

JESUS, THE GOD-MAN

- A. Introduction: For several months we have been talking about the importance of reading the Bible. The Bible is the primary way that Almighty God reveals Himself to us. The Bible is our only fully reliable source of information about God. Every other source must be subject to what the Bible says about God.
1. We are living at the end of this age, and the second coming of Jesus is approaching. Before Jesus left this world He gave a number of signs that will indicate His return is near. The primary sign He mentioned was religious deception—specifically false Christs and false prophets. Matt 24:4-5; 11; 24
 - a. The only protection against religious deception is accurate information about Jesus. If ever there was a time to know for yourself who Jesus is and why He came—according to the Bible—it’s now.
 - b. I especially encourage you to read the New Testament because its documents were written by eyewitnesses of Jesus (or close associates of eyewitnesses)—men who walked and talked with Jesus, men who saw Him die, and then saw Him alive again. II Pet 1:16; I John 1:1-3
 - c. When we read what these men wrote about Jesus, we find that their interactions with Him convinced them that He was (and is) God Incarnate (God in human flesh). They believed that Jesus was (and is) God become man without ceasing to be God (Emmanuel, God with us). Matt 1:23
 2. Last week we looked at a number of statements made by John the apostle, one of Jesus’ original twelve disciples. John was part of Jesus’ inner circle, and he wrote the gospel that bears his name.
 - a. By the time John wrote his document, false teachings about Jesus had arisen and were influencing many. These teachings denied the Deity of Jesus (the fact that He is God) and denied His Incarnation (the fact that He took on a full human nature in the womb of the virgin Mary).
 - b. John wrote his gospel to counter these false teachings by clearly stating that Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God. John’s introduction to his book makes his aim clear. John 1:1-18
 1. John 1:1-3—John opened his gospel with the statement that Jesus (whom John calls the Word, John 1:17) is the eternal God and the Creator of everything.
 2. John 1:14—John further stated that the Creator of the universe entered time and space, took on a human nature (flesh), and lived among us here on earth.
 - A. John called the Word made flesh the Only Begotten of the Father (John 1:14). The Greek word that is translated begotten is *monogenes*. It refers to uniqueness or one of a kind.
 - B. Jesus is unique because He is the only God-man, fully God and fully man—one Person, two natures, human and Divine. Jesus is unique because He is the only man whose birth did not mark His beginning. He has no beginning because He is God.
 - c. We have more to say in tonight’s lesson about who Jesus is (according to the eyewitnesses) and what His death, burial, and resurrection means for humanity.
- B. We’ve made the point that the Bible reveals that God is One God who simultaneously manifests as three distinct, but not separate, Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Triune nature of God (the Divine nature or Godhead, Rom 1:20; Acts 17:29; Col 2:9) is beyond our comprehension.
1. But the men who interacted with Jesus, and wrote the New Testament, believed it. They mention three Persons in numerous passages and report that Jesus spoke about Himself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Two thousand years ago, the second Person of the Godhead (the Word, the Creator of the universe), entered time and space, took on flesh, and was born into this world.
 1. Luke 1:31-35—In the womb of a virgin named Mary, the Word took on a full human nature. He became fully man without ceasing to be God. This also is beyond our comprehension.
 2. Paul, another eyewitness of Jesus, referred to this event as the mystery of God’s plan, the mystery of the Incarnation—God was manifested in the flesh. I Tim 3:16

