

Hypostatic Union

- We have seen that God is 100% God and 100% man, both at the exact same time.
 - Even though the virgin birth explains how this happened and the Kenosis explains how it is possible, it is still hard to wrap the mind around it.
 - More early heresies arose from confusion on this than any other issue.
 - It is a heresy to say He was anything less than 100% of both natures.
 - He was not 50% God and 50% man, nor was He 100% God and 66% man.
- The early church solved the confusion by labeling it as the Hypostatic Union.

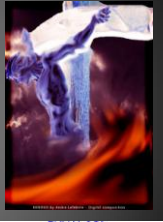


Hypostatic Union

- Jesus Christ is a unity of the two natures – divine and human.
 - Jesus is one person, and in that one person the two natures are united.
- However, Christ has two natures.
- To say that He is two persons is a great heresy.
 - Ancient heretics always tried to separate Jesus the man from the Logos or divine Word.
- The Hypostatic Union is the fact that both natures (divine and human) are united perfectly in one person – the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ.
 - We get the term Hypostatic Union from the Greek word ὑπόστασις *hypostasis*, which literally means the unity of two natures in one personal substance.
- This may seem mysterious, but understand that even the Scriptures treat Jesus Christ as a great mystery.
 - 1 Timothy 3:16 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.
- Despite the complexity of Christ, we are to know and love Him above all else (Philippians 3:8-10).

Hypostatic Union – Distinctiveness

- Christ is an individual unity with a single personality.
- He also is distinct from all other persons.
 - John 8:23 He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."
 - John 8:18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me."
 - John 16:7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.
- He is clearly distinct as a person from other humans and from the other persons of the Trinity.
- This makes sense since He is the only one that possesses both divinity and humanity.
 - The hypostatic union is a property of the Son. It is not an attribute.
- Even though Christ is distinct from all others, He is not distinct from Himself. He does not distinguish between His two natures.
- Consider the implications of John 8:58.
 - John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."



No Distinction in Christ Himself

- There are other passages that show the Bible does not distinguish between the two natures.
 - Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- The name Jesus was given to Him in 4 B.C., yet here that name is associated with His divinity.
- Another strong example is found in Acts 20:28.
 - Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
 - Once again, no distinction is made between the two natures. God only has blood in the sense that the 2nd person of the Trinity became a man through the virgin birth. This all only makes sense in light of the Hypostatic Union.
 - Thus, it is unbiblical to say that only Christ's humanity died, that only His divinity did miracles, etc.
 - The hypostatic union makes Jesus the God-Man, and He is one person. So anything pertaining to either the divine or human natures is still ascribed to the one person, and that one person is God. Thus, God hungered, slept, bled, and died.
 - People often slip into heresy when they ascribe some things to His humanity and other things to His divinity. Jesus is the perfect and permanent union of the two natures. Both are always in effect.

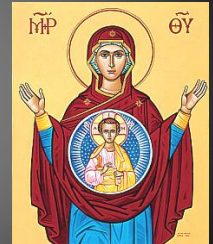
One or Two Wills?

- If Christ was one person, but had two natures, did He have two wills or one?
 - This is a question that has a fine line. The correct answer is easy to stray from.
- As one person you would expect one single will, and for the most part Jesus' will is the same as the Father's. Yet, we see a glimpse of a distinct will in Matthew 26:39.
 - Matthew 26:39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."
- The Father's will clearly was that Christ die on the cross, but for a moment Christ asked that such a fate pass from Him.
- Because of this verse, it is possible to say that Christ did indeed have two wills, but the divine will was the controlling factor in His personality.
 - The human will always submitted to the divine will, which was in agreement with the will of the Father.



Mary, Mother of God?

- Does the Hypostatic Union justify the Roman Catholic practice of calling Mary the mother of God?
 - From theotokos, or Θεοτόκος.
- We cannot make a distinction between the two natures, so the child in her womb was God.
 - However, on a practical side, the use of the title (though technically legitimate) led to an illegitimate veneration of Mary to where in some cases she is practically worshipped.
 - God-bearer is a better title than mother of God.
- The phrase was first used to venerate Jesus, but over time it was perverted.



