

2025-2026

Week Seven: ACBC Theology Exam - Questions #12 & 13

12. Describe the dual natures of Jesus Christ and explain why this reality is crucial for salvation.

Jesus is truly God and He is truly man. Two distinct natures in one person.

Jesus is not 50% God and 50% man.

He is fully divine God and He is fully human man.

Jesus is truly God:

Clear and firm passages:

***John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

John, in this verse and throughout his Gospel, speaks to Jesus as God.

(Jehovah Witnesses claim that it should be translated as “a god”. The heresy Arianism similarly believes that Jesus, as the Son of God, was created by God and is distinct from Him. Both groups reject the divinity of Jesus, they reject that Jesus is truly God.)

JW's are wrong. In the Greek = 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.¹ *Theos en ho logos = “God was the Word”*

‘Theos’ comes before the verb ‘en’ (was). Reveals ‘logos’ (the Word) is truly divine. Translating *theos* as ‘a god’ is not faithful to the grammar, the grammatical structure. In addition to Greek grammar, the context of the passage, and the purpose of John’s Gospel all render JW translation not only *false* but *heretically false*.

Another Grammar example in John without the definite article = **John 1:49**, Nathaniel declares, “You are the King of Israel”. In the Greek text there is not a definite article before the word for “King”, yet in context it is rightly translated as “the King” not “a king”.

John 8:39 Jesus says, “If you are **Abraham’s children...**”. OR as NLT “If you are **the children** of Abraham...”. *Both meaning **the children of Abraham**. “Children” has no definite article, and the grammar rules include the article in the translation - OR context.

¹ Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, et al., The Greek New Testament, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), Jn 1.

***John 1:14** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John clearly defines who the Word is = the One who took on flesh = JESUS.

*** John 8:58-59** Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

Notice 2x for emphasis. Jesus references to **Exodus 3:14**, when God speaking to Moses from the burning bush declares “I am who I am”. His name which signifies His eternal and self-sufficient nature. Attributes that are divine. Attributes that no human man can emulate. No creature can emulate. Incommunicable attributes that God alone possesses. Jesus teaches that He is God.

John 1:3 John tells us the Word is Creator = divine, incommunicable attribute.

***John 10:30-31** “I and the Father are one.” The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.”

Jesus is God, He shares the same divine nature as the Father. The Jews clearly perceived that Jesus claimed to be God, and not just ‘a god’.

***John 20:28** “Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God.’”

The confession of Thomas is the normative expression which all believers make in acknowledging the risen Lord, “My Lord and my God.”

***Hebrews 1:2-3** “In these last days has spoken to us in His Son whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature and upholds all things by the word of His power....”

The author of Hebrews speaks to these same truths telling us that Jesus “made the world” and is “the exact representations of God’s nature.”

Jesus is truly Man:

***Hebrews 2:17** “Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

A. The agent.

Both Matthew and Luke emphasize the ministry of the Holy Spirit in causing Mary's conception. **Matthew 1:20** stresses, "that which has been conceived in her is of (Gk. *ek*) the Holy Spirit," stressing origin. The origin of Jesus' birth was not through Joseph but through the agency of the Holy Spirit. **Luke 1:35** uses the terms "come upon" and "overshadow" to describe the Holy Spirit's ministry with regard to Mary in causing the conception. The same term "come upon" (Gk. *eperchomai*) is used of the Holy Spirit's coming upon the apostles at Pentecost (**Acts 1:8**). It is unlikely the word is intended as a euphemism for sexual intercourse.² "Overshadow" suggests "God's powerful presence will rest upon Mary, so that she will bear a child who will be the Son of God. Nothing is said regarding how this will happen, and in particular there is no suggestion of divine begetting."³ The significant point of emphasis in both gospels is that Jesus had no human significant point of emphasis in both gospels is that Jesus had no human father; Joseph did not beget Jesus. (See also discussion under "Christology: Doctrine of Christ," ch. 20).

