

# God Manifested in the Flesh

by Rolfe Barnard

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the mystery of godliness, which is the incarnation of God in human flesh, and the implications of Christ's ascension and exaltation for believers.*

**Duration:** 35:37

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 3:14

**Topics:** "Incarnation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the role of Jesus Christ as the comforter and savior. He highlights how Jesus wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments by nailing them to the cross. The preacher also emphasizes the mystery of our religion, stating that God became a man in the form of Jesus. He further explains that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, as stated in 1 Timothy 3:15. Overall, the sermon focuses on the gospel message and the significance of Jesus Christ in our faith.

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## Transcript

I wanted to talk to you a little while then. I'm going to start behind me and work towards the front and suggest to you that the whole gospel is encompassed here in the 3rd chapter, 1st Timothy. You got it? I wouldn't mind if you'd pay attention and follow me in the scripture tonight.

And many times I'll give you time to turn to them. Here in the 14th verse of the 3rd chapter, 1st Timothy, I open the scripture. These things write I unto thee, Paul's been writing to this young evangelist, Timothy, hoping to come unto thee shortly.

But if I tarry long, I've been writing these things to you that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And then the next verse tells us what the truth is, that the church of the living God is the pillar and ground up. And here's the whole thing comprehended in the 16th verse.

Here in the King James Version, I read it first. And without controversy, nobody would argue about this, Paul said, great is the mystery of godliness. And here is the mystery of godliness.

God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit. Keep in mind now, God's the subject of all of this. God was first manifest in flesh.

God was justified in the spirit. God was seen of angels. God was preached unto the Gentiles.

God believed on in the world. And God received up in the glory. Of course, the expression received up in the glory, that's the ascension of our Lord.

I wanted, you can get a little of it, to read in three other versions this 16th verse. You keep your Bible open, if you will. Here in the version that Brother Brown read from a while ago, in Philip's translation in the New Testament, this 16th verse is described in more modern language.

No one can deny that this religion of ours is a tremendous mystery. Resting as it does on the water, praise God. He's the foundation, isn't he? He's the pillar, the ground, is that right? He is the truth.

Our brother Heasley magnified that to us the other Sunday. He is the truth. Then in truth, except in him.

No one can deny that this religion of ours is a tremendous mystery. Resting, it sinks her forth, as it does on the one who showed himself as a human being. You don't believe that, and I don't either, but the New Testament says that God became a man.

You don't believe that, do you? You just can't believe that, can you? We don't no more believe that no more. He is some sort of a something, but he wasn't a man. But he was.

And that's the reason oftentimes I tell you, it wouldn't be awful if you were a man, a member of the human race, either male or female, and you go to hell in spite of the fact that God went to the trouble of becoming a man, just like you are, so he could get to where you are and do for you what you need. Brother, there ain't no excuse the last one of you got for going to hell. That's the most tremendous thing that ever happened.

Now, brother, I couldn't have thought that up, and I couldn't explain to you in a million years, but that's the whole point of it. Great is the mystery of our religion, resting as it does on the one who is the one God, who showed himself as a human being. And there's some people who lived on this earth, and they wrote it down so I can read about it.

They said they had on him, and they touched him. He was a man. He got hungry.

He got thirsty and had to have a drink. He got tired and had to rest. We don't believe this.

He didn't know everything. He said he didn't. He was a man.

He was a man. Now, isn't that a mystery? Isn't that a mystery? The heathen can take Christmas and raise hell all they want to, but you listen to me, Christian, that's the beginning of the visit of God Almighty and the flesh to this whole earth, and it's high and holy and sacred. And that baby was God, and yet he was man.

That's the mystery. You'll never have the slightest idea what salvation is unless you remember that it is man that did the sinning, and therefore it's man that's got to make things right. And the only way that even God could save you, Richard Carter, you had to become a man in order to do it.

So that a man, a man could atone for his sins. Now, let's read this again. No one can deny that this religion of ours is a tremendous mystery, resting as it does on the one who showed himself as a human being and met as such every demand of the spirit in the sight of angels as well as of men.

Then after his restoration to the heaven from whence he came, he's been proclaimed among men of different nationalities and believed in in all parts of the world. Glory to God. And then Berkeley translation, this same verse.

