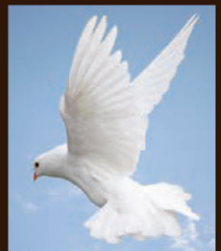


Rose Guide to Discipleship



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Topic 10: Jesus

The Essential Truth About Christ

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity
lives in bodily form.”

—Colossians 2:9

We are exploring what it means to be a disciple (or follower) of Jesus Christ. A disciple is a person who follows Jesus—to *know* Jesus and his teaching; to *grow* more like Jesus; and to *go* for Jesus, serving others and making new disciples.

Discipleship isn’t a short course; it’s a lifelong journey. It involves three aspects:

- ▶ a “learning” part—knowing and believing certain truths
- ▶ a “character” aspect—undergoing genuine transformation from the inside out

- ▶ a “serving” component—serving God and others

Thinking about *what disciples believe*, let’s turn our focus to Jesus.

Who is he? Is Jesus truly God’s son? Why do hundreds of millions of people worldwide claim allegiance to him? What do we know about him, really? More importantly, what do we *need* to know and believe about him, in order to follow him?

Let’s look first at the *nature* of Jesus. Then, during our Bible Study, we’ll examine the *life* of Jesus.



The Nature of Jesus Christ

For two millennia, people have argued and puzzled over Jesus. Was he merely human? Was he divine? Could he really have been the Creator walking among his creation? Here’s what the Bible says: Jesus was both God and Man.



The Humanity of Jesus	The Deity of Jesus
<p>He was a direct descendant of King David Matthew 1:1</p> <p>Mary, a human woman, was his mother Matthew 1:18; Galatians 4:4</p> <p>He felt hunger Mark 11:12</p> <p>He got tired John 4:6</p> <p>He experienced stress Matthew 26:38</p> <p>He had a fleshly, touchable human body John 1:14; Luke 7:38; cf. 1 John 1:1</p> <p>He felt human grief John 11:35</p> <p>He ate and drank Luke 7:34</p> <p>He slept Mark 4:38</p> <p>He sweat Luke 22:44</p> <p>He experienced thirst John 19:28</p> <p>He bled John 19:34</p> <p>He died 1 Corinthians 15:3</p> <p>The apostle Paul, who encountered Jesus, referred to him as a man 1 Timothy 2:5</p> <p>The writer of Hebrews described Jesus as "fully human in every way" Hebrews 2:17</p> <p>He faced all common human temptations Hebrews 4:15</p>	<p>Isaiah prophesied the Messianic child to be born would be "mighty God" Isaiah 9:6</p> <p>He himself claimed a unique relationship with God the Father Matthew 11:27</p> <p>He claimed the authority to forgive sins Mark 2:5–7</p> <p>The apostle John, Jesus' most intimate earthly friend, called him God John 1:1</p> <p>He claimed and demonstrated authority over death John 2:19</p> <p>He claimed to be from heaven and sent by God John 3:13; 6:38; 13:3; 17:8</p> <p>He called God his father, making himself equal with God John 5:18</p> <p>He called himself by the name God used to reveal himself to Moses John 8:58</p> <p>He claimed his death was his choice, not the result of a human plot John 10:17</p> <p>He claimed oneness with the Father, a statement the Jews regarded as blasphemous and tantamount to making himself out to be God. John 10:30</p> <p>He claimed that those who saw him had essentially seen God the Father John 14:9</p> <p>He claimed ownership of all that God owns John 16:15</p> <p>He accepted Thomas referring to him as "My God" John 20:28</p> <p>The apostle Paul referred to him as God "in very nature" as the "image of the invisible God" and said that he possessed "all the fullness of God . . . fullness of Deity" Philippians 2:5–11; Colossians 1:15–17, 19</p> <p>The writer of Hebrews called Jesus "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" and described him as unchanging Hebrews 1:3, 13:8</p>



A disciple reads these Scripture verses and concludes that Jesus was and is *God incarnate*—God in the flesh, God embodied, the unique God-Man. This is *not* to say he is two persons or two identities or two wills in one body. Jesus is *not* a hybrid being, half God and half man.

