

Beloved people of God,

This evening I wish to deal with the difficult teaching of Scripture that Jesus was both 100% righteous man, and 100% God at the same time. So what we are dealing with are the two natures of Christ, his humanity and his divinity. Now I do so because, not only are both necessary for our forgiveness and our salvation, it also helps us understand what God did to save sinners to eternal life. Let's begin by looking at some Scripture references that show Jesus was a 100% man.

In Jn 1:1 we are told that the "In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And then in verse 14 we are told that "The Word (Jesus) 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"

In Phil 2:6-7 we read, that "Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

Heb 2:14 says, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity."

Heb 7:14 reminds us that "our Lord descended from Judah."

Matthew's genealogy lists Him as "the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1).

Paul writes in Gal 4:4-5; "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."

Like every other human, Jesus entered our world after being conceived by the Holy Spirit and carried in His mother's womb. Being fully human, he experienced hunger, thirst, anger, love, joy, sorrow, pain, and happiness. He even faced temptation.

Now we rejoice that he was human for no one but a human could pay for our sin and make us right with God. But that Almighty God became a human being really goes beyond our human understanding. Just think, that the Son of God who enjoyed perfect communion and fellowship within the Godhead, would make himself nothing, to save sinners like you and I.

Now not everyone rejoices in the fact that Jesus took on sinful human flesh. Some people think it is blasphemous to suggest that, indeed the Jews did! In the early church there were a group who called themselves Docetists who claimed that Jesus only appeared to possess humanity, but He wasn't truly and fully human because it is impossible for the divine to unite with the human.

But Scripture teaches, "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us ... full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). And again, just as well for God said that since man sinned, man had to pay! And so God in his infinite wisdom provides the perfect man to take on flesh in order for man to be saved. Now we may be tempted to ask, Was that really necessary? Absolutely!

Because all humanity is tainted with sin, we could no longer love God and our neighbour perfectly. Therefore, our best efforts, are enough to earn eternal punishment for they are tainted with sin. Thankfully, Jesus is able what we cannot do. He is able to save us because He took on our flesh and remained sinless even under the most severe temptations!

As the writer to Hebrews reminds us, Jesus didn't come to save angels, but the children of flesh and blood. That's why he had to be like us, so that he could make atonement for our sin. Man sinned, so the man Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for many. He became the perfect blood sacrifice to which all those OT sacrifices had pointed. Blood needed to be shed, for blood not only indicates life, but when shed also blood indicates death. That's why the writer says, "...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). What a sobering and humbling thought to know that that a man died on Good Friday and a man rose from the dead on Easter Sunday Morning.

That our Saviour was 100% man, subject to all our infirmities, yet without sin, affords us great comfort. We can come to our Saviour when we hurt for He understands our hurt. He's been there! We rejoice that we can come to Jesus when we are in pain and sorrow. We rejoice that we can come to Jesus when we stumble and fall. We rejoice that we can come to Jesus when we face temptation and wrongful desire. We rejoice we come to Jesus when we face death for He also wept when his friend Lazarus died. Jesus understands and knows what we are going through for he was fully human! And because He understands we have every confidence to ask him for help for we know He will give us the mercy and the grace we need to keep on going.

Now as part of that humanity, Jesus also had to be 100% righteous. He had to be free from all sin, for otherwise he could not pay for us.

Isa 53:11 "...by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."

1 Pet 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

Now I mention this, for sometimes Christians tend to be dismissive of Jesus' struggles as a full human being. They will suggest that since Jesus was also God, He could never have sinned. But that is wrong! In fact, by even suggesting it, robs Jesus of his glory and belittles our Saviour's suffering. Our Lord Jesus could have sinned. Do you think the devil would have bothered with him if he couldn't sin?

Do you think the Devil would have bothered him when he was dying on the cross with all those taunts if he knew that Jesus could not sin? Of course not! On the contrary, Jesus was confronted with all the temptations that we are confronted with and some. He suffered more than anyone of us could ever even dream of because when we have already given up and succumb to temptation, Jesus did not!

He said 'No' to the devil when he was hungry in the desert. He said 'No' to power when the devil showed all the kingdoms of the world. He said 'No' to Peter when Peter suggested that he shouldn't go to the cross. He said 'No' to the mocking crowd at Calvary. Jesus did not sin and therefore, along with his obedience to the Father, made him perfectly righteous.

