

What Child is This?

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Date: 22 December 2019

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[0 : 00] Well, today is the last Sunday before Christmas, and Christmas is all about a special, precious child who was born.

One of my favorite Christmas hymns is, What Child is This? What child is this who, laid to rest in Mary's lap, is sleeping? And last Tuesday night at the carol sing, we considered one of the answers to that question of who is this child in the manger.

This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing. This baby in the manger is the Messiah, God's promised King.

Well, this morning we're going to consider another answer to this question. Who is this child lying in a manger? And we're going to hear it from John, the apostle.

If you have your Bible with you, please open it up to the Gospel of John. If you don't have a Bible with you, we have Bibles in the seats now, in front of you, and it's on page 860 in the pew Bibles there.

[1 : 16] Gospel of John. Gospel of John. This is what John wrote, starting in verse 1.

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.

In Him was life. And the life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness.

And the darkness has not overcome it. Verse 14. The Word became flesh. And made His dwelling among us.

[2 : 32] We have seen His glory. The glory of the one and only Son. Who came from the Father. Full of grace and truth.

You know that moment when somebody asks you about something. And you're about to tell them the answer or to tell them the story.

And then all of a sudden you pause. And you realize that for them to really get it, you have to go back to the beginning. And tell the story from the beginning.

This is the kind of moment that is happened here. In John's account of the gospel. He's about to tell us the story of Jesus.

And then he goes back to the very beginning. So that we get it. But what I love about John's gospel is that the beginning that he goes back to is maybe not the beginning that we expected.

[3 : 35] John goes back to the very beginning. To before the universe as we know it existed.

Back then. The Word was. Says John. The Word.

What do you mean by that, John? The Word. As we listen closely and read carefully. We begin to see that the Word is in fact a person.

John says the Word was with God. And the Word was God. The Word is a person. He was with God in the beginning.

- Verse 2. This one. The Word. Was with God. And was God. Back then. In the beginning.
- [4 : 44] But not just the beginning. The very beginning. John is pointing us all the way back to before the world was made. And we know this in verse 3 because he talks about it.
- He says through him. Through the Word. All things were made. Without him. Nothing was made. That has been made. Even before the universe was created.
- Back then. This one who was with God. And was God. Was there. The Word. Who is the Word.
- Who is the Word. As we follow through and read what John has written here. It gets clearer and clearer. In verse 4. John refers to the Word by two other names.
- The life. And the light. In him was life. And the life was the light of all mankind. Kind. John then goes on to tell us.
- [5 : 53] That. The Word. Who was with God. And was God at the beginning. He is the light. That John. The baptizer. Came.
- To testify to. And to bear witness about. In verses 6 to 8. Then down in verse 9. John tells us that. This one.
- The Word. The light. Was coming. Into the world. Then down in verse 11. He says. He. Not just coming. But he came. Past tense. He came. To those who were his own. Verse 10. He was in.
- The world. He was here. He. He lived. Among us. And by the time we get down to verse 14.
- [6 : 50] It starts to become really clear. Just who. John. Is talking about. When he. Says. The Word. Verse 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. This is who the Word is.
- The Son. He is God. He is the Son. The Son. Of the Father. John goes on in verse 15.
- To remind us again. This is the one. That. That John. The Baptizer. Testified about. This. Son. The light.
- The Word. God. And finally. Down in verse 17. John refers to him. By the name that we. Know him best by. Jesus. Christ.
- [7 : 48] And the rest of the story. Goes on from here. In verse 29. The story. About. Jesus. Jesus. This is the story. Of. Jesus. The Christ.
- But John. Wants us to get something. Before we. Go on and hear the story of Jesus. The. The question that we're. We're asking this morning. Is what child is this?
- Who is this? This baby. In the manger. John's answer. Is that. This. Jesus. He didn't have his beginning.
- In the womb of his mother Mary. No. He goes. His story goes way back. To the. To the beginning. Before. Our world.
- As we know it was created. Back then. He was. He was with God. He was. God. This. One. Is the one.
- [8 : 47] Who in verse 14. He says. The word. Became. Flesh. And lived. Among us. The word. Became. Flesh. And made. His dwelling. Among us. The one. Who.
- Was God. And was with God. In the beginning. He. He took on. Human flesh. He became. One of us. In order to live.
- Among us. What an. What a. What a. Wonderful. Act. Of humility.

The great. And. Glorious. Eternal. Son. God. The son. Became. Flesh. The one. Through whom.

[9 : 43] All things. Were created. Became. Himself. One of. The created. Things. Not himself. Created. But. Like us.

In every way. Human. Flesh. It wasn't.

An exchange. It wasn't. That he. Traded. His. His deity. His godness. For. Humanity. It was. A humble.

