

Systematic Theology:

Session Four

Christology

Christology is the theological study of the person and work of Christ.

The Human and Divine Nature of Christ

- I. The word _____ denotes the act whereby the eternal Son of God came and took to Himself a human nature. He remains forever undiminished Deity and true humanity united in one person forever. He is true God and true man. This is called the Hypostatic Union.

J.I. Packer

"The doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation belong together. The doctrine of the Trinity declares that the man Jesus is truly divine; the doctrine of the Incarnation declares that the divine Jesus is truly human. Together they proclaim the full reality of the Savior."¹

- Christ took on a human nature; He did not simply _____ in a human person.

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- The two natures of Christ are inseparably _____ without mixture or loss of separate identity. He remains 100% God and 100% man, two distinct natures in one Person forever.

THE KENOSIS THEORY

The Kenosis Theory holds that Christ gave up some of His divine attributes while He was on earth as a man. According to the theory Christ "emptied Himself" of some of His divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, while He was on earth. This was viewed as a voluntary self-limitation that He carried out in order to fulfill His work of redemption.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:5-7)

The text describes Jesus as "taking the form of a servant," that is, by coming to live as a man, and "being found in human form he humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." Thus, the context itself interprets this "emptying" as equivalent to "humbling Himself" and taking on a lowly status and position. Thus, the NIV translates it, "but made Himself nothing." The emptying includes change of role and status, not essential attributes or nature.

Paul's purpose in this context is to persuade the Philippians that they should "do nothing from selfishness or conceit" and, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." To persuade them to be humble and to put the interests of others first, he then holds up the example of Christ.

The Kenosis Theory, then, ultimately denies the full deity of Jesus Christ and makes Him something less than fully God.

¹ J.I. Packer, Concise Theology: A guide to Historic Christian Beliefs

2. The Virgin Birth (foretold in the Old Testament [Isaiah 7:14] and fulfilled in the New Testament [Luke 1:34-35]) says that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father.
 - The Virgin Birth made possible the uniting of full _____ with full _____ and guaranteed Christ's true humanity without inherited guilt.
 - Both natures are necessary for _____. As a man, Christ could represent man and die as a man; as God the death of Christ could have infinite value sufficient to provide redemption for the sins of the world.
3. Jesus was different from us in one important way: He was _____.

Hebrews 4:15, 16

"For we have not 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 therefore with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

- The two requirements for eternal life are: there must be a _____ and perpetual record of obedience to God's law, and the guilt and penalty of sin must be removed.
- The doctrine of _____ says that: 1) our sins were imputed to Christ on the cross, and 2) the Lord's perfect righteousness and obedience was imputed to us in salvation.

False Views of the Nature of Christ

1. There are two doctrines of _____ related to the nature of Christ.
 - Christ was both fully God and fully man.
 - Christ's human and divine natures were both united and distinct.

HERESY	ERA	ERROR
	Late 1 st century	They denied Christ's genuine humanity—Jesus only appeared human. (Pure spirit could not inhabit a human body.)
	2 nd century	They denied Christ's genuine divinity—Jesus was a great teacher. (They wanted to keep a strict monotheism.)
	Early 4 th century	They denied Christ's full divinity—Jesus was the first and highest created being. (He was God, but not fully God.)
	Late 4 th century	They denied Christ's full humanity—Jesus had a human body but a divine mind. (He was man, but not fully man.)
	Early 5 th century	They denied the unity of Christ's person—two persons existed in one body. (Human Christ was distinct from divine Christ.)
	Early 5 th century	They denied the distinction of Christ's natures—the human nature was swallowed by the divine and created a new third nature.

2. The final solution to the Christological controversies was the Chalcedonian Definition of A.D. 451.

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each na-

ture being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us.

The Atonement

1. The atonement is the work God did in Christ by His life and death to earn our _____. It meets the three needs of mankind.

MAN'S NEED	GOD'S PROVISION
Man deserves to bear God's righteous wrath against sin. <i>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.</i> (Romans 1:18)	_____ is the sacrifice that turns aside God's righteous wrath against sin. <i>God...loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.</i> (1 Jn 4:10)
Man is separated from God by his sins. <i>But your iniquities have separated you from God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.</i> (Isaiah 59:2)	_____ is the reestablishment of relationship between God and man. <i>God...reconciled us to Himself through Christ.</i> (II Cor 5:18, 19)
Man is in bondage to sin and the kingdom of Satan. <i>Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."</i> (John 8:34)	_____ is the purchase of the sinner out of the slave market of sin. <i>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.</i> (Eph 1:7, 8)

2. Jesus took on Himself the _____ necessary to pay the penalty for our sins.

- Jesus suffered in both His body and soul throughout His life.

Isaiah 53:3

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

- Jesus faced the physical and spiritual pain of crucifixion _____.

Matthew 27:46

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?"

- Jesus bore the intense _____ of sin that God had patiently stored up since the beginning of the world.

Isaiah 53:10

But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief.

3. Christ's death was a "Penal Substitution." "Penal" because He bore a penalty when he died. "Substitution" because He took our place when he died.

Man's Condition	God's Provision	Result
Man is totally depraved.	Christ's death satisfied the demands of God's justice, paying the penalty for sin.	Christ bears the penalty of sin; through repentance man can accept Christ substitutionary death as payment for his sin.

The Resurrection

1. The resurrection of Christ is the _____ of Christianity. If Christ was raised from the dead, our faith is secure. If He was not raised from the dead, He died in vain and our faith is vain, and we are still dead in our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:17

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

2. Christ's resurrection insures our _____.

1 Peter 1:3

In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

3. Christ's resurrection insures that we have _____ over sin.

Romans 6:4

...in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

4. Christ's resurrection insures our _____.

Philippians 3:21

...who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.