

## Christmas 2023 – The Hypostatic Union

### A. Definition.

1. In the person of the incarnate Christ are two natures, divine and human, inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.
2. The dispensation of the hypostatic union began at the moment of the virgin birth, also classified as the first advent of Christ.
3. From the time of the virgin birth and forever, our Lord Jesus Christ has been and always will be undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever.
4. The doctrine of the hypostatic union was confirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.
  - a. The two natures of Christ maintain their complete identity though being joined in personal union forever. The attributes of His human and divine nature belong to their corresponding natures though the attributes of either nature belong to the one person of Christ. Each nature has its own attributes that adhere to that nature.
  - b. There is no mixture of the two natures to form a third substance or hypostasis. The human nature always remains the human nature and the divine nature always remains the divine nature.
  - c. It is orthodox to refer to Christ as a theanthropic (the God-man) person. The two natures are united without transfer of attributes. It is impossible to transfer an attribute of one nature to the other nature without destroying that nature.
  - d. The essence is composed of the sum total of its attributes. A change of attributes involves a change of essence. Therefore, there is no change in the essence of deity or the essence of humanity.
5. The focus of the doctrine concerns the union of two natures, divine and human in one hypostatic union, one person.
6. The word “nature” comes from the Greek word, οὐσία (*ousía*), the present participle of εἶμι (*eimi*), which means “that which is one’s own.” It means essence. It is the persona of the unique person of the universe.
7. *Ousía* means, “being or existing,” but comes to mean “nature.”
  - a. Beginning with the incarnation of Jesus Christ, a human nature was inseparably united forever with the divine nature of Jesus Christ.
  - b. Yet the two natures remain distinct, whole, unchanged, and without mixture or confusion, so that He is true humanity and undiminished deity in one person forever. Since the incarnation, Jesus Christ is true humanity and undiminished deity in one unique person forever.



- c. Since the incarnation, Jesus Christ is true humanity and undiminished deity in one unique person forever. Since the first advent, it is no longer the divine nature alone which is expressed in His person, but the human nature as well.
  - d. The Lord Jesus Christ is unique in the universe. He is God with all the attributes of God. All the attributes of deity adhere to His deity and never cross over and become humanity. All the attributes of humanity adhere to the humanity of Christ and never become deity. The attributes of the divine nature could not be transferred to the human nature of Jesus Christ to help Him to resist temptation or to meet the great problems of life. The human nature of Christ in hypostatic union had to depend entirely upon the plan of God the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - e. Jesus Christ had to become perfect humanity to be our savior, to be our high priest, to be the mediator between God and man, and to fulfill the promise of the Davidic covenant that David's son would rule forever.
8. The Approach to the Hypostatic Union.
- a. The two natures of Christ in hypostatic union remain distinct, whole, and unchanged without mixture or confusion, so that one unique person, our Lord Jesus Christ, remains forever truly God and truly man. Whatever the Bible says about either the divine or human nature of Christ must be attributed to the entire person. Whatever is true of either nature is true of the entire person of Christ in hypostatic union. Jesus Christ is not two persons, but one person with two natures.
  - b. Jesus Christ is the God-man, undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever.
  - c. Jesus Christ is not two persons. That is the Nestorian heresy. To deny that Christ is one person is to deny the incarnation, the First Advent, the dispensation of the hypostatic union, and our so great salvation.

#### B. Biblical Documentation of the Hypostatic Union.

**John 1:1** In a beginning which was not a beginning there always existed the Word [deity of Christ], and the Word was face-to-face with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”

**John 1:14** And the Word [the deity of Christ] became flesh [true humanity] and tabernacled among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the unique one from the Father, full of grace and doctrine.” (EXT)



**2 John 1** What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

**v. 2** and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

**v. 3** what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (NASB)

**Hebrews 12:2** Be concentrating on Jesus, leader-hero and completer of our doctrine, who because of His exhibited happiness, He endured the cross and disregarded the shame, then He sat down at the right hand of God.