- b. God took on a human nature so that He could die as a sacrifice for the sins of men, and open the way for all who put faith in Him, to be restored to God and His family. Heb 2:14-15; John 1:12-13
 - 1. Almighty God, motivated by love, became something He had never been (a man) to do to something He had never done (die for sinful men and women). Rom 5:6-8; I John 4:9-10
 - 2. Jesus came into this world to die. He voluntarily laid down His life as the final, once for all, sacrifice for sin. John 10:15; 17-18; I John 3:16
- c. When the angel Gabriel informed Mary that she was going to give birth to this unique child, Gabriel told her that He would be called the Son of God. This refers to the fact that God was the Father of Jesus' humanity. Luke 1:35
 - 1. But there's another aspect to what it means that Jesus is the Son of God. In that culture, the title son of also meant on the order of or possessing the qualities of (I Kings 20:35; II Kings 2:3,5,7,15; Neh 12:28). It was used to mean sameness of nature and equality of being.
 - 2. Jesus is not the Son of God because He was born in Bethlehem or because He is less than God. Jesus is the Son because He is God and therefore possesses the qualities of God.
- 2. Paul (an apostle and an eyewitness) wrote a passage about Jesus that gives us insight into His dual nature—the fact that He is fully God at the same time He is fully man.
 - a. Phil 2:3-5—Paul exhorted a group of Christians to be humble, not selfish, and to think about other people more than themselves. He urged them to have the same mindset that Jesus had.
 - b. Then Paul wrote: Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross (Phil 2:6-8, NLT).
 - 1. The Greek wording used to say that Jesus was God, but appeared in human form, makes it clear that He was by nature God, and then became truly man by nature.
 - 2. The Greek wording for appearance refers to external conditions. In outward appearance, Jesus looked like a Jewish carpenter. Jesus veiled His deity and limited Himself to all the limitations of being human.
 - A. Jesus, in His humanity, needed food and sleep (Mark 11:12; Mark 4:38). He was tempted to sin (Heb 4:15), and He could suffer, bleed, and die (Matt 27:26; 50).
 - B. Jesus, in His humanity, differed from the rest of humankind only in the sense that He was sinless, not just in behavior, but in nature—like Adam and Even before they sinned.
- C. Because the Father and the Holy Spirit formed the human nature of Jesus in the womb of Mary (Heb 10:5; Luke 1:35), He did not partake of fallen human nature.
 - c. Jesus humbled Himself, and took this subordinate position as a man, for the purpose of securing our redemption through His death on the Cross. This subordination to God the Father is mentioned only in reference to Jesus after He took on flesh—never before He incarnated
- 3. Jesus did not cease to be God when He incarnated. He did not take off His deity. He put on a human nature. Jesus became the God-man—fully God and fully man. This is the mystery of the incarnation.
 - a. John 3:13—Jesus referred to Himself as the Son which is in Heaven. How could He be in Heaven at the same time He was on earth? Because, even though, as a man, Jesus was subject to all the limitations of a man, as God, He was and is omnipresent or present everywhere at once (Matt 18:20).
 - b. Jesus made a number of references to coming from Heaven, going back to Heaven, and to the glory that He shared with the Father before the world began. John 3:13; John 6:32; John 17:5; etc.
 - 1. Matt 17:1-2—At one point, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain and was transfigured in front of them. For a brief time, His veiled glory shone through. This was an outshining of the glory that was (and is) His as Almighty God. Peter later referenced this event in II Pet 1:16-18.

2. Jesus radiated from within. In His essential Being, Jesus was and is self-existent, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Jesus is Omni because He is God. 4. People draw wrong conclusion about who Jesus is because they don't make the distinction between Bible verses that refer to His humanity and verses that refer to His deity. Consider these examples.
- a. While on earth, Jesus did not live as God. Not only did Jesus veil His deity, He put aside His rights and privileges as Almighty God, and lived as a man in dependence on God as His Father.
1. Acts 10:38—Peter stated that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and power (note the reference to Three in One), and that Jesus went around healing and delivering people. Why would God the Father need to anoint God the Son with God the Holy Ghost and power?
 2. Because Jesus, as a man, had no more power to heal and deliver people than any other man. In fact, Jesus did no miracles until He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Matt 4:1-2; John 2:11
- b. Consider several passages that people mistakenly use to try to say that Jesus is not God and never claimed to be God, or that He is somehow less than God the Father.
1. John 10:29—Some misinterpret this passage to mean Jesus was telling His audience that He is not God.
 - A. This can't be the case because in the very next statement Jesus claimed equality with God. He said: I and my Father are one in essence (John 10:30, Wuest).
 - B. Jesus' meaning was clear to certain members of the audience. They picked up rocks to stone Him for blasphemy because He made Himself God. God the Father was greater than the man Jesus in His humanity, but not greater than God the Incarnate Son.
 2. John 20:17—Some misinterpret this passage to mean that Jesus is not God because He told Mary Magdalene that He was ascending to His God.
 - A. This can't be the case since a few verses later Jesus allowed His disciple, Thomas, to call Him Lord and God (John 20:28). Jesus didn't correct Thomas. He blessed him.
 - B. The Greek word for Lord (*kurios*) was used for Yahweh (Jehovah) in the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament). John used God (*theos*) for Jesus in John 1:1.
 - C. As good Jews they both knew that the Law of Moses said they were to worship only God Almighty—Jehovah. The man, Jesus, was not an atheist. As a man, His God was God.
- c. A major key to accurately interpreting the Bible is context. We can't pull a verse out of its original setting. Everything was written by someone to someone about something. We must consider what it meant to the first readers and hearers, as well as what the writer intended to say.
1. Consider an example of the important of reading in context. John 9:24 says that Jesus was a sinner. According to numerous other Bible verses, that's not true. Heb 4:15; II Cor 5:21; etc.
 2. When we read the whole account, we find that Jesus healed a blind man, the religious leaders weren't happy about it, and they tried to discredit Jesus by claiming He broke God's Law.
- C. The Bible reveals that God is infinite (without limits) and eternal (no beginning or end). God is Spirit and is invisible. God is transcendent (above and beyond anything we can imagine). God is incomprehensible (beyond our understanding and comprehension). Isa 55:8-9; Rom 11:33; John 4:24; I Tim 1:17
1. But the Bible also reveals that this amazing, glorious Being, the Creator of all, wants to be known by, and have relationship with, the creatures He created. God wants a family of sons and daughters. Eph 1:4-5
 - a. However, the full weight of God's glorious nature is more than fallen, finite humanity can bear. God's glory involves indescribable light which is too brilliant for a finite being to witness.
 1. When Moses asked to see God's glory, the Lord said that no one can see my face (literally, my full being) and live. Glory is from a Hebrew word that means weight.
 2. God showed Moses only a portion of His Being (the backside or after affects of His glory) as opposed to His full glory. Ex 33:18-20; 23

