

Fully God and Fully Human



**Keswick
Ministries**

Preface

This is a seminar series on the divinity and humanity of Jesus in the Gospels.

Christians have long made the claim that the one Lord Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human.

But have you ever wondered whether, as some people say, this way of thinking about Jesus developed very slowly, and perhaps wasn't the way Christians thought from the very beginning?

One of my prayers for this seminar series is that we'll see the Gospel writers from the start presenting Jesus as fully God: fully included in the unique identity of the one true God of the universe. To someone who already knew God, or about God, they persuade us that Jesus is worthy of the same praise and worship. And for the first readers this wouldn't have been as jarring or surprising as we might imagine.

But I'm also praying that we'll be delighting as we see the Gospel writers show God in Jesus taking on a human identity. Taking on a human identity for a purpose. And one of the joys of going back to the Gospels again together will be seeing the divine and human identities of Jesus working together as God acts to rescue humanity from sin and death. So we can join in with Thomas at the end of John's Gospel when he sees the risen Jesus, and cry out with him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Ben Cooper

Fully God and Fully Human



Seminar 1: The Birth of Jesus

How God became a human baby — but didn't stop being God. What the birth stories in the Gospels show us about the true identity of Jesus (with some help from Paul and Hebrews).

Introduction to these seminars

Will it work? Has it worked?

My pastoral aim for these seminars: Secure assurance... but also: reverence, feeling valued, faith and hope, and learning to be human again.

Is it true? — doubts from early times to today about (especially) the divinity of Jesus

My apologetic aim for these seminars...

Where to start? — Chalcedon?

The Council of Chalcedon (451AD) Focus on 'nature'	The Gospels Focus on <i>identity</i>	So what? (Pastoral Implications)
The one Lord Jesus Christ is...	Who is Jesus? Jesus is...	
...fully God (fully divine)	...the Lord God we know from Israel's history and the Hebrew Scriptures, who is Creator of the universe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure assurance (seminar 1) • Reverence towards God and feeling valued by God (seminar 3)
...fully man (fully human)	...the descendent of David (Christ/ Messiah), empowered by the Spirit, who will save and rescue God's people, leading them to victory, fulfilling God's promises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genuine hope for humanity (seminar 2) • Learning how to be human again (seminar 4)

Where to start? — the Hebrew Scriptures?

Key promises:

Genesis 12:1–3

2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 53; Daniel 7

Ezekiel 34:10–16

Where to start? — the NT letters?

1 Corinthians 8:4–6...

We know that [...] “There is no God but one.” [...] ⁶yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Where to start? — The Gospels

When God became Jesus

John 1:14

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(Hebrews 2:9, 14)

When Jesus came... and proved himself both Lord and Christ (Messiah)

The two elements:

- A human king who will save God’s people and fulfil his promises...
- ...who is the Lord and God they already know

Mark 1:1–4, 9 — the human King... who is the Lord

Luke 1:17 (John making ready for the Lord); 32–33, 35 (the human King, son of David, son of God, who will reign forever); 43 (who is ‘my Lord’); 2:11 (the Messiah, the Lord)

Acts 2:22 (A *man* accredited by God to you...); 36 (Jesus proved to be both Lord and Messiah)

Matthew 1

1–17 Jesus the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The ‘fittingness’ of the virgin birth

...he will save his people from their sins

...he will be ‘God with us’ (worthy of worship: 2:11; 28:16–17)

Implications

Will it work?

Seminar 2: The words and works of Jesus

Who did he think he was — God? And what did he think he was doing? What the ministry of Jesus in word and deed tells us about his identity and purpose.



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Introduction

Look around: what hope for humanity? (—our severely limited hopes)

A brief recap of what we're doing in these seminars...

What the Father said about Jesus (at the start of his ministry)

Mark 1:9–11

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Against ‘adoptionism’...

Also: Mark 9:7 (the transfiguration); Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28

What Jesus said about himself

What he came to do — some key examples from Mark's Gospel

1:38 Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” (compare Luke 4:43)

2:17 “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The Titles of Jesus

Son

...of David

...of Man

Christ/Messiah

Son of God

Lord

Also portrayed as:

The Prophet

A great high priest

Divine wisdom personified

The Word

The son of Abraham

Etc. etc.

How he thought and talked about himself

In John: 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; 17:24

The 'Son of Man'...

Daniel 7 first...

And then what Jesus says about himself as 'Son of Man'...

Mark 2¹⁰ But I want you to know that **the Son of Man** has authority on earth to forgive sins."

Mark 2²⁸ So **the Son of Man** is **Lord** even of the Sabbath."

Luke 19¹⁰ "For **the Son of Man** came to seek and to save the lost." (Compare Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:10–16)

Mark 14:61–64 ...Again the high priest asked him, "Are you **the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?**"

⁶² "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see **the Son of Man** sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶³ The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. ⁶⁴ "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

What his works (miracles) signify

About what he came to do

The miracles are windows into the future Kingdom, signifying resurrection from death to life

Mark 5:1–20

About who he is

Like Moses, Elijah or Elisha?

Mark 4:35–41

Mark 6:30–43, followed by 6:45–52

Conclusions

Implications

Raising our game...

Seminar 3: The death of Jesus

How God took on human mortality — and won.
What the crucifixion accounts tell us about Jesus' identity and purpose.



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Introduction

Feeling valued

Jesus completing what he came to do

The Last Supper

Matthew 26²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Gethsemane

Matthew 26³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

His death as sin/curse bearer

Deuteronomy 21²² If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, ²³ you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Isaiah 53¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Matthew 27⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

Matthew 27³³ They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). ³⁴ There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

Matthew 27⁵⁷ As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

His death as King/Christ/Messiah

Matthew 27⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

What *didn't* happen on the cross

What did...

Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood [or ‘the blood of his own’].

Jesus’s Identity and Purpose

Our worth and value

Seminar 4: The resurrection of Jesus

'We can rebuild him.' What the resurrection accounts show us about the future of humanity.



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Introduction

The difficulty of being human after the trauma of sin

The resurrection in Mark

The empty tomb...

16⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

The resurrection in John

Empty tomb, seeing Jesus and worshipping Jesus

20²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

The resurrection in Luke

Very real and human

24⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

The resurrection in Matthew

Leads to a mountain in Galilee:

28¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Worthy of worship

Divine authority

The task for a renewed humanity... (more in a moment)

The identity of Jesus

Acts 2²² "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

[...]

³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. [...]

³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

Compare Philippians 2

The future of humanity

From a fragmented, broken, hostile disaster to...

Learning to be human

From the teaching and example of Jesus

For example, on prayer...

For example, on forgiveness...

For example, on servant-heartedness...

In particular, from the Great Commission

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."