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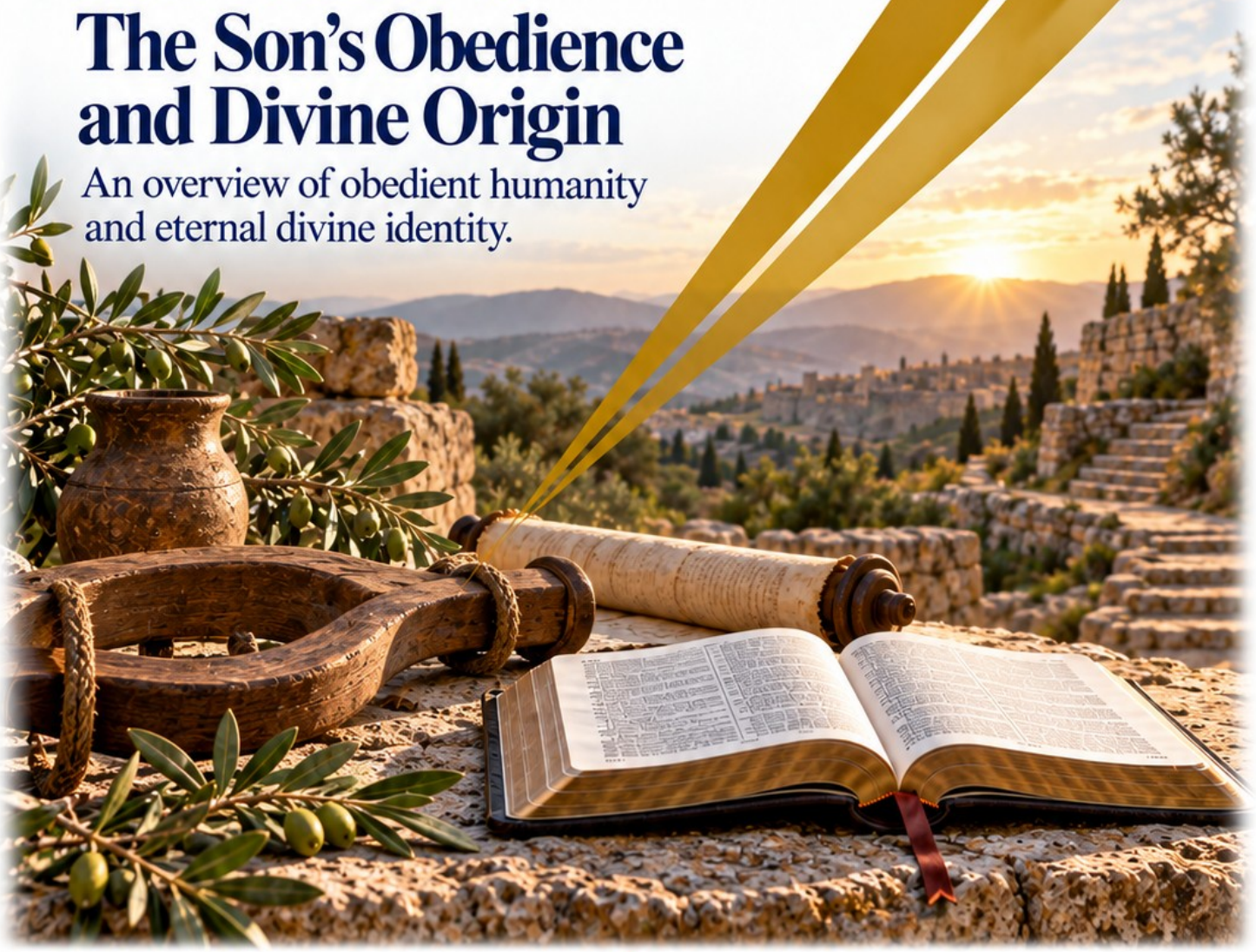
STUDY GUIDE 35 6 OF 10

One God in Jesus Christ

STUDY GUIDE 6 OF 10:

The Son's Obedience and Divine Origin

An overview of obedient humanity and eternal divine identity.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

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PREFACE

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The previous Study Guide established that Jesus Christ was genuinely man while the Father, the eternal Spirit, dwelt within Him in fulness. His prayers, dependence, human will, suffering and mediating work belonged to His genuine human life. These truths now provide the foundation for examining another group of Scriptures concerning the Son.

The Bible says that Jesus learned obedience, could do nothing of Himself, grew in wisdom and did not know the day or the hour. Scripture also says that the Father sent the Son and that Jesus came down from heaven. At the same time, Jesus declared, *"Before Abraham was, I am."*

These statements must be allowed to stand together. We must not use the verses concerning His humanity to weaken the Deity revealed in Him, nor use the verses revealing eternal divine identity to make His humanity unreal.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 5:8**:

> *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"*

The eternal God does not need to learn obedience. Jesus Christ, however, genuinely entered human life and experienced obedience through suffering. His learning, growth and human limitations belonged to the complete humanity of the Son.

Yet Scripture also records the words of Jesus in **John 8:58**:

> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

The humanity of Jesus Christ had a beginning in history. He was conceived, born, grew and lived within the conditions of human life. The God revealed through Him did not begin at Bethlehem. The Father is the eternal Spirit, and that one eternal God was fully revealed through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ.

This Study Guide will therefore examine both truths together. We will consider the obedience, growth and limitation of the Son, while also examining His divine origin, His being sent by the Father, His declaration *"Before Abraham was, I am,"* and His words concerning coming down from heaven.

Throughout these verses, one foundation must remain unchanged: there is one God, and God was in Christ. The Son is not a second eternal divine person beside the Father. He is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ through whom the one eternal God was revealed.

When this distinction is preserved, the verses do not contradict one another. The human experiences of Jesus remain genuinely human, while the Deity revealed through Him remains eternal and unlimited.

The humanity began in time, but the God revealed through that humanity did not. This distinction will guide every section that follows and help us understand how the Son could truly live within human limitation while revealing the eternal God without contradiction.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can the Son live within human limits while the God revealed in Him remains eternal?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated Jesus' human limitations as though the eternal God lacked knowledge or power?

Action Step

Examine one such assumption and explain how you will distinguish His genuine humanity from the eternal Spirit revealed in Him.

INTRODUCTION: HUMAN LIMITATION AND DIVINE ORIGIN

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Scripture contains several statements concerning the Son that must be understood carefully. Jesus Christ learned obedience, grew in wisdom, lived in dependence upon God and experienced genuine human limitation. Scripture also says that He was sent by the Father, came down from heaven and declared, *"Before Abraham was, I am."*

These truths must not be separated from one another. If we emphasise His humanity while ignoring the Deity revealed through Him, we may reduce Jesus Christ to only a remarkable man. If we emphasise His eternal divine identity while weakening His humanity, we fail to take seriously the real human life Scripture attributes to the Son.

