

Christology
The Study of Christ

Introduction

1. The deity of Jesus Christ
2. The humanity of Jesus Christ
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A. The deity of Jesus Christ

1. Millard Ericson's intro to chapter on The Deity of Christ: **"One of the most controversial topics of Christian theology is the deity of Christ. It is at the same time one of the most crucial. It lies at the heart of our faith. For our faith rests on Jesus actually being God in human flesh, and not simply an extraordinary human, albeit the most unusual person who ever lived"** (p. 683)
2. What do we mean when we refer to the deity of Jesus?
 - a. We mean that He is God
 - b. In our study of God the Father, we discussed the Trinity, the three-in-one nature of God
 - c. God exists in three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
 - d. They are not different manifestations of God (modalism), but rather three distinct co-eternal persons Who exists fully and simultaneously as God
 - e. As the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus is 100 percent God sharing all the attributes and character traits as God the Father and the Holy Spirit
3. Six proofs of Jesus' deity:
 - a. First Proof: His miraculous birth (READ Luke 1:26-38):
 - 1) V. 32: **"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High"**
 - 2) V. 35: **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God"**
 - 3) This is something Isaiah prophesied saying, **"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, 'God with us.'"** (Matthew 1:23)
 - b. Second Proof: God's proclamation (READ Matthew 3:16:17)
 - c. Third Proof: Jesus's claims about Himself:

** It is often said by critics that Jesus never claimed to be God; what they mean by this is He didn't explicitly use the phrase, "I am God" but this completely ignores the many explicit claims He did make

- 1) He referred to God as His Father (READ John 5:17-18):
 - a) It was not common for Jews to refer to God as their father; in fact, as this verse shows doing so was an offense because they believed it made one equal with God
 - b) Yet, knowing this, Jesus referred to God as His father over 150 times in the Gospels
 - c) Why? It was a means of equating Himself with God
- 2) He identified himself as the Son of God (READ John 3:16-18):

- a) While He may not said here, "I am the Son of God", Jesus is clearly talking about Himself here
 - b) He did something similar when He was preparing to heal Lazarus (John 11:4): **"When Jesus heard this, He said, 'This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.'"**; once again, He was referring to Himself as the Son of God
 - c) There is no question that Jesus identified Himself as the Son of God because it's why the Jews demanded His crucifixion: **"The Jews answered him [Pilate], 'We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God'"** (John 19:7)
 - d) Finally, we have all the instances where others referred to Jesus as the Son of God when He either accepted it or didn't deny it:
 - Satan and the demons (Matthew 4:3, 6; 8:29)
 - Martha (John 11:27)
 - The High Priest and Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:63)
 - The crowd at His crucifixion (Matthew 27:40)—they also said He claimed to be the Son of God in v. 43
- 3) He claimed to be one with God the Father (READ John 10:24-10:39):
- a) This was a direct claim to deity
 - b) He said something similar to Phillip in John 14:7-9: **"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." 8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**
- 4) He claimed divine prerogatives (list only):
- a) He claimed He can forgive sins (Mark 2:5ff)
 - b) He claimed He will judge the world (Matthew 25:31-46)
 - c) He claimed He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28)
 - d) He claimed His word is as authoritative as Scripture (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28)
 - e) He claimed He is eternal (John 3:13; 8:58)
 - f) He claimed He can give eternal life (John 5:21)
- d. Fourth Proof: Jesus' acceptance of worship:
- 1) The magi worshipped Him (Matthew 2:11)
 - 2) The blind man worshipped Him (John 9:38)
 - 3) The disciples worshipped Him (Matthew 14:33)
 - 4) The women who witnessed Him after His resurrection worshipped Him (Matthew 28:8-9)
- e. Fifth Proof: The miracles Jesus performed:
- 1) Listen to what John wrote (John 20:30-31): **"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."**

- 2) The Gospels recorded over 40 miracles performed by Jesus—everything from healing the sick to raising the dead; controlling nature like turning water into wine, multiplying food, calming the storm, and walking on water; even casting out demons
- 3) Each one of these was designed to reveal the divinity of Jesus
- 4) However, the greatest miracle, and the one that definitively declared Him to be the Son of God was His resurrection from the dead (READ Romans 1:1-4):
 - a) In accordance with the Old Testament prophets, Jesus predicted His death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-40; 16:21)
 - b) He even said it would be of His own doing, declaring that He had authority to not only lay down His own life but take it up again (READ John 2:19-22 & 10:17-18)
 - c) In fact, the Bible declares that all three persons of the God-head had a part in raising Jesus from the dead: God the Father (Acts 2:24), God the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18), and as we just saw in John 2 and 10, Jesus Himself
- f. Sixth (and final) Proof: the Bible's explicit declarations that Jesus is God:
 - 1) John 1:1-5 (READ)
 - 2) Hebrews 1:1-3 (READ)
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:1: **"Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as our, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ."**
 - 4) Titus 2:13: **"looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,"**

