

## *Christology*

(The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ)

Prepared by Pastor Scott Davis  
Pitts Baptist Church, Concord, NC  
Fall 2018

\*\*\*This is Part 1 that simply deals briefly with the Person of Christ. Christology also involves the Work of Christ. That will be in a future handout.\*\*\*

(The following is taken directly from the ESV Study Bible, in the section on Biblical Doctrine, pp. 2515-2526. Thus there is no claim here to originality. This is a very basic summary, and further study can be done in various volumes on systematic theology. A reminder for you: the word "theology" refers literally to "sayings or words about God." Theology should not be the sole possession of the university or seminary. As various writers point out, theology should chiefly be the possession of the church, because it is at church that we worship God, speak of God, and carry out the Great Commission with God. It is unfortunate the wedge that has been inserted here, as though somehow theology does not belong to the church.)

### ESV Study Bible:

**Four statements must be understood and affirmed in order to attain a complete biblical picture of the person of Jesus Christ:**

1. Jesus Christ is fully and completely divine.
2. Jesus Christ is fully and completely human.
3. The divine and human natures of Christ are distinct.
4. The divine and human natures of Christ are completely united in one person. (Referred to as the hypostatic union.)

### **Implications of Christ's deity:**

1. God can be known definitively and personally in Christ.
2. Redemption is possible and has been accomplished in Christ.
3. In Christ risen, ascended and enthroned we have a sympathetic high priest who has omnipotent power to meet our needs.
4. Worship of and obedience to Christ is appropriate and necessary.

### **Implications of Christ's humanity:**

1. It is easy to assume that being sinful is an essential, necessary part of being a human being. But this is not true. Jesus was human and yet He did not sin. In fact, Jesus humanity reveals what man was supposed to be from the beginning. He shows that the problem with humanity is not that we are human, but rather that we are fallen.
2. Jesus humanity enables His representative obedience for us.
3. Because of Jesus' humanity, He can truly be a substitutionary sacrifice for mankind.
4. Jesus humanity makes Him the only effective mediator between God and man.
5. Jesus humanity allows Him to be a sympathetic high priest Who understands our plight.
6. Jesus humanity means that He is a true example and pattern for human character and conduct.

The belief that Jesus is one person with both divine and human natures has great significance for the possibility of fallen people entering into a relationship with God. Christ must be both God and man if He is to mediate between God and man, make atonement for sin, and be a sympathetic high priest.

From the moment of Mary's virginal conception of Jesus, His divine nature became permanently united to His human nature in one and the same person, the now incarnate Son of God. Jesus had a human body, a human mind, and experienced human temptation, yet without sin. He had a human birth and a human genealogy. He had a human body that experienced growth, as well as hunger, thirst, fatigue, and even death.

Jesus continues to have a human body in His resurrected state, and He went to great lengths to make sure His disciples understood this.

After His resurrection, Jesus returned to the Father by ascending in His divinely reanimated body before His disciple's wondering eyes, thus affirming His ongoing full physical humanity. The ascension has been included in every important creed of the church because it teaches the enduring complete humanity of Jesus as the only mediator between God and man. Jesus will be a man forever (as well as being fully divine) as He represents redeemed humanity for all of eternity.

In the incarnation Christ gained or took on human attributes without giving up divine attributes. He gave up the glory of divine life but not the possession of divine powers.

Perhaps the most famous creed of the church affirming the full deity and the full humanity of Christ is the Chalcedonian Creed of AD 451. It reads as follows:

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 [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; 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.

The creed teaches the church how to talk about the two natures of Christ without falling into error. While this creed does not answer all the questions about the incarnation, it has been accepted by Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches throughout history, and it has never needed any major alteration because it effectively articulates the biblical tension of Christ's two natures, completely united in one person.