

Systematic Theology 1 (TH3)

Doctrines of Christ
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Ross Arnold, Winter 2014
Lakeside institute of Theology

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1. Introduction to Systematic Theology
2. Doctrine of the Word of God
3. Doctrine of God
4. Doctrines of Creation and Providence
5. Doctrines of the “Supernatural” –
Miracles, Prayer, Angels and Demons
6. Doctrine of Christ
7. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit; Final Exam

What is “Christology?”

- **Christology, or the Doctrine of Christ:** the study of the person, nature and work of Jesus Christ, especially as reflected in the New Testament. This is the most important issue of Christian theology!

Christology is particularly concerned with the relationship of the nature and person of Jesus with God the Father; and with details of Jesus’ ministry, acts and teaching, to arrive at a clearer understanding of who he is, and how he is able to provide our salvation.

OR, “How is it that Jesus was both human and divine, and how is that important for our salvation?”

Christological Controversies/Heresies

- Gnosticism – Matter is evil; Jesus only “appeared” human.
- Docetism – God could not really become flesh and suffer.
- Ebionism – Jesus was only mortal, not divine.
- Adoptionism – Jesus born human, “adopted” as divine at baptism.
- Modalism – God is one, but appears in “modes” of Father, Son or Spirit at different times.
- Arianism – Jesus was created; not co-eternal with God.
- Apollinarianism – Jesus had a divine mind & human body.
- Nestorianism – Jesus born only human; 2 natures/2 persons.
- Eutychianism – one mixed nature – not human or divine.
- Monophysitism – Divine nature fully absorbed the human.
- Pelagianism – No original sin; Christ not a savior.

Divinity and Humanity in Jesus

- **Jesus was God Incarnate**
 - Mark 1:1; John 1:1,14; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 1:1-3
- **Jesus miraculously was born of a virgin**
 - Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 1:34-35
- **Jesus was Divine Creator**
 - John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 2:1
- **Jesus is Lord**
 - Romans 10: 9; Phil. 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3
- **Jesus also was fully human**
 - Luke 24:39, Hebrews 2:14-18

Controversies in the Early Church

- Was Jesus really divine? If so, what is His relationship with God the Father?
 - AD 325 - Council of Nicaea & Nicene Creed
 - Against Arius; Established the Doctrine of the Trinity; with Jesus as co-eternal, only-begotten Son of God, 2nd Person of the Trinity.
 - AD 381 – 1st Council of Constantinople
 - Against Apollinarus; Affirmed Nicaea; established that Jesus was fully human, with a human mind and soul.
 - AD 431 – 1st Council of Ephesus
 - Against Nestorius; Established that Jesus had two natures in one person (not two persons), and that Jesus had been fully divine when born. (Mary as *Theotokos*).
 - AD 451 – Council of Chalcedon
 - Against Eutychus; Established that Jesus was fully divine and fully human, 2 natures in one person, not one new hybrid.

The Council of Chalcedon & “Hypostatic Union”

Hypostatic Union: the belief that Jesus the divine Son of God fully took on human nature, yet at the same time remained fully God – *“the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] 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...”* Creed of Chalcedon

Bottom-line: Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He has always been God; he became human when conceived in Mary; with no mixture or dilution of these two natures, forever united in one Person.

Divinity and Humanity in Jesus

➤ Jesus showed human emotion

- Love – John 13:1
- Compassion – Matthew 9:36
- Anger – John 2:15-16
- Grief – John 11:35

➤ Jesus had human physical characteristics

- Tiredness – John 4:6
- Sleep – Luke 8:23
- Hunger – Luke 4:2
- Thirst – John 19:28
- Pain & Death – John 19:34

Divinity and Humanity in Jesus

- Jesus experienced REAL temptation, and he could have chosen to sin (contra Grudem).

Grudem, p. 539 – “... if Jesus as a person had sinned, involving both his human and divine natures in sin, then God himself would have sinned, and he would have ceased to be God. Yet that is clearly impossible because of the infinite holiness of God’s nature.

Therefore, ***if we are asking if it was actually possible for Jesus to have sinned, it seems that we must conclude that it was not possible.***”

- In this, Grudem is mistaken in that he favors the divine nature of Jesus at the expense of the human nature – while both are equally important.

Divinity and Humanity in Jesus

- Jesus experienced REAL temptation, and he could have chosen to sin (contra Grudem).

Temptation: an enticement or allurement to do something, especially something morally wrong or unwise.

- No one can be tempted by something they cannot do – I am not tempted to become the Queen of England, or to flap my arms and fly to the moon.
- The Devil is no fool. So when he tempted Jesus in the desert (Matt. 4:1-11) it had to be with the expectation that he might succeed in that temptation.
- Grudem argues that Jesus could not have sinned because it would have violated his divine nature, without recognizing that if the temptations were not REAL (i.e., Jesus *could not* fall to temptation), that would have violated Jesus' human nature.

Divinity and Humanity in Jesus

➤ Jesus experienced REAL temptation, and he could have chosen to sin (contra Grudem).

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ *For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way*, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:14-18

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have *one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are*—yet he did not sin. Hebrews 4:15-16

Divinity and Humanity in Jesus

- **Jesus DID set aside some of his divine power (*kenosis*) when he become incarnate.** (contra Grudem)
- Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, *though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* ⁷ *but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-9

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. ⁶ He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. ⁷ Not at all. *When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human!* ⁸ Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death — and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.

Philippians 2:5-8; MSG

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, *nor the Son*, but only the Father.

Mark 13:32-33

Titles for Jesus Christ

- ***Christ/Messiah (Anointed One)*** established Jesus as fulfillment of the Jewish expectation for God's promised king and redeemer. (Matthew 16:15f)
- ***Kyrios*** was a the most common title for Jesus in the Early Church, and it inherently contains implications of deity, pre-existence and absolute Lordship. (*Kyrios* was the most common title for Jesus in Paul's writing, and among Gentile Christians.) (Rom. 10:9; 2 Cor. 4:5)
- ***Jesus, Friend of Sinners*** – Middle Ages.

Sonship Titles for Jesus

➤ *Son of God*

*The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,
the Son of God... Mark 1:1*

*“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the
Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”
John 11:27*

➤ *Son of Man*

*“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was
one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.
He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his
presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign
power; all nations and peoples of every language
worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will
never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14*

Sonship Titles for Jesus

➤ *Son of David*

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

Matthew 15:22

...a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mark 10:46-47

Roles of Jesus Christ

- **Prophet** – one who speaks the word of God to the people. (*Jesus both spoke the words of God and WAS the Word of God*)
- **Priest** – one who addresses God (especially in prayer and sacrifice) on behalf of the people. (Jesus prays for us as our one Mediator, and he was himself the ultimate sacrifice once for all.)
- **King** – one who leads the people by God's anointing and in His name. (He is the King Eternal who will rule forever.)