

outstanding preacher in our denomination say, "Sure, Jesus knew the Old Testament, He WROTE IT." He did, but the memory of that was left behind when He became fully human. Jesus knew His Bible because He STUDIED IT.

His real humanity ***was purposeful.*** Hebrews 3 says, "He had to be made just like His brothers in every way", so He could be our "High priest" and our "sacrifice". Ephesians 5 says, He offered Himself for us, "as a sweet smelling offering and sacrifice to God."

Suffering For Us As a sacrifice, He suffers ***for us.*** To be true to His moral nature, God has to punish wrongdoing. Any earthly Judge that lets a bad criminal go free is as guilty as the one he frees.

God, in Jesus, never once gave in to temptation and sinned (2 Corinthians 5:21). Not deserving punishment, He took our punishment for us (Romans 3:20-27). God didn't punish Jesus ***instead*** of us, ***He*** punished ***Himself.***

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world back to Himself." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Suffering with Us As a High Priest, God in Jesus, suffers with us and sympathizes with us in our struggles. Sympathy means, "Your pain in my heart." The Omniscient God of this universe could have known, by simple choice, what it means to be human; but He does not take this cheap and easy route. He becomes one of us, feeling our pain, shedding our tears and joining our struggles.

When teenage girls, Corrie ten Boom and her sister Betsy were stripped naked before male guards in a Nazi death camp; Betsy saw the rage on Corrie's face and whispered, "Remember Corrie, they stripped our Lord of His clothes too."

We all wonder why God allows so much suffering in this world. We will never fully know why, but one thing is: when we look at the physical and shame filled horrors of crucifixion and the untold spiritual horrors of "being made

to be sin" (2 Corinthians 5); we know God has not asked us to go through something He is not willing to go through.

Paul Harvey tells the story of a man who never went to church, not even at Christmas. On one Christmas Eve his family was in church singing Carols and he was at home sitting by the fire.

Suddenly, he heard a "thud" and then another. Some birds on a power line were in the freezing cold and they were flying towards his fire and breaking their necks on the picture window. He put on his coat, went and opened the barn door and poured some seed on the floor. Yelling and waving his arms, he tried to shoo them into the barn. It was all to no avail. They were frightened of him and would fly a little way off the line and some headed for his fire and were killed or crippled.

He thought to himself, "I wish I could show them I am trying to help them?" Unable to come up with anything, he knew the only way would be for him to become a bird. He saw the lights of the little church where his family was. Realizing the true meaning of Christmas, he looked up and said, "God, now I know why You had to come down here and become one of us to show us you love us."

God becoming a man, will always be special to me. When I wanted to get my life right, I remembered Jesus forgiving the people who stripped, crucified and mocked Him (Luke 23:34). I looked up and said, "God; if You will forgive them, I believe You will forgive me." I accepted His forgiveness and I still have it.

We cannot explain how God became a human being, but we can experience it when we give Jesus our sins to forgive and our life to change. When we do, we can sing:

I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe
Could in the God-head be.
I only know that little Child
Has brought God down to me.