

BASICS • Part 5 – Jesus Christ

I. INTRODUCTION • JOHN 8

A. *Ralstonanity*

1. My address is 401 Geranium Place in Oxnard
2. There are 5 of us who live at that address; my wife, Lynn, our eldest son Luke, our second son, Tyrell, and then our blond whirlwind, Karesse.
3. We are the Ralstons
4. And around our home, there's a certain *lifestyle*
 - a. just like in your home, there are certain *rules*
 - b. everyone has their own *responsibilities*
 - c. & there's a pattern a *routine* we're all *intimately* familiar with
 - d. we share unique *values* and *family-traditions*
 - e. we have our own special *history*
5. We call this shared lifestyle and value-system = *Ralstonanity*; and each of us are Ralstons!
6. But the bond we share isn't merely the same traditions or lifestyle – our bond is based on the fact that we're *related* to one another by *covenant* and *blood*
7. We're *family* – we share that special bond called *relationship*
8. What makes us Ralstons isn't what we do – it's who and what we are- our relationships!

B. *Christianity*

1. In the same way, it isn't what we do, but who and what we are that makes us *Christians*
2. Christianity isn't merely a lifestyle of religious rituals, nor is it the observance of time-worn traditions
3. The heart of Christianity is a relationship with a Person
4. It's that relationship with that Person which brings someone *into* the Family of God
5. And that Person, is Jesus Christ! = The heart & soul of Christianity is Christ!

C. *Today*

1. So far in our **Basics** series we've looked at the inspiration, inerrancy, and reliability of the Bible, we've taken a look at a few of the attributes of God, and focused on God as Creator.
2. Today we want to zero in on the center, the core of the Christian Faith – *Jesus Christ*
3. Let me briefly outline where we're going with our study today
 - a. first of all we're going to consider the dual-nature of Christ, that He is both *God* and *Man*
 - b. then we are going to take a look at His *present* ministry
4. Next week we'll be taking a look at the subject of *salvation*, and in that we'll consider the Work of Christ at the Cross and in the Resurrection.

II. FIRST • THE DEITY OF CHRIST

A. *Most Heretical Groups Deny The Deity Of Christ*

1. If you've ever had the opportunity to talk at length with a member of a cult, you know that it's typical for them to deny that Jesus is God
 - a. they may assign some great *importance* to Jesus, but they stop short of acknowledging Him as God
 - b. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, The Way, and other groups all deny Christ's *deity*.
2. In light of that, it's interesting to discover that the *earliest* heresies that troubled the church did not deny Jesus' *deity* – they denied his *humanity*!
 - a. his deity was never in question!
 - b. the evidence and record of His *miracles* and most supremely, the *resurrection*, so impressed people with Jesus' specialness and power that they accepted His *deity* but doubted his *humanity*
 - c. the testimony of the Apostles, coupled with the work of the early church fathers *demolished* the denial of Jesus' humanity – and his humanity became such a well established fact, that latter, people began to deny Jesus' deity – and that's where we're at today.
3. But make no mistake, the Bible is crystal clear – it affirms *both* the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ.

B. *Jesus Is Yahweh*

1. The name God takes for Himself in the OT is *Jehovah*, or as it is more properly pronounced, *Yahweh*.
2. Many things are said about Yahweh in the OT, some of them exclusive!
3. Yet in the pages of the NT, these same things are applied to *Jesus*.
4. The conclusion is that Jesus ***IS*** Yahweh.
5. In your study sheet is a chart that lists some of the OT claims of Yahweh and NT application of them to Jesus.
6. No where is this more clear than in John 8, where Jesus is in a heated debate with His opponents. He said to them . . .

⁵¹Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

- a. this is a bold statement, for Jesus is not claiming to be merely a prophet
- b. if he was just a prophet, then he would have called them to keep God's word!
- c. but here He promises eternal life to those who keep HIS word!
- d. His enemies understood this as nothing less than dangerous blasphemy and called Him on it

⁵²Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' ⁵³Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

- e. you see? They understood Jesus' claim!
- f. in their minds *no man* was more exalted than Father Abraham, and the OT

- prophets they honored as the oracles of God
- g. in their eyes, Jesus came *no where near* these lofty figures from their glorious past
- h. but His words have provoked them, so they ask, “Just who do you think you are?”

54 Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing.

- i. in other words, self-honor is worthless
- j. but Jesus doesn’t need to honor Himself – He has a better witness . . .

It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. ⁵⁵Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.

