

Why the God-Man?

Q. Who is the redeemer of God's chosen ones?

A. The only redeemer of God's chosen is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, Who became man. He was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #21)

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

(Acts 4:12)

No study of “*soteriology*” (*the study of how salvation works*) can begin without taking a look at the very foundation of our salvation, that is, the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Bible makes it clear that apart from Jesus, no person has any chance of being saved. Jesus is humanities' only hope. During the Protestant Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries, the Reformers coined the phrase “*Solus Christus*” (*Christ Alone*) to summarize the Bible's teaching on the object of a person's salvation. It's Jesus and only Jesus who can save human beings from the wrath of God on account of their sins. Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*” Our catechism asks the question, “*Who is the redeemer of God's chosen ones?*” and the answer doesn't pull any punches when it declares, “*The only redeemer of God's chosen is the Lord Jesus Christ*”

Jesus is the only mediator (*peacemaker*) between God and man. But why? What makes Jesus so special that He alone is qualified to be our savior? Why can't Mohamed or the Buddha or any other religious leader be the savior of mankind? The answer is simple, only Jesus is both God and man. Our catechism, in describing the identity of Christ goes on to say that Jesus is, “*the eternal Son of God, who became man. He was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever*”. You see, when people think about God, there is usually one thought that comes to mind: that God is a God of love. And that is true! The Bible clearly teaches that our God is a God of infinite love, grace and mercy. In 1 John 4:16 we read, “*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love...*” It's absolutely true that our God is a God of love. However, at the same time we need to remember that our God is also a God who is just. And as a just God, He cannot merely “*wink at*” sin and let it go unpunished (Hebrews 10:30-31; Psalm 5:4-6). Our God is incapable of committing an act of injustice. Imagine being in a courtroom and watching as a judge simply let a criminal off the hook with absolutely no punishment even though he knew that the person had committed the crime. We wouldn't stand for that would we? We would cry out, “*You can't do that! We*

demand justice!". You see, our God is a just God. And because He is a just God He couldn't let sin go. Our sin needed to be punished. And God's justice demands that only a human being could be punished for human sin. You see, God in His justice will not punish another creature for the sin that man has committed.

So what did God do? He sent His Son, the second person of the Trinity to this earth at the incarnation as the God-Man. Jesus is one person with two natures, truly human and at the same time truly God. But why was this necessary? As St. Anselm of Canterbury in the 11th century asked in his famous book, "*Cur Deus Homo?*", "*Why the God-Man?*". The Heidelberg Catechism answers this question beautifully when it says, "*God's justice demands it: He must be truly man, because man has sinned, so man must pay for his sin, and a sinner cannot pay for others...He must be truly God so that, by the power of His divinity, He might bear the weight of God's anger in His humanity and earn for us and restore to us righteousness and life.*" (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A #16,17)

Why the God-Man? So that our Holy God could save sinners while at the same time balancing His infinite mercy and His infinite justice. Jesus, the 2nd person of the Trinity, who is "*very God of very God*" as the Nicene Creed puts it, took on flesh so that He could save His people from their sins. As one songwriter puts it, "*He's totally God and totally man, both in One, He's the great I AM. To save the world, fulfill God's plan He had to be totally God, totally man*"¹

Dig Even Deeper into God's Word!

1 Timothy 2:5-6

Isaiah 9:6

John 1:14

Philippians 2:5-11

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