

Definition of the Doctrine

Jesus is God, has always been God, and will always be God. But at some point, in human history, Jesus **took upon himself a human body** through Mary, and that this act was not the result of Mary's sexual relationship with a man, but that **the Holy Spirit overshadowed her**, and the God-person of Jesus incarnated in flesh was the result. Jesus is 100% divine nature, and 100% human nature. He is no normal man because no normal man has God as his personality and nature. Yet at the same time Jesus was completely a "normal man" or human being.

Many **cults** err in this same point, presenting that Jesus did what any human can possibly do, **believing men can transform themselves into gods**, i.e., every human has the miraculous powers that Jesus has. This was the first temptation and lie that Satan used on Eve. (**Genesis 3:5** "ye shall be as gods").

Confusion about the Doctrine

What the Bible DOES NOT teach. Jesus was the only one of his kind in history. No other was a God-Man. Jesus did not descend and take over the body and personality of just "some man," but He was incarnated in Mary's womb into a special body brought into being between the Holy Spirit and Mary. Mary was passive in this act. Mary did not first have a baby, and then Jesus' person came on that baby. Jesus Himself was the baby. Mary confessed that she "knew no man", or that she hadn't had sexual relations with a man. She was a virgin.

Matthew 1:18 narrates "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Mary was not pregnant with Joseph's baby, but she was a virgin. **Luke 1:27** "To a virgin... the virgin's name was Mary", **Luke 1:34** Mary clearly states, "How shall this be, **seeing I know not a man?**" God told her that the creature inside of her was in her through God's action, not her own actions. **Luke 1:35** And the angel answered and said unto her, **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee**, and the power of the Highest **shall overshadow thee**: therefore also that

holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Jesus had a prior existence before his conception and birth, and this is something that no normal human being has as far as we know. **John 1:1-3, 15; 17:5.** The Bible indicates that Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all Creation (**Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2**), and various times in the Old Testament he took the form of the Angel of Jehovah (very God), with a body of an angel or a human being (**Genesis 16:7-14; Exodus 3:1-8**, especially verse 6; **Judges 13:10-23**). This is the same concept as "Emmanuel" and **Matthew 1:23 "God with us"**. **1 Timothy 3:16** *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

There are two natures in Jesus, God, and humanity, and the two do not mix to form a third, and the one does deny or affect the other. Neither did God the Son lose any divine attributes, and the two natures held his identity. This is to say, that in Jesus, there was established a link between God and man, but **the nature of God did not become man** (the Father and the Spirit did not take upon themselves bodies as Jesus did) and **humanity did not become God** (other human beings did not gain any divine attribute).

The divine nature remained as it was, and humanity remained as it was. Jesus is completely God and completely man. Also, **Jesus did not have two different personalities, one God and the other man** (as if a spirit with another personality had entered Jesus in a demonic possession or some kind of schizophrenia). **Jesus had a single mentally sound and healthy personality in him**, and that personality was the same as He has had from eternity past. **We do not pretend to understand this union, we just observe and accept it.** Jesus was omniscient (knows all), but he "didn't know" in his humanity (**John 11:1-14; Mark 13:29-32**). He was omnipotent in his Deity, but tired in his humanity (**John 11:38** with **John 4:5-6**). He was omnipresent in his Deity but limited to a single place in his humanity (**Matthew 18:20** with **Matthew 26:32**). He has always existed in his Deity, but He was born

and lived 33 years in his humanity (**John 8:58** with **Luke 3:23**). He was unchangeable in his Deity, but physically grew day by day, and in his mental and spiritual abilities in his humanity (**Hebrews 13:8** with **Luke 2:52**). **Jesus is no less God for being human and is no less human for being God.**

The History of the Doctrine

Before the New Testament, Greek philosophy used the term "incarnation." The idea was a union between God (or the gods) and humanity, which was a common concept in ancient religions, like the mystery religions. The concept of "**hypostasis**" was made official at the council of Calcedon in 451 A.D., basically declaring the two natures, that were united in a single person, Christ. This term was greatly used in the Christological debates in the fourth and fifth centuries.

In the first Nicean Council (325 A.D.), the Trinity was declared in three persons or realities (using the word hypostasis for reality), but God is one single essence. Apollinaris of Laodicea used the term saying that it was a single nature with a single essence. Theodore of Mopsuestia said that there were two natures, with two hypostases (essences) that equally existed in Jesus.

The Calcedonian Creed supported Theodore's position. The clarification was that **each essence or nature retained their individual properties, and they united all in Jesus Christ.** They declared that this was a mystical union, and that nobody could understand it exactly. Those that rejected this position of Calcedon were known as "**Monophysists**," because they believed that Jesus had only one nature. Another term here for the hypostatic union is "**diophysists**" coming from the Greek "two natures".