If Christ had not been perfectly righteous, then he could not have atoned for our sin and we would all be eternally lost. But as it is, the Lord did not sin. Yet, on one occasion he did say 'Yes' even when all he could see was ridicule, pain and suffering. He said 'Yes' to the Father in heaven when it was decided that he would be the Saviour of sinners! It's amazing that God made him to be sin, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. When our Saviour hung on the cross he took our sin upon himself! It caused His Father in heaven to turn his face away from his only Son!

So Christ had to be 100% man in every way and yet at the same time absolutely righteous.

Secondly, God's Word teaches that the mediator had to be truly, 100% God. Sometimes we think that Jesus as our mediator was someone who is a third party, who brings God and man together. Man gives in a little on his demands and God gives in a little on his demands and we meet somewhere in the middle. It doesn't happen that way! Jesus isn't a third party. Jesus is God who came to us in the flesh. It was God in the person of his Son who reached down to man's low existence, to become man's Mediator.

And the power of his divinity is infinite in greatness, infinite in dignity and infinite in value. And that is the reason that the Lord Jesus could sustain the infinite wrath of God against sin. If our Lord Jesus had been just a mere man and taken the burden of God's wrath, he would have been crushed under its weight. Yet it is this very teaching that causes sinful men to promote heresy. In the early church, a man named Cerinthus said that Jesus was just a man.

He admitted that Jesus was special, more prudent and wise than most, but that the Holy Spirit as the Saviour came down on Jesus after his baptism and left just before his death on the cross. This explains why he could do all the miracles, but Jesus was just a man!

That is not all that far from what the JW's believe today. They believe that Jesus was the first and best creature that God ever made. In fact, the JW's have a different Bible than what Christians use and read and have changed John 1:1 and v 14 to suite their own unbiblical doctrine. Bishop John Selby Spong says that it is nonsensical to understand Jesus as the Son of God.

What do the Scriptures say?

1 John 2:22 specifically addresses this issue, "Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Saviour! Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son."

The Scriptures wish to leave as in no doubt about the mediator being 100% man and 100% God. Of course there is a very close relationship between these two natures of the Lord. We know that a mere human could never sustain God's punishment and live.

Yet it must be in the human nature that God's wrath is borne. The divine nature could not be the object of God's wrath. Nor can the divine nature suffer and die. In other words, it is God in the person of His Son who bears the punishment for our sin in the human nature. Not just a god, but very God, true God. And yet, not the Father, but the Son, the Lord Jesus.

Congregation, this doctrine is difficult to understand and to grasp. Yet this doctrine shows the amazing love of God!

a) To know that man by his own wilful disobedience caused sin to come into the world and that

b) His Creator God in his amazing love, realizing man's hopeless position says, "I will save man by becoming one of them, in the person of Jesus Christ. I will take all their infirmities, all their excuses, all their weaknesses and I will die for them."

What amazing love! And that is why the Lord Jesus' sacrifice for sin has infinite value. So if you are ever inclined to say that you cannot be saved because you are so bad, then you are wrong. By saying that you are belittling the value of God coming down to man in the person of Jesus Christ.

Be absolutely certain, that if we confess and repent from our sin, then the precious blood of Christ pays for our sins! His blood does not need to be shed again, his death and sacrifice for sin has eternal value. Our mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ. And by his work we have been set free and made right with God. And this is the mediator that we must embrace and accept by faith. We must do that even before we fully understand his person and work.

Some people want to know exactly what Jesus has done, to the nth degree, before they fully embrace him. But that is not the way it happens. We don't receive Jesus bit by bit! We don't receive the blessings of salvation one by one. No! Jesus Christ is our salvation. Into him we are grafted by a true faith. We become members of his body. We have become one with him and in him we possess all his fullness. That's why we can say that our only comfort in life and in death is that we belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ!"

And that is our salvation. That is indeed what it is to be saved, to belong to God's people. To say, "Lord you are the person! You are the man, the God who saves me!" From the depths of our misery, we are shown the full grace of God in Christ. How do we know? By God's Word. God already talked about the wonderful promise of salvation back in the Garden of Eden.

He spoke about it through the patriarchs, through the prophets, through the OT sacrifices, and finally he fulfilled it through his own dear Son! Congregation, let us rejoice that God's Son took on flesh. We confess He didn't come to keep us from suffering; He came to suffer as we must suffer. We confess He didn't come just to keep us from dying; He came to die as we must die.

We also confess He is truly righteous and that he did not sin and hence became the perfect, acceptable sacrifice for our sins. And we confess that he was truly God. Scripture teaches that there is only one Mediator between God and man, and that is God himself as coming to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other name under heaven by which men can be saved. No other way to come to the Father! I pray that you may know him! Amen.