

# The Humanity of Jesus

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This study is going to concentrate on the human nature of Jesus Christ, and therefore look at the human characteristics of Jesus. In this study and the next which is the Deity of Jesus (God nature) we will see that Jesus was one person with both human and divine characteristics.

## **Jesus possessed a physical body like ours**

Both Matthew and Luke commence their gospel by placing Jesus in human genealogy (Matthew 1:1-16 & Luke 3:23-28).

Even though his conception was different from all other human conception (Father=God, Mother=Mary) his birth was a normal one.

- **Matthew 1:25:** *But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*
- **Luke 2:7:** *and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Jesus was a developing foetus in the womb of Mary and came into the world through a human birth canal at the climax of a normal period of gestation (development) and labour. His life ran like ours from womb to tomb.

John 1:14 says ***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*** Here the word **Flesh** is a label of humanity with all its weaknesses and limitations. So Jesus entered into a means of existence where he would experience everything that human beings experience.

Question: Why do you think that was?

## **Jesus was subject to the normal processes of Human development.**

Although we have a very little amount of scripture about the early years of Jesus, what we have does show us that he had apparently normal growth and development and was part of a family.

- **Luke 2:40:** *And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.*
- **Mark 6:3:** *Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?*

## **Jesus experienced the physical limitations of human life.**

He experienced:

- **Hunger, Luke 4:1-2:** *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,<sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.*

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- Thirst, John 4:7: *When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" John 19:28: Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty.*
- Weariness, John 4:6: *Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.*
- Intense agony, Mark 14:33-34: *He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.<sup>34</sup> "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."*
- Agonizing Death, Luke 23:33: *When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals — one on his right, the other on his left.*

## **Jesus experienced normal human emotions.**

He experienced:

- Joy, Luke 10:21: *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit ....*
- Sorrow, John 11:35: *Jesus wept.*
- Love, John 11:5: *Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.*
- Anger, Mark 3:5: *He looked round at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.*
- Compassion, Matthew 15:32: *Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."*
- Annoyed, John 2:15: *So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.*
- Distress, Luke 12:5: *But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!*
- Grief, Luke 19:41: *As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it.*

Question – Why do you think that Jesus was not exempt from feeling human emotions?

Question – How does that help you in your relationship with Jesus today?

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## **Jesus experienced the normal moral conflicts of Humanity.**

His humanity is further confirmed by being tempted to sin.

- Matthew 4:1-11: *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup> "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" <sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. <sup>9</sup> "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*
- Matthew 27:42: *He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.* Jesus had the power to come down from the cross and was tempted to prove who he really was. But He choose to die for mankind.
- Mark 8:31-33: *He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*
- Hebrews 4:15: *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.*

Some people suggest that Jesus' temptations were not real or that He could not possibly have sinned because He was also God. These scriptures clearly show that just like every human being Jesus was confronted with temptation. Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness of temptation. Jesus had to experience temptation, to resist it and experience the power of temptation.

Temptation itself is not sin; it only becomes sin when one yields to temptation that it becomes sin.

Question – Knowing that Jesus was able experience and to overcome temptation, how do you think that helps you and I to do the same?

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## Additional Study

What patterns of life and do we learn from Jesus?

- Luke 4:16: *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom.*
- Matthew 4:5: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'* Luke 24:27 *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*
- Luke 3:21: *When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened.* Luke 6:12: *One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.*
- John 4:34: *My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.* John 6:38: *For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.*

Please spend time thinking about these patterns for life Jesus shows us.

Question - Which of these patterns do you need to develop in your life?