



DISCIPLESHIP MATERIAL

Lesson Number: Seven

Theme: Jesus The Son of God (Pt. 1)

Date: November 2021

Introduction

More than 2000 years ago, Jesus asked His disciples two questions which are still ringing in the hearts and minds of men:

- “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” and
- “Who do you say I am?” (**Matthew 16:13-16**)

Many people, religious systems and philosophers have suggested various answers to the first questions. To some Jesus is a prophet, to others a great teacher and to still others simply a good, moral man whose exemplary life is worthy to be imitated.

But the answer to the second questions is of far greater significance. For on the response of each individual person hinges not only their eternal destiny (**John 3:36**), but the quality, meaningfulness and fruitfulness of their life here and now. (**John 10:10; Colossians 3:3-4; Galatians 2:20**) Thus the central, worldwide theological issue of the ages has been, and still is, this: “Who is Jesus Christ?” And since Jesus Christ is who the Bible says He is – God in the flesh—all people everywhere need to be concerned not so much about religion, *but about coming into and living in right relationship to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.* (**John 14:6**)

Therefore, there can be no more important doctrine to study than the Doctrine of Christ (also known as Christology). For Jesus took the form of a man (**Philippians 2:5-11**) to explain to men not only who God is and what He is like (**John 1:18**), but also to demonstrate who man is and what God intends man to be like. (**1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49**) So a proper doctrinal study of Christ will reveal much about God and much about man and how man can properly relate to God and to other men. And as with all of our study of doctrine we will focus almost exclusively on what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of Christ is of such importance in Christianity it therefore has to be thoroughly understood by all and especially Christians. In order to study it and be familiar with all aspects of it the doctrine will be broken into several studies each taking a piece of the whole. The study on Jesus The Son of God will therefore be divided into the following:

1. The Humanity of Jesus Christ

2. The Deity of Jesus Christ
3. The Present ministry of Jesus Christ
4. The Future ministry of Jesus Christ

Having already looked some reasons behind why Jesus used the self-designation The Son of Man, this material starts on the Humanity of Jesus Christ.

The Humanity of Jesus Christ

In order to fully understand the humanity of Christ a number of different aspects need to be explored. All these different aspects shed some important light on the subject in unique ways. As a first part of exploring these aspects this study we shall be focusing on the **Incarnation** of Christ, His **Virgin birth** and His **Kenosis**.

The Incarnation of Jesus Christ

Many people seem to have an easier time accepting the fact that Jesus was God than the fact that He was a real man! *How could God become a man and still be God?* As much of a mystery as it may seem, this is the clear teaching of Scripture. The term applied to the truth that Jesus became a man is **incarnation**. Let us turn our attention to the subject presently.

Incarnation means that act by which God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit through the means of the Virgin birth. It is important to keep in mind that Jesus did not become the Son of God (2nd person of the Trinity) through the incarnation but that He has *eternally been the Son of God*. (**John 1:1-3; Psalm 2:4-12**)

Christ is said to have eternally “generated” from the Father and the incarnation (birth of Jesus as a man) represents Christ being sent forth by the Father on His divine commission as Saviour of the world at the time God designated. (**Galatians 4:4; John 17:4-5; 1 Peter 1:10-12**) “Generation” refers to function and purpose, not essence or time of creation. In other words, Jesus has eternally been the *Son of God* – He became the *Son of Man* at the incarnation!

Why was it necessary for Jesus to become a man? There are at least 4 significant reasons:

- To reveal God to man (**John 1:8**).
- To reveal what God intended man to be like (**1 Corinthians 11:1**).
- To speak to man through His Son (**Hebrews 1:1-1**).
- To accomplish God’s redemptive plan with regard to sin. (**Hebrews 2:14; Romans 8:1-4; 1 Peter 2:24-25; John 3:16-18; Galatians 4:4-7; 1 Corinthians 15:17-22; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57**)

God’s justice and holiness required a one-time perfect sacrifice for sin and only God in the person of a man could make that sacrifice for the sins of man – thus He sent His Son because He loves us. (**John 1:29; Romans 5:6-11; 1 John 2:2; Hebrews 7:26-27; Hebrews 9:11-15**)

And God chose to accomplish the incarnation of Christ through the person of the Holy Spirit by means of the Virgin birth.

