

## **Belgic Confession Article 19– The Two United Natures of Christ**

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **Jesus is God**. He has no beginning. He has no end. He has all power. You saw that in Article 10. **Jesus is also man** with **a real human nature** – You **saw that the last time in Article 18**.

**But it is not sufficient to prove Jesus was fully God and fully man as 2 independent facts.** You **have to know how his Divine and human natures work together** and **why those two natures worked together** for your salvation and sanctification. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

**The Relationship of Christ’s two natures**

**The Purpose for Christ’s two Natures**

**The Heresies about Christ’s two Natures**

Our goals are: **That you learn that Christ was truly man and truly God in 2 distinct natures permanently joined together**, and that you will **see the necessity and benefits of Christ being 1 person with these 2 distinct natures**.

**We believe that by this conception the person of the Son is inseparably united and connected with the human nature;** so that there are **not two Sons of God**, nor two persons, but two natures **united in one** single person; **yet each nature retains its own distinct properties**. As, then, the divine nature has always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life, filling heaven and earth, so also has the human nature not lost its properties but remained a creature, having beginning of days, being a finite nature, and **retaining all the properties of a real body**. **And though He has by His resurrection given immortality to the same, nevertheless He has not changed the reality of His human nature;** forasmuch as our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of His body. But **these two natures are so closely united in one person that they were not separated even by His death**. Therefore that which He, when dying, commended into the hands of His Father, was a real human spirit, departing from His body. But in the meantime the divine nature always remained united with the human, even when He lay in the grave; and the Godhead did not cease to be in Him, any more than it did when He was an infant, though it did not so clearly manifest itself for a while.

### **The Relationship of the two Natures**

#### **1. Consider a few reminders of Christ’s Divine nature!**

##### **a. Jesus claimed to be God and accepted being called God.**

**John 5:18** Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, **making Himself equal with God**.

John 10:30 "I and My Father are one."

It was this claim to be God that caused his execution. The Jews thought he was just a carpenter.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

The Lord would have been extremely wicked if he claimed to be God and was not.

**b. He pardoned sins, something only God can do.** (This is the work of God.)

Mark 2:10 "**But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins**" —He said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

**c. He accepted worship,** something only God does. The worst punishment is reserved for those who polluted worship!

Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "**Truly You are the Son of God.**"

This was not the generic "son of God" like you are. This was the name of the Divine person!

**d. He was the Creator, and since God was the Creator, he was God.**

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

## **2. Consider a few reminders that Jesus was fully man.**

**a. Jesus was born of Mary,** the oldest of her many children. Matthew 13:55.

**b. His family lines are listed** in Matthew 1, and Luke 3.

**c. He grew in wisdom and stature.** He grew like other children, but he exceeded them in godliness. But he did not know everything as a man. For example, Jesus did not even know when he would return the 2<sup>nd</sup> time. Luke 2:52. **His soul grew!**

**d. He grew tired,** like when he was in the boat, and needed sleep. He had preached all day.

**e. He was hungry** – really hungry – and so could be tempted. Matthew 4:2

**f. He was sad and cried.** He **had groanings of the soul** for physical things (like when Lazarus died) and for spiritual things (like when **he mourned because Israel would not return to God.** (John 10). Mark 3:5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, **being grieved by the hardness of their hearts.** John 11:35. **He cried when he was a**

**baby!** (“No crying he makes” as in the Advent song is silly and inaccurate.)

**g. He was thirsty.** He could not use a shortcut by creating satisfaction miraculously. He experienced full thirst in this body.

**h. He sweated.**

**3. And remember some of the obvious proofs that Jesus indeed was a man – a real man.**

He was called "fruit of the loins of David" according to the flesh, "born of the seed of David" according to the flesh; "the seed of David"; "fruit of the womb of the virgin Mary"; "born of a woman"; "a shoot from the root of Jesse"; "the offspring of Judah," having descended from the Jews according to the flesh; "from the seed of Abraham"—for he "assumed Abraham's seed" was "made like his brothers.”

**4. Now the relationship between the two natures: Jesus’ human and Divine natures were inseparably linked, but not mixed.**

His Divinity remained Divine. His human body kept its nature, and was glorified, as your human body will be glorified after the resurrection. **Even when Jesus was in the grave, his Divinity remained in his body. His Divinity could not die.** So his human and Divine natures did not mix.

**5. What is noticeable about this doctrine is you cannot find an explanation of how these 2 natures could exist in 1 person.**

Rather, **you have proof from the Scriptures they do exist together.** The human mind is limited and cannot understand difficult things. So don’t try to explain “how” Jesus is man with **a body and a soul**, and **God at the same time.** It is beyond your ability to get this! But God says it and that makes it true!

**The Purpose for Christ’s two Natures**

Wherefore we confess that He is very God and very man: very God by His **power to conquer death**; and very man that He might die for us according to the infirmity of His flesh.

**1. Jesus had to be God because only God has the power in himself to conquer death and only he had the great power to free the whole world from death’s condemnation.**

A mere human could not conquer death for himself, let alone conquer death for the whole world. Look how Jesus taught that he had the power to do this!