And confessedly, the hidden truth of godliness is great, who was revealed in the flesh and vindicated by the spirit, seen by angels, heralded among Gentiles, believed them by the world, and taken up in glory. And then the amplified version reads like this. And great and important and weighty, we confess, is the hidden truth, the mystic secret of godliness.

He, God, was made visible in human flesh, justified and vindicated in the Holy Spirit. He, God, was seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory. That's the story of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the gospel. That's the gospel. I wanted just to lay a little foundation tonight.

Next Lord's night, the Lord willing, I want to go through some of the teaching of the Apostle Paul and get some of the glory that's in the word of God on this subject. And him who is the subject, he is the one who ascended. Now, the reason that next Sunday night I'm going to start with Paul is that in the writing of the New Testament, we all know.

Maybe I better take a moment on this. I wouldn't insult your intelligence by calling your attention, except some of you babies. We are likely to get the impression, since we open the Bible, that Matthew is the first book in the New Testament that is written first.

Oh, no. The book, all of the epistles of Paul were written before any of the gospels. So if you want to get to the earliest writings that God inspired, and we don't believe this, you know.

We've been taught what we believe about the Bible. But these people were men who wrote the Bible. God bossed it with men who wrote the Bible.

And Paul is the first one to talk about the glory and what results to God's people from Christ having been raised, not from the dead simply, but ascended to glory. You see, there's a vast difference between the Lord's resurrection and the Lord's ascension. The fact that Christ was raised from the dead proves that death has been conquered and that I've been raised from the dead.

But the fact that he ascended to glory proves not only I'll get out of a grave, but I'm going to land in glory. Isn't that wonderful? And so this Christ, who was born as a baby and wound up sitting at the right hand of God, he's won my faith since. If I get to heaven, it'll be because he was born as a baby and lived a perfect life and died on the cross and was raised and got back to glory.

There to appear, the Scripture says, before the face of God, poor old Ralph Barney. Praise to the Lord. Now, salvation's in here.

I labor that a little bit because I don't want you to go to hell believing these facts. So I believe in the virgin birth of Christ. Ray's held that old brother Tribble out here.

He says he don't. Well, you could believe that and still not have him. You can believe that, but it's not salvation isn't in a that.

Salvation isn't in the virgin birth. Salvation isn't in the life of Christ. Salvation isn't in the death of Christ.

Salvation isn't in the resurrection of Christ. Salvation isn't in the intercession of Christ. Salvation's in Christ! Christ! Christ! Christ! I want your faith to be in a person.

Not a person who didn't die, but a person who did die. Not a person who didn't rise from the dead, but the person who did rise from the dead. And a person who's now in glory.

there is a pledge that you will be there if you join the hymn. Now in the Old Testament, there are two men, of course, in the Old Testament that were ascended to glory without having to die. One of them is Enoch and the other is Elijah.

Now I'm not going to take the time tonight to go into those scriptures, but in the fifth chapter of Genesis, you have a story of Enoch. And I seize upon the word that the scripture says, God took him. God took him.

And then in the second book of Kings, and what chapter is it, the second chapter, I think it is, in the first verse, you have the story of the ascension. He's taken up in chariots. He just went from right here up to there.

Well, praise God, I am through some time. I'm going to come out of that grave and I'm going to clear it up. And the same word there is take.

Now, in the Old Testament, listen to me, in the Old Testament, nobody believed in resurrection or ascension. When a man died in the Old Testament, he went to Sheol, and as far as I knew, that's the last I hear. You remember the controversy when the Lord was sharing the flesh between the Lord and the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Now, the Sadducees were the fundamentalists. They believed the Old Testament book by book and kiver by kiver. They did not believe, what is the scripture say, in a resurrection.

But the Pharisees were modernists. They believed in a resurrection. They were liberals.

That's right. The old Sadducees, they took everything in the Old Testament, and they took right down the line, letter by letter. And there wasn't any ascension.

There wasn't any resurrection, according to them. They didn't believe there was a resurrection. And so here's Eden, and the sense is that he was a good man.

Watch it now. That he was so good in the sight of God that he didn't deserve to die, but he did deserve to be taken to glory. And the same is true of Elijah.

He was such a good man. God looked at him and said, he deserves a better fate than to go to Sheol. And God took him.

And thus they both were clear types of him, who in 2 Corinthians 5 and 21, him who what? Knew no sin. Bless God, he is ascended too. God took him back to glory.

Praise the Lord. See? Now that's a beautiful thing. If I can be joined to Christ, then God reckons me as to be too good just to go down to the pill.

