

Why God Became Man

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Your spiritual success is determined by your personal knowledge of WHO God is: WHAT He can and WILL do and who YOU are and what YOU are authorized to do.

The infant apostolic church shook the powerful Roman Empire, overturned religious traditions, amazed authorities, pestered pagans and made hell tremble. What did this primitive church have that we don't have? The modern church has money, people, instant communications, photo cell phones, text messaging with worldwide internet and church buildings the size of a football field yet society barely blinks. The original Christians didn't have TV faith teachers or the written Word yet they plundered hell to populate heaven.

Jesus said in Luke 11:21-23 "If I cast out evil spirits with the finger of God, surely the Kingdom has come upon you." People bound by Satan aren't in the Kingdom yet.

JOHN wrote in 1 Jn. 3:8) "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.*" In Rev 12:12 he wrote: "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down."

PAUL wrote in 2 Cor 5:9 that *God was in Christ* reconciling the world to himself," and in Col. 1:13:" for He delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, Gaul was a contemporary with Polycarp who sat and learned at the feet of John the Apostle said, "For what purpose did Christ come down from heaven? That he might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to man. But through the Second Man He bound the strong one, and spoiled his goods, and annihilated death. For Adam had become the devil's possession." *Against Heresies II, 23.1 125-202 AD.*

This powerful message, called the *patristic* view of the atonement, was preached for most of the first four centuries, but as the organized institutional church grew theologians

gradually modified the gospel message. Jesus' resurrection completely defeated Satan so he immediately instigated doubt about Jesus' Person and the Atonement.

Tertullian (150-230 AD) was the first to suggest the novel idea of "satisfaction and merit" and Cyprian expanded it to include surplus religious works which are reserved in a heavenly account and can be drawn upon by others. All Christ's good works are available for others to draw upon. Fasting, voluntary celibacy, martyrdom etc. make it possible for men to earn an over plus of merits; more than they need for their personal salvation. Eventually purgatory became the place where the dead could satisfy their unpaid debt for sin and draw on these merits. This theory was codified in 1000 AD when Anselm of Canterbury published a book *Cur Deus Homo* concluding Christ's death satisfied God's wrath and it remains the primary doctrine of the Latin Church. Christ did not come to "destroy" the works of the devil, as the Bible and apostolic church taught, but to "satisfy" an offended God.

These Church Fathers assumed spiritual gifts ceased with the end of the apostolic age. Historically, the *charismata* did not cease nor were they withdrawn, but the spiritual state of the Church became so cold and unspiritual spiritual gifts were not manifested so excuses were invented to cover their absence. The Lord Jesus corrected the Seven Churches in Rev 2 and 3 because there was already error in the Church, especially the practice and doctrine of the Nicolaitans, the separation of clergy and laity. Most of those errors are still around today.

The Church Fathers questioned whether the power of the Holy Spirit was still available. They questioned and doubted until the Middle Ages when they reached an intellectual pinnacle and debated about how many demons could sit on the head of a pin. Meanwhile the sick remained sick, the demonized remained possessed and the Church became like the world around it: *The Living Dead*.

When Jesus cried "It Is Finished" they said His former existence ended and He became a perpetual sacrifice. The sacrifice of the Mass is an offering of bread and wine which mysteriously becomes the literal flesh and blood of Jesus and it is the only means of salvation. Until and unless the sinner eats "this" flesh and drinks "this" blood they are not and cannot be saved.

Hebrews contradicts this assertion. Nine times in chapters 9 and 10 the word “once” is used.

- “Christ was offered *once* to bear the sins of many” (9:27).
- “With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place *once for all*, having obtained eternal redemption” (9:12).
- “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*” (10:10).
- “For by *one offering* He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (10:14).
- “For where there is remission of sin there *no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*” (10:26).

The conclusion is clear: since Christ died once and for all He can’t be sacrificed again and again and again, because His body has been raised from the dead. Christ died once, He was resurrected once and He ascended to heaven once.

