

VII. JESUS CHRIST

MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT

Upon looking at the fact that it is only the blood of innocent man that can purchase back sinful humankind, the question then begs to be asked: is it even worth it? What has humanity done to even deserve such another chance? What has humankind done to honor the One who is offering to take care of their problem of sin?

The answer, quite plainly, is 'nothing.' So, then...is it worth it?

I, for one, say 'no,' and so therefore let's all, in unison, take a big sigh of relief that I am not God. Yet I am a firm believer that beauty is, indeed, in the eyes of the Beholder. And He, for whatever reasons He has, deemed this purchase 'worth it.' But now, before you start giving yourself a pat on the back and get a big head about it, know that what I mean by 'worth it' is not that you or I deserve it. Our worth is not dependent on our own merit, as we have seen, but on the nature and character of God. Even though we were enemies of God, it was because of His goodness, mercy, and compassion that caused Him to desire mercy and show love to those He hates (an oxymoron? To us, yes, but to God, no); therefore, He made a covenant with Himself, the inter-Trinitarian Covenant of Redemption that we saw in the last chapter.

Why Did God Become Flesh?

In this Covenant of Redemption we see that this was the only possible solution for the redemption of mankind and all of creation. It must be, and only be, not through the offering of the blood of goats or rams or bulls, but through an unblemished Man. Since it was man who broke the Law, it can only be a blood relative of man who can pay back the Law. This necessary blood relative is what is known as a *kinsman redeemer*.♣

KINSMAN REDEEMER

This is part of a law in Jewish culture in which a relative either rescues or redeems property or a person.⁴⁵⁸ This must be carried out by a blood relative. A common usage would be that if a man owned land and was forced to sell it due to bankruptcy, if He wanted to get it back the only way for this to happen would be through a relative purchasing the land for him and then giving it to the relative who lost it in the first place. This idea is most clearly illustrated in the book of *Ruth*.

We, who were given dominion over the creation, in a sense had gone bankrupt through sin, and sold ourselves into slavery, and sold the earth unto decay. A curse was put on man, woman, and all of creation.⁴⁵⁹ And now, only by a blood relative *who could afford the price* could redemption come for what has been lost. We have, therefore, a dilemma.

Only God *could be* our Redeemer, but God *should not be* our redeemer.

Only man *should be* our Redeemer, but man *could not be* our redeemer.

Since God alone is perfect and holy, only He is able to afford and pay the price for the penalty of our sin and be our Redeemer. Yet because it is required that a human blood relative of Adam's must make the purchase, only man *should* be our Redeemer. God wasn't the law breaker, so it shouldn't be God to pay Himself back. The problem, of course, is that man *could not* be our Redeemer since there was no man who was good enough, and God *should not* be the Redeemer because it would force Him to break His own law and compromise His own holiness by simply sidestepping the problem of sin rather than destroying it; in His perfection and holiness, sin *must* be punished and atoned for. So, what is the solution? God, in a sense, has His "hands tied."

We need a *Second Adam*.♣

⁴⁵⁸ Leviticus 25.47-55, 27.9-25 // Genesis 48.16 // Exodus 6.6 // Numbers 5.8

⁴⁵⁹ Genesis 3.16-19

THE SECOND ADAM

What it means to say we need a Second Adam is that we need a man to do what Adam could not do: acquire salvation by works, the original Covenant. For us fallen humans, we always (rightly) hear that salvation is only by grace through faith. Of course, this is absolutely true, but only for us. Look how R.C Sproul says it:

Man's relationship to God in creation was based *on works*.
What Adam failed to achieve, Christ, the second Adam, succeeded in achieving.
Ultimately the only way one can be justified is by works.

This is true. The only way to God, ultimately, is if we are holy and pure as He is. However, as we have seen, Adam was not able to do this, and neither are we. God's wrath against this shortcoming must be appeased, and salvation for man must be gained by man paying back the debt to the Father by perfect righteous works.

This is why we need not just the Second Adam, but what **1 Corinthians 15.45** calls the "Last Adam."

Romans 5.12-19

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—

¹³ To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, *who is a pattern of the one to come*.

¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

¹⁸ Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. [emphasis mine]

1 Corinthians 15.21-26, 44-49

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death....

⁴⁴ If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the *last Adam*, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man [second Adam] is of heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

The Second Adam, by works (remember that the Adamic Covenant was conditional based on Adam's works, as is the Covenant of Redemption, which was based on the Son's works), would appease the wrath and anger of His Father and purchase back, as the Kinsman Redeemer, what was lost. By His works He would become the perfect Lamb of God, the Messiah, the Son of David who would reign with all things under His feet. Salvation is, technically, by works, but this time it will not be achieved by *our* works, but by the perfect works of the life-giving Second Adam.

The INCARNATION

It is because of this problem that the Son, the second Person of the eternal Trinity, would agree to this incredible task in the Covenant of Redemption with His Father and the Holy Spirit by fulfilling His part by humbling Himself, becoming one of His own creation, in order that He, God, would become simultaneously a Man, and thus, our Kinsman Redeemer. He would lower Himself, subject Himself to a human body, suffer with us, but yet all in perfection He would come to fulfill the demands of the Mosaic Covenant (the Law, the Old Covenant), in order to procure the promises made in the Adamic, Abrahamic, Noahic, and Davidic Covenants. He would come as God, yet also as Man, and fulfill the full requirement of the Law, thereby appeasing the holy wrath of His Father which is bent against evil, sin, sinners, and death.

This truth is incredible. Knowing that God alone could fulfill the law, but that man alone should do it (yet God *shouldn't* and man *couldn't*). Within the beauty and mystery of the Trinity, this amazing solution was born.

But how can this be? Like the Trinity, there is nothing on earth or in all of creation that can truly encapsulate this profound truth; and it is an important truth. We call this incredible event the *incarnation*,♣ and it is one of the most important doctrines that we believe as it paves the way for the only possible solution for the redemption of mankind.

The BEGINNING OF PROCURING THE COVENANTS

So how would we know when the Messiah, the coming King who would reign from David's throne, be in our midst? How would we recognize this Second Adam? These covenantal promises made to God's people that He will raise them, make them new, and rule upon David's throne for all eternity in the land that He promises had certain specifics about how and *who* would be the One to fulfill procure these covenants. God, in order to prove His loyalty, power, and sovereignty, declared certain facts, in the covenants themselves as well as through the prophets, to let us know that our Kinsman Redeemer, the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the Son of David, the Second Adam, has indeed come. Let's look at a few of these promises, all of which were prophesied between 500 and even (roughly) 4000 years before He was born:

His heritage:

- He would be of the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁴⁶⁰
- From the Tribe of Judah, one of Jacob's 12 sons.⁴⁶¹
- He would be of the seed of David, and the Root of Jesse, David's father.⁴⁶²
- He would be called the Son of God.⁴⁶³

His birth and early life:

- Born of a woman, who is also a virgin.⁴⁶⁴
- He would be born in Bethlehem.⁴⁶⁵
- Though born in Bethlehem, He would be a Galilean.⁴⁶⁶
- He and His family would flee into Egypt to save His life.⁴⁶⁷

His adult life:

- In **Malachi 3.1**, Malachi says to God "the Messenger of the Covenant in whom You delight" will come to the temple. This may not seem like a big deal, the Messiah going to the temple, but knowing that the temple has been destroyed since 70 AD leaves the Jews unable to expect the Messiah after that.
- He will be preceded by someone who announces His coming.⁴⁶⁸
- He will ride into Jerusalem on a young donkey.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁰ Genesis 12.3 // Matthew 1.1, 2

⁴⁶¹ Genesis 49.10

⁴⁶² Jeremiah 23.5, 6

⁴⁶³ Psalm 2.7 // Proverbs 30.4

⁴⁶⁴ Isaiah 7.14 // Matthew 3.13, 21.11, 26.69

⁴⁶⁵ Micah 5.2 // Luke 2.1-7

⁴⁶⁶ Isaiah 9.1

⁴⁶⁷ Hosea 11.1 // Matthew 2.13-15

⁴⁶⁸ Isaiah 40.3 // Matthew 3.1-3

⁴⁶⁹ Zechariah 9.9 // Luke 19.28-38

His betrayal and death:

