
Who was Jesus Christ when He was here on earth about 2,000 years ago?

We have discussed in previous Q&As <http://www.eternalgod.org/qa/9508> <http://www.eternalgod.org/qa/9483> that Jesus Christ was God before He came to this earth, and that He is God today. From this it follows that He was and had to be God--the "Immanuel" or "God with us"--when He came to this earth during His First Coming. As we saw in the last Q&A, He confirmed this fact to the Jews at His time, when He called Himself the "I am"--the Everlasting One--the God of the Old Testament.

But in what way was He God, when He was here on earth? The fact that He was God since all eternity--with no beginning and uncreated--has confused many who think that He was still "fully God"--as well as "fully man"--when He came to this earth. Of course, one cannot be fully something and fully something else, if these two characteristics are incompatible. And indeed, being fully God and fully man would be inconsistent.

What then, was Jesus Christ, when He came to this earth?

We are discussing this question in much detail in our free booklet, "Jesus Christ--A Great Mystery." We would recommend that you read the entire booklet, and for the purpose of this Q&A, pages 7-22. Because of space limitations, we can only quote here pertinent excerpts and highlights, summarizing the biblical understanding as to who and what Jesus was, when He was here on earth:

"Notice the clear revelation of this mystery in John 1:14: 'And the Word [the 'Word' referring to Jesus Christ, Who in the beginning was God and was with God the Father, John 1:12] 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'...

"God clearly tells us that the Word Jesus Christ who was God before His human birth, BECAME flesh. Christ came in the flesh by BECOMING flesh. This means that He became totally and fully flesh and blood, like you and I! This is CRUCIAL for you to understand! When Christ BECAME flesh, He was no longer Spirit. He was no longer fully God, because He had become fully man!...

"When Mary became pregnant with Jesus, how did that happen? We read that the Holy Spirit of God, the Father, came upon her that the power of God overshadowed her (Luke 1:35). From this we can understand that through the Holy Spirit, God, the Father, changed the all-powerful Spirit being, Jesus Christ, into a tiny physical human sperm, fertilizing the egg in the womb of Mary, thus impregnating her. The fetus grew within Mary's womb like any other human fetus. Jesus was born as a little baby like every other human baby. He was fully flesh, just like you and I are fully flesh..."

The Bible teaches clearly that Jesus Christ--the God of the Old Testament--"emptied" Himself and became a human being. We read in Philippians 2:6-7, in the Revised Standard Version:

"[Jesus Christ]... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (better: retained), but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men..."

The New International Version renders the phrase in verse 7 as follows: "...taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness..."

The New Jerusalem Bible leaves no doubt in its translation as to what Jesus became:

"... he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are; and being in every way like a human being..."

In spite of these powerful words, most

commentaries simply deny what is being said here, and resort to some incredible "explanation" as to what this passage allegedly means. Listen to these astonishing statements by the Nelson Study Bible:

"This phrase can be translated 'He emptied Himself.' Christ did this by taking on the form of a servant, a mere man. In doing this, He did not empty Himself of any part of His essence as God. Instead He gave up His privileges as God and took upon himself existence as a man. While remaining completely God, He became completely human."

This is utter nonsense. As mentioned, you cannot be completely something and be completely the exact opposite at the same time.

The Bible is very clear that Christ emptied Himself of existing as a Spirit Being, and He emptied Himself of the glory that He had before the world was (compare John 17:5). He BECAME a human being. He was no longer "completely" or "fully" God--rather, He had become "completely" or "fully" man.

We read, for instance, that man--flesh and blood--cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50). We also read that we must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5), and that flesh and blood cannot even see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3). In order to be IN the Kingdom of God, one must BE Spirit (John 3:6). Jesus came in the flesh; He WAS flesh, when He was here on earth. He became born again at the time of His resurrection as a Spirit Being--no longer flesh and blood--and it was THEN that He entered the Kingdom or Family of God as a glorified Spirit Being. He was NOT (yet) in the Kingdom of God when He was here on earth as a man. It is true that some of His disciples saw Him on the mount of transfiguration as a glorified Being in the Kingdom of God--together with glorified Moses and Elijah--but that was in a vision, picturing what would occur in the future.