- k. if these men who opposed Jesus had *really known God*, they would have recognized Jesus for who He was
- l. then Jesus makes this mind-bending statement – and it had to really rock their world

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

57 Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

58 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I AM.**”

- m. friends, Abraham lived almost 2000 years *before* Christ
 - n. yet here Jesus claims that He and Abraham had seen each other
 - o. in fact, Abraham had looked UP to Jesus!
 - p. but it’s the words of v. 58 that had to knock His listeners on their heels
 - q. “Before Abraham was, **I AM.**”
7. Follow me now because this is fascinating . . .
- a. the words, “I AM,” in Greek are “Ego Eimi”
 - b. the translation of the OT that was in use at this time was called the Septuagint, it was a Greek translation of the original Hebrew text.
 - 1) Greek had become the common tongue of the Roman world
 - 2) and the Jewish scribes had translated their Hebrew texts into Greek
 - c. when they read of Moses’ encounter of God at the burning bush, they read how Moses asked God His name, and God answered that His name was “I AM.” or **YAHWEH!**
 - d. in Greek that’s “Ego Eimi”
 - e. Jesus’ claim in John 8:58 was a bold declaration that they could not have missed.
 - f. they asked Him who He was making himself out to be, and He told just who He was
 - g. “I’m the one Abraham looked up to and looked out for. I am nothing less than the very one who spoke to Moses from the burning bush!”
 - h. “I am The ‘I AM.’” **YAHWEH!**
8. Lest there be any doubt about what Jesus is claiming here, look at how they reacted to these words . . .

59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

9. Why this reaction? Because to them it was crystal clear – Jesus was claiming to be Yahweh!
10. This is just one example where Jesus is shown to be Yahweh – the chart in your notes gives several more

C. Jesus Possesses The Attributes Of Deity

1. The Bible reveals the deity of Christ in many other ways
2. For instance, if the attributes of God can be ascribed to Christ, then He *must* be God.
3. We can do that for the Bible assigns many of the attributes of God to Jesus.
4. For instance, Christ is *Eternal*
 - a. He didn't merely exist before he became a man
 - b. Scripture says He existed prior to creation itself.
 - c. and if there are two categories of being – Creator and Created, and Jesus existed before the created category, then what does that make Him?
CREATOR!
 - 1) John 1:1-2 - turn there

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."

When the beginning began, Jesus already was!

- 2) Colossians 1:17 "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."
- d. the OT claims the Messiah is eternal
 - 1) Isaiah 9:6

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

- 2) I was always troubled by the *Messiah*, who's the *Son* of God being given the title "Everlasting Father"
 - 3) there seemed to be a confusion of roles here that caused me real difficulty
 - 4) until I dug deeper and realized that the words, "Everlasting Father" ought to be translated as "Father of Eternity"
 - 5) and as the Hebrews used it, the word "father" meant the origin; the source"
 - 6) what Isaiah 9:6 is saying is that the Messiah is the *origin* of eternity - eternity finds it's *source* in Him
 - 7) He is the Eternal One - the One Who was, Who is and Who is to come
5. Beside being eternal, the Bible speaks of Christ as *Creator*
 - a. John 1:3

"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

- b. Colossians 1:16 - turn there

"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."

- c. not only did Jesus create all things, He sustains all things, He holds them together

Colossians 1:17 "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

- 6. Two weeks ago we took a look at 4 of God's attributes
 - a. this morning we've already seen that Jesus is Eternal and the Creator of all things created
 - b. the other 3 attributes of God we looked at were *Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience*
 - c. in your notes you'll find several references that apply these *same attributes* to Jesus.
- 7. But one of the most convincing proofs for the deity of Christ is the fact that Jesus *received worship!*
 - a. in Matthew 4 we read about Jesus' encounter with Satan after fasting for 40 days in the wilderness

9 "And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall serve.'"

- b. in Acts 10, a Roman soldier named Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and started to worship him, but Peter quickly forbade him and told him such was not right because he was only a man.
- c. over and over in scripture we see men and angels refusing worship
- d. worship belongs to God *alone*
- e. curious then that Jesus not only received worship but encouraged it!

Matthew 14:33 "Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God.""

Matthew 28:9 "And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him."

