

THE PERSON OF JESUS, THE CHRIST

I. The Person of Jesus, the Christ:

A. Why is it important to have a correct belief concerning the person of Jesus?

1. Without faith in His deity a person **can not** be saved. (Mark 16:16; John 3:18,36; 8:24; Acts 4:12; Hebrews 10:26-29; 11:6). Note: You can be ignorant of the full implications of Jesus' deity and be a Christian, but you cannot be opposed to His divinity and be a Christian.
2. If Jesus was just a "man" He couldn't have died for your sins, because He would have been a sinner too. A sinful man can't die for other sinful men (Psalm 49:7-9; Mark 8:37). Only the holy Spotless Lamb of God could. (Matt. 26:28; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12-14; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; 22-24; 3:18; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; Revelation 1:5; 5:9).
3. If Jesus was just a "man", or just a "great teacher", then it is easy to applaud His teaching and philosophy, yet never bow before Him as Lord and Saviour. We must recognise that in "Christ's one person are inseparably united two distinct substances, the human nature and the divine."¹

B. The Humanity of Jesus: The Bible teaches very clearly that Jesus was fully human. That He was a man in every sense of the word. That He possessed all the qualities of human nature, yet apart from sin. Thus He fully submitted Himself to the conditions of human life and a human body.

1. He was born to the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18).
2. He had a body of flesh and blood (John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:1; Matt. 26:12; Heb. 2:14).
3. He was subject to the ordinary laws of human development (Luke 2:40,52).

He was limited in knowledge, It is apparent from Philippians 2:5-8 & Hebrews 2:9 "that Jesus voluntarily abstained from using (yet always retained) certain divine attributes while here on earth, that he might totally depend upon the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit."² (Mark 13:32; John 11:34).

4. He had a soul (Matt. 26:38; John 12:27).
5. He had a spirit (Mark 2:8; Luke 23:46).
6. He looked like a man (John 4:, 8:57, 20:15)
7. He was subject to hunger (Matt. 4:2; 21:18).
8. He was subject to thirst (John 4:7; 19:28).
9. He succumb to being tired (John 4:6).
10. He slept (Matthew 8:24).
11. He experienced and felt sorrow (Matt. 23:37).
12. He was tempted in all points yet without sin (Matthew 4:1; Hebrews 4:15).

¹ R.L. Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation* (London: Methuen and Company Limited, 1919), 599.

² Harold L. Willmington, *Willmington's Complete Guide to Bible Knowledge* (Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1993),155.

13. He prayed. – (Mark 1:35; Luke 11:1).
14. He loved – (Mark 10:21; John 11:5).
15. He had compassion – (Matthew 9:36).
16. He was angered and grieved – (Mark 3:5).
17. He wept – (Luke 19:41; John 11:35).
18. He experienced Joy – (Luke 10:21; Hebrews 12:2).
19. He was troubled – (Mark 14:33-34; John 11:33; 12:27; 13:21).
20. He sweat drops of blood - (Luke 22:44).
21. He suffered – (1 Peter 4:1).
22. He bled – (John 19:34).
23. He was buried – (Matthew 27:59-60).³

C. Important facts about the Incarnation of Jesus:

1. Jesus' Incarnation was not the loss of divine attributes, but the addition of human attributes:

[Jesus] was no less God then [in the incarnation] than before; but He had begun to be man. He was not now God minus some elements of His deity, but God plus all that He had made His own by taking manhood to Himself. He who made man was now learning what it felt to be man." [Rhodes states] In other words, the incarnation involved not the subtraction of deity but the addition of humanity.⁴

2. Jesus can be said to have limited Himself in three ways:

- a. He purposely veiled His preincarnate glory because sinful men could not behold the full glory of God. When Moses sought to see the glory of the Lord. The Lord responded and said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Exodus 33:20). In order to understand just how little men can experience the glory of the Lord we see "...when the apostle John, over fifty years after Christ's resurrection, beheld Christ in His glory and said, 'I fell at His feet as though dead' (Revelation 1:17; or, as when Isaiah beheld the glory of Christ in his vision in the temple and said, 'Woe to me, I am ruined' (Isaiah 6:5; see John 12:41)."⁵
- b. Jesus chose not to use some of His divine attributes, on occasion, in order to have an understanding of the limitations of mankind. "He does not seem to have used His divine attributes [for] His own behalf, though certainly they were gloriously displayed in the many miracles He performed for others."⁶ As Rhodes points out:

Although Christ sometimes chose not to use His divine attributes, at other times He did use them. For example, on different occasions during His three-year ministry, Jesus exercised the divine attributes of omniscience (that is, all-knowingness – John 2:24; 16:30), omnipresence (being everywhere-present – John 1:48), and

³ Adapted from: *Willmington's Complete Guide to Bible Knowledge*, 154 – 156.

