

Jesus as God Incarnate

Who was Jesus?

Well, he was a human being, obviously, but he was also God, which is rather brain-mashingly confusing.

To understand Jesus, you have to get your head around the idea of the Trinity, which states that God exists as three persons – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

They're distinct from one another, but each one is, simply, God. Sort of like ice, water and steam all essentially being the same thing, even though they really don't behave the same way.

Jesus, then, was God made flesh, or 'God Incarnate' – the 'God the Son' part of the Trinity. That didn't mean that God gave up his day job as the creator, though, and as God Incarnate, Jesus was simply a human being, who felt things just the same as we all do. Of course he wasn't just any human being, and he led a rather exceptional life.

He was born in very humble circumstances – in a donkey shed, in fact. Not really the sort of dramatic entrance one might expect from the Saviour of the world, but Mary becoming pregnant in the first place via the Holy Spirit, and star-gazing Magi turning up shortly after Jesus' birth with funky presents pointed to this being not quite an ordinary baby.

In his adult life, there were times when he performed miracles, but that doesn't mean that he was, simply, God. Christians understand the miracles as the Holy Spirit working through Jesus – meaning that Jesus was still fully human, and got just as hungry, tired and irritable as everyone else. And he sometimes forgot to comb his beard.

Nothing shows his human vulnerability as much as the crucifixion. It might seem strange that God the Son would allow himself to be humiliated and killed, but in accepting that ultimate suffering, he absolved the sins of mankind.

For Christians, this means that God has true understanding of human pain, having experienced it in person.

His death was just one of the things that led some people at the time to believe that he must be the Messiah, or Christ, which means 'the anointed one' – the Saviour who, it was prophesied in the Old Testament, would be sent by God.

And should there have been any doubt about Jesus' divinity?

Bitesize

Well, after the Romans went to all that trouble killing him, he was resurrected. He hung out with his disciples for a time, passing on his final message, that by dying, he'd opened the way for all of humanity to access God's love. Then he ascended to Heaven, by hitching a lift with the Holy Spirit, of course.

So... Jesus: human being, God Incarnate, channeler of the Holy Spirit.

Simple really.