- b. Paul wrote this praise to Almighty God: He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen (I Tim 6:15-16, ESV).
2. Although we can't see Almighty God because He dwells in unapproachable light, and although we can't know Him fully and exhaustively because He's infinite and we're finite, we can know enough of what He does reveal about Himself to respond with awe, reverence, gratefulness, and love.
- a. Jesus is God's fullest revelation of Himself to mankind. Jesus is the visible manifestation, the image of the Invisible God (Col 1:15). The Greek word that is translated image means a perfect image, the very substance or essential embodiment of something or someone.
- b. Heb 1:3—Jesus “is the brightness of his (God's) glory and the express image of his person” (KJV); He is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding the universe by His mighty word of power” (Heb 1:3, Amp).
1. The word translated brightness means an outshining, a shining forth of the very character and essence of God (John 1:4). The word translated express image comes from a word that meant a stamp, and later came to mean the image made by the state—an exact representation.
 2. Col 2:9—For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form—giving complete expression of the divine nature (Amp).
- c. John 1:18—No one has ever seen God; the only God (ESV), Who is in the bosom [that is, in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him—He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him, and He has made Him know (John 1:18, Amp).
1. The Greek word John used for seen means more than the mere act of seeing; it has the idea of discern clearly or perceive. In the bosom of is a cultural reference.
 2. In the 1st century, people reclined when they ate their meals. The person sitting next to the other was said to lie in the bosom of. To have this place with the host (to be in the bosom of), indicated a state of favor and intimacy with that individual.
3. Note several statements that Jesus made about Himself. Remember that Jesus authenticated everything He said when He rose from the dead: (Jesus) was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:4, NIV).
- a. John 12:44-45—Then Jesus cried out “When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me” (NIV).
- b. John 14:9—Jesus answered, “Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father (NIV).
1. Jesus was expressing the fact that when you see me, you've seen the Father, not because I am the Father—but because I show His characteristics. I am the full expression of His nature.
 2. God took on human nature, not only so that He could die for sin, but to make Himself known to us. Jesus is the fullest expression of God because He is God.
- D. Conclusion: Although this information doesn't seem to be practical, it is vitally important. Because of the times we live in, we must know who Jesus is—according to the Bible—so that we won't be deceived.
1. In addition, this information can have a tremendous impact on your everyday life, when you begin to see Almighty God as He truly is and yourself as you truly are in relation to Him.
 2. The Lord of all creation wants to make Himself known to you and live in relationship with you. To make this possible, the second Person of the Godhead, the Word, humbled Himself, took on flesh and limited Himself to all the challenges of life in a fallen world. He became the God-man.
 3. Then He died for you, to pay the price that you owed for your sins. By doing so, Jesus opened the way into God's family—and He did this because He loves you. What a faith builder!! More next week!!