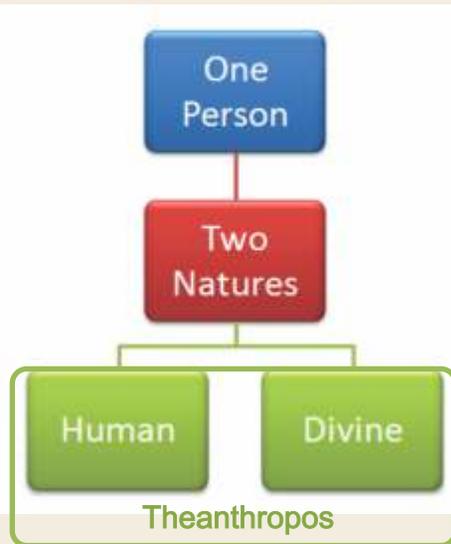


# The Hypostatic Union of Christ

## True God and true man

*Perfect deity and perfect humanity united in one person is the great truth of Hypostatic union or God-Man (theanthropos)*

– Rajan Thomas



There are some like the Jehovah witnesses who deny the deity of Jesus and others like the Gnostic philosophers who deny the humanity of Jesus Christ.

### Why is there such confusion when the truth is so clear in the Word of God?

Unquestionably the only one perfect God-Man is Christ, unlike several other man-gods commonly known as 'Devas' who are often credited with deity.

The resurrected and ascended Christ revealed His eternal existence by saying "I am the Alpha and Omega" (Rev.8) and while in the world He claimed His pre-existence as "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), meaning before something in the past happened (Abraham, was) something in the present happened (I am).

Isaiah prophesied (9:6) that He is the eternal son of God so 'son is given' to mankind not born, whereas a 'child is born'. Such a 'son given' and a 'child born' process was without doubt a divine work through the virgin birth of Christ as Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 and became a historic truth that was fulfilled through Mary, the unquestionable virgin. Thus, Christ was born in this world as the 'seed of a woman' (Gen.3:15) unlike all other humans born in this world as the seed of man and woman through the process of natural birth. The virgin birth of Christ was the divine means for the Almighty God to become an absolute man as stated by Gabriel to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Such supernatural divine intervention in the conception of Christ in Mary without any natural involvement of the human sperm interrupted the unbroken line of descent of sin from Adam. This in turn prevented the transmission of sin by birth (by which all become sinners) to the prenatal Jesus, 'that holy thing' (Luke 1:35). This historic event was the fulfillment of the 'preparation of a body' (without sin) for the Son as predicted in Psalm 40:6-8 and later confirmed in Hebrews 10:5.

Through Elizabeth the Holy Spirit confirmed the prenatal Jesus as 'the Lord' (Gk.kyrios) ( Luke 1:43), a word used in the first Greek translation of the Old Testament ( Septuagint), for 'Yahweh', the Creator and sustainer of heaven and earth, the omnipotent God. Upon His birth, the angels testified of Him as 'the Lord' (Luke 2:11) and Simeon who was waiting for the 'Lord's Christ' (Luke 2:26) addressed him as 'the Lord', (Luke 2:29) thus recognizing and affirming Jesus as the incarnated Yahweh.

Such a divine birth, made possible the union of the fullness of the deity and humanity in one person. These two distinct natures of Christ are inseparably united without the loss of separate identity and continues to dwell in one person for ever. No other means would so clearly unite humanity and the deity in one person.

If on the other hand God had created Jesus as a complete human being in heaven and sent Him down to the earth without the benefit of a human parent, it could have been very hard for us to see how Jesus could be fully human as we are. He would have remained a heavenly being only. On the other hand, if God allowed Jesus to be born out of two human parents, as we are all born, it would have been hard for us to understand how Jesus was fully God, since His origin was like

ours in every way. He would have remained a mere human being.

### **The Perfect humanity of Lord Jesus Christ**

Jesus had a human body, human mind, human soul, and experienced human emotions.

Luke presented Christ as a perfect man and recorded His physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth as that of a normal human child and states in Luke 2:20 “And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was with him.” and in v.52 “Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.” His physical growth was implied in the usage “became strong” and “increased in stature”, while mental growth is implied in “filled with wisdom” and “increased in ..... Wisdom”, and spiritual growth is seen through “in favor with God” and finally “in favor. with man”, his social development.

