

The Carpenter's Son



God's Disguises (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing with you insights into the spiritual life that God has given me through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

The theme of my talks this week is "God's Disguises." At first it seems strange that God should use disguises at all. But, in my talk yesterday I gave three reasons why God does often approach us in a form that disguises his divinity. I said there are three things that God does not want to do when he comes to us. First, he does not want to overawe us with his power. Second, he does not want to entice us with his blessings. Third, he does not want to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity. He does not come to us as just one piece in a jig saw puzzle labeled God that has to be put in its right place. These are the three ways of approach that God disdains. So, in order to avoid approaching us in this way, very often he approaches us in some kind of unexpected disguise. So that only if we're looking for God himself and not for the attributes or the blessings or the provisions, only with that attitude will we discern who he is through his disguise.

What then does God really want. He wants that we desire God for himself, apart from his power or blessings or other benefits. That's why he comes in disguise.

Today I'm going to speak about the most important and marvelous disguise in which God ever came upon the stage of human history, the disguise of the carpenter's son known in history as Jesus of Nazareth. Now, God warned Israel in advance through prophecy that he was going to come to them in a strange way. In Isaiah 9:6 the prophet declares this:

> "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on his shoulders; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

There we have a child who's going to become some tremendous things. "Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of peace." Strange disguise for the mighty God to come as a little child.

The scripture is so accurate. It says two things about this child. He says that he'll be born as a child but given as a son. Jesus did not become the Son of God through incarnation.

Eternally he was the Son of God. He was the Son who was given but through incarnation he became the little child. You see, his eternal nature is described elsewhere. For instance in Hebrews 1:1–3:

> "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

This tells us seven marvelous facts about the Son of God. First, he's heir of all. The entire creation, the entire universe is going to find its consummation and fulfillment in him. Secondly, through him God made the universe. He is the creative source of all. Thirdly, he is the radiance of God's glory. He's the expression of that which we cannot see of the invisible God. Fourthly, he's the exact representation of God's being. He exactly represents to us in form that we can appreciate that which is the exact nature of the eternal, invisible God. Fifthly, he sustains all by his word. He's the upholding force in the entire universe. Sixthly, he provided purification for our sins through his death on the cross. And seventhly, having done that, he sat down at God's right hand. He took the place of all authority and glory in the universe. That's who Jesus really is. But, in history he came to us in that strange disguise, the little baby that grew up to be the carpenter's son.

God warned Israel elsewhere that they were in danger of missing him. For instance, that well known passage in Isaiah 53:1–5 which describes the man of sorrows, Jesus. This passage begins with a warning of unbelief.

> "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ['The arm of the Lord' is none other than Jesus. Then it describes him in his human form.] He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. [Israel was dry ground when Jesus came—in spiritual dearth and need.] He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. [You see, God wasn't to be desired for outward appearance.] He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Picture that mutilated, mangled, beaten form on the cross, dying there, gasping out his life in agony, pouring out his life blood. Wasn't that a strange disguise for almighty God? The scripture goes on to say in verse 6:

> "We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned in his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

That was the greatest and strangest of all God's disguises.

Let's look at four things that Jesus was not. He was not from the ruling priestly caste. He was not highly educated. He was not a political leader. He was not a military commander. All the things that the world would have looked for that would have caused the world to admire him and respect and receive him—he didn't have any of them. Why? Because God didn't want to be received on that basis. He wanted only to be received by those whose hearts were lowly and contrite, those who were longing for God for himself and not for what he had to offer.

True, Jesus was from the kingly tribe, the only tribe from which a king could ever come to the Jewish people, the tribe of Judah. But, its glory had long been eclipsed. And when he came he was just a "root out of a dry ground." That's how God came to humanity nearly 2,000 years ago. How few have penetrated that disguise.

When God came to earth in the disguise of Jesus the carpenter's son who ended his life on a cross, there were two opposite reactions. One dismissed him with contempt as the carpenter's son. The other received him with worship as the Son of God. Let's look at these two opposite reactions for a moment. The first reaction, the reaction of rejection and contempt is described in Matthew 13:54–57. Appropriately enough, in a certain way, it describes the response to Jesus in his own home town of Nazareth. This is what it says:

> "Coming to his home town, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? they asked. Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and

> aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things? And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, 'Only in his home town and in his own house is a prophet without honor.'"

See, they couldn't penetrate the disguise. They'd known him too long. In a certain sense, they'd been too familiar with him. There is a saying that familiarity breeds contempt, and I think partly that was true of Jesus. So, the people, in a sense, who'd been closest to him, failed to penetrate that disguise. He had to go elsewhere to be received.

Let's look now at the opposite reaction. Those who received him, penetrated the disguise and realized who he really was. Matthew 16:13–17:

> "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the son of man is?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ [or the Messiah], the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but my Father in heaven.'"

There was a man who received the revelation of the Father concerning Jesus. A man who looked below the superficialities, the things that weren't really important, and by the grace of God and the Spirit of God he discerned Jesus: the true, eternal Son of God, the Messiah, the one whom Israel had been waiting for but whom they failed to recognize. And you see, we still have the same alternatives today. We can react in one way or the other, just as they could. Listen to these words in John 1, speaking of Jesus.

> "He came to his own, and those who were his own did not receive him. But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God even to those who believe in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (vv. 11–13)

What are you going to do about Jesus? Are you going to reject him? Are you going to receive him? Are you going to look beneath the disguise and see the eternal Son of God, worship him and welcome him? I pray that you may do this.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time telling you more about God's disguises.

Radio Program

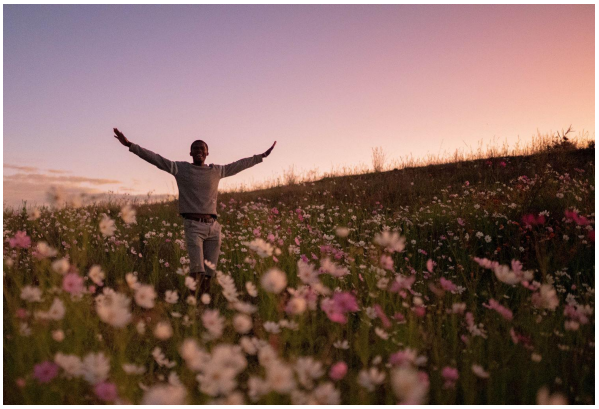
Transcript: TS-R045-102-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



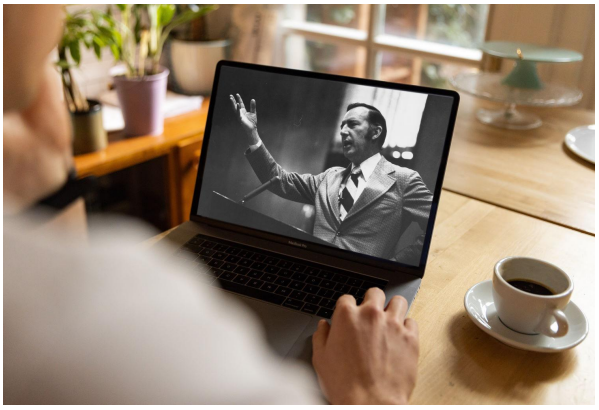
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries