

Doctrines of Scripture

The Hypostatic Union

Introduction

There are themes in the scriptures concerning which saints can disagree, however, when we consider Divine Persons, their activities or manifestations, there can be no room for disagreement. The hypostatic union of our Lord is such a truth, being one of the many themes where created beings can never grasp the infinity of divine persons. The incomprehensible can never be grasped by the limited mind for every attribute of God is inexhaustible. How could created man, who cannot understand the complexities of his own body, ever understand our Lord?

- a) In whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yet increased with wisdom
- b) Who, being God is never weary, yet being man He was wearied
- c) Who being God could not die, yet the man who died was God
- d) In full awareness of His deity He could say: "I and my Father are One" (Jn. 10:30), and in full awareness of humanness say: "I thirst" (Jn. 19:28).

This theme is not to be rationalized but to cause one to bow in wonder and worship. Our Lord said: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27). The addition of: "and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" indicates that there are depths in Christ that only the Father can understand and appreciate.

Closely aligned with this doctrine are the doctrines of the condescension, the incarnation, the deity, and humanity of the Lord.

From time to time one hears preachers speaking about the hypostatic union of our Lord. Very often it is spoken in such a way that all are expected to know what is meant, but this is not so. Indeed, it is possible that the vast majority of people do not know what is meant much less try to define it. Therefore, our first objective is to try to put it in language the saints can understand. This will be done by breaking it down into the following headings:

- a) That which the word "hypostatic" means.
- b) What the doctrine does not mean.
- c) Scriptures which teach His hypostatic union.
- d) The wonder of His hypostatic union.
- e) The uniqueness of the hypostatic union.

That which the word "hypostatic" means.

The word "hypostatic" simply means:

- a) The union of the two natures of the Lord, His human and divine in one person. It is not two persons in one body but a single person who is the fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9), and not only perfectly man but a perfect man.
- b) The non interference of one nature over the other, thus suppressing either one. Neither does it mean the blending of the natures to make a third nature.

What the doctrine does not mean.

In seeking to make understandable this mystery, not only has there been false teachings but also illustrations of it. The rationalizing of this truth by man has resulted through the years with such errors as those who taught and today teach that Christ only became deity at His baptism, His deity left Him at Calvary, and He only appeared human but was not such. These are all erroneous. We restate that human rationale cannot simplify, explain, or account for the complexity of the complete deity and humanity of the Lord. It is not:

- a) The same as a marriage where two people become one, for they are still two individuals.
- b) The same as the union between Christ and His own, for that is a spiritual union.
- c) The same as Christ indwelling the believer, for the individual is only a man but not God.

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- d) The two natures combining to make a third in which the divine was prominent over the human or the human over the divine.
- e) That the man Jesus gradually took on the divine nature.

Scriptures which teach His hypostatic union

When reading the scriptures of truth we learn there are a number of passages which present the hypostatic union of the Lord. Passages such as:

Term indicating humanity	Reference	Term indicating deity	Reference
Jesus	Matt. 8:29	Son of God	Mk. 1:1; Jn. 20:31
Mary brought forth a son	Matt. 1:23	Emmanuel	Matt. 1:23
A child born	Isa. 9:6	A son given	Isa. 9:6
This man	Mk. 15:39	The Son of God	Mk. 15:39
Not have this man	Lk. 19:14	The Lord of Glory	1 Cor. 2:8
The child of twelve years of age	Lk. 2:49	My Father's business	Lk. 2:49
The seed of David	Rom. 1:3-4	The Son of God	Rom. 1:4
David's son	Matt. 22:45	David's Lord	Matt. 22:45
Jesus	1 Thess. 1:10	His Son from Heaven	1 Thess. 1:10
We see Jesus made a little lower than the angels	Heb. 2:9	Son, the brightness of glory, etc.	Heb. 1:1-2
The word was made flesh	Jn. 1:14	In the beginning was the Word and . . . the Word was God	Jn. 1:1-3
Concerning the flesh Christ came	Rom. 9:5	Who is God over all	Rom. 9:5
Made in fashion as a man	Phil. 2:7	Being in the form of God	Phil. 2:6
Jesus	Matt. 8:29	Thou Son of God	Matt. 8:29
Jesus	Matt. 9:2	Seeing their faith. . . Thy sins be forgiven	Matt. 9:2; Mk. 2:5

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The wonder of His hypostatic union

Before His incarnation the Lord was exclusively deity. At His incarnation He added to Himself humanity without divesting Himself of any attribute of deity, but never using His deity to anesthetize Himself of any of the trials or sufferings of His humanity.

The deity of our Lord was never separated from His humanity nor His human needs separated from His deity. These cannot be separated. Some illustrations of this union are:

- a) The man who slept in the back of the boat (Matt. 8:24) was God, and being such He stilled the storm and waves (Matt. 8:26). He did not sleep as man and still the waves as God, that is dividing His person.
- b) The God who said to the dead child, "Arise" and being man He took her by the hand. (Mk. 5:36-41)
- c) Being man He hungered yet had the ability to make stones bread. (Matt. 4:2-4)
- d) At the grave of Lazarus human emotions will flow as He wept, yet being God He will call the dead to life. (Jn. 11:35; 38-43)

The uniqueness of the hypostatic union

It is the hypostatic union which is one of the unique characteristics of Christianity. No other Founder is divine, much less human and divine. They are only sinful men. Christ is gloriously unique in multi avenues of thought:

- a) He is the only man who is eternal in His being (Jn. 1:1-3); yet was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4).
- b) Was completely sinless in His life (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:5) yet suffered the penalty for sins (Isa. 53:4b-5, 5b; 8b; 10a).
- c) Who was crucified in weakness yet whose death was an accomplishment (Lk. 9:31).
- d) Who entered into death, the stronghold of Satan (Heb. 2:14); yet who rose triumphantly from the dead defeating the powers of darkness (1 Cor. 15:3; Col. 2:15).
- e) Who came down from Heaven, from God, and ascended back up to Heaven (Mk. 16:19; Acts 1:9)
- f) Who is God appointed Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1); is exclusively the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 6:20); is the Christ (Messiah) (Matt. 16:16); and God appointed King (Psa. 2:6).

His hypostatic union is only one of the many unique features of the Lord. Neither the Father or the Holy Spirit can claim that! No matter how apparently contradictory the deity and humanity of the Lord may be, it is only so because of our limited understanding.

- a) How can He who is omnipresent not be with the disciples when they were in the boat? (Jn. 6:16-17)
- b) Or why did He who is omniscient ask questions such as: "Where have ye laid Him?" (Jn. 11:34); "How many loaves have ye?" (Matt. 15:34)
- c) How could He the Sovereign Lord be subject to his parents? (Lk. 2:51)

The answer is: "We do not know, and such things are too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto them" (Psa. 139:6). This is why the Lord said: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him". (Matt. 11:27).

Concluding Thoughts

This is a mystery in which the invisible God became visible as man; the immortal became mortal; the omnipresent became localized; the almighty became dependent; and the sovereign became the Servant.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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