In His perfect human body, Jesus wearied and asked for water from the Samaritan woman (John 4:6) and further, at the cross He said “I thirst” (John 19:28), yet in His state of perfect deity He changed the water into wine (John 2). As a perfect man He ‘was hungry’ (Mt.4:6) yet as perfect God He fed over 5000 people with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes. The one who ‘neither slumber(s) nor sleep(s)’ (Ps.121:4) slept in the Boat (Luke 4:38). The body He had in this world had all the attributes of physical weaknesses. The culmination of all limitations was found on the Cross as He was “acquainted with grief (Heb. chili= illness)” (Is.53:3), but upon His resurrection, since He is God He had a perfect glorified body in which He continues to exist as the truth of ascension teaches us.

As a perfect human being, mental growth as implied in “increased in wisdom” (Luke 2:52) was inevitable and He went through learning processes just as all other children do i.e. how to eat, how to talk, how to read and write, and how to be obedient to parents (Heb 5:8), though in Him “dwells all fullness” (Col.1:19) and He is the

### **Jesus had a human body, human mind, human soul, and experienced human emotions but He also possesses every characteristic and attribute that only God can possess.**

source of all wisdom (Prov. 1:7)

Jesus had a human spirit/ soul with all natural emotions. Jesus said “Now my soul is troubled (John 12:27) and He was “troubled in spirit” (John 13:21), i.e. a state of anxiety and pain. As the crucifixion drew nigh, He said “My soul (spirit) is very sorrowful, even to death” (Matt.26:38). Yet He consoled the perplexed hearts of the disciples by saying “let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1) by promising many mansions in heaven (John 14:2) a truth known to Him as the heavenly God.

As a perfect human being He has a full range of human emotions. He “marveled” at the faith of the Centurion (Mt.8:10) though at the age of 12, to the doctoral teachers in the temple He Himself was an astonishment. (Luke 2:48). He wept with sorrow at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35) yet as perfect God, He wiped away the tears of Mary and Martha by raising their brother from the dead, an act pre-

pictured in Revelation 21:4 which states “And God shall wipe away all tears..” when all the resurrected saints will be in New Jerusalem.

The writer of Hebrews states that “in the days of His flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears” ( Heb.5:7), thus summarizing all prayers of Jesus in His humanity to God the Father; prayers He made for His disciples ( John 17), Prayer at Gethsemane( Mathew 26: 36-44) , prayers He made to the Father at the Cross, Mt.26:45) etc. Yet as God he hearkened to the beseeches of the Centurion (Luke 7: 3) and the Syro-phoenecian woman (Mark 7: 25), etc. Stephen while being stoned to death by the persecutors “called upon God “saying “Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59), thus acknowledging Jesus as God as he saw “heavens opened, and the Son of Man (one who became equal to man) standing on the right hand of the Father” (Acts 7:56). In fact Stephen saw the post resurrected and ascended Christ in heaven in the same human body glorified as Jesus Himself explained in Luke 24:39 “ a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have”

Though He ‘learned obedience’ (Hebrews 5:8) in His perfect humanity, yet in His perfect deity “men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him” (Mt.8:27). Not only the sea, winds and elements and materials of this earth obeyed him, demons too obeyed him (Mk.5). Satan also obeyed at His command when He said “Get thee behind Me, Satan” (Mt.16 ).

The author of Hebrews has affirmed that Jesus “in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet (remained) without sin (Heb.4:15). Satan tried to tempt

Christ through all avenues of lusts. By demanding of Him to command the stones to become bread (Luke 4:2) at his natural urge to satisfy human hunger, Jesus was tempted towards 'lust of the flesh' (1 John 2:16). Jesus was tempted towards 'lust of the eyes' (1 John 2:16) when Satan offered all kingdoms of this world provided Jesus worship him (Luke 4:16). Also, the Devil tried to test Him towards the 'pride of life' (1 John 2:16) by demanding of Him to jump from the pinnacle of the temple (Luke 4:9) thereby to attract the applause of men. As Jesus even in His perfect humanity is God, He yielded not to temptations and remained 'without sin' (Heb. 4:15). In fact, Jesus was tempted as He has genuinely human nature but in His divine nature could not be tempted as revealed by James in 1:13 "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13).

Indeed, Jesus was absolutely 'without sin'. During His public ministry He put across a question to the foes not to friends, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (John 8:46) To which none could bring even the slightest of allegations.

Paul a philosophical thinker turned apostle wrote of Christ stating, "He knew not sin" 2Cor. 5:21. Peter a vibrant apostle who moved around with Him wrote, "He did no sin" 2Pet. 2:22 and the passionate Apostle John who loved Him dearly confirmed "...in Him there is no sin" 1Jn. 3:5. Pilate the imperial Governor and Judge who dealt the allegation case fabricated by the Jews against Jesus concluded and proclaimed "I find no crime in Him (John 18:38).

