

Jesus Is The God Man – Part 3

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John 1:15-17

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So imagine you're walking down the beach one day, and you're enjoying the sun on your skin, you're enjoying... You're just kind of minding your own business, sound of waves crashing, children playing. You're just enjoying a warm, beautiful, sunny day. And imagine as you're walking, you see in the distance, there's this crowd of people that are forming by the shore, and as you walk closer, you start to sense there's a frenzy going on there, in that large group of people. And as you get closer, you notice that there's a guy in the middle, and that he's doing things, and he's saying things that the people are just kind of drawn to and attracted to. There's nothing special about him on the outside. He just looks like a very normal, everyday person, but it's unmistakable, as you continue to walk closer, that there is something special about him.

Now, imagine that you join the crowd. You get close enough now you're in it. Other people are coming in around you. You're starting to listen closely to him, but at the same time, you overhear people to the right of you, and you recognize that as you're listening, these guys are really into this guy. Like, they are super-followers of this guy. And as you're listening to them talk, you hear them say to one another, with definite agreement, that this man that you're listening to is actually God, there on the beach.

Now, in that moment, what would you think when you heard them say something like that? I mean, if you're honest, you would probably say something like, "These people have lost their ever-loving mind," right? "The God of the universe, deity becoming human? Come on, that's ridiculous. That's preposterous. Unbelievable." And yet, that is exactly what Christians, that is exactly what I think is true, and I think is more real than anything that you and I have ever experienced, that the one true and living God became a man, a human being, and that he has a name, and his name is Jesus. That's verse 14. That's the central claim. That's the center, the message of Jesus, the message of Christianity, that the word, true and perfect deity, became flesh, became human, true and sinless. He's completely and truly human, just as human as you and I, and yet he is God.

All of human history was leading up to that event, all the rest of history has been affected by that event. In reality, our planet has been visited by an alien, but not somebody from another planet, but somebody who's definitely not from around here. He's no little green man, but he is the good, the great, the glorious God man. That's who Jesus really is the God man. In verse 14, God himself left heaven to become one of us, frail, dependent, even mortal. He didn't diminish his divinity when he came here and became a human, and he didn't diminish his humanity when he ascended back to heaven. He is now and forever the God man.

And just as an aside as you're wondering, why do we believe? Why do we believe this with all of our hearts? Why do we live our lives like this is more true than anything else, so true in fact that we stake the very moment we die on this truth? Why in the world would we even think about doing that? The New Testament answers that question, is we do that because he rose from the dead.

This one teaching on the shores, this one talking to people, interacting with people, actually said in his teaching, "I'm going to die, and I'm going to rise again," and then he did it. And anybody who can do that demands us to go, "Okay, I need to pay attention to you." And that's what we do. More than pay attention, we need to give our lives to you, and that's why Christians believe this with all our hearts, that God became a human, because that God man rose from the dead.

But here's the thing, Christian, that the more that you know Jesus accurately, the more you know who he really is, the more wonderful he's going to become to you, and the more wonderful he becomes to you, the more you will be like him, and that's the goal. That's the goal for pastoral ministry, that Christ is formed in you, that we begin to see Christ coming out of us, that we are transformed into his image, how we think, and how we speak, how we act, how we interact is how Jesus would do it. The way our kids copy us as they watch our lives, the way that young people copy celebrities, is the way that we're supposed to be with Jesus.

As we see who he is, as we listen to what he said, as we remember all that he did, we become like him, we copy his life, never perfectly, right? But we will be like him, and that happens as we look full in his wonderful face, as we take what is said about him in the Bible and we fill our minds with that, so much so that we're actually changed. The rocky crags that are us get chiseled away, and what is left is a picture of the savior, and what happens is he becomes more amazing to us. So let's see how amazing, and in the words of John in verse 14, how glorious he is.

