

## Show Video

### Foundations #3 – Jesus Christ

#### Who do you think Jesus is?

He has been called a great religious leader.

He has been called a great moral teacher.

He has been called the most influential person to have ever lived.

But was Jesus nothing more than a great religious and moral teacher? The real test of what one thinks of Jesus must revolve around **who** He claimed to be and **what** He accomplished during His brief time on earth.

The main theme of the Bible is Jesus, the New Testament is about Him, **about who He was and the work He did**. The Old Testament led up to Him, over **1,000 years before He was born Old Testament** prophets spoke about Him.

Psalm 22:16-18, *“Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”*

Keep in mind that just studying and knowing about Jesus doesn't mean we know Him personally. Over the years I have read a lot about whatever president is in office, but I never met one of them personally.

And just as knowing about them did not make me any closer to them so studying about Jesus will not automatically make us closer to Him. The Pharisees saw Jesus perform miracles for quite some time and said, *“He casts out demons by the power of Satan.”*

**As close as the 12 disciples were**, one of them still betrayed Him. The religious authorities obviously knew the tomb was empty, but did not want to believe. So we see that having knowledge of Jesus still does not mean we will have faith in Him.

It appears that when one comes to a correct perception of Jesus, more is involved than just knowing the facts. Matthew 16:16, *“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”* Then what did Jesus say to Peter? Vs 17, *“...For this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.”* So something more than just seeing the events was involved.

Having faith is described in the Bible as a gift of the Spirit. Just telling a person they need to have faith doesn't mean they can.

1 Corinthians 12:8-9, *"To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit."*

We covered the nature of man two weeks ago and we came to the conclusion that man was created to love, serve and have fellowship with God.

And the reason that man fails to fulfill the reason he was created is because **all men sin**. (1 John 1:8). And we saw last week that because of God's love for mankind, He chose to act through Jesus Christ to restore mankind to the condition and relationship that God created for mankind in the first place.

When we study the person and work of Christ we are studying the very foundation of Christianity. We as Christians are by definition believers and followers of Christ. **Also note that the word Christ was not part of the name He was given by His earthly parents.**

They named him Jesus, which is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua" and it means "The Lord Saves." The word "Christ" is the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Messiah."

The word "Christ" is actually a title that He was given. It means **"anointed."** And was used anytime a person was anointed to some office.

However Jesus was called **"The Anointed."** And all Jews knew what that referred to; it referred to **The Anointed One of God**. So when you see the words "Jesus Christ" in the Bible it actually means **"Jesus, The Anointed One of God."**

We refer to the statement that **Peter** made in Matthew 16:16 as the **"Good Confession"** and we ask everyone who becomes a member or is baptized to agree with what Peter said, and what did Peter say? *"Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"* In the original Greek it was **"You are the Christ, the Son of the God who is living."**

The reason I mention this is because the Holy Spirit caused a woman to make the very same **"Good Confession."** This happened in John 11:27 when Jesus said to Martha in verse 25-26, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

And this is what **Martha** answered in verse 27: *"Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of the God, who was to come into the world."*

How does that match up with what Peter said?

I don't think this was accidental, I believe that the Holy Spirit purposely caused a man and a woman to make the "Good Confession."

That's interesting but **what does the "Good Confession" mean?** The early church declared that it meant that Jesus was the Son of God and is made of the same stuff, of the same essence, as the Father and the Spirit. (We call this **The Trinity**.)

But that brings up another question. How could the same person be both God and man? How could He who is eternal become temporary? This led to the doctrine of **Incarnation**. (Literally, "In flesh.") **That in Jesus God took on human flesh, that our Lord Jesus was truly God and truly man.**

Remember that last week we talked about how only God, only a member of the Godhead that we refer to as The Trinity, would have enough value to pay for the sins of all mankind.

Incarnation is the belief that at one point in time and space God entered the world, in the person of Jesus Christ, as He had never done before and has never done since.

During the time that Jesus came to earth as a man He temporarily **subordinated** Himself to the Father and so we have verses like Mark 13:32 *"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

After Jesus had died and went to heaven we read in 2 Corinthians 13:14, *"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*

In this verse the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are treated as equals. None are treated as superior or inferior to the others. But while Jesus was here on earth He subordinated Himself and was fully human. **The importance of this fact cannot be overestimated;** it has a direct bearing on our salvation.

*"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who existing in the form of God, counted not the **being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped**, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, **being made in the likeness of men...**"* Philippians 2:5-11.

God is high above man, so much so that He cannot be known just by human reasoning. If God is to be known He has to take the initiative to make Himself known.

There is a large spiritual and moral gap between us and God because of our sin. Man is unable by his own effort to overcome his sin and to rise to the level of God. If there is to be any fellowship between God and man they need to be united in some way.

This was accomplished by the incarnation where deity and humanity were united in one person, Jesus Christ. If Jesus was not really one of us, humanity has not been united with deity, and **we cannot be saved!**

For the work accomplished in Christ's death to be valid, and by that I mean, for His death on the cross to cover our sins, **depends on whether He was really human.** Just as we depend on Him being the Son of God. We need both the human Jesus and the divine Jesus. **Hang with me now**, this is important.