B. The humanity of Jesus Christ

1. What do we mean by Jesus being human?
 - a. John 1:14: **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."**
 - b. Hebrews 2:14-17 (READ)
 - c. 1 Peter 4:2: **"suffered in the flesh..."**
 - d. We mean more than He had a physical body (even theophanies in the OT appeared in physical form)
 - e. He did not lack any of the essential elements of humanity
 - f. Just as He is 100 percent God, He is 100 percent man
2. Three proofs of Jesus's Humanity:
 - a. First Proof: His birth
 - 1) He didn't suddenly appear on earth from heaven as a fully grown man
 - 2) While His conception was supernatural, everything else about His birth was natural:
 - a) He was conceived in a woman's womb (Luke 1:31, 42): **"And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus."**
 - b) He went through the normal nine-month gestation (Luke 2:6): **"And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth."**
 - c) He was born like every other human (Luke 2:7): **"And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."**
 - 3) He even experienced childhood:

- a) He experienced life as a baby (Luke 2:16): **“And they [shepherds] came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as he lay in the manger.”**
 - b) He experienced life as a young child (Matthew 2:11): **“And they [magi] came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother...”**
 - c) He experienced life as a pre-teen (Luke 2:42): **“And when He became twelve...”**
 - d) Finally, he grew into adulthood under the care and supervision of his earthly parents (Luke 2:51-52): **“And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”**
 - b. Second Proof: He lived within the experience and limitations of humanity:
 - 1) He ate and drank, and got hungry and thirsty when He didn’t:
 - a) Matthew 26:26-29 (the Last Supper)
 - b) Matthew 4:2: **“And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.”**
 - c) John 19:28: **“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, ‘I am thirsty.’”**
 - 2) When He traveled, He did it by foot, and sometimes even got tired (John 4:6): **“And Jacob’s well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.”**
 - 3) He slept (Mark 4:38): **“Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him...?”**
 - 4) He experienced sorrow and wept:
 - a) At the death of Lazarus (John 11:35): **“Jesus wept.”**
 - b) At the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:41): **“When He approached Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it.”**
 - 5) He experienced emotional distress (Matthew 26:37): **“And he took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.”**
 - 6) He even experienced temptation (Hebrews 4:15): **“He was tempted as we are yet without sin”**
 - c. Third Proof: His death (READ John 19:31-42)
3. So, how could Jesus be both fully God and fully man? There are FIVE important theological words that describe this:
- a. The first is the phrase **HYPOSTATIC UNION**:
 - 1) When theologians refer to Jesus being One Person with two natures (a divine and a human), they use the term HYPOSTATIC UNION
 - 2) The phrase originated out of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD as a means of countering heresy regarding Jesus’ nature
 - 3) They described Jesus as having two natures—divine and human—which exist in perfect and complete harmony without mixing, changing, dividing, or separating
 - 4) What this means is that Jesus’ divine nature did not alter, lessen, or change His humanity and His humanity did not alter, lessen, or change his divinity
 - 5) He is 100% God and 100% man

- b. The remaining four theological terms are found in Philippians 2:5-11:
- 1) V. 5-6: **"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,"**
 - a) This is referred to as the CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST
 - b) We usually think of condescension as a bad thing, but here it describes the act of voluntarily descending from a position of rank and dignity to a lower state
 - c) Jesus **"did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped"** so He was therefore willing to temporarily give up that equality
 - d) He did not give up being God, but rather gave up the rank and dignity that was rightly His as God's equal (something to which God returned Him; v. 9-10)
 - 2) V. 7a: **"but emptied Himself":**
 - a) This is referred to as the KENOSIS OF CHRIST
 - b) It comes from the Greek word meaning to empty
 - c) For Jesus to have emptied Himself does not mean that He was no longer God, or that He no longer possessed all the attributes of Deity, but rather that He voluntarily gave up the exercise of those attributes when He took on humanity
 - 3) V. 7b: **"taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."**
 - a) We find here what is referred to as the INCARNATION OF CHRIST
 - b) It refers to the act whereby Jesus, the eternal Son of God, took on human flesh and became a man (John 1:14): **"...Word became flesh and dwelt among us"**
 - c) As we talked about earlier, it involved both a supernatural conception and a natural, human birth
 - 4) V. 8: **"Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."**
 - a) Finally, we have in this verse what is referred to as the HUMILIATION OF CHRIST
 - b) It describes Jesus Christ's willingness to submit Himself to the sufferings and limitations of His earthly life, including death

