

## **The Biblical Jesus, the Jesus of Scripture, is God**

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The Jesus of Scripture is clearly God. He is God manifested in the flesh, “in the flesh” meaning in human form. While God in the Old Testament is not a man—not human—and God the Father transcends his manifestation in the flesh as Jesus, at the opening of the New Testament, God does become a man, a true human being who is also God. The statement “God is not a man,” from Numbers 23:19, is not a direct teaching or emphasis in Scripture. The one or two places where this statement occurs, it is said in passing as a means of communicating something else. We need to be concerned with the message of Scripture just as much as the text of Scripture in certain specific places. The New Testament does in fact teach that God became a Man and that there is a Man who is God.

John 1:1, which we’ll discuss further at the end of this article, says that “the Word was God.” In verse 14, it is the Word that “became flesh,” or in other words, human. If the Word equals God and flesh equals a human being, then it is entirely appropriate to say God became a human being, or the God became a Man.

Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58), and “Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). Those are statements of identity. He is claiming to be the very God of the Old Testament. Same thing in John 14:7, Jesus tells His disciples that they had henceforth seen and known his Father. Verse 9 makes it clear He is talking about himself. Jesus identified as the Holy Spirit is all over as well, not to mention passages that identify him as God. God is not merely someone in him, but who he truly is. Rather, God is someone as him. That is, Jesus is God as a Man.

Regarding the Old Testament, the Old Testament Scriptures are rich with prophecies about YHWH, the God of Israel, coming to his people and dwelling

among them, coming to his temple (Malachi 3:1), etc. Let's take a look at the language of Zechariah 2:10-13.

10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD. 11 "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. 12 And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!"

YHWH comes to dwell in the midst of Israel, and concurrently "many nations" are "added to YHWH in that day!" YHWH again chooses and takes possession of Judah and Jerusalem. And YHWH is aroused. He rises up from "His Holy Habitation." This is anthropomorphic language in which YHWH is described as getting up and leaving his "house" or palace, his heavenly abode. I think the implication is to descend on Jerusalem to dwell in the midst of His people, as the passage says right before it.

Some do not suggest that Jesus is not God but a mere man used by God, but they assert that God assumed a separate human being into himself who is not God and still purport to teach Oneness. They will say "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5) and claim this means that God is not Christ, but Jesus is "God" only as a man indwelt by God, through whom God worked, and who represented God in carrying out the plan of redemption.

There is a lot wrong with this and a lot missing in this presentation. God can indwell anyone. God's Spirit was in the prophets testifying about the Christ, and that Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, further identifying Jesus as God (1 Peter 1:10-11). God spoke in many diverse ways "in times past." There is a finality and permanence of his last day revelation "through His Son." The reason He speaks the Father's words is because he speaks as the Father. The reason he ascends to heaven and does not take his place with Abraham, Moses, Elijah, etc. but sits

down with the Father on his throne, is because he, Jesus, is the self-revelation of the Father. He is God the Father manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

### **Some essential things to remember about the Son of God**

1. He is God manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).
2. He is truly a man for whom God is his true Father, his actual Dad (John 3:16; 8:54; etc.).
3. He's born of a virgin--why? Just because? No, because He is God coming into this world, born but not conceived as we were.
4. He's not a reproduction of God but God's very image of Himself. God didn't sire another god/God but manifested Himself in true humanity, entering his creation by taking on flesh through the miraculous conception and virgin birth.
5. Son of God, in the literal sense, not metaphorically, means the He is equal with God, according to John 5:18, also Philippians 2:6.

This presentation of who Jesus Christ is everywhere in the New Testament, scattered throughout the Old, and is the overall message of Scripture, which is all about the Kingdom of God, and more accurately, God the King. It's literally everywhere.

It's also true that He lived as a man and was anointed with God's Spirit without measuring. He did his ministry the way he wants us to, as yielded vessels in which and through which God's Spirit dwells and works. Both are true realities with respect to the earthly sojourn, pre-crucifixion and resurrection life of Jesus. It's not either-or; it's both-and. Being both God and man would not make Jesus both God and not God, but both divine and human in two distinct, yet simultaneous ways of being.

It has been asked, if God became what he was not, does that not mean that God changed? In other words, does the idea of the incarnation impact the fact of God's immutability? Not it does not. Allow me to explain.

The way in which Scripture says God “became” a man does not mean that God’s essence changed. Rather, it only means that he assumed something new. His essential being didn’t change. He did not lose anything he already possessed, but he assumed a complete human nature in addition to his divine nature. So, God added something to his immutable self. His immutable self did not change, nor was it impacted in any way. This is what Paul means by “all things” are “from” the Father and all things “through” the Son. 1 Corinthians 8:6: “yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.” God assumed humanity that was his humanity. In this way, God did not change and his immutability is not violated, while at the same moment adding to himself humanity in order to facilitate his redemptive program.

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Furthermore, as my friend and brother Frederick Williams has said, “Immutability speaks of God’s essence, but God changes with regards to his roles and relationships all the time. Before God created, he was not a creator. Yet now “Creator” is a major component of “who” God is.” Yet there was a time when he was not Creator.”

I believe the key is his transcendence. God is immutable. That is why we sometimes use the phrase, "he clothed himself with humanity." He entered the creation he himself was not a part of by assuming a creaturely nature and existence entirely distinct from and in addition to his infinite, perfect, eternal Spirit-self. I have described it mathematically at if God=infinity, he became infinity plus one, 2,000 years ago. He added to himself, but his transcendent essence and self did not change. It indeed cannot.

As I mention above, in John 1:1 "the Word was God," as in God himself. It is God himself who "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (v. 14). "And we beheld his glory..." the glory of who? The glory of the Glorious One, who else? So, we see that much of the other language of John 1 points to the fact that this One who came and was manifested (made known, v. 18) in human flesh was God himself, as is the case with all of Scripture, as we have seen. We could examine the language of John 1 all day, the language of John for years, and the language of the entire Bible for a lifetime. What we find is that this is consistently the case, the language of divine attributes, divine prerogatives, and divine identity are boldly and repeatedly applied to the person of Jesus Christ.

The clear message of Scripture, when examined soundly and comprehended properly, is that God expressed himself. Invisible was made visible, unknowable made known, untouchable made tangible, transcendent made immanent. The transcendent, immutable God assumed humanity. He added to authentic, begotten humanity to himself in order to accomplish the redemptive program.

"Word" in as far as it refers to God's story, or plan, of redemption, can be said to be God in the sense that the story is all about God coming down to accomplish our redemption as only he could. But I do think that the logos has more meaning in it than merely words. The spoken word included, but also the visible expression of God, image of the invisible God, also the mind of God can be included. Logos is a loaded term, and, so far, that is only within Jewish thinking and NT parallels.