The Humiliation of Jesus

The link between his mother Mary and Jesus is that she gave him his human nature. In this "change", God as God manifesting himself as man, is a humiliation. Although his essential essence did not change, just the manifestation of his person. **Hebrews 13:8** *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* This was from his conception (where the hypostatic union began) until his death (**Hebrews 5:7-9; Philippians 2:5-8**).

If Jesus was only a normal man, then why did he need to have this special conception with Mary and the Holy Spirit? Jesus was fully human, and his birth was as any human enters the world. (Matthew 1:18-2:11, Romans 1:1-3; Galatians 4:4). He is called "a man" (John 1:30; 8:39-40). The Pharisees were angered when he said he was something more than just a man (John 10:33). Luke 2:40, 52 tells of his growth as a youth which appears totally normal and human. He had a body both before and after his resurrection (Matthew 26:7-12; Luke 24:36-40; John 20:24-29). He had a soul (Mat 26:38) and spirit (Mark 2:8; Luke 23:46). He felt fatigue (Matthew 8:24), anguish (Matthew 27:46), hunger (Luke 4:1-2), agony (Luke 22:44), sorrow (Luke 19:41-44), tiredness (John 4:5-6), thirst (John 19:28), and was tempted as any human being (Hebrews 2:18; James 1:13).

The Kenosis of Jesus

Philippians 2:6 *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* This topic deserves a separate treatment. But simply put, Jesus made it such that his glory as God was not seen in his relationship with normal human encounters. **He limited his revelation of himself in various aspects, but never lost his Deity.** What this means is that Jesus refused to allow his deity to show forth fully while on earth and depended solely on the same resource God has given to us, the Holy Spirit. In this, He became valid as our moral example, resisting sin and doing righteousness.

The Divinity of Jesus

There is solid evidence in Scripture that Jesus is God. In **John 8:56-59**, Jesus used this concept (much to the irritating of the Jews) when he proclaimed that he is the "I AM" of Jehovah God. **Jesus considered himself completely God.** In **Luke 5:18-25**, the Pharisees, faithfully said that **only God has the power to pardon sin, but Jesus claimed this for himself.**

Jesus' unique mediatorial position of being both God AND man means that he is uniquely the Savior (Acts 4:12 ONLY in his name is any person saved) as well as the intercessor between God and man. This also makes worshipping Him extremely correct,

and there are examples of people in Scripture worshipping Jesus as a baby and adult, and nothing bad is said about them (**John 9:37-39**). Jesus identifies himself as both God and Creator of all creation **John 1:1-3**, and as King of Kings and Lord of Lords **Revelation 19:16**. **Every knee will bow before Jesus on day** (**Philippians 2:9-11**).

The Exaltation of Jesus

This phase began in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus and will continue throughout eternity (**1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Timothy 6:14-16**). Jesus was exalted before the incarnation and before the creation of the world but is even more glorified by the salvation of humanity.

Why did God have to become man?

God the Father willed Jesus to become man so that he could "learn obedience" (**Philippians 2:8-9**). God's plan included **God himself paying the price for our salvation, through his own death. This couldn't happen without God taking on himself a body with which to experience physical death.** According to **Job 9:32-33**, a mediator must be equal (identify) with both parts in conflict in order to mediate or arbitrate. Jesus has always been God, but he had to take a human form (incarnation) to complete this mediation (**1 Timothy 2:5-6**). His human nature established his identification with humanity, and his divine with God.

Jesus also was incarnated to destroy the works of Satan. Being man, tempted as humans are tempted, and resisting the temptation completely without sin (**1 John 3:5**) destroyed the power of Satan. Moreover, he was tempted to use his divine power at his temptation and on the cross but suffered under God's will (**Hebrews 2:17**). Jesus defeated Satan taking power and victory over death (**Hebrews 2:14-15; John 12:31**). Finally, **Jesus took upon himself humanity to complete the promise of God to David** (**2 Samuel 7:16-17; Psalms 89:20-37**).

God Incarnate

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John 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

An essential aspect of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is that He is completely God, and at the same time, He is completely man. The doctrine of "God incarnate" (God in human form with us) is a hypostatic union between the two natures of Jesus in a single physical human body. Understanding this has been a problem for many Christians throughout the history of the church.

Some have resolved this, declaring that the deity came upon a normal man (not divine), and God the Son's personality overtook this man's personality at his baptism. Others thought that Jesus came as a ghost, without physical body, and others argue that Jesus was not God.

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