

Welcome back to week 2 of our Christmas series. Throughout this month we are doing something none of us on the preaching team have ever seen done before—using the Hebrews text as a Christmas text. ☺

Turns out Hebrews is perfect for a Christmas series because it exalts Jesus as the greatest revelation ever given to us from God. As Doug taught last week, the whole book of Hebrews opens with this profound statement: *"In the past God spoke... through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> BUT in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."*

This series is helping us all be reminded how Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God, born as the incarnate Son of God...which means Jesus was in fact, God born in the flesh. This series is going to help remind us that:

- Jesus was born to fulfill all the various promise of God for his people.
- He was born to secure our salvation once and for all.
- And he was born to serve as our High Priest—giving us unhindered access to the Father forever.

***We're calling this series: From manger to majesty!*** Each week we will be focusing on a key text from Hebrews and connecting it to different pieces of the Christmas narrative. As Doug alluded to last week, Hebrews offers us the theological grounding for all the gifts we love to celebrate at

Christmas—hope, peace, joy, love, and victory found in Christ. We hope to demonstrate that while Easter is our most significant holiday as Christians, there would be no Easter without Christmas.

**[Transition]** - I know that sounds like a cliché. But we have to say it. You might think it should go without saying, but in our culture today we have to remind people that without the birth of Jesus, there would be no Christmas. It's nonsensical to take Christ out of Christmas. If you take Christ out, you got nothing! It's like taking memory out of Memorial Day or Independence out of the Fourth of July celebrations. Christmas is not just about the holidays being happy...it's about God ☐ "with us" ☐ in the flesh. ***It's about the Son of God born at Christmas...becoming like us in order to save us.***

**[Transition]** - Why is...Jesus born in the flesh at Christmas...so significant for us? The reasons are not entirely clear to many people. The author of Hebrews speaks to this question. The author of Hebrews shares very clearly at least **TWO advantages** afforded us by having Jesus come to us in the flesh at Christmas. Turn to Hebrews 2: 14-17.

The book of Hebrews is a classic treaty on the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus. He reveals God to us and he connects us with God. Last week Pastor Doug reminded us Jesus is superior! He's superior to all the angels, and all the prophets of old.

This week I want to show you how the writer goes on to explain that God made the superior-One-Jesus, to be like a human, a little lower than the angels for a very particular reason. Do you know what that is? Referring to you and me and all of humankind as children, he writes...[read verses 14-17.]

The first advantage to having God with us by his Son born in the flesh at Christmas, is...

### **1. We have someone who became like us. (v. 14, 17)**

The whole point of Christmas is that God became a man. This is a hard concept for many. And it has been for centuries. As a rule, gods didn't condescend to people. They were aloof and distant; they didn't fraternize with human flesh. For the most part, the basic mode of operation with other gods was distance and detachment.

But, with Christianity the mode of operation is Identification/ likeness.. Jesus Christ took the form of a human for the express purpose of *identifying* with humankind.

Referring to Jesus, the Gospel of John opens up with the declaration that *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning"* (John 1:1-2). *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us..."* (John 1:14).

We can learn a ton about Jesus in these few short verses. Notice, he is God but also differentiated from God. He is eternal like God, no beginning and no end. And notice, here's the crucial Christmas truth...He willingly became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

**[Transition]** - I don't know about you, but when I think of Jesus taking on our flesh, I am immediately drawn to what Jesus had to give up. The reality is as people; we don't like to give things up. When we have enjoyed something nice, we don't want to give it up.

- When I go on vacation and it comes to the last day, I start to get bummed...I don't want to leave.

- When the economy tightens our financial belts, we grouse about having to give things up.
- If your job changes or sales dip your incomes goes down and you have to make changes in your lifestyle, you have to eliminate somethings that you have gotten very used to.

Giving up stuff you've enjoyed is hard, it's super hard. No one likes to give up what we have come to enjoy and appreciate and savor. Have you ever thought much about what Jesus had to give up in order to come in the flesh?

What did Jesus give up?

A. *Jesus gave up his home in heaven* - Remember, when we talk about Jesus, we don't start with Mary. Jesus didn't get his beginning as a baby born in Bethlehem. As the verses we looked at in John make clear, Jesus existed for all eternity in glory. And when He came to earth, He temporarily gave up His place in heaven. He left all the glorious aspects of heaven that he enjoyed. The Bible describes heaven as a place that is indescribable—so wonderful and amazing that our minds cannot even grasp the majesty of it. So, it's hard to really fathom what Jesus really gave up.

**[Illustration]** - In our culture when men and women join the military or go off to war, they have to leave their homes, leave long time relationships and leave the comforts and luxuries of home to live within the limits, disciplines and confines of the military life. Jesus did the same thing.

And add to that the reality that when Jesus came to earth, He didn't land on some beach in Hawaii, or in a place of natural beauty. He came to Bethlehem and was born into a peasant family, and was actually born in a

barn of sorts, laid in a feeding trough. I'm guessing it was dark, cold and smelly. That's how he came into the world.