C. The work of Jesus Christ

1. When we speak of the work of Christ we are referring to roles He fulfills or the functions He performs:
 - a. Those who prefer to describe Jesus Christ's work in terms of roles generally use the terms PROPHET, PRIEST, and POTENTATE (or KING)
 - b. Those who prefer to describe His work in terms of functions generally use the terms REVELATION, RECONCILIATION, and RULE
 - c. I prefer the latter because I believe it better represents the breadth of Jesus' work than the prior (e.g. prophet suggests the giving of prophecy, which Jesus did, but Jesus was more than a prophet in that He revealed much more than future events)
2. We also define the work of Christ in terms of time: the past, present and future (e.g. what He did before His incarnation, after His incarnation, and in eternity):
 - a. Let's look at His work in REVELATION:

- 1) In the Old Testament, there are two phrases that refer to the pre-incarnate Christ and they describe His work in revelation: “**the Angel of the LORD**” and “**the Angel of God**”
 - a) These occurs over 60 times and they are different than “**an Angel of the LORD**” or “**an angel of the LORD**” which refer to actual angels
 - b) The word for angel simply means messenger so another way to think of these phrases is “the Messenger” of the LORD or God—so, Christ’s pre-incarnate work included being a messenger to reveal God’s purposes and plans, and this was done sometimes simply as a voice from heaven but at other times taking on physical form
 - c) Read Genesis 16:1-13—notice that Sarai refers to the Angel as “**God**” in v. 13
 - d) We see something similar in Judges 6:11-25 when the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the Oak tree near Gideon—v. 14 identifies the Angel as the LORD Himself, “**The LORD looked at him and said...**”
 - e) Genesis READ 31:11-13—in v. 13 the Angel of God says, “**I am the God of Bethel...**”
 - f) We see this throughout the OT when the pre-incarnate Jesus speaks from heaven or appears in physical, human form as a messenger of God (e.g. when He visited Abraham along with two other “men” in Genesis 18)

- 2) In the New Testament, we also see Jesus’ work in revelation through His incarnation and His preaching:
 - a) READ John 1:14, 18
 - b) Matthew 11:27: “**All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**”
 - c) READ Hebrews 1:1-3
 - d) John 12:47: “**For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak.**”

- b. Let’s now look at His work in RECONCILIATION:
 - 1) Define reconciliation:
 - a) If you were to look up the definition of reconcile in an English dictionary you find everything from mending relationships to comparing financial accounts to bring them into alignment with one another
 - b) In a Biblical sense it refers to restoring the relationship between two things

 - 2) When we speak of Christ’s work in reconciliation, there are two things He accomplished:
 - a) The first is that He brought about reconciliation between God and man:
 - The Bible establishes that sin has made every living soul an enemy of God and deserving of His wrath and judgment (Romans 1)
 - However, God has restored our relationship with Him through Jesus (READ Romans 5:1-11)
 - READ 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
 - He is the “mediator” between us and God (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5)

 - b) The second is that Jesus brought about reconciliation between God and His Creation
 - Colossians 1:20 says that God reconciled “**all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross, through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven...**”

- Romans 8:20 says, **“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.”**
- c) And just like we saw with Jesus’ role in revelation, His work in reconciliation is both past, present and future because He secured reconciliation in the past by His death and resurrection, continues today to reconcile sinners to God, and will ultimately bring about the complete restoration of God’s creation
- c. Finally, let’s look at His work as RULER (and again, it involves the past, present and future):
- 1) The PAST: He created everything (pre-incarnate work) READ Gen 1:26; John 1:3;
 - a) John 1:3: **“All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being...”**
 - b) Colossians 1:16: **“For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.”**
 - c) We actually see this in Genesis 1:26 when God said, **“Let US make man in Our image...”**
 - 2) The PRESENT:
 - a) He sustains everything (present work):
 - Colossians 1:17: **“He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together”**
 - Hebrews 1:3: **“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power...”**
 - b) He currently rules from heaven and has authority over all things:
 - Ephesians 1:20-23 says that when God raised Jesus from the dead, He **“seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And He put all thing in subjection under His feet...”**
 - Matthew 28:18: **“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”**
 - 3) The FUTURE: He will rule over everything for all eternity:
 - a) Daniel 7:13-14: **“I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”**
 - b) Revelation 11:15: **“Then the seventh angel sounded, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’”**

So why is the nature and work of Christ important to us?

1. The incarnation—Christ becoming man—is the foundation of the Gospel: God sent Jesus to take on human flesh and walk among us so that in Christ, He could reconcile the world to Himself (John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:19)
2. Reconciliation required that Jesus be man because it allowed Him to identify with us, sympathize with our weaknesses, and ultimately suffer death in our place; Hebrews 2:1-18 says that because we are flesh and blood, **“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”**
3. Reconciliation also required that Jesus be God because only a holy, perfect sacrifice could pay the penalty for sin, and only God could live a perfect sinless life; Hebrews 4:15-5:10 says, **“15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. 5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2 he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; 3 and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. 4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”; 6 just as He says also in another passage, “YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.” 7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”**