- 8. There are many other ways in which the Bible reveals the deity of Christ.
 - a. Jesus *forgave sins*
 - b. He is *called* "God" & "Lord" in many passages

D. Does The Subordination Of Christ Defy His Deity?

- 1. There's a question that immediately arises as we affirm the deity of Christ: If Jesus is the Son of God, as the scriptures so clearly say, doesn't that put Him in a *subordinate* position to the Father?
- 2. And how can Jesus, as God, be subordinate to anything? He's God!
- 3. Skeptics point to passages of the NT that show Jesus "obeying God" [Luke 2:41-50 John 4:34 8:29 15:10]
- 4. They point to the times where Jesus said the Father was "greater" than He = John 14:28

“You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

5. How do we reconcile the subordination of Jesus to the Father if Jesus is God?
6. The answer to that is really quite simple - Subordination refers to *relationship*, it has nothing to do with what one *IS*
 - a. for instance; in Ephesians 5 we see that the wife is to be in submission to her husband
 - b. does that mean she is any less human? Not at all!
 - c. children are to be in subjection to their parents – does that make them less human? Of course not
 - d. subordination has to do with *roles* and *relationships*, not essential being.
7. Precisely what do we mean when we say Jesus is the "Son of God?"
 - a. we do *not* mean that He was "begotten" in the incarnation
 - b. Jesus was the Son *before* the Incarnation
 - c. "Son" speaks of the *relationship* between the first and second persons of the Trinity
 - d. it does not mean that there was a point in eternity past when the Father gave existence to the Son – the Father and Son have always been.
 - e. Father & Son defines the nature of their *relationship*

III. SECOND • THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

A. Accepted

1. Next we want to establish that Jesus was a man
2. We probably don't need to spend too much time here because this is something that's already accepted by most people
3. So we'll just briefly consider a few passages which affirm Christ's humanity
4. What I want to do with this truth this morning is show *why* it was so important that Jesus was a man!

B. He Was Born

1. One of the most obvious proofs of Jesus' humanity is his *birth*
 - a. in Romans 1:3 Paul says that Jesus was
"**... born of the seed of David according to the flesh,**"
 - b. both Matthew and Luke tell us the story of Christ's birth through Mary
 - c. and both give us long genealogies to prove Jesus came from the family of man.

C. He Had A Human Body

1. The gospels are clear on the fact that Jesus wasn't merely some ethereal spirit – He had a *body* - John 1:14
"And the Word became 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."
2. Because He had a body, He demonstrated the *physical needs* of any normal

person

- a. he was *hungry* - Matthew 4:2

"When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry."

- b. he got *thirsty* - John 4:7

"A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink.""

- c. in John 19:28 while on the cross, Jesus said **"I thirst!"**
- d. there were times when he grew tired and needed to *rest* - Mark 4:38 & John 4:6

D. The Difficulty of the Dual-Nature

1. It's really not too difficult to see either the deity or the humanity of Jesus if you come to the Bible with an open mind and heart.
2. Why then has the dual nature of Christ been attacked so much throughout history?
3. The reason why either the deity or the humanity of Christ has been rejected by different groups throughout history is because it's difficult to understand!
4. Our minds like things to be in stowed away in neat categories.
 - a. we become uncomfortable with the unexplained
 - b. we don't like to let a mystery go unsolved - puzzles provoke us to be solved
5. And quite frankly, the dual nature of Christ is a truth that transcends our finite minds.
6. How can God become man? How can an infinite deity take on the limitations of human flesh?
7. This is a mystery that cannot be solved by our puny intellects.
8. But it hasn't stopped thousands from trying to do so.
9. Instead of simply accepting the truth of what the scriptures affirm and realizing our own intellectual limitations, different men and women throughout history have changed the formula to make it fit what they were comfortable with.
10. If they cannot understand or reconcile the dual nature of Christ, they reject one side of the equation! I'll deny his deity, or I'll deny His humanity.
11. And so it has gone.
12. It's at this point I again quote Alan Redpath, "A god I can explain is too small to worship."

E. The Necessity Of Christ's Humanity

1. I said a few minutes ago that I wanted to take a look at *why* it was important that Jesus was a man.
2. Here's why – God gave dominion of the Earth to Adam & Eve.
 - a. they were to be God's representatives on earth
 - b. and they were to use creation's resources for the glory of God and the good of all creation
3. But when Adam and Eve fell, they forfeited humanity's dominion of the Earth to the devil
 - a. Paul calls satan the god of this age and the prince of the power of the air

