

Why Did God Become Man?

Bill Deacon was a winch-man for a Scottish rescue helicopter...

Bill Deacon went down into danger and death to rescue these desperate crew members.

The Christmas story includes a descent into danger and death. It's the story of God becoming man. The infinite God took on finite humanity. More specifically, the eternal Son of God – the second person of the Trinity – became the man, Jesus of Nazareth. But have you ever wondered why? Why did God become man? Hebrews chapter 2 provides four answers to this question.

First, we learn that **God became man to be your champion.**

Hebrews 2:10, "For it was fitting that he...should make the **founder of our salvation** perfect through suffering.

Hebrews 2:10 calls Jesus the "founder of our salvation." The word "founder" can also be translated "champion." A "champion" is a person who fights or competes on behalf of someone else.

The Bible is a tale of two champions. Our first champion, Adam, failed... The Bible sums it up like this, "In Adam all die (1 Cor. 15:22)."

But God promised a new champion. A second Adam. But we needed a champion free from the sin virus. So, God became man to be our new champion... As our new champion, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has consequences for all who are connected to him by faith. The Bible sums it up like this, "In [Christ] Jesus shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22)."

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We understand connection to a champion... Seahawks... 2013 season was different. For the first time, the Seahawks were NFL champions. Their championship was my championship. And I wasn't alone. Over 700,000 people turned out for the victory parade in downtown Seattle. If anyone asked, every Seahawks fan would say, "We won. We're champions."

In the end, we either have Adam or Jesus for our champion...

You and I don't just need to behave a little better. We need to be connected to a new champion. With Jesus as your champion, what is true of him becomes true of you... The Christian faith says, "don't look in, look up." Look up to Jesus, your champion.

Why did God become man? God became man **to be your champion**. Why else did God become man? **To deliver you from death**.

Hebrews 2:14-15, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

God delivers you from death by his own death. Since God can't die, he had to become a man... Because of his sacrificial death, you are rinsed clean. All your sin – past, present, and future – is forgiven. So, the devil can no longer legitimately accuse you.

That means we no longer have to fear death. The "fear of death" is not primarily the fear of dying. That's understandable. No, the "fear of death" refers to a fear of punishment.

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Reminds me of a recent conversation. My 92-year old friend shared that thinking about her death reminded her of many regrets... But God became man to deliver her from death by his death. And so, "There is therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1)." There is no fear of judgment.

In his song, Fourth of July, Sufjan Stevens ends with the repeated lyric, "We're all gonna die." Sex used to be topic we avoided, now it's death... So, don't avoid death, let it help you listen to God. God became man to deliver you from death.

So far we've learned that God became man **to be your champion** and **to deliver you from death**. Hebrews 2 also tells us that God became man **to rescue you from wrath**.

Hebrews 2:17, "Therefore, He had to be like His brothers in every way, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

The word "propitiation" means to divert wrath. In the OT, the high priest offered an animal sacrifice for the people and sprinkled its blood before God... This enabled the people to be in God's presence.

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah tells us that these animal sacrifices pointed toward the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
(Isaiah 53:5-6)

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2000 years ago, when Jesus was crucified on a Roman cross, God's wrath was diverted from us to his Son. God accepts the death of Jesus in our place. This enables us to be in God's presence.

Some are offended by this idea of God's wrath... It's because we love that we're angry at these things. It's because God loves that he's angry at injustice and evil.

God became man to rescue you from wrath. He places the wrath we deserve on his Son. And not only that, he takes the righteousness Jesus earned and places it on you and me. We get his righteousness. He gets our wrath. So, not only are we rescued from wrath, we now have God's favor!

This means you can rest...

We've been asking the question, Why did God become man? So far we've learned that God became man **to be your champion, to deliver you from death, and to rescue you from wrath.** Finally, God became man **to help you in trials.**

Hebrews 2:18, "For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

The word translated "tempted" can mean "trials," or "temptations," or "tests." Jesus descended into the danger and death of our world and experienced all these...

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And he is a present help. Jesus isn't a dead teacher, but a resurrected reality. A reality that we can each know and experience... So, through the indwelling Spirit, Jesus is able to help us in trials, temptations, and tests.

And Jesus is eager to help. The word translated "help" carries the idea of a helper who runs toward you. Jesus isn't the kind of helper who sighs, "not again." No, he delights to help. He moves toward you in your suffering – and your sin. God became man to help you in trials.

2020 is a year most of us want to forget... So, no matter what 2021 brings, we know we are never alone.

Christmas is the celebration that God became man. But why? We've seen that God became man **to be your champion, to deliver you from death, to rescue you from wrath**, and **to be your help in trials**. That's a gift worth celebrating!

But here's the question, "**how does all that Jesus accomplished apply to you?**" All that Jesus accomplished applies to you, when you receive him by faith. Faith is actively receiving Jesus. By faith, you become connected – or united – to him. And so, all that he has accomplished applies to you.

Many of you will be offered a Christmas present tomorrow morning...

The whole of the Christian life is receiving and resting in Jesus. So on this Christmas Eve 2020, I invite each of you to receive and rest in Jesus. Whether for the first time or the five-hundredth time, receive and rest in Jesus your champion, your deliverer, your rescuer, and your helper.