

Why a Man Had to Do It

He didn't send a representative.

When the problem was at its worst — when the circuit was severed, when humanity was spiritually dead, when the dominion God had given to His image-bearers was being used as a weapon against His own Kingdom — God did not dispatch an angel. He did not send a messenger. He did not issue a decree from a distance.

He came Himself.

The one who spoke the universe into existence, who holds every atom in place, who inhabits eternity — stepped into time. The Creator entered creation. The one who needs nothing took on need. The one who cannot die became mortal.

The Word became flesh.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” — John 1:1, 14 ESV

God became a man. He cried as a baby. He scraped His knees as a child. He got hungry. He got tired. He felt grief so deeply that He wept at a tomb. He was betrayed by a friend. He was beaten. He was mocked. He was executed.

He didn't observe any of this from a distance. He lived it. From the inside.

Why? Why would the God of the universe do any of that? Why not simply declare the problem solved and be done with it?

Because the problem could not be solved that way. And understanding why changes everything about how you see what Jesus actually did.

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WHAT GOD GAVE, ONLY MAN COULD RETURN

Go back to the beginning.

When God created mankind, He did something He had not done for any other part of creation. He delegated authority. He placed His image-bearers on the earth and gave them dominion — governmental, real, lasting authority over creation. He said: the earth is yours to tend, to rule, to steward under My leadership. It was a gift. And it was binding.

“The heavens are the Lord's heavens, but the earth he has given to the children of man.” — Psalm 115:16 ESV

God gave the earth to the children of man. Not to angels. Not to spiritual powers. To man. And what God gives, He does not take back — Scripture is clear on this. His gifts and His calling are irrevocable.

When Adam surrendered that authority through sin — when he obeyed another voice, opened a door, handed ground to the enemy through agreement and disobedience — the dominion mandate did not disappear. God did not revoke it. What changed is who was exercising it and in whose interest.

The authority that God gave to humanity was now being used against God's Kingdom. Nations fell under the influence of spiritual powers that had gained access through human agreement. The enemy wasn't operating without permission — he was operating with it. Permission that came from the very beings God had placed in charge of the earth.

Here is the problem this created: if God gave dominion to mankind, then the reclaiming of that dominion had to come through mankind. Not because God was unable to act — but because He had established a legal order, and He does not violate His own word. What a man lost, a man had to recover. What was surrendered through human agreement had to be reclaimed through human obedience.

An angel couldn't do it. A heavenly decree couldn't do it. God acting purely as God couldn't do it — not within the order He Himself had established.

A man had to do it, and for a sinful man it was impossible, so we were out. Here is why. Genesis 5:3 says that Adam fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image. Notice what changed. In Genesis 1, man was made in the image of God. By Genesis 5, Adam is fathering children in his own image — the fallen, broken, disconnected-from-God version of the image. The corrupt nature passed down. Every human being born through the natural line of Adam inherited that nature. Not the original design, but the distorted version of it — still bearing the image of God in some sense, but broken, severed from the source.

This is why Jesus had to be born of a virgin. This wasn't a small detail. It was the only way it could work. To enter humanity without inheriting the fallen nature passed through Adam's line, He could not have a human father. The Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary so that the one being born would be fully human — able to stand where Adam stood, face what Adam faced, fight what Adam failed to fight — without the inherited corruption that disqualified every other man from the task. He was the Last Adam, but He entered the human race through a door that bypassed what the first Adam had passed down.

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THE LAST ADAM

Paul understood this more clearly than almost anyone. He writes about it directly in his first letter to the Corinthians:

“So it is written: ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.” — 1 Corinthians 15:45 NIV

The Last Adam. That is who Jesus is in this moment — not just the Son of God, not just the Savior, not just the Teacher. The Last Adam. The one who came to do what the first Adam failed to do. To stand where Adam fell. To obey where Adam disobeyed. To reclaim what Adam surrendered.

The first Adam was given authority and handed it over through sin. The Last Adam took on the full weight of human weakness, lived the life no human had ever lived — completely surrendered to the Father, completely obedient, completely without sin — and through that obedience, reclaimed everything the first Adam lost.

