

Jesus - Man or God?

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[0 : 00] Good evening, everyone. My name is Jeff. You don't know me. I'm the youth and children's pastor here at HTD. You might like to keep that Mark passage open in front of you. I'm going to refer to it later.

I'm also going to be referring to a bunch of other passages, and you'll see them up on the screen when we come to them. There's also an outline, which you'll find in the handout. You might like to use it to take notes.

And there will be an opportunity for questions later on. You can certainly ask them, and I may answer them. Now, tonight, as Marcus said, we're going to continue our series looking at who Jesus is.

Last week, if you were here, you may remember Mark talking about the reliability of the Bible and how we can know that Jesus truly is who he claimed.

Tonight, as Marcus said, we're going to spend some time thinking about the nature of Jesus. We're going to look through what the Bible says about Jesus' nature and consider whether he is man or God or something else.

[1 : 01] I'm not going to spend time looking through extra biblical sources about Jesus' nature because the Bible is where we find out about what we know about Jesus. If you have more questions about reliability of scriptural witness, feel free to ask Mark or perhaps even me after the service.

So, firstly, we're going to look at what the Bible says about Jesus being man, being human, that is. Why don't I just pray before I go any further?

Heavenly Father, thank you that we can open your word together. Please teach us through it that we may understand correctly who Jesus is. Amen. Well, for starters, Jesus experienced, like the rest of us, human birth from a woman.

The Gospel of Luke in chapter 1, verse 30 and 31, when the angel of the Lord came to Mary, he said to her, up on the slide you can see it, don't be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and you will give birth to a son. You are to give him the name Jesus. And in Luke chapter 2, 5 and 7, when Mary and her fiancé Joseph went to their hometown for a census, it says, he went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him, and was expecting a child.

[2 : 19] While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. Now, we can see from these passages that Jesus actually had a natural birth from his mother, Mary, just like the rest of us.

Now, Jesus' conception, as we'll see, isn't entirely the same as the natural process as with us, but he still was born as a human.

He was still born of a human in the human way. Secondly, we see Jesus' humanity in his human descent.

The Bible makes perfectly clear that he was descended from King David and from many others. He came from a line of humans, just like we did.

In the Gospel of Matthew, in chapter 1, verse 1 to 17, there's actually an account of all the human generations, from Abraham through King David and to Jesus.

[3 : 20] And so, just like I am a descendant of men and women, of John and of Lloyd and of Bruce and Rosemary, so also Jesus was a descendant of men and women.

Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, David, Solomon, Mary, to name a few. This genealogy gives us a comprehensive list of Jesus' human ancestry throughout 42 generations.

Or just like we can determine and conclude Jesus' humanity due to these natural human traits, so we can also see his humanity in the things he experienced and in his emotion and need.

In John, chapter 2, verse 15, Jesus was angry when he found people had set up a marketplace in the temple. In John 11, verse 35, Jesus was sad when his friend had died.

And in John, chapter 19, Jesus was thirsty as he hung on the cross. And Jesus experienced more emotion and feeling than just this. In Luke, chapter 7, we see Jesus' compassion reflected in the way that he cared for and responded to a woman whose son had died.

[4 : 41] And in Luke 22 and 12, we see Jesus distressed and showing great anguish and fear at the prospect of dying on the cross, which would understandably be a very human response.

Jesus experienced the things that we experience. He felt what we feel. He suffered as we suffer. He lived as we live. It's pretty clear from these historical accounts of Jesus that he was born, that he lived, and that he experienced human life.

Now, these passages are pretty straightforward in talking about Jesus' humanity, that he really was a man, that he lived like a human does, that he had human nature, just like you and me.

So, does that mean that our study is over? Now that we know Jesus is human, are we done? Well, no, we're not done.

[5 : 47] The Bible says a bunch more about Jesus, in particular about how the nature of Jesus is much more complex than what we've looked at so far.

So, what we're going to do now is see what the Bible says about Jesus being more than simply human, which brings us to the second point on the outline. There are a number of places in the Bible that the Bible talks about Jesus, there being more to Jesus' nature than just humanity.

As with his humanity, the first place we're going to look is at his conception. And in his conception, we immediately see that there is something more to Jesus.

In the passage I mentioned earlier from Luke 1, the angel told Mary that she would give birth. And when she heard this, she made an expected and quite logical response.