- He will be betrayed by a friend who ate bread with Him.⁴⁷⁰
- This 'friend' will betray Him by handing Him over to the authorities for thirty pieces of silver; then, that payment would be thrown down to the potter in the temple, which is a burying place for strangers.⁴⁷¹
- He will be rejected, beaten, mocked, and have His beard plucked out.⁴⁷²
- His clothes will be gambled for.⁴⁷³
- Though mocked and accused, He would be silent before His accusers.⁴⁷⁴
- He would be scourged and crucified; yet crucifixion was not invented until hundreds of years after this prophecy.⁴⁷⁵
- He would be executed alongside sinners.⁴⁷⁶
- None of His bones will be broken. This is significant because due to the method of crucifixion (which again, wasn't invented for hundreds of more years), executioners would break the legs of the condemned in order to speed up the process of death. This was part of the command for the Passover lamb in **Exodus**, that the Hebrews were not to break any bones of the lamb. It was a foreshadowing of *the* Lamb of God.⁴⁷⁷
- He would be forsaken by His Father, who is God the Father.⁴⁷⁸
- The Messiah would indeed die.⁴⁷⁹
- He would be buried in a tomb owned and donated by a rich man.⁴⁸⁰
- He would rise from the grave after bearing the sins of the world.⁴⁸¹

So as we see, there are quite a bit of specifics that awaiting Israel is looking for to identify the validity of their Messiah, their King. As for His coming to this earth, we saw that the proof of the procuring of the Abrahamic Covenant would be that it would indeed be the very offspring of Abraham that would inherit it. Likewise, for the Davidic Covenant to be procured, where the great King of kings will sit on David's throne for all eternity and reestablish His Kingdom, this Messiah must come from David's genealogy. He also must be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem, but also must be a Galilean. So we see that the Second Adam must not just be born into this world, but born under very specific circumstances.

This now brings us to the most pivotal event in human history: the birth of Jesus.

THE KING IS BORN

Consider these quotes about Jesus said by various people throughout history:

- "Socrates taught for 40 years, Plato for 50, Aristotle for 40, and Jesus for only 3. Yet the influence of Christ's three year ministry infinitely transcends the impact left by the combined 130 years of teaching from these men who were among the greatest philosophers of all antiquity." –Unknown
- "By a Carpenter mankind was made, and only by that Carpenter can mankind be remade." -Desiderius Erasmus, 15th century theologian
- "No man ever loved like Jesus. He taught the blind to see and the dumb to speak. He died on the cross to save us. He bore our sins. And now God says, 'Because He did, I can forgive you.' " -Billy Graham, 20th century evangelist
- "You should point to the whole man Jesus and say, 'That is God.' " -Martin Luther, 16th century reformer
- "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They

⁴⁷⁰ Psalm 41.9 // Matthew 26.49, 50

⁴⁷¹ Zechariah 11.12, 13 // Matthew 27.5-7

⁴⁷² Isaiah 50.6, 53.3 // Matthew 26.67, 27.39-44

⁴⁷³ Psalm 22.18 // John 19.23, 24

⁴⁷⁴ Isaiah 53.7 // Matthew 27.12

⁴⁷⁵ Psalm 22.16 // Isaiah 53.5 // Luke 23.33

⁴⁷⁶ Isaiah 53.12 // Matthew 27.38

⁴⁷⁷ Exodus 12.46 // Psalm 34.20 // John 19.32-36

⁴⁷⁸ Psalm 22.1 // Matthew 27.46

⁴⁷⁹ Isaiah 53.8 // Luke 23.46

⁴⁸⁰ Isaiah 53.9 // Matthew 27.57-60

⁴⁸¹ Isaiah 53.10, 11 // Acts 2.32

reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.” – Flavius Josephus, a non-believing Jewish historian who was born only a couple years after Jesus died⁴⁸²

- “A rule I have had for years is: to treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have.” -Dwight L. Moody, 19th century theologian
- “After I set out to refute Christianity intellectually and couldn't, I came to the conclusion the Bible was true and Jesus Christ was God's Son.” -Josh McDowell, modern day atheist turn Christian apologist

So who, exactly, is Jesus, and what makes Him so great? What makes Him so controversial?

Jesus' earthly life started just like all other humans: He was conceived.⁴⁸³ But the events surrounding this conception weren't “just like all other humans,” as the Bible tells us that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and through a young unwed teenage girl who was engaged to her fiancé. Not the best situation in their day and age.

Thankfully, through angelic revelation given to her faithful fiancé,⁴⁸⁴ Joseph, and the faith that was given to young Mary, she moved forward with her pregnancy. He was carried in His mother's womb, just as we are, and He was born just as we. He came out of the womb naked, crying, cold, umbilical cord connected, covered in blood and amniotic fluid (the very fluids *He designed!*). Then He was swaddled and placed in a trough, a far cry from the incubators and cozy heat lamps in our modern hospitals.⁴⁸⁵

And here He was. This Baby...is He the Chosen One of Israel? Is He the Messiah, “God with us,” sent from the Father to fulfill the Covenant of Redemption and secure the promises of the covenants He made so long ago?

Here is this Baby, just a Baby; a tiny, helpless, flesh and blood, crying, screaming, pooping Baby. This little one, this Baby that will breast feed and get His diapers changed; this Baby that has no teeth, but just gums, who coos when He sees His dad, and cries when He doesn't see His mom; is this the One?

Is this our Kinsman Redeemer? The One who has come to save us from the wrath of a good, glorious, and holy God?

The faithful of Israel would look, of course, to God's Word, His Logos, to see if this little One is the One who came to our rescue, humbly becoming one of His own creation.

Isaiah 9.6, 7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

So then what of Jesus? Does this fit His family ties? Where do His earthly parents find their root in?

Luke 1.26, 27, 32, 33

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, *of the house of David*. And the virgin's name was Mary...

[And the angel spoke to Mary and said,] ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him *the throne of his father David*, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

⁴⁸² Josephus' writings have been critical in secularly substantiating the existence, life, and validity of Christ. Though his writings are questioned in some areas to have been interpolated, what is clear by version comparison is that he does, at very least, validate the existence and instances of Jesus and the effect He had on history. This particular quote comes from the Arabic summary, presumably of Antiquities 18.63. From Agapios' Kitab al-'Unwan, 10th century).

⁴⁸³ Matthew 1.18-25 // Luke 1.26-38

⁴⁸⁴ Matthew 1.20-25

⁴⁸⁵ Luke 2.17

Indeed, both His step-father, Joseph, *and* His mother, Mary, are of the line of David! David, in turn, is of the line of Abraham, and as Joseph's lineage is detailed in **Luke 3.23-38**, Jesus falls in line with David, Jesse,⁴⁸⁶ Judah,⁴⁸⁷ Jacob, Isaac, Abraham,⁴⁸⁸ Noah,⁴⁸⁹ and Adam,⁴⁹⁰ all of which are used to describe the Messiah's heritage; therefore we already have these requirements fulfilled!

✠ BORN OF A VIRGIN ✠

But for this rescue and redemption to happen, the incarnation of Christ rests on another very important piece of information: His mother, as we saw prophesied, was to be a virgin. And yet here again, in **Luke 1.27**, we see that Mary was indeed a virgin as she found herself surprised (as was her fiancé) that she was pregnant! Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit, not by a human male.

This aspect of the doctrine of incarnation is the most paramount of all of them, as it either credits or discredits with His divine nature. Sadly, it is a particular doctrine that has been questioned and minimized in the church for years, even recently by many in the Emergent Church. For instance, popular ex-pastor Rob Bell states in his book, *Velvet Elvis*:

What if tomorrow someone digs up definitive proof that Jesus had a real, earthly, biological father named Larry, and archeologists find Larry's tomb and do DNA samples and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the virgin birth was really just a bit of mythologizing the Gospel writers threw in to appeal to the followers of the Mithra and Dionysian religious cults that were hugely popular at the time of Jesus, whose gods had virgin births?

But what if, as you study the origin of the word "virgin" you discover that the word "virgin" in the Gospel of Matthew actually comes from the book of Isaiah, and then you find out that in the Hebrew language at that time, the word "virgin" could mean several things. And what if you discover that in the first century being "born of a virgin" also referred to a child whose mother became pregnant the first time she had intercourse?⁴⁹¹

What do you think? Does this whole redemption thing fall apart without the doctrine of incarnation? If Jesus' dad's name is Larry, and Jesus is not God incarnate as a Man, can we be saved by Him, a mere man? Or is it imperative that Jesus' Father truly be *the* infinite God, not finite Larry?

Speaking of Larry (ironically), talk show host Larry King has been asked a few times who he would interview, out of everyone in history, and what would he ask them.⁴⁹² His answer?

