

JESUS THE GOD-MAN

The majority of professing Christians --- whether Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant --- confess that Jesus is “fully God” *and at the same time* “fully man”. That is to say, Jesus is 100% God *and* 100% man *simultaneously*. These two natures --- the Divine Son of God and the human-born Son of Man --- are thus alleged to be in perfect union in the one person of Jesus Christ. The technical and theological term for this perfect union of the two natures is, “hypostatic union”. Thus, to pass as “orthodox” one is urged to believe Jesus Christ is the co-eternal, co-equal “God the Son”, second Person of the Divine Trinity *while at the same time* he is true man: One Person with two indivisible natures, the perfect “God-man.”

Throughout the generations since this doctrine was first officially endorsed and enforced ---from the Council of Chalcedon in 451BC onwards --- anybody who has dared to ask reasonable questions as to how this doctrine is both a Biblical and logical impossibility has been ostracised. So, at the risk of being “heterodox” I am going to ask some questions, based solely on the Scriptural revelations concerning the Person of the God of the Bible, and concerning the nature of man. These are questions that many outstanding minds who also profess faith in the Living God have posed in every generation since Chalcedon, so I am not a lone ranger in my quest for sanity and sound Bible reading.

Before proceeding, let us be absolutely clear as to the orthodox belief. For orthodox Christianity, Jesus cannot possess only some human qualities; he must possess all so as to qualify as fully human. *At the same time*, he cannot possess only some divine qualities; he must have all to qualify as fully Divine. Jesus must be 100% God and 100% man *at the same time*.

A moment’s reflection will show this proposition is impossible by both Biblical and logical standards. Let us take one simple example from the lips of Jesus himself:

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“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Matt. 24:36).

This verse is problematic for the “hypostatic union” theory. How can Jesus be “fully God” and not know something so crucial that affects the history of the entire globe? Was Jesus speaking the absolute truth when he said he actually doesn’t know the hour? And was Jesus speaking the absolute truth when he said his Father alone knows the hour? According to Jesus, no one else --- not the angels in heaven nor even himself the Son --- knows the hour.

The usual wriggle-out from this dilemma runs something like this. What Jesus predicates of himself, namely ignorance, is true of him as a human, though it is not true of him as Divine. As the God-Man, Jesus is simultaneously omniscient as God (in company with the other Persons in the Godhead) and ignorant of some things as a man (in company with other persons of the human race).

Ah, I get it! Jesus is *simultaneously* aware and ignorant of this fact. So he knows the truth (because he is all-knowing as God) but then informs himself that he does not know this fact because he is simultaneously human? *So Jesus knows that he doesn't know what he knows, and this is the absolute truth of the matter, right?*

Do we really suppose the disciples who heard Jesus utter this truth thought to themselves, “O, that means he doesn’t know as a human, but of course, he knows as God”? Forgive the irony in my typing finger, but no wonder it took the Gentile Church 300 years to come up with this answer! The stubborn exegetical fact is that Jesus wasn’t talking about his own divine nature versus his human nature. Jesus specifically says “only the Father knows”. Which means that neither of Jesus’ “two natures” knows either!

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No, the problem is not in what the text says. The problem is reading the text according to the paradigm of the so-called “hypostatic union.” Biblical exegesis must be made to fit with our traditions at all costs, no matter how awkward.

Let’s face the truth Jesus tells here. There are some things that he as the Son of God does not know. What causes the angst is the doctrine that Jesus is 100% God and 100% man *at the same time*. Which is to make the nonsensical assertion that *Jesus knows all things and does not know all things simultaneously!?*

So, how would you like your theological fruit cake cooked? Plain, according to what the text says, or with plenty of added man-invented concoctions according to what the Church has dictated for centuries one must believe under pain of persecution or threat?

To be human means one is prone to limitations in knowledge. To be God means One has no limitations and is perfect and complete in all knowledge. You can’t have it both ways *at the same time*. This is to make the orthodox Jesus schizophrenic, surely?

