

Chapter 26: The Person of Christ

A. The humanity of Christ

1. Virgin birth, Matt. 1:18, 20, 24-25; Luke 1:35; Gal. 4:4 "born of a woman"
2. Human weaknesses and limitations
 - a) Jesus had a human body
 - Luke 2:7 born as a human baby; Luke 2:40 grew and became strong
 - Luke 2:52 increased in wisdom and stature
 - John 4:6 weary; John 19:28 thirsty; Matt. 4:2 hungry (note 4:11);
 - Luke 23:43 died
 - Luke 24:39 rose with human body (see vss. 42-43)
 - but "glorified": never weak, ill, aging
 - Luke 24:50-51 ascended to heaven in human body
 - Acts 1:11 will return to earth in human body
 - b) Jesus had a human mind
 - Luke 2:52 increased in wisdom; Heb. 5:8 learned obedience
 - Mark 13:32 did not know the day of his return
 - c) Jesus had a human soul and human emotions
 - John 12:27 soul troubled; John 13:21 troubled in spirit
 - Matt. 26:38 very sorrowful, even to death; John 11:35 wept
 - Heb. 5:7 prayed "with loud cries and tears"; Heb. 4:15 was tempted
 - d) People near Jesus saw him as only a man; Matt. 13:53-58 his own village. John 7:5 "even his brothers did not believe in him"
3. Sinlessness
 - a) Luke 4:13 after 40 days, the devil ended every temptation (could not get Jesus to sin)
 - b) John 8:29 "I am always doing what is pleasing to him [God]"
 - c) John 15:10 "I have kept my Father's commandments"
 - d) John 18:38 Pilate: "I find no crime in him"
 - e) Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:30; 7:52; 13:35: "the Holy One" or "the Righteous One"
 - f) 2 Cor. 5:21: he made him **who knew no sin** to be sin for us
 - g) Heb. 4:15 "one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin"
 - h) 1 Pet. 2:22 "He committed no sin"; i. 1 John 2:1 "Jesus Christ the righteous"
 - i) 1 John 3:5 "in him there is no sin"
 - j) Yet Jesus was truly tempted
 - k) Matt. 4:1-11 temptation in the wilderness
 - l) Heb. 5:8 he "learned obedience through what he suffered"
 - m) Heb. 2:18 "because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted"
 - n) Heb. 4:15 "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace..."
4. Could Jesus have sinned?
 - a) If no, how could temptations be real?
 - b) If yes, how could he be truly God?
 - c) What we know for sure
 - 1) Jesus did not sin;
 - 2) Jesus was truly tempted;
 - 3) "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13)
 - d) A suggested solution (not as certain as 3 points above):
 - 1) If Jesus' human nature had existed by itself: like Adam & Eve's at creation: able to sin
 - 2) But: Jesus' human nature was **always** joined to his divine nature -- never existed by itself

- 3) Any act of sin would have involved whole person (human & divine nature) – but impossible for divine nature
- 4) Therefore Jesus could not have sinned
- e) Then how were temptations real?
 - 1) He did not sin because he resisted in human strength alone (by trusting in God and obeying), but he could not have sinned because of his divine nature
 - 2) Example of swimmer who crosses English channel:
 - he did not drown because he kept swimming
 - he could not have drowned because there was a rescue boat
 - 3) Temptations are hardest for those who resist to the end without sinning, not for those who give in
5. Why was Jesus' full humanity necessary?
 - a) Representative: To obey God on our behalf: Rom 5:18-19
 - b) Substitute: To die for sin in our place: Heb. 2:16-17
 - c) Example: To be our example to follow in life: 1 John 2:6 and the pattern for our redeemed bodies: 1 Cor. 15:42-44
 - d) Sympathetic priest: To sympathize as high priest: Heb. 2:18
 - e) Mediator: To be the one mediator betw. God & men: 1 Tim. 2:5
 - f) Human ruler over creation: So that a man (God's image) might rule over creation: Heb. 2:8
6. Jesus will be a man forever

Luke 24:39 "flesh and bones"; Acts 1:11 will come in the same way he left
 Acts 7:56 Son of man standing at right hand of God; Rev. 1:13 one like a Son of man
 Matt. 26:29 will drink wine with disciples in Father's kingdom
 Rev. 19:9 invites us to great marriage supper in heaven

B. The Deity of Christ

1. Direct Scriptural Claims
 - a) The Word **God** (*theos*) Used of Christ
 - John 1:1 The Word was God
 - John 1:18 God the One and Only (NIV)
 - John 20:28 "My Lord and My God"
 - Romans 9:5 God over all
 - Titus 2:13 Our great God and Savior
 - Hebrews 1:8 "Your throne O God"
 - 2 Peter 1:1 Our God & Savior (see 1:11; 2:20; 3:18)
 - b) The Word **Lord** (*kyrios*) Used of Christ
 - [used 6,814 times in Greek transl. of OT for Hebrew name "Jehovah/Yahweh," "the Lord"]
 - Luke 2:11 a Savior, who is Christ the Lord
 - Luke 1:43 the mother of my Lord
 - Matthew 3:3 Prepare the way of the Lord
 - Matthew 22:44 The Lord said to my Lord
 - 1 Cor. 8:6 One Lord, Jesus Christ
 - Heb. 1:10-12 You, Lord, founded the earth
 - many more times in epistles
 - c) Other Strong Claims to Deity
 - John 8:57-58 "I am who I am"
 - Rev. 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega
 - John 1:1 the Word was God
 - Acts 7:56 "the Son of Man"
 - Matt. 26:64 seated at right hand of power
 - Heb. 1:2-3 "Son of God" [see all of Hebrews 1]
2. Evidence that Jesus Possessed Attributes of Deity
 - Matthew 8:26-27 stilling the storm
 - Matthew 14:19 loaves and fish

