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## INTRODUCTION

The reaction to the question “Is Jesus God?” makes it clear that people have different opinions on the subject. As will be evident, the Bible presents a clear answer. Yes, Jesus is God.

Misunderstandings concerning this question have arisen because people called Christians at the time of Muhammad had departed from the truth themselves. They took each other's words and opinions as being more important than God's word.

A number of liberal, so called Christian scholars, who do not believe in the teachings of Biblical Christianity, have brought about confusion on this topic. Many are misled by the great sounding titles these men have before and after their names and become blind to the fact that these scholars base their teaching on a theoretical framework that denies God.

## CLARIFYING OBJECTIONS

Before we look at what the Bible has to say on the subject, let us examine two Islamic concerns:

### First:

*And when Allah will say, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say to men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah, and he will answer, 'Holy art Thou. I could never say that to which I had no right...' (Surah 5, Al Ma'ida, verse 116)*

Christians wholeheartedly support the Quranic outcry against this heresy that began to be promoted during the first few centuries of Christianity. There is not one single verse in the Bible that would support the view that Mary is God! When

*Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'* (John 14:6-7)

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*himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!*'

God revealed Himself in Jesus as perfect man. As such He was given birth by His earthly mother Mary, He had a normal human body, and therefore, He naturally felt hungry and weary. In His humanity He could also make statements like:

*'By myself I can do nothing...'* (John 5:30)

*'...the Father is greater than I.'* (John 14:28)

In other words, **Jesus has two natures; He is fully man and fully God!** While walking on earth, **God voluntarily limited himself to His fully human nature without giving up His deity. He made himself nothing by laying aside His glory** (see John 17:5) and by humbling Himself to become a human being. As a perfect man He prayed to his Father. What a marvelous, mysterious account! In 1 Timothy 3:16 we read concerning it:

*'Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.'*

Among all the founders of the main religions in this world Jesus is the only one that claimed to be God in human flesh! In other religions the teachings, not the teacher are most important. However, when it comes to Christianity we find Jesus Christ, the teacher, at its very center!

Whereas others teach about the way that leads to truth and life, Jesus does more and makes this incredible statement:

reading such Quranic verses, one easily gets the false impression that Christianity teaches that a mere human has been made into God. , but this is NOT what Biblical Christianity teaches or believes.

**Second:** It is illogical to think that God could or would appear in the flesh.

To begin with, let us think about an illustration. Nobody has ever seen a square circle. Since both belong to the same world of shapes it is logical that they are mutually exclusive. One can only have a circle or a square but not a combination of both. However, it is perfectly reasonable to believe that a green circle exists ; one characteristic belonging to the world of colours and one characteristic belonging to a completely different world of shapes. Similarly, God and man come from different worlds and therefore it is not against logic to say that Jesus is both God and man. **The Creator can become part of his creation and yet still be above it since nothing is impossible to him.**

According to Philippians 2:6-8 it is true to say that Christ was 100% God and 100% man at the same time. You ask, 'How can this be? Is that not a contradiction?' The following illustration may help: I am the father of a very lively young boy. He loves to wrestle with me. In order not to hurt him I deliberately do not use the 100% strength I have as an adult. I put myself on his level by taking on the 100% strength of a little boy his age. In other words, I am still fully me but I choose not to use my capacities for my little boy's sake. After all, I love him and that is the only way I can show it to him in these circumstances. Similarly God too has become a man in Jesus because he loves

us. Article VIII of the 'Formula of Concord' takes up the same subject. Henry Otten summarizes it as follows: "The essence of this Article is that Christ has both a human nature and a divine nature with each nature having the special attributes or characteristics of that nature. The two natures are combined in one person, the person of Jesus, in such a way that the attributes of each nature are not the property of that nature alone, but belong to the entire person. Whenever Jesus performed any action, it was not just one of the natures which acted, but the whole person. Thus it can be said that the person of Jesus was hungry, became weary, and slept, while it can also be said that the person of Jesus knew what was in man and stilled the storm on the lake (John 2:25; Matthew 8:26) Some of the other questions of Muslims can be met by distinguishing between the state of humiliation and the state of exaltation. In his state of humiliation Jesus was a man like other men and was dependent upon the same resource as other people. That was why He was ignorant of the Day of Judgment, could endure suffering, and die, even though He was the Lord of life and the Word and Wisdom of God. He refused to use God's power to save Himself." (Ibid, page 100-101)