The Mediatorial Work of Christ

- The Hypostatic Union makes the mediatorial work of Christ possible.
- Thousands of years before the incarnation, Job cried out:
 - Job 9:32-33 For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. 33) There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both.
 - Only one who is both God and Man can lay His hand on both.
- The NT records that this hope has been fulfilled.
 - 1Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
 - Hebrews 2:14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,



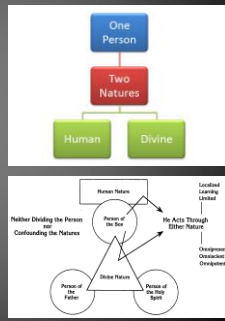
Substitutionary Atonement

- The Hypostatic Union and the ability to mediate is also necessary for Christ to be our substitutionary atonement.
 - Hebrews 10:5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;
 - Hebrews 10:10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
- It also is the basis for Him being our intercessor.
 - Hebrews 4:14-15 Since then 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 is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.



A Permanent Union

- Jesus will have both natures for all eternity.
 - Hebrews 2:17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
 - Hebrews 7:24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.
- The first passage shows as a man He is our high priest. The second shows that this status is permanent.



Chalcedonian Creed, A.D. 451

- Creed:** We then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable (rational) soul and body; consubstantial (coessential) 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, inconfusably, 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, the only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning (have declared) concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.
- In the statement, they claim that the union is inconfusable, thus refuting Eutychianism, unchangeable, which refutes modalism, indivisible, which is contra Nestorianism, and inseparable, which is against adoptionism.

Temptation of Christ

- In Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus is tempted by the devil.
 - The Hypostatic Union does not allow us to say that His humanity was tempted by His divinity was not.
 - Thus, we must conclude that when Jesus was tempted, God was tempted.
- Why is this a problem?
 - James 1:13 – Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.
- Contrast this with Hebrews 4:15.
 - Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.
- So one passage says God can't be tempted, but then another says Jesus was tempted. The Bible clearly shows Jesus to be God. So how do we reconcile these statements?

Temptation of Christ

- There are a few considerations.
- First, is that the Holy Spirit led Christ into the wilderness to be tempted. So He was not blindsided.
 - Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
- Second, James said God cannot be tempted with evil. There is no indication that Jesus was ever tempted to lie, fornicate, get drunk, commit adultery, or any other sin.
 - The things the devil tempted Jesus with were not in and of themselves evil. First, the word tempt simply means desire. Not all desire is wrong. As a human, Jesus could legitimately desire right things.
 - It was not a wrong desire to eat (1st temptation), nor desire protection by God (2nd temptation), nor desire to have all nations bow before Jesus. This was both His right and His destiny.
 - The only problem was Jesus would only receive these blessings from God, never apart from Him. It would be on the Father's timing. So He was tempted with good things by a being who could grant them in a wicked manner. Jesus would have none of it from Satan.
 - Jesus possessed all of the attributes of goodness of God and He was a human without original sin and the sin nature. Thus, He could not be tempted with evil. It would not be His desire.

Temptation of Christ

- Third, the Hebrews 4:15 passage says He was tempted in every way we are, but without sin.
 - This can mean both that He was tempted and never sinned, or that He was never tempted with sin.
- So Jesus was not tempted with sin, but with desires that were legitimate to Him. Had He taken them on His own initiative apart from the Father, then yes, that would have been sin. But the temptation itself was not with sin. It was with things due naturally to Christ.



Conclusion

- The divine and human natures of Christ make the subject of Christology quite complicated.
- However, when the Christian finally understands that Jesus is divine and human, born of a virgin, and exists in a hypostatic union, then person of Christ becomes more fully know to them.
 - They can pray more intelligently and grow closer to God.
- We have covered the major issues of the person of Christ. The remaining task for us centers on primarily on the work of Christ, which is manifold.