

LESSON 08

Foundations Curriculum

The Bible Affirms:

JESUS Is God Made Man!

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Introduction

The Bible Affirms: JESUS Is God Made Man!

In this eighth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we offer an introduction presenting a warning and an orientation to the church about how we should conduct and position ourselves in the face of old and new heresies that continually arise. These warnings are intended to guide the church on how to conduct itself among false brethren and how to combat the heresies that have appeared throughout the centuries, introduced by false teachers.

1) The Bible Affirms: Jesus Is God Made Man!

The Bible warns in many passages about false doctrines and false teachings that would arise.

When we look at the apostolic letters, they had two main purposes:

- 01** To reaffirm the apostolic preaching, confirming the truths they had proclaimed — whether the proclamation of the person of Christ, doctrine, or the principles of ministry.
- 02** To denounce the lies and deceptions that had arisen and spread among the people and the church. They correct deviations in the church's practice, combating the deceivers who were already multiplying in that time.

This same task still rests today on the shoulders of those who lead the church of God, because the same heresies and the same deceivers remain threatening the flock.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

1 John 4:1–3 (NKJV)

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

2 John 1:7–11 (NKJV)

The word “confess” is equivalent to professing, openly declaring, and defending a position on the matter.

Even in the earliest years of the church’s life, many heresies were ravaging it in an attempt to draw disciples away from the simplicity of the doctrine of Christ.

In his second letter, John warns the brethren not to lose what he and the other apostles labored so hard to teach. His zeal for the Word of Jesus is so strong that he commands the brethren not to have fellowship with those who do not remain in His doctrine.

His instruction is so forceful and urgent that he goes so far as to say not to “receive such people into your home,” for whoever receives them “shares in their evil deeds.” Therefore, anyone who does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus (His incarnation) is not of God and must not be welcomed or received.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

1 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)

(Note: Some manuscripts read “God”; others read “He who.”)

He was manifested — that is, He became visible, revealed, and known. The incarnation was a fact. The apostles saw Him, heard Him, and touched Him. Jesus, being the Eternal Word, became human flesh!

2) Examples of Historical Heresies

Let us examine some of these false teachings and false teachers.

✓ **Docetism:** a heresy from the end of the first century that claimed Jesus only appeared to be human. It held that the human body of Christ was merely a specter (a spirit, like a ghost), and that His sufferings and death were mere appearances. Its proponents went so far as to say, “If He suffered, He was not God; if He was God, He did not suffer.” They denied the humanity of Christ while affirming His divinity. Docetism was already present during the apostolic period, as is evident from John’s warning in his letter.

Texts that confirm Jesus was completely human:

- He had a human genealogy (Luke 2:1–7)
- He had a human birth (Luke 2:4–7)

- He had a human childhood (Luke 2)
- He experienced hunger after 40 days of fasting (Luke 4:2)
- He experienced human thirst (John 4:7)
- He experienced human weariness (John 4:6)
- He experienced human emotions (John 11:35)
- He experienced human temptation (Hebrews 4:15)
- He was of human flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)
- He experienced a human death (Matthew 16:21)

✓ **Arianism:** a philosophical doctrine that arose in the fourth century, proposed by Arius, a teacher in Alexandria, Egypt. According to him, Jesus was created by God as the first and most important act of creation. He was a created being with divine attributes but did not possess divinity in himself. Although it was refuted and vigorously combated by the fathers of the church (disciples of the apostles), this doctrine is still present today and challenges us to identify it and expose it as a leaven that contaminates the church.

The heresy of “arianism” today can be recognized among us when we see Jesus merely as a man, but not as God made man. The occurrence of this error has been growing, and its primary cause is an almost complete ignorance of the foundational truths presented by the Scriptures regarding His deity.

How can we refute it if we are not sufficiently grounded in the truth that Jesus is God made man?

Movements such as these have arisen throughout history in an attempt to explain or accommodate the nature of God within their own pre-established concepts. They are products of the human mind, which is only satisfied when everything makes sense within its own theology. But it is impossible to do this without distorting the Holy Scriptures.

