**Fully God, Fully man**

We have talked recently about Jesus being God, through his “I Am” statements and his action in redeeming of humanity.

I hope that the deity of Christ is a fact we can all agree on. If not, you know what next week’s sermon will be on!

To recap:

1. Through Jesus, we can have real knowledge of God

John 14:9 *Anyone who has seen me has seen the father*.

1. Redemption is available to us. Jesus is the life, the giver and sustainer of life; he did not have to die, but did – the death of Christ is sufficient for all sinners who have ever lived;

Ephesians 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*

1. God and humanity have been reunited. God himself crossed the chasm created by sin.
2. Worship of Jesus is appropriate. He is not merely the highest of the creatures, but he is God in the same sense and to the same degree as the Father. He is as deserving of our praise, adoration and obedience as is the Father[[1]](#footnote-1)

We use the term that Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Colossians 2:9 *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*,

Today I want to focus on the fully man part of that saying.

God The Son: Consubstantial (of the same substance or essence) with the Father, wholly man and wholly God. Jesus was both God, and Son of God, both man, and God, at the same time.

(If I slip up and say man and not human, please forgive me, I am not using that term as a gender but as a generic term for humanity.)

There is no half human, half God about Jesus. There is no yo-yo effect of sometimes God, sometimes human. On one hand, Jesus was wholly human, as complete a person of flesh and blood as was his human mother. On the other hand, he was wholly divine, no less God than his heavenly Father.

The concept of the humanity of Jesus co-existing with His deity is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend. 100% God, 100% man – it does not seem to make sense. But the mathematics of 2 into 1 does go. Jesus’ nature—fully man and fully God—is a biblical fact.

John says, "*We beheld his glory —the glory of the Unique One, who came from the Father full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14).

Just as the disciples saw the human nature of Jesus, they also saw and bore testimony tohis divine nature. They called this his "glory".

The humanity of Jesus is as equally important as the deity of Jesus. Jesus was born as a human being while still being totally divine.

One commentator writes that “Apart from the pure act of God in the incarnation, there would have been no Jesus of Nazareth, so that the truly and fully human life of Jesus is grounded in the act of the Son or the Word in becoming flesh”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Let’s break our reasoning for our claim of fully human down into 5 categories.

1. Jesus needed to be a human in order to atone for our sin.

Atone means to compensate.

Jesus had to be fully human because God established the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins in the Old Testament

Leviticus 17:11 *For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life*.

Hebrews 9:22 *the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

The blood of animals, although acceptable on a temporary basis as a foreshadowing of the blood of the perfect God-Man (Jesus), was insufficient for the permanent remission of sin because “*it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*” (Hebrews 10:4).

Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, sacrificed His human life and shed His human blood to cover the sins of all who would ever believe in Him. If He were not human, this would have been impossible.

It was not some outsider to humanity who died on the cross. He was one of us and therefore could truly offer a sacrifice on our behalf.

Jesus could only represent humans if he became a human—a real human. And if he cannot represent us, then he cannot redeem us. Or as the church father Gregory of Nazianzus once said, “That which he has not assumed he has not healed.”

If the humanity of Christ is imperfect, atonement is imperfect, and we would still be in our sins.[[3]](#footnote-3)

in Galatians 4:4–5: *“But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”*

Only a human could be “born under the law.” No animal or angelic being is “under the law.” Only humans are born under the law, and only a human being could redeem other human beings born under the same law.

Being born under the law of God means all humans are guilty of breaking the law. We spoke of this last week.

Only a perfect human—Jesus Christ—could perfectly keep the law and perfectly fulfil the law, thereby redeeming us from that guilt. Jesus accomplished our redemption on the cross, exchanging our sin for His perfect righteousness

2 Corinthians 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

If Jesus was not a real man, then the death on the cross was an illusion and so is our salvation; He had to be a real man to die for humanity.[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. He experienced life so he can truly sympathise with and intercede for us.

He did not descend from heaven and suddenly appear on earth but was conceived in the womb of a human mother and nourished in the womb like any other child.[[5]](#footnote-5)

He has experienced all that we might undergo. When we are hungry, weary, lonely, tempted he fully understands, for he has gone through it all himself.

Hebrews 4:15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.*

In His humanity, Jesus was subjected to all the same kinds of trials that we are, and that should give us great confidence that He is a sympathetic and understanding high priest.

Saying he lived a human life means that He experienced all the temptations, discomforts, and miseries that accompany life in the flesh. He suffered with us. He was poor; He was despised; He suffered physical pain; and He endured the sorrows of a lingering and most cruel death.

The author of Hebrews reminds us: “*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things . . . For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham*” (Heb. 2:14–16).

1. Jesus manifests the true nature of humanity and is our example.

Our perception of ourselves and others are but imperfect examples of humanity. Jesus not only told us what perfect humanity is, he exhibited it.

