

Theology for Life
Faith Presbyterian Church
Lesson 14: The Person of Christ

Last time: *Humans are created in the image of God. Sin has corrupted humans. Sin is legally imputed to us and our nature is corrupted.*

Key terms:

- Mediator – A person whose role it is to bring reconciliation to conflicting parties.
- Atonement – (Hebrew: *kippur* means to “cover over”). Making amends. Repair for a wrong or injury.

For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human who gave himself a ransom for all--this was attested at the right time. 1 Tim.2:5-7

Jesus Christ: His Person and Work

"The person and work of Christ must constantly be linked, each interpreting the other. What Jesus did was possible because of who he was. Who he was cannot be divorced from or confused with what he did.... The Incarnation can only be understood aright when we see it within God's overarching purposes of salvation." -David Wells

I. Person of Christ: Who is Jesus? What kind of person/thing is he?

Proposed Options:

A. Man masquerading as God

1. *Arianism*: Jesus was really just a man, but he claimed to be God or at least he allowed that claim to be said of him.
2. How does this affect salvation?
3. Other problems? C.S. Lewis' "Lord, liar, lunatic"

B. God in the guise of man

1. *Docetism*: God only "seemed to be" man.
2. How human was Jesus? What does it say about humanity if we cannot conceive of Jesus as human? How does it change your understanding of sin?
3. How does this affect salvation?

C. Part God and part man

1. *Apollinarianism*: Jesus is a composite of God and man.
2. Which part did what? Was he then God-lite and human-lite?
3. How does this affect salvation?

D. One person, two natures: Divine and human are neither confused nor separated

1. Nestorianism: Christ is two separate persons (ex. You cannot separate Jesus from God. Therefore, orthodox Christians rightly confess that Mary was the mother of God.)

2. Eutychianism (monophysitism): Christ is one person with one nature (ex. Human body with Divine soul). The orthodox position is that Christ has two wills.

Evidence in the Bible

A. Fully God

- **Isaiah 9:6**-- "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.
- **John 1:1,14**-- "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."
- **2 Cor. 5:10**-- "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body."
- **Col 2:9**-- "For in [Christ] the whole fullness of deity lives in bodily form..."
- **Heb. 1:1-3**-- "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, and through whom he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs."
- **Rev. 19:16**-- "He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God..... On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords.

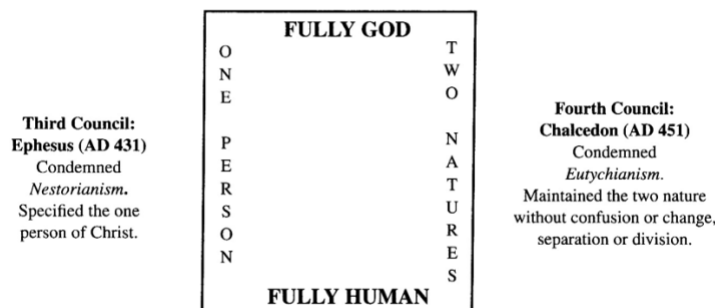
B. Fully Man

- **Luke 2:40**-- *And [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.*
- **Matt. 4:2** -- *And [Jesus] fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry.*
- **Luke 22:44**-- *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground.*
- **Heb. 2:18** -- *For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.*

C. Dual Nature of Christ: Fully God and Fully Man

- **Phil. 2:6**-- *...Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

First Council: Nicea (AD 325)
 Condemned *Arianism*
 Soteriological axiom: "God alone can save us."



Second Council: Constantinople I (AD 381)
 Re-affirmed Nicea, condemned *Apollinarianism*.
 Soteriological Axiom: "That which is not assumed is not healed."

Necessity and Implications of Dual Nature

A. Why he must be human?

Larger Catechism 39: *"It was necessary that the Mediator should be human that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law and suffer and made intercession for us in our nature"*

1. Justice demands: "eye for eye tooth for tooth"
2. Bible operates with "federalism" concept
1 Cor.15:21-22--For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.
3. Is humanity necessarily sinful?
4. What other benefits come from knowing that Christ is fully human?

B. Why must he be God?

1. Only God was capable of enduring God's wrath
2. Only God was able to defeat Sin and Death
Heb. 2:14--*Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has power over death.*
Larger Catechism 38: *"It was requisite that the Mediator be God, that he might sustain and keep human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death."*

Offices of Christ

John 1:41 *"We have found the Messiah (which is translated Christ)"*

Christ is the Greek word for "Messiah", both literally meaning, "the anointed one."

The Heidelberg Catechism # 31:

Q. Why is he called "Christ" meaning "anointed"

A. *Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who perfectly reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance; our only high priest who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body, and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal king who governs us by his Word and Spirit and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.*

A. Three "anointed" offices in Old Testament:

1. Prophet: 1 Kings 19:16--"and Elisha... you shall anoint to be prophet in your place"
2. Priest: Exodus 29:7--"And you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on [Aaron's] head and anoint him."
3. King: 1 Sam. 10:1--"Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said, "Has not the Lord anointed you to be the prince over his people Israel?"

B. Three Offices of Christ

All Anointed with oil to signify the designation by decree and the imparting of the Holy Spirit in order to set them apart and qualifying them for their respective offices. Jesus, the final prophet, priest, and king, was also anointed by the Spirit.

- Psalms 2: 2--"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed... I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you."
- Matthew 3:16--"And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

1. Jesus as Prophet:

- Acts 3:20ff--"In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer...that he may send the Messiah, appointed for you... Moses said, "the Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people..." (see Dt. 18:15ff)
- WSC #24: Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.
- What is lost if Christ is not prophet?

2. Jesus as Priest:

- Hebrews 4:14, 5:5--"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God... So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'"
- WSC #25: Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.
- What is lost if Christ is not priest?

3. Jesus as King:

- Luke 1:32ff--"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end."
- WSC #26: Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.
- What is lost if Christ is not king?

Connecting the Dots: Where Theology meets Life

Summary: Christ is fully God and fully man; one person with two natures. His unique identity is essential for his act of salvation. Jesus fills the three offices of prophet, priest, and king.