

The Savior – The Person of Jesus Christ

The Two Natures of Christ

The God-Man

The fact that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was a *man* is a fact that is widely known. The historical record of Jesus life and ministry is clear for all to see. In fact there have been more books written about Him, more pictures painted of Him and more attention focused on Him down through ages than any other man who has ever lived. He is the *most famous* person who lived in the history of mankind without dispute. But look closer at the person of Jesus and you find Him to be the most unique person who has ever lived as well. He was a man of amazing supernatural powers unlike any other person who has existed. In the Bible, the life, ministry and supernatural power of Christ are seen to be the result of the fact that He is actually the very Son of God. In the Bible, Jesus Christ is presented as **God incarnate in the flesh**. This fact is known as “the deity of Christ”, or “the divinity of Christ.”

John 1:14 - 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. -NASB

So when we consider the *biblical Jesus*, we find Him to be this unique person in history in which God became a man and lived in the flesh as a man, the God-man. In the history of the world, no other claim as this has been the center of more controversy, study, and focus of theologians and religious worshippers as the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. More than this, the claims of this man Jesus Christ and the supernatural powers he bore, witnessed by thousands, makes Him a wonderful and fearful man indeed. Consider just a few of His claims and works....

- He claimed to be God in the flesh (Matt 26:64, John 8:23, 58, 10:36, 11:25, Rev 1:17, 22:13)
- He claimed to be the promised Messiah of the Jews (John 4:25, 6:35-40, 51)
- He claimed to have pre-existed his life on earth in Heavenly Glory (John 3:13, 6:41, 17:5)
- He claimed to be the final judge of all people at the end of the ages (Matt 16:27, 25:31-46)
- He claimed to give eternal life to those who embrace His message (Matt 19:29, John 11:25)
- He taught with supernatural wisdom never heard of in history (Luke 6:20-49, 12:1-18:33)
- He did miracles of healing lame, blind and deaf people (John 9:1-41, Matt 9:18-35)
- He raised people from the dead (John 11:40-46, Luke 7:11-17, 8:49-56)
- He walked on water and fed 5000 people with a few loaves and fish (Matt 14:15-32)
- He made prophecies of future events with pinpoint accuracy (Matt 17:22, 24:2, Luke 21:24)

When you combine these claims and works of Jesus, along with the amazing story of His birth, and His Passion and resurrection from the dead, He is an amazing person indeed.

Peter **Acts 10:37-41** - 38 "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him. 39 "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. 40 "God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, NASB.

One does not have to think real hard to realize that no one person who has ever lived even resembles the person of Jesus Christ. He is in fact the *most amazing* person of wonder, power and wisdom. Even those who embrace His message today, some 2000 years later, claim to have their lives completely transformed in a supernatural way that brings inner peace, joy and a desire to love and do good like no other thing that has ever happened to them. Consider that if all of this be true about this man Jesus Christ, His person and His message is one that we should give close scrutiny to. Jesus answers all the great concerns about our lives and our world. He claims to hold the keys of death, promises immortality and has manifested God to us in most profound manner. Upon close examination, we are left in awe and wonder, proclaiming with doubting Thomas.....

John 20:28 - 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" NASB

One Being Two Natures

Being both the Son of God and the son of man is unprecedented in the world. When Jesus the Christ came into the ~~world~~^{world}, born of a virgin, having been conceived by God Himself, the eternal Son of God manifested Himself as a man.

Luke 1:35 - 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason **the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.** NASB

Here we have an idea, or a concept which the human mind can hardly grasp, God in the flesh of a man. In the passages below, we will examine the *Deity* and the *Humanity* of Jesus Christ in the Bible. But here we will give a brief definition of what it means that Jesus Christ had two natures. In the 5th Century, the Church finally resolved a long struggle to understand this unique idea that Jesus possessed two natures. This happened when a large church council convened for this very purpose in Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The statement on Christ's two natures that was produced is very comprehensive and is referred to as the **Chalcedonian Definition**. It reads as follows... "*We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us.*"