In verse 34, she said, How will this be, since I am a virgin? The angel answered her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, so the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

[7 : 01] Clearly, there is something different about this Jesus who was born to a virgin. The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High, the power of God, will overshadow you.

This son Jesus comes from a woman, but he also comes from God's own spirit. He will be called the Son of God, the angel says.

And now it's important to know that the Bible is filled with miraculous babies who were born to women by God's promise. Just before Mary was visited by this angel, the husband of her relative Elizabeth was also promised a son, John the Baptist, and she was barren and very old.

And in heaps of other places, barren and or old women give birth to children who are key in God's plan. But none of them have come about the way Jesus did.

None of them have come from a virgin mother, nor are they conceived by the Holy Spirit so that they will be called the Son of God. The birth of Jesus is unique, and the Gospel authors are making important points in their account of the birth of Jesus so that they don't play down either nature of Jesus.

[8 : 29] They maintain both human and what we'll see to be his divine nature. And this is important because of Jesus' purpose, which we'll talk more about later.

Well, after Jesus grows up, the development and the revelation of his dual nature becomes more and more apparent. Right from the start of Jesus' ministry, he shows himself to be far more than just a man, and we see this in his divine power.

In the Gospel of Mark, in a number of places, though we're not going to look at all of them now, Jesus displays that he has the power of God. He shows that he can do what only God can do.

In Mark chapter 4, verses 35 to 41, which was read just a moment ago, Jesus does something so powerful and so remarkable that it actually causes terror and shock in his closest friends.

Let me read it to you. Jesus and his disciples were crossing a lake in a boat together when a furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped.

[9 : 41] Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, Teacher, don't you care if we drown? He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the waves, Quiet, be still.

The wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith? They were terrified, and they asked each other, Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him. It is no small thing that Jesus does here. In this passage, we see that there is much more to Jesus than mere humanity.

He speaks and commands the weather, and it responds. I wonder if any of you have ever tried it. I have tried it.

You look like an idiot, and it does nothing. Jesus speaks to creation, and it responds. Creation is subject to the power of his word.

[10:48] And now it's important to take note of the disciples' response. In verse 41, it says they were terrified. Terrified. They asked each other, Who is this?

Even the wind and the waves obey him. And this is important to look at this response because it shows a genuine and expected response to such an act.

When a person today hears a report from the Bible about this human Jesus who does what only God can do, very rarely do they immediately accept it and say, Yeah, of course he's God.

No, this is a shocking and not normal thing to happen. Even the disciples who'd been with Jesus for years, when they saw this kind of thing, they were afraid.

They didn't know what to think. They were baffled. It was as much a shock and just as hard for them to believe as it is for people today when they hear it.

[11:51] Why? Because when the disciples looked at Jesus, they saw a man. They saw a human. They related to him as you would to me.

They lived together. They talked and laughed and learnt together. They witnessed humanity in Jesus. And so when they saw this kind of thing, not surprisingly, they were utterly stunned.

If when you hear this message about a man with the power of God and you're stunned or shocked or even sceptical, that is an expected and actually an unoriginal response.

Jesus makes it perfectly clear that while he is human, there's actually more to him than you can see. He shows he has God's own power and particularly in this point in his control over creation. Now there are many other miracles which prove Jesus' power but we're not going to look at them now. The final proof we're going to look at is Jesus' divine claim. Jesus claims to be God in a few different places and ways and we're going to look at one in particular, a claim which he backs up with some solid evidence.

[13:13] In a certain encounter with the Pharisees, that's the Jewish leaders, when there was a paralyzed man in front of him and a crowd all around, Jesus said a rather controversial thing to this bloke who was lying on the mat.

He says to him, your sins are forgiven. Now the Pharisees who knew the Old Testament, they immediately thought, well what's this guy talking about?

Only God can forgive sins. They understood this truth that man's rebellion, that is their sin against God, their sin is against God and so only God can forgive it.

Only God can forgive sins. And when they hear Jesus say, your sins are forgiven, it's unsurprising that they think these things. But, Jesus knew what they were thinking and so he showed them in front of everyone that there was more to him than they knew.

He said in verse 9 of Mark 2, which is easier, to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven or get up, take your mat and walk?

[14:25] It's a fair question, wouldn't you say? He continues, but, that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, Son of Man meaning Jesus, has authority on earth to forgive sins, as God does that is.

He said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home. He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

This amazed everyone and they praised God saying, we have never seen anything like this.

Friends, clearly from these passages, there's more to Jesus than meets the eye, isn't there?

