

Jesus

Key Verse: Matthew 16:16 (John 1:14)

Key Idea: I believe Jesus is the Son of God in the flesh, the Messiah.

Key Question: Who is Jesus?

In the person of Jesus God physically entered into our world. An infinite God came to live in a finite world. The one who knew exactly how things were supposed to be came to a place where things obviously weren't. In Jesus God and man because one person, a person unlike anyone else the world has ever seen or will ever see. Jesus Christ was, and forever will be, fully God and fully man in one person. And that one person changed the course of history forever.

Jesus – Fully Man

Jesus was fully and completely human. He was conceived in the womb of his mother by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. This is made clear in Matthew 1:18: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit." While many things could be said about this, one thing is clear: Jesus was born of a human mother. His ordinary human birth affirms his humanity.

Just as we have a human body, so did Jesus. As a child, he "grew and became strong" (Luke 2:40), and as he grew older, he "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). He became "wearied" from a journey (John 4:6); after a fast, "he was hungry" (Matt. 4:2); and while on the cross, he said, "I thirst" (John 19:28). His body was, in every respect, just like ours.

Jesus rose from the dead in a physical, human body that was no longer subject to weakness, disease, or death. As he told his disciples, who were astonished at the risen Christ, "See my hand and my feet" that is it I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39). Jesus continues to reside in this perfect but human body in heaven.

Jesus' mind was like ours as well. He went through a learning process as other children do. Luke, for example, tells us he "increased in wisdom" (Luke 2:52). Like a normal child, he learned how to do things such as talk, read, write, and eat. In his human nature he did not know the day he would return to earth, "but concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13:32).

In addition, Jesus felt the full range of emotions: he "marveled" at the faith of the centurion (Matt. 8:10); he "wept at the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35); and he prayed to God "with loud cries and tears" (Heb. 5:7). Before his crucifixion, he said, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (Matt. 26:38) and "now is my soul troubled" (John 12:27).

Jesus was like us in every respect but one: he was without sin. That is why at the end of his life he could say, "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (John 15:10). That is why Paul refers to Jesus as "him...who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). Peter tells us that Jesus "committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). John tells us that "in him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Clearly, Jesus is "one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

In addition, Jesus' humanity (as well as his deity) allows him to serve as the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5). It also means that as a man, he was "in every respect...tempted as we are" and so is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb. 4:15). "Because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

BELIEVE SERIES Lesson Six

Jesus – Fully God

As we stated earlier, Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. Again, this is made clear in Matthew 1:18. Jesus' virgin birth was a supernatural work of God. Through the work of the Holy Spirit inside Jesus' mother, Mary, the human and the divine were united in a way they never will be in any other person.

As we saw when we discussed the full deity of the Trinity (see chapter 3), the Bible clearly says that Jesus is fully God. For example, Paul writes of Jesus in Colossians 2:9, "In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." In addition, when Jesus' contemporaries called him "Lord," they were employing a term that was used over six thousand times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to refer to God or "the Lord." Therefore, when the angels announced Jesus' birth by saying, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11), they were saying that the Lord God himself was born.

When asked if he had seen Abraham, Jesus responded by saying, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:57-58). Those who heard him say this "picked up stones to throw at him" (John 8:59), which is what any self-respecting religious leader would have done if someone claimed to be God. They understood that Jesus was claiming the same title God claimed for himself in Exodus 3:14 – "I AM WHO I AM."

In revelation 22:13, Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." This is very similar to what God the Father said at the beginning of the same book: "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).

Jesus was fully God. "In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19). If Jesus wasn't fully God, he could not have borne the full penalty for sin for the whole world. And if he didn't bear the full penalty of sin for the world as a sinless man, there would be no valid payment for anyone's sins, and nobody could be saved.

Jesus – Fully God and Fully Man in One Person

Jesus was fully God. Jesus was also fully man. He was fully both at the same time. The eternal Son of God took to himself a truly human nature. His divine and human natures are forever distinct and retain their own properties even though they are eternally and inseparably united together in one person.

This is probably the most amazing miracle of the entire Bible – the eternal Son of God, himself fully God, became fully man and in doing so joined himself to a human nature forever. Jesus, a man unlike anyone else the world will ever see again, by eternally bringing together both the infinite and the finite, changed the course of history forever.

Questions

1. Jesus is fully God. What are some ways that this encourages you?
2. Jesus is fully man. What are some ways that this encourages you?
3. Take a moment to pray and talk directly to Jesus, thanking him for coming to earth and becoming fully man for your sake.

Material from Christian Beliefs, by Wayne Grudem

Group Study

OPEN

Ice Breaker: Make a quick list of popular ideas in our culture regarding who Jesus is.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 16:13-21

1. What did Jesus say about Peter's statement in verse 16?
2. Jesus tells the group that His church would be built on Him and hell would not conquer it. Why is this important?
3. How does that give us confidence in sharing the Gospel?
4. John 1:14- tells us that the Word became flesh. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be both God and human?
5. Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic or Lord. Can you explain why? (As a group, work this out.)
6. Read Matthew 1:21. Why was it important for Joseph to be told this about Jesus? Why is it important for us?
7. What is the hardest thing to really grasp about Jesus?

KEY APPLICATION:

Since Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior in the flesh, I can trust Him with my life.

APPLICATION

List 3 things that you will tell someone this week about Jesus.

CLOSING PRAYER – Pray in Jesus' name for clarity on who He is and why He came and died.

NEXT WEEK

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (Galatians 3:13)

Key Idea: I believe that Jesus' death on the cross pays for all my sin.

Key Question: How can I have a personal relationship with a Holy God?

Study Passages

2 Corinthians 5:21	Hebrews 10:4
Galatians 3:13	Isaiah 53:1-10
John 3:16	Romans 8:1

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus die on the cross?
2. Why is it important that he lived a perfect life?
3. In what ways does Jesus' death on the cross satisfy God's wrath over sin, God's justice and God's love for us?
4. How does it make you feel that the God of the universe would die in your place out of unconditional love for you?
5. Read Romans 8:1 again. What does this mean to you in everyday life? In your worship? In your prayers?