

Essentials of Christianity (pt 18)
7/4/2010

Introduction _____

Good morning saints! Today we're going to put the finishing touches on our study of Christology. I thought I'd be able to squeeze this in last week but wasn't able to.

The last thing I wanted to discuss is **Heresies against the Humanity of Jesus Christ.**

Numerous heresies about the nature of Christs' humanity have arisen over the centuries. Some have been subtle, some not so subtle.

Time does not permit us to go through the long list of heresies that have popped up since Jesus walked the earth. I'll tell you, there is no shortage of books written on the subject. And it would serve you well to pick up a book or two on the subject and familiarize yourself with some of them.

Examples:

Denial of the Perfection of the natures of Christ (diminishing one or the other):

Apollinarianism

Kenoticism

Denial of the distinction between the two natures of Christ:

Eutychianism

Monophysitism

Denial of Christ's one personality:

Nestorianism

Denial of the continuity of the Saviour's personality:
Adoptionism

For our purposes today, we are only going to focus on **one of them.**

A couple of weeks ago we read from 1John 4, which states quite vividly, about the peril that is reserved for those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh.

That section in John is a principle that covers any and all denials of Jesus true humanity.

But the ONE heresy we'll focus on was actually the very first attack that came against Christ's humanity. **Let's turn to Matthew 28:1-15.**

^{NAU} Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

² And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

³ And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

⁴ The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

⁶ "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

⁷ *"Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."*

⁸ *And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.*

⁹ *And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.*

¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."*

¹¹ *Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.*

¹² *And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,*

¹³ *and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'*

¹⁴ *"And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble."*

¹⁵ *And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.*

Without question, the denial of Jesus bodily resurrection from the tomb in which He was laid, is the single most denied aspect of His humanity.

And here in Matthew 28, an immediate campaign was launched to silence the historical **fact** of Jesus physical body being raised from the dead.

Isn't it amazing that it happened that fast?

Satan wasted no time in inspiring the circulation of a lie to bring confusion about the **man** Jesus.

And we know from Matthews account that this lie was created in an attempt to cover their hides. How would they explain the sudden disappearance of the body of Jesus.

This was the first of a long list of theories regarding the resurrection of Jesus.

All such denials are lies, but some are more outlandish than others.

False Theories Against the Resurrection of Christ

The Swoon Theory: Christ was nailed to a cross and suffered from shock, pain and loss of blood. But instead of actually dying, He only fainted (swooned) from exhaustion. When He was placed in the tomb, He was still alive and the disciples, mistaking Him for dead, buried Him alive. After several hours, He revived in the coolness of the tomb, arose, and departed.

The Hallucination Theory: This theory says all of Christ's post-resurrection appearances were really only supposed appearances because actually the people only had hallucinations.

The Impersonation Theory: This is the view that the appearances were not really Christ at all, but someone impersonating Him. This, the opponents say, is evident because in some cases they did not recognize Him at first (or at all).

The Spiritual Resurrection Theory: This is the view that Christ's resurrection was not a real physical resurrection. Proponents of this theory assert that Christ's body remained in the grave and His real resurrection was spiritual in nature. It was only told this way to illustrate the truth of spiritual resurrection. ¹

¹ The Humanity of Christ Michael J. Penfold

JW's believe this.

Hugh J. Schonfield-- **Passover Plot**: made all the events of Jesus life a conspiratorial plot. His life, miracles, death and resurrection were all a scam.

Some contemporary attacks:

The Davinci Code (et. al.)-- tearing down the character of Christ through contemporary literature.

The History Channel-- Satans new tool to tear down the authority of the Bible via TV.

Jesus Seminar-- delivering heresy to the local seminary.

But we do know the truth of what happened to Jesus body.

As Peter said in his sermon.

^{NAU} Acts 2:24 *"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.*

Summary of Christology

All of these texts indicate that Jesus did not temporarily become man, but that his divine nature was permanently united to his human nature, and he lives forever not just as the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, but also as Jesus, the man who was born of Mary, and as Christ, the Messiah and Savior of his people. Jesus will remain fully God and fully man, yet one person, forever.²

Pneumatology

² Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Zondervan Publishing, 1994).

Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The term pneumatology comes from two Greek words, namely, pneuma meaning “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit” (used of the Holy Spirit) and logos meaning “word,” “matter,” or “thing.” As it is used in Christian systematic theology, “pneumatology” refers to the study of the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Generally this includes such topics as the personality of the Spirit, the deity of the Spirit, and the work of the Spirit throughout Scripture.³

Most of this subject we’ve already covered. We looked at the person of the Spirit, the deity of the Spirit, and a little bit of the works of the Spirit.