Paul gives us an important foundation in **1 Timothy 2:5**:

> *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*

Paul begins with the declaration that there is one God and then identifies the mediator as *"the man Christ Jesus."* This helps us understand why Scripture can speak of the Son learning, obeying, growing and experiencing limitation. These things belonged to His genuine human life.

This does not weaken the Deity revealed in Him. Paul also wrote in **Colossians 2:9**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

The same Jesus who genuinely lived within human limitation was the One in whom all the fulness of Deity dwelt bodily. His human limitation must therefore not be transferred to the eternal Spirit who dwelt within Him, and the fulness of Deity must not be used to make His human experience unreal.

The eternal Spirit did not grow in wisdom, learn obedience or become limited. The Father is the eternal, invisible Spirit. Jesus Christ, however, genuinely entered human life and passed through real human development. His human experiences were not appearances, but belonged to the complete humanity of the Son.

At the same time, Scripture reveals more than human limitation. Jesus said in **John 8:58**:

> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

The same Jesus who grew in wisdom also declared, *"Before Abraham was, I am."* These statements do not contradict one another when the genuine humanity of the Son and the eternal identity of the God revealed through Him are kept together.

His humanity had a beginning in history. He was conceived, born, grew, learned, suffered and died. The God revealed in Him did not begin when the humanity began. The Father, the eternal Spirit, existed before Abraham, before creation and before the human birth of Jesus Christ.

This same distinction must guide us when Scripture speaks of the Son being sent. Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:4**:

> *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"*

Paul joins the sending of the Son directly with His being *"made of a woman."* The language of being sent must therefore be understood within His genuine human birth and saving mission. It must not be used to create another eternal divine person travelling from one heavenly location to another.

The same principle will help us understand the words of Jesus concerning coming down from heaven. His humanity did not physically descend from heaven as a pre-existing human life. The humanity began through conception and birth, while the God revealed through that humanity is eternal. Scripture must therefore be allowed to distinguish between the human life that began in time and the eternal divine identity revealed through that life.

This Study Guide will examine these verses one by one. In every case, the same foundation must remain unchanged: there is one God, the Father is the eternal Spirit, Jesus Christ possessed complete and genuine humanity, and God was in Christ.

The Son truly lived within human limitation, yet the God revealed through Him remained eternal and unlimited. Holding these truths together allows the verses to speak naturally without dividing the one God or weakening the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must Jesus' growth and His words about coming from heaven be read together?

Personal Reflection

Have you struggled to hold together Jesus' growth as man and His divine origin?

Action Step

Read **Luke 2:52** *with* **John 8:58** *and state what belief should be corrected or affirmed.*

HE LEARNED OBEDIENCE THROUGH SUFFERING

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The writer of Hebrews makes an important statement concerning the Son.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 5:8**:

> *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"*

At first, the words *"learned he obedience"* may appear difficult. God is eternal and perfect. He does not need to develop, improve or learn how to obey. The statement must therefore be understood within the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.

The man Christ Jesus lived through the real circumstances of human life. He experienced temptation, sorrow, rejection, suffering and the approach of death. Through those experiences, His obedience was genuinely lived.

Obedience Was Lived Through Experience

Jesus did not learn obedience because He had previously been disobedient. Scripture never presents Him moving from rebellion to submission or from sin to righteousness. His learning was experiential: He knew what obedience required by actually living it within the pressures and difficulties of human existence.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 4:15**:

> *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

Jesus experienced genuine temptation, yet Scripture declares that He was *"without sin."* His obedience was therefore not theoretical. He faced the conditions in which obedience could become costly and remained faithful to God through them all.

He knew hunger and weariness, experienced rejection and sorrow, and faced suffering and death. None of these things caused Him to turn from the will of God.

His Obedience Continued Through Suffering

Hebrews does not say simply that Jesus knew about obedience. It explains that He learned obedience through the suffering He experienced. Suffering revealed the depth of that obedience because He remained faithful when obedience became costly.

We have already seen this clearly in Gethsemane. Luke recorded His prayer in **Luke 22:42**:

> *"Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."*

His genuine human will recoiled from the suffering before Him, yet remained perfectly submitted to God. The words *"not my will, but thine, be done"* do not reveal two divine wills within God. They reveal the genuine human will of the man Christ Jesus yielding completely to the divine will of the Father, the eternal Spirit.

He Became Obedient Unto Death

Paul carries this obedience all the way to the cross.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:8**:

> *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Notice how Paul connects His obedience with His humanity. Jesus was *"found in fashion as a man,"* and the man Christ Jesus *"became obedient unto death."* His obedience did not end when suffering intensified. It continued even when faithfulness required Him to give His life.

Jesus also made clear that His obedience was willing. He said in **John 10:17-18**:

> *"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*

Jesus said, *"I lay it down of myself."* He was not carried unwillingly towards the cross. The man Christ Jesus willingly remained faithful to the purpose of God even when obedience led to death.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does Jesus learning obedience through suffering not imply that He had been disobedient?

Personal Reflection

When you hear that Jesus learned obedience, do you imagine that He had once been disobedient?

Action Step

Read **Hebrews 5:8** *and correct that idea. Explain how His faithfulness through suffering should affect your trust.*

The Eternal God Did Not Need to Learn

Isaiah also establishes that God is eternal and that His understanding is beyond searching. The learning attributed to the Son must therefore be understood through His genuine human experience, not as a change in the wisdom of the eternal Spirit.

Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 40:28**:

> *"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."*

The everlasting God does not become wiser through experience or gain knowledge He previously lacked. Jesus Christ nevertheless experienced human learning and obedience because His humanity was complete and genuine. The eternal Spirit who dwelt within Him did not need to learn.

His willing obedience also revealed the love of the Father dwelling within Him. Jesus expressed this relationship in His own words.

Jesus said in **John 15:10**:

> *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."*

Jesus spoke as the genuinely human Son whose obedience never departed from the will of the Father. His perfect obedience made the divine love and character of God visible through human life. This same truth does not divide the Father and the Son into separate divine persons.

The distinction must remain clear. The Father is the eternal Spirit, and God does not grow from ignorance into knowledge or from disobedience into obedience. Jesus Christ, however, possessed genuine humanity and through that human life experienced what obedience required under real conditions.

Therefore, when Scripture says that the Son *"learned obedience,"* it does not describe one eternal divine person learning submission to another eternal divine person. It describes the genuine human experience of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Romans 5:19**:

> *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."*

Paul places *"the obedience of one"* in contrast with human disobedience. Jesus Christ stood as the representative man who obeyed where humanity had failed. His obedience does not weaken the Deity revealed in Him. It confirms that the humanity of the Son was real.

Both truths therefore remain together: God was in Christ, and the man Christ Jesus genuinely obeyed. The Son learned obedience by living it through genuine human suffering while remaining completely without sin.

This prepares us for another statement concerning His human dependence: *"The Son can do nothing of himself."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the Son's learning differ from the knowledge of the eternal God within Him?

