

Doctrine 4: God's eternal son

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

Big ideas

- **Jesus is fully human and fully God**
- **Because Jesus is one of us, we can know God**
- **Like Jesus, God calls us to use our bodies to do his will on Earth**

“*The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*”
(John 1:14).

People sometimes say they want God to show himself in the world.

The Christian faith believes that God did just that when he came into the world as a human being – Jesus of Nazareth. God becoming human in Jesus is called his incarnation. God entered history ‘in the flesh’ and became one of us. Christianity is a historical faith and the New Testament tells the history of Jesus.

Jesus was fully human. He was tired, angry, hungry, thirsty and tempted in every way. Yet, people were amazed at the authority of his teaching, his ability to heal the sick, his power over the wind and sea, and his extraordinary love for people that others saw as unimportant. He was “tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Christians believe that Jesus shows us what it means to be fully human – to fully reflect God's image into the world. This means that as we trust and look to Jesus, we find forgiveness and the restoration of our own humanity.

“*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word*” (Hebrews 1:3).

Hebrews also talks about Jesus acting as our high priest. He represents the people to God – and God to the people. This is good news because he understands our weakness and has shared in our temptations. Jesus is the eternal go-between between us and God. This gives us confidence to draw near to God and know that he cares and understands us.

“*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need*” (Hebrews 4:14–16).



We saw the full extent of God's love for the world when Jesus gave up his life for us on the cross. Only God could deal with the sins of the world and defeat death.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Yet the death of Jesus on the cross is not the end of the story. His resurrection from the dead to life is the incredible good news that convinced people that Jesus was truly both human and God. Only as a human could he die, only as God could he defeat death. He is still fully human and fully God.

“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact” (Acts 2:32).

“You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this” (Acts 3:15).

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:15).

The incarnation of Jesus shows us how God is willing to humble himself and engage with people – and not be distant. To follow Jesus is to follow his example by drawing near to others – to share our time, gifts and life in service.

What does this mean for us? It will be both challenging and extremely rewarding. It means that we will reach out in love to those who society regards as insignificant. Jesus does this. It will mean loving our enemies and seeking reconciliation with those we have conflict with or have hurt us. Jesus does this. It will also mean loving ourselves despite what life may have taught us about our value Jesus does this too.

Discuss

How is Jesus' incarnation both an encouragement and a challenge for us?