

Son of God Incarnate • John 1:14

In AD 155 an old man named Polycarp was brought before a raging crowd in the Roman arena at Smyrna. The Roman proconsul silenced the crowd and offered the old man one last chance to save himself. He told him, “Curse the Christ or die!” Polycarp answered, “Eighty and six years have I served him and he has done me no wrong. How dare I blaspheme my Sovereign and King?” And with that response Polycarp was burned to death.

Centuries later on the island of Madagascar off the southeast coast of Africa young Christian women were ordered to surrender their virginity or die. With a commitment to Jesus Christ and to sexual purity they were executed by being thrown off high cliffs to the sea and to the rocks below.

In modern American cities

there are young men and women whose stand for Jesus Christ means they are persecuted by gangs and drug dealers. Loyalty to Jesus means living in constant danger and threat of death.

Who is this Jesus that people love more than life itself? What is there about this Jesus that causes such intense loyalty?

Napoleon Bonaparte said:

I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him.” (Josh McDowell, EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT, Page 127)

In order to understand who we are talking

about we must go back forever before time. No matter how far back you can imagine, God already was. He had no beginning. God was there in the three Persons of the Trinity whom we call Father, Son and Spirit.

John 1 explains about in verses 1 and 2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”

“Word” is a Greek term. Later in John’s Gospel it becomes clear that this is just another name or term for the Son of God.

We understand that we can refer to the same person by different names and titles. We can refer to the same person as “Doctor”, “Mr.

Jones”, “Frank”, “Dad”, “Neighbor”, “Friend” or “Son-in-law”. Likewise, the Bible uses different names and titles for

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the Son of God.

The point is that the Son already existed before the beginning and that he was God.

Please don’t get hung up on the term “Son”. It is simply the term God used to describe this second Person of the Trinity. Since we don’t speak God’s language or understand his terms, God had to pick terms in our language and he chose the terms “Father” and “Son”.

This does not mean that the Father is older or better or superior to the Son. It does not mean that he physically produced the Son. It does not mean that there has to be a Mother god somewhere.

God apparently picked “Father” and “Son” because the best of family relationships are our way to understand the relationship between these two eternal Persons of the Trinity.

The Son is 100% God. He has all of the power, knowledge, love and holiness of God. He has existed forever. He used to be invisible --- a spirit, just like God the Father. Then

came the most amazing change in all of history. The Son became human.

The background for the decision to become human is simple but spectacular. God had created humans to be his friends. That friendship was shattered by sin. Since God hates sin, it created a barrier between God and humans that was seemingly insurmountable.

God knew there was no way that humans could ever adequately reach up to him. The only means for reconciliation would be for God to reach down to us. Since there was no way for us to become like God, God decided to become like us.

Almost every year there is at least one major news story about miners trapped deep in the earth. They are stuck and unable to free themselves. Their only hope is for someone from above to descend down to their level in the dark and set them free.

That is essentially what God decided to do for the human race. We had dug ourselves deep into a pit through our sins. There was no way we could get ourselves out without help from above. And so God decided to come down to us. He decided to become human. And the Person of the Trinity who got the assignment was the Son.

According to John 1:14: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

When the Son became human he did not give up being God. Deity and humanity were uniquely and wonderfully combined. This God-Man was born on Christmas Day and he was given a human name: Jesus.

To correctly understand the Bible we must understand that the Son had lived forever before. However, Jesus began when the eternal Son came down to our earth and became human.

Josh McDowell in his best selling book **EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT**

asks, "If God became man, then what would we expect of him?" He offers 8 answers:

1. Have an unusual entrance into life.
2. Be without sin.
3. Manifest the supernatural in the form of miracles.
4. Have an acute sense of difference from other men.
5. Speak the greatest words ever spoken.
6. Have a lasting and universal influence.
7. Satisfy the spiritual hunger in man.
8. Exercise power over death.

Jesus met all eight expectations.

There were those in the first century (as there are in this century) who rejected Jesus as truly God. However, Jesus said in John 10:30, "I and the Father are one." He knew he was God and he came right out and said it.

Some argue that Jesus meant that he and God the Father were "one in purpose" or something like that. But the religious people in his audience had no doubt what Jesus said or meant, although they didn't believe him. John 10:31-33 reports that they picked up stones to kill him because he claimed to be God.

Today there are people who say that Jesus was a great moral teacher, but not God. C. S. Lewis, the great Cambridge University professor, used to be an agnostic. He rejected the claims of Christianity and the Person of Jesus Christ. But after long and careful thought and research he became a Christian. He wisely answered those who accept Jesus as a good person but not as God when he wrote:

A man who was merely a teacher and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was and is the Son of God or else a madman or something worse. (Josh

McDowell, EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT, page 103)

The Son is God. The Son became human. The Son is Savior . . . that is, the eternal Son of God became Jesus the God-Man for the purpose of becoming a Savior.

Understand that the Son of God is much more than a Savior of humans. The Bible clearly teaches that he created the world and the universe. He is the King of kings. He is the ruler of heaven. He will be the ruler of earth. But most important to us is that he is the Savior.

If someone saves your life by donating a kidney, how will you think of that person? He may be the president of a multi-national company. She may have won a Nobel Prize. Your donor may be wealthy, famous, powerful and good-looking. But you seldom think of those other descriptions. To you, that is the person who saved you from certain death.

That is the way that Christians think of Jesus. We know that he is the Son of God, the eternal Sovereign. We know that he can and that he does perform miracles. Angels in heaven fall down and worship him. But we think and speak of him mostly as our Savior.

John 3:17 explains: "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

Jesus the Son of God agreed to die on a cross. In ways I do not fully understand and cannot adequately explain Jesus' death was the means to dig us out of the hole of sin and give us the kind of eternal life that God has.

In other words, when Jesus died he somehow took each person's individual sins on himself, died, paid the penalty for sin and fixed it so we could be forever reconciled to God. It's

...when Jesus died he somehow took each person's individual sins on himself, died, paid the penalty for sin and fixed it so we could be forever reconciled to God. It's the best thing that ever happened!

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Now all of this is interesting. But it's more than interesting. We must decide whether or not we believe it is true.

Do you believe? Do you believe in God?

Do you believe that Jesus is God's Son? Do you believe that he came to earth to rescue us from sin and death?

If we do not believe, we take an amazing chance. Rejecting God, rejecting God's love, rejecting God's eternal life has to be the most serious mistake a person could possibly make.

If we do believe, we should follow through on our belief. Following through means telling God we believe, acknowledging Jesus Christ as our Savior and committing our lives to follow and live for him.

I generally respect the right of every person to make an individual decision about Jesus Christ. But . . . I would strongly urge you to believe . . . and to tell God that you believe. It is at the point in time when we truly believe in Jesus that we become Christians.

I like the way one eloquent writer summed up who Jesus is:

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While he was dying his executioners gambled for the only piece of property that he had on earth—his coat. When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the

column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected human life upon this earth as powerfully as that one solitary life. (Josh McDowell, *EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT*, page 134. Minor wording changes by LCA.)

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
Do you?

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