

## The Manger

Hebrews 2

When you look into the manger, what do you see?

One person looks and is offended.

Another looks and sees a silly myth.

Still another looks in and sees a cute little baby.

Another looks and sees Christmas trees and Christmas lights, Christmas gifts and Santa Claus.

Some refuse to look at all

But this morning, I'm not concerned with what other people see. For this morning, let's just focus on ourselves. What do we see when we look into the manger of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The manger was a historical event but just as important, the manger is a window. No one feels threatened by a little baby. A little baby we can tame. But for those who have had their eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, we look into the manger, we see not merely a baby but the God-man, Jesus Christ. We see his cross and we see his throne. The truth is, people don't want to truly look into the manger.

This morning we're going to turn to Hebrews 2, and from there together we are going to look into Christ's manger. And I want to show you what it means for Jesus to be fully God and fully man, and once you've seen that, how it changes everything.

*Read the text*

### **Jesus was fully God and fully man**

#### ***Jesus was fully God***

Creator of all things (Jn.1, Col. 1)

Received worship as God (Jn. 21)

He performed acts which only God could do

He controlled the weather (Mk. 4)

He raised the dead (Jn. 11)

He forgave sin (Mk. 2)

Mark 2:7-12 "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! **Who can forgive sins but God alone?**" 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? 9 **Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?** 10 **But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**"; he said to the paralytic; 11 "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Jesus claimed to be God

John 8:56-59 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." 57 So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.**" 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

## **Jesus was fully man**

Heb. 2

Quotation from Psalm 8

Psalms 8:1-9 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens... 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet...

But what happened after creation? How did the first Adam do with the dominion God gave him?

Adam failed miserably, therefore, the entire cosmos has been fractured.

Sin entering the world meant that everything has spiraled out of control, nothing is perfectly as it should be. Where the first Adam failed, we needed a second Adam, a true and better Adam.

Heb. 2:8b 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.

Heb. 2:14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things.

Heb. 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect.

Incarnation (Deity taking on human form) – The fulfillment of God’s prophecy in Genesis 3:15 that one day the seed of woman would bruise the serpents head. Virgin birth – Jesus was born without a human father. The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary and conceived within her womb the Lord Jesus Christ. With this conception, God the Son, entered into his own creation in the form a male human baby. He was born to Joseph and Mary and fully experienced life from the standpoint of a human being.

We can sometimes mistakenly think of Jesus as some type of super hero type of man in a way that would prevent him from living in our world fully as a human.

Grew as a baby into a man (Lu. 2:52)

He learned (Lu. 2:52)

In his humanity there are things he doesn’t know

He became tired (Jn. 4:6)

He slept (Mk. 4:36)

He became hungry and thirsty (Mk. 11:12, Jn. 19:28)

He was sad (Jn. 11:35)

He was fearful (Lu. 22:44)

He felt pain

He had a human mind, a human heart, and a human will

He experienced the whole range of human emotions

## **Why did he have to be fully God and fully man**

He had to be a man in order to be a fitting substitute to bear the penalty that we deserved.

Heb. 2:14 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 life long slavery

Heb. 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

He had to be a man so that he could die.

But he had to be God in order for his sacrifice to be of enough value to satisfy God's justice.

The real question is not why did he have to be, but why did Jesus want to take on the form of a man and come to redeem us?

Hebrews 12:2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

## **How the incarnation changes everything**

You can't see Christ for who he truly is and what he's done and not be completely changed.

1. As a human being – Jesus the Messiah, and him alone, is the answer to every human need. He alone is salvation from our sins. He alone is the friend who will never let us down. He alone the ultimate satisfaction to our hearts desires. It's possible that you're here today and you've been trying to satisfy the desires of your heart in all the wrong places. A boyfriend or a girlfriend? A job? Your education? Money, sex, power? Our hearts are always craving fulfilment, always thirsty, never quenched. If you keep trying to satisfy the thirsts of your soul with other things you're always going to be disappointed. You're going to get that boyfriend and he's going to cheat on you. You're going to get that job and realize it wasn't all you hoped it would be. You're going to marry that person and in a morning or two you're going to realize they have really bad breath, and other things that stink too.

John 7:37-38 If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

***Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I find.***

2. As the God-man, Jesus can truly help us when we suffer...
  - a. Heb. 2:18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted
  - b. Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Because Jesus entered fully into our humanity he can truly empathize with the things we are going through. As a man he can empathize with us, which is a unique and very necessary form of love. But as our God and King, he is able to provide our every need.

3. When we see Jesus come down from heaven, enter into our humanity to save us, we see that Jesus was the first great missionary. At the first Christmas, what do we see Jesus doing? Before he came into the world, he was together with God the father, and God the son and there was perfect joy within the trinitarian God. What if God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit had just remained inward facing like we do sometimes for Christmas?... But he didn't. He left all his comforts, and he came to seek and save that which was lost? Friends, if Christmas teaches us anything, it teaches us that we can't merely be inwardly focusing on ourselves and our families. Listen... Love your families, celebrate with them, richly lavish gifts upon them, but that should not be your only or your main focus. If Christmas is just about celebrating with our families and giving ourselves gifts, then we're not celebrating what Jesus did in the incarnation.

***We are a missional people because God is a missional God!***

So when we look into the manger, what do we see? We see the baby who was fully God and fully man, who was born to die on a cruel cross, but rose from the dead after three days, and is seated triumphantly on his throne at the right hand of God. When we look into the manger we see our God who is still carrying out his mission, seeking and saving the lost through his Church.

Let's pray