

1. **Introduction:** In the incarnation, The second Person of the Trinity took to Himself a human nature in union with His eternal divine nature and became the one person, Jesus of Nazareth, fully God and fully human.
 - The transformation from Divine Spirit to the one person, Jesus of Nazareth, fully God and fully human, was carried out by the Holy Spirit who caused the virgin Mary to conceive. The baby grew full term in her womb and was born.
 - Everything about His birth was natural except conception.
 - The Son's divine nature and Person were His from eternity, eternally begotten by the Father. His human nature (which includes His human body) was acquired "in time," derived from His mother, Mary.
 - It is a deep mystery how the eternal, omnipotent, infinite, omniscient, second Person of the Trinity could add to Himself a finite, limited human nature and become one person in a human body. Yet, we know it is true.
 - Consider how the Westminster Confession of Faith expresses the truths of the incarnation in chapter 8, paragraphs 2.
2. **Westminster Confession of Faith 8:2:** *"The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."*
3. **Insight into the Mystery:** Our working definitions of "nature" and "person" are helpful for gaining some insight into this divine mystery.
 - Recall that a person is a nature possessing a self-conscious center containing a source of "I" (identity). No matter how many natures, the key to being one person is having one and only one identity "I" which controls each of the natures.
 - A human person is one nature plus one identity "I."
 - The Trinity is one nature or essence shared by three divine Persons, each possesses the whole divine essence, each is fully God, and each has a separate identity ("I").
 - The incarnate Son has two natures but is one person possessing one identity ("I").
 - That one identity ("I") that controls both natures must be His divine identity since God is immutable (unchangeable). Adding a human nature simply adds another nature to be controlled by His divine identity.
 - The incarnate Son is not a human person. The incarnate Son is the God-man, possessing a divine nature, a divine identity ("I"), and a human nature but no human identity. He has no human "mission control center."

4. **Purpose of the Incarnation:** The incarnation's purpose was to accomplish a specific mission – to save a fallen people from the punishment due them.
 - All are sinners. Fallen people are spiritually dead, totally unable to do anything to save themselves from their just sentence of death and God's wrath.
 - Without God's intervention there is no hope. God chose to intervene by having the Son become incarnate, live on earth among His people, and carry out the mission of salvation which would require His death.
 - To free them from that ghastly situation, each person must somehow become holy and righteous as God is holy and righteous.
 - God's moral law reflects His character. Action to eliminate the penalty due for sins or action to provide personal righteousness must be consistent with His law.
 - What does the law require? Does God's moral law apply to Christians? Yes.
5. **Matthew 5:17-18:** *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”*
 - When a portion of the law has been fulfilled, it no longer applies. Some things in OT have been fulfilled, some no longer apply because they were specifically for the Israelites individually or as a nation. Common examples include the ceremonial and dietary laws.
 - Jesus' resurrection changed the day devoted to worship from the seventh day to the first day of the week.
 - When Paul says that believers are no longer under the law, I believe he is talking about the moral law that reflects God's character and has always and will always apply to everyone. What then about Paul's statement to believers.
 - To be freed from the penalty for sin, Mosaic Law requires the death penalty to be paid by the sinner or by someone who lawfully is a substitute for the sinner.
 - Satisfying the death penalty for sins is only a part of the problem. In addition, a sinner must also acquire personal righteousness. Paul's point is that the penalty due sin does not apply to believers because Jesus paid that penalty once for all time.
 - Believers are no longer under the just condemnation of the law because their penalty has already been paid by Jesus.
 - Jesus paid the death penalty for everyone who believes. But what about acquiring personal righteousness?
 - How can a person acquire personal righteousness that satisfies the law?
 - The law says, personal righteousness can be obtained by personal perfect obedience to the law in every sense, or by a substitute living the life of perfect obedience for those lawfully represented.
6. **The Son's Incarnate Mission:** To deal, once for all time, with the problem of sin that condemns every human to suffer God's wrath.