**[Transition]** - Not only did Jesus give up his home in heaven, and he gave up certain divine privileges.

B. *Jesus also gave up certain privileges*- Jesus has never ceased being God, but when He became the God-man, and took on flesh, there were certain aspects of His majesty that He voluntarily laid aside.

For example, God is omnipresent. He is present everywhere in the Universe. There's no place where God is not. But when Jesus became a man, he could no longer be everywhere because He was contained in a body.

As God, Jesus never faced limits, needs, or frailties. God never gets hungry. He never gets thirsty, and the Bible tells us that he never sleeps. God cannot be tempted, and God will never die. But as the God-man, Jesus got hungry, thirsty, and tired. He was tempted, and he felt pain. Eventually he would even experience death.

**[Transition]** - Along with giving up the wildly amazing environment of heaven and the use of certain divine privileges, Jesus also gave up being continually worshipped. Have you even thought of that? He gave up continual worship as the exalted one.

C. *Jesus gave up continual worship* - The Bible tells us that the angels continually worship and serve the Lord in heaven. Jesus would have received that worship. But when He became a man, he was not greeted with worship, but contempt. You ever been demoted? Have

you ever had to take a job that you felt was beneath you—your experience and your knowledge?

Think about this for a minute. The Bible says that Jesus is the creator of the world. All things came into existence by him, through him, and for him. Last week Hebrews 1 makes this amazing statement, *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”* In other words, you don’t have anything without Jesus.

So, here you have the Creator of the universe coming into the world... that he spoke into existence...coming to a mankind that he formed with the dust of the earth; wouldn’t you think he would be well received? Wouldn’t you think that people would rejoice to see their King and Creator?

What He faced was not a welcome committee, but a cruel and cold world. John 1 says, *“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him”* (John 1:10-11). Instead of being esteemed when he came, he was despised and rejected by men, like one from whom men hide their faces (Isaiah 53:3). Humankind didn’t want him around.

Isn’t that bizarre? He created them, loved them, and came to them, and they rejected Him. They had been waiting for centuries for the Messiah to come. And when he came, he was shunned, mocked, laughed at, ridiculed, and they even spit in His face. Can you imagine that? Spitting in the face of the Creator of the universe?

It still happens today! He is still rejected by his world. Obviously, not everybody rejects him. But as you look carefully at our culture, we have largely told Jesus to stay out.

### **Illustration:**

Many in our culture hate the Christ of Christmas, and large segments of culture—and even public institutions—are ostracizing Christmas traditions, avoiding reference to Christ, and at times treating Christian expressions as problematic. Many even refuse to say Merry Christmas.

- Liberty Counsel's 2025 campaign reports many large retailers and public-facing institutions using neutral "holiday" branding rather than acknowledging Christmas explicitly.<sup>1</sup> This kind "sterilization" of the holiday – with generic "holiday" greetings instead of "Merry Christmas," along with minimal Christian imagery, and avoidance of "Christmas" language – reflects a broader cultural shift to suppress or downplay the Christian meaning of Christmas.
- In late November of this year, Portland held its annual tree-lighting at Pioneer Courthouse Square – but organizers officially referred only to "the tree lighting," avoiding the term "Christmas tree." During the event, a speaker draped in a Palestinian flag led the crowd in chanting "Free, free, free Palestine." Christmas carols were rebranded as "holiday songs."<sup>2</sup>

One encouraging piece I want you to know about, many times local Christians in the regions where these things happen, speak out, and push back and many of the efforts to take the Christ out of Christmas are reversed. There's actually a living list published by the Liberty Counsel it's

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<sup>1</sup> [https://lc.org/newsroom/details/111025-friend-or-foe-christmas-campaign-2025?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://lc.org/newsroom/details/111025-friend-or-foe-christmas-campaign-2025?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>2</sup> [https://worldisraelnews.com/free-palestine-replaces-christmas-at-portland-holiday-event/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://worldisraelnews.com/free-palestine-replaces-christmas-at-portland-holiday-event/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

called the Friend or Foe Christmas Campaign. They also provide a Naughty and Nice List that catalogs some of the stores that are censoring Christmas and some that are publicly celebrating it.

Our Hebrews text today teaches us Christ entered into our fallen human world, to be like us in order to save us, but these examples are among many that demonstrate there is a growing cultural attempt to *erase* the remembrance and importance of Jesus being born in human flesh – it's a kind of spiritual forgetting, denial or rejection of the core truth about the Jesus of Christmas .

And what might be even more amazing is that Jesus, knowing full well how he would be treated, willingly came to be like you anyway. Motivated by his love, compelled by his mercy and fortified with his grace...Jesus *"Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being"* (Philippians 2:6-7 NLT). He did it all to be like you and near you.

**[Transition]** - He did it to identify with you....and second, he did it to overcome what you could not. This is the second advantage to having God with us by his Son in the flesh...

