

Inside the Lines
P.O. Box 1261
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JESUS

His Humanity Lesson 4

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Something for You to Study

One of the greatest of all mysteries is how the Lord Jesus could be both God and man. When Christ became man, He did not stop being God. He put aside temporarily the glory of His pre-incarnate state but not His deity. The prophecy of His coming is clear that He was to be the Son given and the child born (Isaiah 9:6), both God and man.

Jesus Christ has the nature of God and the nature of man in His one person. This *hypostatic* or personal union of the two natures of Christ is given in such scripture passages as John 1:1-14, Philippians 2:6-11, 1 Timothy 3:16, and 1 John 1:1-3. This union is not a meshing of deity and humanity, for each nature remains separate and distinct from the other. The deity remains undiminished deity and the humanity remains genuine humanity. The two natures are eternally and inseparably united in the one person so that there is no thought of a dual personality in Christ. It is not correct to speak of His divine-human consciousness. Rather, He had a divine consciousness and a human consciousness. "Christ is therefore both God and Man, no less God because of His humanity and no less human because of His deity."

The union of the two natures in Christ is not at all similar to the union of a believer with Christ. The Lord Jesus is not a man filled with God; He is God. While we cannot understand this, we can accept the statement of 1 Timothy 3:16 that in Christ. "God was manifest in the flesh."

The Bible teaches that Christ's humanity is permanent. The body He received at the incarnation is the body He died in, was buried in, and rose in. His resurrected body was glorified and changed, but it was nonetheless His body. The disciples recognized Him (John 20:20). He ascended in His body (Acts 1:9). He is in heaven now in His body (Philippians 3:20-21). He will return in His body (Acts 1:11).

Christ died as man, not God. His death on the cross would not have been real if He were not man. But the victory of His death lay in the fact that He was God. The death would not have been sufficient if He were not God.

Because of the personal union of the two natures, what is true of either nature is true of the person. That is why Christ on earth was both weak and omnipotent, increasing in knowledge while remaining omniscient. The gospels given by inspiration of God do not reveal specific details of Christ's growing years. His supernatural birth, a brief glimpse of His divine consciousness at the age of twelve (Luke 2:46-47), and His willing obedience in His home (Luke 2:51) are a background for the work He came to do.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LORD JESUS

Omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence are those attributes of deity which the Lord Jesus retained when He became man. He could not give them up, for then He would have ceased to be God, an impossibility. God cannot stop being God. But while He was man, He deliberately and voluntarily limited Himself in the use of these attributes. His deity was within Him in all its power, but He did not use it on His own behalf. Christ made Himself obedient to the physical limitations of a human being. That is, when He was hungry, He did not miraculously provide food for Himself—though He could have. His self-limitation is seen in His temptation. He could have turned the stones to bread, but He chose not to, lest He seem to be obeying Satan. His self-limitation is a further evidence of His deity. All of this is a matter of faith on man's part rather than of understanding.

However, in John 6, Jesus took a lunch sufficient for one person and fed more than five thousand. He eluded the mob who wanted to kill Him (Luke 4:29-30) and those who tried to stone Him (John 8:59), because it was not time for Him to die, but later allowed Himself to be taken and crucified (John 18:4-11).

His holiness. Jesus is the only baby who was born holy. Other babies are sweet or pretty but not holy, for each one is born with a sin nature. Jesus as God and man did not have a sin nature. Any temptation that came to Him came from without, not from within. It is clear from Scripture that He was tempted (Hebrews 4:15). His human nature can be tempted; His divine nature cannot. Could He be tempted when there was no possibility of sinning? Yes, for to be tempted does not imply a yielding to the temptation.

Some might question whether Christ's temptations were real. The answer is found in Satan's tempting of Him. To turn stones to bread is no temptation to one who can't do it—but Christ could.

Christ's human will was constantly subject to His divine will. This is clear in Gethsemane as He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). On the divine side there was equality with God; on the human side, submission to God.

The theological term that explains Christ's sinlessness is *impeccability*. It is not merely that Christ chose not to sin but that He could not sin. This truth can be summarized in this way:

God cannot be tempted and God cannot sin. See (James 1:13).

Man can be tempted and man can sin. See (Romans 3:23).

The Lord Jesus could be tempted because He is man. See (Matthew 4:3-10).

The Lord Jesus could not sin because He is God. See (Luke 4:12; 1 Peter 2:22).

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His sinlessness is an essential part of His work as the Saviour. As man. He could die; as God, His death had infinite value.

His love. This is a characteristic which does not need proof, for He Himself is the proof. His love for mankind was demonstrated irrefutably in His death on the cross (Romans 5:6-8).

His compassion. "He was moved with compassion" (Matthew 9:36) are words that describe the Lord Jesus. It means that He suffered with people, as man, He could understand when they were hungry and sick and sad. As God, He could do something about it. So He fed the hungry (Mark 8:1-9), healed the sick (Mark 1:30-34), helped the sad (Luke 7:11-15).

His humility. The Lord Jesus is the supreme example of humility. He left the glory and wonder of heaven to be tired and hungry on earth. He could have been served by angels, but on earth He refused to use His power for His own protection. He who created life allowed Himself to be put to death by men whom He had made.

A Further Word

At this point we are confronted with the strongest contrasts between the Deity and the humanity of Christ. He was weary; yet He called the weary to Himself for rest. He was hungry; yet He was "the bread of life." ... He "grew, and waxed strong in spirit"; yet He was from all eternity. He was tempted, yet. He, as God, could not be tempted. He was self-limited in knowledge; yet He was the wisdom of God. ... He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"; yet it was that very God to whom He cried who was "in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." He prayed which is always human; yet He Himself answered prayer. He dies; yet He is eternal life.

Notes

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Find Out for Yourself

Name _____

1. Read Luke 24:13-31. What factors in this account show the humanity of Jesus?
 - 1a. How does verse 27 indicate His deity?
2. Read Isaiah 9:6. Write the words that speak of Christ's humanity:
 - 2a. His deity:
3. How could Christ grow in knowledge (Luke 2:52), when He had the attribute of omniscience?
4. How can you explain Jesus' death, since God cannot die?
5. Use Philippians 2:6-7 to explain the hypostatic union.
6. Why does Romans 7:15-23 not apply to Christ?
7. How does Hebrews 13:8 prove that Jesus Christ could not sin?
8. What words in Revelation 5:12-14 show Christ's humanity? His deity?

Check Your Memory

1. Jesus did not give up His deity when He became a man. explain:
2. The fact that Jesus is all-powerful is known as His _____.
3. The word _____ means all-knowing.
4. Christ's inability to sin is called _____.
5. While on earth, Christ voluntarily _____ the use of His attributes.

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6. Philippians 2 says Christ became _____ unto death.
7. The Bible teaches that Christ's _____ is permanent.



Scripture Memorization
(write on the back page three times)

Phil 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

(KJV)