

THE REAL CHRISTMAS STORY



Theme: **The Incarnation of Jesus**

• How human was Jesus?

- Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, with two natures (human and divine) coming together to form one person, and will be so forever. (Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:4; Luke 1:30-33)
- Jesus is not a man that became a god. (John 3:16-17)
- Jesus was the only sinless human. (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)

• The Humanity of Christ:

- Incarnation: “the act of being made flesh”
- The Incarnation of Jesus: Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh. (John 1:14)
- Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh. (Rom. 8:3)
- Jesus emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant. (Phil. 2:5-11)
- Jesus was born of a human virgin woman named Mary. (Matthew 1:18-25) (Luke 1:26-38)

• Human Weaknesses and Limitations:

- Jesus had a human body.
 - » Jesus was born just as all human babies are born. (Luke 2:7)
 - » Jesus grew through childhood to adulthood just as other children grow. (Luke 2:40)
 - » Jesus obeyed His parents. (Luke 2:51)
 - » Jesus worshipped and prayed. (Luke 4:16) (Mark 1:35; 6:46) (Matthew 6:9-13)
 - » Jesus worked as a carpenter. (Mark 6:3)
 - » Jesus’ body felt hunger and thirst. (John 19:28) (Matt. 4:2)
 - » Jesus’ body grew tired and weak. “Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well” in Samaria (John 4:6).
 - During Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness He fasted for forty days (the point at which a human being’s physical strength is almost entirely gone and beyond which irreparable physical harm will occur if the fast had continued). At that time “angels came and ministered to Him” (Matt. 4:11), apparently to care for Him and provide nourishment until He regained enough strength to come out of the wilderness.
 - » Jesus’ human body ceased to have life in it and ceased to function, just as ours does when we die. (Luke 23:46)
 - » Jesus rose from the dead in a physical, human body, though one that was made perfect and was no longer subject to weakness, disease or death. (Luke 24:39)
- All of these verses taken together show that, as far as Jesus’ human body is concerned, it was like ours in every respect before His resurrection, and after His resurrection it was still a human body with “flesh and bones,” but made perfect, the kind of body that we will have when Christ returns and we are raised from the dead as well. Jesus continues to exist in that human body in heaven, as the ascension is designed to teach. (Luke 24:50–51) (Acts 1:9)

• Jesus Had A Human Mind:

- Jesus learned. Luke 2:52 - “increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man”
- Jesus went through a learning process just as all other children do. (Luke 2:52)
- Jesus learned how to eat, talk, read and write, and how to be obedient to His parents (Heb. 5:8).

• Jesus Had a Human Soul and Human Emotions:

- Jesus experienced stress and sorrow. (Isaiah 53:3) (Matthew 26:36-46) (John 11:35)
 - » Jesus wept with sorrow at the death of Lazarus. (John 11:35)
 - » Before His crucifixion, Jesus said, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death”. (Matt. 26:38)
- Jesus experienced happiness and joy. (Luke 10:21-24; John 15:11; 17:13; Heb. 12:2, 22)

- Jesus “marveled” at the faith of the centurion. (Matt. 8:10)
- Jesus had compassion for the sick, poor and weak. (Mark 1:41; Luke 7:13)
- Jesus had friends that He loved. (John 11:3-5)
- Jesus loved children. (Matt. 19:13-15)
- Jesus prayed with a heart full of emotion, for “in the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard for His godly fear”. (Heb. 5:7)
- Jesus “in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin”. (Heb. 4:15)
- The fact that Jesus faced temptation means that He had a genuine human nature that could be tempted, for Scripture clearly tells us that “God cannot be tempted with evil” (James 1:13).

• People Near Jesus Saw Him As Only a Man:

- Even though Jesus had taught throughout all Galilee, “healing every disease and every infirmity among the people,” so that “great crowds followed Him” (Matt. 4:23–25), when He came to his own village of Nazareth, the people who had known Him for many years did not receive Him:
 - Jesus was rejected in His hometown. // 54 and coming to His hometown He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And are not His brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And are not all His sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” 57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, **“A prophet is not without honor except in His hometown and in His own household.”** 58 And He did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief. (Matt. 13:53-58)
 - Those people who knew Jesus best, the neighbors with whom He had lived and worked for thirty years, saw Him as no more than an ordinary man—a good man, no doubt, fair and kind and truthful, but certainly not a prophet of God who could work miracles and certainly not God himself in the flesh.
 - John tells us, “Even His brothers did not believe in Him”. (John 7:5)
 - Jesus was so fully human that even those who lived and worked with Him for thirty years, even those brothers who grew up in His own household, did not realize that He was anything more than another very good human being.

