

One Born Every Minute: Why is this baby so special?

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Preacher: Joe Hall

[0 : 00] Wonderful. Thank you, Hannah. And thank you all who have read, those who've led us in singing this morning, boys and girls, again, for your beautiful singing for us earlier on. And thank you all for being here. Once again, let me say, if you're here and this is your first time here, just how good it is to see you and how great and how delighted we are really to welcome you.

It's such a special time of year for us as a church family to really focus our hearts and worship Jesus for coming into the world. And we're so glad we get to share that with you. Whoever you are, maybe you came, you got an invitation in the community, maybe somebody asked you and invited you to come along today. It's wonderful that you can be with us because here's the thing, Christmas is for everyone. Christmas is for everyone. I meet lots of other mums and dads who, as they're getting ready for Christmas, tell me, well, Christmas is really all for the kids, isn't it? It's all about the children. Boys and girls, what do you think about that? Is Christmas all, is it all about you guys? No? It's for everyone, isn't it? Brilliant answer. It's for everyone. You know, I think it's rubbish, isn't it? Christmas is for the kids. You know, I think,

I know that Christmas is for everyone. If you are a human being, if you're a person in the world, Christmas is for you, young or old, working or parenting or studying or growing up or retired, whoever you are, Christmas is for you. And why is that true? Why do I think that?

Well, because at Christmas as Christians, we celebrate the Son of God becoming like us in every way, whoever we are. But it's especially good that you guys, boys and girls, that you're in with us this morning to help us really to think about that. Who do we celebrate coming at Christmas time? Jesus. Right. And how, how did Jesus come in the world? Yeah. Brilliant. Being born as a normal kid. Being born as a normal kid, right? Jesus didn't just one day appear, did he? Like one day he wasn't there. And the next day there was a man who said, let me introduce myself. I am Jesus. No, Jesus came into the world as a normal kid, like me and you, like everyone here. Okay. First of all, he was a baby in his mummy's tummy and then he was born and then he grew bigger and bigger. How old are some of you guys? I could probably guess, but I'm really bad guessing. Okay. How old are some of you guys? Six. Uh-huh. Five. Uh-huh. Eight. Okay. That's not, probably some of you are also five or six or eight or seven or nine and some other. How old are you,

[3 : 22] Anne? Sorry, I shouldn't ask. Look like you're about to answer. Okay. Well, here's the thing. Jesus, Jesus was six and he was five and he was eight. And before that he was zero. And before that he was in the bump waiting to be born. And so he came, didn't he? He was born the same way as me and you and as everyone here. So here's the question. Okay. The big question that I want us to think about today is this. If Jesus was born the same way that we are, well, what makes Jesus so special?

Why are we celebrating him this morning if he was born just like me and you? Well, I want to share three reasons. Okay. Jesus is special this morning. And the first reason that Jesus is so special is this because before he was in Mary's tummy. Okay. Where was Jesus? You guys know this? He was with God. Whereabouts? Where does God live? In heaven. Jesus was in heaven. And he wasn't just with God as a baby or a man. He was God. Okay. Jesus is the son of God. He came down from heaven to become the son also of a human mummy, Mary, which makes him completely one of a kind. Okay. There's never, ever, ever been someone who was both God and a human being. And that is why as Hannah just read for us, he was given a nickname. And the nickname was this, Emmanuel. Emmanuel. And as the verse that Hannah read tells us, Emmanuel means God with us. God with us. Now, I don't know if this statistic is completely true. I don't know if it's up to date even, but I'm sure lots of you, mums and dads, grannies and granddads could probably say it

along with me, that every minute of every hour of every day, a baby is born in Britain. Did you know that? Those of you who don't know, that's the first line in the TV show, One Born Every Minute. As real as reality TV gets, it shows where babies really come from. My wife is a doctor. And before our son was born, she sat me down and she said, you need to watch this. Okay. Now I'm a bit squeamish. I wanted to turn it off sometimes.

