



# **Jesus Journey: Shattering the Stained Glass Superhero and Discovering the Humanity of God**

*Trent Sheppard*

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Jesus was human, like you and me. If the gospel is true, he still is.

Christians worldwide believe that Jesus is God. But this belief wasn't the starting point for Jesus' earliest followers. While Jesus' humanity was a given for the disciples, his divinity was a truth they grew into believing—it was a journey of faith. As Christians today, we are also called into a faith journey—this time, to rediscover Jesus' humanity.

Yes, we believe that Jesus is God, but do we truly believe that Jesus is human? And if so, how does that transform our own experience of being human?

Through eye-opening yet down-to-earth reflections, *Jesus Journey* invites you to encounter Jesus again—as if for the first time—by experiencing his breathing, heart-beating, body-and-blood, crying-and-laughing humanity.

Join Bible teacher and storyteller Trent Sheppard as he shines new light on the vibrant humanity of the historical Jesus through an up-close look at Jesus' relationships with Mary and Joseph, with the God he called Abba, with his closest friends and followers, and how, ultimately, his crucifixion and resurrection finally and forever redefine what we mean by the word God. Come encounter the human who radically transforms our view of God.

Come encounter the God who forever changes what it means to be human.

## Jesus Journey: Shattering the Stained Glass Superhero and Discovering the Humanity of God Details

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# **From Reader Review Jesus Journey: Shattering the Stained Glass Superhero and Discovering the Humanity of God for online ebook**

**Julius McCarter says**

Trent Sheppard's *Jesus Journey: Shattering the Stained Glass Superhero and Discovering the Humanity of God* explores what it means to confess that God has come among us, as a human being, in Jesus. Sheppard looks at the relationship Jesus has with his family and his disciples, and at the relationship Jesus had with God the Father. Throughout the rest of the book, Sheppard goes through various gospel accounts on how Jesus related to people and situations in his humanity.

Where this book fails, I think, is that it doesn't go any further than reciting that basic tenet of the Christian faith: That God was in the human Jesus. While I think it's essential to understand what that claim means, it can't be made at the sacrifice of the first part -- that God was in Christ.

In the end, it's a disappointing little book. If you're looking for something along these lines, I'd recommend Karl Barth's *The Humanity of God* or Elton Trueblood's *The Humor of Christ*. Sheppard had given me such high hopes, only to fail to meet them at nearly every opportunity.

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Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from the publisher through the BookLook Bloggers book review bloggers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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**Nathan Albright says**

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by BookLook/Zondervan. All thoughts and opinions are my own.]

It is a measure of the excellence of this book that while I was reading it I was entirely unaware that this book was part of the subgenre of Christian literature known as the 40-day devotional [1]. To be sure, the chapters were short, in that the 40 chapters of this book make up only a bit more than 200 pages of writing, and one would have wished for a bit more length and detail in the material, but the chapters were sufficiently engaging, and I must have been sufficiently absent-minded while reading, that I viewed this book as a historical and theological work on Jesus Christ rather than a devotional, and there is little better praise I can give to such an "encounter" as this book than not to think of it as a devotional at all. Indeed, this is a work that seriously tackles the tendency within Christian circles to disregard the humanity of Jesus Christ and to neglect the inspirational value of what Jesus Christ's humanity has to say about our own, and has a great deal to say that is worthwhile.

After a humorous and somewhat poignant story where the writer was reminded that Jesus had an aunt just like most people do, the forty chapters of this book are divided into five sections with eight chapters apiece.

The first section looks at Jesus Christ in the context of his mother and stepfather, and the sensitivities that Jesus Christ likely gained as a result of his upbringing and the way his mother's virtue was continually under slanderous assault. The second section looks at Jesus' relationship while a human being with His heavenly Father. Then the author looks at Jesus with his friends--John the Baptist (his cousin, of course), Mary and Martha, the disciples, as well as general sense of humor in dealing with those around him. The third part of the book looks at the physicality of the blood, sweat, and tears shed by Jesus Christ during his life, before closing with a lengthy look at Jesus' humanity after resurrection. Throughout the author takes special care to remind the reader that the humanity of Jesus Christ has implications for believers in how they are to live lives and see Jesus Christ not merely as a remote sort of superhero but rather as someone we can model ourselves after in a great many practical concerns.

The author does not go as far as might be wished with this insight, though. The main flaws of this book relate to the unbiblical ideas the author has about the nature of God as well as the defective but traditional chronology he holds to concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These problems are related to the incomplete nature of the humanity that the author embraces. The author embraces the general humanity of Jesus Christ, his physicality, his love of humor, his enjoyment of food and the company of friends, and so on. However, the author does not appear to evince any interest in the humanity of Jesus Christ insofar as it relates to his Jewish background and the implications of his own example as a believer on our own beliefs and practices as contemporary believers. As the author perceptively notes, there are many mysteries and areas that we do not fully understand regarding Jesus Christ, but we should at least attempt to understand all that is possible and at least demonstrate a curiosity in the implications of Jesus' humanity on how we are to live our lives as we await His return and entrance into His family as spirit beings like the resurrected Christ.