**"Jesus Christ. I would like to ask Him if He was indeed virgin-born.
The answer to that question would define history for me."**

Larry has it right, and seems to understand the importance and necessity of the doctrine of the incarnation more than Bell. Now, to be fair, Bell doesn't actually deny the virgin birth, but by his hypothetical questioning he absolutely denies its importance as a necessary doctrine of our faith. This question radically puts the doctrine of salvation in quite a trivial place. How can Jesus possibly be God if He was indeed born by two sinful parents? He could not. However, Larry King, as someone who was raised Jewish (but was a professed agnostic), understands that if Christ was "indeed virgin-born," it means that Christ really is the Messiah, and that, would therefore indeed define history.



Pick a Larry.

⁴⁸⁶ Isaiah 11.1, 10 // Romans 15.12

⁴⁸⁷ Hosea 5.14 // Psalm 78.67, 68 // Hebrews 7.14 // Revelation 5.5

⁴⁸⁸ Exodus 6.3, 32.13, 14 // Matthew 22.32 // Acts 3.13, 7.32

⁴⁸⁹ Genesis 9.12

⁴⁹⁰ Genesis 3.14, 15 // 1 Corinthians 15.21-26, 44-49 // Romans 5.12-19

⁴⁹¹ *Velvet Elvis*, page 26 and 27.

⁴⁹² *Just Thinking*, RZIM, Winter 1998

We have to recognize that, according to the Bible, this isn't just a "medical miracle." In a world where in vitro fertilization and artificial insemination has become commonplace, therefore making "virgin" births "medically possible," the Bible has defined Mary's sexual purity and virginity not simply because she had not had sexual intercourse with a man, but her virginity was based on the fact that she was sexually pure *in all ways*, as no man's semen had ever entered into her body and impregnating her in any way, making the conception of her Son a supernatural miracle, not a medical "miracle." This is, as Larry King declares, the event that would define history.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event of human history.

But the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the most implausible.

That an almighty and holy God would become a baby for the sake of sinners is, ultimately, wonderfully beyond our comprehension.

The fact of the matter is, without the incarnation, the fact that God became a Man in the most incredulous scheme ever conceived in history, our hope for salvation and redemption is impossible. If Jesus was born of two sinners, man and woman, Larry and Mary, then our faith is futile. So, the answer to the question of this doctrine's imperative nature is yes, it is imperative, because without it, the foundation of the Covenant of Redemption falls apart. And as we have seen and will continue to see, Jesus' deity is indeed predicated on the fact that He is eternal, not temporal.

Indeed, this Jesus is the Christ.⁴⁹³

The Word Made Flesh

The book of **John** kicks off with a massive statement of declaration, with John saying this:

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.

This is, indeed, quite a statement, and it declares that this Jesus did in fact pre-exist before He was born into this world and walked the earth; and it also says that all things were made through Him. It declares nothing less than His deity. Then a few verses later, in **verse 14**, John says, "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." Now, we see that through the incarnation that God became a Man, and that is crazy enough for us to try understand, but what does it mean that "the Word became flesh"?

As we saw in the section on God's Word, the very word used for "word" in Greek is the word "logos," which goes beyond the average definition of what we consider a "word," which is a series of letters that spell something out. As I referenced before from *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, "logos" is defined as "'the expression of thought' – not the mere name of an object." It is the embodiment of a conception or idea, and states that when used specifically as "the Word [Logos] of the Lord," it is in essence saying "the revealed will [mind, thoughts, desires] of God."

And so, with Jesus, we see that the very mind, thoughts, desires, plan, and purposes of God were made into the form of a Baby. Jesus Himself is the very mind and plans and heart of God in human form. God not only verbalized His heart and plans, but He made them come to life to interact with us and give us the most clear picture of His heart and plan. I don't know about you, but this is both an incredibly mysterious and amazing concept as well as a completely mesmerizing and wonderful thought. That God's very will and desires became a Man; that in Jesus, the will and ways and plans of God were made known. His plan of salvation didn't only amount to spoken words, but came to life as a living, breathing, walking, talking Man. A Man that would live among us, dwell with us, take care of us, pray for us, and eventually be rejected by us, spit upon by us, and killed by us.

To make matters worse, we see that John says that "Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." Not only did we reject the Word and the plans of God in the form of Jesus, but we rejected our very own Creator; the Creator that fearfully and wonderfully made us in His image.⁴⁹⁴ The very One that designed us and

⁴⁹³ John 17.41 // Luke 23.47

⁴⁹⁴ Psalm 139.14

knows every hair on our head was rejected by us;⁴⁹⁵ the One that cares for us more than anything else He has ever made.⁴⁹⁶ This Jesus, indeed, was the eternal God, and yet He became a Man for the sake of us sinners.⁴⁹⁷

In all this, His humanity didn't cause Him to cease from being God, nor did His deity cease to make Him a Man. Instead, Christ was actually joined with humanity, as we see in **Colossians 2.9** that says "for in Christ *all the fullness of the Deity* live in bodily form" [emphasis mine]. Jesus' divine nature was neither degraded, changed, nor altered.

He is Emmanuel.

"God...

"...With us." What an event.

 100% GOD, 100% MAN 

So, if the Son became a Man, our Kinsman Redeemer, how did He not cease to be God? Or was He still God, and just a materialized image of man? Was He God and Man 50/50? It is amidst this great picture of redemption that we see this unprecedented truth: a Human who is both God and Man, not 50/50, but 100/100.

No, His two natures weren't just blended together to make some man-god cocktail (Eutychianism⁴⁹⁸), nor was He simply a God-powered superhero (Supermanism or Monophysitism⁴⁹⁹). Both of these were quashed as heresies by the Chalcedonian Creed of 451 A.D. Like the Trinity, He is divinely, mysteriously, and amazingly both 100% Man, and 100% God. His humanity and deity are distinct, yet these two natures are united in one Person. This is what is called the *hypostatic union*.♣

What this means is that there is no division within Christ. He is all God, and yet all Man. This brings up many interesting questions, such as "how can God be in the presence of sinners?" The answer is, well, because He is 100% Man. "How can a Man forgive sinners?" The answer, well, is because He is 100% God.

Again, this seems like quite a paradox, and for us it is. It may be an answer that is a little less than satisfying at first, but again, like the Trinity which is three Persons yet one nature, somehow there is a divine mystery and glory in this amazing truth, but reversed: one Person, two natures. And as with the Trinity, it may confuse and frustrate at first, but the more you understand it (or at least try to!), the more you are in awe of it. God knew that He could not dwell among sinful men because His holiness would consume them, but somehow, as God became and put on flesh and blood, this glory and holiness, though 100% present was somehow cloaked by flesh and blood, sparing humanity from the glory of God.

We know that Jesus is the Son of God, which confirms His deity and makes Him equal with God.⁵⁰⁰ Yet Jesus' most favorite self-declared name was the "Son of Man." On the surface, you can probably guess that "Son of God" would be used to emphasize His deity, whereas "Son of Man" would declare His humanity. Though this is true, the term "Son of Man" goes beyond that, as it is a reference out of **Daniel 7**, where we see the "Son of Man" as a greatly exalted Person.

Daniel 7.13, 14

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

This incredible vision of the Son of Man is a highlight reel of the covenants that the Messiah would come to secure for His people! By using the term "Son of Man," it is specifically pointing to a highly exalted and eternal Man who will rule

⁴⁹⁵ Matthew 10.30 // John 1.1-5

⁴⁹⁶ Matthew 6.25-34

⁴⁹⁷ 2 Corinthians 5.21, 8.9

⁴⁹⁸ Eutychianism is a Christology that teaches that Christ's human nature was blended with His divine nature to make Him unlike the rest of humanity.

⁴⁹⁹ Monophysitism is another similar Christology that teaches that Christ only had one single nature, where the divine nature overtook the human nature completely. The definition is thus: "Jesus Christ, who is identical with the Son, is one person and one hypostasis in one nature: divine-human." It is the Christology held by the Oriental Orthodox churches.

⁵⁰⁰ John 5.18

His indestructible Kingdom forever! So, while the term “Son of Man” makes special mention of His humanity, to the educated Jew it would speak of His exalted power as well.

This doctrine of incarnation, that God came to us rather than us, as in the Tower of Babel, having to reach up to God,⁵⁰¹ gives us an incredible, unfathomable, and as was said earlier, implausible reality. God’s Logos has become flesh and blood, and we are now able to relate with and commune with God on a whole new personal and intimate level. Consider the way John Piper puts it in his online article about the hypostatic union:⁵⁰²

And yet, in our finite humanity, we are significantly helped by a point of correspondence with the divine. God was glorious long before he became a man in Jesus. But we are human beings, and unincarnate deity doesn’t connect with us in the same way as the God who became human. The conception of a god who never became man (like Allah) will not satisfy the human soul like the God who did.

