

Knowing Jesus

A companion to the sermons on 2 John and the person of Christ

Jesus is fully God and fully human. The first sermon calls us to remain in the teaching of Christ. The second helps us hold that truth together: in Jesus we truly see God and are truly saved. Growing in understanding should deepen our worship, trust and obedience.

Stay with the real Jesus

2 John 7–9 warns against teaching that draws us away from Jesus Christ come in the flesh. Staying with Christ brings us into relationship with the Father and the Son. The promised Messiah joins the story of the Old Testament to the good news of the New.

Distortion	What it loses	The truth to hold
Too little human Docetism	Jesus only appeared human.	Jesus truly came in the flesh.
Too little God Ebionitism	Jesus was only a great teacher or prophet.	In Jesus we meet God.
Too different a God Marcionism	The Old and New Testaments reveal different gods.	One faithful God throughout Scripture.
Too distant a God Gnosticism	Secret knowledge is needed to reach a remote God.	Through Jesus we know the Father.

“Too little human” is the corrected wording from the second sermon. Jesus’ divinity and humanity are not competing quantities. Both are fully real.

Begin with the Gospel evidence

He slept and stilled the storm. Mark 4:38–39 shows his human tiredness and his divine authority.

He wept and raised the dead. John 11:35, 43–44 shows his real grief and his power to give life.

One God and one incarnate Son

The Trinity One God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One “what”, three “whos”.

The incarnation One person, Jesus Christ, with two complete natures: divine and human. One “who”, two “whats”. Read John 1:1–5, 14.

The fence	About God	About Jesus
Too divided	Tritheism Three separate gods	Nestorianism Two separate persons
Too merged	Modalism or Sabellianism One person wearing different masks	Eutychianism A hybrid of God and human
Too diminished	Arianism or subordinationism The Son is less than truly God	Apollinarianism Some part of Jesus’ humanity is missing

These are brief descriptions of historic error categories, not complete accounts of every teacher or church given these labels. The fences protect the Gospel witness without removing its wonder.

Church history and the branches

The church's language developed as Christians tried to remain faithful to the Jesus of the Gospels. The diagram on the next page follows the sermon's outline. It is a schematic of selected controversies and church families, not a complete or proportional timeline.

The main milestones

When	Milestone	Why it matters
325	Nicaea	Affirmed that the Son is truly God, of the same being as the Father. Arian teaching made the Son less than fully God.
431	Ephesus	Defended the unity of Christ as one person. The disputes surrounding this council are part of the background to the separation of the Church of the East.
451	Chalcedon	Confessed one Christ in two natures, without confusion or separation. Churches now called Oriental Orthodox, including the Coptic Church, did not receive this council.
1054	East and West	A conventional marker for the long separation between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.
1517 onward	Reformation	Reform movements in Western Christianity led to Protestant church families. Baptists belong within this broad Protestant story.

Reading the branches

The green branches represent the shared Nicene and Chalcedonian confession across Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and most Protestants. Gold marks ancient churches whose language about Christ differed. The "heard" labels describe how formulations were perceived in controversy, not a complete account of those churches' beliefs. Grey marks the early Arian branch, which later faded.

The red branches use the sermon's theological framework to compare later movements with the historic confession. Their placement indicates a broad historical setting, not a direct line of descent from the ancient Arians. These are assessments of teachings, not of people's character.

Branch in the diagram	The sermon's comparison
Oneness Pentecostalism	Too merged: the distinction between Father, Son and Spirit is lost.
Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians and Unitarians	Too diminished: in different ways, these teachings deny the Son's full deity. The groups are not identical.
Mormons	Too divided, and all three too diminished: the sermon's shorthand for a Godhead understood differently from the one divine being confessed at Nicaea.

