

The surprise that God entered the world in personal, corporeal form certainly throws some people. Some are just more comfortable with a cosmic force than with a personal, living-and-breathing God. That God would take on human image especially troubles others. Why a human being rather than something higher, grander, more awe-striking? Those who object on this basis may also regard the anthropomorphic view of God as too convenient and self-serving, a sort of psychological defect in those who embrace Jesus Christ for who he is, fully God while fully human. What could convince one that God became human?

First, settle firmly in mind the question of whether Jesus existed. The Bible is the most-significant historical record of Jesus's life on earth, although not the only record. The four gospels of the Bible's New Testament, each by a different author, each tell the story of Jesus's life from a different perspective. Three of the four gospels share some parts of the same text, likely indicating that their authors worked in part from the same or very similar writing. The fourth gospel is its author's own work. All the gospels give the same or similar accounts of certain events, while each of the gospels also give accounts of distinct events that the other gospels do not mention.

Doesn't their similarity and variation thus prove that the gospels are fake, mythic accounts? To the contrary, scholars who study the origin, authenticity, duplication, and distribution of ancient accounts regard the Bible's gospels as far more reliable than any other ancient documents extant. The gospels appear precisely as persons would write them from their own observation and memory, in the case of three authors who ministered with Jesus, or by interview accounts, in the case of the fourth gospel. Other New Testament books and letters, some by the same authors and others by different authors, also give accounts of Jesus. Outside of the Bible, the Roman historian Josephus also recorded that Jesus lived as an authentic historical figure.

That Jesus plainly lived as a real figure still leaves the question of whether Jesus was who he said he was, fully God while fully human. Here, first consider the contention that Jesus was simply a good or great man, even a wise man or prophet. The insoluble problem with such a view is that Jesus himself rejected it. No person can be wise while rejecting the very thing that would qualify him as such. If Jesus

were merely wise but not God, then he would instead be crazed, disordered, mentally ill, schizophrenic, for claiming that he was not merely wise but indeed God, and dying a most-gruesome death for it.

Here, though, one must return to the Bible's reliable historical record and other historical records of the day, to account reasonably for a most-remarkable development. Huge crowds began to follow Jesus, as his miracles, plainly supernatural God-wrought works, brought him ever-greater fame. The religious leaders would kill Jesus for that reason, that everyone was abandoning them to follow this self-declared and miracle-proven God-man. The gospels depict Jesus's disciples as repeatedly stunned by those same miracles, although following Jesus, they had seen such miracles many times. And yet, fearing for their own lives, they all abandoned Jesus at his arrest, unwilling to hang dead from a cross as Jesus did.

But then Jesus rose from the dead, an event other sections address in greater detail. The point here is that everything changed for the disciples and hundreds of other witnesses who observed it. Suddenly, the disciples were no longer fearful of death. They were instantly so sure that God walked among them, from their own firsthand, see-him, touch-him, eat-with-him experience, that they staked their lives on it. They welcomed death simply to be able to tell others about it, so credibly that their testimony spread the world like wildfire. That's not what happens with fakers, the mentally deceived, or myths.

Yet accepting the fact that God entered his own creation as a human being barely begins to appreciate why. Why would God do so? Why did God find taking human form so compelling as to suffer temptation, torture, and death for it? Here, we've come to the good news that sets Christians afire for Jesus. God, we see, is love. As love, God must do everything for those whom he created in his own image. God did not simply take human form in Jesus. More so, he revealed the form that he had from the beginning, when he first made humans in his image. God didn't simply take on human costume for a brief historical period. Rather, as Genesis 1:26-27 records, God initially made humans like him.

So again, why did God reveal his own human form in Jesus? The name Jesus means savior, rescuer, specifically to save his people. In Jesus, God was saving from death the humans whom he had made in his own image. God does not want his human

creation, those who he made like him, to die but to live forever in joyful celebration with him. God made everything good, but death is not good, and so God undertook to restore everything from death so that all would be good again, with him.

You may expect to die, but do you want to die? God did not make you to die. He made you to rejoice with him forever. The way that he chose to restore you to him, to rescue you from death, was to come into the world to show you his love, invite you to live with him forever, and then die and rise again to show you that doing so was more than possible. Rescue was right in front of us all the time, that real, that probable, that attainable. God made our rescue that simple. He did it through himself, the Savior, Jesus. We shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that we have better ideas.