Addition. The word. Became. Flesh. Paul. Helps us. To see this. Really. Clearly. In his letter. To the Colossians.

This is what he says there. He says. For in Christ. In Christ. Jesus. The one that. That. That you've seen. Performing these miracles.

[10 : 36] And walking around. And. And teaching the people. The one who died. The one who was raised back to life. In him. In Christ. All the fullness.

Of deity. Lives. In bodily form. In. Let that sink in. For a moment. In Christ.

All the fullness. Of deity. Lives. In bodily form. This is who. Jesus.

Was. And is. He didn't exchange. His deity. For humanity. He. He. He added. Humanity. To his. Deity.

Which means. That as we turn. To look at. And consider. The manger. And this child.

[11 : 35] Lying in the manger. Who is this child? This baby. Is the one. In whom. All the fullness. Of deity.

Lives. Bodily. He is truly. God. The son. Of God. That night.

In Bethlehem. Mary. Held. God. In her arms. An amazing thing.

The creator. The one through whom all things. Were made. Held. In the arms. Of the created. Did. He was truly.

God. And. He became. Truly. Human. Jesus.

[12 : 36] Was conceived. By. By the Holy Spirit. In the womb. Of Mary. Which Luke tells us. In his gospel. And from that point on. He went through.

The stages. Of. Human. Development. In the womb. Just as we do. He came through. The birth canal. Just as we do.

He took his. First. Breath. With human lungs. Just as we do. His umbilical cord.

Was cut. Just as ours. Was. He was truly. Human. How human.

Just. How. Human. There are many passages. In the New Testament. In the gospels. That point to this. We're not going to look at all of them.

[13 : 34] This morning. But we get. At least one answer. Or one clue. In verse 10. He was in the world. And though the world. Was made. Through him. The world.

Did not. Recognize him. The world. Did not. Recognize. Him. Why didn't they. Recognize him. This is a big question.

And there's more than one. Right answer. To this question. But at least. A part of the reason. For why they didn't. Recognize him. Was because. He was so. Truly. Human.

That when they. Looked at him. They didn't see. Any difference. Between. Him. And any other. Human being. He didn't.

Come into our world. With. A glowing face. Or with. Little. Beams of light. Or glory. Kind of. Leaking out of his pores. If he had.

- [14 : 31] They might. Had. Have recognized him. For who he was. But no. He was truly. Human. Just like us. When they looked at him.
- Apart from. The works that he did. And the things that he said. And the things that God said. About him. He looked. Just like. Any other man. He felt.
- Just like any other. Man. To the touch. He was truly. Human. And one of the places. That we see this. It's a passage.
- That's one of been. One of my favorite passages. This year. Matthew chapter 16. Verse 1. The. The religious leaders. They. They have a bit of a meeting.
- With Jesus. This is. After he's. An adult. And he's already been doing miracles. He's been. Healing all kinds of people.
- [15 : 26] He's been casting out demons. He's been feeding. Thousands. Doing all kinds of signs. And word is spreading about him. And the people are coming. They're trying to form this conclusion.
- About who he is. And. Many think that at the very least. He is a prophet of the Lord. And some. Believe.
- That he is. The Messiah. And the religious leaders. They come to him. It says. The Pharisees and Sadducees. Came to Jesus. And tested him. By asking him.
- To show them. A sign. From heaven. Why did they need a sign? Why did they ask him for.
- A sign? We hear what the people are saying about you. Jesus. Show us a sign.
- [16 : 22] And we'll believe. That it's true. The reason that they asked for a sign. Is because. To them. As they looked at him.
- They saw. Just an ordinary guy. Just another human being. Like any one of us. That's how. Human.
- Jesus was. That the world did not. Recognize him. Sometimes. I think we take. His humanity for granted. Many of us were.
- Raised in strong. Christian homes. Where we. You know. We've. We've heard. Jesus is God. Jesus is God. Jesus is God. We've read. John 1. Many times. He is.
- God. Yes. Truly God. As we. As we. Saw earlier. But he was also. Truly human. Both.
- [17 : 18] At the same time. Jesus didn't. Pretend. To be. Human. He didn't. Just. Put on a show. For people.
- And. And. And fake it. When he. Said to the crowd. Who touched me? Or when he. Said to his. Disciples. That he did not know.
- The time. Of his. Return. He didn't. Just put on an act. All along. As he was. Growing up. And Luke. Tells us.
- That he grew. In wisdom. He was. Truly. Human. Human. These things.
- Are difficult. For us. To. To even. Begin. To grasp. How could he. Be both. At the same time. Truly. Man. And truly. God.
- [18 : 14] But this is. This. What the scriptures. Teach. This is what they. Clearly. Point to. This reality. That he was both. At the same time. He was.
- Every bit of human. As we are. And he was. Every bit. Of God. As God. Is. And yet. One person.
- Jesus. The son. Of God. This is who. The baby. Lying in a manger. That night.
- Was. And it's difficult. For us. To understand. How could this. Even be possible. And we try. We. We try.