Personal Reflection

Have you confused the learning of Jesus as man with the eternal God gaining knowledge?

Action Step

Compare **Hebrews 5:8** *with* **Isaiah 40:28** *and state how this distinction strengthens your understanding of Him.*

THE SON COULD DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF

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After telling us that the Son learned obedience through suffering, Scripture also records Jesus saying that He could do nothing of Himself. These words must be understood within the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ and the truth that the Father, the eternal Spirit, dwelt within Him.

Jesus said in **John 5:19**:

> *"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."*

The words *"The Son can do nothing of himself"* do not describe a lesser divine being lacking the power possessed by a greater divine being. They describe the genuine human life of the Son living in complete dependence upon the Father.

The Father Dwelt Within Him

Jesus identified the divine source of His works in **John 14:10**:

> *"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

Jesus did not describe the Father as another God standing beside Him. He said *"the Father that dwelleth in me,"* and then explained, *"he doeth the works."* The eternal Spirit dwelt within the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ, so the divine works did not arise from independent human power.

This does not mean that Jesus Christ was only an instrument through whom God acted while He Himself had no genuine human life. The Son possessed complete humanity, including a real body, soul, mind, emotions and will. His humanity was genuine, yet that humanity never lived independently of the God who dwelt within Him. The Father was the divine source of the works, while the Son lived as the genuine man through whom those works were revealed.

His Words and Will Were Not Independent

The same dependence is evident in the words Jesus spoke in **John 12:49-50**:

> *"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."*

Jesus did not conduct His human ministry according to independent self-direction. His words were governed by the will of the Father. This does not describe one God passing instructions to another God. It reveals the genuine human life of the Son remaining completely yielded to the eternal Spirit who dwelt within Him.

Jesus made the same point concerning His judgement and will in **John 5:30**:

> *"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."*

Again Jesus said, *"I can of mine own self do nothing,"* and then explained, *"I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father."* His human will was genuine, but it was never rebellious or independent. The man Christ Jesus remained completely submitted to God.

The distinction is therefore not between two divine wills. The genuine human will of the Son remained perfectly yielded to the one divine will of the Father, the eternal Spirit. His dependence was not evidence of defective Deity. It was the expression of perfect humanity.

Isaiah had foretold that the ministry of the coming Christ would be accomplished through the Spirit of the LORD God. This prophecy identifies the source of the preaching, healing and deliverance revealed in His human ministry.

Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 61:1**:

> *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;"*

The ministry of Jesus Christ displayed the work of the eternal Spirit through His genuine humanity. His miracles and His teaching were not the exercise of independent human divine power. The Father dwelling within Him was the source of the works that the Son made visible.

Jeremiah also acknowledged that mankind cannot independently direct its own way. This helps explain the complete dependence Jesus demonstrated in His genuine human life.

Jeremiah wrote in **Jeremiah 10:23**:

> *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."*

Jesus Christ lived in perfect obedience to God rather than self-direction. For those born again, faithful living likewise comes from the life of Christ within, not from an outward attempt to manufacture His character by human strength.

The Works Revealed the Father

Jesus explained that His works revealed the Father in **John 10:37-38**:

> *"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."*

Jesus directs attention to the works and then explains what those works reveal: *"the Father is in me."* The miracles were therefore not evidence of two divine persons working side by side. They revealed the presence and power of the one God dwelling within Jesus Christ.

The blind received sight, the sick were healed, the dead were raised and devils were cast out. These works revealed the Father because the Father was dwelling within the Son. The genuine human life was Jesus Christ, while the divine power and source of the works was the Father, the eternal Spirit.

At the same time, we must not divide Jesus Christ into two persons living within one body. Scripture presents one Jesus Christ possessing complete and genuine humanity, while the one eternal God dwelt fully within Him. The humanity was real, and the indwelling Deity was real.

The Father's Presence and the Son's Oneness

David spoke of continually living with the LORD before him, and Jesus Himself declared the oneness of the Father and Son. Both Scriptures reinforce the unity underlying the Son's real human dependence.

David wrote in **Psalm 16:8**:

> *"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."*

Jesus said in **John 10:30**:

> *"I and my Father are one."*

The man Christ Jesus remained perfectly conscious of the Father dwelling within Him. The dependence of His genuine humanity did not place a second divine being beside the Father. His words and works revealed the one God present in Him.

Dependence Does Not Deny Deity

When Jesus said, *"The Son can do nothing of himself,"* He was not denying the Deity revealed in Him. The same Jesus also said that the Father dwelt within Him and performed the works.

His dependence therefore helps us understand how perfectly the invisible God was revealed through His genuine humanity. Because His human life was never governed by independent self-will, the words, works and character of the Father were perfectly expressed through Him.

Jesus did not reveal one purpose while the Father possessed another. The Son did not act from a separate divine will. His entire human life remained in complete harmony with the eternal Spirit dwelling within Him.

This is why the statement *"The Son can do nothing of himself"* must not be isolated from the words *"the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."* The two statements explain one another. The first establishes genuine human dependence, while the second identifies the divine One dwelling within and working through Him.

The result is not two divine persons cooperating beside one another. It is the one true God revealing Himself through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ.

The meaning can therefore be stated clearly: The Son's dependence reveals genuine humanity, not divine inferiority. The man Christ Jesus did not live independently of God. His words, works, judgement and will remained completely governed by the Father who dwelt within Him.

This prepares us for another important statement concerning His genuine human life. Scripture not only says that the Son could do nothing of Himself. It also tells us that Jesus *"increased in wisdom and stature."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why do Jesus' words about doing nothing of Himself reveal dependence rather than inferior Deity?

Personal Reflection

Have you considered Jesus' dependence upon the Father as evidence that He was a lesser God?

Action Step

Read **John 5:19** *with* **John 14:10** *and correct what you believe about the source of His works.*

THE SON GREW IN WISDOM

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We have seen that Jesus Christ lived in genuine dependence upon the Father who dwelt within Him. Scripture now gives us another important statement concerning the genuine humanity of the Son.

Luke wrote in **Luke 2:52**:

> *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."*

The words *"Jesus increased in wisdom"* must be allowed to mean what they say. The eternal God does not become wiser, but a genuine human mind develops, learns and matures. Jesus Christ therefore experienced real human development.

His Human Development Was Real

Luke does not say that Jesus only appeared to grow. He says that He *"increased in wisdom and stature."* His physical development was real, and His mental development was also real.

The Son was not simply a physical body through which God appeared. Jesus Christ possessed complete and genuine humanity, including a real human mind capable of growth and development. The presence of the fulness of Deity within Him did not remove or replace that human experience.

Luke gives us a picture of this during His childhood in **Luke 2:46-47**:

> *"And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."*

Even as a young person, Jesus displayed remarkable understanding. Yet Luke still says afterwards that He *"increased in wisdom."* His remarkable understanding did not mean that genuine human development had ceased.

Jesus truly passed through childhood and matured within human life. Luke also records that this development took place within the ordinary relationships of family life.

