

Summer Dinner Series – The Big Ideas – Week 6

Who is Jesus? – Fully God and Fully Man

“Christianity got over the difficulty of combining furious opposites by keeping them both, and keeping them both furious.” G. K. Chesterton

We may observe, that God, in the revelation that he has made of himself to the world by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellencies or perfections of his nature, viz. those that especially tend to possess us with awe and reverence, and to search and humble us; and those that tend to win, to draw, and encourage us. By the one, he appears as an infinitely great, pure, holy, and heart-searching judge (for example Jesus’ deity); by the other, as a gentle and gracious father and a loving friend (Jesus’ humanity). Some Thoughts on the Revival of Religion - Jonathan Edwards - 1742

Humanity – fully man, but not merely man.

1. Virgin Birth

Rob Bell – Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith

Trinity - *“It is a spring, and people jumped for thousands of years without it. It was added later. We can take it out and examine it. Discuss it, probe it, and question it. It flexes, and it stretches.”*

Virgin Birth - *“What if that spring was seriously questioned? Could a person keep jumping? Could a person still love God? Could you still be a Christian?”*

Virgin Birth...so what?

- Salvation is from the Lord, not human effort
 - The promise was that “seed of the woman” Ge 3:15, not seed of man...
- uniting divinity and humanity in one person
 - could have sent him to earth as a man, like, but we would have never seen his humanity, this was his chosen means.
 - his beginning was like ours in every way
- Jesus does not inherit sin.
 - No original sin from Adam - Luke 1:35 the Holy Spirit will overshadow you, therefore the child to be born will be called holy.

2. Really a guy

Human Body

- wearied from a journey
- thirsty – on the cross – “I thirst”
- hungry - fasted 40 days
- grew up as a boy
- obeyed his parents (got lost)

- worked as a carpenter (got splinters)
- he slept
- asked for information -
- was crucified

Human Soul and Emotions

- stressed out
- astonished
- cried
- loved kids
- loved his mom
- went to parties

Human Mind – he learned stuff – luke 2:52 “increased in wisdom”

People perceived him as a mere man

- Holy – but did not have a halo. Look at the pictures in Catholic and Eastern orthodox icons.
- Away in a manger...The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. Really?
- Had a family – Matt 13:53-58 – Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary...

So What?

- **Representative obedience –**
 - Romans 5:18-19 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s (Adam’s) disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s (Jesus’) obedience the many will be made righteous.
 - Adam represented all men in his disobedience; Jesus represents the church in his obedience and perfect life.
 - God required righteousness from the human race; Jesus had to be fully human to represent us.
- **To be a substitute sacrifice**
 - If Jesus had not been a man, he could not have died in our place and paid the penalty that was due to us.

Hebrews 2:16-17 *For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

Jesus had to become a man, not an angel, because he was concerned with saving men, not with saving angels. But to do this, “he had to” be made like us in every way, so that we

might become “the propitiation” for us, that sacrifice that is an acceptable substitute for us. Grudem, p. 540

- **Mediator between God and Man** – 1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus
- **Sympathize as high priest** - Heb 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - Really tempted. Even worse than us because he never gave in.
- **Jesus will be a man forever** –
 - In his resurrected body he ate food and still has scars.
 - Revelation 5:6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain
 - Stephen – “Son of man, standing at the right hand of God”

Jesus will continue forever in his offices as prophet, priest, and king, all of them carried out by virtue of the fact that he is both God and man forever...He did not temporarily become man, but that his divine nature was permanently united to his human nature, and he lives forever, not just as the Son of God, but as Jesus, the man who was born of Mary...Jesus will remain fully God and fully man, yet one person, forever. Page 543.

- **To be our example and pattern in life**
 - Christus Exemplar – But not just our example.
 - Ghandi - “Jesus’ death on the cross was a great example to the world, but that there was anything like a mysterious or miraculous virtue in it my heart could not accept”
 - Social – feeding the hungry, clothing naked, defending the marginalized
 - Jesus is only an example to lead a meek, humble, tolerant life
 - You could see how you are supposed to live, but get nothing from him to make that possible
 - But death, resurrection, new identity, provision and process. He is your potential.