And. And imagine. As. Mary. Held him. In her arms. Was Jesus. Kind of. Looking up at her. And just thinking.

[19 : 08] To himself. If you only knew. Mary. Just who you're holding. Nothing. But at the same time.

With respect. To his humanity. We might imagine. That. He. He thought. And saw. Just the same. As any other. Newborn did. How could it be both?

We simply don't understand. It's a mystery. It's. It's a beautiful mystery. That God has done. Here. We only know.

About being. Human. That's our experience. We don't know. About being both. God. And. Man. Human. At the same. Time.

One of the verses. That. Really. Makes us think. And wonder. Which I love. About Jesus. Is. Hebrews. One. Verse. Three. It says.

[20 : 09] This. Referring to. The son. Jesus. Not. Not the son. In the sky. But the son. Of the father. It says.

This. It says. The son. Is. The radiance. Of God's glory. And the exact. Representation. Of his being. Sustaining.

All things. By his. Powerful word. I love that. Jesus. Is. The son. Of God. Who. Is.

Sustaining. All things. By his. Powerful word. The way. Paul. Says it. In his letter. To the Colossians. In him. All things. Hold.

Together. This. Is. The mystery. Of the incarnation. As. Mary. Is. Holding.

[21 : 03] This. Child. This baby. In her arms. At the very same time. This one.

This son. Is holding her. And the whole universe. Together. At the same moment. This.

This. This child. Who. With respect. To his. Humanity. Is unable. To speak a word. He cries. To communicate.

Just like all newborns do. With respect. To his deity. At that same moment. He is speaking. The words. Which hold. Everything. In the universe. Together.

And keep it all. From flying apart. Heart. This. Is. The mystery. Of the incarnation. This child. This gift.

[21 : 59] That we've been given. What is it? It's the gift. Of God. Himself. Come down. Into our world. In the most. Intimate. Way.

Possible. In the most. Humble. Way. Possible. It's wonderful. I love the words.

Of Graham. Kendrick. In his song. Meekness. And. Majesty. Manhood. And.

Deity. In perfect. Harmony. The man. Who is God. Lord. Of eternity. Dwells.

In. Humanity. Oh. What a mystery. Bow. Down. And. Worship. For this. Is. Our. God.

[22 : 58] This. One. John. Tells us. In verse 10. Was. In the world. He was here. Among us. And. Though the world. Was made. Through him. The world. Did not.

Recognize him. He came. To those. Who were his own. But his own. Did not. Receive him. On the whole. This one. Was in the world. Here. Among us. And yet.

He was not. Recognized. He was not. Received. On the whole. Yet. Says. John. To all.

Who did. Receive him. Some. Did. Receive him. Some. Did. Believe. In his name. John. Says.

We. Have. Seen. His glory. The glory. Of the one. And only. Son. Who came. From the father. Full of grace. And truth.

[23 : 55] We have seen. His glory. You didn't see it. Leaking out of his pores. Or his face glowing. How did John see it? That's what the rest of this gospel is all about.

It's what John. Saw. Of the glory. Of Jesus. The son. And it's written.

So that. We too. Might believe in his name. And receive him. And be. Come. Children of God. And receive this.

Precious gift. Of eternal life. This whole book. Of John. And especially. This first section. Could be summed up.

In the words. Of the Christmas carol. That we. That we've already been singing a lot. In this past week. Veiled. In flesh.

[24 : 50] The Godhead. See. Hail. The incarnate. Deity. Pleased as man. With men.

To dwell. Jesus. Jesus. Our. Emmanuel. This is the child. Whose birth. That we celebrate. At Christmas.

And so as we. Prepare to. To gather. With our family. Maybe for some of us. To have. Hopefully some quiet moments. Too. Of reflection. And meditation.

In both of those moments. The quiet moments. And the loud moments. Of celebration. May our joy. Be full. Because of this precious gift. That God has given us.

The baby in a manger. The gift. Of God. Himself. The gift. Of his son. Let's pray. Father in heaven.

[25 : 52] What can we say. But thank you. This is. This is amazing. We don't understand it completely. But we praise you. That you.

Have. Given yourself. To us. Like this. We love you. We adore you. You're worthy. Of all of our worship. Of all of our praise.

Of. Of everything. We could possibly give. And more. To your name. Be the glory. Forever. Amen. Amen.