

**ETERNAL HOPE !**

We celebrate the risen Jesus Christ who gives eternal life and hope to all who trust Him as Lord and Savior! We have looked at how orthodox Christianity describes Him, as "incarnated" not created. He has always existed in the divine Trinity of Father, Son, Spirit. He came in the flesh as a man. And He is a unique "hypostatic" union of divine and human natures in one person. Today we consider two more important theological points to describe the unique person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**#1- Jesus Christ is truly God yet truly man.** He is one person with two natures, human and divine. The Christian creeds affirm what the Bible teaches. There is one true Godhead in three persons. One God, not three. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. But the Father is not the Son who is not the Holy Spirit. One Godhead in three persons.

Theologian JI Packer notes, "the distinction between Father and Son is within the divine unity." The Son is God in the same sense that the Father is God. In the same way, Jesus Christ is one person with two natures, that is, two sets of capacities for experience, expression, reaction and action, Packer explains. RC Sproul agrees, "we affirm the hypostatic union, that the two natures of Jesus Christ are united in His one person without mixture, confusion, division, or separation."

**Each nature retains its own attributes**, distinctive characteristics. As Packer says, "all qualities and powers that are in us (human) as well as all qualities and powers in God (divine) were, are, and ever will be really and distinguished in the one person of the man from Galilee." Truly man, truly God, in one.

In John 4, Jesus is weary and asking for water, yet He tells the woman that He can give living water such that you will never thirst again. In John 11 Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus, with human grief, yet moments later He raised the dead man to life. False teachers claim that Jesus only pretended to be human, hungry, weary, or ignorant of facts, "because His divinity always energized His humanity."

**No, says Packer, "the incarnation** of Christ, two natures in one person, means the Son of God lived His divine-human life in and through His human mind and body at every point, drawing on divine resources only when directed by the Father's will." Scripture indicates when. Also wrong is to conceive it like alternating current, sometimes acting in divinity, sometimes in humanity. He endured everything in the unity of His divine-human person. Otherwise He could not be sinless and work your salvation.

Philippians 2 says "though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, obedient to the point of death." The "kenosis theory" says that He laid aside His divine attributes, and was not omnipresent, omniscient or omnipotent while on earth. This novel view took issue with pseudo-intellectual issues with Christ as both divine and human. But "emptied" means what Paul says, that Christ humbled Himself to come in human form, obedient to death on the cross, and then was raised.

**#2- Jesus Christ is Lord & Savior** - the only God-Man who saves and transforms. To deny Christ as "one person with two natures, truly God yet truly man" is to deny not only who He is but also what He came to do. Philippians 2 goes on to say "*therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" Why? Because He is not only truly human, the Second Man and the Last Adam, who came to undo the damage of the first Adam (1Corinthians 15:45-48), but He is also truly God. Unique.

1Peter 3:18 says "*Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.*" He is God come in the flesh to save us! In John 8:58 Jesus says, "*truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.*" Another passage that affirms His deity is Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, "*now Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed*" the pre-existent glory of the eternal Son of God.

**The early Christian creed** recorded in 1Timothy 3:16 says, "*great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.*"

All this is why Christians believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, worship Him as God and Christ, obey Him as Lord of our lives, trusting Him to empower us to live for Him. Because He saves us and transforms us, to make us more like Himself. As 2Peter 3:18 says, "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*" And as Hebrews 13:20-21 says, "*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good, that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.*" Amen! ☐