

WHAT SORT OF REDEEMER IS NEEDED TO BRING US BACK TO GOD? One who is truly human and also truly God.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 9:1–7

Memory Verse: Isaiah 9:6

Big Idea: A Redeemer who was fully God and fully human was needed to reconcile man to God.

Virtue: Forgiveness

LEADER'S NOTES:

We live in a world that is diverse and at times confusing. There are a myriad of different religions in the world, and they all have different truth claims. It can be a daunting task for us to try to understand the difference between all the different religions. One of the most important things for us to comprehend is how different world religions understand the nature and status of Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus is fully God and fully man; he is both human and divine. No other faith tradition believes that God left the glory of heaven to be incarnated as the man Jesus. This lesson aims to help us understand the uniqueness of Jesus the Redeemer and to help us understand that God planned and promised to send a Redeemer who was fully God and fully man to save his people.

Things to remember:

- Some will be familiar with the concept of the incarnation but may not have considered just how amazing it is. Help them to reflect on the uniqueness of the Redeemer.
- The fact that Jesus is fully human and fully God is hard to understand. Reassure those who find the idea of one person having two natures conceptually challenging.

Question 20 Review

Who is the Redeemer? The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself.

INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 21

Explain that different world religions believe different things about Jesus. Very briefly describe what Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism believe about Jesus.

Use the provided illustration pages for visual reference.

Introduce the group to Question 21: “What sort of Redeemer is needed to bring us back to God?” Explain that a very special kind of Redeemer was required to reconcile humans to God. Highlight for the group that many of world religions teach that Jesus was human, but they don’t teach that Jesus is God.

Explain that the claim Christianity makes is that Jesus is both fully human and fully God, and that this kind of Redeemer is the only kind capable of restoring God’s relationship with humanity. Acknowledge to the group that this is a difficult concept to understand because Jesus is unique, but that this lesson will help them to understand a little more.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Ask the group what they are in their essence or nature. Confirm that they are human! Remind them that Christians believe that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine; clarify that he’s not part human or part divine, but that he is one person with two natures.

It is difficult for humans to understand the concept of Jesus being one person with two natures, because the only point of reference that humans have is our own experience, and we have just one essence or nature.

Explain that the Christian church has always understood that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. Encourage the group to look up the Nicene Creed on their own, and invite them to identify the parts that talk about Jesus’s divinity (his God–ness) and his humanity.

Read Isaiah 9:1-7.

1 But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

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3 You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

5 For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Remind the group that Isaiah was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Explain that the book was written at a dark and difficult time in the history of God's people. They were rebelling against God. Throughout the book God warns them that they will face judgment and punishment, but he also promises that he will not abandon his people.

The beginning of chapter 9 is striking because it speaks of a future time that contrasts with the dark and difficult times God's people were experiencing. Isaiah promises times filled with light, joy, and hope. Explain to the group that those times would be brought about by the arrival of God's promised Savior and Redeemer.

Direct the group's attention to verse 6. Explain that this verse particularly reveals the type of Redeemer who would be sent to save God's people from judgment and punishment. The beginning of verse 6 identifies that the Redeemer would be human. He would be born into the world as a baby. He would take on human flesh. Isaiah describes him as God's unique gift to the world by using the phrase "a son is given."

Explain that the second part of the verses uses phrases to describe the Redeemer as God. Ask the group to identify the four different titles that are given in this verse to the Redeemer. The titles used to describe the Redeemer are Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

These titles are all titles used in other places in the book of Isaiah, and when they are used they all refer exclusively to God. God is described as wonderful in 25:1

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and 28:29. God is described as mighty in 10:21. God is described as everlasting in 40:28. And God is the one who brings peace in 26:3 and 12.

Ask the group if they have figured out what this verse is highlighting about the promised Redeemer.

Help them to see that the verse is clearly stating that the Redeemer will be both man and God. Remind them that Jesus was fully human and fully God. Explain to the children that everything about a human person and everything about God are found fully in Jesus.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Look up each verse reference. If the passage describes Jesus's divinity, write D in the blank. If it's about Jesus's humanity, write H. If it's about both, write DH.

___ John 1:14

___ 1 Timothy 2:5

___ John 11:35

___ Galatians 4:4

___ Hebrews 4:15

___ John 4:6

___ Titus 2:13

___ Matthew 28:18

___ John 1:1

___ Luke 11:17

___ Luke 2:7

___ Matthew 4:2

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

(Allow for several answers within your group before reading the provided response.)

- 1. How can Jesus be fully human and fully God?** Acknowledge once again that it is a difficult concept for the human brain to understand, but that both the Bible and Christians throughout history agree that Jesus was fully God and fully man.
- 2. Why is Jesus described as God the Son?** Remember that Question 3 of the catechism taught us that there are three persons in one God, and that they are each God. Explain that it is God the Son who leaves heaven and becomes incarnate, that he becomes fully man.

More to consider:

Is there anything surprising about today's lesson?

In the past, have you thought of Jesus as fully God and fully man?

How would you explain that Jesus is one person with two natures to a person from the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, or Buddhist faith?

VIRTUE VISION: Forgiveness

We've learned in this lesson just how unique Jesus the Redeemer is because he is truly God and truly man. Spend a few moments talking about why Jesus being fully God and fully man is necessary for our forgiveness.

Imagine that Johnny (you may substitute the name of a member of your group) walked up to you and slapped you in the face. While you were still in shock, Susie (substitute with the name of another member of your group) walked up to Johnny and said, "I forgive you." How would that make you feel?

Can Susie forgive Johnny for his sin against you?

It is the person who has been sinned against that has the ability to extend forgiveness. We have all sinned against God because we've broken his holy law. We can't forgive each other for this, only God can. Because Jesus was truly God, he was able to bring forgiveness down to us. We have sinned against him, but he has chosen to forgive us and make us his own!

How does knowing that God forgives our sins against him affect you when someone else sins against you?

Should it make you more eager to forgive?

Memory Verse

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

(Isa. 9:6)