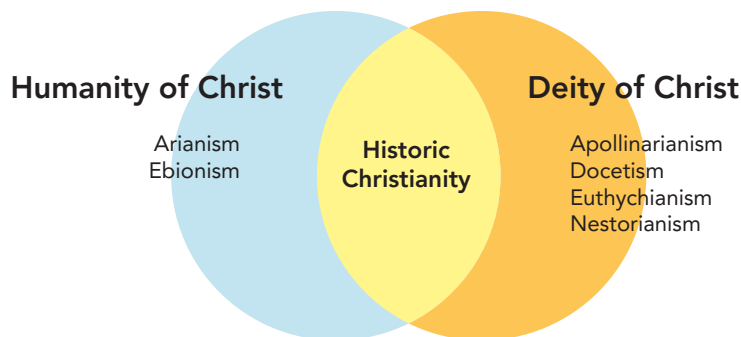
Historic, orthodox Christianity teaches that Jesus is one person with two distinct natures—a one-hundred percent divine nature and a one-hundred percent human nature. Theologians refer to this as the “hypostatic union”:

Jesus Christ is fully God (the Son of God) and fully man (the son of Mary), inseparably united in one person forever.

How could this be? Theologian Charles Ryrie explains: “The virgin birth was [the] special miracle performed by the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, whereby the Second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God, took to Himself a genuine, though sinless, human nature and was born as a man, without surrendering in any aspect, His deity.”

So, incarnation means the Second Person of the triune Godhead stepped out of eternity into time, he “became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). The Creator entered his creation. Or, as one man quipped, “God moved into the neighborhood.” This is a big deal! Theologian John Walvoord, in his book, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, says, “The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central fact of Christianity. Upon it the whole superstructure of Christian theology depends.”

Because such an idea is supra-logical—beyond human ability to understand—and because some people are unable to live with not knowing, attempts have been made to “solve” this theological riddle of Christ’s nature—leading to errors and heresies. Some of these attempts are shown in the diagram below. If you are curious, you can use the Internet to look up information about each of these “isms.”



Bible Study



Jesus asks us the most important question ever:

“Who Do You Say that I Am?”

And beliefs and opinions about him run the gamut.

- Legend or myth
- Archangel become man (Jehovah’s Witness)
- Avatar or way-shower (New Age)
- Ethical teacher (Humanism)
- Miracle worker or healer
- Peasant revolutionary
- Spiritual mystic
- Prophet (Islam)
- Bringer of knowledge (Gnosticism)
- Controversial rabbi
- Man upon whom the divine Christ-spirit descended
- Manifestation of God (Bahai)
- Political martyr
- Victim of a religious perfect storm
- Populist preacher
- Hebrew shaman
- Religious reformer
- Freedom fighter for social justice
- Reincarnation of Horus—the son of the god Osiris
- Nazarene carpenter
- God-man
- Jewish messiah
- Son of God
- Savior of the world