Some may object by saying it is impossible for God to enter into humanity. But what about the Muslim belief that God made himself known through the Quran? Or think about the Prophets of old. To some of them God spoke directly in an audible voice. Surah 20, Ta Ha, verses 11-13 confirm that Moses heard God speak to him, from **within the fire**. This conversation most probably took place in his own Hebrew language because God wanted His message to be understood. **If He**

*from death to life.'* (John 5:22-24)

*'Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, **but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'*** (Phil 2:5-11)

God raised Jesus from the dead confirming his authority, loyalty, blessedness, and blamelessness. Those who deny the cross refuse to accept God's generosity, His blessing. They dishonor the giver.

## CONCLUSION

*'For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form...'* (Colossians 2:9)

In the light of all these strong evidences one must ask the question, "How is it possible that God can condescend to take on human form? After all, God has no flesh and bones, does not need to eat, He never gets weary, He does not pray, He does not die like Jesus did. Who would have ruled the universe while He was dead?" The answer is found in Philippians 2:6-7:

*'(Jesus) who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled*

quently, God introduced an elaborate sacrificial system to the Israelites through Moses. Shame could be removed by getting forgiveness for sins, but only if an animal would die in their place.

*...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.' (Heb 9:22)*

This all important truth is also reflected in 'Qisas' the Islamic law of retaliation. (Surah 2, Al Baqarah, verses 178-179) It consists in doing to the person who has committed a crime the very same thing they have done. The life of someone who is wilfully killed demands the murderer's life in retaliation. However, the next of kin can accept a financial compensation instead. According to Surah 5, Al Maida, verse 45, retaliation for inflicted wounds is also necessary. A nose for a nose and so on. If the member of the body which is to be cut off in revenge is defective, a compensation will be accepted.

From God's perfect perspective animal and all other sacrifices are defective. They can not take away sins but were only serving as a picture or a shadow of Jesus, the Messiah, the perfect sacrifice to come (Heb 10:1-18). He was without sin and by taking our shame upon Himself through His death on the cross, He restored the honor of God in a most profound and just way:

*'Moreover, the Father judges no-one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that **all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.** I (Jesus) tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has **eternal life** and will not be condemned; he has crossed over*

**has limited Himself inside a voice in the past, He surely can embody a human being in order to communicate more directly and fully with His creation.** That is exactly what He has done in Jesus.

Others may say that God becoming a man in Jesus would somehow be degrading to God. Athanasius, one of the early church fathers answered, "Does not the mind of man pervade his entire being, and yet find expression through one part only, namely, the tongue? Does any say on that account that the mind has degraded itself? Some then may ask, why did He not manifest Himself by means of other and nobler parts of creation, and use some nobler instrument, such as sun, or moon or stars or fire or air, instead of mere man? The answer is this. The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men. For one who wanted to make a display, the thing would have been just to appear and dazzle the beholders. But for Him who came to heal and to teach, the way was not merely to dwell here but to put Himself at the disposal of those who needed Him, and to be manifested according as they could bear it, not vitiating the value of the Divine appearing by exceeding their capacity to receive it." ('The Incarnation of the Word of God', Mac Millan, New York, 1946, page 78)

As seen so far, it is not illogical to believe that Jesus is God in human flesh! But does the Bible really teach it?

## THE CHRISTIAN BASIS FOR BELIEVING THAT JESUS IS GOD

### ONE: Evidence taken from verses speaking about God and Jesus

In the following list, the corresponding extracts from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible will be listed as pairs. The verses in the Old Testament, the Taurat, are clearly speaking about God. Several hundred years later in the Injil, we see these same statements being made concerning Jesus.

*For this is what the LORD says... By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'* (Isaiah 45:18,23)

*...That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,..* (Philippians 2:10,11)

*This is what the LORD says-Israel's king and redeemer, the LORD Almighty: 'I am the first and I am the last...'* (Isaiah 44:6)

*'Do not be afraid. I (Jesus) am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!...'* (Rev 1:17f)

*spirit.' Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:59 - 60)*

**Jesus is addressed in prayer, as God!**

## AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

### Why does it matter that Jesus is God?

God in His love wanted to provide forgiveness for His people. He had to do this in a way that His honor would be maintained and justice would be done.