We continue quoting from our free booklet, "Jesus Christ--A Great Mystery":

"Christ had God's Holy Spirit dwelling within

Him... He had God's Spirit without measure or limit--given at conception--which is how He was able to overcome sin in the flesh... Jesus said that He could do nothing of Himself (John 5:19, 30). When in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed to God, the Father, for strength and God sent an angel to strengthen Him. He knew that the Father could do everything and that nothing was impossible for the Father (Luke 22:40-46; Matthew 26:39-42)...

"It was absolutely NECESSARY for Christ to become FULLY MAN, because only in that way could He become the Savior of man. Notice this in 1 Corinthians 15:21: 'For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.'... We read that Christ was DEAD. HE HIMSELF had died--the person that He was--the Son of God Who had become Man. Revelation 1:18 confirms that HE was dead, not just a part of Him...

"Philippians 2:8 adds that 'He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of DEATH, even the death of the cross.' ... Romans 14:9 adds: 'For to this end Christ DIED and rose and LIVED AGAIN, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.'...

"Hebrews 2:9 teaches very powerfully that Christ died just as all humans die. In fact, He HAD to die that way in order to 'taste death for everyone.' We read: 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.'

"The only way that Christ--who had been GOD since all eternity--could die, was to become flesh. When He became flesh, He was totally human!... When Christ became flesh, He gave up all of His divine attributes and powers. Simply put, He became a man so that He could die! He was no longer a Spirit being, He was no longer God as we think of God, since God, a Spirit being, cannot die (compare Luke 20:35-36; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 Timothy 1:17)...

"Christ became flesh so that He could overcome sin in the flesh. He had to prove that it is possible for man, with the help of God's Holy Spirit within him,

to overcome sin!...

"Christ was tempted in all points, as we are, but He stayed sinless (Hebrews 4:15, '[He] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.'). He overcame sin in the flesh, resisting temptation (Revelation 3:21). God, a powerful perfect Spirit being cannot be tempted (compare James 1:13). But we read that Christ WAS tempted. This proves that He was not the all-powerful perfect Spirit being when He was here on this earth that He HAD been prior to His birth as a human being...

"Romans 8:3 tells us: 'For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh [human beings, all by themselves, without God's Spirit dwelling in them, are too weak to keep the law], God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.' In other words, He OVERCAME SIN as a human being."

"... why, then, do we read that Christ would be called 'Immanuel,' which means, 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23)?...

"Christ had been an immortal God being. He was changed into a human being, but He was still the same personage He had been since all eternity. Christ, who became human, was still the personage He had always been. He was still the one who had previously met with Abraham, the one who created Adam and Eve, and the one who spoke to Moses face-to-face. He lived as a human being growing as children do, developing into a young man, and then becoming a rabbi, or teacher, in Judah. But He was still the same individual that He had always been. He had been an immortal God being and He knew that He would become an immortal God being again, subject to qualifying by being and remaining sinless... Christ, when He was here on earth, was, quite literally, Immanuel, or, 'God with us.'...

"Christ was God Eternal, who BECAME man, so that man COULD ultimately become God! Christ was tempted, He suffered, and He died as a man.

"Who IS Christ now? Christ is God. Christ, the

man, was resurrected by God, the Father, as the mighty and powerful God being that He had always been before His days in the flesh. He is now the mighty God for whom we wait to bring us redemption, salvation, and eternal life in the very Kingdom of God (Titus 2:11-14)!"

Christ--very God--became man so that you and I could become God. That is quite a thought to ponder. In subsequent Q&As, we will discuss and explain the very fact that it is the potential of man to become a mighty God being.

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