

## Growing in God

### Doctrine

1. Introduction – Who is Jesus?
  - 1.1. Matthew 16:13-16
  - 1.2. There is no question that is more important than this one. Everything hangs on how we answer it. From our theology to our ethics, indeed especially eternal life and death, everything hangs on how we answer this one question. Our answer affects everything about who we are and how we live.
  - 1.3. We know God only through Jesus [John 14:9, Colossians 1:15]. Jesus reveals God. He reveals who God is, what he is like, and what he cares about. In the true, apostolic gospel, we hear and know God's wondrous glory in the person and work of Jesus. If we get Jesus wrong, we get God wrong.
  - 1.4. Jesus is not only the key to understanding who God is, but he is also the key to understanding who we are.
    - 1.4.1. Jesus is the true human, the last and greater Adam. From the beginning, we were made in his image [Genesis 1:27–28, Colossians 1:15, 3:10]. We were made through him and for him [Colossians 1:16]. If we want to know why God made us and who we are, then we must understand who Jesus is.
    - 1.4.2. In Jesus's wholehearted love for God and for others, we see the joy and glory of our humanity as God intended it. In his incarnation, he dignifies our humanity.
  - 1.5. Christology stands at the centre of all our theology because Christ stands at the centre of life. This is how God made his world and how he redeemed his world. To know anything and anyone truly and rightly, we must know Jesus.
2. The Person of Christ
  - 2.1. Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person and will be so forever.
  - 2.2. The humanity of Christ
  - 2.3. The deity of Christ
  - 2.4. How Jesus' deity and humanity are united in the one person of Christ
3. The Humanity of Christ
  - 3.1. Virgin Birth
    - 3.1.1. Salvation ultimately must come from the Lord
    - 3.1.2. This made possible the uniting of full deity and humanity in one person
    - 3.1.3. Humanity without inherited sin [Luke 1:35]
  - 3.2. Human Weaknesses and Limitations
    - 3.2.1. Jesus had a human body
      - 3.2.1.1. Born like all human babies [Luke 2:7]
      - 3.2.1.2. He grew as other children grow [Luke 2:40, Luke 2:52]
      - 3.2.1.3. He became tired [John 4:6]
      - 3.2.1.4. He became thirsty [John 19:28]
      - 3.2.1.5. He became hungry [Matthew 4:2]
      - 3.2.1.6. He became physically weak [Matthew 4:11, Luke 23:26]
      - 3.2.1.7. He died [Luke 23:46]
      - 3.2.1.8. He rose from the dead in a physical, human body, but a perfect body that was no longer subject to weakness, disease, or death. [Luke 24:39, 42-43, John 20:17]
      - 3.2.1.9. He ascended to heaven in a human body [Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:9] – this shows that He continues to exist in that human body in heaven
    - 3.2.2. Jesus had a human mind
      - 3.2.2.1. He increased in wisdom [Luke 2:52]