JESUS THE HUMAN: BABY, BOY, MAN

If He was fully God, He seems to have had a clear advantage, and therefore doesn’t really relate to us. Though Jesus indeed retained all of His deity and power as God, yet He also maintained all the attributes of being man.

As a young boy, Jesus presumably went to school, learned to read and write maybe by sitting with mom and step-dad before bed reading whatever their day’s version of *Hop on Pop* was.⁵⁰³ He may have been a shy guy who hid behind mom’s leg when meeting someone, or maybe He was the talkative story-telling machine. He probably played catch, probably had little 4th grade girls flirting with Him, and He may even have experienced some puppy love. He probably was called names at some point, but He would soon get used to that. He also probably got good grades in school and made His bed before His brothers did. My guess is that He didn’t necessarily always get dessert. He had a real stomach that held real food and really got full.

It would have been fascinating to watch Him grow up, to know Him as a little kid, because He was exactly that: a little kid. Art Linkletter coined the great phrase, “Kids say the darndest things.” I’ve heard some amazing things from my two boys when they were younger (and even older); some really classic, timeless stuff. Sometimes hilarious, sometimes amazingly insightful, and most times just so darn cute. To hear the funny, profound, and incredibly cute things that came out of this young Messiah would have been just incredible to observe.

We also know that He grew in favor with both God and man and that He took His faith and studies seriously.⁵⁰⁴

As an adult we know that He:

- Slept⁵⁰⁵
- Ate tasty meals⁵⁰⁶
- Drank good alcohol (even made His own!)⁵⁰⁷
- Cried⁵⁰⁸
- Was called names⁵⁰⁹
- Walked⁵¹⁰
- Sang⁵¹¹

⁵⁰¹ Genesis 11.1-9

⁵⁰² <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/what-is-the-hypostatic-union>

⁵⁰³ Quick story: my wife was toting my two boys, age 5 and 3, around with their friends. They decided to tell each other their favorite Bible stories. The friends started with “Adam and Eve,” my 5 year old said “Jonah and the big fish,” and my 3 year old chimed in with “Hop on Pop.” A week or so later he did a little better by saying his favorite Bible story was “the one with God in it.”

⁵⁰⁴ Luke 2.49-52

⁵⁰⁵ Matthew 8.24

⁵⁰⁶ John 12.1-3 // Mark 14.17-25 // Matthew 11.19

⁵⁰⁷ Matthew 11.19 // John 2.1-12. I always wonder if He made His own whenever He sat down and had a glass with friends. Or if He didn’t, I wonder if He took a sip and thought, “mmm, yeah I could have made this a little better.”

⁵⁰⁸ John 11.35

⁵⁰⁹ Luke 22.63-65 // Mark 15.31, 32

⁵¹⁰ Matthew 15.29 // John 10.23

⁵¹¹ Matthew 26.30

- Loved His friends⁵¹²
- Felt strong emotions⁵¹³
- Sweat⁵¹⁴
- Built things⁵¹⁵
- Went boating⁵¹⁶
- Was a good storyteller⁵¹⁷
- Had a sense of humor⁵¹⁸

What I love about this description, is that it sounds a lot like me! He sounds like someone I can relate to, someone that can understand me. I'm not arrogantly saying "I'm like God." I'm humbly stating that "God became Man." He not only put on a human body, but He put on human emotions, mind, and will.

Christ has put on our feelings as well as our flesh.

- John Calvin

The Model of a God Glorifying Life

Sometimes we get this picture of a super religious, staunch, solemn, judgmental Jesus who never smiled or had fun, because that would be a waste of time and unglorifying to God. But this is a better description of us, sometimes, if anything. Jesus was a Man who loved life! He loved the people around Him and the life that He had. He sang, told stories, even related spiritual truths with comedy. Apparently, He was to some degree the life of the party, as He was always invited to all the sinners' parties (this infuriated the Pharisees, either because they were super religious or they were acting like jealous seventh graders who don't ever get invited to the cool kids' parties. Or quite possibly both.).

Albert Einstein, a non-believing Jew, very much noted the charismatic personality of Jesus when he said:

As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene....No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.

Interestingly, however, Jesus makes this observation when being accused by the Pharisees in **Matthew 11:16-19**:

"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

¹⁷ "'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

¹⁸ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

What Jesus is saying here is that religious people can't be pleased. There is always something wrong. John the Baptist came conservatively, and they accused him of being a freak. Jesus came enjoying food and wine and the joys and gifts of life, and they accused Him of sin. He points out their religiosity by telling them not to judge by the outward appearance, but that "wisdom is justified by her deeds."

⁵¹² John 11.5, 13.23 // Mark 10.21

⁵¹³ Matthew 8.10, 26.38 // John 11.33-35, 12.27, 13.21 // Hebrews 5.7

⁵¹⁴ Luke 22.44

⁵¹⁵ Matthew 13.55

⁵¹⁶ Matthew 8.23, 24

⁵¹⁷ Matthew 13.1-52,, 21.33-22.14

⁵¹⁸ Luke 6.41. Check out *the Humor of Christ* by Elton Trueblood. He lists over 30 humorous passages in the gospels that were spoken by Jesus, and he cites Jesus prolific use of satire, wit, hyperbole, irony, parables, and word-play as common humorous tools for communication.



Unfortunately, we don't model the life-loving joy of Jesus. Too often we are throwing a constant pity-party for me, myself, and I, or we are being the wet blanket for others when they are having just a little too much fun. Too often we are very much viewed as Ned Flanders from "the Simpsons" or the Church Lady from "Saturday Night Live." And this is not to the glory of God.



The fact of the matter is that Jesus is an enemy of dead, empty religion. He is *the* absolute opposite and absolute enemy of legalism. A tightly wound, judgmental, holier-than-thou Christian is the worst opponent to the cause and ministry of Christ. They work in absolute polar opposite of God's mission. As a matter of fact, look at what Paul says to the Galatian church as they resorted back to legalism after they got saved:

Galatians 3.1-3

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Jesus came to set us *free* from the Law, not keep us imprisoned in it! He lived and modeled that free, joyful, and generous life, and we should to!⁵¹⁹ I am blown away sometimes at how *easily* we get, as Paul forcibly says, *bewitched* by legalism. In my own mind, I can even hear the Church Lady, upon reading the Bible itself speaking of Jesus drinking wine, "Oh, well I see Mr. Jesus thinks He's going to have a little glass of wine. And in public even...well isn't that special? I think Mr. Jesus needs to think twice about what He's doing if He's going to go around and call Himself the Son of God!"

**I like your Christ; I do not like your Christians.
Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.**

-Mahatma Gandhi

Sadly, this is the sentiment proclaimed by many, many, many non-believers (and believers!). And let's not go rushing off to say "Well, it's persecution! Jesus said the world will hate us because the world first hated Him! Praise God that non-Christians don't like us!" Yes, it is *absolutely true* that we *will indeed* face persecution and that there will be a *number* of non-believers who won't like what we have to say! But **1 Peter 3.17** tells us that it is "better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil."

In other words, it's great if you suffer for righteousness' sake, but don't call it persecution when you are suffering for *self-righteousness'* sake. Self-righteous, religious legalism is evil, plain and simple. The lifestyle that Jesus led was one absolutely filled with unadulterated hard truth, but covered in love, compassion, and kindness. It was most often the *religious* people that He was harsh with.

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

-Teddy Roosevelt

A theology that doesn't cause us to love God and love people more is a poor theology. Biblical information is no good if it stops short of biblical transformation.

As a model of a God glorifying life, above all we know that He was tempted; that He really and truly wasn't impervious to temptation.⁵²⁰ Now let's be clear when we say He was in fact tempted, and that to be tempted means that He indeed actually felt the temptation to sin! He felt the urge. But He demonstrated complete self- (or to be more clear, Spirit-) control, submitting Himself to the Word and obedience to the Holy Spirit and the glorification of His Father. Yet in that, it is also to be made abundantly clear that amidst His temptation He clearly *did not sin*.

⁵¹⁹ 1 John 2.6 // 2 Corinthians 3.18 // 1 Peter 2.21 // Hebrews 12.3

⁵²⁰ Matthew 4.1-11

Jesus came as a Man and enjoyed every aspect of physical life, yet without sin. He glorified His Father in all that He did.

All this to make clear that we see that He was indeed human, and that He was indeed God. To ignore His humanity would go in the lines of many New Age, Gnostic, and Docetist beliefs,⁵²¹ which John even declared was such a blatant heresy he called it the “spirit of the antichrist.”⁵²² To ignore His deity would be to go in line with Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons.⁵²³ Without this necessary truth that this indeed is the Lamb of God, God made flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, we, as fallen humans, would still be stuck in our sin, as our need is for our Kinsman Redeemer, a perfect Man to atone for our sins.

