

THE
JOURNEY

BECOMING
MORE LIKE
JESUS

LEADER'S
GUIDE

UNIT ONE
TO KNOW HIM



LESSON ONE

JESUS, THE GOD / MAN

INTRODUCTION: Two thousand years ago a Man rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. His presence stirred an entire city and left its people asking, “Who is This?” (Matthew 21:10). That Man became the most influential person in human history and that question remains the most important one ever posed. Who was Jesus? Who is this Man who never wrote a book, never held an office, never commanded an army, never owned a piece of land, never traveled far around the world, and yet multiplied millions of people have embraced Him as their Savior and Lord.

In future lessons, we will study why Jesus came and what He did, but first, we must be certain of His identity. Was He really the Son of God? Was He a real human being? Amazingly, the answer to those questions is “Yes, He was both.” According to the Bible, God became Man, but He never stopped being God! He was not half-God and half-Man, rather, He was very God and perfect Man. He did not have a “God button” and a “human button” that He would press from time to time. He was not a Clark Kent who would change into Superman, then back again after performing a miracle. On the contrary, He was 100% God and 100% Man at every moment.

As we begin this journey together, keep in mind that we have the supreme privilege of not only knowing about Jesus, but also knowing Him in a personal way that impacts every part of our lives.

I. JESUS WAS GOD

READ ALOUD: John 1:1-3: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All



things were made through Him, and without Him, nothing was made that was made.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: This passage from the opening of John is often cited when explaining the divinity of Christ. Why do you think John refers to Jesus as “the Word?” How does Jesus’ relationship in the Trinity (and His pre-existence) confirm that He is indeed God?

Possible Answers:

- The Word ties back to the creation in Genesis 1.
- Calling Jesus the “Word” indicates that Jesus is the fullness of all that God could say to humanity, His revelation.
- These three verses tell us what’s coming in the rest of the Gospel. 7 “I AM” statements.
- See 2nd paragraph below for more help

CONTENT: John’s Gospel traces Jesus as far back as our minds can comprehend. Just like the Book of Genesis, it begins with the three words: “In the beginning...” That first verse of the Old Testament continued by affirming that “God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). However, John 1:1 declares that even before He started creating, He simply “was.” Something (or Someone) had to exist before everything else. Evolutionists contend that matter existed before all other things. Yet, this position begs the question, “Where did the matter come from?” If one can have faith in the eternality of matter, is it so outrageous to express faith in the eternality of God?

The word “Trinity” is not in the Bible. However, the truth of that term is found throughout the Scriptures. It refers to the reality that God exists in three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This does not mean there are three Gods, rather, there is one God, consisting of three distinct persons who are equal in every attribute. When John wrote his account of the story of Jesus, he identified Him first as “The Word” – a description that means He was the full expression of God. John tells his readers three things. 1. The Word was never created, He has always existed. 2. The Word was “with God” (that is, the Father and the Holy Spirit). 3. The Word “was God.” Every



created thing in the universe may be traced back to the pre-existing Christ.

The opening verses of Hebrews echo the same truth, only that writer describes the pre-existent Jesus as “The Son” by whom God made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus expressed that sacred relationship that existed from eternity past by saying to the Father, “You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:5).

II. JESUS WAS MAN

READ ALOUD: John 1:14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Was Jesus a real human being or did He only appear to be while on earth? Why does this question matter?

Possible Answers:

- It is imperative that Jesus was fully man. This way, He can identify with us in our weaknesses, but He can show us how to live triumphantly. As Hebrews says, “but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.

CONTENT: Someone reading the opening passage of John might ask how we can know that “the Word” refers to Jesus. Fortunately, our answer arrives just a few verses later: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (v. 14) God became a Man and came to live with us! The rest of John’s Gospel flows out of his statement, “We beheld His glory...” The glory of Jesus was clear as He performed seven astonishing miracles that John describes in detail. John contended that these “signs” were enough for people to believe that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31).

Today, millions of people deny that the historical Jesus was truly divine. However, in the first few centuries of church history, it was the humanity of Jesus that was called into question. Many could not comprehend a God who would condescend to the status of lowly human beings. It is ironic that John’s



book, which places the greatest emphasis on Jesus' deity of the four Gospels, also repeatedly highlights His humanity.