And one day, as I'm joined to him, praise the Lord, I'm going to be taken to be with him. That's right. Now, while the Sadducees didn't see it, because they were literalists, the Pharisees did, there are four Psalms.

As far as I know, there are only four Psalms and all of the teaching, as far as I'm able to get, about the ascension of the Lord, it's prefigured, is given in these four Psalms. And I wanted just to read some excerpts from them tonight. The first one is Psalm 68, if you'd like to turn to it.

And here in Psalm 68, I'm going to be reading from the authorized version. You can follow it in whatever version you have. Here in the 17th verse and the 18th verse of the 68th Psalm, we've got a marvelous prefigurement or a picture of the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we'll learn in this discussion how the Apostle Paul changes the language here in verse 18, when he comes to write. Here in verse 17, we've got a picture of the convoy of angels that escorted the Lord Jesus Christ, when according to Paul, him who was manifested in the flesh and was justified in the spirit and was seen by angels and was preached among the nations and was believed in in the world and was received unto God. And the psalmist gets a picture of a convoy of angels that are going along escorting the Lord Jesus Christ as he goes from this earth and goes up to be with the Father.

Here in the chariots of God of 20,000, even thousands of angels, the Lord is among them as in Sinai in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high. Thou hast led captivity captive.

Thou hast received gifts from men. For men, ye father rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. And then in Psalms 47, there is a reference to the resurrection of our blessed Lord.

In verses one and two, we read first, Psalms 47. Oh, clap your hands, all ye people, shout unto God with a voice of triumph, for the Lord most high is terrible. He is a great king over all the earth.

Then verse five, God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God. Sing praises.

Sing praises unto our king. Sing praises for God is the king of all the earth. Sing ye praises with understanding.

God reigneth over the heathen. God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham, for the shields of the earth belong unto God.

He is greatly exalted. Now, you know, that's about the Lord. Well, the New Testament writers quote from these scriptures.

I don't think I called your attention to that. I don't know how much reference there is to the ascension of the Lord in the Old Testament. I simply know, as far as scholars have been able to find out, the only reference is to the going up into heaven itself of the Lord Jesus, as found in these four Psalms.

In Psalms 24, we've got a blessed picture of how the Lord was received when he got there. And this is blessed because he went up there for me. He went up there for me, and I sure am interested in how he is received when he got there.

In verse 7 we read, Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Well, who is this King of Glory? Well, he's the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? He's the Lord of Hosts. He's the King of Glory. And the Old and New Testament writers quote that psalm several times.

And then in Psalms 110, right quickly, we have another beautiful reference to the ascension of our blessed Lord. Beginning at verse 4 of Psalms 110, we read this expression, Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Jehovah at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

Here's a picture of the enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of God, not only as king, but as priest. Not just some old flesh and blood man. Our enemy is the power of the devil himself.

And watch it now. We wrestle not against man, but we have to do in the spiritual realm with powers and principalities under the control of Satan. Demonic power.

Devilish power. Satanically inspired power. But praise God, watch it now, although this old world is under the prince of the powers of the air, and the devil is the god of this world, and we have to struggle with him.

I've heard the scripture like Ephesians, and I read first in the first chapter, verses 20 and 21, and then I want to hook it up to one verse, and just joy in it just a moment. We are wrestling. While we can get everybody in Winston-Salem to God for tomorrow night, what for the power of the devil? He's the one that gives us a rat in the mat.

He's where we're the center of our fight. Now watch it. Praise God.

Look at it. Ephesians 1 and 20, which he wrote in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his right hand in the heavenly places. That's his ascension.

Far above all principality, bless God. He got more power than the devil, and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. When God raised Christ, he made him sit there in his right hand, above, over.

Praise God. He got the whole world in his feet. And we see not, Paul said, all things yet subject to it, but he's working at it.

He's working at it. He's working at it. And he included us in this battle.

For in Ephesians 2 and 6, I read that not only did God raise him, set him above every power and dominion and principality and might, but it says he has raised us up together with him. Wish we could believe that, wish we could enter into that. I tell you, we've got no right to let the devil defeat us.

We've got no right to let anything defeat us. He's raised him up, and he's raised us to sit together with him. In the mind of God, there's a man lower than I'm there too.

And he raised him to exercise lordship and sovereignty and rule over this whole universe and bring it unto subjection unto him. He says we are to share in that. And I get this, brother, even though I can't believe much of it, brother, victory is ours.

