



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

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics)
Lesson 6.5.2.2 – The Doctrine of Jesus, Son of God, Messiah (Christology)

The Sharing of Attributes: of Majesty – Omnipresence and Divine Honor

Another divine characteristic shared with Jesus' human nature is omnipresence – being everywhere at once. This truth is especially difficult for the human mind to grasp, and there have been many Bible students through the years, and still today, who reject it. In fact, one of the main arguments of those who deny the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Lord's Supper is that Jesus' human body ascended to heaven and, therefore, cannot be present in all the various places on earth where the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

During Jesus' state of humiliation, He gave the appearance of being only in one place at a time, just as all of us are only in one place at a time. When a great storm arose on the sea and Jesus' disciples were alarmed, Jesus was in a definite place: He was asleep in the boat. That is where they woke Him up, and that is where He stood up and He quieted the winds and the waves (Matthew 8:23-27). When the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years wanted to be healed by Jesus, she walked up to Him and touched His clothes, and she was healed. She knew where Jesus was, and she went to Him (Matthew 9:20-22). When Jesus was a baby, He was also in a definite place: Mary **"wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger"** (Luke 2:7). When Jesus was twelve years old, Joseph and Mary did not know where He was, but **"after three days they found Him in the temple"** (Luke 2:46). The four Gospels clearly spell out where Jesus was during His arrest, His trials before the Jews and Pontius Pilate, and at His crucifixion.

Yet even during His state of humiliation there are indications that Jesus was not limited to a definite location. For example, when the people of His hometown of Nazareth threatened to throw Him off a cliff, the Bible says: **"Passing through the midst of them, He went His way"** (Luke 4:30). At a later time, when Jesus' enemies had already picked up stones to throw at Him and kill Him, the Bible account says: **"Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by"** (John 8:59).

After Jesus rose from the dead, He was in His state of exaltation; He could be anywhere He wanted to be, without being limited by walls or distance. The angels did not roll the stone away from Jesus' tomb so that He could escape, but so that the women and His disciples could see that the tomb was empty. On the evening of the day of His resurrection, we read: **"when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst"** (John 20:19). Jesus showed up here and there and then just as suddenly vanished from their sight.

In His state of exaltation, Jesus now fully exercises His omnipresence – not only as God but as man, because Jesus' divine nature and His human nature cannot be separated from each other. Wherever Jesus is, He is the God-man – fully God and fully human. Jesus' human nature is present everywhere His divine nature is present. Jesus assured His followers: **"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"** (Matthew 18:20). After His resurrection He repeated this promise: **"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"** (Matthew 28:20).

Those who deny this truth point to Jesus' ascension to heaven. They say that Jesus being at the right hand of God is evidence that Jesus' human body cannot possibly be present on earth at the present time. But the Bible presents Jesus' ascension and His sitting at the right hand of God in an entirely

different way. This is what Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus: God **“raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all”** (Ephesians 1:20-23). In the same letter Paul wrote: He **“ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things”** (Ephesians 4:10). Jesus ascended to heaven not only as God, but also as man. So He fills all things both as God and as man. His human nature shares in this divine characteristic of being everywhere at all times, ruling over all things for the good of His Church and sharing in the glory and authority of God in every way. God’s right hand is not a physical place in heaven, but it is everywhere, as these passages clearly indicate.

That is why Peter said on Pentecost: **“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear”** (Acts 2:32-33). Not many days later Peter repeated this testimony: **“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins”** (Acts 5:30-31). Being at the right hand of God implies that there are no limitations of any kind on Jesus now. He can do what He wants, and He can be wherever He wants. He fills all things and so He is omnipresent, not only as God but also as man, for the disciples saw the Man Jesus ascending to heaven.

The letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus, **“when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”** (Hebrews 1:3). **“We have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God”** (Hebrews 4:14). It is true that we now ordinarily do not see Jesus, but that does not mean He is not present. He appeared to Paul several times after His ascension, and He also appeared visibly to John on the island of Patmos. Peter wrote that we love Him even though we do not see Him, and: **“Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory”** (1 Peter 1:8).

But we will see Jesus’ presence again when He returns to judge the world. At His ascension the angels said: **“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”** (Acts 1:11).

Since Jesus’ human nature shares in the divine characteristics of omnipresence, as well as omniscience and omnipotence, there is no reason to deny that Jesus can give His body and blood to us in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. We do not want to lock up Jesus’ human nature in heaven and separate it from His Church. We do not want to prevent Him from being wherever He wants to be and doing whatever He wants to do. If He wants to give us His body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, there is nothing to prevent Him from doing that. We shall discuss this further when we study what the Bible says about the Lord’s Supper.

Since these various divine characteristics are shared with Jesus’ human nature, does this mean that divine honor should be given to Jesus’ human nature as well? The Old Testament prophets insisted that the LORD (JHVH) God is the only One who should receive such honor and worship. Isaiah said: **“I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another”** (Isaiah 42:8).

But such divine honor is also given to Jesus in His human nature. We cannot separate Jesus’ human nature from Jesus’ divine nature in such a way that we honor only His divine nature when we honor Him. **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”** (Philippians 2:9-11). Surely when we honor Jesus, the God-man, we are honoring Him as both God and man; His human nature shares in the honor and worship. We are not worshipping His human nature as something separate from His divine nature, but as being joined to it

in one Person. We worship the whole Person of Jesus. The angels in heaven praise Him: **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing... Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever”** (Revelation 5:12-13).

Questions

1. Why do so many reject the teaching that omnipresence is shared with Jesus' human nature?
2. How did Jesus hide His omnipresence during His state of humiliation?
3. What are some passages in the Gospels that put Jesus in a specific place.
4. Why did the angels roll away the stone from the entrance to Jesus' tomb?
5. Where did Jesus promise to be in the future?
6. Where is Jesus present with us today?
7. Jesus has ascended to heaven, so where is He now?
8. Where is God's right hand?
9. What does it mean that Jesus is sitting at God's right hand?
10. In what way will Jesus return on the Last Day?
11. Why is Jesus able to give us His body and blood in the Lord's Supper?
12. How does Jesus' human nature share in the glory given to Him as God?