But it didn't take long before I wanted to keep watching. Because you kind of realize that even though babies are born like that everywhere, all the time, aren't they, that each and every one is so precious. Those babies mostly will be special to their parents. Their birthdays will be celebrated every year by their families and friends. But at Christmas, one baby and one birth is celebrated by billions of people all around the world. Needless to say, that birth wasn't filmed on camera. And yet, 2,000 years later, this baby and this birth is still recognized by around a third of the people on earth today as being completely one of a kind in human history. Because in this baby, Christians recognize that God came down to be with us. Which surely makes Jesus the one person we need to know, the one birth we need to celebrate. He could not be more special. Last week in church, we read the first part of that book called Hebrews that Cassia read for us this morning, where it tells us that Jesus is better than angels. Who is better than angels? What is better than an angel? Can you guys think?

God is better than angels. There's no one really, there's nothing better than angels but God. And the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is better than angels. So if Jesus is better too, he must be God himself. Jesus is better because Jesus is best. In Jesus, God came down to be with us. But while that does make Jesus incredibly special, there's no one like him. Well, one of the most special things about Jesus is this, that though he was God, he chose to become completely normal. Okay, though he was always the best and the highest and greatest, he came down and became the very same as us. So this is the second reason that he is so special. Now, how did Jesus become the same as us? You guys have already told us, haven't you? He was born just like any other kid. Now, I don't know if you guys are babies, are you?

[8 : 54] No. No, you're definitely not. You're definitely not babies. Okay, probably it was so long ago. Do you guys even remember what it was like to be a baby? Do you remember what? No, you don't.

You don't remember what that was like at all, do you? But maybe some of you guys, I know you have little brothers and sisters at home. And some of you know other babies. There's lots of babies in our church family, aren't there? So what are babies like? What sort of things do babies do? You think of some things? Let's have a phone.

They suck their thumbs. Uh-huh. They whine. They whine, yeah. They do. Any other, any other, what do babies do? What sorts of things do babies do?

Do you guys know? They cry. They cry. They do lots of crying, don't they? Absolutely. Any other things? Go on.

They sleep. They sleep. Sometimes they sleep. That's a mercy, isn't it? Yeah. Man. Well, sorry. They eat a lot, too. They do. They do. They do all these things. They eat a lot. They need to sleep a lot. They do a lot of growing. They suck their thumbs sometimes. They cry a lot.

[10 : 10] Boy, they cry a lot. So then, when Jesus was a baby, do you think that Jesus did all those things to you? What do you think? Did Jesus need to eat a lot? Yeah. Did he need to sleep a lot? Did he cry sometimes? Yeah, he did. Now, there's one Christmas carol that we've not sung this morning. Maybe some of you are thinking, are we going to sing this carol?

Okay. The BBC did a survey and found it was the UK's eighth favorite carol. Maybe it's in your top ten, too. It's away in a manger. And it's not bad, okay? But one thing that it gets wrong is the completely unrealistic way that it describes Jesus waking up. Okay.

The cattle are lowing. The baby awakes. The little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes? Are you kidding? I have a little boy at home, okay? And I know that that cannot be true. Because if Jesus became just like him, a real human baby, he definitely cried sometimes. In fact, he wailed, he screamed, he kept Mary and Joseph awake at night. Now, how can I say that about Jesus? Well, because while he was truly God, and while there's no wrong in him whatsoever, he became not just a little bit human, but fully, properly human. A human baby who got hungry and tired and cried. He needed a change. He needed a cuddle with his mum. That's what a human baby does. So, that's what Jesus did. And what a wonderful thing it is to think that God himself knows, then, just what it's like, just what a baby goes through, just what a baby needs, because he's been there and

done it himself in Jesus. But seriously, how far can we take this? How the same as us is Jesus? Well, here's another way he's the same as us. In the passage that Cassia read for us, in Hebrews, it says this, since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity.

[12 : 33] So, Jesus has a body like us, and all the bits of our bodies too, a body just like you guys and me. Now, we've got a book at home for our little boy that helps us to think a wee bit about this.

And I wonder if you guys can see this page. Okay, what parts of the body does Jesus have? Can you see? What parts of the body does Jesus have?

He has a body, yeah, a whole body. He has arms. Legs and head and feet. Hair as well, yeah? It makes it really easy, doesn't it? It points out the kind of things. But he has a whole body, doesn't he? He has hair. Does that mean that Jesus needed to have a haircut? Yeah.