• Jesus Was Sinlessness:

- Jesus was fully human just as we are but Jesus was different in one important respect: He was without sin, and He never committed sin during His lifetime. (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)
- Jesus asked the Jews who opposed Him, “Which of you convicts me of sin?”, and received no answer. (John 8:46)
- Jesus always did what was pleasing to the Father. (John 8:29)
- Jesus was the light of the world. (John 8:12)
- When Jesus was put on trial before Pilate, in spite of the accusations of the Jews, Pilate could only conclude, “I find no crime in Him”. (John 18:38)
- In Acts Jesus is called the “ Holy One ” or the “Righteous One”. (Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:30; 7:52; 13:35)
- Jesus is referred to as “Him who knew no sin”. (2 Cor. 5:21)
- Peter speaks of Jesus as “a lamb without blemish or spot”. (1 Peter 1:19)
- Jesus is “one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin”. (Heb. 4:15)
 - » Through Jesus’ temptations He gained an ability to understand and help us in our temptations. “Because He Himself has suffered and been tempted He is able to help those who are tempted”. (Heb. 2:18)
 - » Jesus understands and will help us overcome in every situation in which we are struggling with temptation.
- Jesus was made perfect through suffering. (Heb. 2:10)
 - » Jesus “learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”. (Heb. 5:8–9)
 - » Jesus did not move from disobedience to obedience, He learned obedience from obeying.
- Jesus obeyed God in our place and as our representative, therefore succeeding where Adam had failed, and where we had failed. (Rom. 5:18-19)

Could Jesus Have Sinned?

- Jesus' human nature resisted temptation and did not sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:1)
- Jesus' divine nature could not be tempted to sin because He is God. (James 1:13)
- Jesus chose righteousness because He sought to please God the Father always. (John 8:28-30)

• Seven Reasons Why Jesus' Full Humanity Is Necessary?

- 1) Jesus was our representative and obeyed God for us where Adam had disobeyed.
 - » "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." (Rom. 5:18-19)
- 2) Jesus was our substitute sacrifice.
 - » God became a man to die and pay the penalty for man's sins. "to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Heb. 2:16-17)
- 3) Jesus is the one mediator between God and men. (1 Tim. 2:5)
 - » Jesus is the only mediator who could represent us to God and who could represent God to us.
- 4) Jesus fulfills God's original purpose for man to rule over creation.
 - » Jesus' sinless obedience to God as a man gave Him the right to rule over all creation as a man, fulfilling God's original purpose in putting man on the earth (Gen. 1:28). Jesus has been given "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18), and God has "put all things under His feet and has made Him the head over all things for the church". (Eph. 1:22)
- 5) Jesus is our example and pattern for life.
 - » John tells us, "He who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked" (1 John 2:6), and reminds us that "when He appears we shall be like him," (1 John 3:2-3)
 - » Paul tells us that we are continually being "changed into his likeness" (2 Cor. 3:18), thus moving toward the goal for which God saved us, that we might "be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29).
 - » Jesus tells us to "abide in Him" (John 15)
- 6) Jesus is the pattern for our redeemed (glorified) bodies.
 - » "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49). Jesus had to be raised as a man in order to be the "first-born from the dead" (Col. 1:18), the pattern for the bodies that we would later have.
- 7) Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest.
 - » Jesus lived as a man on earth, He was tempted as we are, suffered as we do and is able to sympathize fully with us and help us in our experiences. (Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16).

Jesus Will Be a Man Forever.

- Jesus did not give up His human nature after His death and resurrection, He appeared to His disciples as a man after the resurrection, even with the scars of the nail prints in His hands (John 20:25-27).
- Jesus was taken up into heaven, still in His resurrected human body, and two angels promised that He would return in the same way: "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).
- Jesus will continue forever in His offices as prophet, priest, and king, all of them carried out by virtue of the fact that He is both God and man forever.

• Application / Conclusion

- Our goal should be to become more like Jesus everyday, up to the point of death, and to die with unflinching obedience to God, with strong trust in him, displaying love and forgiveness for others.

Hebrews 1:3 // He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Luke 1:30-33 // And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

John 3:16-17 // “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Romans 8:3 // For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

Philippians 2:5-11 // Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,[a] 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,[b] being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so 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.

Luke 2:52 // And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

John 11:35 // Jesus wept.

Romans 5:18-19 // Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.