



# Jesus is God

John 1:1

Sermon for June 5, 2022

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We are studying the New City Catechism this year, because it is a great summary of what we believe as Christians. I'm going to read Question 23 now, and then let's read the answer together.

## **Question 23: Why must the Redeemer be truly God?**

That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and also that he would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death.

### **Introduction**

We talked last week about how Jesus was a representative of his people. Adam and David also represented people. Their actions affected others in significant ways. Adam was the father of all human beings. Adam faced sin and temptation in the garden. Adam lost the battle. Therefore we all are born with a sin nature that we inherit from our father Adam.

Many years later, David also faced an enemy, the giant Goliath. That time, the human representative was not facing Satan but an evil human enemy. Thankfully, David won that battle. David freed his people from the threat of slavery and death by his victory. He fought that victory in their place, as a human representative.

Jesus also fought a battle as our representative. It was a battle against Satan, sin, and death. On Friday when Jesus died on the cross, it looked like Jesus had lost the battle. But on Sunday Jesus was resurrected and came out of the tomb. The resurrection of Jesus after three days in the grave proved his victory over Satan, sin, and death.

Seeing how Adam and David served as human representatives helps us understand the ministry of Jesus. For Jesus to represent God's chosen people and die for our sins, it was necessary for him to be a real human being. Today we will talk about why it was necessary that Jesus be fully God and fully man. Our brains cannot comprehend how Jesus the Messiah could be man and God at the same time. But it is true, and it is necessary for us to be saved.

We will look at several passages of scripture where the divinity of Jesus is clearly taught in God's word. We will look at them one at a time, and I will explain what they mean after I read each passage. Let's begin at the beginning. Listen to how the apostle John describes Jesus as the living Word who has existed as God for all time.

Listen to the first verse of the book of John.

John 1:1.

1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

The apostle John tells us a lot in that one sentence. John says that Jesus the Son of God is the eternal Word. The Word was there in the beginning, before the world was created. Notice that the Word was God, and also that the Word was with God. This reveals some of the mystery and truth of the Trinity. Jesus is divine, he is God. But Jesus is also a separate person from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Why is Jesus called "the Word?" Because Jesus is the person of the Trinity who reveals God to us. What can you know about someone you have never seen or heard? If I tell you that I have a relative in New York City, what have you learned about this person? You don't know if it is a man or woman, or what the person looks like. You do not know what he or she thinks. You know nothing about this person. But if you meet my uncle Bob, and talk with him and see how he lives, you will learn a lot about him.

The Son of God came to earth in a human body so we could meet God. The Word made flesh allows us to hear the voice of God. Jesus came to teach the truth of God, so we can understand God's heart and mind and character.

Now let's look at John 1:2.

2 "He was in the beginning with God."

Verse two makes a bold claim. The apostle John, the brother of Jesus, says that Jesus has existed for all time. The Jewish people knew that was true about God. God spoke about himself in Isaiah 44:6.

6 "This is what the Lord says--Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord of Heaven's Armies: "I am the First and the Last; there is no other God.

Now look at what the apostle John wrote about Jesus in Revelation 1:17-18.

17 "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead.

But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last.

18 I am the living one.

I died, but look--I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.""

Jesus said that he is "the First and the Last." The same thing God said about Himself in Isaiah 44:6. In passages like this, the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is God. This is what separates Christianity from every other religion. It is a mystery we cannot fully understand. But you cannot be a follower of Jesus unless you accept this. Because only a divine Messiah can save you from your sins. That's why I'm showing you all these different passages from scripture today.

Now let's look at John 1:3.

3 "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."

All three persons of the Trinity were involved in creation, including Jesus the living Word. Listen to Genesis 1:1-2.

1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters."

Verses 1 and 2 say that God the Father was there in the beginning, and the Spirit of God was also there.

In the next verses we also see God the Son, the Living Word of God.

Genesis 1:3.

3 "Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.""

Genesis 1:6.

6 "Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters..."

### Genesis 1:20

20 "Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind..."

### Genesis 1:26

26 "Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us"

How did God make everything? He spoke words. All things were made through the Son of God, the living word. Now let's look at John 1:14 and 18.

14 "So the Word became human and made his home among us.

He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.

And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."

18 "No one has ever seen God.

But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart.

He has revealed God to us."

Jesus became human to reveal the character and message of God to the world. Jesus also became a human being so he could save human beings like us. Now let's look at some of the things that Jesus about his divinity.

For example, Jesus forgives sins in Luke 5:20-21.

20 "Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Young man, your sins are forgiven."

21 But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, "Who does he think he is?

That's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"

Jesus forgives sins again in Luke 7:48-50.

48 "Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 The men at the table said among themselves, "Who is this man, that he goes around forgiving sins?"

50 And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Did you see how the people responded to what Jesus said? In both incidents, the people ask "Who is this man? Who does he think he is?" They know that only God can forgive sins.