The people of old did as they pleased because they had lost a sense of shame. While their mechanical, outward ritual acts may still have been in place they were not concerned about God's honor at all. Repentance, the turning around from one's evil ways, was later expressed in terms of recognition of shame and disgrace. (Jer. 31:19) Likewise, our disloyalty to God, our resistance against His work among us is known and is exceedingly shameful. We too deserve to be punished ever so severely. Since God is pure, and completely removed from all evil, man's sin has cut off, effectively killed, the relationship between the two. The warning given to Adam and Eve has become a frightening reality:

*And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'* (Gen 2:16-17)

*For the wages of sin is death,...'* (Rom 6:23)

Only through death will God's honor be restored. Conse-

'Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our **God and Saviour Jesus Christ** have received a faith as precious as ours...' (2 Pet 1:1, see also John 1:1, 14, Rom 9:5)

'But grow in the grace and knowledge of our **Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.' (2 Peter 3:18)

In these and other verses, (2 Peter 2:20, Titus 2:13) the following rule of Greek grammar has to be applied and the Greek text **confirms clearly that Jesus is God**: "When two nouns in the same case are connected by the Greek word 'and' and the first noun is preceded by the article 'the,' and the second noun is not preceded by the article, the second noun refers to the same person or thing to which the first noun refers, and is a further description of it." ('Word Studies in the Greek New Testament', Volume III, Book II, by K.S Wuest, Eerdmans, Michigan, page 31)

Jesus said: 'You call me 'Teacher' and '**Lord**', and rightly so, for that is what I am.' (John 13:13)

A further confirmation of the Deity of Jesus is found in the fact that the Greek word, 'Kyrios,' translated 'Lord' in 2 Peter 3:18, "was an accepted title of Deity in the terminology of Israel, the Roman empire, and Christianity." ('Word Studies in the Greek New Testament', Volume III, Book II, by K.S Wuest, Eerdmans, Michigan, page 32) This profound truth is reflected in that **the very special Hebrew name for God, 'Jahwe' is also rendered 'Kyrios'**, meaning 'Lord, in the Septuagint, the first Greek translation of the Old Testament dating from the 3rd century BC,

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my

In the beginning, **God created** the heavens and the earth. Gen 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1; see also 1:1-14

**For by him (Jesus) all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. Col 1:16

## **TWO: Evidence taken from the sayings of Christ**

I tell you the truth,' Jesus answered, '**before Abraham was born, I am!**' (John 8:58)

By saying 'I am' and not 'I was', Jesus used the personal name by which God revealed Himself to Moses! (Exodus 3:14) In this way He expresses **His oneness with God and the eternity of His being**.

The latter is also alluded to in the next verse.

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

'**I and the Father are one.**' Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?' 'We are not stoning you for any of these,' replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, **because you, a mere man, claim to be God.**' Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods?' If he called them 'gods', to whom the word of God came - and the Scripture cannot be broken - what about the one whom the Father set apart as his

very own and sent into the world? *Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.*' Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. (John 10:30-33)

The Jews understood correctly that Jesus was not just speaking about being one with the Father in purpose but in essence and nature. They wanted to stone Him because they understood that Jesus was clearly claiming to be God.

*'For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.* (Matthew 18:20, see also 28:19-20)

Jesus is omnipresent, an attribute of God.

### **THREE: Evidence from Jesus' Divine acts that He is the omnipotent, all-powerful God**

*Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.* (Matthew 28:18, see also John 10:18)

Jesus is described as doing things, which are exclusively the works of God:

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.'* (John 1:3)

*He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* (Colossians 1:17)

*All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another... Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.'* (Matthew 25:32,46)

*And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven... Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ... But that you may know that the **Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**"--he said to the paralytic-- "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, Mark 2:5,7,10-12a*

*'I (Jesus) give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.'* (John 10:28)

### **FOUR: Evidence from the testimonies of Jesus' followers**

*Thomas said to him (Jesus): 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me you have believed...'* (John 20:28-29)

If Thomas had used the words 'My Lord and my God' to express his surprise, Jesus would have rebuked him for breaking the Third Commandment by misusing God's name. (Exodus 20:7)

*'Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, (Jesus)..'* (Matthew 14:33) . On many occasions Jesus received worship, which is only due to God . (e.g. John 9:38; Mat 2:11, 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9)