This is the moment we have all been waiting for, not just *a* spotless lamb, but *the* spotless Lamb; a final and complete sacrifice to end all sacrifices.⁵²⁴ All the covenants of old that spoke of and testified of God’s faithfulness and devotion to fulfill His own Trinitarian Covenant of Redemption are seeing their foreshadowing come to a glorious light. The anticipation of the ages is culminating as we approach the most pivotal event in human history: victory of the King.

JESUS, THE LORD: HOLY CREATOR KING

So here we have Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, who is in fact, God. We find this truth in many Scriptures,⁵²⁵ some from declarations of His followers, but also by the claims of Jesus Himself. Of His followers, Thomas, after initially doubting, exclaimed “my Lord and my God!” when seeing the risen Jesus.⁵²⁶ Paul told the Romans that Christ is “God over all,”⁵²⁷ and told the Philippians that Jesus, though equally God, was born in the likeness of men.⁵²⁸ Paul also told Titus that we await the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.⁵²⁹ In **Hebrews** it states that Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory and *exact* imprint of God’s nature, and that He, Jesus, upholds the universe by the Word of His power.⁵³⁰

Jesus whom I know as my Redeemer cannot be less than God.

-St. Athanasius

But Jesus’ deity wasn’t just, as some would purport, invented by radical followers. He Himself declared the fact that He is God. He equated Himself with the Father, which was a serious offense (this is what led to His death).⁵³¹ Jesus, by word and deed, made it clear that He is indeed God, and that He retained His full God attributes while here on the earth. A relatively common view is that Jesus gave up some of His divine attributes while He was living on the earth, but this is a false view for a few reasons. This view, called the *kenosis theory*,[♣] states that Jesus limited these attributes so that He could experience life completely as a Man. Here are a few of the problems that this view poses:

- God is always and eternally God, 100% of the time in 100% capacity. He is unchanging, consistent, and total, all the time. For Jesus, who is 100% God amidst the Trinity and 100% God as a Man, to “lay aside” some of His divine attributes He would cease to be truly God.
- It denies the two natures of Christ and minimizes Him to just a Man who was not fully God.
- It confuses the idea that the two natures are completely distinct, and it is only the Person of the Son of God which is only one.

We should specifically explore that third bullet point to help us understand a little more. We will occasionally run across various Scriptures that raise questions, such as “why doesn’t Jesus know the day or the hour of His return? Isn’t He

⁵²¹ Docetists believe that Jesus’ body was just an illusion and that He was truly and only a Spirit who appeared as a Man.

⁵²² 1 John 4.2, 3

⁵²³ Both of these deny the deity of Jesus, believing that He was only a mere Man sent by God.

⁵²⁴ John 19.30

⁵²⁵ John 11.25, 14.6, 17.41 // Matthew 5.11, 12, 17, 7.21-29, 10.37 // Luke 23.47 // Romans 10.9 // 1 Corinthians 12.3 // Luke 1.43

⁵²⁶ John 20.28

⁵²⁷ Romans 9.5

⁵²⁸ Philippians 2.7, 8

⁵²⁹ Titus 2.13

⁵³⁰ Hebrews 1.3

⁵³¹ John 5.18

omniscient?" These are valid questions, especially when we see that the Word says that He "knows all things."⁵³² This is where attempting to further understand His two distinct natures becomes important.

Consider the following examples of what seems to be contradicting or confusing Scriptures:

Human Nature, Mind, and Will

He had limited knowledge⁵³³
He got tired and weak⁵³⁵
He is limited to one location⁵³⁷
He died on the cross⁵³⁹
He was tempted⁵⁴¹
He was born⁵⁴³

...and yet...
...and yet...
...and yet...
...and yet...
...and yet...
...and yet...

Divine Nature, Mind, and Will

He knows all things⁵³⁴
He is all-powerful⁵³⁶
He is everywhere⁵³⁸
God cannot die⁵⁴⁰
God cannot be tempted⁵⁴²
He created all things in eternity past⁵⁴⁴

Again, yet another truth that is hard for us to comprehend, but as we try to understand what it means to have two natures, yet one Person, we have to see through the biblical account that these natures were indeed distinct. In **Matthew 8.23-27** we see His humanity, as He was tired, sleeping on a boat, even though as we know that God is never weary. And a moment later we see that unwearied nature of God manifests as Jesus wakes up and commands the wind and sea to stop!

There are indeed times when Jesus seems to have limited knowledge, and we also know that He grew in wisdom, which means He learned things from a baby and all the way through His adult life. Why would an omniscient God need His diaper changed? Because He was 100% Man.

It is apparent that He lived and walked and grew as a Man, was tempted as a Man, was mocked as a Man, was tired as a Man, and died as a Man. Yet He was able to call upon or utilize His omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence when He saw fit, and yet they were exclusive from one another. Somehow, His Human body clothed His divinity, but His divinity was still completely there in totality. Remember as we saw earlier that **Colossians 2.9** says "for in Christ *all the fullness of the Deity* live in bodily form" [emphasis mine].

**If Christ is not divine,
every impulse of the Christian world falls to a lower octave,
and light and love and hope decline.**

-Henry Ward Beecher

DOING THE WORK OF HIS FATHER

It was clear to His disciples, Himself, and especially to those who opposed Him that He very openly and clearly claimed to be God, and this was made evidently clear to those who paid close attention to His words and works. Jesus constantly put Himself to the test in front of people by telling them that He only does and says the works and words of the Father, so all they had to do was go in the Scriptures to test His validity. Jesus was sent on a great redemptive mission from His Father. The Covenant of Redemption was enacted for Him to come to earth, fulfill the Covenant of Works which was broken by Adam, and declare that the Kingdom of God will be returning to earth.

⁵³² John 16.30, 21.17

⁵³³ Mark 13.32 // Luke 2.52

⁵³⁴ John 16.30, 21.17

⁵³⁵ Matthew 4.2, 8.24 // John 4.6

⁵³⁶ Matthew 8.26, 27 // Colossians 1.17

⁵³⁷ John 16.28, 17.11, Acts 1.9-11

⁵³⁸ Matthew 18.20, 28.20

⁵³⁹ Luke 23.46

⁵⁴⁰ John 10.17, 18 // Hebrews 7.15-17

⁵⁴¹ Matthew 4.1 // Hebrews 4.15

⁵⁴² James 1.13

⁵⁴³ Luke 2.17

⁵⁴⁴ John 1.1-5

This was made most clear to Jews when He made His boldest claim of being the coming King here to declare His sovereignty over the earth when He declared that He bore the sacred Name of Yahweh by calling Himself "I AM."⁵⁴⁵ In the Gospel of **John** He said "I and the Father are one."⁵⁴⁶ This statement enraged unbelieving Jews. But in the end, they could not prove His claim was blasphemous.

As we look at His final three years of life, we should look at the "mission statement" of this great King who has come to declare His Kingdom. In **Luke 4.18-19** Jesus enters into the temple and reads of the book of **Isaiah**:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus came as King to declare His restoring of His perfect and glorious Kingdom. This Kingdom would be Good News to all who are under the curse that would meet the one condition of the covenants: faith. In faith, the Good News would be realized by the poor, liberty from the curse would be enjoyed by the captives, eternal healing would be received for the nations, and the oppressed will rule and reign. It will be a glorious day when the Son of David when these inaugurated proclamations come to pass in full form, when all of His enemies are placed under His feet for all eternity!

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

So here He was, the Kinsman Redeemer for Israel. God with us. This is the One that Israel has been awaiting and looking for from the Fall of Adam, through the faith in the covenant of their father Abraham, the shorthanded sacrifices of animals that the Mosaic covenant pointed towards this perfect Lamb of God, and through times of captivity and even silence. They have been awaiting the One who would make all things new and recreate creation according to the covenant with Noah. The time has finally come. The Son of David, the King of kings, has arrived.