Because the Holy Spirit’s role is primarily to bring glory to the father and the Son, it may be easy to misinterpret His role as third person of the trinity to be less significant.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Some of you have heard me say before that the Book of Acts, which is commonly called the Acts of the Apostles; should more appropriately be designated as the **“Acts of the Holy Spirit.”**

It is quite clear that the Holy Spirit’s deity, person and work is on center stage in the Book of Acts.

More proof of the importance of the Spirit, when we consider what is regarded as the gravest of all sins is described in **Matthew 12:31-32.**

³ Greg Herrick, *An Introduction to Christian Belief: A Layman’s Guide* ([Http://bible.org/series/introduction-christian-belief-laymans-guide](http://bible.org/series/introduction-christian-belief-laymans-guide)).

^{NAU} Matthew 12:31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

³² "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Also, many believe (and I'm one of them) that an OT counterpart to Jesus' words about the HS is what God said in **Exodus 23:30-32--read**

^{NAU} Exodus 23:20 "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

²¹ "Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him.

²² "But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

So his role is far more significant than we may realize.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

Let's look at some of them many essential things about the Holy Spirit beyond what we already talked about.

To begin, let's look at some of the metaphors that are used for the Spirit, because they express many of his essential works. Like the names of God, the metaphors reveal something about His character.

We'll go through these quickly

Scriptural Metaphors for the Holy Spirit

Jesus referred to him as a **wind**—a metaphor which seems to underline the inscrutable nature of his moving in the hearts of people to give them life and bring them to faith (John 3:8).

In connection with his personal and glorious ministry to people, Jesus referred to him as **water** in John 7:37-39. This symbol portrays the Spirit as the One who can fulfill the deepest longings of the heart to know God and to enjoy eternal life (John 4:14; 17:3).

Each of the gospels emphasizes the descent of the Spirit as a **dove** “out of heaven,” which stresses that the Holy Spirit has come from the presence of God in heaven. It is significant, of course, in emphasizing the Father’s blessing and anointing of His Son for His public ministry. This was an important witness to the people, particularly those who opposed Christ. The dove portrayed the Holy Spirit coming upon Christ at beginning of His public ministry and therefore emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit on Christ for His work.⁴

Another metaphor for the Spirit is **clothing** (Acts 1:8). This idea involves being dressed by another person so that one is characterized by this new clothing. In the case of the Spirit, it refers to his gift of power to us so that we might live consistent with the gospel as we boldly preach it throughout the entire world.

The Spirit is also referred to as a **guarantee or pledge** of the Christian’s glorification (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:21-22). In this case, the present gift of the Spirit is the guarantee that the totality of what has been promised to us will someday be fulfilled (Rom 8:30). It’s the “first installment, deposit, down payment, [or] pledge, that pays a part of the purchase price in advance, and so secures a legal claim.”

Closely related to the idea of the Spirit as **“pledge”** is the Spirit as seal or the One with whom Christians are sealed by God. In 2 Cor 1:22 and Ephesians 1:14, 4:30, Christians are said to be “sealed” by the Spirit of God. The “sealing” of the Spirit speaks to the divine ownership of the Christian which translates into security and protection.

⁴ Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Moody, Chicago, 1989).

At Pentecost **“tongues of fire”** distributed themselves and rested on the Apostles (Acts 2:3). God’s revelation of Himself by fire was not unusual and would have been understood by the Jews. It would have denoted the presence of God. This unusual occurrence, with the descent of the Holy Spirit, would signify that God was in this event (Exod. 3:2). The occurrence also indicated the approval of God. The fire also symbolized the judgment of God (Lev. 10:2).⁵⁶

Peter's sermon after this exemplified all these attributes of fire.

Besides the metaphors for the Spirit, we have abundant testimony attributed to Him for His marvelous work.

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Revelation

The apostle Peter makes it clear that the Holy Spirit was responsible for the production of the OT scriptures by carrying men along as they freely wrote God’s message. Paul likewise asserts the Holy Spirit’s involvement in the production of sacred Scripture (2 Tim 3:16).

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

The work of the Spirit in the OT is much broader than just the production of Scripture, as important as that is. The Spirit was involved in creating the cosmos (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13). He is currently intricately involved in sustaining creation (Psa 104:29-30).