He is not some celestial superstar but one who has lived where we live. We can therefore look to him as the model of the Christian life. We do not have the option of saying that “Oh Jesus was God therefore he could do what we cannot.” He was a man and so we can aspire to be like him.

John 14:*12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

The author of Hebrews: “*Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every way, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest”* (Heb. 2:17).

His humanity is not a mirage.

1. Human nature is good.

Gnostics say that spirit is good, and matter, including the physical body, is evil. And that we need to be delivered from the physical world in order to go to the spiritual world. They argued that Jesus merely took on human form temporarily, rather like putting on a mouldy smelling old coat that you can’t wait to take off as soon as you put it on.

In reply to this belief, John writes in 2 John 7 *Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.*

Scripture nowhere says that matter is intrinsically evil. On the contrary, as it says in Genesis chapter 1, God made everything “good.” And when he made humans on the 6th day, it was “very good”.

It’s true that as we look at the physical world, we can clearly see the corruption in it. There’s dysfunction and suffering and evil. But those problems are caused by sin, not by being physical. And God’s redemption will end the former, not the latter. He has no intention of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Human nature is not inherently evil or inferior to the spiritual and immaterial. Jesus took upon himself our full human nature as a reminder that to be human is not evil, but good.

And remember Jesus had a physical body.

1 John 1:1-2 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us*

Touch was thought by the Greeks to be the most basic and most reliable of the senses, for it is direct perception, nothing gets between the perceiver and the thing perceived. They confirmed that our eyes can lie, our ears can lie but touch is physical. So, when John records “we have looked at and our hands have touched”, he was confirming the physical presence of Jesus[[6]](#footnote-6)

John 20:27 *Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”*

As well as the Gnostics, there are others who reject these biblical truths. Docetism is the view that Jesus was God, but not human. Apollinarianism denies the humanity of Jesus, claiming he took on genuine humanity but not all of human nature. And at the other end of the scale, Ebionism declares that Jesus was a man, but not God.

All of these viewpoints are unbiblical and false.

1. And finally, God is not totally transcendent.

We say that God is transcendent, meaning “existing above and independent from. He is the only truly transcendent Being. The “LORD God Almighty” (in Hebrew, El Shaddai) created all things on the earth, beneath the earth and in the heavens above, yet He exists above and independent from them.

But we can confirm that Jesus is Christ Immanuel – God with us. Matthew 1:22–23: “*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ (which means ‘God with us’).”*

So, if Christ is not human, then God has not reached us, but has stopped short of our humanity – then God does not love us to the uttermost, for his love has stopped short of coming all the way to where we are, and becoming one of us in order to save us. Christ’s humanity means that God’s love is now flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, really one of us and with us.

If he could actually come and live among us at one time as a real human person, it is not surprising that he can and does act within the human realm today as well.[[7]](#footnote-7)

We can declare with John when he writes (1:14) *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*

The truth is that the man who walked among us was a demonstration, not of the unveiled deity but of perfect humanity. The awful majesty of the Godhead was mercifully sheathed in the soft envelope of human nature to protect humanity.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Remember when Moses met God, he was told in Exodus 33:20 “*you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live*.” But with Jesus we can look upon his face: (Hebrews 12:2) *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Jesus has come in the flesh; He sinlessly experienced our human frailties; His human blood was shed for our sins; and He was fully God and fully Man. These are biblical truths that cannot be denied.[[9]](#footnote-9)

As John of Damascus wrote in the 7th century: “Christ is one, perfect God and perfect man: and Him we worship along with the Father and the Spirit. For we worship Him, not as mere flesh, but as flesh united with divinity, and because his two natures are brought under the one person and one subsistence of God the Word.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In Jesus Christ, we can see a God revealed with a human face, a self-giving God, one to be comfortable with in times of prayer, from whom and for whom we can live. According to Jesus, God offered and continues to offer entry into a realm or kingdom where humans can hope for justice, compassion and peace for all. In light of Jesus’ own life, death and resurrection, we can look to Jesus to open up a perspective on God as a God of hope in times of dark and light, of joy and sorrow, of adversity and death[[11]](#footnote-11)

1. Millard Erickson *Christian Theology 2nd edition* 720 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Thomas F Torrance *Incarnation: the person and life of Christ* 84 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Torrance 186 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Enns, P. P. (1989). The Moody handbook of theology (p. 223). Moody Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Erickson 723 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Millard Erickson *Christian Theology 2nd edition* 724 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Erickson 737 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Tozer, A W *The Knowledge of the Holy* 47 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.gotquestions.org/humanity-of-Jesus.html [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. JOHN OF DAMASCUS\*. 300 quotations for preachers from the Medieval church [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. John Dunn “The God of Christians revealed in Jesus Christ” in Neil Darragh (ed) *The God Book: talking about God Today* 75 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)