Verse 14 again, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us." Let's stop there. 30-and-a-half years, 30+ years of Jesus' life is summarized with this phrase, "Dwelt among us." That word "dwelt" is a word that means "to live in a tent." The same root word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the tabernacle. Do you remember that, the tabernacle? When God rescued his people from Egyptian slavery, he told the Israelites, "Build me this very special tent. We'll call it a tabernacle. I want you to build that," and it says that it would be there, Exodus 25:8, so that God could, quote, "Dwell in their midst." He would live among them in the tabernacle. So John has been hearing the Old Testament for his whole life. He's been hearing this and recounting the Exodus every year, and he wants us to remember as we read this text, the tabernacle, so he says the word "dwelt," or the word "tabernacled." He lived, he took up residence among us.

But unlike the Old Testament tabernacle, what Jesus did is far more glorious, because it was far more personal. I want you to think about this. If you were an Israelite, rescued from Egyptian slavery, walked through the Red Sea, you're in the wilderness, and what is it that you see every single day? You see, with your physical eyes, this cloud, that's there every day, and as the sun set, what happens? That cloud turns into a tornado of fire, so you see the visible presence of God with you every day, and for some of them, 40 years of that, every day, "God is with me. How do I know? There he is. He's right there." You would go into your tent, fire. You'd wake up, there it is, the visible manifestation of God, every day of your life.

Why did I say what Jesus did is far more amazing than that? We want to see the fire tornado, right? Why is what Jesus did more wonderful? Because God being among his people, he already did that, but God becoming one of his people, becoming one of us, to be with us, that is far more glorious. And then you just take a step back from that and go, "Wait a minute, that God would do that?" I mean, "Hallelujah, what a savior" doesn't begin to scratch the surface on how amazing that is.

And I think what the text wants us to ponder... We'll summarize point #1) *with the word "association."* *"Association."* Not only does Jesus associate with us in the deepest possible way, he becomes one of us, but he associates us... He associates with actual people, real people. He knew people personally. He knew people's names. He knew their backgrounds. He knew their family members. Instead of interacting with God, one person, one priest, once a year, day of atonement, God was among us for 30+ years. He had a family, a mom, a dad, brothers, and sisters. He had friends. He had a ministry where people were around him all the time. What he did, what he said, all of that was done around people, and tons and tons of people. In the words of Matthew 1:23, "He is Emanuel," which means God what?

God with us. That's not just for Christmas, okay? That's for right now. He was here on our planet, truly, really, historically, actually. And yes in verse 14, the "us" there are the people that were alive with Jesus. Yes, that's true. The idea is that these are eyewitnesses, followers, family members, friends. They're eyewitnesses. This isn't myth. This is fact. I want you to think about this. Real membranes in real ears vibrated while he spoke to them. Real eyes focused in on him as he walked this Earth. Some people got so close to him that they were able to what?

They were able to touch him. He was real. He was around them. He lived with people. He ate with them. Which means this, he wasn't too good for them, right? He didn't hide from them in disgust because of all that he is in compared to all that they are. He wasn't so above them that he stayed away from them, or was only around them reluctantly, "Oh, the prostitutes, the tax collectors, all those sinners. Oh, yuck, okay. Oh, I got to do it."

He didn't seclude himself in a castle, or a fortress, or a temple, or some other hard-to-find place where he's not going to be around anybody. He didn't send his associates like, "I'm staying here. You guys go take care of all that stuff." He didn't have bodyguards keeping everybody away from him. And remember when his disciples tried to do that? Remember all those kids were trying to come to him, they were like, "Get those kids out of here." What did he do? He rebukes them. "Take those kids. Hey, they can come to me." Turns out he said, "Anybody can come to me."

Listen, do you know what that means for you? A God who dwells among us means he can be with you too, that he's not too good for you. Jesus destroys the need for a temple because he takes its place, and if you're a follower of Jesus, you are a temple where he lives. It's not just that he is with us. It's that he is what? He's in us. You can't get more close, more intimate, more dwelling with than that. He's that close to us. He doesn't hide from you in disgust. He's not so far above you that he stays away from you, or only interacts with you reluctantly, "Oh man, they are praying again. Okay, whatever. Got to go interact."

