

1. **How can Jesus be equal with the Father and yet say that the Father was greater?**
2. **How can Jesus be omniscient (all-knowing) and yet say that the Son did not know of His return?**

The humanity of Christ never compromises His Deity, and the Deity of Christ never compromises His Humanity.

Question #1 - How can Jesus be equal with the Father and still say, "the Father is greater than I?"

John 14:28 - *"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."*

John 10:29 - *"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."*

The idea behind the question is really to try to find a contradiction in the Bible. If someone can determine that the Bible can't be trusted because it contradicts itself, that person can then throw out the authority of the Bible and live life believing they are not accountable to the living God of the Bible. I really do think that is the motive of this question. People don't want to be held accountable to God, so if they can disregard His word, they can begin to think that they won't have to stand before Him one day in judgment.

We hold to the stance that Jesus is the Son of God who is equal with God the Father. The two persons are co-eternal and co-equal as members of the Trinity. The Trinity is a belief that the Bible teaches there is one God, eternally existing in three distinct Persons, while remaining one God. We have made a case for the trinity so far in this study, and we have built a case for Jesus being equal with the Father (cf. "Jesus in the Trinity", "John 5:19-25 Sermon").

According to **Hebrews 2:5-9**, Jesus was made, for a little while, lower than the angels. We understand this time of Him being made a little lower than the angels to be referring to the time between Jesus' birth and death. Jesus became a man, and **Philippians 2:6-7** refers to that time as something that Jesus had to empty himself in order to be what He was - a human servant.

What we learn from looking at the book of Hebrews and the book of Philippians is that Jesus was God from all eternity. He was existing with God the Father, and His status was that of equal with the Father; but, when He became a man and when He lived life in a state where he had potential to die (mortality) because He was a man, He was made lower than the angels. His equality with the Father changed for a temporary amount of time. He went from being in the form and appearance of God to being in the form of a servant and in the appearance of men.

Did Jesus stop being the second member of the Triune God when He became a man? No. He remained God, but according to the Word of God, His status of equality went from that of equal with God to that of a servant of God. He was made in the likeness of men. He was made, for a time, lower than the angels, because He was a human servant.

Because of what the Bible teaches us in [Philippians 2](#) and [Hebrews 2](#), we can say that Jesus, in His essence, truly is equal with God ([John 5:19-25](#)), and during the time of His earthly life, the Father was greater than Him.

That is my personal answer, and I have done my best to defend that answer Biblically. There are others who make the case that Jesus, in essence, is equal with the Father, but in office, is not equal with the Father. They may also word it to say that they have absolute equality but relative inequality.

There is another note I'd like to make and that is regarding the context of [John 14:28](#). Jesus was discussing going to the Father and that Him going to the Father would be far better for Him and for the disciples. It's possible that He meant the Father is greater than Him in the sense that if He is with the Father, there will be better fellowship between the disciples and God, because the disciples will be in fellowship with the triune God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus were with the Father, that means the disciples would have the Spirit of God in them, which is far better than having Christ with them according to Jesus' words in [John 16:7](#). This is a possibility, but it does not answer the issue of [John 10:29](#) - "Greater than all." That is why I still hold to the answer already given.

So my final answer is this: Jesus was made lower than the angels for the time of His earthly human life, and that is why He can say, "the Father is greater than I."

One last note, how can we determine that this time was temporary and not forever? Jesus anticipated His status to be restored to His former glory upon His resurrection and ascension, making him lower than the angels for only a "little while." **John 17:5**

Question #2 - How can Jesus be omniscient (all-knowing) and yet say that "not even the Son" knows?

Mark 13:32 - *"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

Matthew 24:36 - *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."*

The context is about the return of Christ to establish the Kingdom for Israel. Jesus calls it the coming of the Son of Man or the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

The issue with this text is that we take the stand that Jesus is omniscient. Omniscience means that He is all-knowing. He knows all there is to know, that is one of the attributes of God that we believe the Bible teaches is true of Jesus, the second member of the Trinity.