The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ

The Virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ are the keystone miracles of the Christian faith. A person cannot be a Christian unless they believe in the Virgin birth for without the Virgin birth Jesus was not God but only a man with a sin nature like all other men and thus not qualified to be God's perfect sacrifice.

It is reasonable to ask the question why God chose the Virgin birth as the means to make Jesus a man. There are several important reasons:

- It was such a supernatural act that only God could do it and thus requires faith to believe (**Luke 1:29-37**).
- It specifically fulfilled Old Testament prophecy and identified Jesus as the promised Messiah/Redeemer (Christ means anointed one). (**Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 7:14**)
- It was the best means for God to make the divine human without losing divinity so that Jesus would be the true "God-man". It was thus a unique miracle by which God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ without compromising deity or humanity – He was a real man and yet still really God. He had an earthly mother which guaranteed His humanity, and a heavenly father which guaranteed His divinity (**Colossians 2:9**).
- It guaranteed that Jesus as a man would not have an earthly father and inherit a sin nature. It assured His sinlessness (**Luke 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:26-27; 1 Peter 2:22**).

Accounts of the Virgin Birth

Scripture contains two accounts of the Virgin birth and each contributes significantly to our understanding of the concept and event.

Matthew's Account (1:16-25)

Emphasis:

- Focuses on Joseph.
- The work of the Holy Spirit (**1:18**).
- The non-involvement of Joseph (**1:16,20**).

"Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The phrase "of whom" is genitive – feminine – singular in its grammatical form indicating that no man was involved. **Galatians 4:4** also testifies of this truth.

- Specifically fulfills Old Testament prophecy. Chapter **1:23** quotes **Isaiah 7:14**.
- Shows Jesus' legal right to reign as the Davidic king (house and lineage of David). Chapters **1:1,17, 20**.
- Shows the divinity of Christ in His title "Immanuel – God with us", Chapter **1:23**.

Luke's Account (1:26-38)

Emphasis

- Focuses on Mary.
- The literal virginity of Mary (**1:34**).
- The protective “overshadowing” of the Holy Spirit so that Jesus would be a real child but not inherit a sin nature (Jesus called the “Holy One - Son of God”) (**1:35**).
- Shows His link to the physical line of David and His real humanity. (**1:27-33; 3:31**).
- Simeon's prophecy in the temple when Jesus was presented on the 8th day indicated clearly that Jesus was the promised Old Testament Messiah (**2:21-32**)

The Kenosis (self-limitation or emptying)

Through the incarnation, Jesus as God became a real man. *But how could God take on humanity and still be God?* To answer this three *key* concepts must be carefully examined.

- the “kenosis” of Christ.
- the real humanity of Christ.
- the hypostatic union.

Philippians 2:5-11 provides the key text on the “kenosis” (simply meaning self-limitation or emptying of Christ) while **Romans 8:3** and **Hebrews 2:14** also contributes to our understanding.

In **Philippians 2:5-11** we read 4 basic truths about Christ:

- The eternal **deity** of Christ – **vs. 6** “being in very nature God”
- real **humanity** of Christ – **vs. 7** “being made in human likeness”
- The servanthood **mission** of Christ – **vs. 8** “as a man...He became obedient even to death on a cross.”
- The **exaltation** of Christ – **vs. 9-11** “Jesus Christ is Lord”

But what does it mean to say that Christ “made himself nothing” in the verse? If in some way Christ ceased to be God when he became man, then He was really God and **Colossians 2:9**, is not true. And *so Jesus added humanity to His deity without subtracting from His deity in order to be the Saviour*. The emphasis then of the “kenosis” is that Christ

1. voluntarily gave up the right to use some divine prerogatives, and His divine position for a time.
2. condescended to add unglorified humanity to His deity.
3. agreed to limit the use of some of His divine attributes while a man.
4. voluntarily depended on the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry. **Acts 10:38**
5. sacrificially became God's servant. This is what **Isaiah 9:6** anticipates for the God-man Jesus Christ.

Instead of grasping His glory Christ gained glory by giving up the right to His divine position on prerogatives for a season in order to accomplish the Father's redemptive plan. **Hebrews 1:1-3, 12:2** In the nutshell the **kenosis** is that Christ voluntarily limited His divinity in some way, humbled Himself and became a man to accomplish God's purpose in redemption. And yet remained fully God. **Luke 22:66-71**