



SESSION 3

THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

Jesus is God, who reconciles us back to God.



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Read through the following Scripture passages this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses.

Day 1

Isaiah 11:1-9

Day 2

Luke 1:26-56

Day 3

John 1:1-18

Day 4

John 19:1-42

Day 5

Philippians 2:1-11

Day 6

Hebrews 2:1-18

Day 7

Revelation 1:1-20

FULLY HUMAN AND FULLY GOD

We use a number of different titles in today's culture for different things. Most of these titles are connected with our jobs—with the things we do. Think of "doctor," "professor," and "judge," for example. People used titles in the ancient world, as well. However, those titles were often connected to who a person was, rather than what a person did. A person's title was a key element of his or her identity.

With that in mind, we can further explore the nature of Jesus' character and identity by focusing on two titles commonly used to identify Him throughout the Scriptures: "Son of God" and "Son of Man."

First, let's look at "Son of God." Interestingly, Jesus rarely used this title when referencing Himself. Instead, others often applied this title to Jesus in order to identify His divine heritage.

Read the following passages of Scripture and identify those who proclaimed Jesus to be the "Son of God":

Luke 1:35

Luke 4:40-41

Luke 22:66-71

John 1:43-51

In the culture of Jesus' day, society was heavily influenced by the concepts of sonship and inheritance. Specifically, the eldest son in a family was the primary heir of his father, which meant he carried his father's status and authority. To call Jesus the "Son of God," then, was to give Jesus the same level of honor and authority as God.

Essentially, the title "Son of God" was a declaration that Jesus was equal with God. Given the context of the rest of the Bible, we can say with certainty that Jesus *is* God.

Take a moment to skim through the Gospel of Matthew. What evidence do you see to support the claim that Jesus is God?

Now let's take a deeper look at Jesus' second title: "Son of Man." This was actually the title Jesus used most often when referring to Himself. For example:

²⁶ It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.

MATTHEW 20:26-28

"Son of Man" emphasizes Jesus' humanity. The title reminds us that since Jesus has a physical body like ours, He also shares our weakness, our frailty, and even our suffering. No pain we experience is unfamiliar to our Lord, and no problem we encounter is too big for His power.

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to the confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.

HEBREWS 4:14-15

How does Jesus' humanity impact your life today?

CASE STUDY: Imagine that a Christian friend of yours has recently been diagnosed with cancer. This friend is facing the real possibility of death and therefore is in great despair.

How would you comfort your friend with the truth that Jesus is fully human?

How would you comfort your friend with the truth that Jesus is fully God?



OUR SALVATION

We've seen that Jesus is both fully human and fully God. He is the "Son of God" and the "Son of Man." This can be a difficult concept to understand in full, but it's a concept that has a vital impact on our spiritual lives. Consider the following:

³² As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself." ³³ He said this to signify what kind of death He was about to die.

³⁴ Then the crowd replied to Him, "We have heard from the scripture that the Messiah will remain forever. So how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" ³⁵ Jesus answered, "The light will be with you only a little longer. Walk while you have the light so that darkness doesn't overtake you. The one who walks in darkness doesn't know where he's going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become sons of light."

JOHN 12:32-36a, emphasis added

¹⁶ "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God.

JOHN 3:16-18, emphasis added

Jesus' dual nature is a necessary foundation for our salvation. Without His full humanity and full divinity, we would be lost.

Why is Jesus' humanity a necessary element of our salvation?

Why is Jesus' divinity a necessary element of our salvation?

These point back to an Old-Testament event called the Day of Atonement. On this day each year, the high priest chose a lamb upon which to place all the sins of all the people of Israel. This lamb was then sent out to die in the wilderness, bearing away the sins of the people and leaving them clean before God.

This was a ritual, of course. There wasn't anything special about the lamb chosen each year, nor did the priest have any real power to offer forgiveness. Instead, the ritual pointed forward to the coming Someone who *was* special and who *did* have power: Jesus Christ.

With that in mind, look at what John the Baptist said when he first encountered Jesus:

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the One I told you about: 'After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He existed before me.'"

JOHN 1:29-30

How do these verses contribute to your understanding of salvation?

The doctrine of atonement is easy to remember when you break it into parts: "at-one-ment." In that single moment ("ment") when Jesus died on the cross, He made us "at one" with God by bearing the punishment for our sins.

Again, it's important to see that only Jesus could accomplish such a feat. Because Jesus is fully human, He was able to take our sins upon Himself—and to die because of it. Yet, since Jesus is fully God, He is larger even than our sins. His power as God allowed Him to absorb our punishment and still rise victorious from the grave.

What steps can you take to worship and thank Jesus for His accomplishments as part of your daily life?