

## Christology 101

### Lesson 11

#### The Divine and Human Person of Christ

#### Part 1: Demonstrations of His Deity and His Humanity

- Pre-Incarnate Christ Comparison
- Definition of the Person of the Incarnate Christ
- The Full Deity of the Incarnate Christ
- The Perfect Humanity of the Incarnate Christ
- Ancient Heresies

We have already discussed the “Pre-Incarnate Christ,” the Second Person of the Trinity before He clothed Himself with Humanity through the Virgin Birth. Now, we will discuss the “Incarnate Christ.”

“The study of the Person of Christ is one of the most complicated and intricate studies that can be undertaken by a biblical theologian.” Dr. John Walvoord

Let that be an encouragement to you as we try to get our minds around this vast and complex issue. And, let’s all give each other some grace as we try to express this issue in words to each other until we can come to a good understanding. We will set some parameters at the beginning so that we all know even as we discuss this issue that we agree on the parameters that orthodox or mainstream Christianity has agreed upon for 2,000 years.

In previous classes when we discussed the ancient church councils, we showed how the church has always held to the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ. Occasionally there have been some misguided individuals who have challenged that belief and gathered a following, but the position of the church from the time of the Apostles until today is the same. These challenges have merely forced the church to define its position more precisely.

#### **Pre-Incarnate Christ Comparison**

We have studied about the Person of Christ before His incarnation. He was and is the second person of the Trinity. He is the eternal Son of an Eternal Father. He has the same attributes of the Father, and the Holy Spirit. He is holy, eternal, spirit, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, etc. He retains those attributes in His incarnate state, and through eternity. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” In His pre-incarnate state He had a different role than the Father and the Holy Spirit, in fact, He is the One who appears as the Angel of the Lord. However, since He has the one divine nature, it is not as complicated to understand His person. When He also takes on a

human nature, things get complicated. At least, they are complicated for us to understand.

As Dr. Walvoord states it, “When the second Person of the Godhead became incarnate there was immediately introduced the seemingly insuperable problem of uniting God with man and combining an infinite and eternal Person with one that is finite and temporal.” (Walvoord, 107). Christianity has always maintained that there was not compromise in which Jesus was less than completely God. In other words, by becoming a man, He did not give up any of His attributes or characteristics of deity.

### Definition of the Person of the Incarnate Christ

It is hard to search for a definition that completely covers the Person of Christ incarnate. Charles Ryrie states it this way, “**full Deity, and perfect humanity united without mixture, change, division, or separation in one Person forever.**” (Ryrie, Basic Theology, 247). Key terms to notice here are “full Deity” which means that there was no loss or diluting or any attribute of Christ in the process of His incarnation. “Perfect humanity” rather than “full humanity” is used to emphasize His sinlessness. “One person” emphasizes that there were not two persons. There is a human nature and a divine nature, that are united in one person. “Forever” refers to the fact that Christ still possess the characteristics of humanity. He still has a body (Acts 1:11, Revelation 5:6).

Sometimes preachers state it as “100% God, 100% Man,” or “fully God and fully man.”

Earlier we studied the early church creeds. The Council of Chalcedon has long been considered definitive by orthodox Christianity.

### Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D)

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.

## The “Full Deity” of Christ Incarnate

In his time on earth, Jesus Christ possessed all the attributes of the second Person of the Trinity in bodily form. From time to time we see those attributes and prerogatives that are reserved for deity, exercised and claimed by the Son of God.

1. Eternality            John 8:5-8, 17:5
2. Omnipresence        Matthew 18:20, 28:20
3. Omniscience        Matthew 16:21, Luke 6:8, 11:17, John 4:29
4. Omnipotence        Matthew 28:20, Mark 5:11-15, John 11:38-44

### He works the works of God.

1. He Forgives Sins                            Mark 2:1-2
2. He Gives Spiritual Life                    John 5:21
3. He Raises the Dead                        John 11:43
4. He Performs Judgment                    John 5:22, 27

### He Received the Titles of Deity.

1. Son of God            John 10:36 (by Himself), Matthew 26:63-64 (by others)
2. “Lord and God” “Jesus is called Yahweh in the New Testament, a clear indication of His full Deity (cf. Luke 1:76 with Malachi 3:1 and Romans 10:13 with Joel 2:32). He is also called God (John 1:1; 20:28; Hebrews 1:8). Lord (Matthew 22:43-45), and King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). (Ryrie, 248)

### He claimed to be God.

1. John 10:30 “I and the Father are One.” His enemies understood what He meant. Cf. John 10:33.

## The “Perfect Humanity” of the Incarnate Christ

Jesus Christ was fully human and yet sinless, so we refer to Him as “perfect humanity.

1. He had a human body. Luke 2:52 He called himself a man. John 8:40
2. He had a human soul and spirit. Man is both material and immaterial. We are body, soul, and spirit. Christ not only the physical part of humanity, but also the immaterial part of humanity. Matthew 26:38, Luke 23:46
3. He had the characteristics of humanity. He was hungry. Matthew 4:2. He was thirsty. John 19:28. He became tired. John 4:6. He felt love and compassion. Matthew 9:36. He wept. John 11:35. He was tested. Hebrews 4:15.
4. He was called the “Son of Man” over eighty times. He was called the “Son of David.” Paul, who emphasizes His deity, also calls him a man. 1 Timothy 2:5.

## Ancient Heresies

Some ancient heresies arose concerning the Person of Christ. This is one reason the Church Councils were convened, to answer the heretical teachings and clarify the truth of the New Testament.

**Docetism:** Marcion and the Gnostics: That Christ only appeared to be a man. The apostle John answered this teaching in 1 John 4:1-3.

**Ebionism:** Denied the Deity of Christ. He was the natural son of Mary and Joseph, but elected to become the Son of God at His baptism and was united with the Eternal Christ.

**Arianism:** Denied the Eternality of Jesus. Arius claimed that since Jesus was “begotten” He must have had a beginning. Arius believed that Jesus was “similar nature” (**homoiousian**) to God, but not the “same nature” (**homoousian**) as God. The Council of Nicea dealt with this heresy in 325 AD.

**Apollinatiranism:** Apollinarius taught that Christ had a human body and soul, not not a human spirit. Instead he had only a divine spirit. This takes away from Christ’s full humanity.

**Nestorianism:** Nestorius divided Christ into two persons. He separated the two natures to actually become two persons, a Divine Person and a human person. This was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.

**Eutychianism:** Eutyches reacted against Nestorianism and taught that there was only one nature in Christ. In other words the nature of Christ was not fully human or fully divine. Rather it was a mixed single nature of a different kind. This was also condemned at the Council of Chalcedon.

“A study of errors should help us clarify the truth and make us more careful how we express it. Semantics are very important in the statements of theology.”  
Ryrie, 252.