Victory is ours. Victory is ours. I give my two arms.

If I knew how to teach and preach, it's also teach and preach to myself so it could change out to you. Let me just give this brief word and I'm through. I used to be associated, I'm not very proud of it, with Dr. J. Frank Norris.

And wherever he went, he built another new church, built a church, took a little run down dead church in Detroit, kept his church in Fort Worth. In three, four years' time, he had thousands of people joined. Didn't mean much to join, but the way he did this, his workers went out and they had the greatest unschooled class in the world.

They had the greatest preacher in the world. They had the greatest church in the world. They had the greatest services last Sunday they'd ever had, next Sunday they'd have the greatest one they'd ever had.

And they didn't know how to use morals at most. They never used the word better, they said best. And I don't much like that bragging on a man.

But oh, my friend, this town got plenty of church membership. This town got plenty of religion. I'll tell you what's the fact.

This town don't care much about the wonders of Christ, the power of Christ, the might of Christ, the place of Christ. Oh, if we brag on him, if some of it entered into us, oh, my soul, we don't try to get somebody to quit one place and join another. Oh, the folks in the factories and towns, their conception of Jesus Christ is mighty low.

Paul said, brother, he's been raised. He's had over everything. He's put up there to start the job of bringing this whole world of the subjection to himself.

It's time we quit apologizing for believing in Christ. Brother, he's the one God's turned this outfit over to. It's time we begin to magnify him.

He's going to win, brother. He's going to win. He's going to win.

He's already dealt the death blow to the devil and his crowd. Praise God. And the old snake's tail's still wiggling.

But victory is already certain. And victory's certain for those who share in his victory. For he hath raised us to sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Where is this one who was a baby? Where is this one who wound up on a cross? Where is this one who was seen of many people? Where is this one? He's been exalted. Where is he? He's been exalted. He's been taken up.

God took Enos. God took Elijah. God took Christ.

He exalted him. And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, now the exalted Redeemer hath done what? Hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. First thing he did, he went up there and received it from the Father.

He sent the Holy Ghost. Well, and in that preaching, look there in chapter 3, at verse 13, The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up. And you denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

And bless God, God, that he exalted him. He glorified him. You crippled him.

You denied him. You crucified him. But God's exalted him.

And then in Acts 4 and 11, Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name unto heaven given among men, whereby ye must be saved. He's talking about this ascended Lord. Now just one other scripture, just to set the pattern, what I hope to go in next Lord's Day night with you.

I want to read Paul's, just one statement from Paul. Here in the second chapter of Colossians, King let me have Phillips there, at the second chapter. I want to read it at verse 14 and 15, King James, thank you, sir.

Here in the authorized version, we read, talking about the work of our Lord, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly. How'd he do it? He drug them with it, bless God.

Triumphing over them in it. Woo! Yes, my Lord, going back to glory. He got the devil in his hand and all his imps in this.

He just, he said, I got you. And he, how, how, while he was down here, what'd he do? He became the conqueror. And there he is, ascending, dragging in his chariot wheels, the infernal host of hell, and openly showing them to God's holy angels as vanquished prisoners.

What does, let me read this. Christ has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments, which always humbled our heads, and has completely annulled it by nailing it over his own head on the cross. And then having drawn the steed of all the powers raged against us, he exposed them, shattered, empty, and defeated in his final glorious trial.

But hallelujah, what a scene. The longer I live, the more I'm coming to see, I don't understand nothing about the gospel, but I want to rejoice in him. Oh, he's worthy, only he is worthy.

He took the sting out of everything that's against us, praise God. Yes, sir, he did. I wish I could believe that, don't you? Amen.

Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious. See the man of sorrows now from the fight. Return victorious.

Every knee to him shall bow. Crown him, crown him. Crown for come the victor's crown.

Crown the Savior. Angels crown him. Rich the trophies Jesus brings.

In the seat of power, enthroned him. While the vault of heaven rings, crown him. Crown him.

Crown the Savior. King of kings. We'll be interested, as I've called your attention time after time, when my Lord went back, raised him from the dead, that's fine.

But here he came down from heaven to do something, and he had to go back and make a report. And when he got back after having purified us of our sins, he said, and the Father is satisfied with his blessed Son. As far as I know, saving faith is just a dissatisfaction with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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