

Christology**H. Graham Wilson, Jr.**

There might well not have been a challenge to the Deity of Christ, the Son of God, had He not become incarnate in human form. The Deity of the Son is set forth in the Bible as is His humanity. This **hypostatic union** of two natures has caused challenges to both His deity and His humanity.

First, the Deity of Christ: “What think you of Christ?” is the paramount question of life (cf. Matt. 16:15; 22:42). Christ possesses five attributes which are uniquely and distinctly divine: eternality, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability.

1). He is eternal. He was not only before John (Jn. 1:1, 15), before Abraham (Jn. 8:58), and before the world came into being (Jn. 17:5, 24), but He is “the first born of all creation” (Col. 1:15), being in existence “in the beginning” (Jn. 1:1; cf. I John 1:1), and, in fact, “from the days of eternity” (Mic. 5:2). Concerning the future He continues forever (Isa. 9:6ff; Heb. 1:11 ff.; 13:8).

2). He is omniscient. Jesus knows all things (John 16:30; 21:17). In Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). He knew what was in man (Jn.5:24 ff.), and He knew the life of the Samaritan woman (John 4:29), the thoughts of men (Lk. 6:8; 11:17); the time and manner of His exit out of this world (Matt. 16:21; Jn. 12:33; 13:1), and the character and termination of the present age (Matt. 24:25).

3). He is omnipotent (Jn. 5:19). He is the mighty God (Isa. 9:6; cf. Rev. 1:8), He “upholds all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3), and all authority is given to Him (Matt. 28:18). His miracles are cited as proofs of His deity (Jn. 5:36; 10:25, 38; 20:30f.).

4). He is immutable (Heb. 1:12; 13:8). This is true of His plans, promises, and Person.

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The prerogatives of Deity are ascribed to Christ. He is Creator (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:10) and the upholder of all things (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). Neither accident nor mere natural law caused the universe to come into existence or keeps the universe in existence and everything in its proper place. This is the work of Deity (II Pet. 3:5-7). Christ forgave sins (Matt. 9:2, 6; Lk. 7:4ff.). He will raise the dead in the resurrections (Jn. 5:25-29; 6:39f, 54; 11:25). These resurrections will be different from the raising of the widow's son (Lk. 7:12-16); Jairus' daughter (Mk. 5:35-43); and Lazarus (Jn. 11:38-44). In the future, all saints will be raised; they will be raised from decomposition as well as from death; they will be raised never to die, and they will be raised by Christ's inherent power rather than by the Spirit's power. Finally, He will execute judgment, for Church age believers (Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 3:8-10; II Cor. 5:10), of the beast and his followers (Rev. 19:15) of the nations (Matt. 25:31f; Acts 17:31), of Satan (Gen. 3:145), and of the lost (Acts 10:42; II Tim. 4:1; I Pet. 4:5).

He is identified as the Old Testament Jehovah. Things that are in the OT said of Jehovah are in the NT said of Christ. He was creator (Ps. 102:24-27; Heb. 1:10-12), was seen by Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-4; John 12:41), was to be preceded by a forerunner (Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3), disciplines His people (Num.21:6ff.; I Cor. 10:9), is regarded as holy (Isa. 8:13; I Pet. 3:15), is to lead captivity captive (Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8), and will be the object of faith (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:9, 13).

He is associated with names that imply Deity. Jesus used certain metaphors of Himself that imply supernatural character. "I am the bread that came down out of heaven" (Jn. 6:41; cf. v. 50); "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved" (Jn. 10:9); "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (Jn. 14:6). "I am the resurrection

and the life” (Jn. 11:25). Further, He said, “Before Abraham was born, I AM” (Jn. 8:58; cf., Exod. 3:14).

He was called Immanuel. Matthew explicitly applies Isaiah 7:14 to Jesus (Matt. 1:22 ff.). The name in the NT occurs only here in Matthew, though the concept occurs elsewhere (Jn. 1:14; Rev. 21:3). The term “Word” (*logos*) is used to emphasize His Deity (Jn 1:1-14; Rev. 19:13). Jesus’ favorite name for Himself was Son of Man. The term does not always denote Deity but very often does. Examples are, it is the Son of Man that has authority on earth to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6), and to interpret the Sabbath law (Matt. 19:28). When Jesus declared He was the Son of Man spoken of in Daniel, who was to come in great power, the High Priest accused Him of blasphemy (Matt. 26:63; cf., Dan. 7:13).

