

About Jesus As God

No matter what anyone says, no matter what ideas appear popular to the masses, no matter what other religions may say, Jesus of Nazareth was and is totally God Almighty and a Man.

The two positions considered here go something like this. Jesus of Nazareth was a unique individual who founded the most far reaching and influential religion in the history of mankind. The supernatural in the life of Jesus is referred to and often reinterpreted as oral tradition or myth. Jesus was a man, a very special man, but nevertheless only a man. Some even admit that God favored Jesus to such an extent when he saw what Jesus was doing that God adopted Jesus into a son like position. But Jesus was and is not himself divine.

Jesus was deified by early Christian fathers and scholars after the New Testament period. For centuries the Gnostic gospel prevailed and the deity of Jesus was at the very least unclear or foggy. In the first century Christianity was a branch of the Jewish religion. The original twelve disciples were, of course, Jewish. The greatest missionary sending center was Antioch in old Judea followed by Jerusalem. As Christianity grew in Constantinople and Alexandria non-Jews or Gentiles became dominant in the leadership of the Christian church. Gentiles were heavily involved in the Greek culture.

Until Greece and Rome people worshiped gods in the shape of strange beings that were models of reptilian or animal life or a mixture of human and animal. Ra, the principal Egyptian god, was the god of the Sun. He was human from the neck down with the head of a great bird or falcon. Others had the heads of a crocodile or a jackal or a wolf. The gods of ancient Babylon had bodies like a lion or a bull or a snake. Some animals had wings like a bird.

All of the Greek gods appeared as men and women and Rome merely adopted and renamed the Greek gods. It had taken the blossoming of the Greek empire for the concept of god to be understood in human form. This was a great advancement on the ancient gods of Babylon and Persia and Egypt. By the time of the great council of Nicaea in the early 300s this predominant Greek mindset had deified Jesus to the position of God. This is something that the Jewish mindset would never have done. The Greek mind, which is to say the Western mind, like all cultures needed a god or gods to worship. And the Greek mind demanded that god be a man or woman. By

the seventh century the Latin world had taken over as the Western leader and it continued to perpetuate Greek theology. So down through the centuries Jesus is portrayed as the God-Man in Western Christianity.

The pattern above is championed by those who use philosophy in the intellect to attempt to understand about god. But there is another pattern.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem one week before his death a group of Greeks appeared in the midst of that Jewish culture wanting to see Jesus. As soon as Jesus heard this he proclaimed that the time of his death and resurrection was very near. (John 12) There is a connection here. Jesus knew that Christianity, unlike Judaism, would spread to all of the world. The involvement of the gentiles would make this possible. Before long another 'sent one' was introduced, Paul of Tarsus, the apostle to the Gentiles.

In this view it is understood that 'in the fullness of time' God waited until mankind longed for a god in human form before he entered the world through the womb of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Jesus did indeed say that he was divine in several places in the gospels. CITE If the scriptures are taken at face value and not treated as myths then we can see God's plan in revealing himself to mankind and Savior and Lord.

God is a self-revealing god. Some things he keeps to himself, others He reveals in His timing.

God's ways are consistent with himself. With what he has created.

No Dionysus springing from the thigh of Zeus. Babies come from wombs, not thighs. No rape. Mary consented. No intercourse. No sin.

Two viewpoints have a sort of similarity. But God's way is never the way of man. God does better than that.

The Greek gods are important to both interpretations. But one interpretation relies on the development of a god-man myth in history based on the Greek (Gentile) need for a god-man. The other interpretation sees this expressed need as something that God allowed to develop so that he could meet man's need for god in the intentional preplanned purpose of God almighty. The Incarnation is the most important event in human history without any equal.

This was the final exaltation of humanity. In today's western world view characteristics of these particular gods of the Greek pantheon have merely been morphed into the god of mankind himself.

In the words of John F. Kennedy, "Our problems are man-made, therefore they can be solved by man. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings." That is the great western mindset. Communism has bowed to it. Christianity resists it continually, sometimes more successfully than others, but in the end Christianity will prevail. Islam will wear itself out hammering on it. The hammer wears out before the anvil. Neither Humanism nor Christianity will accept Islam including sharia law.

Secular Humanism is a prominent world view. Included in it are certain beliefs and convictions. Humanism requires that all beliefs be tested. Nothing is to be accepted by faith. Each person must consider any and all beliefs and traditions no matter what area of life they involve. After due consideration the individual decides which beliefs are the most logical and which ones will work for the good of humanity in general.

In Humanism the answers to human problems and challenges must be sought by critically examining each problem. Firm factual evidence and scientific methods must be used in these examinations. Also, every person and human beings as a group must be offered the opportunity to grow as individuals. They all need to be fulfilled and their creativity must be given room to grow.

Ethics are important in humanism. However, the principles of ethical conduct must be developed in the light of how much they will enhance the wellbeing of all.

In humanism the concept of truth is constantly changing. There are no objective, permanent truths, no absolute truth. Only new knowledge can help humans to grow collectively and thus recognize the ever emerging new truths by which we live.

For the secular humanist only this life is important. The afterlife, if it exists at all, is not to be the concern of the humanist. We must strive to make this life better for everybody by growing in our understanding of the past and striving to live in concert with those who disagree. The final goal of Secular Humanism is to build a better

world for all by the open exchange of ideas and tolerance. The good of all and tolerance are watchwords of Secular Humanism.

The European Enlightenment of the 1700's brought the concepts of Secular Humanism to the forefront and magnified them greatly. The entire American system is built on the beliefs of the Puritans and the Enlightenment. Some may ask how these two systems of thought could work together to produce the historical American experience. The answer is not very complicated. In many ways the two systems have the same goals but for very different reasons.

The Great Awakening in America, which some sources say peaked in the 1740's, profoundly altered both Puritan and Enlightenment thinking. The Great Awakening was the major "repent of your sins and follow Jesus" event that set the tone which emboldened and propelled those who formed the American Republic. Coupled with almost unlimited natural resources American Exceptionalism was born and prospered.

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