Luke wrote in **Luke 2:51**:

> *"And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."*

Jesus lived within a genuine human family. He grew, learned and lived in submission within the home into which He had been born. His childhood and development were not appearances.

The Eternal Spirit Did Not Grow in Wisdom

The human development of Jesus must be distinguished from the nature of the eternal God who dwelt within Him. The Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 147:5**:

> *"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."*

God's understanding is *"infinite."* The eternal Spirit does not begin with limited knowledge and gradually acquire more. God does not increase in wisdom.

Therefore, when Luke says that Jesus *"increased in wisdom,"* he is describing the development of the genuine human mind of Jesus Christ, not a change in the eternal nature of God. The human mind of Jesus developed, while the understanding of the eternal Spirit remained infinite.

These statements do not reveal two divine persons. They distinguish the genuine humanity of the Son from the eternal Spirit who dwelt within Him.

Growth Does Not Deny the Deity Revealed in Him

Someone may ask how Jesus could increase in wisdom if the one true God was revealed in Him. The answer remains within the foundation already established throughout this module: Jesus Christ was genuinely man, and God was in Christ.

His human mind could develop because it was genuinely human. At the same time, the Father dwelling within Him remained the one eternal God whose understanding is infinite. The development belonged to the humanity, not to the eternal Spirit.

Jesus later said in **John 12:49**:

> *"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."*

His genuine human development never became independence from God. The man Christ Jesus continued to live in complete dependence upon the Father who dwelt within Him. The humanity could grow, learn and receive because it was truly human, while the eternal Spirit remained the divine source of truth and authority.

We must therefore neither deny His humanity in order to defend the Deity revealed in Him nor deny the indwelling Deity because His humanity genuinely developed. Both truths must remain together.

Jesus Christ possessed complete human life, including a real body, soul, mind, emotions and will. The Spirit within Him was not a separate created human spirit alongside God. The Spirit within the man Christ Jesus was the Father, the eternal Spirit, the one true God Himself.

The Words Establish Genuine Humanity

Luke 2:52 therefore teaches us to distinguish without dividing. Jesus Christ is one genuine man in whom the one eternal God was fully revealed. The words *"Jesus increased in wisdom"* do not describe a divine person becoming wiser. They establish the reality of the humanity of the Son.

His human mind genuinely developed, and His human life genuinely matured. Yet throughout that development, the Father dwelt within Him and God was in Christ.

This prepares us for an even more difficult statement concerning His genuine human limitation. If the Son possessed a human mind that could increase in wisdom, we can now consider why Scripture says that the Son did not know the day or the hour.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does increasing in wisdom show that Jesus had a genuine human mind?

Personal Reflection

Has the statement 'Jesus increased in wisdom' been difficult for you to accept?

Action Step

Reflect on **Luke 2:52** *and explain how accepting His real human development changes your understanding of His humanity.*

THE SON DID NOT KNOW THE DAY OR THE HOUR

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We have seen that Jesus Christ possessed a genuine human mind and that He increased in wisdom. Scripture now gives us another statement that must be understood within that same reality. Jesus spoke of something the Son did not know, while the Father did know.

Jesus said in **Mark 13:32**:

> *"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."*

The words are direct: *"neither the Son, but the Father."* We should not explain away what Jesus said. The statement reveals a genuine limitation within the human experience of the Son, while the Father remained the eternal Spirit whose understanding is unlimited.

The Son Experienced Genuine Human Limitation

Mark 13:32 belongs with what we have already seen concerning the humanity of Jesus Christ. Luke wrote that Jesus *"increased in wisdom and stature."* His human mind genuinely developed, and His human life genuinely passed through the conditions of growth, learning and limitation.

Luke wrote in **Luke 2:52**:

> *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."*

If Jesus genuinely increased in wisdom, then His human experience was not one of unlimited human knowledge. His humanity was real enough to grow and develop. The same pattern appears throughout the Gospels as Jesus became hungry, weary, sorrowful and suffered within the genuine conditions of human life.

Limited human knowledge therefore belongs within that same reality. The Son truly lived as man and did not bypass the limitations of humanity simply because the fulness of Deity dwelt within Him. Human limitation is not sin, and Jesus Christ remained completely without sin while genuinely living within the conditions of human existence.

The Father Remained Unlimited in Knowledge

The contrast in **Mark 13:32** is clear. The Son did not know, while the Father did know. Scripture also tells us plainly that the understanding of God is without limit.

The Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 147:5**:

> *"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."*

God's understanding is *"infinite."* The Father is the eternal Spirit and does not move from lesser knowledge to greater knowledge. He does not discover something that was previously unknown to Him.

Therefore, **Mark 13:32** does not mean that God Himself became ignorant. The eternal Spirit remained unlimited in knowledge, while Jesus Christ genuinely experienced human limitation as the Son. We must not transfer the limitation of the humanity to the eternal Spirit, nor use the unlimited knowledge of the eternal Spirit to make the human limitation of Jesus unreal.

The distinction is therefore not between two grades of Deity. It is the distinction between genuine humanity and eternal Deity. The Son genuinely experienced human limitation, while the Father, the eternal Spirit, remained infinite in understanding.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can the Son not know the day or hour while the Father remains unlimited in knowledge?

Personal Reflection

Have you taken **Mark 13:32** *to mean the eternal Spirit did not know the day or hour?*

Action Step

Examine the verse with **Psalm 147:5** *and explain what needs changing in your understanding of Jesus' human limitation.*

The Father Dwelt Within the Son

Jesus had already explained where the Father was in **John 14:10**:

> *"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

The Father who possessed unlimited divine knowledge was not another God standing beside Jesus Christ. Jesus said plainly, *"the Father that dwelleth in me."* The indwelling presence of the eternal Spirit did not remove the reality of the genuine human mind of Jesus Christ.

Deity did not swallow up His humanity, and His humanity did not weaken the Deity dwelling within Him. Jesus Christ remained truly man, while the Father remained the eternal Spirit dwelling within and revealing Himself through that genuine human life.

Jesus also spoke of receiving what the Father gave Him in **John 12:49-50**:

> *"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."*

This language reveals genuine dependence and reception. The Son did not conduct His human life according to independent knowledge or self-direction. He spoke what the Father gave Him and remained completely dependent upon the God who dwelt within Him.

The limitation revealed in **Mark 13:32** therefore agrees with the wider Scriptural picture. Jesus Christ genuinely lived as man, received from the Father and remained completely dependent upon God. None of this makes Him a lesser divine person. It reveals the genuine humanity through which the one true God was made known.

Human Limitation Does Not Deny the Deity Revealed in Him

Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:7-8**:

> *"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Jesus was 'made in the likeness of men' and 'found in fashion as a man.' His human limitations belong to the reality of that genuine human condition. He truly lived as man and experienced the realities of human life.

Yet human limitation does not mean that Jesus Christ was simply a man separated from God.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:19**:

> *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*

The same Jesus who experienced human limitation was the One in whom God dwelt and through whom God was revealed. His human mind could grow and experience limitation, while the Father dwelling within Him remained infinite in knowledge.