## **2. We have someone who overcame what we cannot. (v. 18)**

What obstacles did Jesus overcome?

- Jesus overcame temptation - Look at Hebrews 2:18. *"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."* Do you realize how huge this is?



The Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted in all ways like we are but was without sin. This means he perfectly modeled trust in God and dependence upon God and obedience to God's will. But, this also means that he gets how hard it is for you to resist temptation. He understands how conniving and deceiving the devil is.

**[Illustration]** - It's practically impossible to understand another person's sorrows and sufferings unless we have been through them. As I mentioned, my daughter and Son-in-law miscarried 5 pregnancies before she experienced success with this 6<sup>th</sup> one. Cindy and I miscarried twice before our oldest Britt was born. It's interesting to hear the things some people say to you when that happens. Everyone means well, but you can tell who has experience it and who hasn't.

For example, one woman might smile through a baby dedication and say the right things, "Congratulations, I'm so happy for you." Another woman claps too—but her clapping is different, more intense. Because she has miscarried three times. She knows what it feels like to pray and bleed in the same week.

One woman is kind. The other woman understands. Friends, there are sorrows you can't Google. There are griefs no one teaches you in school. You only understand them when they live in your body

This text in Hebrews teaches us clearly that Jesus understands our silent sorrows. The unanswered prayers. The nights where faith barely breathes. He became like us in every way—so no pain is foreign to Him.

Here's a reality:

- "You can't fully understand chemotherapy until poison becomes your medicine."

- “You don’t understand panic attacks until fear hijacks your body for no reason.”
- “You don’t understand poverty until you’ve had to decide between rent and groceries.”

And that’s why Jesus didn’t stay distant. He came close. **Because only a Savior who suffers can truly save sufferers.**

I want you to see something...

Hebrews 4:15-16 says, *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

This means Jesus isn’t standing there when you are tempted or when you are struggling with saying, “What a loser!” “How could you?” No, no no... he’s there saying, “I get it...I understand the struggle...I know how tempting that is...don’t give in...instead, come to me...I know what you need. I can help you get victory.”

In fact, consider this: Most of us probably cave to temptation long before the enemy really throws out all the stops...we probably cave long before the enemy gives us his best shot. So, Jesus, having never given in...has likely seen Satan’s best shot. And he resisted and emerged victorious! He overcame and he knows full well how to enable us to overcome.

**[Transition]** - The second thing Jesus overcame was the curse of death.

- Jesus overcame the curse of death through the cross. Look closely at verse 14 of Hebrews 2. *"**14** Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity **so that by his death** he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— **15** and free those who all their lives were held in slavery..."*

Notice the words, "that by his death." That is speaking about the cross. It is speaking about the death of Jesus on the cross.

Don't miss this friends: Christmas is special primarily because it's a prelude to Easter!! Jesus knew that He was born for the purpose of dying. He was going to be the sacrifice for our sins. He knew that. In the gospels He would tell the disciples that over and over. He also told them that he would rise again to defeat death once and for all...and he did!

Let me put all this in a nutshell: Jesus had to be like us, fully human, in the flesh in order to represent us on the cross. And he had to be fully God in order to pay for all the sins of all humankind, once for all, for eternity.

You see, Jesus didn't just take on part of us at Christmas. Jesus took on a fully human body to save our bodies. And he took a human mind to save our minds. Without becoming man in his emotions, he could not have rescued our hearts. And without taking a human will, he could not save our broken and wandering wills.

In the words of 4<sup>th</sup> Century Church father Gregory of Nazianzus, “That which he has not assumed he has not healed.”<sup>3</sup> He became man in full, so that he might save us in full.

### **Conclusion:**

This is why Christmas is so significant. This is why God “*with us*” through his Son born in the flesh is a non-negotiable truth for you. God invites you to accept and trust that Jesus came in the flesh to die on the cross to pay for your sin.

And this is why he invites you to trust that through his resurrection he proved he was victorious over sin and death once and for all. No other proclaimed spiritual leader has done that. Not one! Jesus is the only one. Jesus was born at Christmas to be like us and to overcome what we could not.

For these reasons, friends, Jesus born at Christmas is absolutely unique, and uniquely qualified to connect us closely with the Father. He is capable. You can always trust him.

When we connect with God through faith in Jesus the way is opened wide for us to experience all the amazing and meaningful gifts of connection to God—all the gifts we love to celebrate at Christmas—hope, peace, joy, love, and finding our home in God.

Have you opened your heart to him? Do you sense he’s pulling you close? If you have never opened your heart and invited Jesus to be your forgiver and leader, you can do that today. In the privacy of your own heart and in your own words you can say something like:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/jesus-is-fully-human>.

*Jesus, I need you to be my forgiver. I'm so grateful you loved me enough to be born as a human on Christmas to open the way to come home to God. I want to begin today to follow you and enjoy all the benefits of being connected and at peace with God.*