Yeah, I know it's invisible, but he hasn't secluded himself from you. He's made it so that through his word and through his people, and again, as you his temple, he is dwelling with you too. I'm not sure we're ever really going to reach the depths of the amount of mercy and grace Jesus shows sinners just by being with them. And see, only grace would drive him to do that, because everything else about him, his holiness, his goodness, his truth, his justice, all of that should drive him away and keep him away from every single one of us for all of eternity. And yet, anybody, everybody, no matter what you've done, no matter what's been done to you, no matter who you are, anybody can come to him, right? On the cross, arms open wide, scream what? "Come to me. Come to me."

And maybe you need to do that for the first time. Maybe you did that once, but you need to come to him again, because you've been going the other direction. Either way, we know this. When we come to him, he will accept us. He'll never throw us away. Maybe other people did, but he will never throw us away, and we know that why? Because he dwelled with us. He lived among people like us.

I'm not sure that can get any better, but let's see what else the text has for us. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only son from the father." As eyewitness as John is saying, like the tabernacle after the Exodus, which housed the glory of God, John is saying the glory of God walked among us when Jesus was here. Glory in the Bible refers to God's weightiness, his God-ness. Kids would call it his swag, just his awesomeness, his otherness, that it makes him God, which means it separates him from everything else. He is glorious compared to everything else and everyone else, ever.

So when people see that, when people see God for all that he is, like many did in the Bible, what the text says is that they see his glory, a visible manifestation of what God is. Well, John is saying it became obvious to those who knew him, who followed him for two to three years, that Jesus is the very presence of God himself among humanity. And they didn't just glance at the glory of Jesus. That word "seen" in verse 14 is the same word that we get our word "theater" from, so they watched him. They contemplated. They scrutinized, and they did so long enough and intensely enough, so much so that they could become impressed. This idea here is they were gazing at Jesus with admiration.

And at the end of it all, it says after everything we saw, it was clear to us that he is, in the words of the text, "The only son from the father." Translation, "He is no ordinary person. He is the only son, the unique, the one-of-a-kind son of God. He's incomparable, unparalleled, the only person in his class, because no one and nothing is like him." Again, why? In context, because he is the God man.

But the idea is this. Christian, you are a child of God by grace. Jesus is the son of God by nature. You become a child of God, because that's not what you were before. He is now and has always been divine. He is what the father is. That's why he is the son of God, and being from the father, in the text says, means that not only is he what God is, but he is on a mission here from God. God sent him here with an assignment, and that's what we're going to see in the rest of John.

So again, the glory of God is on display for all to see when Jesus is here. We see God clearly, accurately, when we see Christ. In Jesus, people saw the greatness, the grandeur, the glory of God, because he is the one-of-a-kind God man. And the keyword in the text, clearly, it's repeated twice, the keyword in this phrase is the word "glory." So let's take that and summarize it with the word **"admiration."** **"Admiration."**

Let me ask you. If you've been here for maybe... Maybe this is the first time you've been in this series, or maybe you've been here for some or all of it or watched some of it. Let me ask you, as we've just lasered in on Christ, has your admiration for him gone up at all? I know mine has. Every day of the week, I have my prayer list, and because love is in all 27 books of the Bible, when I pray for myself as a Christian, I pray, "Give me more, more love, more love for my neighbors, more love for Christians, more love for non-Christians," and I go on, but every Thursday, my prayer is, "Give me more love for Jesus," and I recognize I have to pray that, because my flesh, that leftover sin tendency in me, pushes against it, right? And it wants to take other things and put that in his place, and move him down, and move that up, and I hate it.

So I pray, "God, give me more love for Christ," and to be honest, personally, I want to go through John, personally, because I just want to see him every week. I want to meditate on him, think about him. Unlike his followers there, verse 14, I don't get to gaze at him personally, but I can gaze at him through the truth of the word. But I want to investigate and contemplate. I don't want to just glance, so that we can all, together, with the goal that we would all, together, admire him, so that we can behold his glory. And when we behold his glory, when we focus, when we investigate and contemplate all that Jesus is and all that he did, 2 Corinthians 3:18, "We are transformed into his image." We start to look like him. Like I said earlier, we'll become like Jesus the more we behold his goodness and his greatness in the Bible.

