

Two experiences I have had within the past 5 years... In the first, we were in a small group speaking about Jesus' humanity. In the group was a friend of one of the people of the church. When it came her turn to speak, she told us how she thought that Jesus was a great man, the greatest teacher, but that was all he was. The idea that Jesus was God was very foreign to her.

In the other experience, I had the opportunity to give the Gospel message to Jehovah's Witnesses. During our conversations, we would always debate about Jesus' deity. They do not believe that Jesus is God but instead believe that he is the Archangel Michael.

In both of these experiences, it was very difficult to explain that Jesus was God. It is a concept that people can't grasp before they come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Before we were saved, we also did not understand that Jesus is God. It seems that the understanding of Jesus' deity cannot be understood apart from God's saving work in us. However, the flip side of that coin is that I have had more than a couple of conversations with Christians who recognize that Jesus is God, but don't understand that he is man. If I were to ask you whether Jesus is at this moment a man, too many of you would say he is not – that he is God the Son, sitting at the right hand of the Father, but that he is not a man. This also is incorrect.

Today, we will see how Jesus is both God and Man as determined by scripture. This concept of Jesus being both God and Man is hard for many to understand. It is a mystery how this can be, but because it is a mystery, doesn't mean it isn't so. How God does most of the things He does is a mystery! This teaching that Jesus is both God and Man is called the Hypostatic Union. It means that Jesus is fully God and fully man, not half and half. Two separate natures, not mixed. His humanity is fully human like you and I are human. His deity is fully God, like God the Father. Yet, though they are two separate natures, they are combined in one person.

"Hypostasis means, literally, that which lies beneath as basis or foundation... Previous to the Council of Nicea (325) hypostasis was synonymous with ousia, and even St. Augustine (De Trin., V, 8) avers that he sees no difference between them. The distinction in fact was brought about gradually in the course of the controversies to which the Christological heresies gave rise, and was definitively established by the Council of Chalcedon (451), which declared that in Christ the two natures, each retaining its own properties, are united in one subsistence and one person... They are not joined in a moral or accidental union (Nestorius), nor commingled (Eutyches), and nevertheless they are substantially united." [2]

The phrase hypostatic union was adopted by the fifth general council at Constantinople, 533 AD. That council declared that the union of two natures is real (against Arius), not a mere indwelling of God in a man (against Nestorius), with a rational soul (against Apollinaris), and that Christ's divine nature remains unchanged (against Eutyches).

Why is this important? What does this mean to me? It seems like a simple matter of theology – and we all disagree on certain aspects of theology. What's so important about

this one? Well, most cults start off with a simple misunderstanding of a theological issue. Unfortunately, they almost always start out with the same theological mistake – who is Jesus? The problem with theological errors is that one error will invariably lead to another as you try to make other biblical statements fit the error. Jesus is “not God and is just a man” becomes “his body wasn’t actually resurrected”, which leads to “there is no hell and the unsaved are annihilated” as well as “you need to do certain (good) things to get into heaven” and of course, what do you do with the Trinity and so “the Holy Spirit is just the essence of God” and so on. A simple error leads to other errors until you have changed the entire gospel message and have created your own religion. You wouldn’t be the first! The Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mormons, and even Islam all started that way. And that’s why it’s important to understand who Jesus is.

Though we might not completely understand how it works, let’s take a look at what scripture has to say about it.

We can see that scripture certainly shows Jesus as God. Let’s look at a few examples:

1 Kings 8:39

then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men)

Rev 2:23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

Here we see in the Old Testament that King Solomon is praising God when the Ark is brought into the Temple. We recognize that God is pleased when He comes to Solomon and tells him that He has heard the prayer and that He has consecrated the temple. Now recognize that Solomon says that only God knows the hearts of men. Now in Revelations, we see Jesus speaking to the church at Thyatira. As he speaks to them, he says that he is the one who searches the hearts. How can Jesus search our hearts if only God knows our hearts?

Exodus 34:14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Rev 5:11-14 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Heb 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,
"Let all God's angels worship him."

We recognize that we are not supposed to worship anything or anyone except God. Exodus tells us that as do other passages. However, we see quite clearly that even the angels worship Jesus. If only God is to be worshipped, then why are the angels worshipping Jesus...unless he is God?

Isaiah 42:8 "I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another
or my praise to idols.

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

God will not share His glory with anyone or anything. Yet we see that Jesus had the same glory as the Father. That can only be if Jesus is God.