Thus, Heaven presented to the world undeniably, "a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:19).

In fact the whole purpose of incarnation of Jesus and

crucifixion despite finding no faults in Him was to present a sinless savior to the world, becoming the only one solution to the sin problem.

### **Divine attributes of Christ.**

Christ being the very 'brightness' (radiance) of God the creator's glory and the 'express image (emblem) of the very person of God' (Heb. 1:3) possesses every characteristic and attribute that only God can possess. Further He has demonstrated those attributes even in His perfect humanity while on earth in performing miracles and wonders such as calming the storm at sea by His word (Mt. 8:26-27), multiplying the loaves and fish (Mt. 14:19) and changing water into wine (John 2: 1-11). Through these, Jesus demonstrated His all powerfulness (omnipotence) as God.

By perceiving the inner thoughts of people (Mark 2:8) and knowing Nathaniel under the fig tree from far away (John 1:48) and knowing that Zacchaeus was up on the Sycamore tree (Luke 19:5), perceiving that a woman with an issue of blood touched His garments (Luke 8: 43-45), Jesus demonstrated His divine attribute of all-knowing (omniscience).

Jesus also demonstrated His omnipresence by promising His presence where two or three gathered in His name (Mt. 18:20) and also promising that "I am with you always to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:20). His dwelling in the hearts of all believers simultaneously (Eph. 3:17, Col. 1:27) and His desire to have fellowship with all believers (Rev. 3:20) bear out this truth.

He expressed His divine sovereignty in forgiving sins (Mark 2:6) when He caused the scribes to self interrogate by asking them

"Who can forgive sins, but God only?" (Mk. 2:7), apparently remembering Psalms 130:3&4 and Isaiah 43:25 wherein is revealed that the exclusive authority to forgive sins is God's alone.

His immutability is depicted in Heb. 13:8 and His works as the Creator are portrayed in John 1:3 and Col. 1:16 and the cohesive force of the universe as the Sustainer is affirmed in Col. 1:16.

He received worship of men in John 9:38 and stated "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which hath sent Him" (John 5:23) by which He proclaimed His co-equality with the Father to receive worship. The statement would have been blasphemous before the Jewish community and violating the fundamental truths that only God is to be worshipped in the light of the Old Testament scriptures. However, Paul gives glory that only God deserves, to the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 4:18) and confirms that He is the one who deserves the worship of all 'in heaven, in earth and under the earth' (Phil. 2:10).

All moral attributes of God such as Goodness, Love, Mercy, Grace, Patience, Peace, Righteousness, Justice, Jealousy, Wrath, etc. were evident in Christ even while on earth and thereafter in his post-resurrected and ascended form as evident in the Gospels, epistles and in the book of Revelation.

### **Christ, the Immortal God**

Can God die? If Jesus is God and God is eternally self-existent, how can He be God? The Gnostics, atheists, Moslems and liberal theologians have been voicing this to challenge the deity of Christ. As "God alone has immortality" (1 Tim 6:16), Jesus as God, challenged the Jews in John 2:19 when He said

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“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”, a statement that His disciples remembered upon His resurrection (John 2:21).

He also claimed “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:17&18). Here He spoke of a power no other human being has had – the power to lay down His own life and the power to take it up again - which is the divine attribute of immortality.

Remember what He proclaimed at the tomb of Lazarus “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he was dead, yet shall he live.” (John 11:25) As it was absolutely necessary for the sinless Christ to “die for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor.15:3) He “was once offered to bear the sins of

many” (Heb.11:28). Thus, the human body of Jesus Christ was only offered as a sacrifice towards death (Hebrews 10:10) as His divine attribute of immortality continued and He rose again on the third day. In other words He died in his state of perfect humanity but rose again in his state of perfect deity and this truth is the climactic resultant of hypostatic union.

The hypostatic union may be defined as “the second person, the pre-incarnate Christ, came and took to Himself a human nature and remains forever the undiminished Deity and true humanity united in one person forever”. When Christ came, a Person came, not just a nature; He took on an additional nature, a human nature – He did not simply dwell in a human person. The result of the union of two natures is the theanthropic Person (the God-man) (Paul Enns)

Jesus Christ is the unique God-man who being the eternal and immortal God took up a human body and nature to die and shed sinless blood to wash away the sins of man towards the only one solution of sin problem.

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