Humbly born, raised in a good Jewish home, raised in the ways of the Lord, the young Jesus grew in His faith and favor with both God and man, fulfilling His Jewish duties according to the Law (which He had even written!). In the proper time, He even became baptized by His own cousin, John, to fulfill every last bit of His witness.⁵⁴⁷

During His ministry, as the Messiah, God made flesh, He did many things:

- Performed miracles⁵⁴⁸
- Cared for people⁵⁴⁹
- Comforted them⁵⁵⁰
- Hung out with sinners⁵⁵¹
- Forgave sins⁵⁵²
- Washed feet⁵⁵³
- Fed people⁵⁵⁴
- Prayed for people⁵⁵⁵
- Healed the sick, blind, and paralytic⁵⁵⁶
- Raised the dead⁵⁵⁷
- He ate fish, broke bread, drank wine, walked, and sang songs with His friends⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁴⁵ John 6.35, 48, 51, 11.24, 25, 14.6, 8.56-58

⁵⁴⁶ John 10.30

⁵⁴⁷ Matthew 3.13-17

⁵⁴⁸ Matthew 11.20 // John 10.25, 32, 38, 15.24

⁵⁴⁹ John 11.3-5

⁵⁵⁰ Matthew 9.22

⁵⁵¹ Mark 2.15-17 // Matthew 9.10, 11.9

⁵⁵² Matthew 9.2 // Mark 2.9 // Luke 7.48, 5.20

⁵⁵³ John 13.2-5

⁵⁵⁴ Matthew 14.15-21

⁵⁵⁵ John 17.1-26

⁵⁵⁶ Matthew 8.13, 9.22, 12.15, 14.14, 15.28, 17.18 // Mark 1.34, 10.52, Luke 4.40 // Luke 8.50, 9.42, 13.14, 18.42, 22.51 // John 5.13

⁵⁵⁷ John 11.17-27

⁵⁵⁸ Matthew 26.30 // Luke 22.14-20, 24.42 // John 6.11

Jesus, as we see, was truly the Lamb of God, and He came to “bring peace to those who were near and to those who were far off.”⁵⁵⁹ He came as the Ambassador of God, the Mediator of the Covenant of Redemption to purchase a people for salvation. He was an Ambassador of peace.

But Jesus was no pushover. Though we sometimes tend to view him as a guru hippie teacher wearing Birkenstocks and dressed in a nicely pleated smock, we have to remember that He is not just the Lamb of God, but He is the Lion of Judah.

He was also bold and afraid of no one. He stood up for the poor and persecuted, and He opposed the self-righteous boldly, risking arrest on a few occasions. He offended many, most notably the religious. He didn’t cater to anyone’s personal desires if they went against truth. On top of that, He was probably in very good shape as He was a carpenter by trade, He walked everywhere, He didn’t worry or stress out, He ate lots of fish, He walked on water (which takes both faith *and* incredibly strong calf muscles), calmed the sea and storm, and, ultimately, was able to withstand thirty nine lashes and then carry His cross most of the way up to His death.

Jesus was truly a man’s Man. A Man that you would fear and respect, yet also would love and adore. A Man who would tell you the hard truth and turn your tables upside down, but would also miraculously put your ear back on after getting sliced off so you can continue your arrest of Him.

It was again Teddy Roosevelt who said “speak softly and carry a big stick.” We should be humble, peaceful, and generous people with the world around us, as the Word says “so far as it depends on you.”⁵⁶⁰ When it comes time to be bold, like Jesus, we are to be bold.

He did all of these miracles, preaching, testifying, and living out of a life of faith to testify that He was in fact the Messiah whom they had been waiting for; the God-Man who would come as the Kinsman Redeemer and break the curse of sickness, death, and sin. He was declaring that He was Second Adam, a Man, but that He was also the Lord God. He was declaring that He would, in fact, rule and reign as King and will have all enemies under His feet.⁵⁶¹ This pinnacle event in history of Jesus’ ministry was the crossroad of eternity and was the most pivotal event in human history since the Fall itself.

Yes, Jesus came to redeem His people, who by faith have been eagerly awaiting His arrival. He came to receive Israel as His chosen people, justify them, sanctify them, and glorify them.⁵⁶² But would it be that simple? Would it be a slam dunk? After all, it has been over 4,000 years, a lot of pain, a lot of sin, a lot of death, a lot of injustice, a lot of captivity, a lot of dead animals sacrificed, and lots of prayers. No doubt Israel is tired and worn out, ready for redemption, ready for a change. But, as it were, this would not be so simple.

THE REJECTION OF JESUS

The percentage of Jews who received Christ’s teachings at the time during His mission on earth, though significant, seems to be very marginal. He was faced with great opposition from the Jewish leaders and the Jewish community. Led by the prideful, self-righteousness of the Pharisees, the Jews were suspicious of this Man. Countless times the Jewish leaders would call in to question Jesus’ statements, ever trying to catch Him in a misstep.⁵⁶³

When it got down to it, the Pharisees were threatened by Jesus. He showed, in their eyes, a disrespect for the Law (ironically in one instance by healing on the Sabbath, which was considered “work” on this holy day of rest⁵⁶⁴); He associated Himself with sinners by befriended them, going to their parties, and being welcomed into their homes.⁵⁶⁵ But more than this, most likely, was His threat to the Pharisees’ control, power, place of stature, prominence, and elevation over the people. He came, in their eyes, usurping their authority and “demoting” them.

⁵⁵⁹ Ephesians 2.17

⁵⁶⁰ Romans 12.18

⁵⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 15.25-27

⁵⁶² Romans 8.28-30

⁵⁶³ Matthew 19.3, 22.34

⁵⁶⁴ Mark 3.1-6

⁵⁶⁵ Matthew 11.19

I liken this to the last of the three *Lord of the Rings* stories, *the Return of the King*. The Steward of Gondor was a legacy of men who were “keepers” of Gondor in the absence of the true King who would come from the line of Isildor. They were to humbly govern Gondor until the throne be truly inhabited by the true King. However, as the story unfolds, we see that Denethor, the current Steward of Gondor is not interested in handing over his power, especially to a lowly, common ranger (Aragorn, Isildor’s heir).



Gondor awaits their true King, but the Stewards are reluctant.

This, indeed, was the attitude of the Pharisees. Who was this Man from Nazareth? A poor carpenter’s Son? Surely no good thing could possibly come out of Nazareth.⁵⁶⁶ He wasn’t even fit to be a priest or Pharisee, much less *the* High Priest. Then as the adage goes, “like priest like people,” the Jews, strained under the controlling Roman government, were also hoping for someone more powerful (they weren’t threatened by His usurping of religious authority, for they had none, but they were actually hoping He would usurp a different authority: their Roman oppressors).

However, when they saw Jesus, they didn’t see that kind of authority. He was no High Priest, and He also was no Conqueror. Israel was looking for a powerful, conquering king who would ravage the pagan, oppressing kingdoms of the world. Jesus was a nobody. He was a joke, a mockery, blasphemous even.⁵⁶⁷

Yet this false expectation of the coming King is a similar picture we get of Jesus’ great-great-great-great grandpa David, whose throne He came to sit upon. Wee little David with his slingshot taking on the biggest and baddest dude in the bad guy army was indeed a laughing stock!⁵⁶⁸ But this is the same Israel (and more broadly, the same humanity) that looks far too much on outward appearance, who even selected Saul over David as the first earthly king of Israel, simply because he seemed like more of a catch than little David.⁵⁶⁹ Even many of those who *did* recognize Him as the King were still also insistent on Him taking charge, as this was the common view of what to expect from a King. These were also the same people who rejected the very prophets that spoke of the coming King, and were the same people who rejected their first “redeemer,” Moses.⁵⁷⁰

But still, Jesus’ opposition didn’t end with His own people, however. The ruling government at the time, Rome, was in no mood to deal with a new rising King of a people whom they governed. For Him to claim He was King, well, these were fightin’ words, because everyone knows if you have a King, you have to have a Kingdom, and to have a Kingdom, you have to have land. And if there isn’t enough to go around, you take some from the other guy.

And so this declaration of being a King was used as ammunition by the Pharisees to gain Roman support by claiming that He was in opposition to Caesar, which would be seen by Rome as an insurgency of political activism⁵⁷¹ (we see this same type of perceived political threat going back to when Herod the Great issued a decree to kill Jewish males from Bethlehem under age two to be killed, as he was told by the magi at the time of Jesus’ birth that they were bringing gifts to the newborn King of the Jews⁵⁷²). For this reason, Rome was passively compliant in issuing the death penalty for the charge of blasphemy by the Jewish leaders.

