

God Became Man

Lesson 4

John 1:14-18

Opener

Ask: Do you believe that Jesus was God, just a man, or both God and man?

In this lesson we will learn that Jesus was BOTH God and man.

Singer-songwriter Rich Mullins wrote a song called “Boy Like Me/Man Like You.” He describes Jesus as a boy growing up and wonders what he was like. He asks,

Did You grow up hungry, did You grow up fast?
Did the little girls giggle when You walked past?
Did you wonder what it was that made them laugh? . . .

Did You ever get scared playing hide and seek?
Did You try not to cry when You scraped Your knee?
Did You ever skip a rock across a quiet creek?

Scripture

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. John pointed him out to the people. He shouted to the crowds, “This is the one I was talking about when I said, “Someone is coming who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before I did.” We have all benefited from the rich blessings he brought to us—one gracious blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; God’s unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But his only Son, who is himself God, is near to the Father’s heart; he has told us about him.

Discussion

Ask: Is it hard for you to comprehend that Jesus was God but also a man who lived and breathed like we do?

v. 14

In John Chapter 1, we have seen Jesus described as the Word, the light, and as God Himself. Now we see in verse 14 his becoming man. This can mean only one thing: Jesus was at the same time 100% God AND 100% man.

It may be hard for us to understand how Jesus could be God and man at the same time, but this is exactly what John is saying. It is something we must accept by faith.

Jesus came to earth and walked among us. He has experienced pain, felt the sting of sorrow and rejection, and felt the joy of friendship. Because he has been one of us, he can relate to us! He is not a distant God; he understands our emotions. He has laughed and cried, been hungry and thirsty, tired and alone. The bottom line is this: He knows what we're going through because he's been there!

The Message Bible paraphrase says that "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." Jesus was still God, but he took on the physical nature of a man, with all of our weaknesses and vulnerability.

John goes on to say that Jesus was "full of unfailing love and faithfulness." The NIV version says he was full of grace and truth. Either way, we see the heart of God represented in Jesus, the God-man. "It is as if God has reached into his very being and plucked out his own heart in sending Christ to us" (Bruce Milne, *The Message of John*, p. 50). He showed us who he really is and what is important to him—not worldly power and authority, but love, mercy and truth.

Ask: What do you think John means by, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father"?

It is true that Jesus performed many miracles in his lifetime. But even though many saw him heal the sick, give sight to the blind, feed the 5000, and raise a person from the dead, most did not accept Jesus as the Son of God.

The TRUE glory of Christ was seen at Calvary on the cross: when the God who created the world was brutally killed to pay the price for the sins of all people. And three days later he rose victoriously from the dead. THIS is true glory. But it is a glory that requires "eyes of faith" to see it (Floyd V. Filson, *The Layman's Bible Commentary*, p. 32).

vv. 15

John the Baptist played a very significant role in pointing Jesus out to the world. After centuries of spiritual darkness, John's role was to awaken people's "spiritual eyes" to the light of Christ.

vv. 16

Ask: What blessings did Jesus bring to us?

The mere fact that God came down as one of us is proof that He cares about us. But He became our sacrificial Lamb, as John the Baptist states in verse 29: "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

This is the blessing above all blessings: that we are saved from eternal damnation because of God's great love for us.

The blessings Jesus brings into our lives when we know him are never-ending: "one gracious blessing after another." The word "gracious" implies that these blessings are undeserved.

v. 17

Verse 17 refers to the laws God gave his people in the Old Testament. John seems to be comparing the law to “God’s unfailing love and faithfulness . . . Through Jesus Christ.” Because God’s people could not obey his laws, He had to make a better way for us to receive salvation. Jesus was that better way.

Romans 8:3-4 sums it up:

The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

v. 18

Up until Jesus came, no one had ever seen God directly. Different people had seen visions, angels, burning bushes and other *expressions* of God, but Jesus is the most direct expressions of who God is.

Application

What difference does it make in your life to know that Jesus has been one of us?

Jesus can relate to what we are going through. He is not a distant God. He can *sympathize* with us because he has been there. This should help us to develop a close relationship with the God who cares enough to become a “humble servant” (Philippians 2:7).

Also, it is important to know exactly what we believe about Jesus so that we will have an answer when someone questions what we believe. In this day and age, people believe many different things about Jesus. We must know what WE believe: that he was God who became a man, died on the cross for our sins, rose from the dead, and lives in the hearts of those who believe in him.