I would like to give you an example about forgiveness. Yaovi and Kashif, would you come up front please? Yaovi, I want you to slap Kashif on the face. Not hard, because he is your brother! Okay. Did you see that? Yaovi slapped Kashif. Yaovi, listen to me. I forgive you.

How do you feel Kashif? Do you feel better because I forgave Yaovi? What's wrong here? I cannot forgive Yaovi, because Yaovi didn't slap me. Only Kashif can forgive Yaovi. Because Kashif is the one who was hurt by Yaovi's sin.

Why did Jesus forgive the man in Luke 5 and the woman in Luke 7? Jesus did something only God can do, because all sin is an offense against God. Jesus claimed to be God, when he did something that only God can do. The prophet Isaiah wrote these verses about it.

In Isaiah 43:25 God says: 25 "I--yes, I alone--will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again."

God also says in Isaiah 44:22, "I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free."

Jesus paid the price to set us free from our sin and guilt. He can forgive your sins, too. He died as our human representative, suffering punishment for our sins. And because Jesus is also God, only his death could blot out our sins. It was the voice of Jesus the Word of God who said in Isaiah 44:22-- "I have swept away your sins like a cloud. I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free." Have you come to Jesus to be free? Have you believed in his death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins?

Romans 10:9 makes this promise to us:

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

It is not sufficient to think Jesus as a good teacher, or a good moral example. We have a sin nature that needs to die so we can receive new life and walk in holiness. That is exactly what Jesus accomplished for us through his death and resurrection. Because Jesus is a man, his death paid the penalty for human sin. Because Jesus is God, his resurrection makes our spiritual resurrection possible. Now let's look at a place in scripture where Jesus said He is equal with God.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 10:37.

37 "If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine."

Do you see what Jesus is saying? The 10 Commandments instruct us to honor our parents. They also command us to love and worship God above everyone else. But in Matthew 10:37, Jesus is telling us we must love him more than we love our parents. Jesus is claiming divine privilege here. A normal human being should never accept the honor and worship that belong to God alone.

For example, listen to what happened in Acts 10:25-26.

25 "As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him.

26 But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being just like you!"

Peter did not accept worship. But in the following passages, Jesus accepts the worship of human beings.

Matthew 2:11.

11 "And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."

Matthew 14:32-33.

32 "And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 28:8-9.

8 "So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him."

I want to look at one more passage with you, where Jesus used the holy name of God for Himself. In John 8:51-59 Jesus is talking to some of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. Jesus told them: 51 "Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death."

52 At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed!

Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death.

53 Are you greater than our father Abraham?

He died, and so did the prophets.

Who do you think you are?"

54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing.

My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

55 Though you do not know him, I know him.

If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

57 "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

58 "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I Am!"

59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Young children learn in school about past and present tense. Verse 58 should sound strange to our ears. Jesus doesn't say, "before Abraham was born, I was." Jesus says, "I Am!" This is the divine name of God. You might remember what God said when he appeared to Moses. Listen to Exodus 3:13-14.

13 "But Moses protested, "If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me,

'What is his name?' Then what should I tell them?"

14 God replied to Moses, "I Am Who I Am.

Say this to the people of Israel: I Am has sent me to you.'"

When Jesus said, "I Am" he was using God's personal name. That's why the crowd picked up stones to execute him. Jesus was claiming to be God. Some people say that Jesus did not think of himself as God. But as we have seen in these passages, Jesus clearly believed he was God.

I don't know if you know the Irish band U2? They are one my favorites. Their lead singer is named Bono. Listen to what Bono said.

"I think a defining question for a Christian is: 'Who was Christ?' I don't think you're let off easily by saying he was a great thinker or a great philosopher. Because he went around saying he was the Messiah. That's why he was crucified.

He was crucified because he said he was the Son of God. So, he either was the Son of God, or he was nuts (crazy). I find it hard to accept that millions and millions of lives, half the earth, for two thousand years have been touched and inspired by some nutter."

My friends, Jesus received worship. Jesus forgave sins. Jesus used the divine name "I Am" for himself. Jesus invited people to pray to him. Jesus predicted the future and read people's hearts and minds. Jesus calmed storms and healed the sick and resurrected the dead. Was Jesus a crazy person, or was he God?

All these things occurred in small communities. Jerusalem was a small city, and Jesus did a lot of ministry in the villages of Nazareth. People knew Jesus. They knew the lepers and blind men that were healed. They saw the things that happened. Jesus said he was God and he did the things only God can do. If he was lying or pretending, his neighbors would have known the truth. But Jesus wasn't lying, and he wasn't crazy. That's why thousands of people put their faith in him 2,000 years ago.

And that's why we today can also put our faith in Jesus. Because the Word of God reveals the truth to us, and the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to understand and believe. Jesus is Savior and Lord. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He deserves our worship and prayers. Our closing prayer will encourage us with God's truth from Colossians 2 and 3.

## **Closing Prayer**

Colossians 2:8-9

8 Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.

9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.

Colossians 3:1-3

1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.

2 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

3 For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.



Colossians 3:16-17

16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.


Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.

Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the

Father.

Amen.

 One Voice Fellowship