

Sovereignty Series:
“The Preexistence, Deity and Work of Christ, pt.2
January 27, 2013

John 1:1-3, 14; 1 Timothy 2:5

Melanchthon, the great reformer, pursued a fuller, richer understanding of the meaning and implications of Christ the Son of God being 100% fully God and 100% fully man in one person. Consuming his interests and his energies for decades he proved that this aspect of the God-man, Christ was beyond his searching out. Finally, with great relief at the time of his death, he rejoiced that his search to understand the mystery of God and man in one person would soon come to an end and the glory of the mystery of the God-man would become clear!

The early church fathers were also driven to understand and explain Christ as the God-man in one person. I saw a comment somewhere that of the hundreds of thousands of pages written before 381 A.D concerning the person of Christ, over half of those pages concerned Christ as the God-man: 100% fully God and 100% fully man in one person!!

The Gospel writers, the author of Acts, the writers of the Epistles and of the Revelation were concerned with one subject: Christ, the God-man. Everything is Christ in the Bible! They thought it no small matter to explain Christ and expound on Christ. This should lead us to conclude that of all the matters which concern us as Christians the One matter that matters most, that should occupy our time and energy, our intellect and affections—the One matter is Christ Himself! More to the point: Christ the God-man!

In this sermon it should become evident that we are emphasizing the deity and humanity of Christ in one person. I think this how Christ is portrayed in Scripture. For example, John 1:1-3, 14 demonstrates that the Word is the eternally preexisting Son of God become Flesh (1:14). From this point on we see Jesus revealed as the Christ, the Son of God. In other words, we know this man by His human name, Jesus, indicating his full humanity. We also see this same Jesus identified as the Son of God, indicating His full deity!

Let’s look across the pages of John’s Gospel. If you look carefully you will see three giant theological mountain peaks, each prominently displaying the Deity and humanity of Christ in one person.

The first mountain peak stands before us in John’s prologue. Here John 1:1-3, 14 reveal to us that

- The Word was eternally preexistent
- The Word was eternally with God
- The Word was God
- The Word dwelt in eternal unity with God

The Word became flesh

John was declaring the foundation Truth about Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the eternally preexistent Son of God become flesh! For John that Christ was the Son of God, very God of very God become flesh was everything!

But as we see through his gospel, John could not emphasize the deity of Christ enough. As we peer out over the remainder of his gospel we see the second mountain peak. In John 12:41, John provides a claim to revelation that would shock and astound the average Jewish reader. He makes clear that in His pre-incarnate state, Christ was the “glory” of the Temple, who IS the Sovereign of heaven and earth described by Isaiah in Isaiah 6. John left no doubt that the manifest glory of God is Christ the Son. There could be no mistaking that the glory of God in the Old Testament is He who became flesh and dwelt among the people of Israel, who died, was buried and resurrected from the dead—Jesus Christ the Lord!!

Jesus Christ is God!

The third mountain peak comes at the end of John’s Gospel. In 20:28 having previously expressed his doubts regarding Christ’s deity, Jesus confronts Thomas as the risen Son of God. Jesus appears to the disciples and allows Thomas the liberty to touch His hands where the nails had pierced, and feel His sides where the sword had plunged. At that moment Thomas comes into the full light of revelation and exclaims, “My Lord and My God!” It is this very truth that John wants his readers to receive, that Jesus Christ is God!

There is a fourth mountain peak, which John saves for us near the end of *The Revelation* of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 19:11-16 it is the risen and ascended Jesus Christ of Nazareth who comes in glory as the triumphant King of kings and Lord of lords. Think of it, Jesus Christ is coming in all holiness and righteousness to judge every people who have ever judged Him as inconsequential, a liar, a devil or an imposter. John makes it clear that this King is none other than the Word of God (John 1:1-3,14-18), Jesus Christ the Son of God. To His praise and glory we confess that Jesus Christ is God!!

A good rule of thumb for our confession of Christ as fully God and fully man in one person is as follows:

If it can be said about the Father, it can be said about the Son

If it can be believed about the Father, it can be believed about the Son

Is the Father Sovereign? So is the Son!

Is the Father all-holy? So is the Son!

Is the Father all-glorious, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, all-justice, all-righteousness, etc.? So is the Son!

Jesus Christ is God!

To know Him is know His Father (John 14:7).
To see Him is to see His Father (John 14:9).
To believe Him is to believe His Father (John 12:44).

(It should be noted here that only Jesus, the Son of God, could call God the Father, "My Father". Another notable quote of Jesus on this matter is John 8:54. In this one verse He addresses God as "My Father," whereas the people could only address God as, "My God." What a difference! It is only after we are reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ that we can then address God as, "Our Father." O, blessed Redeemer who is for us the new and living way to God!)

These statements by Jesus in John's Gospel leave no doubt that Jesus Christ is God!

If that were not enough! John has recorded eight "I Am" statements so that all doubt can be removed concerning the deity of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Let's look at perhaps the most prominent of all of the "I Am" statements, John 8:58.