He has more than just a human nature, but also a divine nature. He can do what only God can do. And yet, he lived and breathed and functioned as a human.

And so, what do we conclude about Jesus being man or God? And that brings us to our final point.

A proper understanding of who and what Jesus is and knowing his purpose in the Bible will show that Jesus is in fact equal to man and to God.

[15 : 45] Knowing and understanding this, this truth is absolutely crucial in knowing God and in having salvation from God from sin and death.

And so, what I'm going to briefly do now is show you the necessity of Jesus' dual nature. Because of the nature of sin, that is, that is the sin of mankind, because of, and because of the nature of God's justice, only God, as we looked at a moment a moment ago, can forgive and remove sin. And only a human can pay the penalty for humanity's sin. Our sin, our rebellion, our wrong, is against God so only He can forgive us.

If Jesus wasn't divine, if He wasn't God, then He would have no power to forgive us, because He would be attempting to forgive on behalf of someone else.

Only the person who was wronged can forgive that wrong. In the Old Testament, in Psalm 49, the author, the psalmist, writes, that no human can redeem the life of another.

[17 : 01] The cost is too great. A mere human, because of the sin that they already have, their rebellion towards God, has no power to pay for the life of another.

Man cannot do this, the psalm continues, because they are destined for the grave. But God, he writes, will redeem my life from the grave.

Only God, who is not under the power of sin and isn't destined for the grave, can afford the cost of the redemption of humans. Secondly, Jesus needed to be human because the penalty for sin falls to humanity.

Humans are the ones who have rejected God and deserve His punishment, so only human can take that penalty. If Jesus wasn't human, He couldn't take our sin. The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 4 that the redemption of those under the law, the Jews, is only achieved by one born under the law, one who is subject to life under the law, that is, a human.

A human can sympathize and can understand the life of humans, understand their human nature, understand their struggle, understand their suffering, yet not succumbing to their sin.

[18 : 28] In Romans 5, 18 and 19, it says, Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all mankind, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all mankind.

For just as through the disobedience of one man the many were made sinners, so also the obedience of, through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous.

Paul argues here that just as sin and death came through a human, life and righteousness, that is, perfection, come through the work of one man, of Jesus.

And not only, and not just any man, but a righteous man, a man who does a righteous act. This means that only a perfect person can do such an act that will bring about righteousness for all people.

And so, it is necessary, I hope you can see that, that Jesus is both man and God, because his work on the cross could only achieve its redemptive purpose if he is that.

[19 : 44] And so, because of what the Bible says about Jesus, we can conclude that he is in, that he in fact equals both man and God, and that it was no accident, it was no coincidence that this happened, but God's intention for the sake of salvation of mankind.

Now, you may well be thinking, so what? Jesus lived a long time ago, he may have made a bit of a splash, but what does it matter to me?

Well, I think it matters a great deal. You see, if Jesus was just a man, then so what is right? Even if he caused all the responses he did and was an awesome public figure, but he wasn't God, well, it just doesn't matter.

There's been plenty of impressive people over the years, some are interesting to listen to, and some aren't. But Jesus isn't a big deal just because lots of people think he's cool and worth following.

Jesus is a big deal because he's more than an impressive person. He's a big deal because he's God, because he's the creator of the world. And since Jesus is God, it matters a great deal how we, how we all respond to him.

[21 : 09] In Romans chapter 6, it says that the penalty for rejecting God is death. And since Jesus is God, he's Lord, he's boss, what he says goes.

So if you don't care about Jesus, then you don't care about God. If you don't know Jesus, then you don't know God. If you reject Jesus, then you reject God and you are his enemy.

And you will pay the penalty for that rejection. But if you recognize the truth about Jesus, if you accept Jesus and treat him as God, then you truly have accepted God.

If you know Jesus, you know and are known by God. and if you listen to and believe in Jesus, then you're friends with God and he loves you as his own.

Friends, if it's your first time here tonight or if you've been here for years and you haven't yet realized the importance of who Jesus is, then you need to make a decision to either reject Jesus, reject God and suffer the penalty for that rejection, for sin or to accept to believe Jesus as Lord and Savior and receive redemption and righteousness because of what Jesus has done.

[22 : 43] Please let me encourage you to keep reflecting on this and if you need to, to come and talk to me later or to the person who brought you, but how about I finish by praying. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus who was born man but is fully God.

We thank you for the redemption that comes through him by believing. Amen.