### **Why must He be fully human for us to be saved?**

If He was not human when He faced the trial and crucifixion, then what is the point? **This is something that God could easily do.** You cannot hurt God. If He was not the "Passover lamb" sacrificed for us then our sins remain.

Furthermore, Jesus ability to intercede for us depends upon His humanity. By experiencing all the temptations and trials of human existence then He will be able to understand us in our struggles as humans.

If He were not human He would not be a priest that could intercede on our behalf. *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."* (Heb 4:14-15)

Jesus did everything his disciples did, He ate, He bled, He slept, He cried, He did everything except sin. **The fact the Jesus was fully human means:**

**1. The atoning death of Jesus can truly save us.** It was not some outsider to the human race who died on the cross. He was one of us, and so could truly offer a sacrifice on our behalf. Like the Old Testament priest, Jesus was a man who offered a sacrifice on behalf of his fellows.

**2. Jesus can truly sympathize with us and intercede for us.** He has experienced all that we experience. When we are hungry, weary, or lonely, He understands, for He has gone through it all Himself. (Hebrews 4:15) *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses.*

**3. Jesus displayed the true nature of humanity.** While we may draw our conclusions as to what humanity is by examining ourselves and those around us, these are imperfect examples of humanity. Jesus has not only told us what perfect humanity is, He has **demonstrated** it.

**4. Jesus can be our example.** He has lived where we live. So we can look to Him as a model of the Christian life. The fact that Jesus found it necessary to pray and depend on the Father is a good indication that we must also rely on Him.

**5. God is not so far removed from the human race.** If he could actually 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.

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* John 1:14

**Okay, we see that He was fully human but equally important is that He was fully divine as well.**

In Genesis 1:26 God said, *“Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness.”* Who was God talking to? The members of the Trinity.

In the New Testament, speaking of Jesus, John wrote in John 1:1-3, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. **Through him all things were made**; without him nothing was made that has been made.”*

*“For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”* 1 John 5:7. All three of the Trinity are treated as equally being God by the Bible.

What do I think about the Trinity? First of all I think the Trinity is above our understanding and that God is so powerful, and so wonderful that in an effort to help us understand even just a little bit about Him, He refers to Himself as the Father, Son and Spirit.

I don't know that we can actually wrap our mind around the truth of a being so powerful who tells us that there is only one God. And yet we can see three distinct personalities in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**To accurately describe what Jesus is was so hard that the early Christians gave up and only could come up with what He was not.**

In order to preserve fully our Lord's **deity** AND His **humanity** they came up with four terms of what did **NOT** happen in the Incarnation. SO WE HAVE FOUR NEGATIVES.

1. The two natures are declared to be "without confusion."
2. The two natures are declared to be "without conversion."
3. The two natures are declared to be "without separation."
4. The two natures are declared to be "without division."

We know what a father is and we know what a son is, we have a little more trouble with understanding the Spirit but I think God uses these terms for our benefit knowing that what He truly is, is completely above our ability to understand.

Hebrews 13:8, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*" Jesus is considered to be equal with God the Father.

Colossians 1:15-20, "*The Son is the image of the invisible God. For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*"

### **The fact that Christ is God, a member of the Trinity, means:**

**1. We can have real knowledge of God!** Jesus said, "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*" (John 14:9). In the OT, prophets gave us God's message, but Jesus **is** God. So if we want to know what the love of God is, or the power of God is like, we only need to look at Christ.

**2. Salvation is available to us!** The death of Christ is sufficient for all sinners, for it was not just a finite human, but an infinite God who died for us.

**3. God and man have been reunited!** It was not an angel or a human who came from God to man, but God Himself who crossed the chasm created by sin.

**4. Worship of Christ is appropriate!** He is not merely the highest of the creatures, but He is God in the same sense as the Father. He is as deserving of our praise, worship, and obedience as is the Father.

**ONE DAY EVERYONE WILL RECOGNIZE WHO AND WHAT JESUS IS. THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE DEITY OF CHRIST ALREADY RECOGNIZE WHO HE IS AND HAVE ACTED ACCORDINGLY.**

*“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being...”* Hebrews 1:3.

Last week we talked about how only God Himself would have enough value for His sacrifice to cover the sins of the whole world. We have seen today how the redemption accomplished on the cross to be available to mankind means it must be the work of the human Jesus.

But to have enough value to atone for the sins of all humans then it must be the work of a member of the Trinity as well, and that was Jesus.

**What do I personally think about Jesus?** He is God. He became a human being, died by crucifixion, and was buried. He rose again from the dead. He is the only, all-sufficient Savior of the world. He will come again to this earth.

John 6:29, *“Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”* As one who lost his faith for a number of years I know that just saying you must believe, that you must have faith, doesn’t mean you can.

And as we saw earlier, belief or faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. **If you are having trouble believing here is what you do:**

Deuteronomy 4:29 says, *“If you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.”*

This is what I did; I went on my face before the Lord and prayed for Him to rebuild my faith, to show me the truth, to show me what He wanted me to do.

And **maybe God is speaking to you right now** and if you don’t answer His call, you may not hear Him so clearly next time. *Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.* Isaiah 55:6

*Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart.* Psalm 119:2

Who do you say Jesus is?