2016 Fall Semester

Foundations

# Incarnation

## State of Theology Survey

### “Jesus is truly God and has a divine nature, and Jesus is truly human and has a human nature.”

#### 62% of general population agreed, 83% of evangelicals agreed

### “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.”

#### 54% of general population agreed, 63% of evangelicals agreed, with 49% strongly agreeing.

### This shows that the majority of evangelicals are seriously confused about the nature of Christ. This is actually heresy because the Bible presents Christ as being God, and as God He is uncreated.

### The single most important question of all time may very well be, “Who is Jesus Christ?”

## Person of Christ – “Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.”

## Humanity

### Virgin Birth – the bible is very clear that Jesus was born of a virgin. That is, without the participation of a human male, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### Matthew 1:18 – “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit.”

#### Joseph was undeniably concerned whenever his fiancée turned up pregnant, but the angel Gabriel came to him and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20).

#### Joseph then “did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus” (Matthew 1:24-25).

#### That was the account in Matthew. Luke gives us a different perspective. At some point after talking to Joseph, Gabriel speaks to Mary and tells her that she will bear a son. When she asks how this can be, the angel tells her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

#### So the bible is very clear, precise, and direct about Jesus’ conception. He was indeed born of a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Implications of Jesus’ virgin birth

#### The virgin birth made possible the uniting of full deity and full humanity in one person. Jesus was born through woman by the Holy Spirit.

##### If Jesus was created by God in heaven and then sent to Earth, it might be hard for us to understand the full humanity of Christ.

##### If Jesus was born of two human parents and then His deity attributed to Him later by God, it would be hard for us to understand the deity of Jesus.

#### The virgin birth makes possible Christ’s true humanity without inherited sin.

##### “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

#### These two implications are why it is important to assert, affirm, and defend the virgin birth of Christ. If we deny that he was born of the Holy Spirit, then we strip Jesus of His deity, and we also open up the possibility that he inherited a sinful nature. Neither of these can be true about Christ.

### Human Weaknesses and Limitations

#### Because Jesus was fully human, he experienced, in his humanity, the same human limitations and weaknesses that we do.

#### Jesus had a human body. This body grew, developed, and matured just as ours do.

##### Luke 2:40 says that “the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.”

##### Luke 2:52 says that “Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.”

#### Jesus grew tired like we do.

##### “…so Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.” – John 4:6

#### He became thirsty for if you’ll remember on the cross he cried out “I thirst”. After he had fasted in the wilderness for forty days the Bible said that he was hungry and weak; so weak that angels came from heaven to minister to him and care for him. And we see the ultimate human weakness that Jesus experienced in that his human body died on the cross. At that moment, life ceased to flow through his veins. Jesus, the man, was dead. He really died. Certainly during his life, Jesus dealt with the same weaknesses and limitations that all of humanity does.

#### And after his death, Jesus rose from the dead in a physical body. After his resurrection, when he first encounters the disciples, he says to them:

##### In Luke 24:39, “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.” He is showing them and proving to them that he is the same man that they knew and loved before. It is in this same human body that Jesus ascended to heaven. After proving his humanity to them, he told the disciples “I am going to the Father.” He ascends into heaven and then in Acts the angels that are there at his ascension tell the disciples that “in the same way that you have seen him go up, you will see Him return.” This shows us Jesus’ continuing existence in a human body in heaven, as well as on Earth; just as we also will continue after our death.

#### Jesus had a human mind.

##### Earlier we read in Luke 2:52 that Jesus “increased in wisdom.” Obviously he went through the same learning process that all humans do. He learned how to eat, read, write; He even learned how to be obedient, as Hebrews 5:8 tells us:

###### “He learned obedience through what he suffered.”

##### Jesus’ limited mind is also shown to us whenever He is talking about the day that He will return, His second coming.

###### “But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Mark 13:32).

#### Jesus had a human soul and emotions

##### Many times Scripture says that Jesus was “troubled in spirit”, or that He “grieved in his soul.”

###### Just before his crucifixion, Jesus said, “Now is my soul troubled” (John 12:27). John writes a little later after that, “when Jesus had thus spoken, He was troubled in spirit” (John 13:21).

###### Matthew 26:38 – “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.”

###### Remember how Jesus “marveled” at the faith of the Centurion. He “wept” at the death of Lazarus and over Jerusalem’s rejection of him. Hebrews 5:7 says that “Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard or his godly fear.”

#### People near to Jesus saw him as only a man

##### Matthew 13:53-58 – “And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son? In not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?’ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household.’ And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.”

##### The people that he was closest to. That He lived amongst for thirty years, had no other opinion of Him except that he was a normal man.

##### Jesus was very much a man, just like we are.

### The Sinlessness of Christ

#### As much as Scripture makes Jesus out to be everything that we are, there is one very important, fundamental, monumentally key difference between us and Jesus.

#### The New Testament affirms that Jesus was fully human, just as we are, and it also affirms that Jesus was completely sinless, just as we are not.

##### Pilate, in spite of the accusations of the Jews, said of Jesus in John 18:38 that he “could find no crime in him.”

##### Paul refers to Jesus as “He who knew no sin” in 2 Corinthians 5:21.

##### The author of Hebrews declares that Jesus is “one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15), instead he is “holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).

##### Peter speaks of Jesus as “a lamb without blemish or spot” in 1 Peter chapter 1, and later on in chapter 2 directly states that “He committed no sin; no guile was found on His lips.”