Yeah. And did Jesus need sometimes to go to the doctor? Yeah. Did Jesus need to drink lots of water? Yeah.

[13 : 37] Yeah. Absolutely. Did he need to sleep? Yeah. He has a body like our bodies. But is that it? Okay, what about inside of Jesus?

What about his soul, his thoughts, and his feelings? Are they the same as us? Well, Hebrews tells us because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

So, did Jesus feel pain inside sometimes, like we feel pain inside? What do you guys think? You think so? Yeah.

Well, that verse tells us, doesn't it? He suffered when he was tempted. Okay, it was hard for him not to sin. In the same way that it's hard for us not to sin.

Jesus was also sad when he was left on his own. He was lonely. He got angry when things were not right. He cried when his friend died.

[14 : 41] Jesus became the same as us inside, in his heart, his soul, his feelings. The only difference is that he never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever sinned on the outside or on the inside.

He only had perfect feelings and thoughts and behaviors. But they were still our feelings. The same sadness. The same loneliness.

The same pain. The same happiness that we feel Jesus felt. How else is Jesus the same as us?

Well, we could go on and on, okay, through all the ways that Jesus is the same as us.

But Hebrews saves us time, that book of Hebrews. In fact, it says, for this reason, he had to be made like them, fully human in every way.

Every way. So there was no way that Jesus was not the same as us on the inside or on the outside. So then what's so special? Here's our big question again, isn't it?

[15 : 45] What's so special about him then? If he was so normal? Well, none of us get to choose to be born, do we?

Okay, put your hand up if you chose to be born. Good. No one. Right answer. But that's not the same with Jesus.

Jesus did have a choice. He was God in heaven. But when he chose, he chose to become normal like us. He chose to become properly human, born as a baby, so that he could be properly with us, God with us.

He could bring dead people back to life. Okay, that's a brilliant proof, isn't it? That he really was God with us. Absolutely, Tabitha. If I asked you guys, okay, if I asked any of the grown-ups here, would you want to go back to being a baby?

What would you say? Good idea? Bad idea. Going back to being a baby. You think it's a good idea. Why do you think that? I want to be a baby.

[16 : 57] You want to be a baby. You want to be a baby. Oh, okay. That wasn't what I was expecting. Anyone think it's a bad idea? Well, think about all the things that you wouldn't be able to do if you were a baby, huh?

You wouldn't be able to say very much. You wouldn't have many words. You could play a lot. You could play a lot. But, you know, a baby can't really do very much. Actually, a very little baby can't really move.

It takes a baby a long time to learn how to roll over even. Think how easy it is for you to roll over.

Okay, a baby couldn't even roll. He could just maybe wriggle his arms, okay, and make some crying noise.

But the baby can't say very much. It can't do very much. It has to be carried around everywhere. It can't go anywhere. So even though it might sound quite good to be a baby, I don't think that any of us really, if we chose, would choose to go back to being a baby like that, would we?

Think of all the things you couldn't do anymore. But now think, okay, if you asked God, okay, God, would you want to go and be a baby? What do you think God would say?

[18 : 05] You think he would say no? Why do you think that? Yeah, right. Well, God can do much more than a baby, can't he?

But here's the amazing thing at Christmas, that when God chose, he didn't say no. God actually said, yes. Yes, I'll come down and be born as a baby so that I can be perfectly with you by becoming like you in every way and living a life like your life.

That's what makes it so special that Jesus was so normal. See, the book of Hebrews told us before, Jesus is better than the angels. But the bit that Cassia read for us today says that when Jesus came, he was made lower than the angels for a little while.

He is the very, very best. He is God himself. But when he chose, he chose to let go of his glory, to come down from heaven, to become less, small, weak, to become the same as me and you, so that he could really be God with us.

How special is that? It means that God understands you. He, whoever you are, he understands you on the outside, your body.

[19 : 35] He understands you on the inside, all the thoughts and the feelings that you have. And we can share our whole lives with him because he listens, because he understands, because he has been there and done it.

He's lived a life like yours. He knows you through and through and you can share everything with him because God came down in Jesus to become the same as you.