**v. 3** Think about Jesus who has endured such hostility of sinners against himself, that you may not be fatigued in your souls. (EXT)

**Philippians 3:10** ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death ... (NASB)

**Romans 1:3** Concerning His Son [deity] who was born from the seed of David according to the flesh [ humanity ],

**v. 4** who has been demonstrated the Son of God by means of power according to the Holy Spirit because of the resurrection from the dead, ... Jesus Christ our Lord [ deity ],

**1 Timothy 3:16** [ A summary of the dispensation of the hypostatic union. ] And by common acknowledgment, great is the mystery of the spiritual life: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up into glory.” (EXT)

**Hebrews 1:3** Who being the flashing forth of the glory, and the exact image of His essence; also sustaining all things by the Word of His power, having Himself accomplished purification for sins [ function of His humanity ], He was caused to sit down [ only humanity sits ] at the right hand of the majesty on high.” (EXT)



**Hebrews 2:14** Therefore, since children [ **Homo sapiens** ] share blood and flesh, He also partook of the same [ **became true humanity** ], in order that through [ **substitutionary spiritual** ] death, He neutralized [ **rendered powerless** ] Satan who had the power of death.” (EXT) 5-9

**Philippians 2:5** Keep on thinking this in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

**v. 6** who though He existed in the essence of God, He did not think equality with God a gain to be seized;

**v. 7** but He laid aside His privileges [ **κένωσις (kénosis)**<sup>!</sup> ] taking the form of a servant, having come to be in the likeness of men.

**v. 8** And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of [ **substitutionary spiritual** ] death, even the death of the cross!

**v. 9** Therefore also, God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name [ **a royal patent** ] which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.” (EXT)

- a. We are to have the same thinking that our Lord had during the dispensation of the hypostatic union. Precedence for our thinking does not go back to Israel, but to the humanity of Christ inside the prototype spiritual life. Thinking is worship.
- b. Under the doctrine of **κένωσις (kénosis)**, our Lord did not use His deity in connection with the Father’s plan for the incarnation.
- c. Note the secret of our Lord’s greatness in His humanity: “He humbled Himself.”

### C. The Doctrine of the Communion of Attributes.

#### 1. The Hypostatic Union.

- a. While the two natures of Christ in hypostatic union remain distinct, whole, and unchanged without mixture or transfer one to the other whatever the Bible says about either nature must be attributed to the entire person of Christ.

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<sup>!</sup> The True Humiliation of the Incarnation. During the dispensation of the hypostatic union, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes in compliance with the Father’s plan for the Incarnation and the First Advent. This means that Jesus Christ did not use the attributes of His divine nature to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, to glorify Himself, to act independently of the future protocol plan of God for the Church Age by the compromise of the prototype spiritual life.



- (1) The attributes of deity never transfer to humanity or become the attributes of the humanity of Christ. When Jesus Christ was on earth and facing all of the temptations to sin in His humanity, He did not call on His deity to solve the problem. He solved them from his humanity. This is where Dr. Charles Hodge and other theologians have come to erroneous conclusions about the deity of Christ helping His humanity resist the temptation to sin. Our Lord never allowed the integrity of His human nature to be compromised by help from His divine nature. All of His help came from the Father and Holy Spirit totally apart from His own deity.
- (2) Many theologians want to make impeccability the fact that the deity stepped in and guided the humanity of Christ away from temptation. That is absolutely wrong! Many theologians imply that the divine nature overpowers the human nature so that the human nature cannot say yes to temptation. This is totally wrong. Our Lord's help came from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, not from His divine nature. He could not depend upon His own deity to prevent Himself from sinning. His deity did not help Him at all.
- (3) There is no true humanity in Jesus Christ, if the attributes of His deity start functioning in His humanity. He did not use His deity to resist temptation. He used His humanity. His spiritual life was in His human nature, not His divine nature. He tested and proved our spiritual life from His humanity. He performed miracles from both His own divine attributes and from the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

**Ephesians 4:13** ... until we all attain the objective because of the system from doctrine, and by means of ἐπίγνωσις (*epignōsis*) knowledge of the son of God [ **understanding the hypostatic union** ], resulting in the mature believer attaining the stature of the maturity of the fullness of Christ. (EXT)

- (4) This last phrase deals with the prototype spiritual life which was lived entirely in the human nature without any divine attributes coming over to help out.

**Ephesians 3:20** Now to Him who is able to do more than we could ever ask or think on the basis of the power that keeps on working for our benefit,

**v. 21** to Him the glory by agency of the Church by agency of Christ Jesus with reference to all generations of this unique age of the ages. (EXT)