For example, in John, Jesus is born, attends a wedding, walks, thirsts, rides a boat, cries, washes others' feet, dies, and is buried. Only a human being can experience all those things. Perhaps the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) demonstrates His humanity in the clearest way.

III. JESUS IS THE GOD / MAN

READ ALOUD: Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: This phenomenon of God becoming Man and yet remaining God is called the "Incarnation." Like "Trinity," this word is not in the Bible, yet it is the best way we can theologically describe God taking on human form. The question is not if it happened, rather, how and why would a God so lower Himself to become a mere mortal?

Possible Answers:

- Love, Sacrifice, Relationship. See below for more help.

CONTENT: The biblical answer is love. The most well-known verse in the New Testament attests, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Note that Jesus was identified as "the Son of God" even before His birth. Seven hundred years before that epoch event Isaiah described the Incarnation this way. First, he said, "a Child is born." This was the birth of Jesus outside of an inn in Bethlehem two thousand years ago. We can understand that part of the story.

Second Isaiah states: "a Son is given." This is the divine side of the story that requires faith on our part. How did it happen? Jesus was evidently born like all other children in human history. However, it was His conception that was miraculous. The Bible declares that the Holy Spirit overshadowed a young Virgin to allow God's Son to dwell within Her womb. This biological



impossibility became possible through God's Spirit.

Philip Yancey wrote about feeding his fish every day. He said that every time he approached the aquarium the fish would swim away from him in fear. He tried to talk to the tiny creatures, telling them how much he cared for them, yet all they could see was the giant figure so different from themselves, hovering over their watery environment. He would tell them how much he loved and cared for them, yet they always swam away.

One day it dawned on Yancey that there was only one way his fish could ever really know what he was like. He said to himself, "If only I could become a fish...If I could become a fish, I could swim alongside them, I could communicate with them in their own language, I could tell them, "I am one of you now."

And for thousands of years during the Old Testament days, God in Heaven used various methods to reveal Himself to the inhabitants of the earth. He repeatedly exclaimed, "I created you, I love you, I care for you, I am here for you." Yet most of humanity retreated from the Invisible One who seemed so different and distant from themselves. There was only one way that the fallen human race could ever know what God was like and how much He loved them.

Philip Yancey could not become a fish, but God did become a Man. And the Christmas story is that Jesus Christ came along side of humanity and said: "I made you...I love you...I am here for you...I am one of you now."

CALL TO ACTION: Commit to participating in The Journey the next eight weeks to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) Be sure to fill out your commitment form for this eight-week unit.



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Before today's lesson, how would you have defined Jesus the God/Man?
- 2) What still seems confusing to you about Jesus the God/Man?
- 3) Identify one or more ways that Jesus relates to you as a human, knowing he was fully man?
- 4) How does knowing and understanding Jesus as God/Man impact your daily living?

AT- HOME SCRIPTURES: JOHN 1:1-14; ISAIAH 9:1-7

AT-HOME EXERCISES:

- 1) Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study John 1:1-14. Bible study is an essential part of your life with God. Paying close attention to the verses you read offers the greatest opportunity of hearing God's Word speak to your life. Don't rush as you read. Take your time. Use the Bible Study Handout and Worksheet to study John 1:1-14.
- 2) The Son of God became the Son of Man so we who were sons and daughters of men could become sons and daughters of God. He came down so we could go up. He became poor that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. He was tempted so we could overcome. He suffered so we could be healed. And He died so we could live. Having learned this wonderful truth, begin reading through the four Gospels with an open heart and eyes to see further evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ.
- 3) Reflect on what it means that Jesus is called the Word. The lesson defined this description as Jesus being the full expression of God. Take a few moments and write down the ways that this truth connects to your life with God.
- 4) Since Jesus is God and we are not, we are called into submission to Him. Go for a walk and think about all the ways that you try to be in control of your life, instead of turning them over to Jesus. Ask Jesus to help you submit every part of your life to Him.