**John 10:18 "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..."**

You can only be a Christian if you believe Jesus is God, **for without him being God you would still be in your sins.**

**2. Jesus had to be man, for since man sinned, man had to die.**

**God’s justice and God’s nature demand this.** You can only be a Christian if you believe

that Jesus was fully man, for without him being fully man, you, as a man, would have to die for your own sins. **A thousand goats could not suffice for you.** You could **not give money to expiate for your sins** as Islam teaches. **“Doing your best”** as the West teaches is an abominable sacrifice to bring to God to try to please him. Jesus was your scapegoat! He took your place. Your works were like filthy rags.

So if **Jesus’ body did not come from Mary’s body, he would not be fit to die for you.**

**3. Christ, fully God and the second Adam, provides for you all the benefits he gained (perfect righteousness).**

**Adam gave you the curse. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam gave you righteousness.**

**Romans 5:19** For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, **so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.**

**4. Guido deBres, the writer of the Confession, was under severe persecution when he wrote the Confession, and was eventually beheaded by Roman Catholic controlled authorities, yet, because he knew how critical this doctrine was to the hearts of men, he spent much time explaining this doctrine.**

This doctrine has not declined in importance. It can’t. **And at a time when there is an increasing attempt to make Jesus simply into a moral example, you must understand this doctrine well and accept it.** An example of the attack on Christ’s work is seen in the life of Bultman. He argued: “You don’t really need the cross as atonement but you need the cross as a picture of being sacrificial. You need to be like Jesus’ example.” Lies.

**5. Ultimately, the ground for the Divine Son of God taking on a human nature, is love, love for you.**

Illustration: Imagine a perfect husband! His wife commits adultery multiple times with others and has no interest in coming back. That husband then chooses to go and **does whatever it takes to get his wife back.** His love drives him. He has to humble himself and leave his beautiful home and go and get his wandering bride. **That is why Jesus had to take on humanity!**

**Heresies About Christ’s Two Natures**

**1. Eutychus (c378-452) wrongly believed Jesus had 1 nature.**

**He believed Jesus 2 natures formed 1 new nature, so Jesus was neither true man nor true God.** He thought Jesus’ natures became polluted by the other. **It is like mixing a hot and cold liquid** – the result is neither hot nor cold liquid. So to Eutychus, Jesus became semi-god-like, and his Divine nature became somewhat humanlike.

**Martin Luther held a watered down version of this false teaching.** He believed **Jesus’ human nature has taken on board this divine characteristic of omnipresence and is therefore everywhere present, including in man’s body.** This led to Luther’s **doctrine of consubstantiation.** This doctrine teaches that Christ is really physically present on top of,

alongside of, or underneath the elements of the Lord's Supper. But **we believe that Christ's body is in heaven**, and his Divinity is everywhere present. So the bread we eat and the wine we drink are not parts of his physical body.

**2. Nestorius (5<sup>th</sup> century) taught that Christ has 2 natures that were completely separated from each other.**

It was like trying to **mix oil and water**. He argued that the Divine Jesus came to live in the body of a human Jesus. He was wrong.

**If this were true, then Jesus would not be fit to die as he would not have been a full God-man from conception**, and would therefore not have the power to save. The truth is, Christ's human nature (body and soul) and his Divine nature had to be inextricably linked so he would meet God's lawful requirements.

**3. The Jews accepted Jesus' humanity, but not his Divinity.**

The Jews did not reject the Trinity, but they rejected Jesus! To them, Jesus was merely human.

**This view rejects Jesus as a fit sacrifice for sins.**

**4. Unitarians and liberals also deny Christ's Divinity.**

Generally, they believe he **was a good man who was a good example to imitate**. They even deny his sacrifice on the **cross for sins as essential**. Rather, they teach Jesus only taught self-sacrifice. Heresy!

**This is a common erroneous view among non-Christian church attenders today.**

**5. The Greeks accepted his Divinity but not his humanity.**

To them, Jesus only seemed human. This Greek heresy is known as "Docetism," from the Greek word "to appear, to seem." This view rejects Jesus as a fit sacrifice for sins.

**Conclusion:**

**Christ is 1 person with 2 distinct natures: truly God, and truly man. He had to be truly God and truly man!** He had to be man because **since man sinned a man had to die!** As God **he was great enough to be able to take the full justice of God!**

Brother and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. Today, one of the most common errors is to make Jesus as merely a man of good example, showing love, mercy, and compassion.** If you agree with this and look to Jesus and imitate him, the world likes you. And because many people want to be liked by man more than they want to be liked by God, they simply imitate Jesus.

**2. But treating Jesus this way denies the necessity of his 2 natures** and doing this is really an **attempt to hide the great work of Christ and rob him** of the consequent praise of those who

look to him for salvation. **So do not let Jesus see you as a robber – especially a robber of his honor!** He died to satisfy God's anger against you! **He had to atone for all your sins!**

**3. Proudly announce Christ as fully man, and fully God,** so men would look to him and be saved. No other person can save!

Finally, if you are not a Christian: No one can ever hope for salvation apart from this God-man, Jesus Christ. You have many sins in your account, and will die with your sins on your head, unless you appeal to the infinite God-man for your salvation. Please do so today.