##### And finally, 1 John 3:5 states that “in Him there is no sin.”

##### It is very hard to deny that Jesus was without sin.

#### The implications of Jesus’ Sinlessness

##### We need to understand the importance of Christ’s sinlessness in the face of temptation. Christ being tempted, yet remaining sinless, results in some of the most precious verses of Scripture that we have in regards to our relationship with Christ. Both of them are found in the book of Hebrews:

###### Hebrews 2:18 – “Because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.”

When we face temptation, we can turn to him. He knows exactly what we are going through.

And not only does he help you, but he sympathizes with you. Meaning he knows your struggle, has compassion on you, and gives you the aid that you need.

###### 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. Let us therefore with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.”

##### Jesus was fully human. More so than we are.

### The Necessity of His Humanity

#### For Representative Obedience (Active Obedience, we’ll get into this more next week)

##### We are all sinners, and God demands that nothing less than perfection enters his presence. Jesus, being fully man, was able to step into our place and represent us in obedience. Where Adam, and we, have failed, Christ has succeeded on our behalf.

###### Romans 5:18-19 says, “Then as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”

##### Jesus had to be a man in order to be our representative and obey in our place.

#### To be a substitute sacrifice (Passive Obedience, we’ll also get into this more next week)

##### So where the previous note was that Christ represented us by living the life that we should have lived, this point is in regard to the fact that Christ had to be a man to die the death that we should have died. Again, we go to the author of Hebrews to see this.

###### “For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” – Hebrews 2:16-17

##### Unless Jesus had been fully man, he could not have died to pay the penalty for man’s sins. He could not have been a substitute sacrifice for us.

##### “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” – “Galatians 4:4-5

##### “For the whole Christ assumed the whole me that he might grant salvation to the whole me.” – John of Damascus

## The Deity of Christ

### Scriptural Assertions That Christ is God

#### Isaiah 9:6 – “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God…” (Greek word used is “theos” which is the strong form of God: creator, ruler).

#### Revelation 1:8, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Revelation 22:12-13, “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

#### Hebrews 1:3 – “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

#### Colossians 1:19 – “In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”

#### Colossians 2:9 – “In Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.

### Jesus as God by his authority

#### Unlike the Old Testament prophets who declared, “Thus says the Lord,” Jesus could preface his statements with the phrase, “But I say to you”, an amazing claim to His own authority. He could speak with the authority of God himself because He himself was God.

### Jesus as God by His Immortality, meaning his ability to not stay dead

#### John 2:19, Jesus says to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” We know that Jesus was speaking of His body when he said this because John tells us exactly this two verses later in verse 21: “He was not speaking of the temple made of stones in Jerusalem, but he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.”

#### Jesus claims to have the power to lay down his life and take it up again. This is an indication that Jesus possessed the divine attribute of immortality.

#### The author of Hebrews actually considers the immortality of Jesus as the key reason why Jesus is able to serve as our perfect High Priest. He says in Hebrews 7:16 that Jesus “has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.”

### Jesus’ Deity is Seen in His Ability to Be Worshiped

#### Isaiah 48:9-11 – “For my name’s sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.”

#### Compare that with Philippians 2:9-11: “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. “

#### Similarly, God commands the angels to worship Christ. We read in Hebrews 1:6, “When He brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him.’”

### Implications of Jesus’ deity

#### We can know God. Jesus said “anybody who has seen me has seen the Father.” Remember, Christ is the exact imprint of His nature and the radiance of His glory. You want to know the heart of the Father, look at Christ. He is the clearest representation of who God is because He is God.

#### Salvation is available to all. Redemption is available to any and everybody who will come to Christ for forgiveness. It wasn’t merely a finite human that died on the cross, but an infinite God who died. His mercy and grace are never-ending.

#### God and humanity have been reunited in the strongest way possible. It wasn’t an angel or another man that took us to God, but rather, God himself crossed the chasm that separated us, fought and died for us, then carried us with him back to himself. Indeed, the Scripture is true that “All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: [that](http://biblehub.com/greek/5613.htm) [God](http://biblehub.com/greek/2316.htm) [was](http://biblehub.com/greek/1510.htm) [reconciling](http://biblehub.com/greek/2644.htm) [the world](http://biblehub.com/greek/2889.htm) [to Himself](http://biblehub.com/greek/1438.htm) [in](http://biblehub.com/greek/1722.htm) [Christ,](http://biblehub.com/greek/5547.htm) [not](http://biblehub.com/greek/3361.htm) [counting](http://biblehub.com/greek/3049.htm) [men’s](http://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm) [trespasses](http://biblehub.com/greek/3900.htm) [against them.](http://biblehub.com/greek/846.htm)” – 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

## The relationship between Christ’s humanity and divinity.

### In his earthly life, the divine nature of Jesus Christ was latent.

#### Latent - existing but not yet manifest; hidden; concealed.

##### His deity was there, but was never utilized or depended upon.

#### All of the miracles he performed were from God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit

##### Acts 10:37-39 – “You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”

##### Acts 2:22 – “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst”

##### Luke 5:17 – “On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.”

##### Matthew 12:28 – “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.”

#### Also seen in Jesus pleading for God to remove this cup from Him.

### This was necessary for at least two reasons that we can see from Scripture

#### Jesus’ sacrifice would not have been suitable had he been acting out of his divinity.

##### Hebrews 2:17 – “For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”

##### Jesus resisted sin to the point of shedding his blood.

#### He would not have received as much glory

##### John 8:48-54 – “The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'