

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity
... He had to be made like his brothers in every way” Heb. 3:14,17*

A study of “the spiritual foundations in the life of Jesus”, is possible only on the premise of his full humanity. It is only because we can watch him as a true human being that we can gain any understanding relevant to our own lives and draw parallels for our benefit between him and us.

Throughout its long centuries of considering the person of Jesus the Christian church has maintained an essential viewpoint, namely that Jesus was fully man and fully God. There was nothing that made his life short of manhood, and nothing that made him short of Godhood. There are difficulties in understanding and explaining the precise working of this duality, but the truth of his complete manhood and divinity is something from which we cannot depart without serious error.

The reason for this is simply that no other understanding will do justice to the picture that the New Testament gives us, the gospels in particular, . Only a disregard for the validity of the New Testament record allows other constructions to be made.

When it comes to his divinity then the massive record of John’s gospel, for example, permits no alternative viewpoint. Jesus is seen to be constantly making claims of the highest order, and frequently coming under the threat of stoning for the blasphemy of making himself equal with God. John’s prologue sums up the viewpoint of the gospel perfectly - “*in the beginning the Word was God*”.

The testimony of the gospels to his full humanity is equally clear. His human origin goes back exactly to where ours began - to a conception in the womb, to a human period of gestation and then to a normal human birth. Nothing can bear better testimony to his humanity than that. Though we hear little of his early years we do know that he was part of a normal family and well known to neighbours and friends. Through childhood he grew normally, and though it seems he had a very perceptive and intelligent mind, he had to learn things and think through things. He “*grew*” in wisdom.

Later on the crowds, the Jewish leaders, Herod and Pilate certainly did not find him unnatural, though undoubtedly unusual. Neither did his disciples. They saw themselves as following a Rabbi and, living and travelling with him, knew him as a human person, not a “*docetic*” phantom. They never had to learn that he was human, but their pilgrimage was rather that of coming to a realisation of his divinity. They saw his deep struggles in prayer, they saw his tiredness, his hunger, they saw his need of fellowship, and they tasted his companionship. It was on this account that a commentator like William Barclay could write. “*Any Christology must begin from the historical fact that those who lived and walked and ate and talked with Jesus saw absolutely nothing unnatural and abnormal about him. His manhood was complete*”.

Jesus wanted his disciples to watch him and listen to him, to seek to walk as he walked. He wanted them to know the spiritual foundations of his life, and he wants the same for us.

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