Because His human life remained completely yielded to the Father, the limitation of the Son did not prevent the Father from being perfectly revealed through Him. His dependence did not obscure God. It belonged to the genuine humanity through which the eternal Spirit made Himself known.

The Difference Is Between Deity and Humanity

Mark 13:32 must therefore be understood within the same distinction that has guided the other verses concerning Jesus Christ. The Son genuinely lived within the limitations of human life, while the Father remained the eternal and unlimited Spirit.

This is not a difference between a greater God and a lesser God. Neither is it evidence of two divine persons possessing different levels of knowledge. It is the Scriptural distinction between eternal Deity and genuine humanity.

We can therefore allow the words of Jesus to stand exactly as Scripture gives them. We do not need to deny His limitation in order to affirm the Deity revealed in Him, and we do not need to deny the indwelling Deity in order to affirm His genuine human limitation.

Within His genuine human experience, the Son did not know the day or the hour. The Father, the eternal Spirit, did know. Both statements can stand together because the humanity was real and the indwelling God remained eternal and unlimited.

This prepares us for the deliberate contrast that follows. The same Jesus who grew in wisdom and experienced genuine human limitation also made a declaration that reaches beyond His human birth and earthly development: *"Before Abraham was, I am."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does **Mark 13:32** *neither remove Jesus' humanity nor limit the eternal Father's knowledge?*

Personal Reflection

Have you tried to avoid Jesus' words 'neither the Son' because they seem difficult?

Action Step

Receive His words as written and explain how you will affirm both His genuine human knowledge and the Father's unlimited knowledge.

BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM

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We have now examined several verses in which Jesus speaks from the reality of His genuine human life. He learned obedience through suffering, lived in dependence upon the Father, increased in wisdom and experienced real human limitation. If we considered only those verses, someone could wrongly conclude that Jesus Christ was no more than an exceptional man.

Scripture does not allow that conclusion. The same Jesus who genuinely lived within the limitations of humanity also spoke words that reveal an identity reaching beyond His human birth.

John recorded the words of Jesus in **John 8:58**:

> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

Jesus did not simply say that He existed before Abraham. He declared, *"Before Abraham was, I am."* These words must be understood together with everything Scripture has already established. The humanity of Jesus Christ genuinely began in history, while the God revealed through that humanity is eternal.

The Eternal I AM Was Revealed in Jesus Christ

The wording of **John 8:58** is significant. Jesus did not say, *"Before Abraham was, I was."* He said, *"I am."*

Abraham had a beginning, and the genuine human life of Jesus Christ also had a beginning in human history. He was conceived, born, grew in wisdom and stature, experienced hunger and weariness, suffered and died. The God revealed through Jesus Christ, however, did not begin when His humanity began.

The words "I am" direct us to the revelation God gave to Moses in **Exodus 3:14**:

> *"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."*

God declared, *"I AM THAT I AM."* The one true God does not come into existence, develop or become God through a process of time. He is eternal.

Therefore, when Jesus said, *"Before Abraham was, I am,"* His words reveal the eternal divine identity of the God manifested in Him. The statement must not be turned into a doctrine of a second eternal divine person existing beside the Father. The Father is the eternal Spirit, and that one eternal God was revealed through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus had already explained that the Father dwelt within Him in **John 14:10**:

> *"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

The eternal Spirit was not absent from Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *"the Father that dwelleth in me."* The One who had declared Himself to Moses as *"I AM"* was the eternal God dwelling within and revealing Himself through the man Christ Jesus.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do 'Before Abraham was, I am' and Jesus' human birth refer to different aspects of His identity?

Personal Reflection

Have you thought the human child born in Bethlehem existed bodily before Abraham?

Action Step

Compare Jesus' 'I am' declaration with His genuine birth. State what you should now believe about the God revealed through Him.

The Humanity Began in Time, the Deity Did Not

John gives us another foundation in **John 1:1**:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

John then wrote in **John 1:14**:

> *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

The order is important. John first says *"the Word was God,"* and then says *"the Word was made flesh."* The Word did not begin when the flesh began. The human life of Jesus Christ came into history, but the God revealed through that human life is eternal.

This distinction allows us to preserve both truths without contradiction. Jesus Christ could genuinely grow in wisdom because His humanity was real. He could also say *"Before Abraham was, I am"* because the eternal God was revealed through Him.

The first statement belongs to His genuine human development, while the second reveals the eternal divine identity manifested in Him. We must not use His humanity to deny the Deity revealed through Him, nor use His Deity to make His human birth, development and limitation unreal.

This distinction also helps us understand why Scripture can speak of eternity through the same Jesus whose human life had a beginning. The eternal identity is not being assigned to a separate heavenly Son-person existing alongside the Father. It belongs to the one God who was made known in Jesus Christ.

The humanity provided the genuine human life through which God could be seen, heard and known, while the eternal Spirit remained what He had always been: the one true God. Bethlehem tells us when the genuine human life of the Son entered history, while **John 8:58** reveals the eternal identity of the God manifested through that life.

These truths answer different questions and must not be confused. One concerns the beginning of the humanity, while the other concerns the identity of the Deity revealed through Him. The humanity began in time, but the Deity did not.

Abraham Rejoiced to See His Day

The immediate context of John 8 also matters. Shortly before His declaration, Jesus spoke about Abraham.

Jesus said in **John 8:56**:

> *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."*

Abraham lived centuries before the human birth of Jesus Christ, yet Jesus said, *"he saw my day."* The God revealed in Jesus Christ had not first begun to work when Jesus was born. The one eternal God was already working in the generations before the Word was made flesh.

The God who dealt with Abraham was not one divine person who was later replaced by another. The same one eternal God who dealt with Abraham was revealed in Jesus Christ.

The reaction of those who heard Jesus also shows that they understood His statement to be extraordinary. John wrote in **John 8:59**:

> *"Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."*

Their reaction does not establish the doctrine by itself, but it confirms that they did not understand Jesus to be making an ordinary statement about age. His words carried a claim reaching beyond normal human existence. The eternal identity revealed through Jesus Christ therefore belongs to the one God who existed before Abraham and before the human life of the Son began.

Human Limitation and Eternal Identity Belong Together

This is one of the most important distinctions in this Study Guide. Scripture says *"Jesus increased in wisdom,"* while the same Jesus said *"Before Abraham was, I am."* Scripture says that the Son did not know the day or the hour within His genuine human experience, yet Scripture also presents the eternal God as unlimited in understanding.

There is no contradiction when genuine humanity and indwelling Deity are kept together. The Son genuinely lived within human development and limitation, while the Father remained the eternal Spirit. The eternal God did not age, grow in wisdom or become subject to human limitations as the humanity developed.