- All humans are Adam and Eve's progeny. Since Adam and Eve's fall into sin, every person is born spiritually dead having a sin nature that inevitably leads them to active sinning.
 - God is holy and cannot tolerate sin. Sinners must approach God through an acceptable mediator. OT mediators were able to only temporarily and partially deal with the sin problem.
 - Jesus' mission was to be a permanent solution to humanity's sin penalty, sin nature, and lack of personal righteousness problems. He would be a lawful substitute who satisfies the law's demands for all whom He represents.
 - His mediatorial actions on behalf of those He represents will, once for all time, satisfy the law's demands against sin. He will bear the due punishment and supply personal righteousness apart from the requirement that they perfectly obey the law.
7. **1 Timothy 2:5**: ***"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."***
- Mediator means one who stands between two entities that have differences whose function is to bring about reconciliation between the parties.
 - The issue Jesus mediates is God's holy opposition to sin and man's inability to not sin. God justly condemns sin. People inevitably sin.
 - Through Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son, mercy will be extended to repentant sinners without violating the eternal law of justice. Mercy is not automatic but will be granted through a covenant established by belief in Him.
 - The incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, did complete His mission and those who believe are freed from condemnation and enabled to ultimately be glorified (i.e., be made holy and righteous as God is Holy and righteous).
 - Glorified believers will be able to dwell with God forever. (Heb.
8. **Were Two Natures Necessary**: Did acquiring a Human Nature add to the incarnate Son's capability something essential to His mission?
- The short answer is yes! There are things a human can do that God cannot do.
9. **Necessity of His Human Nature**: All mankind sinned in Adam. It is necessary that the death penalty for sin be borne by those who sinned or by a lawful substitute.
- The incarnate Son is to be the lawful substitute for meeting the law's demands. As eternal spirit, God cannot die. Dying was necessary to accomplish the Son's mission. It was essential the incarnate Son have a human nature capable of death.
 - Paying the law's death penalty for sin will involve suffering of body and soul such as only a human person can experience (Jn. 12:27; Acts 3:18; Heb. 2:14, 9:22).
 - To be an effective substitute, the incarnate Son must have human nature's essential properties but also the infirmities that came with the Fall (Heb. 2:17-18).
 - As a lawful substitute, the Mediator must be sinless. A sinful person who willingly gave up their life could not atone for their self nor for others (Heb. 7:26).

- The Mediator's truly human nature must have experiential knowledge of the woes of mankind and yet have never given in to temptations.
 - Then He could enter sympathetically into experiences, trials, and temptations that people endure and be a perfect example for believers (Heb 2:17-18, 4:15-5:2, etc.).
 - Forgiveness of sins requires the shedding of blood.
10. **Hebrews 9:22:** *"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."*
11. **Leviticus 17:11:** *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life."*
- In the Old Testament, atonement for sins required blood sacrifices. Those sacrifices were only temporary and only partially atoned for sins. Since sin occurred constantly, atonement sacrifices had to be repeated (Lev 17:11; Heb 9:22).
 - Atone means to make it possible "to be at one." Two related words are associated with atonement. The two words are "propitiate" and "expiate."
 - Expiation is the act that results in the change of God's disposition toward us. For believers, that act is what Christ did on our behalf on the cross.
 - The result of Christ's expiation work is propitiation – God's anger is turned away.
 - God's anger and wrath is directed at sin. To be "at one" with God, we must be free from actual sin and our sin nature. We will discuss those issues later. Being totally free of sin and having no sin nature doesn't happen until we are glorified.
 - The God-Man, Jesus the Christ, by sacrificing Himself will expiate our sin paying the death penalty as our lawful substitute. His work of expiation will permanently propitiate the Father concerning believer's sins.
 - As with OT sin sacrifices, Jesus' act of willingly yielding Himself into the hands of others to be killed must end with the shedding of His blood.
12. **Necessity of His Divine Nature:** Our lawful substitute and Mediator must be able to bring to God a sacrifice of infinite worth. He must also be capable of living a perfect life under the law.
- Jesus must redemptively bear the wrath of God that is due our sins so that we may be free of the curse of the law's penalty.
 - Fallen humans can do nothing in their own strength to avoid God's wrath at their sin nor can they perfectly obey the law. Except for God's redeeming grace, we would all have to bear God's wrath forever.
 - Having lived a perfect life under the law (earning righteousness), paid the penalty due our sins, all done on behalf of those He represents, Jesus will through the Holy Spirit, apply to those who believe the benefits of His accomplished salvation work.
13. The principal reference has been **Systematic Theology** by Louis Berkoff.
14. Next lesson we begin with how Jesus' two natures worked together.