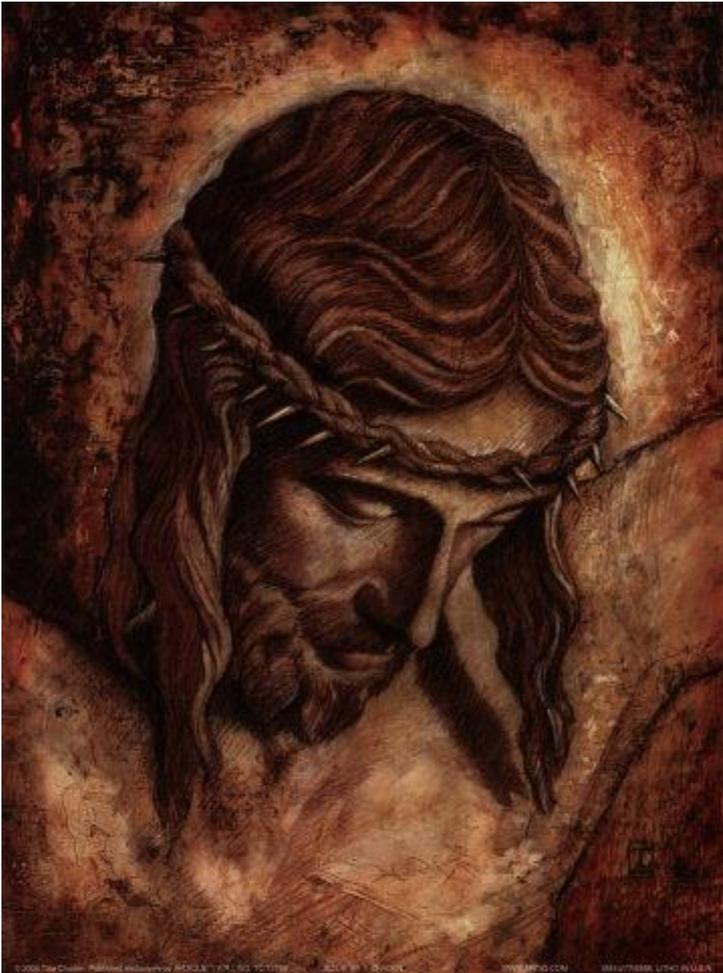


*Christian Essentials
Series:*

*Why the God Man? – Cur
Deus Homo.*



Christian Essential series: Why the God man - "Cur Deus Homo."

In the last 100 years we can recognize a firm attack on the person and work of Jesus Christ. It has even gone so far that the very historicity of Jesus seems to be in question. What is even more alarming is that all these "contradictions" and assumptions seem to come directly from the interpretation of certain biblical portions and statements. What would the implications be if Jesus was not God or even just another good moral man or another wise sage?

If Jesus was just another "prophet" or holy man why should we particularly care what he said? Why pay any more attention to him than to any other ethical thinker? If He wasn't divine your sins would never be forgiven. (Psalm 49:7-9 & V/15).

The problem is when we read the Bible we see the following:

Only God can forgive sins after the blood of a righteous man has paid our ransom. Only a man who has never sinned can be righteous, and only God has never sinned. If Jesus was not a man he couldn't have been our kinsman, and if He wasn't God He couldn't have qualified as our redeemer. To be our kinsman redeemer,

He had to be both. If Jesus was not the perfect God Man there would be no Communion, Church, gathered people. Heaven would not be an option because it would be a promise based on a man's word not God's authority. (John 14:2) If Jesus's death was not the ransom for our fallen state and inherent sinfulness death would be everlasting. (2 Tim 1:10) .If Jesus was merely a good man, then the bible is not the word of God but merely a good book on the same level as other literature.



Was Jesus God and Man?

The term hypostatic union is much easier than it sounds, but the concept is as profound as anything in theology. The English adjective hypostatic comes from the Greek word hupostasis. The word only appears four times in the New Testament—maybe most memorably in Hebrews 1:3, where Jesus is said

to be “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.” Here the author of Hebrews uses the word in reference to the oneness of God. Both the Father and the Son are of the same “nature.” Jesus is “the exact imprint of his nature.” However, in early church discussions, as Greek thinkers tried to find agreeable terms with those who spoke in Latin, the word *hypostasis* came to denote not the sameness in the Godhead (God’s one essence) but the distinctness (the three persons). So it began to be used to refer to something like the English word *person*. So “hypostatic union” may sound fancy in English, but it’s a pretty simple term. Hypostatic means personal. **The hypostatic union is the personal union of Jesus’ two natures.** Jesus has two complete natures—one fully human and one fully divine. What the doctrine of the hypostatic union teaches is that these two natures are united in one person in the God-man. **Jesus is not two persons.** He is one person. The hypostatic union is the joining of the divine and the human in the one person of Jesus.