The dotted lines and modern agreements

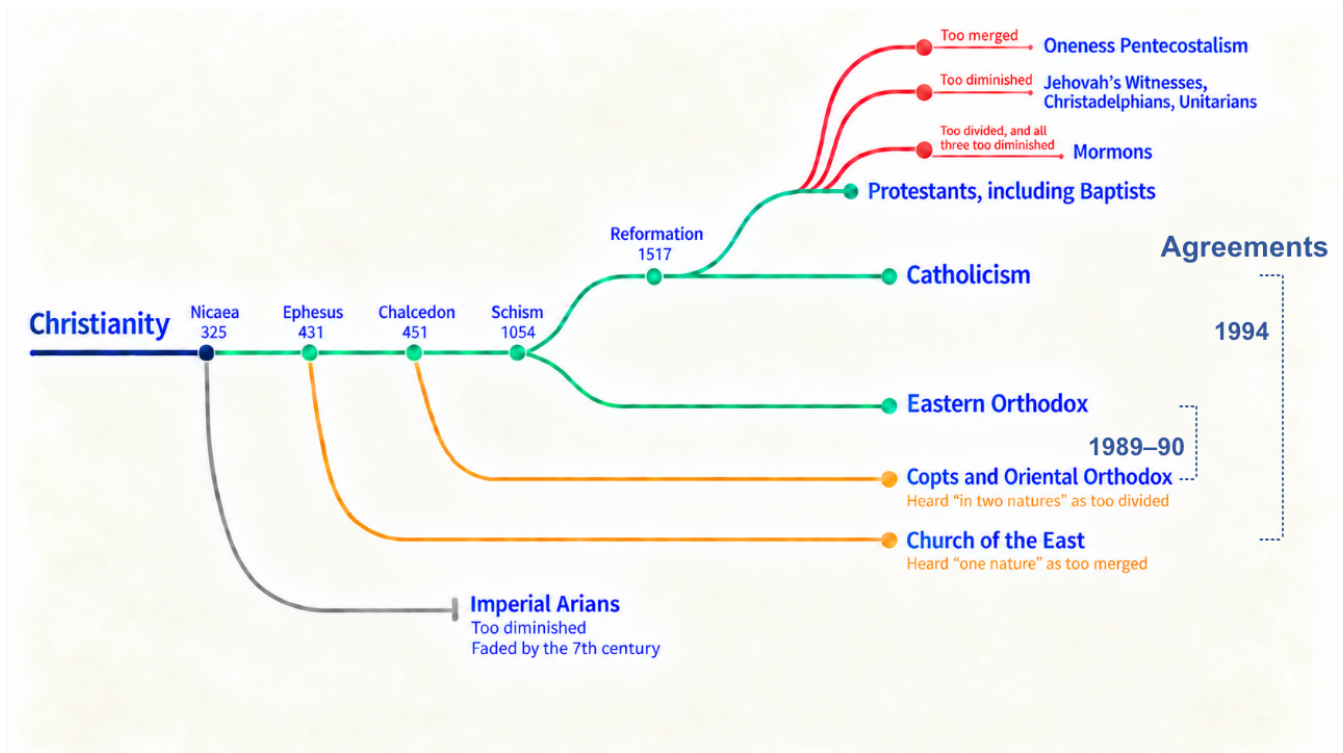
1989–90: the joint Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox theological commission expressed agreement on Christ's full divinity, full humanity and the unity of his person. These agreed statements did not themselves restore full communion between all the churches.

1994: the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East signed a common declaration of faith in the one Christ, true God and true man. Shared Christological faith did not mean an institutional merger or the resolution of every difference.

[Read the 1990 agreed statement](#)

[Read the 1994 common declaration](#)

Church history and branches diagram



Selected branches from the sermon. Dates mark milestones, not a proportional timeline. Dotted lines show Christological agreements, not church mergers.

Why knowing Jesus matters

We truly see God. Hebrews 1:1–3 presents the Son as the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being. To discover what God is like, look at Jesus.

We are truly saved. Hebrews 2:14–17 says he shared our humanity, broke the power of death and made atonement for sins. His real humanity matters for our freedom from sin, fear and death.

Learn from the church with humility

The councils of Nicaea, Ephesus and Chalcedon sought language faithful to the Jesus revealed in Scripture. The historic Christian confession holds together one God in three persons and the one Christ in two natures. These shared convictions reach across many church traditions.

The second sermon also described later conversations in which long-separated churches recognised substantial agreement about Christ. Different words can hide shared convictions. Listen carefully, check what someone means and discuss beliefs without belittling people.

Practise discernment together

Read deeply. Begin with 2 John, expand into 1 John, then spend time in John’s Gospel. Let the wider biblical story shape how you understand a short clip or striking claim.

Test what you welcome. Podcasts, reels, books and AI can shape our picture of Jesus. Ask what a teaching says about his humanity, his divinity, the God of Scripture and our access to the Father. Check the claim rather than trusting its popularity or confidence.

Talk face to face. Bring questions to trusted believers, a small group or a church leader. John wanted personal conversation with his readers (2 John 12). Communion also brings us back to the embodied Jesus who gave himself for us.

Grow in Christlikeness. In 1 John 2:12–14, growth involves knowing the Father, receiving forgiveness, letting God’s word live in us and overcoming evil. Seek a deeper life with God, not merely the next novel idea.

Adore trust and follow

Adore. Pause to worship the one who slept in the boat and stilled the storm, wept at the tomb and raised Lazarus. Let learning lead to praise.

Trust. Bring Jesus your grief, fear and unanswered questions. We can experience his presence and goodness while our understanding is still growing.

Follow. Choose one specific act of obedience this week. Let a clearer view of Jesus change how you speak, forgive, serve or love.

Reflect and discuss

1. Which distortion of Jesus do you most often encounter, and what Scripture helps you recognise it?
2. What does Jesus’ sleeping, weeping, stilling and raising show you about God and your own humanity?
3. Where might you be talking past someone? What could you ask before drawing a conclusion?
4. What will you read, whom will you talk with, and what act of obedience will you take this week?

My next step this week _____

Prayer

Jesus, help us remain in your truth and grow deeper in life with you. May our understanding, adoration, trust and obedience grow together. Amen.

Based on the sermon summaries from 20 September and 4 October 2026. Scripture references are provided for further reading.