So are we beholding Jesus, or are we just kind of glancing at him a little bit? See, many people glance at Jesus, they kind of give him the wink and the gun, "You're awesome," but then they move on quickly to lesser things. Few will slow their minds down and calm their hearts down long enough to just sit and go, "I just read about him healing a blind man. That is unbelievable." You know? Like, we go through, but we don't slow down enough to go, "No, this is actually incredible." It's like my kids. I took them to the Grand Canyon, Colin and Ava, back in January. You know, one of the greatest wonders of the world, and one of the most visited national parks? So I thought they'd be excited, and they were totally excited until they saw it.

They saw it, they thought it was cool, and then they wanted McDonald's. I've had so many parents say, "My kids did the same thing," right? I wanted to sit there and stare, and take pictures, and pictures of them, and read all of the little signs that are there, and just try to take it all in, and they were like, "Dad, I saw it. I'm good. Can I get a Happy Meal? Let's go." And I wonder when it comes to Jesus, are we like my kids at the Grand Canyon? "Yeah, he's great. I'm good. Can I get... I got to get onto something else now."

It would be so tragic to see Jesus and not admire him, and that's going to be the problem in the book of John. We get front-loaded with all of this truth about Jesus, so that we read the rest of the book in light of what we see in verses one to 18, and when we do that, we're going to see all of these people that look at Jesus and completely miss it, and you look at that [inaudible 00:18:53] go, "No, like I would give anything to be there, to be that person in that moment," and then they just moved by, "Got to get onto something else more important."

For the rest of our lives, no matter how long we live, let's do what we can to really see him, to investigate, contemplate, meditate, to behold his glory, so that our admiration for him grows, to do it enough to where we can actually sense my admiration for him is growing, my love for him is growing, because I've slowed down, and I've sought to behold his glory. Because listen, there are treasures to be discovered about his life before he even came here. There are treasures to marvel at about his life and his teachings. There are infinite treasures to be enjoyed about his death as a stand-in, as a substitute, for sinners. There are innumerable treasures to think about concerning his resurrection, his return to heaven, his present heavenly ministry, his second coming, and how all of these things can actually truly impact, and change, and transform our actual lives.

That's not just pie in the sky. That's real. It's not just something that happened when you were saved and then it doesn't happen anymore. It happens even now, if we'll just slow our hearts down and see him like it says there, enough to admire him, to see his glory. I don't know about... I so badly want to love him more. I hate that part in me that tries to pull me back from that, and in moments like this, when I get to spend a significant amount of time in this text, I go, "God, I

want to love you more, Jesus. I want to live for you more. I want to live like you more." And I realize and I know that only happens as my admiration for him goes up, and that only happens as I know him truly in his word.

Now, if admiration for Jesus has not been the effect so far in your heart, maybe this last phrase will do the job. End of verse 14, Jesus, the word, the only son of God, the glory of God, he is full of grace and truth. He's admirable, he is wonderful, because he is full of grace and truth. Do you remember, Moses said to God, "God, I want to see your glory"? Exodus 33:18, and God says to him, "You can't see me, because if you do, you won't survive. Seeing me face to face, that is going to kill you." But God says, "I'll protect you. I'm going to let you see the edges of me," so the next day, Exodus 34:5, it says, "The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with Moses there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.'"

I'm not sure if you caught it, but Moses wanted to see God's glory, and what God did was he preached. He wants to see God's glory, and God's response to him is, "I'm going to tell you who I am." So the glory of God is that he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and listen, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Those last words, "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness," are incredibly similar to our three words, "full of grace and truth." This, yet again, is another proclamation that Jesus is God, just as an aside. Only God is full of grace and truth. He is abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. So only God is those things. God is described as those things. Jesus is described as those things. Therefore, Jesus is God.