What Is the Significance?

Why bother with this seemingly fancy term? What good is it to know about this hypostatic union? At the end of the day, the term can go,

but the concept behind the term is infinitely precious—and worshipfully mind-stretching. It is immeasurably sweet—and awe-inspiring—to know that Jesus' two natures are perfectly united in his one person. Jesus is not divided. He is not two people. He is one person. As the Chalcedonian Creed states, his two natures are without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation. **Jesus is one.** This means Jesus is one focal point for our worship. As Jonathan Edwards preached, in this one-person God-man we find “an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies.” Because of this hypostatic, one-person union, Jesus Christ exhibits an unparalleled magnificence. No one person satisfies the complex longings of the human heart like the God-man. God has made the human heart in such a way that it will never be eternally content with that which is only human. Finitude can't slake our thirst for the infinite. 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.

One Person, for us

Beyond just gazing at the spectacular person of Jesus, there is also the amazing gospel-laced revelation that the reason Jesus became the God-man was for us. His fully human nature joined in personal union to his eternally divine nature is permanent proof that Jesus, in perfect harmony with his Father, is undeterrably for us. He has demonstrated his love for us in that while we were still sinners, he took our nature to his one person and died for us.

The Incarnation

The doctrine of the incarnation in Christian teaching is that Jesus, who is the second person of the Trinity, added to himself human nature and became a man. The Bible says that Jesus is God in flesh, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.....and the word became flesh and dwelt among us," (John 1:1, 14); and, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form," (Col. 2:9). Jesus, therefore, has two natures. He is both God and man. Jesus is completely human, but He also has a divine nature.

As God:

Jesus is worshiped (Matt. 2:2,11; 14:33; 28:9)

He is prayed to (Acts 7:59; 1 Cor. 1:2)

He was called God (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8)

He was called Son of God (Mark 1:1)

He is sinless (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15)

He knew all things (John 21:17)

He gives eternal life (John 20:28)

The fullness of deity dwells in Him (Col. 2:9)

As Man:

Jesus worshiped the Father (John 17)

He prayed to the Father (John 17:1)

He was called man (Mark 15:39; John 19:5).

He was called Son of Man (John 9:35-37)

He was tempted (Matt. 4:1)

He grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52)

He died (Rom. 5:8)

He has a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)

Important questions:

Was Jesus praying to Himself?

Jesus prayed to inform Christians about the importance of communicating with God. Jesus taught Christians how to pray (Matt. 6:9) and Jesus is our example. John 13:15 says "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." Why did Jesus need to pray at all? Why did Jesus pray out loud, audibly? Could God the Father hear his Son if He prayed silently? Of course! However, Jesus told us why He prayed right before He raised Lazarus from the dead: "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me,"(John 11:41-42.) Jesus prayed audibly for everyone else's benefit so that the people would believe and the Bible could be written. Jesus and the Father are one (John 8:58), that is one in purpose and one in essence. They are totally united, one in purpose, one in thought and one in deed. Jesus is very unique as God, the only human being who is God incarnate.

If Jesus is God, then why did He not know the time of His return?

In Matt. 24:35-37 Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away." But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah." If Jesus is God in flesh, then shouldn't He know what the day and hour of his return would be? After all, God knows all things. Therefore, if Jesus doesn't know all things, then He cannot be God. We know through scripture that Jesus was both God and man. He had two natures. He was divine and human at the same time. In Heb. 2:9 that Jesus was "made for a little while lower than the angels..." Also in Phil. 2:5-8, it says that Jesus "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men..." Col. 2:9 says, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus was both God and man at the same time. As a man, Jesus cooperated with the limitations of being a man. That is why we have verses like Luke 2:52 that say "Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men." Therefore, at this point in his ministry he could say He did not know the day nor hour of His return. **It is not a denial of His being God, but a confirmation of Him being**

man. Also, the logic that Jesus could not be God because He did not know all things works both ways. If we could find a scripture where Jesus does know all things, then that would prove that He was God, wouldn't it? Well John 21:17 says "He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep" Jesus did not correct Peter and say, "Hold on Peter, I do not know all things." He let Peter continue on with his statement that Jesus knew all things. Therefore, it must be true. It wasn't until after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection that omniscience is attributed to Jesus. As I said before, Jesus was cooperating with the limitations of being a man and completed His ministry on this earth. He was then glorified in His resurrection. Yet, He was still a man (cf. Col. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5). After Jesus' resurrection, He was able to appear and disappear at will. This is not the normal ability of a man. But, it is, apparently, the normal ability of a resurrected and glorified man. Jesus was different after the resurrection. There had been a change. He was still a man and yet He knew all things.



