

**DOCTRINE OF GOD**  
**Lesson 6: The Person of Christ**  
**The God-man**

I. BIBLICAL COUNTOURS

a. Titles

- i. Messiah: Jesus is the “Anointed One”, the one sent by God to be the true Prophet, Priest, and King that Adam and Israel failed to be.
- ii. Son of Man: Jesus used this title about himself more than any other. The title has messianic origins (Daniel 7:13-14) and speaks to the universal rule that Jesus enjoys.
- iii. Son of God: Jesus is the eternally generated Son and the perfect image bearer of the eternal God, the faithful Son in a way that Adam and Israel failed to be.
- iv. Servant of Yahweh: From the Servant Songs of Isaiah to the synagogue readings in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-21) to the *Carmen Christi* (Phil. 2:5-11), Jesus is the faithful servant of the Lord who has come to do perfectly the will of the Father.

b. The testimony of the Gospels

i. Implicit testimony:

1. His baptism – Fulfilling all righteousness, Jesus receives the Spirit and the benediction of the Father. These marked him out as the Messiah and the dawn of the messianic age. (Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1)
2. His teaching & miracles – “...but I say to you...” (Mt. 5-7) Jesus taught with an authority that marked him out as different from all those who preceded him and those who would preach “in his name”. The same is true of the manner with which he performed signs and wonders.
3. His death & resurrection – He sees his death and resurrection as divinely ordained events. (Mk. 10:45; Jn. 10:17-18) By these two acts, he would reconcile God and man, by which he had the authority to forgive sin. (Mk. 2:5-12; Lk. 5:20-26)
4. His worship – He is bold enough to not only allow people to worship him (Mt. 14:33; 21:15-16), but also to say that it is impossible to honor the Father without also honoring the Son. (Jn. 5:23)

ii. Explicit self-understanding of Jesus:

1. His use of *Abba* – Nowhere in all of Jewish literature is their precedence for calling God, “Father” in the way that Jesus does. He consistently speaks of his relationship to God in familial terms that his opponents understood as equal to deity. (Jn. 5:18)

2. His use of *Son of God* – Closely related to his use of “Father”, this phrase indicates that he believes that he has a relationship with God that is unique, as the “only begotten Son”. (Jn. 5:19-23)
  3. His use of “I am” statements – Sometimes he uses this phrase without a predicate in a deliberate identification with the covenant God of Israel. (Ex. 3:6,14; Jn. 6:20; 8:24, 28) Other times he includes a predicate to tie his ministry to the work of Yahweh in the OT. (Jn. 6:35; 8:12; 10:7-9)
  4. He makes himself as the object of personal faith – To believe in Jesus is to believe in God. (Jn. 14:1) To believe in Jesus is to have eternal life. (Jn. 3:15-18,36)
- c. The testimony of the Apostles
- i. Who is Jesus? The apostolic testimony to Christ’s unique person can be summarized by the following: [from K. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, p.171]
    1. Jesus is *God the Son* and thus Lord by virtue of what he has always been.
    2. Jesus now becomes *Lord* and *Christ* by virtue of his incarnation and cross-work.
    3. In his humanity, the Son fulfills the roles of previous sons (e.g., Adam, Israel, David) by inaugurating God’s kingdom and the promised new covenant age, *and* he is able to do so precisely because he is the *divine* Son.
  - ii. Biblical evidence:
    1. Romans 1:3-4 – The Son, who, according to the flesh is descended from David, is designated as the Son of God by his resurrection.
    2. Phil. 2:5-11 –
      - a. The eternal Son who was “in the form of God” takes on “the form of a servant”, which Paul defines as being in “the likeness of man”.
      - b. As a human, he becomes obedient to death.
      - c. In return, God has highly exalted him to be the supreme Lord – the enthroned God-man.
    3. Heb. 1:1-4 – The Son is the last and greatest revelation of God to mankind, the “exact imprint” of God’s nature. This Son was present at the creation of all things and now, as the exalted Lord rules over heaven and earth. As man, he suffered death as a sacrifice for purification of sins.

## II. THEOLOGICAL CONTOURS

### a. Christological Heresies:

#### i. Deny Christ's deity:

1. Ebionites – Jesus is exclusively human who justified himself by the works of the law and became an example to his people.
2. Adoptionism – At his birth (or baptism), God adopted Jesus as his son but he was not divine.
3. Arianism – Jesus is the first created being and was of a “similar substance” with the Father but was not truly divine, “of the same substance”.

#### ii. Deny Christ's humanity:

1. Docetism – Jesus was fully divine but only seemed human.
2. Gnosticism- Contrasted Jesus, the man, with Christ, the highest of divine emanations.

#### iii. Confuse the two natures of Christ: Monophysitism – Before the incarnation, there were two natures but afterward there was only one.

#### iv. Divides the two natures of Christ into two persons:

Nestorianism – the Logos indwelt Jesus morally rather than essentially.

#### v. Kenotic theology – Christ gives up his deity in order that he might live fully as a human.

### b. Orthodox formula: Jesus is one person with two natures, one fully divine and one fully human.

#### i. Jesus is one person.

1. Person = an active subject who does things and to whom things happen.
2. The person of the incarnation is the divine Son who assumed a human nature without a human subject. In this sense, Jesus is unique and unlike say, a demon-possessed person or a Spirit-indwelt person.

#### ii. With two natures.

1. Nature = that by which a thing is what it is.
2. Divine nature = that which makes God divine (i.e. God's attributes are what God is).
3. Human nature = that which makes man human.

#### iii. Jesus exists as one person, having two distinct natures, one divine and one human.

1. In the incarnation, he gains humanity without losing deity. The two natures exist in a hypostatic union.
2. In order to experience human existence as a human, he voluntarily restricts the use of his divine prerogatives, choosing to live by the power of the

Spirit in a way that his humanity is never compromised.

3. *Communicatio Idiomatum* – the attributes of each nature are to be predicated to the one person. So the Scripture can say of the Son that he is almighty, eternal, and omniscient while also saying the same Son is weak, temporal, and ignorant. This allows us to distinguish between the two natures in a way that neither confuses them or that they are comingled, while at the same time affirming that they exist simultaneously in the one Person.