This definition sought to correct several false teachings about the nature of Jesus Christ, which it did, and has been accepted by orthodox churches ever since its inception. Wayne Grudem comments on this... "*When the Chalcedonian Definition says that the two natures of Christ occur together "in one Person and one Subsistence," the Greek word translated as "Subsistence" is the word hypostasis, ὑπόστασις (G5712) "being." Hence the union of Christ's human and divine natures in one person is sometimes called the hypostatic union. This phrase simply means the union of Christ's human and divine natures in one being.*"

The Bible makes very clear statements about the fact that Jesus was both human and divine, and this miracle is a precious treasure for us to embrace as we worship our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:3-4 - concerning His Son, who was **born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead**, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, NASB

Galatians 4:4 - 4 But when the fulness of the time came, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman**, born under the Law, NASB

Many times as we read through the Bible, we will encounter various passages which may stress one or the other nature of Jesus. When this happens we must remember that we understand the verses in the Bible in their larger context of the passage, chapter, book, and even in the context of the whole Bible. Therefore we must understand these difficulties in the light of what the entire Bible teaches about each one. As we see Jesus revealed in the pages of Scripture, let us worship Him with reverence and awe, and with the hymn writer say "hail the incarnate Deity!" "*Christ, by highest heav'n adored: - Christ, the everlasting Lord; Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the favored one. Veil'd in flesh, the Godhead see; Hail, th'incarnate Deity: Pleased, as man, with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"*"

Person of Christ

I. Person of Christ

A. He is God—Deity

1. Divine Names

a. Eternal relationship

- 1.) Logos—As language is expressed through words, Christ is the Expression, Revealer, and Manifester of God (Chafer-Christology p.9) In the beginning He was with God indicating He is different than the Father and was God indicating He had all the qualities of God. (John 1:1) Col. 2:9 states that "in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form. Therefore, whatever comprises Deity Christ possessed.
- 2.) Only Begotten Son/God -Jn 1:14,18, cf. Ps 2:7. Angels are sons by creation and believers are sons by adoption; but Christ is the only Begotten Son. He has an eternal relationship as Son and therefore He has the same essence and nature of the Father, that being God.
- 3.) Image of God - Col. 1:15. There is a prototype and the image is its revealed reality.
- 4.) Form of God- Phil 2:6. Morphe--everything intrinsic and essential to a thing, the whole nature or essence.
- 5.) Exact image - Heb. 1:3. Vincent- "Here the essential being of God is conceived as setting its distinctive stamp upon Christ coming into definite and characteristic expression in His person, so that the Son bears the exact impress of the divine nature and character (Word Studies in the New Testament IV p.383)
- 6.) First-born of Creation-Rom. 8:28; Col. 1:15. Describing position or rank not first created thing.
- 7.) Son of God-John 10:36. Share equality, nature and essence of the Father; therefore, He is God. Matt. 3:17; Jn3:16,17; Gal 4:4; Isa 9:6.

b. Designations of Deity

- 1.) God-Isa. 40:3. The Messiah is both Yahweh and Elohim, Is. 9:6-7
Messiah is called Mighty God, everlasting Father (or Father of eternity) Jn 1:1-2 Logos is God Jn 20:28 Thomas addressed Him as God, Titus 2:13 Jesus is called Great God and Savior, Acts 20:28 God purchased the church with His own blood, Matt. 1:23 cf. Isa. 7: 14 Jesus is called Immanuel-God with us. Ps. 4:5-6 cf. Heb. 1:8 Thy throne, O God is forever and ever.
- 2.) Yahweh-O.T. Scripture speaks of Jehovah and N.T. Scripture quotes the verse in regard to Jesus: being pierced; Zech 12:10; cf Rev. 1:7, ascending on high, leading captive a host of captives- Ps. 68:18; cf Eph 4:8-10; Ps. 102; cf Heb. 1:10; Is. 8:13-14; cf I Pet. 2:7-8; Is. 6:1-13; cf John 12:41; Mal 3:1; cf Luke 1:76 and Joel 2:32 with Rom 10:13.
- 3.) Lord-Ps. 110:1; cf Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43; Acts 2: Heb 34-35; 1:13; 10:13
- 4.) Yahweh of the Temple-Mal 3:1 Jehovah would come to His temple-Jesus said "You have made my house a den of thieves" and "My house shall be called the house of prayer" Matt. 21:13
- 5.) Yahweh of the Sabbath-Sabbath was Yahweh's day and Christ claimed to be Lord of the Sabbath.
- 6.) King of Kings and Lord of Lord-spoken of God in I Tim. 6:15 and of Jesus in Rev. 19:16.

