

JESUS *Human or Divine?*

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Our Lord Jesus Christ is God Himself, the Incarnate Logos, who took to Himself a **complete** manhood. His Divine Nature is united with His Human Nature in a **complete hypostatic (personal) union without mingling, confusion, alteration or separation**. Furthermore, the unity between the two Natures occurred **without transmutation**. Thus the Divine Nature did not transmute to the Human Nature, nor did the Human Nature transmute to the Divine Nature. The Two Natures did not mingle, as in the case of wheat and barely or salt and sugar, and were not confused, as in the case of wine and water or tea and milk. The Two Natures were not altered, as opposed to the case of the chemical union of carbon and oxygen to form carbon dioxide, each loses some of its properties that distinguished it before this unity. In contrast, no change occurred to the Divine or Human Nature as a result of their unity. The Two Natures were not separated for His Divinity parted not from His

Humanity for a single moment nor a twinkling of an eye.

The Divine Logos was united with the Human Nature (body & spirit) that He took from the Virgin Mary by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit purified and sanctified the Virgin so that the Child to whom she gave birth would not inherit the original sin. This unity between the Two Natures (Human and Divine) took place from the first moment of the

Holy Pregnancy. As a result of this unity between both Natures inside the Virgin's womb, **One** Nature (entity) was formed **out of both**: "**The ONE Nature of God, the Incarnate Logos.**" The Term "One Nature" **does not refer to either** of the Two Natures (Human or Divine), **but it refers to the result of the union of Both Natures** into this One Nature which is "the Nature of the Incarnate Logos". The term "Two Natures" implies division or potential separation. Human language is inadequate when it comes to describing this union but here is one example: The union between the human spirit and human body: The nature of the human spirit unites with the physical earthly nature of the body without mingling, confusion, alteration, or transmutation {Note: They will separate at death and then they will reunite}. This union of the two natures (human spirit and human body) results in ONE nature that is the human nature. The term ONE here doesn't refer to either of the two natures (spirit or body) but it refers to the result of this union of BOTH natures into this ONE human being. **Therefore, just as we say that the person is ONE nature consisting of two elements (spirit and body), we can also say about the Incarnate Logos that He is ONE entity of two natures (Divine and Human)**. The union of the spirit and body is a hypostatic one. So is the union of the Divine Logos and the Human Nature in the virgin's womb. A hypostatic, real, self-essential union not a mere connection that separates as Nestorius claimed. Although a person is formed of two natures (spirit and body), nobody refers to him/her as two. All the person's acts are attributed to this ONE nature, not to the spirit alone or the physical body alone. Similarly, all the acts of Christ should be attributed to Him as a whole, not to His Divine Nature independently or to His Human Nature independently.

In a Nutshell:

Our Lord Jesus Christ has Two Natures:

1. The Divine Nature of the LOGOS.
2. The Human Nature that He took from the Virgin Mary.

The Human Nature is composed of Two Elements: the Human Spirit and the Human Body.* The Divine Nature of the LOGOS is united with every element of the Human Nature without mingling, confusion, alteration, transmutation, or separation. As a result of this Hypostatic Union, One Entity is formed out of Both (Divine and Human) Natures. This is the "One Nature Of God, The Incarnate Logos". When we refer to this **ONE NATURE** we are referring to this **ONE ENTITY** that resulted from the union of **BOTH** the Divine and Human Natures.

So what happened on the cross? Our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross. Death means that His Human Spirit was separated from His Human Body. The Divine Logos remained united with **BOTH** the spirit and the body after their separation. Hence, His Divinity parted not from His Humanity. This explains why the body was not corrupted in the grave and it also explains how the spirit was able to return to the body when the Resurrection took place.

Are we Monophysites?

The Oriental Orthodox Churches (Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Indian) are '**Miaphysites**.' There is a difference

between the 'Monophysites' who believe in **One Single Nature** (Divine) of our Lord Jesus Christ and the 'Miaphysites' who believe in **One United Nature** or **One Composite Nature** (Divine and Human) of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not believe in a Single Nature but we believe in One Incarnate Nature of the Logos.

Our Faith concerning the One Will and One Act:

Naturally, since we believe that after the union of the Divine and Human Natures, One Nature resulted, namely, the Nature of the Incarnate Logos. We also believe in **One Will** and **One Act** for the Incarnate Logos. There is no contradiction or conflict between the Will and the Act of the Two Natures; what the Divine Nature chooses is undoubtedly chosen by the Human Nature. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work*" (John 4:34) This proves that His will is the same as the Father's. Certainly, the Divine Logos has the same will as the Father since He is one with Him in the Godhead. Thus, it must be that the Nature of the Incarnate Logos has One Will that is not different from the Father. In fact, sin is nothing but a conflict between man's will and God's. But our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*" (John 8:46) proving His One will with the Father. If there were no unity between the will of the Divine Logos and His Human Nature, internal conflict would have resulted. Far be it from Him! How then could the Lord Jesus Christ be our guide and our example? The complete righteousness that marked the life of our Savior was due to the unity of His Divine and Human will. Also, the crucifixion was the choice of both the Divine and Human will. Had it not been one will, it would not have been said that He died by His own will for us. And since the will is one, the act is also one.

*This Lecture is adapted from 'The Nature of Christ' by H.H. Pope Shenouda III.

* Human nature actually consists of three elements: The body, the spirit and the soul. As St. Paul said, "may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Only two are mentioned above for simplicity. But we need to understand that our Lord had a FULL human nature.

