

The Two Imperative Views

First, you must see Him as a man. Next, you must also see Him as God.

Or, you must see Him as God, then you must also see Him as a man.

Aside from the order in which these revelations occur, yes, they are, in fact, identical.

To the rational, He is never relegated to legend. Jesus is, indeed, a factual, historical figure that all but a microscopic body of outliers recognize. In the world of monotheism, those who reject His messianism still acknowledge His rightful place in the timeline of history. No one can deny the B.C. countdown and the beginning of the A.D. era that are attributed to His arrival into the world of His own creating. No sane academic could ever refute His influence on the civilizations of the world and its calendar and retain a shred of credibility.

The vast majority of world religions recognize Jesus as a man, as He genuinely is. The flawed viewpoint stops there, however. They see Him only as a historical figure who “went about doing good.” They recognize that He was a great teacher, a great influencer, or even a great prophet. But beyond His humanity, they cannot see.

The struggle of the human psyche in a world that sees only the physical realm is a condition that all must overcome if He is to be seen in the correct light. This frame of reference can only come, however, through revelation within the heart that wishes to see it. In Matthew 16:17, Peter saw it. At the singular moment, the light came on in the heart of the Hebrew fisherman. His revelation that Jesus was not merely a man, but God manifest in flesh, forever disclosed the foundational basis for the Church that God came to establish on this earth. Through his earthly senses of seeing and hearing, it was easy to acknowledge and view Jesus as a man. But that blessed moment came when Peter realized that this same Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

To the first-century Jew, every man born out of the lineage of David would have to undergo the scrutiny of the same question— “Are you he which should come?” There was an expectation in the hearts of those who had faith that He was coming.

The sister of Lazarus came to her epiphany after her brother’s death. In a moment of conversation with the Master, Martha’s understanding graduates from her base human comprehension to the revelation that indeed, “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” -John 11:27

He walked. He talked. He lived. He breathed. None in His earthly days could deny that He was indeed a man. As a man, He ate. He drank. He wept. He slept.

While she came to draw water from the community well, the Samaritan woman recognized that it was indeed a man who commanded, “Give me to drink.” -John 4:7. At first, she saw only a man, but in further dialogue, after her rational perception took Him from the status of mere man to a prophet, she too experienced her own spiritual epiphany and recognized that this same man, was indeed the promised Messiah. “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” -John 4:29.

Our unnamed woman of Samaria saw the two required perspectives and joined the short list of Simeon, Anna, Martha, Peter and Andrew who recognized the full deity of the man Jesus Christ.

He is the image of the invisible God according to Colossians 1:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:4. He indeed had a human body, and within that same body, the fullness of the Godhead dwelt.

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” -Colossians 2:9

The ministerial organizations of His earthly time were loathe to recognize any man as the Messiah lest they should relinquish their power. Their personal struggle was more than they could bear. Many were too invested in personal glory to relinquish what belonged to Jesus. They would never desire to see Him as they needed to. They only saw, and would ever see, a man.

It has become the struggle of many who hold to doctrines so far from scriptural truth. The Bible’s inerrant veracity holds to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. While calling themselves Christian, Jesus has been relegated to a sub-deity, a second-rate god under an angry dominant father, or even, as the Pharisees saw Him, as a mere man. As has always held true, after ignoring scripture, doctrinal error was sure to follow.

Mere years after His ascension, the pendulum of error swung to the other extreme, with the view that He was not a real man. Docetism held that He did not come in the flesh but was a phantom or apparition. Gnosticism taught that Christ was divinity in human form only. The erroneous view of the “divine flesh” doctrine also holds to a similar belief that Jesus, could not be fully man.

A denial of His full humanity would be an outright denial of His mission and of His own stated identity as the Son of Man. The last Adam of 1 Corinthians 15:45 was indeed divine, but He was still a son of Adam. As a man, He felt all of our frailties. As a man, He knew our temptations, yet, without sin. As a man, He took on our iniquities and bore the load of sin for all of humanity. Without this viewpoint, we have no sacrificial Lamb. Without this revelation, we have no Savior. We must see Him as a man in order to be free from the burden of sin that He alone could deal with once and for all. Peter placed the evidence of His humanity and His deity at the feet of the Jerusalem pilgrims, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” -Acts 2:36

Paul’s monotheistic training expounded to the saints of Ephesus, declared: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” -Ephesians 4:5-6

Conversely, while there are many things we see through a glass darkly, the revelation of His deity is as imperative as the understanding of His humanity. “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.”
-John 8:24.

The men of the B.C. era were looking for His arrival on this earth as a conquering Messiah. The Christians of all of A.D. now look for the same. The same spirit of error that failed to recognize Him as the Great "I AM" as God manifest in flesh gives rise to the same spirit of error that refuses to see Him in His full humanity.

The Gospel of John boldly declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." -John 1:1

Going further, the incarnation is declared, "And the Word was made 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." -John 1:14

The Pharisees and Sadducees knew what the man Jesus meant when He said, "I and *my* Father are one." -John 10:30.

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." -John 10:33

His full identity wasn't a mystery to them to which it was revealed:

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father? -John 14:9. This scripture tells us that we must see Him as He asked us to see Him.

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. . ." 2 Corinthians 5:19

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:" -Deuteronomy 6:4

In Jesus Christ, these two imperative views are incontrovertibly reconciled. The mystery of His deity and of His humanity emphatically revealed in 1 Timothy 3:16. Simply and eloquently put:

"God was manifest in the flesh."

L. Montano
mission238@hotmail.com
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