The genuine humanity developed through normal human growth. The eternal God did not change.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 13:8**:

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

This does not require us to believe that the human body or human life of Jesus existed unchanged from eternity. Scripture clearly teaches that His humanity was born, grew, suffered and died. The unchanging reality is the eternal divine identity revealed in Jesus Christ.

The one true God does not change. The God revealed in Jesus Christ is the same eternal God who existed before Abraham. This also guards us against using the title Son to create a second eternal divine person beside the Father.

The Son is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ through whom the one eternal God was revealed. Therefore, when Jesus said *"Before Abraham was, I am,"* He was not teaching that an eternal human Son existed beside the Father before Bethlehem. His genuine humanity began in history, while the eternal One revealed through that humanity did not begin.

The meaning can therefore be stated clearly: The man Christ Jesus lived in time, but the God revealed through Him is eternal. Jesus Christ genuinely grew, learned, obeyed and experienced human limitation, yet the Father who dwelt within Him remained the eternal Spirit, the one true God.

The same Jesus who could speak from genuine human limitation could also reveal the eternal identity of the God manifested in Him. That is why the words *"Before Abraham was, I am"* belong naturally within the revelation of one God in Jesus Christ.

The humanity began in time, but the Deity did not. This now prepares us for another group of verses that can easily be misunderstood. Jesus repeatedly said that He was sent by the Father, so we must now ask what Scripture means when it says that the Father sent the Son.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can Jesus' real human limits and the eternal I AM belong to the same revelation?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated Jesus' human limits as cancelling His eternal divine identity?

Action Step

Identify a verse you have struggled with and explain how you will read it alongside **John 8:58** *without denying His humanity.*

THE FATHER SENT THE SON

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Jesus repeatedly said that He was sent by the Father. These statements must be understood within the foundation already established throughout this module: there is one God, the Father is the eternal Spirit, and the Son is the complete and genuine human life through whom that one God was revealed.

The language of sending does not require us to imagine one eternal divine Son-person leaving heaven while another eternal divine person remained behind. Scripture connects the sending of the Son with His genuine human birth, the Word being made flesh and the saving mission He fulfilled in the world.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:4**:

> *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"*

Paul joins the sending of the Son directly with His being *"made of a woman."* The Son who was sent entered human history through genuine birth. His humanity did not descend from heaven as a pre-existing human person. Jesus Christ was made of a woman, born into the human family and lived under the real conditions of human life.

Paul also says that He was *"made under the law."* The sending therefore took place within a definite historical setting. Jesus entered the world as a genuine man, born among the people to whom the law had been given and living within the covenant circumstances into which He was born. The language is concrete and historical, placing the Son within the real history of God's saving purpose.

The Son Was Sent Into Human History

Luke explains how the Son of God came into the world in **Luke 1:35**:

> *"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

The Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. As a result, *"that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."* Scripture therefore connects the title Son of God directly with the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus Christ.

The Father is the eternal Spirit, while the Son is the genuine human life brought forth through the work of that one Spirit. The humanity began in history, but the God revealed through that humanity is eternal.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does the Father sending the Son reveal about God's saving purpose entering human history?

Personal Reflection

Have you imagined the sending of the Son as one divine person travelling away from another?

Action Step

Read **Galatians 4:4** *and explain how God's saving purpose entering human history should correct that picture.*

The Eternal Word and the Sending of the Son

John describes the same truth from another direction in **John 1:1**:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

John then wrote in **John 1:14**:

> *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

John does not say that an eternal human Son existed beside the Father and later travelled into the world. He says that *"the Word was God"* and that *"the Word was made flesh."* The one eternal God was therefore revealed in genuine human life.

Paul states the same truth directly in **1 Timothy 3:16**:

> *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."*

Paul says that *"God was manifest in the flesh."* This gives us the foundation for understanding the sending of the Son. The one true God made Himself known through the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself used the words *"proceeded forth and came from God"* when explaining the source of His authority and mission. The statement belongs to His revelation of the Father, rather than to the idea that one divine person had travelled away from another.

Jesus said in **John 8:42**:

> *"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."*

He linked coming from God with being sent by Him. His genuine human life and His saving mission came from the eternal Spirit, and the Father performed His works through Jesus Christ. The Son was not another source of Deity beside the Father.

Sending Describes Purpose and Mission

Scripture sometimes uses the language of sending to describe something proceeding from God to accomplish His purpose.

David wrote in **Psalm 107:20**:

> *"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."*

God *"sent his word"* to accomplish His purpose. The language of sending therefore does not by itself prove that one person physically travelled away from another person. Context must determine what the sending means.

This principle helps us understand the Son. The Father sending the Son describes God bringing His saving purpose into human history through Jesus Christ. The sending identifies divine origin, authority and mission without requiring another eternal divine person to move from one heavenly location to another.

Jesus said in **John 3:17**:

> *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."*

The purpose of the sending is stated plainly: *"that the world through him might be saved."* The Son was sent with a saving mission that included revealing the Father, speaking the words of God, obeying the divine will, suffering, giving His life and accomplishing the work through which humanity could be reconciled to God.

Sending therefore speaks of both origin and purpose. Jesus Christ did not arise from human initiative or earthly authority. His mission came from God and was carried out through His genuine human life.

The One Who Was Sent Lived in Obedience

Jesus repeatedly connected being sent with doing the Father's will. He said in **John 6:38**:

> *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*

The One who was sent did not pursue an independent human purpose. Jesus possessed a genuine human will, yet that will remained completely submitted to the will of the Father. This agrees with everything we have already established concerning His genuine humanity and dependence upon God.

The man Christ Jesus did not live from independent self-direction. His words, works and mission were governed by the eternal Spirit who dwelt within Him. His being sent therefore includes the purpose He was given to fulfil and the obedience with which He fulfilled it.

The Son Revealed the Invisible Father

Jesus also said in **John 5:37**:

> *"And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."*

The Father is invisible Spirit. Yet the invisible God was made known through Jesus Christ. The One who sent the Son remained unseen in His eternal Spirit nature, while the Son made Him known through genuine human life.

John wrote in **John 1:18**:

> *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."*

The Son *"hath declared him."* Jesus Christ did not simply bring information about a distant God. The Father dwelt within Him, and the genuine human life of Jesus Christ revealed the invisible God.

The sending of the Son therefore belongs directly to the revelation of God. The Father sent the Son so that the one true God could be made known through genuine human life and His saving purpose could be accomplished through the man Christ Jesus.

God Was in the One Who Was Sent

Paul brings the whole truth together in **2 Corinthians 5:19**:

> *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*

Notice who was accomplishing reconciliation: *"God was in Christ."* The Father did not send another God into the world to accomplish salvation on His behalf. The one true God Himself was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

This keeps the Scriptural testimony together. There is one God, the Father is the eternal Spirit, the Son was made of a woman, the Word was made flesh, God was manifest in the flesh, and God was in Christ. The language of sending must remain within that foundation.