But, and this is a big, huge but, okay, the only thing that he was exactly the same as us, the same as us in every way yet, as I said, he never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever sinned.

And that has to do with the very last reason that he is so special that I want us to think about this morning because Jesus became the same as us so that he could save us.

We thought a little bit about what God can do that a baby can't do. God can do everything a baby can't do very much. But what is one thing that human beings can do that God can't do?

[20 : 44] You guys have a thing? What do you reckon? Something that me and you, we can do that God can't do. What do you reckon? Sin? Absolutely. Aha, anything else?

He can't do what, sorry? He can't break a commandment. He can't sin, can he? What happens to us because we sin? God can't die, can he?

Can God die? He can't walk, he can't walk forever, because he can't do anything. Yeah, well, God can't die. His life goes on forever and ever. And we can die, can't we?

We do die. And why do we die? Well, sometimes because we get sick. Sometimes because accidents happen to us. Sometimes just because we grow old.

But the big reason, the big reason that we really die is because of our sin. God can't sin and he can't die, but we do sin and we do die.

[21 : 54] Well, we can live up in heaven. We're going to get there. How can we live up in heaven? We're going to see. But when the first people, okay, said no to God, and they said, we're not going to love you, we're not going to do you, what you say is good and right, they sinned against him.

And God said the punishment for that is that people had to die. Not straight away, but eventually their lives would come to an end. And that's still true for us today, that because we have sinned, we've pushed God away from us.

Well, God is unhappy with us and says we need to die. But here is the most special thing about Jesus, that the reason he came to be like us isn't just so that he could be with us, but so that he could die instead of us.

He became the same as us so that he could save us. Hebrews says, the children have flesh and blood and he too shared in their humanity so that, here is why he did that, by his death, he might break the power of him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives had been held in slavery by their fear of death.

It's as if we lived all our lives in prison and we were so afraid of what would come at the end of that. But Jesus came and he served our sentence for us.

[23 : 26] He took our place in prison. He took the punishment for our sins, dying in our place, so that we would never have to live in that prison of fear anymore, so that we would not have to face the punishment that our sins deserve, so that we would no longer be afraid of death because Jesus died instead of us.

Hebrews puts it another way, uses some longer words, maybe some of you grown-ups will be able to understand. It says, for this reason, so here's why, he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Okay, that just means Jesus died to pay the price for our sins, so that we could be right with God again through his death. That's why it's important Jesus didn't have any of his own sins to pay for. Okay, he didn't have to die or be punished, but he chose to be punished for our sins, so that we, by trusting in him, simply by trusting in him, wouldn't be punished and would not die, but that we would come and be part of God's family forever.

And so it's wonderful, then, that this is our family service. And why I'm so glad is to say that we can be here whoever we are today, wherever you come from, however you came here, because Christmas isn't just for families and for children, is it?

[25 : 11] Jesus was born so that whoever we are, we could be part of God's family through him. Hebrews says Jesus came to be part of the same family as us.

He became our brother so that through him we might become the sons and daughters of the living God. And instead of dying forever, we will live forever with God and his family if we put our faith in Jesus and his death to save us.

Jesus became the same as us so that he could save us. And so boys and girls and mums and dads, grannies and granddads, workers, students, whoever you are, I hope that helps you to see just how special Jesus is.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and the best possible day when it does come, the best time that you can have celebrating. And that is why I want to invite you then as you get ready to celebrate this year to get to know Jesus.

And when you know him, to put your trust in him. If you came with somebody today, maybe ask them to help you to get to know him.

[26 : 30] Or you can come and speak to me afterwards. I would love to chat about that with you. Because Jesus is really the most special person that we could ever know. And more importantly than that, he can save you.

He is a savior for us. He came to be like us in every way, God with us. And he did that so that he could take our place and take the punishment, the death we deserve, so that we could belong to God's family forever and live with him.

So let me invite you then to put your trust in him this Christmas. Come to be part of God's family. And as you celebrate this year, receive the most special gift of all this Christmas time.

We're going to sing in response to what we've heard, a song that really speaks of Jesus' humanity and how God sent him into the world to bring him glory and how his truth is spoken by even the littlest children.

So let's stand then as we sing from Psalm 8 together. there. There. There. Thank you.