Therefore, instead of enthusiastically receiving their King (and to be sure, there were many who did), Israel, in large part, rejected their Kinsman Redeemer, led by the blinded and proud Pharisees. They then turned Him over to Pontius Pilate (who saw through the Pharisees’ false allegiance and “sticking up” for Rome, as well as found no fault in Christ. Nonetheless, for fear of an uprising, he handed Christ over to be crucified⁵⁷³). This, however, would not be the end of the road for humanity’s redemption; no, this was not a botched plan. Forgiveness for sin would not just be offered to those select few Jews who received Him as King during His earthly ministry (or those that died in faith before them). God, in His grace and mercy, would now break down the wall between Jew and Gentile. Salvation would now, out of compassion for man and God’s desire for His own glory, become available to everyone.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁶⁶ John 1.46

⁵⁶⁷ John 8.58, 59, 10.22-39

⁵⁶⁸ 1 Samuel 17.23-54

⁵⁶⁹ 1 Samuel 10.20-24

⁵⁷⁰ Acts 7.52 // Luke 13.33-35

⁵⁷¹ Matthew 26.1-5, 59-68, 27.1, 2

⁵⁷² Matthew 2.16-18

⁵⁷³ Matthew 27.15-26 // Mark 15.15

⁵⁷⁴ Colossians 3.11 // Galatians 3.28 // 1 Corinthians 1.24 // Acts 20.21

⌘ A NEW COVENANT BEING PREPARED? ⌘

So here we have one of those great “mind of God” moments. Though it may sound a bit like God’s plan didn’t quite work and so He was now calling the option play and going to a Plan B by opening up salvation to the Gentiles, the fact of the matter is that this is how it was, in fact, supposed to go down. Look at some of these words of Christ as He begins to spell out what to expect for the New Covenant to come about:

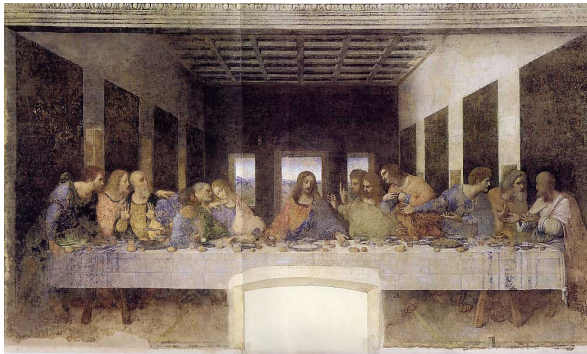
Luke 17.20-25

²⁰ Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, ²¹ nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

²² And he said to the disciples, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ And they will say to you, ‘Look, there!’ or ‘Look, here!’ Do not go out or follow them. ²⁴ For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵ But *first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.* [emphasis mine]

Matthew 16.21-23

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”



Da Vinci's iconic masterpiece, “The Last Supper,” ca. 1498

Jesus had to be rejected by His own people. This wasn’t a “slam dunk,” ministry-wise, but it never was meant to be. He had to go to the cross. He had to shed His own blood to atone for the sins of His people. This was not a plan gone wrong. It was never the intent of Christ to walk out His mission on earth, have everyone accept Him as King, and then ride out into the sunset holding everyone’s hands singing “We are the World.”

Perfect human blood had to be shed; the Kinsman Redeemer had to reclaim what was lost.⁵⁷⁵ God’s holy Law had been broken, we had sold ourselves and everything given in our dominion (creation) to be under the curse of slavery to death and sin, and God’s wrath against sin and the sinner needed to

be appeased if God was going to bestow His grace on His distorted, image bearing enemies. Simple faith that Jesus was who He claimed to be was not enough for salvation: sin had to atoned for first.

As He was personally preparing for this day, He was with His disciples in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. At this Passover meal, He declares that there is now a New Covenant, which would be made not by the dividing of an animal in half, or prolonged by the sacrifice of bulls and rams, but a sacrifice that would be made one time, for all time. And so, it was there, at this Passover meal, that they were presented with Him: the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.⁵⁷⁶ God made flesh, the Kinsman Redeemer.

1 Peter 3.18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Romans 6.10, 11

For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

⁵⁷⁵ Joel 2.25, 26 // Matthew 10.5-8

⁵⁷⁶ John 1.29-37 // 1 Peter 3.16-21

Hebrews 7.27, 28

He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

The reality was kicking in. This Jesus, who healed and loved, didn't come to the earth with any other intention than to fulfill the Covenant of Redemption and procure the covenants made long ago. He came to abolish sin and bring salvation to the enemies of God.

Jesus was born so that He could die.

This was the only way to enact the New Covenant and satisfy the righteous requirement of the Law. Jesus must become the High Priest who would make one final sacrifice for all time.

Hebrews 9.11-22

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶ For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷ For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." ²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. ²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

I can't begin to put myself in the shoes of His closest friends during His earthly ministry. As He slowly unfolded the revelation of His necessary plan for His death, reality must have been sinking in like never before. Fear, pain, sadness, anxiety, doubt; it all must have been rushing in their hearts and minds. But this is what had to take place. And so, that very night, as Jesus and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, Judas, one of the twelve, came to betray Jesus and have Him handed over to His death.⁵⁷⁷

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

After His arrest, Jesus spent the night in jail after examination by the Pharisees. The next day He was brought before the people by Pontius Pilate. They demanded His death, even choosing to have a true criminal be released rather than Jesus. Israel had been deceived.⁵⁷⁸

After being given thirty-nine lashes (which would often kill the prisoner), He was mocked, beaten, and then, in the ultimate act of mockery, this King who came to a fallen earth that He created was given a token of His Kingship: He was crowned with a crown of thorns.

With God as a covenant King sending His Son on a mission to redeem a people and His Kingdom, He saw His Son in whom He was well pleased be crowned by His own image bearers by a symbol of the cursed world itself: thorns. As we think back to **Genesis 3.18** when God declares to Adam that the earth will now produce thorn and thistle for you, we now see the King being ridiculed with a painful crown imaging the curse. And soon, Jesus Himself would become the curse.

⁵⁷⁷ Matthew 26.14-16, 47-56

⁵⁷⁸ Romans 11.7-10

He was then issued His cross, probably the cross bar of it, to carry by Himself to the place of His death. Is it possible that Jewish believers were linking their hearts to the Scriptures that wrote of God preserving Noah and his family in a pitch-covered ark, saving them from His wrath? Are they being reminded of Abraham and Isaac as they see an only begotten Son willingly carry the wood used for His own sacrifice up to the hilltop that would be His death as a sacrifice to God? Are they thinking of all the animals that were sacrificed under the Law of Moses, and now seeing *the* Lamb of God about to be shed for sins once for all? Are they cognizant that they are watching the Root of David ascend to His place of death, only to conquer it and ascend to His rightful place on the throne? Are they seeing these promises of God finally being fulfilled? I believe that much of this came to mind in many of their hearts.

Yes, here He was, the very hands that healed, “blasphemously,” on the Sabbath. The hands that touched many lives, the feet that traveled to many places spreading the grace of God, were now viciously nailed to the cross. A despicable act, and a barbarian way to die. Utter humiliation. Cicero, a Roman philosopher who died about 45 years before Jesus was born, called it a “most cruel and disgusting punishment,” and also said that there is “no fitting word that can possibly describe so horrible a deed.” He was speaking specifically in context of the “far be it from us” attitude that a Roman citizen ever even be mentioned in the same breath as crucifixion. No, this form of execution was only for the lowly, the dirty, the defamed, the unholy, the scum, the worst of the worst. This would be the sickening form in which the image bearers of God would kill their Maker, the very Maker who fearfully and wonderfully made them.



“Here is your King.”
—Pontius Pilate

Bruce Shelley opened up his book *Church History in Plain Language*⁵⁷⁹ with a profound statement that has stuck with me for over a decade, and it simply states:

**Christianity is the only major religion
to have as its central event the humiliation of its God.**

This unfathomable truth is piercing. Here is not just simply a Kinsman Redeemer dying a terrible death for us, but this here is ‘God made flesh,’ the Logos of God. Our God, our Lord, who humbly came into His created world through a natural birth, as a baby, conceived in an unwed teenager. He taught us, cared for us, called for us, and desired us, and now He hangs lifeless as a piece of meat begging for the crows to come pick at Him. He fulfilled all the prophecies made about Him.⁵⁸⁰ He was born of a virgin, of the line of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Jesse, and David. He entered into Jerusalem on a young donkey when He declared His triumphal entrance, but then He also broke bread with his friend who would betray Him. He was arrested, beaten, scourged, and crucified, all in accordance to what was foretold of Him long before He was born as a baby.

On top of that, He fulfilled every righteous requirement of the Law, and no guilt or sin was found in Him. He did what the first Adam (and every man and woman since) could not do. But why did this have to happen this way (or did it have to happen, even?), and what came of it?

The Word gives us three words to let us know exactly what has happened and what has come of this sacrifice of the Lamb of God:

It is finished.

⁵⁷⁹ pg. 3

⁵⁸⁰ pg. 145, 146 of this study. There are also many, many more in the Word.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

Why UNDERSTANDING Jesus is IMPORTANT

Result #1: Understanding His humanity makes Him personal.

