



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

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics)
Lesson 6.5.3 – The Doctrine of Jesus, Son of God, Messiah (Christology)

The Sharing of Attributes: *in Work*

In this lesson we look at some Bible passages that present Jesus' official acts or actions as the action of one Person, with each nature contributing its own characteristics to the action. We begin with the very first Gospel promise in Genesis 3:15: **"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."** The speaker is God, and He is speaking to the serpent, that is, to the devil who has used the serpent for his evil purposes. Jesus is the woman's Seed who shall bruise or crush Satan's head while having His own heel bruised. The action is the crushing of Satan. We see the human nature in the fact that this Person who crushes Satan is a human being born of a woman, who will have His heel bruised. But the divine nature is involved also, because no human being can possibly take on Satan and win the battle. The apostle Paul wrote regarding the devil and all his hosts: **"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"** (Ephesians 6:12). Human nature, acting by itself, could not hope to defeat Satan. But Jesus' human nature was necessary in order for Him to be the woman's Seed and to have His heel bruised, that is, to be put to death in order to take away Satan's power. **"It pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief"** (Isaiah 53:10).

The apostle John refers to both natures in Christ when he writes: **"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"** (1 John 1:7). The action is cleansing from sin. The human nature contributes the blood that can be sacrificed to God. But the blood of any ordinary person would cleanse no one from sin. It has to be the blood of One with a divine nature, namely, the Son of God. For it is written: **"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him – for the redemption of their souls is costly"** (Psalm 49:7-8). Only the blood of One who is God Himself has enough value to redeem sinners.

Peter, Jesus' apostle, wrote that Jesus **"Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed"** (1 Peter 2:24). Again we see the two natures cooperating in our salvation: the human nature contributes the body that was crucified – the body that could be beaten by stripes – but the divine nature is necessary in order for such suffering to provide healing – to actually bear our sins and take them away, to atone for them by means of a costly sacrifice.

Similar passages can be found in the Gospels, in the book of Acts, and in the epistles. Examples include John 1:29, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:2, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, and Hebrews 2:14, which says: **"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."** In order to destroy the power of death, Jesus had to be God. But He had to be man in order to die for our sins and destroy death and the devil. In all His functions – as Savior, Mediator, King, Priest, Prophet, Lord, and Shepherd – Jesus carried out His official actions as one Person using of both of His natures in order to accomplish His purpose.

How important it is to remember that Jesus died not only as man but also as God! Just as the Child Jesus in the manger was the Lord God Himself – as the angels told the Bethlehem shepherds – so the Man Jesus that was nailed to the cross was the Lord God Himself. Thus, it is correct to say that our

God, the mighty Creator, died for the sins of man, His creation. It needs to be emphasized that Jesus died on the cross not only in His human nature but also in His divine nature. We dare not separate the two natures from each other when we consider Jesus' actions. And when Jesus returns, He will return as God and man in one Person, our Savior.

Questions

1. In what way does Genesis 3:15 picture the coming Savior as both God and man?
2. Why was it necessary for Him to be man?
3. Why was it necessary for Him to be God?
4. Why could not even Jesus as a holy, perfect Man save us from our sins?
5. Why could God not save us without taking on a human nature?