

002 - The Word Became Flesh - John 1:14-18 - 2017-09-03

Call to Worship: Proverbs 30:4-5

Scripture Reading: Psalm 46

Sermon: "The Son of God Part 2: The Word Became Flesh" John 1:14-18

Benediction: 1 Timothy 3:16

INTRODUCTION

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate . . .

What I just read is the Nicene Creed, published by the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. There's more to it; I stopped at the point of today's message. I read it to you primarily to point your minds to the glory of our great Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I read it to you also to teach and remind you that what we here in this church believe about the Son of God is the same that has been believed by His church all over the world, going back to the first centuries of the church, and indeed back to the time when He was here on earth personally teaching His apostles.

There is always a new generation.

In the first century, our Lord's apostles, such as John, were preaching and teaching that the Word of God is God, that is, the Son of God is of one substance with the Father, and that the Son of God came down from heaven and was incarnate. As the Holy Spirit inspired them, the apostles wrote that down; for example, in John chapter 1; they also entrusted it to faithful men like Silas, Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, and others, with instructions that they, in turn, should teach the same pattern of sound words to faithful men in the churches, who themselves would be able to teach others.

In the fourth century, Athanasius was preaching and teaching (sometimes, it seemed just him against the whole world) that the Son of God, being of one substance with the Father, came down from heaven and was incarnate.

Interestingly, in the thousand years of the Roman Catholic domination of Europe, despite all that organization's corruptions, its doctrine of the Son of God remained orthodox. It might have been said only in Latin, and it might not have been taught faithfully to the people, but still the corrupt medieval church maintained that the Son of God, being of one substance with the Father, came down from heaven and was incarnate.

So that in the great Reformation, which can be said to have begun in earnest October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed up his 95 theses, even as the reformers had much work to do, to re-form the church according to the pattern of sound doctrine laid down by the Lord through His apostles, their to-do list did not have to include recovering the doctrine that the Son of God, being of one substance with the Father, came down from heaven and was incarnate. Instead, the various protestant groups that emerged in the Reformation were able to re-affirm the Nicene creed, and include its ancient language in their new confessions of faith.

So it is in our church's constitution and confession of faith, the Second London Confession of Baptist Faith, published in 1677, affirmed publicly in 1689, reprinted in Philadelphia in 1741 and in Charleston, SC in 1812.

The Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance . . . The Son of God . . . did . . . take upon him man's nature . . .

Our Baptist Catechism likewise states

. . . the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man . . .

Three centuries have past since then, during which those entrusted with the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the Baptist churches here in the south in America, passed on to faithful men this pattern of sound words. There was sometimes more and sometimes less attention paid to the carefully-laid theological language necessary to exclude heretical concepts from the church's concept of Jesus Christ.

When I was growing up, Brother Gene and Brother Alan preached that the Son of God came down from heaven and was incarnate. I don't remember if they ever said anything about the Son of God being of one substance with the Father.

Then, as a younger man, about 15 years ago, I started listening to R.C. Sproul, who spoke of the early church councils, which met to deal with the early heresies, and the ancient creeds the church councils published. In the course of listening to those lectures, I took notice, for the first time, of the truth that the Son of God always has been, and still is, and always will be of one substance with the Father, so that the Son of God, being of one substance with the Father, came down from heaven and was incarnate.

And so I stand before you today with that message, passing on to you what the Lord Jesus Himself taught the apostles, what they wrote down and taught others, and what has been taught to me.

The Son of God . . . did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof . . . so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ . . .

TEXT

John 1:14-18 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (15) John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " (16) And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. (17) For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (18) No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

BODY

I. The Son of God Took Upon Him Man's Nature

(14a) And the Word became flesh

A. With all the *essential* properties thereof

1. Chalcedon: like us in all respects, apart from sin
2. not sin, which is not an essential property of mankind

B. With all the *common* infirmities thereof

1. def. of infirmities unsound or unhealthy state of the body; weakness; feebleness

The Son of God took upon Him man's nature

II. The Son of God Is Now Recognized In Two Natures

A. Two natures: divine nature and human nature

Chalcedon: recognized in two natures

1. whole
 - a) Chalcedon: "at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood"
 - b) Chalcedon: consisting also of
 - (1) a reasonable soul
 - (2) and body
 - c) NOT: human body, with the divine nature in place of a soul
2. perfect
3. distinct

B. Inseparably joined together

1. joined together
 - a) called the hypostatic union

- b) a true mystery
 - c) to His praise and glory
 - 2. inseparably
 - a) sometimes we say Jesus “was” both God and man
 - b) better to remember He “was and continues to be God and man . . . forever” (Baptist Catechism)
- C. Without
 - 1. 1689 conversion - Chalcedon change
 - 2. 1689 composition - mixing, with connotation of orderly mixing
 - 3. 1689, Chalcedon confusion - mixing, with connotation of disorderly mixing
 - 4. Chalcedon division, separation
- D. Chalcedon: the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union

