

WHY MUST THE REDEEMER BE TRULY GOD?

That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and also that he would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death.

Bible Passage: Acts 2:22–41

Memory Verse: Acts 2:24

Big Idea: Only God himself is capable of redeeming humanity.

Virtue: Humility

LEADER'S NOTES:

People will understand that Jesus was fully human a little easier than the truth that Jesus was fully God. This lesson will once again focus on the fact that Jesus was one person with two natures. The aim is to help us further understand that Jesus is fully God and why it was necessary for the Redeemer to be fully God. Given the pluralistic air that surrounds us in everyday life, it will be useful to once again point out that this is where Christianity differs from every other religion that recognizes Jesus. Only Christians believe that Jesus was fully God. This lesson should give us confidence in understanding the divinity of Jesus and the significance of the incarnation for them individually.

Things to remember:

- This is a hard concept for some to understand. Reassure them that this lesson should further their understanding.
- Be careful not to be overly critical of other religions, but rather point out the differences clearly.

Question 22 Review

Why must the Redeemer be truly human? That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin; and also that he might sympathize with our weakness.

INTRODUCTION TO QUESTION 23

Briefly tell the group the story of The Prince and the Pauper, in which a prince trades lives with a poor boy who happens to look like him. On the subject of royalty, ask the group if they have seen Aladdin, and if they remember when Jasmine ran away from her father's palace.

Ask the group if they lived in the most beautiful place in the world, with perfect relationships and with everything that they could possibly need, would they ever consider leaving their homes? It is unlikely that they would want to leave

Ask the group if they've ever heard of anyone who left such a beautiful and perfect place to live among their subjects. God left the splendor of heaven to live among his creation when he became man.

Introduce Question 23: "Why must the Redeemer be truly God?" Explain that this question will help them to consider more carefully why the one who came to redeem had to be fully God.

TEACHING OUTLINE

Jesus is one person with two natures. Jesus is fully God and fully human. Acknowledge once again that this is a hard concept to understand because it is unique. Remind the group that this is an area where Christianity differs greatly from other religions. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, do not believe that Jesus is God.

Read Acts 2:22–41

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

25 For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

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28 *You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'*

29 *"Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.*

30 *Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,*

31 *he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.*

32 *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.*

33 *Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.*

34 *For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,*

35 *until I make your enemies your footstool."*

36 *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*

37 *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

38 *And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

39 *For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."*

40 *And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."*

41 *So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

These verses are part of a speech that Jesus's disciple Peter gave at a time called Pentecost. Pentecost was when God sent the Holy Spirit to his church. This speech was given to thousands of people in Jerusalem after Jesus's death and resurrection.

Peter clearly proclaims to the listening crowds that Jesus is God. Peter delivers a speech that essentially reminds the people who Jesus was and why he came:

- He was a man whom God the Father used greatly in many ways. Through all the signs and miracles Jesus performed, God the Father was confirming that Jesus was God the Son.

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- He was a man destined to die on the cross because God the Father had determined that God the Son would be the Redeemer.
- He died but was raised again because death could not hold God the Son.
- He is now back in heaven at the right hand of God the Father.

Peter had no doubt that Jesus is fully God, and that Peter urged the listening crowd to seek redemption from Jesus. Jesus needed to be fully God to redeem humans because:

- Only the Creator God who gave life can recreate and give new life.
- Only God himself can bear the punishment for the sins of all those who trust in him. Jesus's humanity meant that he could be a qualified substitute; Jesus's divinity meant that he was an infinitely valuable substitute.
- If Jesus was not God, he would not have had the authority to pronounce their sins forgiven.

Ask the group to imagine how they'd feel in the following scenario: They stole from a friend, and they were caught. When they apologized to their friend and asked for forgiveness from the friend, the friend's brother said, "Yes, he forgives you."

Forgiveness needs to come from the one who has been wronged. Jesus is not a third party. He is God who has been sinned against, and only he has the right to redeem.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Read the four verses below, which speak of Jesus' divinity.

John 1:1

John 1:14

John 20:28

Colossians 2:9

What do we celebrate at Christmas in the Christian church. The birth of Jesus! This lesson is helping us learn more about the deity of Jesus—the fact that Jesus was fully God. Consider that when Jesus was born, he was fully human and fully God, one person with two natures.

What do these verses teach about Jesus (you may need to add a little context).

The verses clearly indicate that Jesus was God the Son and that he existed eternally before he came to live on earth as a man.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

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

- 1. Why did Jesus not save himself if he was God?** Jesus, God the Son, was perfectly obedient to God the Father. He was fully God, but chose to do his Father's will.
- 2. Why didn't God redeem people another way?** This was the only way possible for humans to be freed from sin and brought into a relationship with God.

More to consider:

- How does understanding that Jesus is fully God affect your desire to worship him?
- How might you explain that Jesus is one person with two natures to someone who has never heard about Jesus before?

VIRTUE VISION: Humility

What is the opposite of being humble?

The opposite of humility is pride.

Can you recall a time when you acted proud?

Have you ever felt tempted to boast about your greatness when you do something well?

Is there is a difference between confidence and pride?

Jesus had every reason to act proud—he is God himself! But instead, he humbled himself to become a little human baby in order to save us.

What would it look like for you to be humble instead of proud?

Memory Verse

“God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”

(Acts 2:24)