Here in John 8 Jesus is under attack, being accused of being a liar and a devil. They accuse Him of being delusional because He acknowledged that Abraham looked forward to seeing His coming "and was glad" (John 8:56). Then, He spoke clearly to them asserted His eternal preexistence and His deity:

"I tell you the truth, before Abraham was I AM!"

Then, the text says, "They picked up stones to stone Him."

They knew He was claiming to be God!

As mentioned earlier, John records seven other "I Am" statements. They are clear statements that only very God of very God could make. They are as follows:

- I AM the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35)*
- I AM the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12; 9:5)*
- I AM the door (Jn. 10:7,9)*
- I AM the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11,14)*
- I AM the Resurrection and the Life (Jn. 11:25)*
- I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn. 14:6)*
- I AM the True Vine (Jn. 15: 1,5)*

Truly these statements confirm the identity of Jesus as the Son of God who is able to provide every spiritual need required to save and sustain the elect of God!

Have you received Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Sovereign Lord over all? Have you bowed down before Him who is, who was and who is to come? If not, why not? Would you do that now? Today is the day of salvation for all who receive Him, for those who believe on His name (See John 1:12).

The apostle Paul had first hand experiential knowledge of the Deity of Jesus Christ. While on a mission to Damascus to persecute the Church it was the risen Son of God, Jesus Christ who confronted him. Paul was struck blind by the inapproachable Light of God the Son. Within moments of this divine encounter, Paul acknowledged *Jesus Christ as Lord!* (see Acts 9:10). From that moment on Paul would never shrink back from declaring, “Jesus Christ as Lord”!

Take a moment to read Philippians 2:5-11. This is one of Paul’s most definitive statements on the eternal preexistence and deity of Christ. Here we see the history of Christ presented unapologetically. First his eternally preexisting glory in eternity *past*; second, his earthly ministry as the God-man descending to the cross; third, His eternity future where He reigns and rules in increased glory as the one and only Sovereign Lord! Truly, Paul left no doubt that the essential teaching about Jesus Christ must include His full deity and humanity in one person! Hence, the amazingly succinct credal declaration of Philippians 2:11, “Jesus Christ is Lord”. Or, to say it another way, “Jesus Christ is God”!

With full confidence Paul declared that Christ is fully God and fully man. He would not ever elevate Christ’s deity over His humanity. He explains in many passages that essential to the person of Christ is His humanity. The following texts serve as excellent examples of this:

2 Corinthians 8:9: “For you know the grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

Here we can see that Paul’s reference to the LORD is a clear reference to His Deity and *Jesus* a clear reference to His humanity.

Here is another example,

Galatians 4:4: “But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son (Deity), born of a woman (humanity), born under the law...”

Another,

Colossians 1:19-20: “For God was pleased to have **all His fullness** dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through **His blood**, shed on the cross.”

One more and perhaps the most clear of all:

Colossians 2:9: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity dwells in bodily form”

Certainly from the Colossians 2:9 passage we can see perfect alignment with John’s statements in John 1:14 and John 1:17-18!!!

Let's close by asking a big question. Why must Jesus Christ be both 100% fully God and 100% fully man in one person?

To answer we turn to Anselm of Canterbury. Anselm lived back in the late 11th century and early 12th century. He wrote a profound work entitled, "Cur Deus Homo", or "Why the God-man". (The book is deep and wide in its Christology, so it seems almost to be vulgar to reduce his masterpiece to small sound bites, but) Anselm answered his question by saying that God became a man in Christ because only one who was both God and man could achieve our salvation from God's wrath and justice.

He said that salvation must be:

- 1) Achieved by God for no one else could do it. Angels could not, nor could a perfect sinless man alone. It had to be God because only God had the will and power to save sinners.
- 2) Achieved by a man because man sinned and therefore man must pay the penalty; he must make right what he made wrong. But no man of sin could do such a thing because sin brought the will and desire of man into bondage, the heart in rebellion and the mind at enmity with God.

Therefore, salvation MUST be achieved by one person who is both God and man!

Next week we will rejoice at the Work of our Lord Jesus Christ. His work is redemptive, which means life giving to us who, according to the grace of God have through faith received Jesus Christ as Lord. But let us not forget that we would do well as a fellowship of confessors to hold fast to the simple confession that Jesus Christ is God. I believe that should this confession ever lose its primacy in this fellowship, then we will be obliged to change our name as a church. But I am certain of better things for us!

Grace and peace be yours in abundance!

Sovereign Christ Bible Fellowship Church is committed to spreading the good news of the glory of the Gospel of God in Christ to every creature under heaven. As Hebrews 2:7-9 declares about Him,

"You made Him a little lower than the angels; you crowned Him with glory and honor and put everything under His feet."

"In putting everything under Him, God left nothing that is not subject to Him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for every 'son'."

Therefore, if it would benefit this cause the contents of the preceding message can be used in what ever form would be most helpful in causing more people to "**Behold the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ!**"