence in His place.

[21:11] The garden. They sinned. They got expelled. Israel was delivered out of the captivity to Egypt. Do you remember how they were led out by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night?

It was God in their midst. God dwelling with His people to deliver them. to lead them. It doesn't end there.

At Mount Sinai, God gives His people, Israel, the law. He gives His people a sacrificial system in order that they can be in relationship with Him, a holy God.

It governed their relationship with Him. And in Exodus 25, we read that God gave His people some very specific instructions about building Him a very fancy tent.

It's called a tabernacle. They were to pitch that tent wherever they would go. And it was made out of wood. It was made out of fabric.

[22:15] It was made out of animal skins. And in Exodus chapter 33, we read about God in a cloud of His glory coming down and dwelling at the entrance of this tent of meeting, the tabernacle, and Him talking with Moses face to face as with a friend.

God dwelling with His people. It's just the next chapter that we read about God's kind of self-revelation of who He is.

He says this about Himself to Moses. The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Do you know there's another way you can talk about steadfast love and faithfulness? It's a God who's abounding in grace and truth. God has always sought to dwell with His people.

In 1 Kings 8, there's a new way in which God dwells with His people.

[23 : 33] Solomon, David's son, builds a temple in Jerusalem. And what we read about in 1 Kings 8 is the priests bring up out of the tabernacle the Ark of the Covenant, which is believed to be God dwelling on the top of the mercy seat of that Ark of the Covenant.

And these priests brought out the Ark of the Covenant from the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, and they brought it out, and they brought it into this newly constructed temple made out of just stone and beautiful woodwork and gold all over the place.

And they brought it in from the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies, and they set it between these gigantic angels with outstretched wings called cherubim, and they set the Ark down, and do you know what happened?

The cloud of the glory of God filled the temple. God came and dwelt among His people in His place in the temple in Jerusalem.

The story of the Bible is about God dwelling with His people. And then it gets tragic. in Ezekiel.

[24 : 46] Ezekiel has this vision of the temple in chapters 10 and 11. There's abominations taking place. God's people are going AWOL with their God. And you know what Ezekiel sees?

He sees the glory of the Lord, this cloud, gradually removing Himself from the Holy of Holies, gradually removing Himself from the Holy place, gradually removing Himself from the temple itself, from dwelling with God's people.

The story of the Bible is about God dwelling with His people. By the close of the Old Testament, we're asking the question, is God talking anymore? Is God with His people anymore?

400 years of silence. And then, Luke chapters 1 and 2, Matthew chapter 1, John 1, 14.

God comes and dwells with His people in a new way. God pitches His tent with His people in a new way.

[26 : 06] Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, pitches His tent to dwell with His people. And the tent that's been pitched is not made out of fabric, it's not made out of animal hides, it's not made out of massive blocks of stone.

The tent that was pitched is the tent of human flesh. God dwelt among His people by becoming one of us.

The incarnation is about God dwelling among us. Christmas is about Jesus, and Jesus is about our salvation.

He pitched His tent among us to save us. What child is this? Well, He's the second person of the Trinity, fully God. He's fully man.

And He came and dwelt fully among us. Jesus, after His death and resurrection, ascended to heaven where He's right now at the right hand of the Father.

[27 : 20] Fully God, fully man. And right now, do you know what? Know what the Bible talks about? As the dwelling place of God? We are the dwelling place of God.

The new temple is God's people. We are the dwelling place of God by the Holy Spirit. And there's going to come a day when Jesus comes back and it's going to, His, the final dwelling place of God with man is the new Jerusalem in which we will be seeing our King face to face.

He's going to light up the joint. It's just going to get better. The story of the Bible is a story of God pitching His tent among His people.

God dwelling fully with us. Answer number four, this child is full of glory. John 1.14, we read, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

He pitched His tent. And we have seen His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father. So the storyline of the Bible is God dwelling with His people and the glory of God shows up time and again.

[28 : 35] They're called theophanies. Appearances of God. The cloud of God's glory leading Israel out of Egypt. Theophany. Theophany. The cloud descending.

The tabernacle in Exodus 33. Theophany. The filling of the temple in 1 Kings 8. Theophany. I don't know what Ezekiel 10 and 11 is.

It's kind of a theophany, but it's kind of a backwards theophany. God departing. Theophanies are appearances of God's glory in what John 1.14 is saying is this.

That when the second person of the Trinity became a man, it was the ultimate theophany of God.

The ultimate showing up of God Most High.

The ultimate theophany. John 1.14 talks about a glory as the only Son of the Father.

[29 : 44] That word only is a very special word throughout your Bible. Some of the earlier versions talk about the only begotten Son. It's talking about the one and only, the unique Son of God.

And when John uses it, it's only of Jesus. So we see it showing up in 1.14. The only Son. You see that word showing up in 1.18.

The only God referencing Jesus. It shows up in John 3.16. For God so loved the world that He sent His one and only unique Son.

That whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. There is a unique glory on display in the person of Jesus. Here's how it works.

God. Instead of beholding God in the written word of revelation, what Jesus did was reveal God in a living word of revelation.