We must accept that the nature of God is not subject to the limitations men wish to impose on Him. We simply believe when He says:

*“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are My ways higher than your ways,
and My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Isaiah 55:9 (NKJV)

Our goal is not to explain the inexplicable. We are finite and incapable of explaining the infinite; we are temporal and cannot explain the Eternal.

What we believe with all our hearts is that the texts presented confirm the truth that Jesus is God made man. It is on this truth that our faith is founded.

3) False Teachers and How the Apostles Confronted Them

Revisiting some foundational texts

✓ **2 Peter 2 and Jude** – These two texts contain nearly the same admonitions regarding false teachers. Just as there were false prophets in the Old Testament, so also there will be among us false teachers who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even going so far as to deny the Sovereign Lord who redeemed them and turning His grace into licentiousness.

Because of them, the Gospel has been and continues to be slandered. They follow the same path as Cain, Balaam, and Korah. They are grumblers (most of the time), discontented and arrogant. They are people who despise and slander all forms of authority and submit to no one. They are self-serving, deceiving the newer believers through flattery. They cause divisions, being driven by their emotions (natural senses) and not by the Holy Spirit. Jude says that “the blackness of darkness” is reserved for them.

Our attention must turn to those who are being deceived so that they are not lost. These false teachers are compared to dogs that return to their own vomit, and to a sow that after washing wallows again in the mire.

✓ **Romans 16:17–18 and Titus 3:10–11** – Paul warns us that those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine we have received must be identified and exposed (noted, exposed, and clearly named for who they are). After attempting to dissuade them from their error, we must withdraw from them.

✓ **2 Timothy 2:16–18** – Paul warns Timothy to avoid pointless talk about worldly matters, as this only serves to draw people further from God. The teachings of these masters spread like cancer, and to protect the church from this influence, he exposed those responsible and their heresy. He named Hymenaeus and Philetus, who were undermining the faith of some. The rest of the text makes clear that these were not people with whom the church should associate.

*“For there must also be factions among you,
that those who are approved may be recognized among you.”*

1 Corinthians 11:19 (NKJV)

A note on the word “heresy”:

(From the Greek: hairesis) There is something important to highlight here. In English, the word “heresy” is strongly associated with the anti-biblical content of a false prophecy or false teaching. But the Greek word hairesis, which literally means “to capture,” is related to division — the dissension of men who divide the church by forming sects. Thus, in the New Testament context, the word “heresy” does not necessarily mean false doctrine.

✓ Most of the time, the word heresy carries the meaning of producing or creating a division in the body of Christ. A heretic, therefore, is someone who produces a division.

✓ In this way, a person can be a heretic with the truth if he uses that truth to create a division among the brethren.

✓ These are people who use the work of God to promote themselves — to meet their personal need to become the central figure of some teaching.

The great problem we face today

Amid the passivity and lack of discernment that is, lamentably, present in leadership today, heresies continue to proliferate within the church. These false teachers of our day want to destroy the foundations of the faith.

When will we have the courage to carry out these apostolic instructions? May Jesus help us!

We need to recover the resolve and the courage to expose, as the Scriptures instruct us, every person who attempts to pervert the way of the church through false teachings and divisions.

Thanks be to God for this time!

CONCLUSION

In this eighth lesson, we presented guidance and several warnings from the apostles about false doctrines, false teachers, and heresies that arose in their time and that continue to occur today. We explained and contextualized some of the heresies that spread in an attempt to cause confusion and division in the church. We concluded with an exhortation directed to the church to know and be well grounded in the doctrine of Christ, in order to combat false teachings and help rescue those who are being deceived.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

01 Do you feel responsible for defending the faith that has been entrusted to us?

02 Are you able to defend this doctrine, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is God made man?

03 Do you understand that there is a great difference between someone who is weak in the faith and someone who is teaching heresy, and that the way of dealing with each is also different?

These questions should also serve the application of these truths in the church's relationships — in its joints and ligaments.

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)