But, these two traits, these two aspects of Jesus' character, one author said, paints him in the most charming and appealing way possible. We'll summarize this last phrase, verse 14, with the word **"attraction."** **"Attraction."** And then when I use that word, I don't mean that God... that we are somehow attractive to God, okay? There is nothing in us that attracts human beings to a holy God. He doesn't have anything to do with us because of who we are. I'm going to say that again. God doesn't have anything to do with us because of who we are. God interacts with us, God works with us, God works in us, God reveals his son to us and saves us because of who he is.

And using the word "attraction," I'm not saying that God is attractive to us, that Jesus is attractive to us in our rebellion. He's not. We're repulsed by him. We don't want anything to do with him. We want him to stay away from us. "I don't like this. I can't believe this. This is such an assault on my self-esteem and self-worth. How can I be a sinner? Whatever, like I don't care." But what I mean when I use this word "attraction" is that Jesus is everything we need, and when we see ourselves truly in the light of all that God is, who Jesus is attracts us to him.

What do I mean by that? When we see ourselves in light of our sin, when the weight of our sin and who we really are, when that crushes us, we recognize that what we need is not to do a whole bunch of good things to try to outweigh our bad things or show God, "I'm really a nice person. I know I yelled at that person and cut them off and got them fired, but I know I'm really a nice person." We recognize like, "I've got no hope. Like, he saw that. He was there. He had a front row seat for that. I'm in trouble." And we recognize, "No, no. What I need is grace. I need God to be gracious. And not just partially gracious or a little gracious. What I really need is a God who is full of grace." And look at the text. That's what we get in Jesus.

And in a world full of lies, and spin, and deception, in a world where you don't know who you can trust, in a world where you don't know who's going to remain trustworthy, the truth as well

as the trustworthiness that you and I need, not just a little bit of truth, full of truth, and again, what do we have in Jesus? One who is full of truth. Put those things together. Jesus gives us a grace. He bestows on us a compassion that is real, that is true, that we can depend on, and the only reason we know anything about the truth, the only reason we know anything about the one who is called the truth, is because he's gracious to us.

And this is what John and the others who were with Jesus saw in him. It's what you see throughout his life. He speaks the truth. He does the truth. He proclaims the truth for all to hear, and you recognize in that moment, "Wait a minute. Many of the people in that crowd hate him, or they're going to reject him. Some may even show up in Jerusalem and scream for him to be killed." And you realize, "Wait a minute. Him even doing that in their midst, preaching the truth, is a gift of his grace to them."

His grace is based on the truth about us. He knows the truth about each and every one of us, and in light of that truth, he chooses to be kind. He chooses to be merciful to us. He chooses to be gracious, again not because of who we are, but because of who he is. Do you see this in him, a savior who's marked by truth, by reality, by being fixed, and immovable, and unchanging, dependable? Do you see that he's a savior marked by grace? Again, he knows the truth about us, and because he knows the truth about us, grace is what we need and grace is what we get. As a God of truth, as a God who demands truth, we need Jesus to be a God of grace, and that's what he is.

I did a funeral yesterday, and the person who went to be with Jesus, when she was first interacting with her now husband, when he was boyfriend, she had this thing that she wanted to tell him, but she was worried that if she told him about this disease that she had, that he would reject her, if he knew the truth about her. Jesus knows the truth about us. He knows it all. He knows who we really are, and all of our sin, all of our failure, all the darkest recesses of our hearts, the darkest parts of our lives that nobody else knows. He knows. He knows the truth. He is the truth, and in light of that truth about us, he gives us grace. He doesn't treat us like we deserve. He gives mercy.

So as I paint that picture of Jesus for you, isn't that attractive? Don't you go, "I want to move closer to that. I want to move in. However far away, like I want to get closer to that. That's pulling me in, grace and truth, a God who is both truthful and gracious, a God who is real, who shows mercy to the real you, not the you that we pretend to be on social media, but the real us"? Jesus is full of grace and truth for people who are full of lies and sin.