2. Evidential Attributes-only of God

- a. Eternality-Messiah: from the days of eternity Micah 5:2 Jesus said I AM . John 8:58; Messiah was Father of eternity Is 9:6-7 Existed before all created things Col 1:17; First and Last Is 41:4, 44:6, 48:12 cf. Rev. 1:11.
- b. Immutability-Jehovah Mal.3:6, Jesus-Heb.1:11-12; 13:8.
- c. Omnipotence-Almighty Jesus will subdue all things to Himself Phil 3:21; I Cor. 15:28.
- d. Omniscience-knows the hearts of men-Yahweh: I Kings 8:39; Jer. 17:10, 11:20, 20:12. Cf. Jesus Mark 13:32, Rev.2:23. Father knows the Son and the Son knows the Father John 10:15 and Matt. 11:27.
- e. Omnipresence-Yahweh I Kings 8:27; Jer. 23:23-24. Jesus said where 2 or 3 are gathered together I will be with you. Jesus and the Father will abide in the believer. John 14:23.
- f. Love, holiness, justice, truth are spoken of both.
- g. Jesus possesses the essence or nature of God. Image-Col. 1:15, form-Phil 2:6, Heb. 1:3, exact representation.

3. Evidential mighty works-only of God.

- a. Creation-God created all things. Gen 1:1 and Rom 11:36; Jesus created all things. John 1:3,10; Col 1:16; Heb. 1:2,10.
- b. Preserves-holds together all things Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3.
- c. Forgiveness of sins-Mark 2:1-12; Acts 5:31; Col. 3:13.
- d. Gives spiritual life-John 5:21.
- e. Resurrection of the dead-John 5:25-29; I Cor. 15:21; John 11:43.
- f. All judgment-Yahweh 8; Jesus-John 5:22,27.