⁴ Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Mormons*, 151.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 150.

omnipotence (being all powerful, as evidenced by His many miracles- John 11). Hence, whatever limitations Christ may have suffered [upon Himself]. He did not subtract a single divine attribute or in any sense make Himself less than God.⁷

- c. Jesus condescended Himself by taking on a human nature. "Yet at the same time, it must be noted that the word 'likeness' [Philippians 2:7] suggest *similarity but difference*. As theologian Robert Lightner explains, 'Though His Humanity was genuine, He was different from all other humans in that He was sinless.'"⁸

D. Why is it important for us to understand the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus?

1. Knowing about His humanity assures us of our salvation as humans. Theologian R. L. Ottley wrote:

Only if human nature in its completeness had been taken into the Godhead was the fact of salvation assured. The Son of God became perfectly human. Thus human nature was in Him, in virtue of His person and work, really redeemed. He assumed our nature in its entirety, 'was made like unto us in all things sin only except.'⁹

2. Knowing He was really human gives you great encouragement that He knows what you're going through in your everyday life. He not only knows but can help (Heb. 2:18).
3. This reveals His great humility and love for mankind that He would come and be made in the likeness of men, be a servant, and suffer and die for mankind. (John 3:16; Phil. 2:5-8).
4. To see His humanity clarifies all those verses of Scripture that seem to deny His deity (being God). These refer to His humanity and His position of wilful submission to the Father's will.

E. The Divinity/Deity of Jesus: The Bible also teaches that Jesus was not only fully human but also fully divine (God).

Jesus declared that belief in his deity was absolutely essential for salvation. He said, "**unless you believe that I Am, you will die in your sins**" (John 8:24). This is God's divine name "throughout all generations," therefore Jesus is insisting that He be recognised as divine (Ex. 3:14,15).

1. Divine names ascribed to Jesus:

- a. Called God (Heb. 1:9; John 1:1, 20:28; Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20).
- b. Called the First and Last. Compare: (Is. 41:4, 44:6; Rev. 1:8, 22:12,13,16).
- c. Called I Am. Exodus 3:14 God is called I Am. Also in Isaiah 43:10-13. Jesus declares that He is that same I Am in John 8:24, 58, 13:19, 18:5-6.
- d. Called Lord of all (Acts 10:36).
- e. Called the mighty God. Compare: (Ps. 50:1, 132:2; Is. 20:21 with Is. 9:6).
- f. Called the Lord and the Highest in Luke 1:16, 76.
- g. The Apostle John declares that Jesus is *Yahweh* whom Isaiah saw a vision of. See John 12:39 – 41 & Isaiah 6.

⁷ Ibid., 150.

⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁹ R. L. Ottley, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 600.

2. Divine worship is ascribed to Jesus:

- a. In Exodus 34:14, we are told not to worship any other god but the Lord. Yet, Jesus accepted worship (John 9:38, 20:28; Matt. 2:11, 8:2, 9:18, 15:25, 28:9, 28:17).

All of these acts of worship contain the Greek word *proskuneo* (worship), which is the same word used when acts of worship are ascribed to the Father (Matt 4:10; John 4:24; Revelation 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 14:7; 19:10; 22:9).

- b. In Revelation we see both the Father and Jesus receive the same exact worship. The Father 4:10 and Jesus 5:11-14.

- c. Jesus taught that you should honour Him even as you honour the Father (John 5:23,24). The New Testament writers also taught this (Heb. 1:6; Phil. 2:10).

3. Divine qualities, offices, and attributes ascribed to Jesus:

- a. Pre-existence (John 1:1, 8:58; Micah 5:2).
- b. The authority to raise men from the dead and give them life (John 5:21,28,29).
- c. The authority to judge all men (John 5:22,27; 2 Tim. 4:1).
- d. *Omnipotent* over disease (Luke 4:29); over death (Luke 8; 54,55); over nature (Matt. 8:26,27); and over demons (Luke 4:35,36,41).
- e. *Omniscience* over the secrets of men's past lives (John 4:16-19); over men's thoughts (Luke 5:22); and over the future choices of men (John 6:64). Notice, only God knows the hearts of men (2 Chron. 6:30).
- f. *Omnipresence* wherever two or three gather in His name (Matt. 18:20); or wherever you are, "I am with you" (Matt. 28:20) He also declares He is in every believer (John 14:20).
- g. He is eternal (Romans 9:5; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:8; Micah 5:2).
- h. He is immutable [doesn't change] (Heb. 1:12,13:8).
- i. He is the Creator (Col. 1:16; John 1:3).
- j. He holds all things together (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).
- k. He has the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5,10).
- l. He bestows eternal life (John 10:28).
- m. Jesus taught that you should honour Him even as you honour the Father (John 5:23,24). The New Testament writers also taught this (Heb. 1:6; Phil. 2:10).