And as a God of grace and a God of truth, as followers of Jesus, we should be people of grace and truth. We shouldn't treat people according to how they treat us, right? We should treat people how? According to how God treats us, right? He's a God who's merciful, and compassionate, and forgiving, and gracious, and so should we. And as a God of truth, we should be people who love the truth and live the truth, who don't have secret lives of sin, who people can depend on, who people know that when we say we'll do something, we'll do it. We can be trusted, because we're trustworthy. Why? Because we have a Jesus who is full of truth.

I want to end in Revelation 21, so turn there. Revelation 21, second to last chapter in the Bible. And as I do that, I want to go through the Bible quickly and wrap our minds around this idea of God dwelling with us. In the Garden, Adam and Eve walked with God. He was among them, but they lost that when they sinned, and the whole human race at the time, Adam and Eve, they lost that for the whole human race, which includes us. Intimacy with him lost. Separation from God

is now how we enter the world. In the tabernacle, and then later in the temple, God gets closer. So he says he's going to dwell with his people, and he did, but there was still a separation, right? There are all those fences, and then there's that room that only one person, the priest, high priest can go in once a year, and that's all. He can be in God's presence. Everybody else shut out. You can see it. You know that's where God is, but you can't go there. But he's kind of in your midst.

Then, Isaiah 7:14, there's the proclamation that the Messiah will be Emanuel, which means "God with us," and Jesus fulfills that. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. He dies, and that separation from humanity is ripped to shreds, right? That curtain is torn in two, screaming. There's no access to God, that people can come into the presence of God because of the cross of Jesus. As his body was being ripped to shreds on the cross, that curtain was ripped to shreds. So what the Old Testament is hinting at, and Isaiah prophesied, that God would dwell with his people. Jesus fulfills, but there's more coming.

All of that was for this, Revelation 21:1, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new Earth. For the first heaven and the first Earth," that's this world, "has passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold the...'" What?

"Dwelling place of God is..." What? With man. "He will..." What's that word?

"Dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be..." What?

"With them as their God." There's a day coming, Christian, when you will exist in the very presence of God, and there will be no temple, there will be no fences. There will be nothing separating you from him. That will be your very existence, will be in his presence, and it's because of that that verse four is true. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And I wonder, does he do that, like does he just do this and then millions of people's crying eyes just kind of wipe away? Or does he actually come over and wipe tears from people's eyes, because we're with him?

"Death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And yes, the death, and the sin, and the pain, the mourning, the crying, yeah, all of that is no more, but the former things also include, in context, the separation of the visible from the invisible, the separation of sinful people from the holy God. That former thing, that we exist in right now, that'll be gone too.

Christian, that's your future. That's where you're headed. All the things that cause the mourning, and the crying, and the pain, all of that now, all of that will pass away one day. And how do we know that? How do we know that's what's coming? Because Jesus dwelling among us 2,000 years ago is the guarantee that those who trust in him now will be with him on that day and will be with him forever and ever and ever. Never forget, that's your true home, and you're just passing through this life. Let's pray.

Jesus, it takes the tongues of millions of angels to really adequately explain these truths. And unfortunately, we get mine. I am so grateful, so grateful that there is another preacher in this room who has access to every heart, and who can take very human, very frail words, and he can make those words change reality for us. So my prayer is that's what's been happening to everybody here and everybody watching, that you would draw us closer to you, as I've sought to lift you up in our time together. For some in this room, it's for the first time. They've been pushing against you, maybe some watching, pushing against you, running from you. They have a

picture of you that is so opposite of full of grace and truth. Help them to see just how amazing, and wonderful, and kind, and gracious you are. And for the rest of us, who know that, may you help us to just come back and keep drinking, and drinking, and drinking this truth, so that we would actually see our lives. We would actually see our thoughts and our hearts actually admiring you more. We could see actually growth of our love for you because of these truths that we heard today. Please do that for me. I want that so badly for my own heart. And please do that for all of us, at the sound of my voice, because it would be so, so good for us. It'd be so good for us. Do it please, for the glory of your great and wonderful name. Amen.