

# **BASIC CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY**

## **Part 6 The Man Who Is God**

At this point in our series on the essentials of the Christian faith, we turn our attention to the central figure of the faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the center of Christianity, of the Bible, and of the Gospel. Who is He? Is he God? Is he just a man. The Bible makes a lot of great claims about who Jesus was.

When we add up the biblical evidence, we see that Jesus is demonstrated to be both fully God and fully Man. Some want to believe that Jesus was just a good a wise teacher, on a par with Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, and other founders of religions. But this cannot be the case. C. S. Lewis said that when we examine the claims of Christ, we have three choices: 1) His claims were false and he knew it, 2) His claims were false, but he believed they were true, or 3) his claims were true. So Jesus was either a liar, lunatic, or Lord.

After the controversy in the early church over the Trinity, the issues related to Jesus himself were dealt with, and finally settled at the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. This important council concluded that the scriptures teach that Jesus Christ was, is, and will forever be one person, having two natures, fully divine and fully human. It was essential for Jesus to be true God and true man for our salvation. Both of these natures are plainly taught in scripture. Let's look briefly at some of the passages that show this.

Jesus was and is fully man: Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (NIV) He got tired (John 4:6), hungry (Matt. 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28). Although his conception was supernatural, he had an ordinary human birth. Hebrews says that, as a man, he was like us in every, with one important exception, he was without sin.

Jesus was and is fully God: John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" (NIV) , John 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!", Romans 9:5 There are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. (NIV)

Both the Deity and Humanity of Christ are brought together in some passages. For example, John 1 begins with the Word, who already existed from the beginning and was also God. Then, in verse 14, we are told that the Word became flesh, became a man, was incarnated. Another passage is Phil. 2. Verse 6 talks about Christ, "6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NIV)

Here, the one who was in very nature God, took on an additional nature, becoming a man and a servant. The Second Person of the Godhead, while remaining fully God, became fully human, being born as a baby and growing to adulthood as one of us. This took place so that Jesus Christ could be the Savior, to save his people from their sins Jesus saved us by, as Phil. 2 says, becoming obedient unto death -- even death on a cross. He had to be God because only God can save man. He had to be man, because only a true sinless human could be the proper substitute for us.

Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God, God the Son, the Creator. He is the perfect God-Man, who came as the Savior to save his people. That is part of the essence of the Gospel, the Person of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is also about the redemptive work he came to do and how it applies to you and me. We will focus on that important truth next month.