- 1) Nations-Ps. 2:7-9; Is 63:1-6; Matt.25:31-46; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:5.
 - 2) Israel-Matt 24:37; 25:13.
 - 3) Believers works-II Cor. 5:10.
 - 4) Angelic powers-I Cor. 15:15-26.
 - 5) Great White Throne-Rev. 20:12-15
4. Triune relationship-equality with the Father and Holy Spirit ascribed same worship, honor, and glory. Also mentioned together.
 - a. Christ's baptism-Matt. 3:16-17
 - b. Christ's teaching-John 14:26; 15:26
 - c. Baptismal formula-In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Matt. 28: 19.
 - d. Spiritual gifts-I Cor. 12:4-6.
 - e. Apostolic benediction-II Cor. 13:14.
 - f. Apostolic teaching-Gal. 4:4-6.
 5. O.T. Messiah is declared to be Yahweh and yet Yahweh and the Messiah are recognized as two separate persons. Ps 2:2; Deut. 30:3; Jer. 33:16-17; Isa. 9:6-7; Zach. 9:9; cf. Matt. 21:1-14 and John 12:23-15; Zech. 1:4,9,16; Jer. 23:5-6 and Is. 63:1Yahweh our Righteousness; cf. Rom 11:26-27; Jesus, Lord our Righteous.
 6. Pre-existence of Christ implied-John 1:14; 3:13; 8:23; 17:14, 18; Phil. 2:8 also John 1:15, 18,30; 3:16-17,31; 6:33,42, 50-51,57-58; 7:29; 8:42; 9:39.
 7. Direct assertions of Pre-existence
 - a. John 1:1-4,14
 - b. John 6:33,38,41,50-51,58,62
 - c. John 8:58-59
 - d. John 17:5
 - e. Phil. 2:6
 8. Jesus claimed to be God-John 10:30; John 8:58.
- B. He is man-humanity.
1. He had a human body.
 - a. Born as a baby and had a normal human development. John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Matt. 1:18,2:12; Luke 1:30-38,2:1-20;2,40,52.
 - b. Referred to Himself as a man. John 8:40.
 - c. Recognized by others as a man. I John 1:1-4.
 - d. Was said to have flesh or flesh and bones. John 1:14; Heb.2:14; Phil. 2:6,7.
 2. He possessed a human soul and spirit. Matt. 26:38; Luke 23:46.
 3. He possessed characteristics of a human being: hungry-Matt. 4:2, thirsty-John 19:28, tired-John 4:6, love, compassion-Matt 9:36. Wept-John 11:35, tested-Heb. 4:15.
 4. He possessed human names: Son of Man (80x)-Son of David-Mark 10:47-Jesus-Matt. 1:21-Man-I Tim. 2:5.
 5. He had human ancestors:
 - a. Joseph's-Matt.1:1-17
 - b. Mary's-Luke 3:23-28
 - c. Son of David-Rom 1:3; II Tim. 2:8.
 - d. Promise to Eve-Gen 3;15.
 - e. Promise to Ahaz-Is. 7:14.
 6. After His resurrection, He appeared as a man. John 20:15-17; 21:4-5; Matt. 28:9.
 7. Bodily ascension-Acts 1:1-11.
 8. One mediator between God and man-the man Christ Jesus. I Tim. 2:5.
 9. Appeared to John as a glorified man. Rev. 1:12-20.
 10. Will appear as a man when He returns. Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:11-16 Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69-70
- C. He is God-Man-hypostatic union-Phil. 2:6-11; John 1:1-14; Rom. 1:2-5; I Tim. 3;16; Heb. 2:14; I John 1:1-3.
1. Definitions
 - a. Hypostatic or one-person union-one person with 2 natures divine and human. "the single Person of the incarnate Christ retained the total complex of divine attributes and possessed all the complex of human attributes essential to a perfect human being." (Ryrie, Basic Theology p. 250).
 - b. Person-"essence, inward properties which underlie all outward manifestation." (Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord p. 114).
 - c. Natures-complex or: sum of all attributes and their relationship to each other" (Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord p. 114).
 2. Character of the Union
 - a. Chalcedonian Creed-"two natures united without mixture (Eutychians), without change (Apollinarians), without division (Nestorianism), without separation." "All attributes of Deity and perfect humanity were maintained in Jesus Christ at all times since His incarnation." (Ryrie, Basic Theology

- p. 150). Therefore "the two natures were united without loss of any essential attributes and that the two natures maintain their separate identity". (Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord p.114). Change in attribute would mean change in essence.
- b. Two natures in one person forever-Christ is a theanthropic person and does not have theanthropic natures-no mix of divine and human natures to form a 3rd substance.
 - c. There is no transfer of attributes from one nature to another-Luther taught the ubiquity of Christ's body-His body became omnipresent.
 - d. His humanity continued after His resurrection-bodily resurrection appearance, bodily ascension, and bodily revelation to John, bodily return to earth and bodily reign in millennial kingdom.
3. Communion of attributes.
- a. Christ weak yet omnipotent.
 - b. Christ ignorant yet omniscient.
 - c. Christ limited yet infinite.
 - d. Attributes can't be transferred, but the Person can transfer from expression of one or the other nature.
 - 1.) Actions predicated on whole person: redemption, Prophet, Priest, and King.
 - 2.) Actions predicated on divine nature: pre-existence/eternality.
 - 3.) Actions predicated on human nature: tired, thirsty, and hungry.
4. Self-conscious-the Person of Christ was always aware in Himself with respect to His deity and grew in self-consciousness with respect to His humanity. Both divine and human self-consciousness were never in conflict. He was self-conscious that: He was King, fulfillment of Old Testament eschatological hope, super natural power, He is the Savior, and He is Deity.
5. One or two wills.