B. The results.

1. **The human nature of Christ came into existence.** It was not a person who came into existence, for Christ as a Person existed from all eternity in His deity; however, the human nature of Christ had a beginning in Mary's womb.
2. **The human nature of Christ was sinless.** Although Christ had a fully human nature, it was not stained by sin. Although He was born of a human mother, the conception by the Holy Spirit guaranteed the sinlessness of Christ. This fact reveals why the doctrine of the virgin birth is so important; had Jesus had a human father He would have been no different from anyone else. The testimony to the sinlessness of Christ is evident as Christ claimed for Himself: "there is no unrighteousness in Him" (**John 7:18**). John the apostle declared, "in Him there is no sin" (**I Jn. 3:5**).
3. **The human nature of Christ brought human limitations.** Although Christ was sinless, the virgin birth resulted in a truly human nature. Christ was tired (**Jn. 4:6**); He became thirsty (**Jn. 4:7**); He slept (**Mt. 8:24**); He wept (**Jn. 11:35**). He submitted to the voluntary limitations of humanity.

²I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 198), p. 70.

³Ibid., p. 71.

Crucial for Salvation:

***Hebrews 2:14-18.....**

The author clarifies why it is necessary for Jesus to be truly God and truly man. Since humans are flesh and blood, Jesus likewise took on flesh and blood - He added flesh and blood (Human Nature) to His eternally existing Divine Nature - so that He could be our representative.

In order to be our representative, He had to be like us in all things, except for sin. Being truly man, like us in all things, Jesus is able to be the propitiation for the sins of human beings. Jesus being truly man is necessary for the salvation of man. Just as the first Adam represented man, the second Adam, Jesus, also represented man, ***Romans 5:14-19.....**

***1 Corinthians 15:45** “So also it is written ‘The first man Adam, became a living soul, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.’”

Jesus being truly God is also necessary for our salvation.

***Isaiah 43:11** “I even I am the Yahweh, and there is no savior besides Me.”

There is one savior, and it is Yahweh. If Jesus is savior, and He is, Jesus must be God.

*Because the Scriptures are clear that Jesus is our savior.

***Luke 2:11** “for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior who is Christ the Lord.”

***Acts 13:23** “From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus....”

V25, “And while John was completing his course he kept saying, ‘what do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’”

***Ephesians 5:23** “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

***1 Timothy 1:15** “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners among whom I am foremost of all.”

Additionally, the author of Hebrews tells us there must be a shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins. ***Hebrews 9:22** “And according to the Law one may almost say all things are cleansed with blood and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

We know from the Old Testament that the atonement sacrifice must be unblemished.

***Exodus 12:5** “Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old, you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.”

So for Jesus to be our atonement sacrifice He must be unblemished, He must be holy, without sin. And God alone is holy. So, Jesus must be God in order for His sacrifice to be acceptable to God.

***Hebrews 10:19-22**, tells us that we can have confidence that our sin is forgiven because of the shed blood of Jesus. “Therefore brethren since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil that is His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Jesus being truly God means His sacrifice was pure. Jesus being truly man means His sacrifice was representative for mankind. Jesus being truly God AND truly man is necessary for our salvation.

13. Provide an explanation of and the biblical basis for the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, explaining the implications of this doctrine for human guilt over sin.

Substitutionary atonement - This doctrine is essential to a sinner’s redemption. Jesus Christ must die in the place of sinners to satisfy, placate, appease, the wrath of the Father. Jesus must take the penalty that is due the sinner, as their substitute.

Jesus had to be made like His brethren so that He could be a faithful high priest and be a representative propitiation for the sins of the people, **Hebrews 2:17**. To be our substitute He had to be like us. Because Jesus was like us, because He was truly human, He could be our substitute.

Through Jesus’ obedience in His holy life, and in His obedience to be sacrificed, He satisfied the wrath of God for those who have faith in Him, **Romans 3:26; 5:17-18**.

.....Dr David Burggraff.....

The atoning work of Christ is a complex event that has several effects on us. **Christ's death met four needs that we have as sinners:**

1. **We deserve to *die* as the penalty for sin.**
2. **We deserve to *bear God's wrath* against sin.**
3. **We are *separated* from God by our sins.**
4. **We are in *bondage* to sin and to the kingdom of Satan.**

These four needs are met by Christ's death. The central meaning of the death of Christ focuses on these four basic ideas: Christ's death was a **substitution** for sinners, a **propitiation** in relation to God, a **reconciliation** in relation to man, and a **redemption** in relation to sin.