[1] See, for example:

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2015...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2013...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2013...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2017...>

<https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2016...>

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## **Mary says**

### **Very good book on Jesus**

This book shows us how very human Jesus was and is. So He can relate to us and everything we experience. Yet he is God and because of Him we know how much God loves us and always has and that we have a relationship with God forever.

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## **Annette Vellenga says**

too many assumptions, not enough scripture, or missing the point of the passage. Can't truly recommend this book, though it might be useful in a group situation where you can really study the passages involved and talk about how you can learn more about Christ and how his humanity is a shining example.

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### **Vickie Hedgepeth says**

Trent gives us a rich glimpse into the life of my friend, Jesus. I am encouraged to see beyond the written word, to explore the life of Jesus from different perspectives. It encourages engagement with my spirit as well as my mind. This book is liberating to me. I find myself saying, "Yes! This is my friend, Jesus. He is funny. He has emotions. He is so real! And he is God!" There is such a connection that comes. I am so grateful for how Trent is introducing Jesus to the reader in a fresh, authentic way.

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### **Kimberly says**

I loved this book and if you my friend are agnostic or even an atheist this is a book you cannot ignore. Inspiring, challenging, affirming. I cannot find even one thing that I did not like about this book. It was especially a blessing to me to finish it as Holy Week begins. Perfect for Easter devotions. I will read this one again and again.

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### **Reg Rivett says**

Was Jesus 100% God, or 100% man? Or did he have a mixture of humanity and divinity, some 50-50 mix? Or 60-40?

This has been a question that has bothered Christians since the days of the Early Church, with Christians falling on different answers. For most Christians, the answer is usually heavy on the divinity, with humanity sprinkled in. Trent Sheppard disagrees. Jesus was not some mixture of divinity and humanity, Jesus was 100% and 100%. But as a reaction to most Christian's belief in Jesus' overbearing divinity, Jesus Journey comes to show us how human Jesus really was.

Created as a devotional for individuals or small groups, Sheppard aims to break down the idea that Jesus was some kind of "superman" or something very different from human. Jesus was human. He had to grow up, go to school and learn. He had a family. He worked, hard. He experienced fatigue and hunger. He may have experienced physical attraction.

While some of these ideas will take some time to work through or digest, Sheppard dives into Scripture to show that Jesus was indeed human, something that the Gospels clearly speak about. For those that do not see such things are worthy of examination, what Sheppard is doing with Jesus Journey is feeding people's faith in an Advocate that completely understands what we are going through.

While this is intended to be a "40-Day Encounter", you can power through it and still drink deeply of the great insights that Trent Sheppard has to share. The level of humanity that he brings to light is amazing. Even the simplest things "flesh" out who this Jesus was. In the Introduction, Sheppard shares how the humanity of Jesus changed his faith, and it started with the idea that Jesus had an aunt. It's something that most of us

know, but we don't think of Jesus asking his aunt if John the Baptist can come play, or something like that. But would be completely normal and realistic because Jesus was just as human as we are.

Jesus Journey is full of insights like that, going through the entire life of Jesus, hitting every major event that is recorded in the Gospels. While we often think of Jesus in terms of his divinity in all of his dealings, there was a very human man, with human emotions and understanding behind each miracle, each teaching, each time Jesus suffered. It is a lot to handle, making this a 40-day trip that much easy to work through. Too much change makes it easier to revoke, and the truth in Jesus Journey should not be revoked. Churches need to grab on to this.

While I enjoy Sheppard's book, there was something that happened when Jesus Journey transitioned toward the events of the Crucifixion that frustrated me. The book is about displaying the true humanity, how Jesus was 100% man while still being 100% divine. That stopped being explored when we start moving with Jesus towards Jerusalem and the Passion Week.

One particular chapter was about the Last Supper and Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Sheppard rightly points out that Judas would have been there for the washing of the feet, while Jesus fully understood what he was about to do, namely betray Him. The idea that Jesus, even as a man, stooped down to bless the man that would hand him over to destruction, is something that is rich for exploration about the human nature of Jesus. To have every fiber of your being screaming against your actions, to feel the fight between serving God and serving Himself would have been wonderful to see talked about. This emotion continues all the way to Gethsemane, but I feel that Sheppard missed something that people need to hear; that their Saviour knows the hurt, the grating feeling of doing good to people that will abuse that gift. Seeing that explored and put forward for readers to dwell on would have been a powerful thing.

Despite my frustration with how the last third of the book went, Jesus Journey does help shatter some of the "Stained Glass Superhero" imagery that we tend to cast onto Jesus. There were things about Jesus and his humanity that I had not considered or thought of in quite the same way before I read Sheppard's book. As a 40 day devotional, this is a great work to use and build upon for bible studies and small groups.