Christus Exemplar...so what?

Jesus’ dependence upon the Holy Spirit

Regarding the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit, Abraham Kuyper wrote, “This ought to be carefully noticed, especially since the Church has never sufficiently confessed the influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon the work of Christ. The general impression is that the work of the Holy Spirit begins when the work of the Mediator on earth is finished, as tho [sic] until that time the Holy Spirit celebrated His divine day of rest. Yet

the Scripture teaches us again and again that Christ performed His mediatorial work controlled and impelled by the Holy Spirit.”¹

The heart is both regenerated and empowered by God the Holy Spirit to live a life patterned after Jesus. Speaking of Jesus’ earthly ministry, Peter said, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” ...Before ascending into heaven, Jesus spoke of how the church was supposed to continue with Spirit-anointed ministry. Just as Jesus promised, today Christians are sealed by the Holy Spirit at conversion and are able to be filled with the Holy Spirit like Jesus was. This means that we can live like Jesus, doing what he did, with two exceptions. One, we must continually repent of personal sin, which is something the sinless Jesus never had to do. Two, we are not continually and perfectly able to live like Jesus because of our ongoing sinful desires. (Mark Driscoll, Vintage Church)

- We are told to follow Jesus’ example.
 - 1 Peter 2:21 - For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.
 - If he were only God, and not a man, empowered by the Holy Spirit, then that would not be possible...
- Jesus rejoice in the Holy Spirit
- Depended upon the Holy Spirit to make decisions
- Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit for mission – so are we

Deity – Jesus was fully human, but not merely human

- Direct claims

John 5:17-18 *But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*

- Omnipotence
- Omniscience
- Sovereignty – forgive sins
- Worshipped in heaven

Big question...Did Jesus give up divine attributes on earth? (No, just his privileges)

So What?

- *Only someone who was infinite and eternal could bear the full penalty for all the sins of all those who would believe in him, any finite creature could only pay for his own sins.*

¹ Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri de Vries (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 97.

Christian Heresies in Church History - The heretics gave us all the good creeds.

Arianism – comes from a heretic named Arius. Jesus is a heavenly being, at some point created by God the Father, not equal with God, but only similar to God. Defeated at the council of Nicea in 325 AD and thus the Nicene Creed.

Apollonarianism – Bishop in Laodicea in 361 AD. Jesus was one person and had a human body, but not a human mind or spirit. His mind and spirit were divine only. This was rejected at the Council of Alexandria in 362 and Council of Constantinople in 381.

Nestorianism – Nestorius was a popular preacher in 428 in Antioch and Bishop of Constantinople. Probably never taught this, but it was ascribed to him. Taught that in Jesus there were two separate persons: one human and one divine. (He is not like Gollum, where two personalities live in the same body)

Monophysitism – opposite error. Jesus' human and divine natures are combined to be a new, third kind of nature.

So What's Right?

Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D) and the Chalcedonian Creed

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.

In Conclusion

Those who reject this as impossible simply have a different definition of what is "possible" than God has, as revealed in Scripture. To say that we cannot understand this is appropriate to humility. But to say that it is not possible seems more like intellectual arrogance. Grudem Page 560

At the end of this long discussion, it may be easy for us to lose sight of what is actually taught in Scripture. It is by far the most amazing miracle of the entire bible, far more

amazing than the resurrection and more amazing even than the creation of the universe. The fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become a man and join himself to a human nature forever, so that infinite God became one person with finite man, will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe. Grudem, Page 563

Discuss

- Which nature of Jesus do you tend to emphasize? Are you neglecting one for the other? How do you think this has affected the way you perceive Him? What aspect of God have you been reminded of tonight?
- Which aspect of Jesus to find the hardest to get your head around? How about your heart?
- Jesus is fully human and fully God. If someone asked you what that matters, what would you say?