The Son of God took upon Him man’s nature

The Son of God is now recognized in two natures

III. The Son of God Is Very God and Very Man

(14) the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father

- A. what is meant by “very” or “true”
 - 1. e.g. Genesis 27:21-24 Are you my very son Esau? I think maybe you are not my very son Esau, but someone who only seems like my son Esau.
- B. Very God
 - 1. Chalcedon: of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead
 - 2. Are you very God, or someone who only seems like God?
 - 3. not like the demi-gods of mythology, half God
- C. Very man
 - 1. Chalcedon: of one substance with us as regards his manhood
 - 2. Are you very man, or someone who only seems like man?
 - 3. so, not that the Son of God has taken on the mere appearance of a man, but instead true manhood; do not mistake Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.
 - 4. APPLICATION: Grasp the gospel significance of this.
 - a) Why can’t the blood of bulls and goats take away sin?
 - b) If Christ were not very man, could His blood shed on the cross truly take away sin?
 - (1) Is Christ the very sacrifice for man’s sins, or does He only seem to be?
 - (2) Is Christ the very substitute for me, the sinner, or does He only seem to be?

The Son of God took upon Him man's nature
The Son of God is now recognized in two natures
The Son of God is very God and very Man

IV. The Son of God Remains One Person, One Christ

(15b) He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me

- A. He -one person (This is original to me.)
 - 1. He comes after me (which they will see only as to His human nature)
 - 2. He was before me (only as to His divine nature)
 - 3. He is preferred before me, or ranks before me, or has surpassed me (as to Christ as one person!)
- B. Chalcedon: not as parted or separated into two persons
- C. Chalcedon: the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence
- D. Despite having two natures, being just one person: Jesus Christ is utterly unique in this - to His eternal praise and glory!
- E. Sometimes we have to make the distinction between His two natures, to understand perfectly something about Him; but when we do that, do not think of Him as two persons, which He is not; He is one Person

CONCLUSION

The Son of God took upon Him man's nature
The Son of God is now recognized in two natures
The Son of God is very God and very Man
The Son of God remains one person, one Christ

As I said in the introduction, I am saying to you today what has been entrusted to me: the truth about our dear Lord Jesus, the Son of God.

Hopefully 5 or 10 years from now some of you men who sit listening today will be up here preaching the same truth about the Son of God.

Hopefully, 20 or 30 or 40 years from now Caleb or Caleb or Peter or Jonathan or Andrew or Andrew or John or Henry or Truman or some other boy here today will be preaching this same truth.

Hopefully, God willing, 100 years from now or 1000 years from now some person not known to us, and who knows nothing about us, will stand in the pulpit of Christ's church and tell the people:

The Son of God . . . did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof . . . so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ . . .

(15) John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' "

JRY:

See here the pre-existence of the Son of God

See here the two natures in one person

1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

Acts 13:26-39 "Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. (27) For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. (28) And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. (29) Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. (30) But God raised Him from the dead. (31) He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. (32) And we declare to you glad tidings--that promise which was made to the fathers. (33) God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.' (34) And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID.' (35) Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION.' (36) "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; (37) but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. (38) Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; (39) and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

1 John 5:1-3 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. (2) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

Gill:

the resurrection of Christ is not the cause of his sonship, or the reason why he is called the Son of God, but a manifestation of it; Christ was the Son of God, before his resurrection from the dead; he was declared to be so by a voice from heaven, was believed on by his disciples as such, and confessed by others, both men and devils: besides, if his resurrection was the cause of his sonship, he must beget himself, which is absurd, for he was himself concerned in his resurrection from the dead; more over, his sonship would not be proper, but figurative and metaphorical, whereas he is God's own, or proper son; besides, on this account he could not be called God's only begotten Son, because there are others that have been, and millions that will be raised from the dead besides him: but the reason why these words are applied to the resurrection of Christ, allowing them to be so, is not because he was then begotten as the Son of God, but because he was then manifested to be the eternally begotten Son of God; things are said to be, when they are only manifested to be; so Christ is said to be that day begotten, because he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead", Rom_1:4 Hence these words are applicable to any time or thing wherein Christ is manifested to be the only begotten Son of God, and accordingly are applied to different times and things; see Heb_1:3.

John 1:14-18 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (15) John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " (16) And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. (17) For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (18) No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

1689 Confession, Chapter 8, Paragraph 2

The Son of God . . . did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof . . . so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ . . .

Baptist Catechism, Question 25

Q: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever.

Gal 3:13; 1 Tim 2:5; John 1:14; 1 Tim 3:16; Rom 9:5; Col 2:9

Definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451)

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Call to Worship: Proverbs 30:4-5

Scripture Reading: Psalm 46

Sermon: "The Son of God Part 2: The Word Became Flesh" John 1:14-18

Benediction: 1 Timothy 3:16

Prelude: Grace 111 My Hiding Place

Camille: Flute

Noah: Trumpet

Anna: Piano

Grace 39 Depth of Mercy

Camille: Flute

Noah: Trumpet

Anna: Piano

Trinity 227 O Wherefore Do the Nations Rage?

Camille: Sing

Noah: Sing

Anna: Piano

Grace 161 The Old Rugged Cross

Camille: Piano

Noah: Trumpet

Anna: Sing

Trinity xv Gloria Patri

Camille - Piano

Noah - Trumpet - sheet music attached

Anna - Clarinet - sheet music attached