By definition a thing cannot be the opposite of itself. A thing cannot be perfect and imperfect *at the same time*. The presence of one of these qualities implies the absence of the other. Jesus was either one or the other. He cannot logically be both. To believe he can be both unlimited and limited *at the same time* makes no more sense than if I were to tell you I just saw a square circle! Would I be telling you the circle was not round, in which case it would not be a circle? Or would I be saying the square was circular? This is to speak meaningless nonsense. It’s a sheer impossibility, unless we start playing fast and loose with the definition of what a circle is and what a square is. Or what would you think of my sanity if I spoke of hot ice cubes? Imaginative it might be, but sensible and factual it is not.

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Thus, to say that someone is all-knowing and yet does not know all things *at the same time* is to say that “X” and “not X” can both be true. This is to either abandon the meaning of words or else to abandon logic, and in either case it means we are speaking nonsense that can have no meaning for us.

But can't God do anything He chooses to do? Of course He can --- *except* those things that are inconsistent with being God. Can He choose to be evil or ignorant? Could He be the Devil or nothing at all? May it never be! The Christian God is the Eternal God of Israel, the God of the Universe and will never nor can ever be anything other than *that* God.

So, if we want to say, “God did and did not,” or “God is and is not” *simultaneously* our statements are meaningless. When we say Jesus is perfect God and perfect man *at the same time* we are saying two opposite things which cannot be possible, even for the Almighty! Let's face it, there are some things even God cannot do, or He ceases to be God.

Let's take another Bible example to illustrate the dilemma of the orthodox God-Man theory. Jesus tells us in John 4:24 that “God is (a) Spirit”. Jesus means that God (Who in the previous verse he calls “the Father”) is not composed of matter. This ought to be obvious because He existed before the universe of matter. God created matter and does not consist of that which He created. It is therefore axiomatic that God Who is Spirit is not composed of anything physical that can decompose or change. As Spirit He exists outside of creation and unlike matter cannot be divided. This is also why God is able to say, “I the LORD change not” (Mal. 3:6). Fundamental to the God of the Bible is His transcendence and what the theologians call His immutability, that is, His unchangeable nature.

The absence of change in His wholeness is the basis for the absence of any divisibility in God. As Spirit, God fills space and

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time in the physical universe, but nothing in the physical universe becomes God as a result of being filled by Him. The universe cannot contain Him. God is Spirit, not changeable material, which is why He is an indivisible One.

God Himself draws a clear line of distinction between Himself as Spirit and men as “flesh”. When Israel was running off to Egypt for help in time of trouble, they were charged with making a foolish swap. God wryly points out, “Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit” (Is. 31:3). The categories of flesh and spirit are not to be confused or mixed. Note that God puts men and horses in the one and same category of physical “flesh” and puts Himself in another category as Spirit. It is the pagan nations, the Gentiles who always mix Spirit and matter and the Bible calls this the sin of idolatry!

Jesus Himself knew this. Contrast Jesus’ definition of God Who is Spirit with his own description of himself. After his resurrection from the dead Jesus challenged his disciples, “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). So Jesus says he is not (a) spirit! Jesus puts himself, even in his resurrected state as completely physical. Jesus thus puts himself in a different category altogether from “the Father” Whom he has defined for us as (a) Spirit.

This is why the God of the Bible is defined as “immortal”. Twice in one little letter the apostle Paul describes God as immortal. He writes that “the only God” is “eternal, immortal, invisible ...” (1 Tim. 1:17). The particular Greek word here for “immortal” means “incorruptible”. God is Spirit and as such His essential nature can never decay. By definition God is eternally incorruptible!

Now, again in the same letter Paul writes that this God “alone possesses immortality...” (1 Tim. 6:16). Here Paul uses a different word to convey immortality. It is the word that means “never

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dying”, “incapable of death”. By definition God “alone” and all by Himself possesses the quality of never being able to die. It is impossible for God to die! When we put these two verses together we are meant to understand that God “alone” is “the only God” Who “possesses” immortality and by definition cannot die, and therefore cannot decay.

