

Essentials of Christianity (pt 17)
6/27/2010

Introduction _____

Blessings to all of you this morning. We are going to wrap up our study of Christology today as we continue our examination of the essentials of the Christian faith.

Let me remind you of one of the reasons why we're spending so much time doing this study. We read this together back when we began.

^{NAU} Colossians 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

To this end, we began our study of Christology last week, and I told you that our primary focus would be on the humanity of Jesus, since we already covered His attributes as God.

We talked about the seriousness of the doctrine, supported by the words of 1John 4.

19th century expositor C.H Mackintosh said this:

“The truth respecting Christ’s humanity must be received with scriptural accuracy, held with spiritual energy, guarded with holy jealousy, and confessed with heavenly power. If we are wrong as to this, we cannot be right as to any thing. It is a grand, vital fundamental truth; and if it is not received, held, guarded, and confessed as God has revealed it in His holy Word, the entire superstructure [of doctrine] must be unsound.”

We also talked about the **nature of His humanity**. The incarnation--which is the point in history when God took on human flesh. This included an emptying of Himself.

Theologians call this union of God and humanity the **hypostatic union**.

Hypostatic meaning, *substance*; Union being the combining of the two: “human and divine.” Both existing simultaneously.

We can summarize the scriptures teaching on this in the following way:

In summarizing the hypostatic union, three facts are noted:
(1) Christ has two distinct natures: humanity and deity;
(2) there is no mixture or intermingling of the two natures;
(3) although He has two natures, Christ is one Person.¹

We ended our time last week looking at the scriptural proofs of His humanity:

He Was Virgin Born
He Had A True Body Of Flesh And Blood
He Had A Normal Development

¹ Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody, Chicago, 1989).

He Had A Human Soul And Spirit
He Had The Characteristics Of A Human Being²

The last three things we're going to cover about Christology are:

1. The Character of His Humanity
2. The Importance of His Humanity/What His Humanity Accomplishes.
3. Heresies Against This Doctrine.

1. The Character of His Humanity. I suppose we could have just pointed to the attributes of Christs' deity and been satisfied with saying, "as He was prior to His incarnation, so is He as a man."

That is perfectly true. But I do want to point out some notable references to Jesus as he conducted Himself as a man.

Turn to 2Corinthians 5:21.

Holy and righteous: the Lord Jesus was intrinsically holy (2Cor 5:21; Luke 1:35).

Read 2Cor5:

^{NAU} 2 Corinthians 5:21 He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

² Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody, Chicago, 1989).

^{NAU} Luke 1:35 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 Child shall be called the Son of God.

The dying thief on the cross even acknowledged Christ's sinlessness.

^{NAU} Luke 23:40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

⁴¹ "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

⁴² And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

Meek: He embodied true submission even under the severest provocation (Matt 11:28-29).

Turn to Matthew 11:28-29: read

^{NAU} Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

Humble: His humble obedience led even to the death of the cross and is held up in scripture as the supreme example of selflessness (Phil 2:5-8).

We read this last week

Love: He expressed the fact that 'God is love' in His purpose on earth (John 15:9-13).

Turn to John 15:9-13

^{NAU} John 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

¹⁰ *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.*

¹¹ *"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.*

¹² *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.*

¹³ *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

Which is precisely what Jesus did with His life.

Balanced: the Lord Jesus had neither weak nor strong points. He was grave without being melancholy and joyful without being frivolous. There was an exquisitely fine balance to His humanity that was uniquely beautiful and glorious (Col 2:9; 1:19).

He was PERFECT!!

Turn to Colossian 2:9;

^{NAU} *Colossians 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,*

^{NAU} *Colossians 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,*

The Importance of the doctrine/what His humanity accomplishes

This will make up the bulk of our study today.

Why is it so important that Christ be truly human? Why is a denial of His true humanity the mark of antichrist and why must this doctrine be defended at all costs? These reasons provide some answers.

This is not in order of importance or priority.

First may seem so obvious, but it needs to be stated.

Christ's humanity enabled Him to fulfill scripture.