Therefore, the four words that deal with the meaning of the death of Christ are: substitution (sacrifice), propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption.

● **A substitution for sinners.** The concept of “penal substitution” –

1. The view of Christ's death being presented here is called the theory of “*penal substitution*.” Christ's death was “penal” in that he bore a penalty when he died.
2. His death was also a “substitution” in that he was a substitute for us when he died. Clearly the Bible teaches that Christ's death was not a matter of sympathy but of substitution.
3. This view of the atonement is sometimes called the theory of *vicarious atonement*. A “vicar” is someone who stands in the place of another or who represents another. Christ's death was “vicarious” because he stood in our place and represented us. As our representative, he took the penalty that we deserve.

● **A propitiation in relation to God.**

Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. To remove us from the wrath of God that we deserved, Christ died as a propitiation for our sins (*1 John 4:10 – In this is the love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*)

● **A reconciliation in our relationship.**

Reconciliation means a change in relationship from hostility to harmony and peace between two parties. To overcome our separation from God, we needed someone to provide reconciliation and thereby bring us back into fellowship with God (**Rom. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-21, *katallasso*; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, *apokatallasso***).

God's provision of reconciliation is universal. Because of the death of Christ, the position of the world is changed – people are now able to be saved. However, that alone saved no one; the ministry of reconciliation must be faithfully discharged by proclaiming the Gospel. When a person believes, then he receives the reconciliation God provided in the death of Christ (**2 Cor. 5:18-21**). The world has been reconciled, but people need to be reconciled – that is, the universal reconciliation changes the position of the world from an unsavable condition to a savable one. Individual reconciliation through faith actually brings that reconciliation in the individual's life and changes the position of the individual from unsaved to saved. Then, and only then, are his sins forgiven, though they were paid for on the cross.

One comment here – As Seyoon Kim has summarized Paul's statements on reconciliation, he stresses an important point: "It is not God who needs to be reconciled to human beings, but it is human beings who need to be reconciled to God; and it is not repentance, prayers or other good works on the part of human beings that bring about reconciliation between God and human beings, but it is by his grace that God reconciles human beings to himself." (Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor. 5:11-21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of 'Reconciliation,'" *NovT* 39 (1997): 362.

- **A redemption in relation to sin.**

Redemption means liberation because of a payment made. The word *redemption* comes from the Greek word *agorazo* and means "to purchase in the marketplace." Frequently it had to do with the sale of slaves in the marketplace. The word is used to describe the being purchased out of the slavemarket of sin and set free from sin's bondage. The purchase price for the believer's freedom and release from sin was the death of Jesus Christ (**1 Cor. 6:20** – "For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body"; **7:23** – "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves to men"; **Rev. 5:9; 14:3, 4**).

Implication for human guilt over sin: The guilt of our sin demanded the penalty of death. Either we pay the penalty eternally, or the Lamb of God pays the penalty as an expiatory sacrifice on our behalf. The wrath of God was indeed kindled against our sin. But Christ bore that wrath in the place of the elect.

Guilt is a legal standing. A person is either guilty or not guilty. Every person is guilty of sin and thus every person has a penalty that must be paid. Either the individual pays the penalty, or they trust that Jesus pays the penalty. But the penalty must be paid and will be paid. For the person who trusts in Jesus to pay the penalty of their sin, they are no longer declared "guilty" but now are declared "not guilty" via the atonement of Jesus Christ.

People may still have a lingering, or an occasional feeling of guilt over their sin. I have come across this in counseling cases not infrequently. In addition to reminding the counselee of the above Scriptural truths, I also remind them of this truth. God the Father does not love His people strictly because Jesus died for them, rather Jesus died for His people because the Father loved them. This is the very reason that God sent His Son into the world, **John 3:16**. (MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine* p 516). This is important to understand because the love of God toward them then is not the result of Jesus' incarnation and sacrificial death on the cross. The love of God toward them is the very cause of Jesus' incarnation and sacrificial death.