When Scripture says that the Father sent the Son, it describes the one true God bringing His saving purpose into human history through Jesus Christ. The sending belongs to the genuine human life of the Son and to the mission He was appointed to fulfil. It does not require another eternal divine Son-person travelling away from another eternal divine person.

The Son was sent to reveal God, to do the Father's will and so that the world through Him might be saved. The same one God who sent the Son was also the God who dwelt within Him and worked through Him.

This now leads naturally to another expression Jesus used concerning His divine origin and mission. He said, *"I came down from heaven."* Those words must be understood within the same foundation, as language of divine origin, the Word made flesh and the saving mission of God revealed through Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does God being in Christ help explain the relationship between the One sending and the Son sent?

Personal Reflection

Have you found it hard to distinguish the Son being sent from the Father dwelling within Him?

Action Step

Compare **Galatians 4:4** *with* **John 14:10**. *Explain how both statements should shape your understanding of the one God revealed in Jesus.*

I CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

BACK TO CONTENTS

Jesus repeatedly spoke of coming down from heaven. These words must be understood within the same foundation that has governed this Study Guide. Jesus Christ possessed genuine humanity that began in human history, while the God revealed through Him is eternal.

Jesus said in **John 6:38**:

> *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*

The words *"I came down from heaven"* do not require us to picture a second eternal divine person travelling from one heavenly location to another while the Father remained behind. Scripture connects these words with divine origin, the Word made flesh and the saving mission of God revealed through Jesus Christ.

His Origin and Mission Were From Above

Jesus Christ was genuinely born into human history. His humanity did not exist eternally in heaven before being transferred to earth. He was conceived through the work of the Holy Ghost and born of Mary.

Luke wrote in **Luke 1:35**:

> *"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

The Son entered human history through miraculous conception and genuine human birth. Yet the source of the revelation, life and saving purpose made known through Him was from above.

Matthew expressed this truth in **Matthew 1:23**:

> *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*

Jesus Christ is *"God with us."* The invisible God made Himself known through genuine human life. The humanity was born into this world, while the God revealed through that humanity is eternal.

Jesus also said in **John 8:23**:

> *"And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."*

His humanity was real. He was born, grew, learned, suffered and lived within human conditions. Yet the divine identity revealed in Him, together with the authority and purpose of His mission, was from above.

Jesus said again in **John 16:28**:

> *"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."*

These words speak of the divine source of His mission and the completion of His earthly work. They must remain within the truth Jesus Himself repeatedly established: the Father was dwelling within Him.

Jesus said in **John 14:10**:

> *"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

The Father had not remained far away in heaven while another divine person came to earth. Jesus said plainly, *"the Father that dwelleth in me."* The Father, the eternal Spirit, was present in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Jesus coming from heaven reveal about His divine origin and saving mission?

Personal Reflection

When you read that Jesus came down from heaven, have you pictured His human body descending before birth?

Action Step

Revisit His words and the account of His birth. State what needs correcting about His divine origin and genuine humanity.

The Word That Was God Was Made Flesh

John gives us the clearest foundation for understanding the language of heavenly origin in **John 1:1**:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

John then wrote in **John 1:14**:

> *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

John first tells us that *"the Word was God,"* and then that *"the Word was made flesh."* The eternal Word did not begin when Jesus was born. The humanity began in history, but the God revealed through that humanity did not.

Paul expresses the same truth in **1 Timothy 3:16**:

> *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."*

Paul does not describe another eternal divine person separating from God and travelling to earth. He says, *"God was manifest in the flesh."* The language of descent therefore belongs to the revelation of the eternal God entering human history through genuine humanity.

This keeps both truths clear. Jesus Christ was genuinely human: He was born, grew, learned, obeyed, suffered and died. At the same time, the divine identity revealed through Him and the source of His saving mission were from above.

The humanity had a beginning, but the Deity did not.

Jesus also explained that the Father is invisible to mankind, and that the One of God makes Him known. His divine origin and genuine human manifestation belong together in this witness.

Jesus said in **John 6:46**:

> *"Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."*

The statement directs attention to the unseen Father who was revealed in Jesus Christ. His human life made known the one eternal God; it did not introduce a second divine being beside Him.

He Came Down to Give Life

John 6 connects the language of coming down from heaven with the saving purpose of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in **John 6:51**:

> *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

Jesus called Himself *"the living bread which came down from heaven,"* and then identified what He would give: *"my flesh."* His human flesh had not existed eternally in heaven. His genuine humanity was formed in Mary and entered human history through birth.

Therefore, the heavenly origin cannot mean that His physical flesh travelled down from heaven. The heavenly origin belongs to the divine life, revelation and saving purpose made known through Jesus Christ. His coming had a definite purpose: *"for the life of the world."*

The one eternal God was revealing Himself and accomplishing salvation through genuine humanity. This is why the language of coming down from heaven must not be separated from the Word being made flesh. The Word was God, the Word was made flesh, God was manifest in the flesh, Emmanuel was *"God with us,"* and the Father dwelt within Jesus Christ.

These declarations interpret one another and keep the divine origin of Jesus Christ joined to His genuine humanity.

He Came to Do the One Divine Will of God

Jesus connected His coming down from heaven with obedience in **John 6:38**:

> *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*

Jesus possessed a genuine human will. That human will was real, but it was never rebellious against God. The will of the man Christ Jesus remained perfectly submitted to the divine will of the Father.

Scripture does not reveal several competing divine wills belonging to separate divine persons. There is one God and one divine purpose and will.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:11**:

> *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"*

God works *"after the counsel of his own will."* The divine will belongs to the one eternal God. At the same time, Jesus Christ possessed a genuine human will that was perfectly submitted to that divine will.

The Human Will Yielded in Gethsemane

Gethsemane made this distinction especially clear. Luke wrote in **Luke 22:41-42**:

> *"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."*

Jesus said, *"not my will, but thine, be done."* The distinction is not between two divine wills. *"My will"* is the genuine human will of Jesus Christ, while *"thine"* is the divine will of the Father, the eternal Spirit.

His human will remained perfectly surrendered to God. The source of His mission, the authority by which He ministered and the purpose He fulfilled all came from the one God.

Paul summarised the foundation in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

There is one Spirit, one Lord and one God. The words *"I came down from heaven"* must therefore remain within that Scriptural foundation.

Why Paul Said "By the Will of God"

Paul frequently identified his calling and ministry as being *"by the will of God"*. His words provide another Scriptural witness that the risen Lord Jesus Christ acts by the one will of the eternal Spirit, not as a second divine person with a separate divine authority. Paul's calling was not an appointment made by men or a council; it was the work of God.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:1**:

> *"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,"*

Paul later described how he learned the identity of the Lord who called him. The One who appeared to him identified Himself as Jesus and appointed Paul to be His minister and witness.

Paul recounted in **Acts 26:15-16**:

> *"And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;"*

The calling that Paul described as the will of God came from Jesus Christ Himself. It was not the will of one divine person being passed to another. The Lord Jesus who called Paul is the one God revealed through His saving work and now known by His Spirit.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:1**:

> *"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)"*

Paul joined Jesus Christ and God the Father without introducing two Gods. His commission came from God rather than human authorisation. The same Lord whom Paul encountered was the eternal Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ.