How many Old Testament prophecies would have gone unfulfilled if Christ had never become man! For example, the Lord's prophecy of the seed of the woman who would bruise Satan's head (Gen 3:16), Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin birth (Isa 7:14) and David's prophecy of a Messiah nailed by hands and feet (Psa 22:16). A fuller list could be drawn up, but these suffice to show that there are Old Testament prophecies of physical events in the life of the Messiah that could not have been fulfilled if He had not become a real man of flesh and blood.

(slide) For Representative Obedience: turn to Romans 5:18-19.

Adam is seen in scripture as the physical head of the human race. His sin in the garden constituted us all sinners and made us liable to death (Rom 5:12). Just as all were made sinners through Adam, so all may be judicially made righteous through Christ. Jesus was our representative and obeyed for us where Adam had failed and disobeyed.

read Rom 5

^{NAU} Romans 5:18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

This is why Paul can call Christ "the last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45) and can call Adam the "first man" and Christ the "second man" (1 Cor 15:47). Jesus had to be a man in order to be our representative and obey in our place.

Related to this is the next reason.

Turn to 1John 2:6

***(slide)* To Be Our Example and Pattern in Life:**

John tells us, **read**

^{NAU} 1 John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

and reminds us that "when he appears we shall be like him," and that this hope of future conformity to Christ's character even now gives increasing moral purity to our lives (1 John 3:2-3).

Paul tells us that we are continually being "changed into his likeness" (2 Cor 3:18), thus moving toward the goal for which God saved us, that we might "be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). Our goal should be to be like Christ all our days, up to the point of death, and to die with unfailing obedience to God, with strong trust in him, and with love and forgiveness to others.

Next

Christ' Humanity Enabled Him To Die and To Be a Substitute Sacrifice.

If Jesus had not been a man, he could not have died in our place and paid the penalty that was due to us. The author of Hebrews tells us that "For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation [more accurately, "propitiation"] for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:16-17; 14).

Angels do not and cannot die, but in order to become the sacrifice for our sins the Lord Jesus became a little lower in rank than the angels.

This leads up to what we ended our time last week talking about.

Turn to Heb 4:14-16

Christ's humanity fits him to be our High Priest and to be the One Mediator between God and men.

The risen Lord Jesus is the Great High Priest who has real and genuine sympathy for His people on earth. As their High Priest in heaven, Christ's aiding ministry is based on his experiences in this world that are uniquely connected with His humanity. During 33 years on earth He became intimately familiar with suffering, misunderstanding, weariness and pain. In fact, he was subject to all the trials of the human condition, apart from the question of sin.

Read Heb 4

^{NAU} Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Because we were alienated from God by sin, we needed someone to come between God and ourselves and bring us back to him. We needed a mediator who could represent us to God and who could represent God to us. There is only one person who has ever fulfilled that requirement: "There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5).

Now let's look at a few more obscure reasons that maybe we wouldn't consider.

To Fulfill God's Original Purpose for Man to Rule Over Creation.

The purpose for which God created man: to put mankind on the earth to subdue it and rule over it as God's representatives. But man did not fulfill that purpose, for he instead fell into sin. The author of Hebrews realizes that God intended everything to be in subjection to man, but he admits, "As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him" (Heb 2:8).

When Jesus came as a man, he was able to obey God and thereby have the right to rule over creation as a man thus fulfilling God's original purpose in putting man on the earth. Hebrews recognizes this when it says that now "we see Jesus" in the place of authority over the universe, "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb 2:9). Jesus in fact has been given "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18), and God has "put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church" (Eph 1:22). Indeed, we shall someday reign with him on his throne (Rev 3:21) and experience, in subjection to Christ our Lord, the fulfillment of God's purpose that we reign over the earth (cf. Luke 19:17,19; 1 Cor 6:3). Jesus had to be a man in order to fulfill God's original purpose that man rule over his creation.

Christ's humanity links Him with David and thus the throne of Israel (Matt 1:1, Luke 1:32, Rom 1:3).

Christ's links with David are vital and frequently mentioned in the Bible.