If Jesus is God, then why did He say the Father was greater than He?

John 14:28 "You heard that I said to you, 'If I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I," Jesus said the Father was greater than He not because Jesus is not God, but because Jesus was also a man and as a man he was in a lower position. He was ". . . made for a little while lower than the angels . . ." (Heb. 2:9). Also in Phil. 2:5-8, it says that Jesus "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men . . ." Again; Jesus has two natures. Jesus was not denying that He was God. He was merely acknowledging the fact that He was also a man. Jesus is both God and man. As a man, he was in a lesser position than the Father. He had added to Himself human nature (Col. 2:9). He became a man to die for people. So, Jesus was not denying that He was God. He was simply acknowledging that He was also a man and as a man, he was subject to the laws of

God so that He might redeem those who were under the law; namely, sinners (Gal. 4:4-5).

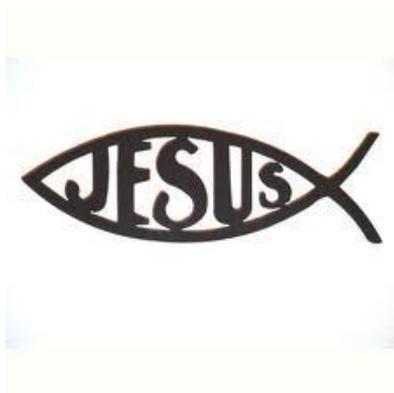
God cannot be tempted. Jesus was tempted. Therefore, Jesus cannot be God.

James 1:13, says "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone." It also says in Heb. 4:15, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Answering this objection is a bit more difficult than answering the other objections to Christ's deity because it deals with an area of scripture that is not explicitly clear: the relation between the divine and human natures of Jesus. We see that Jesus has two natures but how they related is not clarified in scripture. We see from scripture that Jesus' human nature never existed apart from the union of His divine nature. We also see in scripture that God cannot sin and that in Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (John 1:1, 14; Col. 2:9). Therefore, since we acknowledge that Jesus was divine, we could easily conclude that it was not possible for Jesus to have sinned. On the other hand, Jesus was truly man. Therefore, it is fair to say that Jesus could have been truly tempted. But, the question persists: if it was

not possible for Jesus to have sinned then how could He be truly tempted? I do not know if I have a sufficient answer to this. But I will offer one anyway. First of all, is it possible that God be tempted? Yes it is. Psalm 106:13-15 says, "They quickly forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel, but craved intensely in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. So He gave them their request, but sent a wasting disease among them," (NASB). The Hebrew word of "tempt" here is "nasaw." According to the Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, it means "to test, try, proving, tempting, assaying, putting to the proof or testing." The NIV says, "they put God to the test." The KJV says, "and tempted God in the desert." The NKJV says, "And tested God in the desert." The 1901 ASV says, "And tempted God in the desert." Therefore, we can see that God was "tempted in the desert." Yet, this temptation in no way negates the divinity of God Himself. In the New Testament, when Jesus is tempted, in Matt. 4, the word for tempt is "peirazo." Again, according to the Enhanced Strong's Lexicon, it means "to try whether a thing can be done, 2) to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quantity, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself; 2c) to try or test one's faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin." We can see in both cases that it was God who was tested. In the Old Testament, God was being tempted, that is,

being put the test in the wilderness even as Jesus was being tempted (put the test) in the wilderness in the New Testament. This temptation can occur without God sinning. Furthermore, this temptation, this testing is not a challenge to the deity of Christ any more than it was a challenge the divinity of God in the Old Testament. In addition, all that Jesus did, He did by looking to the Father. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner," (John 5:19). Also, Jesus said, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30). In Matt. 12:22-32, Jesus was casting out demons. The Pharisees accused Jesus of doing this by the power of the devil. Jesus replied to them that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven. Why did he say this? I believe that it is because Jesus did none of his miracles out of his own divine nature but did them as a man working through and by the Holy Spirit who indwelt Him. Therefore, Jesus was casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit. We see that Jesus' miracles began after his baptism and that is when the Holy Spirit descended upon him. Jesus came as a man in order to fulfill the law of God and to be the