This is why the temptation in the wilderness matters so much. Satan came to Jesus with the same basic strategy he used in the garden — question God’s word, offer an alternative, appeal to legitimate need. And Jesus, as a man, hungry and tired and alone in the desert, answered every single temptation with the Word of God hidden in His heart.

Where Adam failed, the Last Adam stood. Not as God overriding the problem from above. As a man, from within it, fighting the same battle with the same weapons available to every human being — and winning.

“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.” — Hebrews 4:15 NIV

He faced everything we face. He felt what we feel. He was tested the way we are tested. And He did not sin. Which means the argument “I couldn’t help it” loses its ground — not as condemnation, but as encouragement. Because the one who now intercedes for us knows from the inside what the fight feels like. And He won it.



WHAT THE CROSS ACTUALLY SETTLED

The cross is often understood primarily as forgiveness — and it is that. But it is also much more.

Think about the hands.

The hands that healed the sick. That touched the ones nobody else would touch — the lepers, the outcasts, the people society had declared unclean and untouchable. The hands that reached across every social boundary and brought dignity to the ones the world had discarded. Those hands never once committed an act of evil. Never. Not a single moment in their entire existence.

And those were the hands that were nailed to a cross.

Think about the feet.

The feet that walked toward people's real needs. That went to the grieving, the sick, the forgotten, the outcasts. Feet that never once rushed toward evil — that never carried their owner to a place of sin or selfishness or harm. Every step those feet ever took was toward someone who needed what only He could give.

And those were the feet that were pierced.

It was our sin that put Him there. Our opened doors. Our surrendered ground. Our agreements with darkness across generations. He who had done nothing wrong bore everything that we had done wrong. And in the middle of all of it — with every nail, with every wound, with every moment of agony that the hands and feet of a perfectly innocent man endured — what was being said was not condemnation.

I love you.

That is what the cross was saying. In the most costly, most permanent, most undeniable way possible — I love you. Not from a distance. Not through a representative. Personally. Physically. At the cost of everything.

When Jesus went to the cross, He was not simply absorbing punishment. He was destroying the legal claim the enemy held over humanity. Every sin ever committed, every door ever opened, every agreement ever made with darkness — He took all of it. The debt was paid. The record was wiped. The legal ground the enemy stood on was removed.

“He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” — Colossians 2:13–15 NIV

Disarmed. The powers and authorities — the spiritual forces that had accumulated claim over humanity through generations of sin and idolatry and agreement with darkness — were disarmed. Not weakened. Not inconvenienced. Disarmed. Their legal standing was removed at the cross.

And then came the resurrection.

Because the cross without the resurrection is a tragedy. The resurrection is the proof that what Jesus did actually worked. That death — the ultimate consequence of the severed circuit, the final word of the enemy — could not hold the Last Adam. He walked out of the tomb. And after He did, He said something that should have shaken the foundations of everything:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” — Matthew 28:18 NIV

All of it. Every bit of what Adam surrendered. Every claim the enemy had accumulated across every nation and every generation — reclaimed. By a man. Legally. Permanently. And then He shared it with His Church.

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WHY THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Understanding why a man had to do it changes how you see yourself.

You are not just someone who has been forgiven. You are someone who has been placed back into a restored order — one where the authority God always intended for humanity has been reclaimed and given to those who are in Christ. You are not a sinner on probation. You are a co-heir with the one who won everything back.

The enemy knows this. It is the thing he works hardest to make sure you never fully grasp. Because a believer who understands what was legally reclaimed at the cross and resurrection — and who walks in that understanding — is not someone who can be easily moved.

But a believer who thinks salvation was just about going to heaven when they die? That person is leaving most of what Jesus purchased completely unclaimed.

Jesus didn't become a man just so you could be forgiven. He became a man so that everything the first Adam lost could be restored to the sons and daughters of God. The dominion. The relationship. The identity. The authority. The family.

All of it.

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” — 1 John 3:8 ESV

He came to destroy the works of the devil. Not manage them. Not limit them. Destroy them. And He did — as a man, from within the human experience, through a life of perfect obedience and a death that paid every debt and a resurrection that proved death itself had no final word.

He didn't send a representative.

He came Himself.

And because He came as one of us, everything He won belongs to us.