

sermon study summary

GOD WHO? SERIES Part 1 – God Who Descends

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For the next few weekends, till the 1st of January 2023, we're teaching a Christmas series titled 'God Who?' and learning about attributes or characteristics of God – revealed to us in Christ. We want to be sure we learn about God, straight from Scripture, so that we do NOT get the wrong idea of who He is!

Jesus came to earth to reveal God to us, and through Christ's life we learn about God's love, His plan for our salvation, His power through miracles to humankind, etc. We also see God's almighty power through the multitude of miracles Jesus performed, including bring adults and children back to life. However, despite everything we have learned about God, we still find it confusing, at times, to understand exactly who Jesus really is, and grasp the fact that baby Jesus, Jesus walking on water, and Jesus hanging on the Cross, are all the same Jesus who existed with God before He came down to earth.

Philippians 2 is a remarkable passage of scripture where we learn that: Jesus is God, with all authority and power! Yet He humbled Himself, and because He loved us so much, He came down to earth, became a man, and obeyed the Father implicitly, even to death on a cross, as remediation for the sins of the whole world! It reveals the truth of the incarnation, and when Jesus was raised back to life, His name was exalted above every other name. Jesus was and is God, He always existed and is the creator, life-giver and the very Word of God. When Jesus left His heavenly throne, He voluntarily left behind His divine attributes and most of His powers, and became a part of His own creation, becoming human in almost every way.

Eugene Peterson says that Jesus became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood. He didn't come to earth as an adult Middle Eastern man; instead He was conceived, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in a woman's womb – making Him both divine and human, and true humanity: Like us He learned to walk, talk, read, write, count and bled when He fell. He confined Himself, while on earth, to human capability, knowledge, understanding and emotions, and was an ordinary Middle Eastern man.

The Bible tells us of the many riches we receive because Jesus is God! He lives in our hearts, and those of us who believe in Him should be the most optimistic, empowered, courageous, hope-filled, extravagant loving, joy-filled people in the world! If, however, we are pessimistic/reluctant about giving our lives to Him we need to realize that Our Lord and Saviour is committed to us. He is our helper, and we are never forgotten or alone because we are 'yoked' with Him and have nothing to fear.

Romans 8 tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Jesus is with us and within us and died so we might have eternal life with Him in heaven. Because Christ was human, He understands and can relate to our every need since He has undergone more pain, hatred and suffered death on the cross – just because He loves us. We can speak with Him about anything!

Our culture says there are two principles/forces at work in the world – good and evil – and that they are locked in battle. However, this is not a Biblical principle because God has already defeated Satan. Jesus chose to come down to earth to save us through His death and resurrection; He is our all-powerful, omnipotent God with a mission and plan, and the end of the story of this world, that He created, has already been written. All evil and suffering will end, peace will reign, and we will have eternal life with our Lord and Saviour – Jesus Christ!

There is no middle-ground with Christ; we are either for Him or against Him – and we have been given the free will to make our choices. What choice will you make?

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What was your earliest impression of what God is like? Has that impression changed?
2. What is the biggest example of humility that you have seen in someone?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read *Philippians 2:3-11*, *John 1:1-5*

3. What did Jesus leave when He came down to live among us? What attributes did He take on that were not true before He became human?
4. What were His greatest acts of humility? What were the results?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. Read Matthew 11:28; Hebrews 4:15-16, 13:5b. What difference does it make knowing Jesus experienced the same kinds of struggles as you?
6. If every Christ-follower had the same mindset or attitude as Christ Jesus (*Philippians 2:5*), how could it change our relationships and how we deal with society? What are you willing to give up to demonstrate your love for others?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

If Jesus were only human, you could be neutral about Him. Because Jesus is God, there is no middle ground. You are either for Him or against Him. You either run from Him or you run to Him. You either resist Him or you want to love and follow Him. Where do you stand? What do you most need to put into action in the week ahead?

The Word (NIV)

Philippians 2:3-11 ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Matthew 11:28 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Hebrews 4:15-16 ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 13:5b

“Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you.”

Romans 8:14-39

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