- He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom 1:3)
- He was born in the City of David (Luke 2:11)
- He was promised the sure mercies of David – Acts 13:34 (2 Sam 7:12-14 – the seed, the throne, the house)
- He has the key of David (Rev 2:7)
- He is the root and offspring of David (Rev 22:16)
- He is both David's Son and David's Lord (Matt 22:43-45)
- He will sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:32)

Clearly none of this makes sense unless the Lord Jesus is related to David. The gospels give us two genealogies of Christ: Matthew Ch 1. and Luke Ch. 3. Each list is identical from Abraham to David, but from David to Christ the line diverges. Luke traces the line from David through his son Nathan to Joseph the husband of Mary. Matthew traces the line from David through his son Solomon to Mary the mother of the Lord. Thus Christ's parents, Joseph and Mary, were both directly related to David. However, in Joseph's line a King called Jeconiah (Matt 1:11) was cut off by God. All His children were disqualified from sitting on David's throne (Jer 22:30).

How then can Christ inherit David's throne? Due to the virgin birth Joseph was not the actual father of Jesus! So, Christ is physically related to David through Mary (Luke 3), and legally related to David through Joseph (Matt 1).

Christ's humanity links Him to Abraham and thus the land (Matt 1:1, Gal 3:16, Heb 2:16).

In Genesis 12 God promised Abraham a nation (v2), a blessing (v3) and a land (v7). These promises were made to Abraham and his seed. In Galatians 3:16 Paul explains how this promise is to be fulfilled

through the singular seed of Abraham, that is, Christ. For Israel to inherit all these promises, Christ had to become a man and be born to a Jewish mother. Though to this day Israel says the land is theirs apart from Christ, through Isaac, and Islam says the land is theirs apart from Christ and Isaac, through Ishmael, the fact is the land is Israel's through Christ. As Joshua brought Israel into the land, their rest, so Christ will bring Israel into their millennial rest and through them all the nations of the earth will be blessed.³

These little details are vital and can only be accomplished through Christ coming in the flesh

And lastly...

Turn to 1Corinthians 15

To Be the Pattern for Our Redeemed Bodies (1 Cor 15:42-44).

The gospel in short is this:

^{NAU} 1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,

² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

³ The Humanity of Christ by Michael J. Penfold

⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

⁶ *After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;*

⁷ *then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;*

⁸ *and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

⁹ *For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

¹⁰ *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.*

¹¹ *Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

¹² *Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

Christ' body did not perish in the dust.

Acts 2:23-24, 32-36

^{NAU} Acts 2:23 *this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.*

²⁴ *"But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*

^{NAU} Acts 2:32 *"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.*

³³ *"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.*

³⁴ *"For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,*

³⁵ *UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.'"*

³⁶ *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified."*

Paul tells us that when Jesus rose from the dead he rose in a new body that was "imperishable...raised in glory...raised in power...raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor 15:42-44). This new resurrection body that Jesus had when he rose from the dead is the pattern for what our bodies will be like when we are raised from the dead, because Christ is "the first fruits" (1 Cor 15:23)—an agricultural metaphor that likens Christ to the first sample of the harvest, showing what the other fruit from that harvest would be like. We now have a physical body like Adam's, but we will have one like Christ's: "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Cor 15:49). Jesus had to be raised as a man in order to be the "first-born from the dead" (Col 1:18), the pattern for the bodies that we would later have.

^{NAU} *Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;*

²¹ *who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

Here's something of interest to conclude (skip the heresies till next week). A poem expressing the wonder of the true humanity and deity of Christ.

Years ago Phil Keaggy put music to it and made it into a beautiful song.

I thought it would appropriate to end our time today reading through this brief poem in song (we'll try).

True God True Man

The maker of the Universe, as man for man was made a curse
The claims of laws which He had made, unto the uttermost He paid
His holy fingers made the bough, which grew the thorns that crowned
His brow
The nails that pierced His feet were mined in secret places He designed
He made the forests where there sprung, the tree on which His body
hung
He died upon a cross of wood, yet made the hill on which it stood
The sky that darkened o'er His head, by Him above the earth was
spread
The sun that hid from Him his face, by His decree was poised in space
The spear revealing precious blood, was tempered in the fires of God
The grace in which His form was laid, was hewn in rock which He had
made
The throne on which He now appears, was His from everlasting years
But a new glory crowns His brow and every knee to Him must bow.