



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 6.5 – The Doctrine of Jesus, Son of God, Messiah (Christology)

The Sharing of the Two Natures within the One Person

We will now examine the way Scripture speaks about the two natures of Christ in the one person and how these two natures work together. What does the human nature share with the divine nature, and what does the divine nature share with the human nature? We can use the words “permeation” and “interpenetration” to describe this sharing. The basic teaching is stated in John 1:14: **“The Word became flesh.”**

It is true that the human nature and the divine nature are so different and distinct from each other that it is difficult to think of any kind of sharing between them. And yet, because **“the Word became flesh,”** there is a sharing of the two natures in the person of Jesus Christ, but only in the person of Jesus Christ. In Psalm 110:1 it is written: **“The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”** This is a conversation between God the Father and God the Son. The Son is the promised Messiah, a Man born of woman. And yet He sits at God’s right hand, sharing in the glory and authority of His Father.

Jesus referred to Psalm 110:1 in an interchange with the Pharisees on Tuesday of Holy Week: **“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord,” saying: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’”? If David then calls Him “Lord,” how is He His Son?’”** (Matthew 22:41-45) The Pharisees could not answer Jesus, but we can, since we know that Jesus has a human nature as the Son of David but also a divine nature as David’s Lord and God. Therefore, even though the natures of God and man are distinct from each other, they are joined in the person of Jesus in such a way that we can say that God is man in the person of Jesus Christ.

The human nature is so different from the divine nature that we cannot say of any human that he is God. And yet we can say of the Man Jesus Christ: **“This Man, and this Man only, is God.”** **“The Word became flesh”** (John 1:14). This is the way Scripture speaks. In Isaiah 9:6 we are told that **“a Child is born...a Son is given,”** and then we are told that His name is **“Mighty God.”** Likewise, in Jeremiah 23:5-6 we are told that David will have a Branch, that is, a Son, whose name is **“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”** This human Son of David is at the same time the Lord of David. This Man is God. Thus, the Child born to Mary is **“Immanuel...God with us”** (Matthew 1:23).

We cannot say that the human nature becomes the divine nature, or that the divine nature becomes the human nature. Each nature retains its own characteristics. And yet we can say (with reference to Jesus only) that God has become man in the person of Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ, the Man, truly is God. In the days before the incarnation, the Son of God or the Word was *without flesh*. But in the incarnation, **“the Word became flesh”** and so forever after that incarnation the Son of God – the Word of God – is *in flesh* and the Word does not ever revert back to being without flesh. In other words, ever since the incarnation, Jesus is both God and man, and there can be no separation of the human nature from the divine nature in Him. He is the God-man – true God and true man – with His two natures being inseparable from each other.

Believers in Jesus are also children of God, but only Jesus is the *natural* Son of God, that is, the Son of God (and true God) from the moment of His conception. We become children of God by adoption. It is written that God **“chose us in Him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself”** (Ephesians 1:4-5). **“God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons”** (Galatians 4:4-5).

Questions

1. In what ways are human nature and divine nature different from each other?
2. In what person are human nature and divine nature found together?
3. Explain the riddle of David's Son and David's Lord.
4. What names are given to Jesus to show that He is truly God?
5. Why would it be wrong to say that Jesus today is “without flesh”?
6. What is the difference between being a natural son of God and an adopted son of God?