

We Believe: Doctrines of Our Faith

The Doctrine of Christ

The Baptist Faith and Message article on God the Son begins with these statements. "Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin." These claims about Jesus capture both the biblical description of Him as well as the difficult paradox He appears to be. How can God become a man? How can a spiritual being take on physical form? How can an eternal, immortal God die?

These questions and others have been the focus of theological discussion from the early church up to the present day. Like the doctrine of the Trinity, Jesus's identity has produced many of the heretical beliefs that offshoots of Christianity hold to. Arius (3rd and 4th centuries AD) was an early church leader who developed one of the most widespread and persistent errors about Jesus: the claim that He is only the first created being and not actually God.

I. Who Is Jesus?

Jesus is a _____, born to a woman named Mary, who lived and died roughly 2000 years ago.

Jesus is _____, with all of the characteristics of God (omniscience, sovereignty, etc.).

Jesus is both _____ human and _____ divine. He lacks no essential qualities of either humanity or divinity.

Any belief that claims Jesus is not this way is _____.

II. How was God Human?

John 1:1 says that Jesus ("the Word") was _____ before creation, was _____ before creation, and dwelt _____ in creation.

Colossians 1:15-20 says that Jesus is the _____ and that "all the fullness" dwelt in Him (compared with Genesis 1:26-27 where mankind is "in the image of God").

The theological term for this reality is called the "_____." Divine and human essences combined in the person of Jesus. He was neither sub-divine nor super-human.

As with the Trinity, we have no _____ for a God-man. Yet Scripture teaches us that this is the truth. In the end, it is a matter of faith.

An Aside: Assumed Inerrancy

Inerrancy means that the Bible is accurate in everything it says about matters of _____ and _____.

Belief in inerrancy can be _____ by lots of evidence that confirms the accuracy of the biblical claims.

Sometimes, the Bible reveals things that go beyond what we can _____. In these moments, we have a choice:

- (1) We can jettison parts of the Bible that transgress a modern, rationalist worldview.
- (2) We can assume a convincing explanation exists even if we don't yet know it.

When it comes to inerrancy, we have to decide what rules the day: Scripture or our ability to reason. In general, the best approach seems to be (2). A little _____ in the world is not a bad thing!

III. How Did God Die?

Once we have accepted that Jesus was fully human and fully God, His _____ makes more sense.

It was not as though only the "_____ " of Jesus died. Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, died on the cross.

Because Jesus' death was the death of a God-man, it had the power to _____ more than normal human death could.

Colossians 2:8-15

- Christ's death created a way for us to be _____ to glory with Him.
- Christ's death paid the _____ of sin we owed and which condemned us.
- Christ's death paved the way for death to be _____.
- Christ's resurrection defeated the _____ that war against us.

IV. Jesus, Our Example (Philippians 2:5-13)

One of the consequences of Jesus being human is that we can _____ Him.

- Take on _____; be a servant of others.
- Be willing to give everything for God's _____ in your life.
- Obey God for the sake of _____ Him.
- Expect _____ from God for obedience.

In Jesus, God became _____ like us so that we could truly strive to be _____ like Him.