Isaiah 44:6 "This is what the LORD says—
Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:
I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God.

Rev 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.

God, the Lord Almighty, El Shaddai, says that He is the first and the last. Then Jesus says that He is the first and the last. There cannot be two firsts and two lasts! Either one of the is lying or they are one and the same!

Isaiah 45:21-22 Declare what is to be, present it—
let them take counsel together.
Who foretold this long ago,
who declared it from the distant past?
Was it not I, the LORD ?
And there is no God apart from me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none but me.
22 "Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.

Titus 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

1 Peter 1:1 To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

Isaiah 43:11 I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

We see that God himself says He is the savior. Then we see in the New Testament that Paul and Peter call Jesus our savior. (Notice they also call him our God!). But yet we see in Isaiah that there cannot be more than one savior.

The list of comparative passages goes on. The New Testament testifies to the fact that Jesus is God. I have made copies of a list of statements and scriptures that verify this fact. Feel free to access them [here](#).

So we can see without a doubt that the Bible tells us that Jesus is God. This is great for us to be able to tell our friends who don't understand who Jesus is. However, how about those of us who are not yet convinced that Jesus was and still is a man? Let's continue with our study of scripture.

Col 2:9 ⁹For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

John 2:19-21 ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." ²⁰The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

One of the first things we need to prove is that Jesus indeed had a body. There were, and are, people who had believed that Jesus never had a body or that the body wasn't really his. However, these passage prove that he did have a body and that it was his. All men have bodies and we see that Jesus the man had one also.

In Colossians, we see that Jesus is called Deity – that means God. However the outstanding aspect of this verse is that Paul is writing several years after Jesus' death, yet he uses the present tense to show that Jesus is living even after his death. In fact, he is living even right now. That is the glory of the resurrection – that even though died, yet he lives. But that isn't enough – this verse tells us that he is alive but also that he lives in bodily form. In other words, that he is still in his body!

Jesus was resurrected in his body – a glorified one, but his body nonetheless. If it were not his body, it would still be in the tomb. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection he appeared to various people to demonstrate that He had risen physically.

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have," (Luke 24:39).

*"When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, and *said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord," (John 20:19-20).*

*"Then He *said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." (John 20:27).*

Jesus is alive – right now! – and he has his real body. It still has the holes from the nails and the spear thrust, so we can see it is the same body he had before his death. It is the same body that was missing from the tomb after the resurrection. It has changed – He appears in a locked room (John 20:19) and disappears just as suddenly (Luke 24:31). Mary Magdalene doesn't recognize him at first (John 20:11-18), the disciples walking to Emmaus don't recognize him at first (Luke 24:13-35) and the disciples fishing in the boat don't recognize him at first (John 21:4-7). However, that changes and they realize it is him. This is the wonderful promise that we have – that Jesus has overcome death and that we will also overcome death through him! The same way that Jesus was resurrected with his new body will be done for us as well.

1 Cor. 15:14, *"and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain."*

If we don't believe he is in his body and that it is only a spirit Jesus that now exists, then our faith is in vain. If Jesus is not in his human (though glorified) body, then he has not been raised – then he is just a spirit and most would agree that we ALL have a spirit that lives on after our bodies die. If this is the case, then there is nothing special about seeing Jesus after his death. What makes Jesus' appearances after his crucifixion so assuring is that it is that he HAS been raised! This is what we place our hope in!

Cor. 15:35, 42-44

³⁵But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?"

⁴²So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Paul tells us what will happen with our bodies. He explains that when we are resurrected, we will experience the same change that Jesus' body experienced. It will be changed from perishable to imperishable. Notice the same body that is now a natural body will become a spiritual body. This does not mean that it is a spirit, it says that it becomes a spiritual body. It is the same body, but different – like Jesus' body. It is why Paul calls him the firstborn from among the dead. Jesus wasn't the first person to be resurrected; we see that Jesus himself resurrected several people before his death. But he is the first to be resurrected with his new spiritual body. (It is important to note that in many cases, the term firstborn as applied to Jesus actually means "the highest", "the greatest", "the most important".)

Some people believe that at Jesus' ascension, He was somehow changed and His physical body was no longer needed. But, this is not what the Bible teaches. There is no place

where it states that Jesus stopped being a man. If anything, the New Testament says He is still a man.

1 Tim. 2:5, *"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*

Right now, there is a man in heaven on the throne of God. He is our advocate with the Father. Jesus is both man and God. We might not understand it, but scripture tells us it is true.