Contrast this with Jesus. The Scripture tells us that when Jesus was buried he was in a state of “decay”(Acts 2: 27). Jesus was dead and corruptible. He was a man. And were it not for the faithfulness and the power of God his Father Who alone possesses immortality, Jesus would have rotted in the grave. (It is not without accident that every single verse in the NT that declares Jesus’ resurrection tells us it was God Who brought him up from the grave from among the dead. Every verse! There is not a verse anywhere that tells us as most of our hymns and choruses do, that Jesus raised himself up from the dead. God honoured Jesus’ faithful obedience with the gift of His immortality.) Death can never again touch Jesus. And this is the hope of every believer in Christ who is the “first-fruits of those who sleep”. Because he lives we live. Jesus is the first man that God has granted to have immortality. But it was not always so. He was corruptible man for he died. Jesus is now called “the living one” but he says he was dead but behold, he is alive now forevermore (Rev. 1:18). This cannot be said of God.

I know I will be challenged that if Jesus was not God then how can I be saved? I am often assured that only God was big enough to pay the infinite price of all the world’s sin. This is why Jesus had to be the God-Man for a so-called “mere man” could not be a big enough Saviour for all men.

Now stop and think about this proposition. If Jesus is the pre-existent Divine Son he is purported to be, then this person must by reason of his Divinity, be immortal and so could not have died on the cross for my sins. And it will not do to appeal to the fact that Jesus had “two natures” and that it was his human nature

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that died on the cross. If it was only his human nature that died, how on this theory does the Trinitarian still maintain that Jesus had to be God otherwise I have no Saviour? On this theory it was the God part or nature that did not die anyway! On this theory it was only the “mere human” nature of Jesus that died. And don’t forget the “hypostatic union” teaches the two natures are indivisible anyway!

So I am still left with no Saviour according to the popular theory. I am left with a God-Man who could not die but died anyway! And there is not a single theologian yet who has been able to explain this, which is a sure sign it is a man-made ‘God-man’ the Church has constructed.

So the important question is: How does the death of Jesus save us? He tells us that, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). This refers to the incident recorded in Numbers 21:7-9 in which the people were dying from the bites of the poisonous snakes. Moses was instructed by God to make a serpent of brass and set it on a pole for all to see; those who *believed* as they looked were saved from the poison of the snakes.

Jesus compares this incident to *faith* in him: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever *believes* in him may have eternal life”. The point here should be very clear; the saving of the thousands who looked to the brass serpent had nothing whatever to do with anything inherent in that bronze serpent --- they were saved by *God* through *faith* in His promise that whoever looked would be saved. God said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live” (Num. 21:8). The next verse confirms those who had the faith to look lived. The same is true for all who are looking to Jesus for salvation through *faith*. It is God’s saving power in Christ which saves from sin and death. It is therefore not

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something inherent in the constitution of Christ that saves, but it is God our Father who saves us in and through Christ. Salvation is entirely God's work, and by His grace alone. Jesus is the mediating and instrumental agency through whom God saves.

We should not overlook the fact that as the sinless and perfectly obedient Son who was always well-pleasing to Father God, Jesus was perfectly qualified to be the one to offer a perfect offering for every man (see 1 Tim. 2:15). He was the lamb without blemish.

Let's draw this to a close. Can one person be Infinite and finite *at the same time*? Can one Person, even God, be Unlimited yet limited *at the same time*? Can one person know all things but not know some things *at the same time*? Can one person be incorruptible and immortal Spirit and *at the same time* be decomposable and death-bound physicality? Sufficient has been raised to seriously challenge the theory of the "hypostatic union" of two completely opposite natures in the one God-Man of Church "orthodoxy". Indeed, it may be sensibly stated that the Jesus who is "fully God" and "fully man" *at the same time* is in reality neither God nor man.