

Systematic Theology session 28
Doctrine of Christ, Part 5

- The union of the two natures of Christ into the single divine person of the God-man.
 - The difficulty of speaking of the union of the two natures of Christ in the Incarnation.
 - The approach of speaking of the union of the two natures by studying what the union is NOT.
 - The proper use of the creeds of the early church as summaries of Scripture on the question, as a result of the work of the early church in refuting errors.
- The Creed (or Symbol) of Chalcedon (451 AD).
 - The two natures as united “inconfusedly.”
 - Christ’s two natures are not somehow mixed together to make a third type of nature, or a composite nature, neither fully divine or fully human.
 - The two natures as united “unchangeably.”
 - The divine nature of the second Person of the Trinity is not changed in the Incarnation.
 - The human nature that Christ took in the Incarnation is not changed from real human nature.
 - The two natures as united “indivisibly” and “inseparably.”
 - The two natures of Christ do not result in two persons.
 - The “communication of properties”: whatever we can say about one of Christ’s natures, we can say about the person of Christ.
 - The caution to not take the doctrine of communication of properties too far. Christ’s divine nature does not change His human nature, to give Him the human nature of a “superman.” Hebrews 2:14-18 shows that His humanity is like ours.
 - This principle as shown in Luke 2:52 (the person of Jesus grew in wisdom, as humans do), and Luke 24:39 (the person of Jesus, in His humanity, has a human body). John 8:58 ascribes deity to the person of Jesus (“before Abraham was, I am”).
- Monophysitism (or Eutychianism): The error that Christ, after the Incarnation, has only one nature instead of two natures.
 - Refuted by other principles of systematic theology, such as the Creator-creature distinction (see Romans 11:33-36), and immutability (see Malachi 3:6). Also refuted by Romans 1:1-4.
- Nestorianism: The error that asserts that Christ is two persons, a human person and a divine person, instead of two natures and one Person.
 - Refuted by passages that speak of Christ as a single Person (Luke 1:30-35, Galatians 4:4-5, Colossians 2:8-10).
 - Refuted by interactions between the Person of Christ and the Persons of the Father and Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17).

| Christological Heresies | | |
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| Denying Christ's divinity | Adoptionism Arianism | <i>Adoptionism:</i> Christ just an ordinary man, but God "adopted" him at some point. <i>Arianism:</i> Christ is not God, but is only the first and greatest creation of God. |
| Denying Christ's humanity | Docetism/Gnosticism Apollinarianism | <i>Docetism:</i> Christ only seemed to have human nature. <i>Apollinarianism:</i> Christ had a human body, but the place of His human spirit was taken by the Logos, or the Word. |
| Confusing the two natures of Christ | Monophysitism/Eutychianism | The error of Christ only having one nature, a mixture of the divine and human nature. |
| Dividing the two natures | Nestorianism | Christ as two persons, a divine person and a human person. |

| Ecumenical Councils | Year | |
|---------------------|------|---|
| Nicaea | 325 | Formal statement on the Trinity |
| Constantinople | 381 | Rejection of Apollinarianism, Monophysitism, and Nestorianism |
| Chalcedon | 451 | Consolidation of "one person in two natures" |