Christ is called Lord. In the NT this term is used four ways. It is used of God the Father, as a title of courtesy, as a name for a master or owner, and as a title of address to, or as a name for Christ. The title “Lord” as it is often used of Jesus is the translation of the Hebrew name *Jehovah*. Thus, Christ is identified with the Jehovah of the OT (Rom. 10:9, 13; and I Pet. 3:15 with Isa. 6:1ff; Joel 2:32 and Isa. 8:13 respectively).

Jesus has certain relations proving His Deity. The Father and He are put side by side with each other and with the Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula (Matt. 28:19) and in the apostolic benediction (II Cor. 13:14; cf., I Cor. 1:3). He is the radiance (Heb. 1:3) and image of God (Col. 1:15; cf. 2:9). He and the Father are one (Jn. 10:30; and note that **one is neuter, not masculine;** one substance, not one Person; cf. John 14:9; 17:11). Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ is God in the fullest sense.

The humanity of Christ: God the Son and the Hypostatic union. The term “hypostatic” is derived from *hypostasis*, meaning, the mode of being by which any substantial existence is given an independent and distinct individuality. This term is theological and is applicable only to Christ, as in no other. Two distinct and dissimilar natures are united in one body. Christ is the Theanthropic Person, the God-man, the Mediator and Daysman (Job 9:32, 33).

How can two natures be in one person? Only His Deity has eternity, His humanity was gained in time. The Theanthropic Person began with the Incarnation (Jn. 1:14). There is only one personality in the Christ and that is of Deity. There are two natures, Deity and humanity, in one Person, one body. There are two consciousnesses and two wills. The Second Person of the Trinity assumed humanity with all its attributes without sin (Lk. 1:35). He is impeccable. Christ’s human nature was impersonal apart from the Incarnation; this, however is not true of the Divine nature. Jesus was aware at all times of His Deity in His Divine self-consciousness. It was fully operative at all times even in infancy. There is evidence that the human nature developed and with it a human self-consciousness, at other times from His Divine, but the two were never in conflict.

In the life of Jesus His will was to do the will of the Father’s will (Heb. 10:7, 9). This He fully accomplished. The Person of Christ is Theanthropic, but His nature is not. One may speak of the God-man referring to the Person; however, one may not speak of the divine-human nature, but must say the divine and the human nature in Christ. Christ has an infinite intelligence and will and a finite intelligence and will. He had a divine consciousness and a human consciousness. His divine intelligence was infinite; His human intelligence increased. His divine will was omnipotent; his human will had only the power of unfallen humanity. Divinely conscious He said “I and the

Father are one” (Jn. 10:30). In human consciousness He said “I am thirsty” (Jn. 19:28). But it must be emphasized that He is still the God-man for eternity! The union of the two natures is called the **hypostatic union**. Two natures constitute one personal subsistence. Because Christ **did not unite with a human person but with a human nature**, the seat of personality of Christ is in the divine nature. The humanity of Christ is present with His Deity in every place.

For the mature Christian conscious Christ was the Savior because sin has been paid for being efficacious upon belief in Him, and in whose fellowship all the blessings of the new spiritual life are received. Christ was absolutely Holy. He was that “holy offspring” (Lk. 1:35), “the Holy and Righteous One” (Acts 3:14), God’s “holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4:27). He was holy in nature (Jn. 14:30), and He was sinless (Heb. 4:15).

Scripture declares again and again that Christ had a part in creation. Paul says that through Him are all things, and we through Him (I Cor. 8:6). Also, “And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together (Col. 1:16 ff.).

Attention needs to be drawn to the fact that when God was about to create man there was first a council in the Godhead. God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). Proverbs 8:30 states, “Then I was beside Him, as a master workman.” Jesus was Creator. To cast our eyes upon the Christ should bring a response like Isaiah. “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of host” (Isa. 6:5). Peter responded in a similar fashion as Isaiah when he said, “depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Lk. 5:8). The uniqueness of Christ, the Holy One, the Lord God, causes men to see how short they come to meeting the Glory of God.

Christ's humanity could not be divorced from His Deity therefore He was impeccable. As the apostle stated, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Tim. 3:16). Christians need to believe this without reservation.