Paul also explained the inward purpose of his calling. God revealed His Son in Paul so that the gospel might be preached through him, and this revelation was an act of grace rather than human achievement.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 1:15-16**:

> *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:"*

The words *"to reveal his Son in me"* carry the teaching beyond a human commission. Paul's service flowed from Christ revealed within him. The same Spirit who called him gave life and direction to his ministry; he was not trying to serve Christ by unaided outward imitation.

The Lord also declared Paul to be His chosen vessel, entrusted with carrying His name among the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel. Luke recorded His words in **Acts 9:15**:

> *"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:"*

Paul was chosen and commissioned by Jesus Christ, and his calling was the will of the one true God. Scripture presents one Lord and one Spirit governing His Church. This source of ministry remains the indwelling life and authority of Christ, not independent human power.

"I Came Down From Heaven"

We can now bring the meaning of Jesus' words together. His declaration *"I came down from heaven"* speaks of divine origin, authority and mission. It describes the one eternal God bringing His saving purpose into human history through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ.

It does not require the journey of a second eternal divine person away from the Father. The humanity of Jesus Christ began through conception and birth, while the God revealed through that humanity existed eternally.

The Word was God, and the Word was made flesh. God was manifest in the flesh, and the Father dwelt within Jesus Christ. The Son came to do the will of God and to give His flesh for the life of the world.

Jesus Christ genuinely lived as man, while the God revealed through Him remained the one eternal Spirit. His heavenly origin and earthly humanity therefore do not contradict one another when the distinction between genuine humanity and eternal Deity is preserved.

That is the Scriptural meaning of His declaration: *"I came down from heaven."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Word made flesh and the Father in Jesus explain His words about coming down from heaven?

Personal Reflection

Have you separated God's eternal Word from the real flesh through which He was manifested?

Action Step

Read **John 1:1** *and 1:14 together. Explain how this should change the way you speak about Jesus coming from heaven.*

CONCLUSION: THE SON'S OBEDIENCE AND DIVINE ORIGIN

BACK TO CONTENTS

Throughout this Study Guide, we have examined verses that speak of the Son learning, obeying, growing in wisdom, experiencing human limitation, being sent by the Father and coming down from heaven. When these Scriptures are brought together, they reveal the reality of His genuine human life while preserving the truth that the one eternal God was fully revealed in Him.

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 2:5**:

> *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*

The foundation remains unchanged: *"there is one God,"* and the mediator is identified as *"the man Christ Jesus."* His obedience, growth, dependence and limitation therefore belong to His genuine humanity.

The writer of Hebrews says that the Son *"learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."* This does not mean that Jesus moved from disobedience to obedience. The man Christ Jesus lived obedience through the real circumstances of human life and remained perfectly faithful through suffering.

Luke tells us that Jesus *"increased in wisdom and stature,"* showing that His human mind genuinely developed. Mark records that the Son did not know the day or the hour. These statements reveal genuine human limitation, while the Father, the eternal Spirit, remained unlimited in knowledge.

Yet the same Jesus declared in **John 8:58**:

> *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."*

His humanity had a beginning in history, but the God revealed through Him did not. The humanity was conceived, born, grew, learned, suffered and died, while the Deity revealed through that humanity remained eternal.

The distinction is therefore clear: the humanity began in time, but the Deity did not. These truths do not contradict one another because they speak of genuine humanity and eternal Deity.

Scripture also says that the Father sent the Son. Paul connects this directly with His genuine human birth when he says that God *"sent forth his Son, made of a woman."* The sending belongs to the entrance of the Son into human history and to the saving mission Jesus Christ was appointed to fulfil. It does not require another eternal divine person travelling away from the Father.

The same principle governs the words *"I came down from heaven."* The Word was God, the Word was made flesh, and God was manifest in the flesh. His coming from heaven therefore speaks of divine origin, authority and saving purpose entering human history through Jesus Christ.

Jesus also possessed a genuine human will. That will remained perfectly submitted to the one divine will of God. His words *"not my will, but thine, be done"* do not reveal competing divine wills. They reveal the genuine human will of the Son yielding perfectly to the Father, the eternal Spirit.

The whole testimony therefore remains consistent:

- There is one God;
- The Father is the eternal Spirit;
- Jesus Christ possessed complete and genuine humanity;
- God was in Christ;
- The Son's obedience, growth and limitation belonged to His genuine human life;
- The God revealed in Him is eternal;
- His divine origin and mission were from above;
- His human will remained perfectly submitted to the one divine will of God.

These truths do not divide Jesus Christ or divide the one God. They preserve both His genuine humanity and the eternal Deity revealed through Him. The Son truly lived within human limitation, while the God revealed through that genuine human life remained eternal, unlimited and unchanged.

Jesus Christ was truly man, and God was in Christ.

The next Study Guide will continue from this foundation by examining what Scripture says concerning the Son's humiliation, exaltation and reign.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Son's learning, limits and heavenly origin agree when genuine humanity and eternal Deity are preserved?

Personal Reflection

Which saying of Jesus about learning, limitation or divine origin has most challenged your faith?

Action Step

Correct or affirm one specific belief and explain how the whole testimony now strengthens your trust and obedience to Jesus Christ.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Explain how Jesus could grow, learn obedience, and live within human limits while the eternal God was revealed in Him. Why must both truths be held together?

2. Understanding

How do **Luke 2:52**, **Mark 13:32**, *and* **John 8:58** *speak about different aspects of Jesus' identity? Explain why a human limit must not be assigned to the eternal Father.*

3. Personal Reflection

Before reading these verses, how did you understand Jesus' learning and limited knowledge? Explain what has been corrected or strengthened in your understanding and why it matters.

4. Response to Truth

What does Jesus' obedience to His Father's will mean for your own willingness to trust and obey God? Explain a response you are considering, or something you still need to understand.

5. Action Step

Which saying of Jesus about His humanity or divine origin will you study this week, and what mistaken idea or weak conviction do you intend to address?

6. Early Response

Have you studied that saying yet? If so, what was corrected or strengthened? If not, what has prevented you from beginning?

7. Ongoing Practice

What will help you continue to read Jesus' human experiences and His words about coming from heaven together? Explain how you will test an explanation that weakens either truth.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do the Son's obedience, the Father dwelling in Him, and His words 'Before Abraham was, I am' agree with the truth that there is one eternal God? Use verses to distinguish His genuine human life from the eternal Deity revealed in Him.

9. Living the Truth

If someone says that Jesus' limited knowledge proves He was only an ordinary man, how would you answer? Explain His real human limits and the eternal God revealed in Him from the Bible.

10. Final Response

How do the Son's birth, obedience, human limits, and words about His origin belong together? Explain what these truths now show you about Jesus and what they mean for your own trust and obedience.