- John 2:1-11 water to wine
 John 8:58 eternity
 Revelation 22:13 Alpha and Omega
 Mark 2:8 Omniscience
 John 1:48; 6:64; 2:25; 16:30 Omniscience
 Matthew 18:20; 28:20 Omnipresence
 Mark 2:5-7 Sovereignty
 John 2:19; 10:17-18 Immortality
 Hebrews 7:16 an indestructible life
 Philippians 2:9-11 worthy to be worshiped
3. Did Jesus Give up some of His Divine Attributes While on Earth?
 - a) called the "Kenosis Theory" (Greek *kenōō* = "empty")
 - b) claimed from Philippians 2:5-7
 - c) But: early church did not understand it this way
 - d) Text does not say emptied Himself of divine attributes
 - e) Text says emptied Himself *by taking the form of a servant*
 - f) Purpose is to encourage humility (imitate Christ)
 - g) Larger context of NT doctrine does not support
 4. Conclusion: Christ is Fully Divine

Colossians 1:19 in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell
 Colossians 2:9 in Him the whole fullness of Deity dwells bodily
 Matthew 1:23 Immanuel, God with us
 5. Is the Doctrine of the Incarnation "Unintelligible" Today?
 Our proper response is not to reject the clear and central teaching of Scripture about the incarnation, but simply to recognize that it will remain a paradox.
 6. Why Was Jesus' Deity Necessary?
 Jonah 2:9 Salvation is from the Lord (no one else could bear penalty for our sins)
 1 Timothy 2:5 Only someone truly and fully God could be the one mediator
 John 14:9 Only God could reveal God most fully and bring us back to God
 2 John 9 "Anyone who...does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God"

C. The Incarnation: deity and humanity in the one person of Christ

1. Three inadequate views of the person of Christ
 - a) **Apollinarianism** (Apollinaris became bishop in Laodicea about A.D. 361)
 - 1) Christ had a human body only
 - 2) mind and spirit of Christ were from divine nature
 - 3) example: meeting "Mickey Mouse" at Disney World (see Fig. 26.1)
 - 4) Problem: our minds and spirits need salvation too! (such a Christ: not really true man to represent us)
 - 5) Christ had human mind, spirit: Lk 2:52; Jn 12:27; 13:31; Heb 4:15; 5:7, etc.
 - 6) Rejected by several church councils (362-381)
 - b) **Nestorianism** (Nestorius was a popular preacher at Antioch; after 428: bishop of Constantinople)
 - 1) Christ was 2 distinct persons in one body:
 - a. the human person; (b) the divine person
 - 2) Example: circus "horse" (see Fig. 26.2)
 - 3) Problem: Gospels show Jesus as "I" not "we"
 - i. never seen as two persons in Gospels
 - 4) Nestorius probably never taught the heretical view that goes by his name
 - c) **Monophysitism** (Eutychianism)
 (Greek *monos*, "one", and *physis*, "nature")
 (Eutyches (378-454) was the leader of a monastery at Constantinople)
 - 1) Human nature absorbed into divine nature
 - 2) Something entirely new resulted (greater than human, less than divine)
 - 3) Example: drop of ink in water (see Fig. 26.3)
 - 4) Problem: both humanity and deity are lost!

2. Solution to the controversy: Chalcedonian Creed (451) (Chalcedon: a city near Constantinople)
 - Affirmed by Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches ever since (see Fig. 26.4)
3. Combining specific texts on Christ's deity and humanity
 - a) One nature does some things that the other nature does not do ("the property of each nature is preserved" ... Chalcedonian Creed)
 - 1) Jesus' human nature ascended to heaven and is no longer in the world, but His divine nature is everywhere present. (John 16:28; 17:11; Acts 1:9-11; Matt. 28:20; John 14:23)
 - 2) Jesus was 30 years old (Luke 3:23), but also eternally existed (John 1:1-2; 8:58)
 - 3) Jesus was weak and tired in his human nature (Matt. 4:2; 8:24; Mark 15:21; John 4:6), but his divine nature was omnipotent (Matt. 8:26-27, Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3)
 - 4) While Jesus was asleep in the boat (Matt. 8:24) he was also "continually carrying along all things by his word of power" (Heb. 1:3).
 - 5) Jesus' human nature died (Luke 23:46; 1 Cor. 15:3), but his divine nature did not die, but was able to raise himself from the dead (John 2:19; 10:17-18; Heb. 7:16)
 - b) To preserve the reality of Jesus' human nature, we must say that Jesus had two wills (a human will and a divine will) and two centers of consciousness (human and divine)
 - 1) Jesus' human consciousness did not know the time of his return (Mark 13:32), but his divine consciousness knew all things (John 16:30)
 - 2) Jesus' human will was tempted (Heb. 4:15) but his divine will could not be tempted (James 1:13)
4. Anything either nature does, the person of Christ does
 - Jn 8:58 "Before Abraham was, I am"
 - Jn 16:28 "I am leaving the world"
 - Matt 28:20 "I am with you always"
 - 1 Cor. 15:3 "Christ died for our sins"

THE CHALCEDONIAN CREED (451 A.D.)

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 soul and body; consubstantial [*homoousios*-- "same nature"] 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 handed down to us.