*The following notes are copied from lesson #6 of Christology.

[Jesus' attribute of Omniscience Omni (all) Science (Knowledge)

God is all knowing. He is infinite in knowledge. God is all wise.

Of God:

1 Samuel 16:7 -	God is able to look beyond the physical and see the heart of people.
Psalms 147:5 -	God infinitely understands.
Jeremiah 17:9,10 -	Man's heart lies to him, but God searches and knows the heart.

Of Jesus:

John 2:24 -	Jesus knew all men.
John 4:29 -	Jesus knew the Samaritan woman's past.
John 16:30 -	The disciples of Jesus said He knew all things.
Matthew 9:4 -	Jesus knew what the scribes were thinking.

While it is said of God in the Bible that He knows all things, it is also said of Jesus that He knows all things. No mere man, like you and me, could ever make the same claim. Jesus is no mere man. He possesses the attribute of omniscience. He knows all, just as God knows all.

That means that Jesus knows what is best for each and every one of us. His plans and His will for us are the best possible outcome for our life. Jesus understands everything about us and all that we go through. When Jesus, through the Word of God, gives us instruction, we can trust Him, because He knows everything.

Now there is one question that often comes up with this topic and that question is this: What about in Mark 13:32 where Jesus said that He did not know what day the Father had appointed for Him to return? That is an excellent question. I won't take the time to answer that tonight, but, Lord willing, we will tackle that question head on at some point during this study in the future.]

This question is also a very similar question that I asked during lesson #13 of this series. I was discussing the humanity of Christ, and I showed from **Luke 2:41** concerning Jesus as a child. The Text says that He grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. The New American Standard Bible says that He increased in wisdom. That would indicate that Jesus had to learn things as a child growing up. So that creates the same dilemma. How can Jesus increase in wisdom if He is all-knowing?

There is one more text of Scripture that is related to this question and that is from **Hebrews 5:7-9**. This text shows us that Jesus had to learn obedience. Again, how can He learn obedience if He is all-knowing?

To answer this question, I need to first give some logic regarding life as a human, and then I'll defend my answer with Scripture.

I believe Jesus is fully human. He did not appear to be a man, but He truly did become a man while remaining God. He had all the characteristics of humanity except sin. Now, one part of being human is that we learn things. We know very little when we are young, and then as we grow up, we learn knowledge, and when we apply knowledge of truth, we increase in wisdom. If Jesus were to be truly a man, he needed to experience life in that way.

I will give you my Scriptural answer, which takes us to **Philippians 2:5-8**. Last week we said that it appears from this text that Jesus emptied Himself of the independent use of His Divine attributes during the time of His earthly life. What it means to empty Himself of the independent use of Divine attributes is that He did not exercise His divine power and knowledge independently while He lived life on earth as an un-glorified man. Instead of acting independently, He did everything under the authority of the Father, by the Spirit. He said Himself that what He said was by instruction of the Father (John 12:49). He also said that He did nothing unless He saw the Father doing it also (John 5:19-20).

Jesus, living life on earth as a human, was not going to exercise His Divine knowledge of the future unless it was something that the Father wanted Him to be aware of and to speak about. He completely submitted to learning by the Spirit from the Father while He lived life on earth. This would allow for Him to be able to learn things and not know things during His earthly life and still possess the attribute of omniscience because He was not independently exercising that divine attribute during His earthly life.

Did He not know things while He was in His glorified state prior to Him becoming a man? No. I believe He did know all the knowledge of God prior to Him being a man. He is the creator of all things in heaven and on earth according to Colossians 1, meaning that He is the creator God who is all-knowing according to Psalm 147:5.

Does He currently not know things even though He has now ascended to the Father and is restored to His exalted state? No. I believe He emptied Himself of the independent use of His divine attributes only during the time between His birth and death. He did not tell the disciples that He did not know the time of the Kingdom in Acts 1 when they asked Him. This was after the resurrection when He appeared with a glorified body. I believe He knew but told the disciples that they did not need to know.