sacrifice for sin. He did this as a man. When He resisted the temptations of the devil, He quoted scripture -- as a man. He did not at that time rely on His divine nature when going about His earthly ministry in Israel. As a man, He was tempted and as a man He resisted temptation by relying on God's word. He cast out demons by the Holy Spirit and not by His own divine nature. Therefore, Jesus was tempted in His human nature, not in His divine. He did not rely on His divine "side" to help Him out. Instead, He completely relied on the Father, the Holy Spirit, and God's word to successfully resist the temptations that came to Him. Therefore, I conclude that Jesus could not have sinned, but that He could be tempted; that is, He could have a sinful option presented to Him -- as was presented to God in the wilderness -- yet Jesus would not have sinned.



If Jesus were not God, then we need to explain...

- Why Thomas calls Jesus God in John 20:28? (Note, Thomas addresses Jesus specifically.)
- Why does God call Jesus God in Heb. 1:8?
- Why does John the apostle state that Jesus was the Word which was God that became flesh (John 1:1, 14)?
- Why is the phrase "Call upon the name of the LORD" (Hebrew, YHWH, i.e., Psalm 116:4) used only of God on the OT, and translated into the Greek in the LXX as "Call upon the name of the LORD (Greek, KURIOS)," applied to Jesus in the NT (1 Cor. 1:2) if Jesus is not God in flesh?
- Why does the apostle John say that Jesus was, "...calling God His own Father, making Himself equal to God," (John 5:18)?
- What did Jesus say that caused the Pharisees to claim that Jesus was making Himself out to be God (John 8:58)?
- How was it possible for Jesus to know all things (John 21:17)?

- How can Jesus know all men (John 16:30)?
- How can Jesus be everywhere (Matt. 28:20)?
- How can Jesus, the Christ, dwell in you (Col. 1:27)?
- How can Jesus be the exact representation of the Nature of God (Heb. 1:3)?
- How can Jesus be eternal (Micah 5:1-2)?
- How can Jesus be the one who gives eternal life (John 10:27-28)?
- How can He be our only Lord and Master (Jude 4)?
- How can Jesus be called the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6) if there is only one God in existence (Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:5)?
- How can Jesus be called the Mighty God (Isaiah 9:6) and "God" also be called the Mighty God in Isaiah 10:21?
- How was Jesus able to raise Himself from the dead (John 2:19-21)?

- How can Jesus create all things (Col. 1:16-17), yet it is God who created all things by Himself (Isaiah 44:24)?
- How can Jesus search the hearts and minds of the people (Rev. 2:23)?
- Why was Jesus worshiped (Matt. 2:2, 11; 14:33; 28:9; John 9:35-38; Heb. 1:6) when He says to worship God only (Matt. 4:10)? (Same Greek word for worship is used in each place.)
- In the OT God was seen (Exodus 6:2-3; 24:9-11; Num. 12:6-9; Acts 7:2), yet no man can see God (Exodus 33:20; John 1:18). It was not the Father that was seen in the OT (John 6:46). Who, then were they seeing? See John 8:58.
- Why did Jesus claim the divine name, "I AM", for Himself in John 8:58? See Exodus 3:14.
- Why did Jesus say you must honor him even as you honor the Father (John 5:23)?
- Why is it that both the Father and the Son give life (John 5:21)?

- Why did Jesus bear witness of Himself (John 8:18; 14:6)?

-The End-

How to receive Christ:

Receiving Christ is as easy as A-B-C.

A – Admit your sins

You must first repent of your sins. This means turning away from them and asking God to forgive you. Acts 3:19 says "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

B – Believe and confess

What does it mean to believe? It means to trust your life to Jesus. If you jump out of a falling airplane with a parachute, you don't just know or hope the parachute will save you. You believe it! You trust your life to the parachute. Similarly, believing in Jesus means trusting your eternal life to him. Acts 16:31 says "They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'" Paul affirms this in Romans 10:9-10 "That if you confess

with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

In verse 13 it says “For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

C – Call on Jesus as your savior

Through prayer, invite Jesus to come in and change your life through the Holy Spirit. Invite him to save you. “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” – Romans 5:1 (NASB) Remember “he who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” – 1 John 5:12-13 (NASB)

What Now: Find a Family not just a Church

If you accepted Christ as your savior, the next step is to find a local, Bible-preaching Church in your area. A place where you belong! The author of Hebrews writes “And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling

together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” – Hebrews 10:24-25 (NASB)



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