

How Human Was Jesus?

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Integration Question: *How human is Jesus? Can we really be like Him?*Theological Statement

Jesus is fully God and fully human. While some believe Jesus kept all of his Divine (incommunicable) attributes, such as omniscience and omnipotent, choosing to use them or not whenever He wanted to, I believe Jesus surrendered His divine status and role while living incarnate, becoming human in every possible way that we are human. Philippians 2:6-8 helps understand this aspect of how God could become human, explaining that Jesus “ who, although He once existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” This chiasm centers on the fact that Jesus emptied himself. Jesus emptied himself of being in the form (status) of God, and took on the status of a man, while also relinquishing his equality with God (role, way love living, and Divine attributes) as He took on the form (limitations) of a man servant. In other words, when Jesus left His heavenly throne room in order to enter the uteruses of a human, He became human in every way a human is different than the Creator, even while still retaining His essence of full equality with God. The author of Hebrews believes this to be true as he says that Jesus took on flesh and blood as a man, becoming fully human in *ever aspect* (Heb. 2:14-17). For this reason, Jesus was tempted and faced a real, genuine choice to give into temptation or not, just like man (Matt. 4:1-11); He had a limited understanding, just like man, as He did not know the date or time of renewed creation except God the Father (Matt. 24:36); and He could really die just like a mortal man could (Matt. 27:33-56).

Jesus fulfilled prophecy by living as a perfect, Spirit filled human on mission as the Messiah. Isaiah 11:1-9 is one of the most notable Old Testament passages that foretold about the Messianic King, describing Him in terms of being saturated, in every aspect of life, by God's Spirit. It is repeated four times that God's ruakh would influence this Davidic king: the ruakh of the Lord will rest on this future king, the ruakh of wisdom and understanding, the ruakh of counsel and strength, the ruakh of the knowledge and fear of the Lord. Every aspect of this king's leadership would be influenced and empowered by God's ruakh. The Spirit filled Messianic King would bring about such a new creation that the only words the prophet Isaiah could use to describe is something as absurd as a lion and the lamb living in peace together and a child playing in harmony with a cobra's nests. This is exactly how the Biblical authors portrayed Jesus. For example, Jesus' conception was Spirit filled (Luke 1:26-38), those who were to prepare the way for Him were Spirit filled (Luke 1:1-17), He was anointed at birth in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22), His ministry was commissioned via the Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17), every miracle He performed was through the power of Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28, Acts 10:38), His resurrection was attributed to the power of the Spirit (Romans 8:11), and the commission for His followers to continue redeeming the world is through the outpouring of Holy Spirit (Acts 1:7-8). Jesus emptying himself of His divine nature, and taking on the nature of man, meant that Jesus had to be fully submitted to Holy Spirit, thus fulfilling Messianic prophecy.

Ministry Application

The application of Jesus being fully human and fully reliant on the Spirit means it is actually possible for humans to be like Jesus (1 Peter 1:15-16). Jesus would not tell His people to become Holy like Him, walk as he walked and follow Him if it were not possible. As New Covenant people who have been given a renewed Spirit, Jesus' very one, we can look like, live

like, and become His hands and feet to a desperately searching world (1 John 2:6, 4:17). This reality should stop Christians from putting on the mindset of Old Testament people and begin to put on the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Far too often followers of Jesus look at the cross and are thankful for the blood of Jesus because it means that they are saved from going to hell, while missing the focus of the gospel that God Himself restored His presence with humanity so that we can live and reign in His kingdom, right here and right now. The Old Testament people could only wish and foretell of a day when God would actually change the hearts of all His people (via His Spirit), but we get to live in that reality thanks to Jesus. By abiding in Holy Spirit, we are to look, act, and become the very life of Jesus to this world (2 Cor. 2:15). Christians must wake up to the reality of Jesus' victory and live in their renewed identity. Every restaurant we eat at, store we shop in, and sibling we interact with is an opportunity to have other people experience Jesus through us. Our words, our actions, our mindset, should and can (if fully abiding in submission an consumption of Holy Spirit) reveal Jesus to the waitress, the checkout clerk, our brothers and sisters. If a word of knowledge is given, speak it; if a smile and warm "hello" is instructed, do it; and if being falsely accused by a sibling is offered in order to bring peace to the situation, praise God that you can live dead to your flesh and still alive in His Spirit. These are some practical examples of what it means to live like Jesus.

Secondly, because Jesus has given us His Spirit to His followers, telling us it is better He leaves and so that His Spirit can guide us in all His Ways (John 14:12), then Christians must stop "waiting for God to redeem this world" and realize He using us, restored image bearers, to do just that. The plan, from the beginning, was for God to always rule and reign through humanity. This means we must live even more devoted and submitted to the voice of His Spirit. This practically looks like waking up before anyone in the house to spend time communing before the

fireplace with Him; retreating to your empty closet to seek His council; praising Him in the car drive to pick up the kids from school; or weeping to Him in the laundry room while folding clothes. We are to live every second of our lives in the reality that our spiritual flesh has died and Christ's life now is the lens for every decision. When you are cut off and flipped off on the freeway, you can bless the person by not retaliating, and instead, pray that they experience the love of Jesus that ultimately leads them to change. If your spouse unhealthily takes their pent-up anger from the stresses of this world out on you, you can respond with sympathy, without taking offense, because you realize they may be letting the world speak and influence their identity more than their Creator. You can offer them the love, care, and light yoke of Jesus through your response, council, and affection.