[30 : 47] In His person, in His life, in His work. It's a whole new medium. He pitched His tent. He walked among us to John 1.18.

Make known God. To literally exegete the Father. Big word. It means to make known. The author of Hebrews talks about Jesus as the radiance of the glory of God.

And the exact imprint of His nature. You know, there's this guy, Philip. He was a follower of Jesus.

And in John 14, he makes this request. Lord, show us the Father.

And what does Jesus say? He says, Have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? And then you know what he says?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Look at John 1.18. No one has ever seen God the Father.

[32 : 00] The only God, the Son, who is at the Father's side, distinct from, but present with. He has made Him known.

You want to get to know God? You want to see Him? You look to Jesus. You look to Jesus. You look to Jesus. All throughout John, we read about these manifestations of glory.

When Jesus performed the miracle in John 2 of changing the water into wine, 2.11, John says that that was a manifestation of glory.

Showing glory. glory. In John chapter 11, Jesus hears about Lazarus' death and you know what He says? You know what? Don't freak out. This is going to be for showing the glory of God.

And right before He calls Lazarus out in 11.40, He tells Martha, hey, this is for the glory of God so that you would believe. Lazarus, come forth! Come forth! And He came forth.

[33 : 08] You know, glory is on display all throughout the Gospel of John. And so we see it in Cana, water to wine.

We see it in Bethany. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. But you know what? Those displays of glory, they pale in comparison to the ultimate display of glory by Jesus on the cross.

That's where we're moving in John. The cross is the ultimate display of God's glory. The incarnation of Jesus is absolutely linked to the crucifixion of Jesus.

He became flesh in order to die in your place on the cross. The death on the cross displays God's glory by demonstrating God's love and His justice simultaneously.

In the death of Jesus on the cross, Jesus fully satisfied God's holy wrath for our sin justice.

[34 : 31] And simultaneously, He reconciles us to the Father as sons and daughters. Love! He is full of grace and truth.

Full of grace and truth. The salvation Jesus accomplished on the cross puts God's glory on display in a way that turning water into wine doesn't.

In a way that raising someone from the dead doesn't. Jesus took care of God's wrath for our sin and takes us as His own. The incarnation is necessary.

It's necessary to God's plan of salvation. It's absolutely vital. It moves us to the cross of Jesus Christ.

Christmas is about the incarnation of Jesus and the incarnation of Jesus is all about salvation and salvation is all about the cross. The fifth and final answer to the question what child is this is that this child is full of grace.

[35 : 44] full of grace for you. In John 1.14 and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we've seen His glory glory as of the only Son from the Father full of grace and truth.

16 and from His fullness we've all received grace upon grace. 17 for the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Grace upon grace grace in the place of grace.

The revelation through Moses is superseded by the revelation that came through Jesus. It's a greater grace. God's grace is His unearned kindness His unmerited favor it's His unobligated generosity to people who are sinning against Him.

And it's transformative. Jesus didn't come in the flesh and hang on the cross because He had to because He was obligated. He did so voluntarily out of love for you.

The salvation He offers is a salvation He paid for in full at the cross. It's all by grace. It's different than any other religion on the planet.

[37 : 06] He doesn't expect for you to work for it. You can't. His grace is a grace that's received. He offers fullness of life to know Him to live for Him and to live for Him forever.

He offers forgiveness. He offers peace and joy love for others. this is salvation that He offers at the cross. It's not a gift for you to pay for.

Could you imagine you open up a gift on Christmas Day and when you open it up it's your favorite thing and you pull it out and underneath it there's a bill for you to pay for it? Could you imagine that? He'd be like this is not a gift. I'm paying for it. Could you imagine Jesus offering you salvation and you pull out your checkbook and you're like what do I owe you?

It's not a gift at that point. God offers you salvation in Jesus freely. It's been paid for in full by Jesus Himself at the cross.

[38 : 16] and you receive it by faith. There are two ways to respond to this gracious gift of salvation that Jesus offers you.

You can reject it or you can receive it. You see that working out in verses 11 and 12. He came to His own and His own people did not receive Him. They rejected Him.

Verse 12 But all who did receive Him who believed in His name He gave the right to become children of God. You're either going to reject Him or you're going to receive Him. And if you haven't received Him you're rejecting Him.

So the question is how do you receive Him? You receive Him by faith. By believing in His name. So here you are this morning in this building.

December 4th talking about Jesus the incarnation. Have you received Him? Have you received the greatest gift ever given?

[39 : 21] The gift of salvation that's in Christ alone. Christmas is all about Jesus and Jesus is all about salvation. What child is this?

He's fully God. He's fully man. He's fully present with us. He's full of glory and He is full of grace. Let's put Christ back into Christmas.

Let's put Christmas back into God's plan of salvation. That's what gives it its full meaning. What child is this?

He is your salvation. Let's pray. Oh God in heaven thank you so much for John chapter 1.

Father thank you so much for sending the Son Jesus as the perfect mediator between God and man. The greatest gift ever given. I pray that we as your people God would live in full view of the significance of Christmas.

[40 : 27] It's about Jesus and Jesus is about salvation. God would you bless the remainder of this day for the glory of your name.

Amen.