When Jesus cried: “It is finished” the Old Covenant animal sacrifices, the temple, priesthood, holidays and the entire Jewish religious system which was a type was *fulfilled*. The Old Covenant was finished and a New Covenant begun.

According to Scripture Jesus entered the strong man’s house. He entered Satan’s domain, confronted him and successfully defeated him. Satan tempted Him just as he tempted Adam. The Mother of all battles; the clash of two mighty kingdoms; the final test between obedience and disobedience, between life and death began. His only weapon was the Word of God. To emerge as *Christus Victor* He must use the same weapons Adam could have used.

“The strong man guards his homestead” (Mt. 12:29). No one had ever challenged Satan’s authority before. He mustered his angelic army and forcefully protected his possessions. Satan used what had always worked for him and questioned Jesus’ identity. “If you are the Son of God,” he sneered, “Prove it.” The Wilderness temptation was the temptation of all temptations.

The Son came to expose Satan as the thief, accuser and liar and overcame him as man’s sinless substitute. Satan dominates man because man is a descendent of Adam so Christ legally overcame Satan by identifying with man.

“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). Adam disobeyed, but the Last Adam obeyed. He said, “I delight to do thy will, O God.” (Psa40:8), and “My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me” (Jn. 4:34). Adam disobeyed; Jesus obeyed (Heb 5:8).

Before the Incarnation Christ was the Creator (Jn. 1:1-3), but He laid that equality aside and *took* the place of a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). He was born under the Law and fulfilled its requirements. “He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). *Having been made perfect (mature, complete, finished) He became the author of salvation to all who obey Him (Heb. 5:9).*

Satan watched as John baptized Jesus and heard God say, “This is my Son in whom I’m well pleased.” He watched Him decisively wander into the lonely wilderness, but he waited and waited for the right time before tempting Him with three carefully crafted challenges. He questioned His identify: “If you’re the Son God...” How did Jesus overcome? With three carefully crafted words: *It is written.*

As the Pattern Son He showed us how to overcome: “There is no temptation overtaken you except what is common to man and God will with the temptation provide a way of escape” (1 Cor 10:13). When you’re tempted, tested and tried “Run to the Rock/word of our Salvation.”

2 Cor. 8:9 informs us He “became poor.” Became in the Greek is the *aorist tense*, a completed action. As deity, before He was made man, He had need of nothing. Deut. 28 portrays poverty as part of the “curse” and Gal. 3:13 says Jesus was made a curse to deliver us from the curse. It’s past tense, completed and done.

He was Heaven’s King born in an unclean stable to a poor family in very small town. He died penniless and deeply humiliated for US. He became poor that you and I may become rich. He fed multitudes, healed all who came to Him, delivered from demons and gave hope. From the cross He provided for His Mother and promised redemption to the thief at His side. He mastered the laws of nature, storms, drought, hunger and poverty as the Lord over all. He is our all!

Isa. 53: 3-4 says He was made sick with our sicknesses. Man's stubborn unbelief is strange. The Jews believed Jesus healed the sick, but could not forgive sins. Today's doubters believe Jesus forgives sins, but He doesn't heal the sick. He entered the strong man's house and systematically overcame the Law of Sin; the Law of Sickness; the Law of Poverty; the Law of Spiritual bondage and the Law of Death. He forgave sins, healed the sick, fed the poor, released the demonized and raised the dead. WOW, what a Savior.

However, His substitution for sinful man severed His relationship with His Father. He did not become a sinner, commit an act of sin or partake of man's sinful nature; He was a *sinless substitute*. He did not go to hell to experience the suffering of the lost, but to defeat the devil who had the power of death (Heb 2:14). Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels, not man. Because man is an eternal spirit *hades* is the only place to jail the rebellious; it is the eternal prison for the unrepentant.

The wage of sin is death, but Jesus never sinned so how could He die? Neither man, the Jews or the Romans killed Him; He willingly laid down His life in death just as He had the power to take it up again. He didn't deserve death, but He died in order that you and I who deserve death – all have sinned and come short of God's glory- can have life.

The mystery of Calvary is: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." God is both the Reconciler and the Reconciled.