

# Born To Die

## What Was God Thinking?!

December 24, 2022

*Tonight we're going inside the mind of Christ!*

But first, a Christmas question: **What did God come down to do?** Why would our Omnipotent Creator, take the plunge into a tiny, powerless, pool of amniotic fluid? Christmas is usually all about the *birth*; but we're going all the way back to the beginning of Jesus' earthly journey, **when the Bread of Life was about to become a bun in the oven!** Cuz, you gotta remember ...



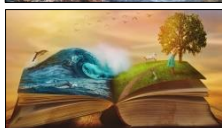
He was in the *form of God* ... but made himself *nothing*, [which must've taken some *doing!*] taking the *form of a servant*, [and then] being born in the *likeness of men*. And [then] being found in *human form*, He *humbled* himself by becoming *obedient* to ... *death* on a cross. – Philippians 2:6-8 ESV



**Which required Almighty God to empty himself and separate himself, so He could humble himself, and serve himself, like a Father and Son.** Like when you *dream*; and you're both the *resting creator* as well as the *very image of yourself* in your creation. And the writer of *Hebrews* says that:



[God's] *Son* is ... the very image of His substance – Hebrews 1:3 WEB



So, what was the *All-knowing thinking* when He "made himself nothing"?! *Know what?* That writer of *Hebrews* found it, in *Psalms 40*. We won't find it on *Christmas cards*, or in *pageants* or *programs* or *plays*. *Know why?* It's **dark**. **It's about sacrifice and death.** Which is about as *enticing* as coal in your *stocking*. Not very *Christmassy* ... or rather, *Clausemassy*. Cuz *frankly*, they don't come any more *Christmassy!* But we'll *build* to it.



[For] When the *time* had *fully come*, [for the OT law to be fulfilled] God sent His Son, born of a *woman*, born under *law*, to *redeem* those under *law* – Galatians 4:4-5 NIV

Cuz the OT law required them to *sacrifice innocent animals* for *sin*, **to make visible the invisible cost of wickedness, as an illustration and a foreshadow, not a solution.** So when it had served its *purpose*, **God himself made himself into a sinless sacrifice to satisfy the justice that reality itself demands,** teeing up the most *significant Christmas Scripture* we never hear at *Christmas*:

For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image [that's God's Son] ... can never with *these same sacrifices* ... make those who approach *perfect*. ... For it is *not possible* that the blood of *bulls* and *goats* could *take away sins*. Therefore, when He came into the world, [When? Months before the manger. When He emptied himself, and separated himself] He said: "*Sacrifice and offering* You did not *desire*, but a body You have *prepared for Me*. ... Behold, I have come— in the *volume of the book* it is written of *Me*— to do Your will, O God." ... [And] By that will we *have been sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. – Hebrews 10:1-10 NKJ

I love how the Lord refers to the Bible as “the book”. And think how *excited* that *writer* was when he found that in *Psalm 40!* Cuz it shows how *everything* was *building* to Jesus saying, “This’ll be the body that’ll carry Me to the cross for an end-all sacrifice for sin.” And *then* something *akin* to, “Let’s do this!” And *then* He made himself like *us*.



[In fact] In *all things* He *had* to be *made* like His brethren ... to make *propitiation* [a *suitable* and *acceptable sacrifice*] for [all] the *sins* of [all] the *people*. [For *all time*] – Hebrews 2:17 NKJ



Cuz *perfect justice* knows a *good deal* when it sees it. **How many crushed Rolex watches, broken beyond repair, would you trade for one in mint condition?** All of ‘em! Which is why **a perfect, sinless, Son of Man had more trade-in value than every broken human together.** Ever.

For we do *not* have a High Priest who *cannot sympathize* with *our weaknesses*, [writes the *writer of Hebrews*] but One who *has been tempted* in *all things* as *we are*, [i.e. He didn’t *cheat*] yet [was] without sin. [i.e. He didn’t *fail*, as *we do*] – Hebrews 4:15 NAS

Which is *why* He *had* to be “made like [us]” “in all things”. Originally, **“God made man in His own likeness”** (Gen 1:26 NLV) but then we *sinned*. So **our Creator “made himself ... in [ours]”**. (Phil 2:7)

Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in *their humanity* so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – Hebrews 2:14 NIV



**The crucifixion isn’t just part of the Christmas story, it’s the reason for it.** The “reason for the season” is His *birth*; but **the reason for His birth is His death.** He was quite clear about it, saying:



“The Son of Man did *not come* to *be served*, but to serve, and [not to *take*, but] to give His life” – Matthew 20:28 NIV



“I lay down My life—only to take it *up* again. ... I have *authority* to lay it *down* and *authority* to take it *up* again.” – John 10:17-18 NIV



Cuz the story doesn’t *end* with the *sacrifice*. Jesus was sent to conquer death itself. Which He *did*. But *that’s* the *Easter* story. **Jesus came to the manger to get to the cross – to surrender His sinless human self to save all sinners of all sin for all time.** And *this* we *do* find on *Christmas cards*, and in *pageants* and *programs* and *plays*. Because, *Joseph* was *commanded* to:

Give Him the name *Jesus*, because He will save His people from their sins. ... and *they* will call Him *Immanuel* (which means *God with us*). – Matthew 1:21-23 NIV

**Nativity scenes should be lit in the light of a cross.** Cuz **that’s why God came down.** But, is it just me, or does that standard-issue nativity star *look* like a *cross* with the end of a manger on it? So, **now we know what was on God’s mind** the *moment* just before He dove in: **You.** But if you know much about Him, you probably could’ve *guessed that*. So let’s give *ourselves away*, in His honor, and *live* in a way that says, “We’re part of His *body!*” **What do you say? Let’s do this!**