I give Trent Sheppard's Jesus Journey 3 out of 5 stars.

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## **Judith Noameshie says**

### **Loved this book!**

I was a certain person when I started this book. I became a different person by the time I finished this book. Though there are some theological differences with some views expressed in here, this book has helped come down from my religious uppity tower and be 'human'. Thank you Mr. Sheppard for this profoundly honest and deep book!

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## **Ian says**

For much of my life I think I believed that Jesus while on earth was some "superman", a super-human because he is God. And so relating to him wasn't so straightforward because of his divinity. However, in

recent years I've found my early beliefs to be flawed and have marvelled at Jesus' humanity. He isn't just our Saviour and Lord but also our example. He lived the human life that we live.

This marvellous book outlines how human Jesus really is and is an excellent resource to better understand his humanity. And, as Trent Sheppard outlines, it's important for us to really understand his humanity because it helps us to better understand him and ourselves.

I worked through the 40 chapters a day at a time using an email "devotional" of sorts written by a bunch of Trent's friends and colleagues who provided their own insights to each chapter. The book follows Jesus' life from beginning to end and shares tremendous and powerful insights in the humanity of Jesus helping make him more accessible.

I grew up not spending a lot of time with Jesus, but rather the Father and this gave me an unbalanced perspective on God. It's only in the last 10 years or so when I've come to know Jesus that my sense of understanding of who God is and who I am in God has come alive. When I meet someone who is cynical towards God I ask them the question: "Have you spent much time meeting Jesus?" and invariably the answer is "No."

As Sheppard quotes in the last chapter, "If God is like Jesus, God is worth believing in." (Anthony Burgess). We need more of Jesus, we need to better understand his humanity and in so doing we come to a stronger belief in God. Sheppard helps guide us through the life of Jesus to reveal how human he really is.

The last chapter is particularly powerful summing up the humanity of Jesus in relation to the Trinity. "The very being of God is relational: picture a vibrant, mere-ending, life-giving dance shared by the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. And the vital and glorious reason that you and I and the entire cosmos were created is so that we would enter that dance."

Sheppard highlights the relational aspect of God by revealing the humanity of Jesus. And he is God who wants an intimate relationship with us. And as Jesus demonstrated in his own life, we can have an interconnected and intimate union with God just like he did.

Highly recommended.

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## **Elliott says**

How often do we meditate on or even think about the humanity of Jesus? I think the reason why is churches focus so much on his divinity and are extremely uncomfortable confronting the humanity of Jesus. We preach the Christ not the man. In his book *Jesus Journey: Shattering the Glass Superhero and Discovering the Humanity of God*, Trent Sheppard does just that: examines the humanity of Jesus. And he does so in such a way that it makes the reader long to go back into their Bibles and see Jesus with new eyes and a fresh perspective.

So often we come to the scriptures with our preconceived ideas of God and Jesus, or our perceptions are shaped by Sunday school stories (many never move past those), and so we never delve deeper into what did it really mean for Jesus to be fully God and fully man. But what exactly does that mean? Do we wrestle with this mystery of incarnation fully? Do we honestly stop to think about how Jesus was, indeed, flesh and blood? That the Word really and truly became flesh? That he was born an infant just as we all were, that he



was breastfed and had to have his diapers changed as we all do. As he grew, did he struggle to fit in? If he had a hard time, is that where much of his connection to the outsiders and the fringe of society came from?

Do we think of Jesus experiencing pain, loneliness, joy, hunger, exhaustion, and the gamut of emotions and experiences that make someone human? Or do we prefer the Jesus from the felt board of our Sunday school classes? Do we simply make him a kind of spiritual superhero?

Do we stop to think about his disciples and how young they really were (all between the ages of 15 and 25)? Certainly stopping to consider that makes me more compassionate towards their foibles and flaws; after all, when I consider what I was like in my own youth, what kind of bumbling and misguided disciple would I have been? What must it have been like for these young men, all good monotheistic Jews, to even begin to consider this man, their Rabbi, as God? Sheppard even makes the connection that Peter, stepping out of the boat to come to Jesus on the water, possibly did so, not because he understood that Jesus was divine, but because the man Jesus was walking on the water before him.

What Trent Sheppard does well in this book is to make us see the humanity of Jesus. By using the four gospels, the author takes a closer examination of Jesus' relationship to his parents Mary and Joseph and to his heavenly Abba, to his fellowship with his disciples, as well as his final days on earth. The book is an invitation to the reader to explore the life of Jesus as a Jew from Nazareth who is the son of God. In writing of Jesus' humanity, Sheppard does not, like Thomas Jefferson focus on the humanness and deny the divinity (as Jefferson created his own New Testament with only Christ's teachings and he cut out any mention of the miracles or the resurrection). This book restores the humanity and embraces the divinity. And Sheppard offers beautiful insight into both.

Jesus Journey is meant to be read as a 40 day devotional and each section ends with a call for the reader to Ponder, Pray, and Practice what they have just reflected on.

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