

The Theology of Christmas:
The Humanity of Jesus
Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16

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Introduction: This Christmas season we are considering some theological themes underscored in the Christmas story. One of the mysteries of the Gospel is that Jesus came to this earth fully God and fully man. He was not sometimes God and sometimes man. He was not part God and part man. He was fully God and fully man. This week we will consider the effect of His humanity.

Text: (Hebrews 2:14-18)¹⁴ 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,¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

(Hebrews 4:14-16)¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Introduction: Many consider the book of Hebrews to be one of the most complex books in the New Testament. Our unfamiliarity with the Old Testament sacrificial system is probably one of the issues that makes this a difficult book. We can make the book much easier to understand if we consider the context of the original letter. The Book of Hebrews was written to encourage Christians to persevere in their faith in the midst of persecution. Even though the recipients of the letter were victims of persecution, the call of the author is for them to persevere in their faith. Nothing, even persecution, should detract them from following Christ. Salvation through Christ is and was so superior to every aspect of their former religion, Judaism, that they would be fools not to persevere in their commitment to Christ. The primary thrust of the book is to show how Jesus is superior to several things so very familiar to them. Christ is superior to the Angels. (1-2) Christ is superior to Moses and Joshua. (3-4) Christ is superior to Aaron's Priesthood. (5-7) Christ is superior to the Mosaic Law. (8-10)

The Conclusion of Christ's Superiority: Why would you even be thinking about turning your back on Christ? Why would you not endure and persevere in your faith and calling? Even though the persecution is not pleasant and even threatens lives, isn't Christ superior in every way to the law?

Such superiority demands and deserves our highest praise and allegiance.

In the midst of this kind of argument comes a tremendous picture of the humanity of Christ. If we are going to consider the theology of Christmas, we must consider the humanity of Christ alongside the Deity of Christ.

One of the early Church fathers helps us to do this. Chrysostom, the great church father, put it in a beautiful paragraph, and I want to read it to you: 'I do not think of Christ as God alone, or man alone, but both together. For I know He was hungry, yet I know that with five loaves He fed 5000. I know He was thirsty, and I know yet that He turned the water into wine. I know that He was carried in a ship, yet I know that He walked upon the sea. I know that He died, yet I know that He raised the dead Himself. I know that He was set before Pilate, and I know that He sits with the Father in His throne. I know that He was worshipped by angels, yet I know that He was stoned by the Jews.

Have you allowed the reality of the humanity of Jesus touch you?

Some Evidence of the Humanity of Jesus

- His Birth—The first chapters of the Gospels tell us of His birth. The Gospels tell us of His brothers and sisters. The Gospels give us His family's genealogy.
- His Life—Luke 2:52 for example.
- His Death—The agony of the cross is depicted pointing to His real death.

1 John 1:1 "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the Word of Life..."

Conclusion: Nobody ever really doubted His humanity.

But, what is the point? Does it matter that Jesus was fully human? The answer for us is a resounding "YES!" In a sermon on the humanity of Jesus, one wrote that he did not see personal application. This is just a theological message of facts. I disagree. The point of all theology is practical. There is great application in the fact that He became man.

Spiritual Effects of the Humanity of Jesus

1. Shows His great Love for us. God came! I heard Pastor David Platt of Birmingham tell a story about his decision to go on a mission trip. He was thinking of the cost to go for a couple of weeks of probably about \$3,000. He contemplated if it might be more effective stewardship to send \$3,000 to this particular location. Ultimately, he decided to go. His decision to go was confirmed when a persecuted pastor told him, "Your coming tells me that you really care!" Isn't that what Jesus did? He came!
2. Allows Jesus to sympathize with our weaknesses.
 - Our Struggles
 - Our Sin

Have you ever said, “I know how you feel” to someone when you really don’t know how they feel. Jesus’ humanity is the ultimate example that He really does know how we feel.

3. Sets an Example for us to follow.

(Philippians 2:5-11)

- In His relationship with the Father, Jesus modeled total dependence and total obedience.
- In His relationship with others, Jesus modeled humility.
- In His relationship with sinners, Jesus modeled both compassion and challenge.

4. Secures for us peace with God.

The most important thing is here. For salvation to be effect, He must be sinless. To be sinless, He must be God. But also, He must be like us. He was human. In order to be sin on our behalf, He must be human.

5. Strengthens us for our journey here on earth.

Do you know the story of John Howard Griffin? In 1959, he entered a New Orleans hotel having hired a dermatologist to change his white appearance to that of a black man. Being white, but having the appearance of a black man so much so as to fool even his closest friends. Griffin then set out on a six-week bus tour across the racially segregated Deep South. For six weeks, he rode the bus as a black man, tried to eat in restaurants as a black, try to use restrooms as a black man. He chronicled his 6 week experiment in a book *Black Like Me*. He would later say that he simply wanted to write about the black man’s experience and the only way to really know what it was like to be black was to become black. Even though his book was a best seller, Griffin’s “experiment” was not well received either by blacks or whites. The book was not well received by whites for unfortunately very obvious reasons—the racism of whites across the South was being exposed. The book was not received well by some blacks because as one said, “You cannot understand what it is like to be black in six weeks.”

Now, please don’t misunderstand. Jesus wasn’t trying to become aware of what it was like to be human. He had no need for that. However, maybe some of us have a need to know that He knows what it is like to be human.