The Holy Spirit came upon certain people to impart wisdom and practical skills, strength and ability. He did this during the building of the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and all the tabernacle’s furnishings (Exod 31:1-11). He was also the strength and guidance behind the building of the temple (Zech 4:6).

The Spirit was involved in the administration of the nation of Israel by giving gifts of administration and wisdom (Gen 41:38; Num 11:25;

⁵ Herrick, *An Introduction to Christian Belief: A Layman’s Guide*.

⁶ Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*.

Deut 34:9). He also raised up national leaders during the dismal period of the Judges. He gave strength, courage, capability in war, and leadership abilities to several people (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 14:19). Later on he anointed Saul, David, and Solomon for leadership by giving them strength and ability to prophesy, but in the case of Saul, the Spirit subsequently withdrew because of his disobedience (1 Sam 10:10; 16:13).

The Holy Spirit was also involved in the regeneration, instruction, and sanctification of Israel in the OT (Nehemiah 9:20; Psa 51:11; 143:10; Isa 63:10). It is also said that he will produce righteousness and justice among the people of God in the messianic age (Isa 11:2-5; 32:15-20).

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ

The Holy Spirit was involved in the birth of Christ, with the result that Christ, while fully human, was completely sinless (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:35). The Holy Spirit was also involved in Christ's anointing for messianic service (i.e., at his baptism [Luke 3:21-22]), filled him during his temptations (Luke 4:1; John 3:34), and revealed the timing and nature of the beginning of that ministry (Luke 4:14, 18). The Holy Spirit was also responsible for Christ's ability to perform miracles and cast out demons (Matt 12:28). He was also involved in both the death of Christ as well as his resurrection (Heb 9:14; Rom 1:4; 8:11).

The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church

We will discuss the various aspects of the work of the Spirit in relation to the church under the headings of "soteriology" and "ecclesiology." Suffice it to say here that the Spirit is involved in the works of calling, regeneration, uniting the believer with Christ, indwelling, filling, teaching, guiding, gifting, empowering, and sanctifying the believer. His primary ministry is to mediate the presence of Christ and the knowledge of God to the believer (John 16:13-14).⁷

Expound

⁷Herrick, *An Introduction to Christian Belief: A Layman's Guide*.

Anthropology & Hamartiology

Anthropology & Hamartiology: The Doctrines of Man and Sin

The term “anthropology” comes from two Greek words, namely, anthropos meaning “man” and logos meaning “word, matter, or thing.” We use the word “anthropology” to refer to the study of man and a Biblical anthropology is the study of man as understood primarily from Scripture. Thus it often involves discussion of the particular creation of man, man in the “image of God,” the constitutional nature of man, and man after the fall. Other areas of concern include human dignity, freedom, depravity, culture, and society.

“Hamartiology,” on the other hand, comes from two Greek terms as well, namely, hamartia meaning “sin” and logos. Thus it concerns the biblical doctrine of sin including its origin, nature, transmission, effects, and judgment.⁸

The study of Biblical anthropology should begin where man began--In Genesis. We'll go through one paragraph on this to prepare us for next week.

The Creation of Man

There are several points that can be made from the Genesis narrative regarding the creation of man (Gen 1-2). These ideas are expanded upon and developed in the rest of Scripture.

First, the origin of man is not in naturalistic evolution, but in the mind of God. Man was not an afterthought of some kind, or the result of blind evolutionary forces, but was created according to the purpose, plan, and good pleasure of God. In Genesis 1:26 God says “let us make man...”

⁸ Herrick, *An Introduction to Christian Belief: A Layman's Guide*.

Second, man has a certain place as the pinnacle of creation. We are made in the “image” of God. Nothing else, including the angels, is said to be made in the image of God. Thus we are, in this sense, unique in the created order, with the result that we are both privileged and responsible (cf. Gen 3). Both men and women together reflect the image of God.

Third, we bear a special relationship to God. In our original creation, coming from the hand of God, we were holy, upright, and perfect and there was no hostility between God and us.

Fourth, we have a certain role in creation. We were created to rule over God’s created earth, that is, to have dominion over it.

Finally...

Fifth, man was created in what appears as an instantaneous act of God, bringing together material aspects and “the breath of life.” Suffice it to say here that we were not taken from some previously existing animal. According to Genesis 2:7, our creation gives rise to the dual nature of our experience as we relate in both a heavenward (spiritual) and earthward (material) direction.