

Jesus dual nature are  
divine and human at  
once religion essay



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Being one of the enigmatic figures in history and in the Bible, the person of Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Son or the Word of the Father. More importantly, he is characterised by his dual nature which are divine and human at same time. Despite the trend of a new quest for the historical Jesus by Kasemann in 1950-1980's, this paper will mainly focus on the biblical interpretation of Jesus as Christ of Faith. Hence, this paper will concentrate on how Jesus was portrayed in the Bible and in Christology (from Greek " christos") and who Jesus Christ is from a theological perspective. At the end of this essay, I will deal with the implications of the Christian doctrine on the person of Jesus.

Jesus himself suggests his pre-existence in a number of texts in the New Testament. He said he had glory with the father before the world was (John 17: 5), which implied his existence prior to all things.[1]The prophecies on Christ in the Old Testament encompass his birth place, the fact that he would be born of a Virgin Mother, death and resurrection.

It must be noted at the first place that Jesus is not half God and half man; instead, he is fully divine and fully man at the same time, i. e. he has a dual nature. He is not merely a human being who neither " had God within him" nor is he God who manifested his principle through a physical person, rather, the two distinct natures co-exist and unit in the person of Jesus, which is also called the " hypostatic union".[2]

Jesus is represented as the seed of the woman, the son of David and the prince of pastors. The following features demonstrate Jesus' inherent humanity: he was called man (Mark 15: 39; John 19: 5), has a body of flesh

and bones (Luke 24: 39) and was tempted (Matt. 4: 1). He had human emotions such as distress and sorrow; he was equally subject to hunger. More significantly, he had a human soul (Luke 23: 46) and died. I shall leave the issue of the “ son of man” and resurrection of Jesus later in this paper. For the present, it seems self-evident that Jesus identified himself with men and was “ truly man”. He was explicitly named the “ servant” who offered himself for the sins of the entire world, suffered and sacrificed himself as the One representing all human beings. This fully human aspect of Jesus received support from arianism and ebionitism, which viewed Christ as a man born naturally, but was rejected by docetism arguing that the human features of Christ were mere appearances.[3]The Gnostics also denied to Jesus a true human nature. Nonetheless, the above views were both rejected at Church Councils and the idea of the union of the two separate natures in one person was upheld.

Besides this emphasis on Jesus’ true humanity, there has always been stressed that he was sinless. In this sense, he was distinguished from other human beings and he could not be simply said to be the wisest or greatest man at his time, as he was fundamentally different from his fellows (1 John 1: 9).

## **The deity of Christ: the divine and transcendent aspect of Jesus**

Despite the emphasis on Jesus’ true humanity, there is little doubt about the divinity of Christ. It was clearly taught in the Bible that Jesus was regarded as more than human: he was called God (John 20: 28) and Son of God (Mark 1:

1), was worshiped (Matt. 2: 2) and honored the same as the Father (John 5: 23), was omniscient (John 21: 17) and resurrects (John 5: 39).

## **Son of God, Son of Man**

Being called the Son of God and Son of Man in the New Testament, Jesus seemed to receive these titles so as to fulfil a messianic purpose.

Jesus does not refer to himself as the Son of God, rather, he was named so by the heavenly voice at his baptism.[4]The term was also frequently used in the Pauline gospels. This title is clearly connected to a messianic purpose: whilst accepting it, Jesus assumed to be the Son of the Father become One with the Father both in activity and will (i. e. the rightful Son in nature, whereas men can only become sons of God by adoption). Hence, he assumed his roles of saving and judging.

More interestingly, in the gospels of John, he equally referred to himself as the Son of Man. It seems that this enigmatic title was mainly used in three different contexts: 1) to address the prophet Ezekiel (e. g. Ezekiel 2)1 to refer to humanity in general and his humility (Psalm 8: 14) to refer to a figure representing the end of history.[5]Hence, it seems that he used this title when he emphasised his authority and power of judging.

## **Lord**

The statement “ Jesus Christ is Lord (Greek kyrios, Hebrew adonai)” is frequently used in the New Testament: Thomas called the resurrected Jesus “ My Lord and my God!” (John 20: 28), so does the Father: “ Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever.” (Hebrews 1: 8).[6]Interestingly, McGarth

noted in her Christian Theology that in Torah readings, “ Lord” had become synonymous with God in Jewish thinking by the time of Jesus, which might justify Jews’ refusal to address the Roman emperor as “ Lord”. [7] Thereby, Jesus is more than a charismatic figure but the saviour of the world (Luke 2: 1); people could pray to him as they would pray to God and worship God. More importantly, Jesus received honor and glory from the Father and reveals the Father: “ Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14: 9) (329-330)

## **Word**

In the expectations of classical wisdom, Jesus is not only considered as fulfilment of the Law, but also as the logos (“ word”), i. e. “ the mediator between the seen and unseen worlds”. [8] In the gospels of John, Jesus is described as the Word who was God and was with God and was made flesh, (“ The Word became flesh” (John 1: 14), which confirms again the intrinsic dual nature in the person of Jesus.

## **The incarnation and three offices of Christ**

The “ threefold office of Christ” was first formulated by John Calvin as (1) Prophet; (2) Priest, and (3) King. [9] Different from the prophet in the traditional sense, Jesus is “ both gave revelation from God and was himself revelation from God” [10], and this may explain why the title of “ prophet” is absent in the epistles. As an unconventional priest, Jesus fulfilled his office by offering himself as sacrifice for people’s sin. In his role of King, he reveals God to men (John 1: 18); saves sinners (Gal 1: 4) and judges men (Acts 17: 31), accomplishes God’s work including saving (Matt 1: 23), raising the dead (John 5: 25) and building his church (Matt 16: 18). He rules over the entire <https://assignbuster.com/jesus-dual-nature-are-divine-and-human-at-once-religion-essay/>

universe with wisdom and justice, and shall return as “ the King of Kings” (Rev 19: 16).

## **Resurrection**

The resurrection which was recorded in all four gospels remains as a debatable topic in Christology: how to understand that Jesus rose from the dead, physically in the same body in which he had died? Should we interpret the word “ resurrection” in a physical sense or a spiritual one? Despite the earlier doctrine of soteriology which consists in regeneration of individuals, it now seems appropriate to say that the testimony of Jesus’ resurrection by the disciples (“ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” Cf: Luke: 24: 36-43) “ only confirms a faith in Jesus’ resurrection that had its origins in independent acts of divine revelation.”[11]Scholars such as R. Bultmann argue that the disciples’ experience is too supernatural to be ascertainable, whereas K. Barth and S. Kierkegaard argued that the resurrection was merely literal in the Bible and could not be experienced by ordinary human beings and can only be accepted by faith alone.[12]

Although it is difficult to reconcile the interpretation of Christ’s resurrection as a bodily one in the early Christian doctrine, it must be recognised that this interpretation is core to Christian ethical life and reflects the hope that Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Kings will return with great glory to rule over the cosmos, judge the dead and establish his kingdom (Rev 19: 11).[13]

## **Implications of the doctrine**

It appears that the interpretation and understanding of Jesus in the Bible and Christology have various ethical ramifications. As “ what you believe affects what you do”, the life of Jesus and his self-sacrificial love provides the reader with ethical teaching and affects his whole life. As H. R. Mackintosh rightly pointed out: “ When we come to know God in the face of Jesus Christ, we know that we have not seen that Face elsewhere, and could not see it elsehow. Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and there is no door, nor way, leading to the Father but by him.”[14]

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