- b. note well that Jesus did not contend with the devil when satan tempted him in the wilderness
 - 1) he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time
 - 2) and promised Jesus that if he would only bow down and worship satan, he would give Jesus all these kingdoms – because they were his to give to whom he pleased
 - 3) note that Jesus didn't argue with the devil - that was the power in the temptation!
 - 4) Jesus had in fact come as the Messiah and Savior to reclaim the earth and it's dominion
 - 5) He knew the path lay by way of the cross, and the devil was offering Him a shortcut to the prize - all he had to do was bow down and worship satan.
- 4. Dominion of earth had been given to man, lost by man, and could only be reclaimed by a man!
- 5. But because of the Fall, all men were disqualified
 - a. the Fall resulted in mankind falling into slavery to sin and death; slavery to satan
 - b. every child born to a slave is also a slave
 - c. so all human beings were born into slavery with no rights to reclaim man's lost dominion
- 4. All that is, until Jesus Christ.
- 5. That's why Christ had to be *born of a virgin*.
 - a. only through a virgin birth could the cycle of sin and slavery be broken.
 - b. because Jesus is God, and so – holy, He is *sinless* and therefore the devil had no claim on Him.
 - c. but because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, He is human -
 - d. and thus able to enter the contest to reclaim man's lost dominion and rescue him from slavery to satan.
- 6. We see all this in the very first temptation in the wilderness in Luke 4 [Turn there]

¹Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

²being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

³And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

- 7. The devil was threatened by Jesus because He was the one free human being he did not exert control over
- 8. So the devil came to Jesus at a time of great physical weakness and tried to get Him to remove Himself from contention in reclaiming man's lost dominion
- 9. See the devil's appeal that Jesus use his powers as God to turn stones to bread?
- 10. But note well Jesus' reply . . .

⁴But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but

by every word of God.”

- a. Jesus is saying, “I’m not going to deal with you in My mission as Messiah as God. I will deal with you as a man over whom you have no authority or control.
 - b. Jesus is letting satan know that He has come in His mission and role as Messiah as a man
 - c. and it is as a man that He will face satan on his own turf and defeat him.
11. Christian – do you realize that Jesus is still a man!
- a. He did not just take on humanity in His birth and then lay it aside in His death and resurrection
 - b. the one who sits on the throne of heaven is both God and Man! He retains His humanity!
12. This is why we can approach the throne of God with all confidence and boldness
13. Our God *knows* us – He is Himself familiar with our struggles and needs,
- a. our aches and pains, our sorrows and joys
 - b. he Himself has wept at the grave of a friend
 - c. He knows what it is to be despised and rejected, to have even his best friends desert Him
 - d. He’s felt hunger and thirst, and has known temptation, the likes of which most of us cannot even imagine!

IV. THE PRESENT MINISTRY OF CHRIST

A. Many

1. Let’s briefly turn to consider the *present ministry* of Christ
2. Your notes list several things that Jesus is currently doing for us . . .
 - a. He Is Head Of His Body, The Church
 - b. He Gives Gifts To His People
 - c. He Empowers Us
 - d. He Is Our Great High Priest who makes intercession for us
3. But there is one ministry of Jesus I want to mention this morning . . .

B. He Is Our Mansion-Builder - John 14:1-3

1. In John 14 we read . . .

1””Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 ”In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 ”And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.”

2. Jesus is building us a mansion in heaven – He is our Mansion-Builder!

V. CONCLUSION

A. *Philippians 2*

1. I want to end this morning with one of the deepest passages in all scripture on the person and work of Jesus Christ

⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

⁹Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

¹¹and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2. For me, the great mystery about Jesus is not His dual nature

3. I do not struggle with His being both God and man

4. What I struggle with is *WHY* God would become man – that seems a far greater mystery to me.

5. Why would Jesus, the eternal, glorious, holy God, lay aside His glorious robe of light, wrap Himself in human flesh, and consent to dwell here?

a. those feet that angels adored and caressed, became caked with the mud and filth of the streets of Nazareth

b. those ears which were filled with the glorious music of the heavenly host as they sang their continual praises of the Most High –

c. became filled with the cacophony of the market of Jerusalem, and the reviling insults of the enemies of God

d. those precious hands that had rested on the throne of heaven and were kissed by the lips of angels, -

e. were stretched out on a coarse cross of wood and suffered to endure a metal spike

6. Is not that a far greater mystery?

7. But then the mystery is solved when I read these words

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

B. God Loves You!

1. God loves you and Jesus Christ is the *proof* of God's love for you.

2. Mankind's lost dominion has been reclaimed by Christ.

3. And one day soon He will return to claim that which rightly belongs to Him.

4. You know why He delays His coming? Only one reason - He is waiting for YOU to surrender your life to Him!

a. to come out from under bondage to sin and satan b. to freedom in Him

5. Will you come? Come now!