

Part IV: The Person and Work of Christ

Chapter XIV: The Names and Natures of Christ

1. The Names of Christ

The most important names of Christ are the following:

- a. Jesus. This is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, Jos. 1:1; Zech. 3:1, or Jeshua, Ezra 2:2. Derived from the Hebrew word 'to save,' it designates Christ as the Savior, Matt. 1:21. Two types of Christ bore the same name in the Old Testament, namely, Joshua the son of Nun and Joshua the son of Jehozadak.
- b. Christ. This is the New Testament form for the Old Testament 'Messiah,' which means 'the anointed one.' According to the Old Testament, prophets, 1 Kings 19:16, priests, Ex. 29:7, and kings, I Sam..10:1, were anointed with oil, which symbolized the Holy By this anointing they were set aside for their respective offices, and were qualified for them. Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit for the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. Historically, this anointing took place when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and when He was baptized.
- c. Son of Man. This name, as applied to Christ, was derived from Dan. 7:13. It is the name which Jesus generally applies to Himself, while others seldom use it. While it does contain an indication of the humanity of Jesus, in the light of its historical origin in points far more to His superhuman character and to His future coming with the clouds of heaven in majesty and glory, Dan. 7:13; Matt. 16:27, 28; 26:64; Luke 21:27.
- d. Son of God. Christ is called 'the Son of God' in more than one sense. He is so called, because He is the second Person of the Trinity, and therefore Himself God, Matt. 11:27, but also because He is the appointed Messiah, Matt. 24:36, and because His birth to the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:3.
- e. Lord. Jesus' contemporaries sometimes applied this name to Jesus as a form of polite address, just as we use the word 'sir.' It is especially after the resurrection of Christ that

the name acquires a deeper meaning. In some passages it designates Christ as the Owner and Ruler of the Church, Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:17, and in others it really stands for the name of God, 1 Cor. 7:34; Phil. 4:4, 5.

2. The Natures of Christ

The Bible represents Christ as a Person having two natures, the one divine and the other human. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3:16.

a. The two natures. Since many in our day deny the deity of Christ, it is necessary to stress the Scripture proof for it. Some old Testament passages clearly point to it, Such as Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Micah 5:2; Mal. 3:1. The New Testament proofs are even more abundant, Matt. 11:27; 16:16; 26:63, 64; John 1:1, 18; Rom. 9:5; 1 Cor. 2:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 19:16. The humanity of Jesus is not called in question. In fact, the only divinity many still ascribe to Him is that of His perfect humanity. There is abundant proof for the humanity of Jesus. He speaks of Himself as man, John 8:40, and is so called by others, Acts 2:22; Rom. 5:15; 1 Cor. 15:21. He had the essential elements of human nature, namely, a body and a soul, Matt. 26:26, 38; Luke 24:89; Heb. 2:14. Moreover, He was subject to the ordinary laws of human development, Luke 2:40, 52, and to human wants and sufferings, Matt. 4:2; 8:24; Luke 22:44; John 4:6; 11:35; 12:27; Heb. 2:10, 18; Heb. 5:7, 8. Yet though He was a real man, He was without sin; He did no sin and could not sin, John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 9:14; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5. It was necessary that Christ should be both God and man. It was only as man that He could be our substitute, and could suffer and die; and only as sinless man that He could atone for the sins of others. And it was only as God that He could give His sacrifice infinite value, and bear the wrath of God so as to deliver others from it, Ps. 40:7-10; 130:8.

b. The two natures united in one Person. Christ has a human nature, but He is not a human person. The Person of the Mediator is the unchangeable Son of God. In the incarnation He did not change into a human person; neither did He adopt a human person. He simply assumed, in addition to His divine nature, a human nature, which did not develop into an independent personality, but became personal in the Person of the Son of God. After this assumption of human nature the Person of the Mediator is not only divine but divine-human; He is the God-man, possessing all the essential

qualities of both the human and the divine nature. He has both a divine and a human consciousness, as well as a human and a divine will. This is a mystery which we cannot fathom. Scripture clearly points to the unity of the Person of Christ. It is always the same Person who speaks, whether the mind that finds utterance be human or divine, John 10:30; 17:5 as compared with Matt. 27:46; John 19:28. Human attributes and actions are sometimes ascribed to the Person designated by a divine title, Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 2:8; Col. 1:13, 14; and divine attributes and actions are sometimes ascribed to the Person designated by a human title, John 3:13; 6:62; Rom. 9:5.

c. Some of the most important errors concerning this doctrine. The Alogi and the Ebionites denied the deity of Christ in the early Church. This denial was shared by the Socinians of the days of the Reformation, and by the Unitarians and Modernists of our day. In the early Church Arius failed to do justice to the full deity of Christ and regarded Him as a demi-God, while Apollinaris did not recognize His full humanity, but held that the divine Logos took the place of the human spirit in Christ. The Nestorians denied the unity of the two natures in one Person, and the Eutychians failed to distinguish properly between the two natures.

To memorize. Passages to prove:

a. The deity of Christ:

Isa. 9:6. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Jer. 23:6. "In His days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness."

John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Rom. 9:5. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever."

Col. 2:9. "For in Him dwells all the fulness of the God"

b. The humanity of Christ:

John 8:40. "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God."

Matt. 26:28. "Then said He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide here and watch with me."

Luke 24:39. "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself'. handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having."

Heb. 2:14. "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

c. The unity of the Person:

John 17:5. "And now, Father, glorify Thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

John 3:13. "And no one hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, who is in heaven."

1 Cor.2:8. "Which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

For Further Study:

a. In what respect was Joshua the son of Nun a type of Christ; and in what respect Joshua the son of Jehozadak? Zech. 3:8, 9; Heb. 4:8.

b. What do the following passages teach us respecting the anointing of Christ? Ps. 2:2; 45:7; Prov. 8:23 (cf. Auth. Ver.), Isa. 61:1.

c. What divine attributes are ascribed to Christ? Isa. 9:6; Prov. 8:22-31; Micah 5:2; John 5:26; 21:17. What divine works? Mark 2:5-7; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3. What divine honor? Matt. 28:19; John 5:19-29; 14:1; 2 Cor. 13:14.

Questions for Review:

1. Which are the most important names of Christ? What is the meaning of each?
2. What elements are included in Christ's anointing? When did it take place?
3. Whence is the name 'Son of Man' derived? What does the name express?
4. In what sense is the name 'Son of God' applied to Christ?
5. What different meanings has the name 'Lord' as applied to Christ?
6. What Bible proof is there for the deity and humanity of Christ?
7. What is the nature of the Person of Christ, divine, human, or divine-human?
8. How can the unity of the Person of Christ be proved from Scripture?
9. What are the main errors respecting the Person of Christ?