- 3.2.2.2. Went through a learning process just like other children.
    - 3.2.3. Jesus had a human soul and human emotions
      - 3.2.3.1. His soul was troubled [John 12:27, John 13:21. Matthew 26:28]
      - 3.2.3.2. He marvelled at the faith of the centurion [Matthew 8:10]
      - 3.2.3.3. He wept with sorrow [John 11:35]
      - 3.2.3.4. He prayed with a heart full of emotion [Hebrews 5:7]
    - 3.2.4. People near Jesus saw him only as a man [Matthew 13:53-58, John 7:5]
  - 3.3. Jesus was so fully human that even those who lived and worked with him for thirty years, even his brothers that he grew up with did not realise that he was anything more than an exceptionally good human being.
4. Sinlessness
- 4.1. From the scriptures above we can see that the NT clearly affirms that Jesus was fully human just as we are. It also affirms that he was different in one important respect: he was without sin.
  - 4.2. Some object to this saying that if Jesus did not sin then he was not fully human because all humans sin.
  - 4.3. But this fails to appreciate the fact that we are in an abnormal situation. God did not create us sinful. Adam and Eve were fully human in the garden of Eden before they sinned.
  - 4.4. Satan was unable to tempt him successfully [Luke 4:13]
  - 4.5. The Jews who opposed him could find nothing against him [John 8:46]
  - 4.6. Pilate found no guilt in him [John 18:38]
  - 4.7. Paul refers to him as the one who knew no sin [2 Corinthians 5:21]
  - 4.8. The author of Hebrews says he was tempted but insists that he did not sin [Hebrews 4:15]
  - 4.9. Could Jesus have sinned?
5. Why was Jesus' full humanity necessary?
- 5.1. To deny Jesus' full humanity is to deny something at the very heart of Christianity.
  - 5.2. There are several reasons why Jesus had to be fully man if he was going to be the Messiah and earn our salvation
  - 5.3. For representative obedience [Luke 4:1-13, Genesis 2:15-3:7, Romans 5:18-19]. Jesus had to be a man to be our representative and obey in our place
  - 5.4. To be a substitute sacrifice [Hebrews 2:16-17]. Jesus had to become a man because God was concerned with saving men. That was the only way he could be an acceptable substitute for us. If he was not fully man, he could not have died to pay the penalty for man's sins.
  - 5.5. To be the mediator between God and man [1 Timothy 2:5]. To be our mediator Jesus had to be fully man and fully God.
  - 5.6. To fulfil God's original purpose for man to rule over creation [Matthew 28:18, Ephesians 1:22]
  - 5.7. To be our example and pattern in life [1 John 2:6, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 Peter 2:21, Hebrews 12:3]
  - 5.8. To be a pattern for our redeemed bodies [1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 23, 49]
  - 5.9. To sympathise as High Priest [Hebrews 2:18, 4:15-16]
  - 5.10. <https://ccel.org/ccel/athanasius/incarnation/incarnation.toc.html>
6. Jesus will be a man forever
- 6.1. Jesus did not temporarily become man
  - 6.2. He did not give up his human nature after his death and resurrection [John 20:25-27, Luke 24:39, Luke 24:41-42]
  - 6.3. He ascended in his resurrected human body [Acts 1:9]
  - 6.4. He will return in the same way [Acts 1:11]
  - 6.5. Appearance as the Son of Man [Acts 7:56, Revelation 1:13]
  - 6.6. Jesus will remain fully God and fully man forever
7. The deity of Christ
- 7.1. Direct Scriptural Claims