1. What beliefs have you heard others express about Jesus?

2. What are your biggest questions about Jesus?

Take-Home Reflections



30 Reasons Jesus Came to Earth

1. To fulfill the law	Matthew 5:17
2. To call sinners to repentance	Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32
3. To seek the lost	Luke 19:10
4. To save the lost	Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15
5. To preach the gospel	Mark 1:38
6. To “explain” God, to reveal him to the world	John 1:18; 14:9
7. To bring judgment	John 9:39
8. To serve	Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45
9. To give his life as a ransom for sin	Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45
10. To save the world, not judge it	John 3:17; 12:47
11. To bring light, to enlighten people	John 1:9; 12:46
12. To give abundant life to the world	John 6:33, 50; 10:10
13. To do the will of the Father	John 6:38; Hebrews 10:9
14. Because he was sent by the Father	John 3:16; 6:39; 7:28; 8:42; 9:4; 16:28
15. To testify to the truth	John 18:37
16. To be a king	John 18:37
17. To suffer and die	John 12:27
18. To bring blessing to the world by turning people from sin to God.	Acts 3:26
19. To bestow power for new creatures to live new lives, as God intended	Romans 8:3–4
20. To confirm the ancient promises of God	Romans 15:8
21. To redeem sinners from the curse of the law and adopt them into God’s family	Galatians 4:4–5
22. To be a merciful and faithful high priest for sinners	Hebrews 2:17
23. To atone for our sins	Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:10
24. To give us an example to follow	1 Peter 2:21
25. To destroy the works of the devil	1 John 3:8
26. To break the power of the devil and cast him out	Hebrews 2:14; John 12:31
27. To proclaim good news to the poor	Luke 4:18
28. To set prisoners and the oppressed free	Luke 4:18
29. To give sight to the blind	Luke 4:18
30. To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor	Luke 4:19



For all these reasons, a disciple believes this about Jesus Christ:

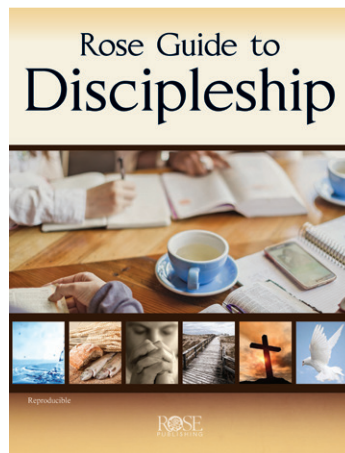
Fully God and fully human, Jesus is the Lord of the universe and the Savior of all who trust in Him.

- ▶ He lived an extraordinary—and sinless—life!
- ▶ He died a gruesome death—for sinners!
- ▶ He experienced a glorious resurrection!
- ▶ He is coming again one day!

Life Application

An important part of discipleship is learning how to apply God's truths to your life. Below are just a few ways you can start thinking about what you've learned and apply it to your daily life.

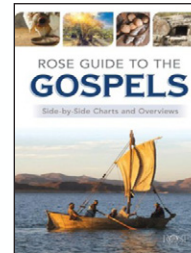
1. Memorize our memory verse, Colossians 2:9:
"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."
2. Talk with a non-believing friend about this study of Christ. Decide together to have an honest dialogue, not a heated debate. Ask a lot of questions and listen. See what his or her objections are to the gospel—the good news of Jesus. Ask if you may share what you are learning. Do so in a humble, non-preachy way. Remember, it is not up to you to "save" anyone or change hearts and minds. That's the Holy Spirit's work (we'll talk about him in the next session). Make sure you pray for your friend before and after your discussion.
3. Wrestle with one or two of these questions:
 - ▶ If you could choose to have been an eyewitness at any event in Christ's life here on Earth, which event would you choose? Why?
 - ▶ Why do you think the religious leaders in Jesus' day got so angry with him, and the irreligious people were so attracted to him?
 - ▶ Why is Jesus' sinlessness so crucial?
 - ▶ After the resurrection, the disciples seemed to be galvanized and strengthened in their faith. Why do you think this is? How can we make the resurrection more real in our experience?
 - ▶ What's one question that still bugs you about Jesus?
 - ▶ When have you felt closest to Christ in your life? What were the circumstances?



Rose Guide To Discipleship

Enjoy having this easy-to-understand guide which includes 30 ready-to-use lessons on 30 discipleship topics: Becoming more like Jesus, salvation, forgiveness, prayer, trusting God, how to study the Bible, and other spiritual growth topics! Whether you're a new Christian or a seasoned believer, this guide includes overviews of key topics to dive into for a lifetime.

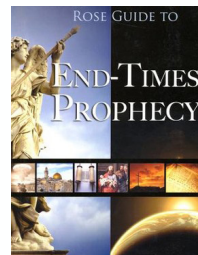
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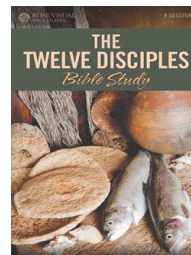
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