
Title: Who is Christ?

Series: Speaking of God

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Date: October 22, 2006

Introduction

Jesus, God Incarnate

In the person of Jesus, God physically entered into our world. An infinite God came to live in a finite world in a finite body. This belongs to the realm of God's mystery. We may never understand how an eternal God could subject himself to time and space in a physical body.

In Jesus, God and man became one person. Jesus Christ was, and forever will be, fully God and fully man in one person.

Jesus — Fully Man

Jesus was fully and completely human. Throughout history, there have been groups and religious cults that have gotten either Christ's deity wrong or Christ's humanity wrong. Some have denied his deity. Some have denied his humanity. We're emphasizing this point in this lesson because our conservative evangelicalism tends to overemphasize Christ's deity to the detriment of his humanity. And this is as much due to the defense of Christ's deity against liberals in the 20th century who denied it than it is any other one thing. We affirm Christ's deity. But we must also affirm that Christ was as human as the rest of us, yet without sin.

Jesus was conceived in the womb of his human mother by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). Jesus had a human body (Matthew 4:2; Luke 2:40, 52; John 4:6, 19:28) that was in every respect, just like ours (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus rose from the dead in a physical, human body that was no longer subject to weakness, disease, or death (Luke 24:39). This resurrected body is still a physical body.

Jesus continues to reside in this perfect but human body in heaven (Acts 1:9). We have to be careful how we speak of Christ's omnipresence. When Christ was born, the Second person of the Godhead took on a body for the rest of eternity. This became a point of contention in the reformation when the reformers insisted that because Christ is physically in heaven, he cannot be physically in the Lord's Table.

Jesus had a human mind (Mark 13:32; Luke 2:52). Jesus the baby was not born with an omniscient mind. Jesus **learned**. Jesus grew in wisdom, just like we grow in wisdom. Jesus also felt the full range of human emotions (Matthew 8:10, 26:38; John 11:35, 12:27; Hebrews 5:7).

Jesus never sinned (John 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). This is what made Jesus' humanity different from ours. We have only known sin. Christ knew no sin, in order to become sin for us.

Jesus' humanity is important because Jesus had to be fully human in order to serve as our perfectly obedient representative (Romans 5:19). Whether we like it or not, Adam was our representative in the garden. How much Adam knew about that representation we aren't told, though there are indications he knew more than we give him credit for. But when Adam sinned, he sinned on our behalf. We were "in Adam", just as we are "in Christ".

God's plan of substitution required that a man save humanity. The commandment in the garden was **never** rescinded. Adam was to not eat of the tree and pass his test. In order for man to be saved, the test given to Adam, the first man, had to be passed... by a man. A man had to obey the commandment. Adam, the first man, didn't. Christ, the last Adam, did. Jesus' representative obedience as a man is in contrast to Adam's representative disobedience.

Not only did Jesus have to be human in order to be our representative, Jesus had to be human to die in our place (Hebrews 2:17). Not only was the test never rescinded, the penalty was never rescinded. The original commandment given to Adam included the promise that if he were to eat of the tree he would **die**. The penalty was a life for a life. That did not change when Adam left the garden. In fact, he left being covered by the life of an animal on his back.

Jesus' humanity allows him to serve as the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5; Hebrews 2:18, 4:15). A study of the Second Person of the Godhead tells us that a function of the Son has always been to mediate between man and God. Christ's incarnation, representation, and substitution forever makes him the mediator between God and man.

Jesus — Fully God

Jesus is fully God (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 2:11; John 8:57-59; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:19, 2:9; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 1:8, 22:13). This, of course, has been the scandal since the shepherds and wise men worshipped a baby born in Bethlehem. No mere mortal is worthy of worship. The Pharisees in John 8 understood full well that Christ claimed to be divine. It was a scandal to the Jews, who to this day, still do not believe that Christ is divine.

It is not true, as liberals claim today – as they have through the centuries, that Christ's deity was imposed on the historical Jesus figure by adherents to Christianity hundreds of years after his death. Liberals claim that the idea of Christ being divine comes from our faith. We believe that we need a divine Jesus, so we have faith that Jesus was divine. Our **delusional** faith becomes the source of Christ's so-called deity. But this does not stand the test of history. Our New Testament documents are reliable. It is quite evident, especially as we read Christ's interaction with the religious leaders in the book of John, that Christ knew and believed himself to be divine.

We've already noted that if Jesus was not man, he could not have mediated our salvation on our behalf. We can say the same thing about Christ's deity. Christ had to be divine in order to save us. If Jesus wasn't fully God, he could not have borne the full penalty for sin. This is true because God required a perfect sacrifice.

Jesus — Fully God and Fully Man

Jesus was fully God and fully man at the same time.

The eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Godhead, took to himself a truly human nature.

Christ joined himself to a human nature forever, eternally bringing together both the infinite and the finite.