- 7.1.1. The word God (Theos) used of Christ [John 1:1, 18, 20:28, Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:8, Psalm 45:6, 2 Peter 1:1.
- 7.1.2. The word Lord (Kyrios) used of Christ. While the word can be used as a polite way to address a superior (like sit) or to mean master, it is also used in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) as a translation of the Hebrew YHWH (Yahweh). [1 Corinthians 8:6, 12:3, Luke 2:11, Luke 1:43, Matthew 3:3, Matthew 22:44, Hebrews 1:10-12, Revelation 19:16]
- 7.2. Possessed Divine Attributes
  - 7.2.1. Omnipotence [Matthew 8:26-27, Matthew 14:19, John 2:1-11]
  - 7.2.2. Authority [Mark 2:5-7, Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44, John 3:36]
  - 7.2.3. Omniscience [John 2:25, John 16:30, John 21:17]
  - 7.2.4. Eternity [John 8:58, Rev 22:13]
  - 7.2.5. Immortality [John 2:19, John 10:17-18, Hebrews 7:16]
  - 7.2.6. Worshipped [Revelation 19:10, Philippians 2:9-11, Hebrews 1:6, Revelation 5:13]
8. Kenosis
  - 8.1. Did Jesus give up some of his divine attributes while on earth?
  - 8.2. Philippians 2:5-7
  - 8.3. The text does not say that Christ emptied himself of some powers or divine attributes
  - 8.4. It describes what Jesus did in this emptying – he took on the form of a servant focussing on a change in role and status but not of his essential attributes and nature.
  - 8.5. Paul's purpose in this portion of scripture, focussing on the Philippians humbling themselves as Christ did
9. Jesus is fully God
  - 9.1. Colossians 1:19, Colossians 2:9, Matthew 1:23
10. Why was Jesus' Deity necessary?
  - 10.1. Only the infinite God could bear the full penalty for all the sins of those who believe in Him.
  - 10.2. Salvation belongs to God [Jonah 2:9]. The whole story of the OT points to the fact that no human being can or could ever save man. Salvation can only come from God.
  - 10.3. Only someone who was fully God could be the mediator between God and man [1 Timothy 2:5]
  - 10.4. If Jesus is not fully God, we have no salvation and ultimately no Christianity. It is no accident that throughout history those groups that have given up belief in the full deity of Christ have not remained long within the Christian faith [1 John 2:23, 2 John 9].
11. Deity and humanity in the one person of Christ
  - 11.1. The biblical teaching about the full deity and full humanity of Christ is so extensive that both have been believed from the earliest times in the history of the church. But a precise understanding of how full deity and full humanity could be combined in one person was formulated only gradually in the church and did not reach the final form until the Chalcedonian Definition in AD 451. Before that point, several inadequate views of the person of Christ were proposed and then rejected.
  - 11.2. Arianism: The term Arianism is derived from Arius (d. 336), a presbyter (elder) of the church in Alexandria whose views were condemned at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Arius taught that God the Son was at one point created by God the Father, and that before that time the Son did not exist, nor did the Holy Spirit, but the Father only. Thus, though the Son is a heavenly being who existed before the rest of creation and who is far greater than all the rest of creation, he is still not equal to the Father in all his attributes—he may even be said to be “like the Father” in his nature, but he cannot be said to be “of the same nature” as the Father, according to Arian teaching.
  - 11.3. Apollinarianism: Apollinaris, who became bishop in Laodicea about AD 361, taught that the one person of Christ had a human body but not a human mind or spirit and that the mind and spirit of Christ were from the divine nature of the Son of God. But the views of Apollinaris were rejected by the leaders of the church at that time, who realized that it was not just our human body that needed salvation and needed to be represented by Christ in his redemptive work but our human minds and spirits (or souls) as well: Christ had to be fully and truly man if he were to save us.

11.4. Nestorianism: This states that there were two separate persons in Christ, a human person and a divine person, a teaching that is distinct from the biblical view that sees Jesus as one person. It is important to understand why the church could not accept the view that Christ was two distinct persons. Nowhere in Scripture do we have an indication that the human nature of Christ, for example, is an independent person, deciding to do something contrary to the divine nature of Christ. Nowhere do we have an indication of the human and divine natures talking to each other or struggling within Christ, or any such thing. Rather, we have a consistent picture of a single person acting in wholeness and unity. Jesus always speaks as “I,” not as “we.”

11.5. Monophysitism (Eutychianism). A third inadequate view is called monophysitism, the view that Christ had one nature only (Gk. monos, “one,” and physis, “nature”). The primary advocate of this view in the early church was Eutyches (c. AD 378–454), who was the leader of a monastery at Constantinople. Eutyches taught the opposite error from Nestorianism, for he denied that the human nature and divine nature in Christ remained fully human and fully divine. He held rather that the human nature of Christ was taken up and absorbed into the divine nature, so that both natures were changed somewhat, and a third kind of nature resulted. Monophysitism also rightly caused great concern in the church because, by this doctrine, Christ was neither truly God nor truly man. If that were so, he could not truly represent us as a man nor could he be true God and able to earn our salvation.

11.6. The Solution to the Controversy: The Chalcedonian Definition of AD 451

11.6.1. So, following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin God-bearer as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ himself instructed us, and as the creed of the fathers handed it down to us.

11.6.2. Jesus Christ is a single person

11.6.3. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man

11.6.4. The two natures of Christ are united without confusion or change

11.6.5. The two natures of Christ are united without division or separation

11.6.6. The attributes of both natures are preserved

11.6.7. The council did not answer every possible question in its definition, but it did provide boundaries within which we can examine any questions and remain true to the Bible.

12. Conclusion

12.1. The fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become man and join himself to a human nature forever so that infinite God became one person with finite man—that will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe.