

Jesus Christ: 'Our Great God and Savior'

by Greg Herrick

The sermon explores the dual nature of Jesus Christ as both fully God and fully man, emphasizing his role in salvation and the mystery of the incarnation.

Scripture: John 1:1, Romans 5:10, Philippians 2:6, Colossians 1:13, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:3, 1 Peter 3:18

Topics: "Christology", "Atonement"

Description

Greg Herrick preaches on the dual nature of Jesus Christ, emphasizing that he is both fully God and fully man, with two distinct natures united in one person forever. The mystery of the incarnation is highlighted, acknowledging that while the exact relationship between Jesus' divine and human nature may be beyond full human comprehension, it is not contradictory but a profound truth to be accepted. The sermon delves into the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection, explaining how his sacrifice paid the penalty for our sins through vicarious atonement and penal substitution, ultimately defeating Satan's authority and offering salvation to believers.

Transcript

For God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16)!

Meditation: "I Will Come and Be Among You"

Jesus Christ Is Fully God

1. Read John 1:1, 14. Who is the "Word" in John 1:1? What did the word do in 1:14? NOTE: With the use of the expression "took up residence" John is alluding to God's presence in the tabernacle of the OT.
2. What was the result of the Word taking on flesh in John 1:18 (cf. John 8:58; 14:8-9; 20:28)?
3. How does Paul refer to Jesus in Philippians 2:6? NOTE: The expression "form of God" is one of the strongest possible ways to express Christ's deity in the Greek language. The term "form" (morphe,,) refers not to outward similarities, but to inward or essential attributes, properties, and characteristics.
4. What titles does Paul give Christ in Titus 2:13?

5. What does the title "Lord" reveal about Jesus in Romans 10:13 (cf. Acts 2:20-21)? What OT text does Romans 10:13 cite? Who is Lord in the OT passage? In Jewish thought only God can save. Note: certain OT terms for God such as Yahweh (i.e., God) and Adonai (i.e., "Master") are usually translated as kurios in the Greek Old Testament¹ (i.e., LXX; used frequently by the apostles). Thus it is highly significant in certain passages, such as Romans 10:13, when these Jewish monotheistic writers refer to Jesus as kurios.

6. Read Hebrews 1:3 and 1:8. What does the writer say about Jesus?

7. Read 2 Peter 1:1. How does Peter refer to Jesus?

Jesus Christ Is Fully Man

1. Read John 8:40 and Acts 2:22. How did Jesus refer to himself? How did Peter refer to him?

2. Read Luke 2:52. What does this say about Jesus' humanity?

3. Read Hebrews 2:14. What does the author say about Jesus Christ regarding his humanity? How does his death prove that he was human?

4. What two important points does Hebrews 4:16 make about Jesus?

5. Read 1 John 1:1-3; Matthew 4:2; John 4:6; 19:28. What do these passages teach us about Jesus and his humanity?

6. Read Hebrews 12:2; Mark 3:5; 6:6; 10:14; Luke 7:9. How do these passages contribute to our understanding of Jesus' humanity.

Summary of Who Jesus Is

Jesus is both fully God and fully man. Obviously the precise "way" in which God accomplished this union is a mystery (1 Tim 3:16). While Christ's two natures are taught in Scripture, the Biblical record only ever refers to Jesus Christ as a single person and he himself only acts and speaks as a single individual. Divine titles are used to refer to his human qualities and acts and human titles are used when his divinity (qualities or acts) is in view. In short, he has two natures (divine/human) united in one person forever, without confusion of the attributes.

What Jesus Accomplished in His Death and Resurrection

1. Read 1 Peter 3:18? Who paid the penalty for sin? Why did he do this? Read Hebrews 9:27-28. Does Christ need to continually die or be sacrificed again and again?

2. Read 1 John 2:2 and 4:10. The term "propitiate" means to "satisfy." How, then, has the death of Christ affected God's just wrath (Rom 5:10) against us?

3. Read John 12:31; 16:11, and especially 1 John 3:8. What did the death and resurrection, i.e., the glorification of Christ, accomplish with respect to Satan and his authority?

4. What did Christ's death and resurrection accomplish for us as Christians? Read Colossians 1:13-14; Acts 2:31-33; Romans 5:1 and 6:1-14; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:5-7.

A Summary of the Nature of Christ's Death and Resurrection

While Christ's death is a model of sacrificial service to God and love for people (cf. Phil 2:6-11), this is not the primary explanation of it in the New Testament. The primary explanation and summary of the multifaceted cross-work of Christ is to refer to it as vicarious atonement or penal substitution. This means that Christ's sacrifice paid the full penalty of our sin by dying in our place. The penalty for sin is death and Christ completely paid that penalty on the cross.

Meditation: What Does This Mean for My Life?

Worship

Paul referred to Jesus as "our great God and Savior" (Titus 2:13). Just as Peter fell at Jesus' feet and worshipped him (Luke 5:8) so we too should humbly worship the Lord and love him with an undying love (Ephesians 6:24). What do you think it means to worship Jesus Christ? Compare Mark 12:29-30 and Romans 12:1-2. What is God really looking for? See John 4:23-24; Mark 12:41-44.

Obedience

What does it mean to serve a new master now instead of sin? How is Jesus a better master than the dictates and lusts of our previous life when we were without him (cf. Romans 6:12-13; Eph 2:1-3)?

Mystery: Let God Be God

There are those who deny the deity or humanity of Jesus Christ and thus they distort the teaching of Scripture on this matter. Almost always they begin with the presupposition that the incarnation is absurd or logically contradictory. This is simply false. There is nothing contradictory about asserting that Jesus is both God and man, that is, that he has two related, yet distinct natures. We have not said that his human nature was divine and human at the same time and in the same way, nor have we said that his divine nature is both human and divine at the same time and in the same way. This would be a contradiction. Rather, we are asserting that within the one person of Jesus Christ there are two natures, one human, one divine. Indeed, the biblical evidence, which we only lightly touched on above, demands this interpretation. Now, while the incarnation is not logically contradictory, the precise relationship between his divine nature and human nature is for the most part beyond our powers of rational explanation. Again, because we cannot completely explain it does not mean it is contradictory, it simply means we don't understand it's inner workings and dynamics very well. And here's where we--along with the early church--joyfully cry out, "mystery" (1 Tim 3:16; Compare also Romans 11:33-36). In short, the incarnation must be both logically and existentially possible because scripture says it happened.

1 The Greek Old Testament, translated sometime between ca. 285 B.C. and 150 B.C., is often referred to with the Roman numeral LXX (i.e., "seventy"). Apparently this comes from a tradition which states that the work of translating was done by seventy two translators and completed in seventy-two days. This tradition seems to have had its beginning in the Epistle of Aristeeas (2nd century B.C.) but is also found in Philo (Vita Mosis, 2.5-7.25-44), Josephus (Antiquities 12.2.1-15), and Justin (Against Heresies, 3.21.2). For more information, the reader is urged to consult Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 407-10.

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