The fact of Jesus' humanity gives us a tremendous amount of hope. He is not a distant, cold, and impersonal God who sees us simply as minions who robotically go around singing His praise. The fact that He became one of us is simply, incredible. We know that we have a God who completely, 100% experienced what we experience. He understands, first hand, what life as a human is like.

As a Man, God experienced:

- Pain
- Suffering
- Humiliation
- Name calling
- Betrayal by His closest friends
- Joy
- Being a teenager
- Puberty
- Fatigue
- Rejection
- Parties
- Temptation
- Difficult decisions
- Friendship
- Let downs
- Love
- Care
- Compassion
- Social pressures
- The list goes on...

This is no stale, irrelevant God that we serve, but rather, a High Priest who has walked in our shoes. This is why the Word can say:

John 15.14-16

[Jesus says] You are my friends if you do what I command you.¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Hebrews 4.15, 16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Indeed, we have a Savior who we need not be ashamed to go to when we need Him, but rather should boldly go into His presence as we know that He has died to purchase us to be His bride.

Result #2: Understanding His divinity makes us more worshipful.

On the flipside of this, understanding His divinity should cause us to have a deeper awe, reverence, honor, and worship for Him. The very fact that it was *God* who became a Man is just crazy. Though Jesus is completely approachable, it is good and healthy for us to remind ourselves that Jesus still is the Author of everything, He is the holy God.

This dramatically changes the way we pray and interact with Him. While His humanity encourages us to run boldly into His arms, His divinity reminds us to think deeply about ourselves and our approach. Now, just know that His divinity shouldn't slow down your approach to Him, but it should enhance the very things that you are bringing to Him in prayer. You *must* remind yourself that He is not a pushover and He is not here to give to us as we please, but that when we pray and seek His face we are acknowledging that He is *the* holy God who is completely worthy of all of our worship.

Result #3: We see that His death wasn't just to pay for sins, but to inherit the promises of the covenants that He would then share with us.

One of my favorite things about the study of the covenants, including the New Covenant, is how it ties everything together. What may have seemed like a series of random books and stories put together actually becomes the most epic story ever told.

As we see this plan, this Covenant of Redemption unfold, we recognize that Jesus' death as the Lamb of God didn't *only* bring salvation to us, but that it purchased back anything that was cursed.

Grace extends as far as the curse extends.

Consider verse three, a barely ever sung verse from the Christmas carol, "Joy to the World":

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

His death came to destroy the curse and to redeem everything that the curse had touched. The earth, the animals, male, female, the heavens, the birds, you name it. Right before unveiling His new creation, Jesus says:

Revelation 21.5-8

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Result #4: We understand why He is the only way to God.

When we see the depth of sin, the despair of sinful man, and the justice and holiness of God, it should become a wake-up call that we have no hope for salvation. The unbiblical ideas of "being good" or believing that "well God is loving so He'll accept everyone in to heaven" or "there are many paths to God" all of a sudden wake up in a contextual nightmare. None of these self-made ideas stand up to a true, holy, living, and all-powerful (and angry) God.

Hopefully, the reality hits us that something will need to appease Him, and that it wouldn't be us. As we hear the testimony of Jesus and observe His life, His words, and His perfect deeds, we realize that He, as an absolutely gracious gift of God, is the only way to God. When we are faced with the question or thought that there must be another way without Christ, the reality of sin and God's holiness would immediately reveal that thought as a thought with no substance.

Result #5: It causes us to pray more for others who don't know Him.

When Jesus becomes a real, true, and living Person in our life, and not just a cosmic "somewhere out there" God, we fall more and more in love with Him. The more we see His grace and forgiveness and His love for us, we are driven to a deeper desire to see our friends, family, and total strangers know the same beauty we know.

Imagine that you discovered something incredible. Maybe it was a way to get free Starbucks for a year or you saw the most incredible movie or heard the most incredible band. Maybe you won an all-expense paid trip to Tahiti and you were allowed to invite, for free, as many of your friends as you like. Would you tell everyone you know? Of course you would! Because you know the value of a free cup of coffee or a free vacation!

The more you see the value in knowing Christ, the more you will want to share Him with others. If you don't know much about Him or what He says in His Word, you won't feel that obligated, partly because you don't even know what you would say to them. But the more you know about who He is, what He did, and why He came to this earth, the more confident and excited you are to share Him with others.

**When it comes to evangelism, we have nothing to lose.
But the world has everything to lose.**

Result #6: He helps us gauge our reputation in the world.

Observing the life of Christ should also give us a good indicator on how we are reflecting the image of Christ. Do you look like Him? Do non-believers enjoy your company, or are you a kill-joy? Do they look to you for advice, or do they stay away from you because you cram the Bible down their throat? Do they get life out of being with you? Or do they feel judged and condemned when they are around you?

Apparently, Jesus was well liked by the sinners (I realize we are all sinners, but I use the phrase in contrast with those that appear to not be sinners), and He was *most disliked* by the religious people! They couldn't stand Him, and He couldn't stand them! He called them names and judged their emptiness. But yet the outcasts, the sinners, they loved Him. Surely not every single one did, but by and large, as we examine His ministry, He was most loved by the least likely.

Ask yourself a few of these questions:

- How much do I hang out with non-Christians?
- Am I a light around them? Do I have integrity, do I properly model a life after Christ?
- Am I a stick in the mud? Or do they think I am enjoyable to have around?
- Do I compromise my faith, or do I stand strong in my faith without "getting all religious?"
- Do people see you as someone who is warm, welcoming, inviting, and compassionate?
- Do you find fault in people easily?

There are so many other ways we can examine ourselves against Christ. Read through the Gospels and test yourself, take an inventory of your life. We are to be a blessing to the world without becoming the world.

PRACTICAL TOOLS

♣ Definition of Terms ♣

Kinsman Redeemer: This is part of a law in Jewish culture in which a relative either rescues or redeems property or a person. This must be carried out by a blood relative. A common usage would be that if a man owned land and was forced to sell it due to bankruptcy, if He wanted to get it back the only way for this to happen would be through a relative purchasing the land for him and then giving it to the relative who lost it in the first place. This idea is most clearly illustrated in the book of **Ruth**.

Second/Last Adam: This is a term that speaks of Christ being the second perfect man to ever walk the earth. What Adam lost us in his moral failure but breaking the Covenant of Works, Jesus will regain, and even more, by His moral works victory which will fulfill the Covenant of Redemption. Death came through the first sinless (turned sinful) man, life came through the second sinless Man.

Incarnation: If you've ever enjoyed a carne asada burrito, you know that "carne" means "meat." The word "incarnation" means to "embodied in flesh" or "taking on flesh." The incarnation was the event where God became embodied in flesh so that He could be the perfect Man to atone for the sins of man.

Hypostatic Union: This is the technical nerdy term to describe the dual nature/one Person of Christ. We believe that as the Scripture tells it, Jesus was 100% Man, and 100% God, not 50/50. It is indeed a divine mystery, but somehow, He always had the full nature of God, as well as the full nature of man (minus sin).

Kenosis Theory: This is the erroneous view that Jesus set aside His divine attributes and functioned simply and only as a Man. Scripturally, Christ had two natures dwelling in one person. So though He may have been operating in His human mind or knowledge in one instance, He could have also drawn from His divine nature and mind in another. We believe that He was fully God and fully Man all the time, and is to this day.

Recommended Resources

Theology Books

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem. Chapter 26.

Books

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel. A great book dealing with the facts and questions of Jesus' authenticity.

More Than a Carpenter by Josh McDowell. A book dealing with apologetics as well as common questions about Jesus.

Sermons

www.christianessentialsbc.com/messages. This is Wayne Grudem's sermons going through his book, *Systematic Theology*. Go to the sermons on Chapter 26

www.desiringgod.org. This is John Piper's ministry. Along with audio or video sermons, he has the transcripts as well. The list under "Web Articles" for desiringgod.org has mostly audio sermons attached to the articles.

Web Articles

www.gty.org. This is John MacArthur's ministry. Type "Jesus" in the search engine for various articles.

www.desiringgod.org. This is John Piper's ministry. Type in "Jesus" for these articles:

- "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God"
- "The Truth and Beauty of Jesus Christ"
- "Jesus Came into the World to Bear Witness to the Truth"
-

Also search for these:

- "What is the Hypostatic Union"
- "Jesus' Humanity Now"
- "Eternal Life Has Appeared in Christ"

www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Covenant-Theology/ is a great site in general, but this particular link has a lot of information on covenant theology.

www.gotquestions.org. If you tend to have lots of questions in general, this is a great website to get to know. Go here and search "Jesus," "incarnation," "virgin birth," "is Jesus the only way," you name it.