

Heidelberg Catechism 48 – The Two Natures of Christ

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The doctrine of the 2 natures of Jesus Christ has specific import to the life of the Christian, so it is well-worth studying. All doctrines of the Bible are important, but this one is particularly important. By God's grace, you will hear from God's Words about these two natures of Christ, both of which were essential for your salvation.

Our headings are: 1. What are the 2 natures of Christ? 2. What are the Links and Limitations of those 2 natures?

Our goals are: That you might praise your Savior with wisdom for who he is and for the greatness of his work for you.

48 Q. IF HIS HUMANITY IS NOT PRESENT WHEREVER HIS DIVINITY IS, THEN AREN'T THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER?

A. Certainly not. Since divinity is not limited and is present everywhere, it is evident that Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of the humanity he has taken on, but at the same time his divinity is in and remains personally united to his humanity.

What are the two Natures of Christ?

1. Consider some false concepts of Jesus' nature: He is not just an incredibly great man as some believe. He is not partially God and partially man as some believe. He is not God with an "apparent" 表面的 but not real human body, as the Gnostics believed. That is Docetism 基督幻影说... a lie from hell. They believed that Jesus was some kind of phantom. And the reason they believed that Jesus was not a real human being was because they felt that flesh was evil. So in order to prove that Jesus was not evil they had to find some way of getting rid of the human flesh. So they say: What people saw was not real... just an apparition. Rather than all these false conclusions, what does the Bible teach?

2. Jesus is fully God in his nature.

a. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ is 100% God in his nature and being. He exhibits all the characteristics of being Divine. He is near and yet he is far – meaning he is omnipresent 无所不在 He knew the thoughts of men - he was omniscient 无所不知 He was omnipotent 无所不能 – and showed it by raising the dead and raising himself from the dead.

b. Consider the rhetorical 反问 questions that Jesus Christ asked through Jeremiah about his omniscience.

Jeremiah 23:23 "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off? 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

c. Stephen, just before he was executed, reasserted 重申 Christ's omnipresence based on what the Old Testament taught. Jesus Christ cannot be restricted to any place.

Acts 7:48 "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 49 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? Isaiah pointed out Christ's omnipresence. He is on earth and in heaven at the same time. There is no place where he is not.

Isaiah 66: 1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"

d. Jesus personally assured his disciples of his omnipotence.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

e. Now combine all of these things to other evidences, you will know that Jesus was fully Divine: He forgave sins. He accepted worship. He said he was God. He did what only God could do.

f. Those who argued that he emptied himself of his Divinity...that somehow Jesus was less Divine when on earth, sin. (The Kenosis theory – which misinterprets 曲解 Philippians 2.) Look at a few verses!

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no (low) reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Jesus simply hid his Divine glory so that man would not be overwhelmed by it when he came as the suffering Son of Adam to redeem the world from sin. Further, Jesus did not use his Divine power to do the essential work he came to do. He did not use his power as God to make the stones into bread to satisfy his hunger...that would have short-circuited 短路 his duty...

f. The main point: Jesus had to be fully God in order to bear the full extent of God's justice and save many at the same time.

3. Jesus has a fully human nature- a body. Consider proof of his human body.

a. The Bible says that he became human...and those who saw him knew he was human.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus Christ did not become a man and changed his nature. He simply assumed a human nature along with this Divine nature. He called himself a man...and others called him a man. (John 8:40)

b. Look at the details of Jesus' life. Jesus was born of Mary, the oldest of her many children.

His family line is listed in Matthew 1, and Luke 3. He grew up in Nazareth, like other children grow up. He grew in wisdom and stature. Luke 2:52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." He grew tired as men grow tired. Mark 4:38 - But He was in the stern 船尾 of the boat, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" He was hungry. Matthew 4:2 "And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry." He picked grain and ate. He was thirsty and drank and asked for water. John 4:7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." He was circumcised. No phantom is circumcised. He cried. John 11:35 – "Jesus wept." It is this human body that died that we celebrate in the Lord's Supper.

c. Toward the end of his life on earth, Jesus himself reaffirmed 重申 that he would be gone from the earth...his body would be removed and he would have to send the Comforter.

John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

4. Jesus Christ has a human soul. Consider the proof.

a. Jesus Christ was tempted in his soul but did not sin. The Devil tempted him in 3 major ways at one time. And he also endured temptation throughout his life.

b. He was hurt in his soul when he was abandoned and betrayed.

Mark 14:33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."

Jesus' disciples fell asleep and emotionally abandoned him...and then abandoned him physically when he was arrested.

c. Jesus Christ was moved with compassion in his soul when he saw the needy. Matthew records 6 X that Jesus was moved with compassion. (Matthew 14:14, etc.)

d. Jesus Christ was sad. Mark 3:5 "And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts..."

5. Jesus Christ could not be your prophet, priest, and king if he did not have a fully human body and a fully human soul.

6. The Nestorians 景教 denied the unity of the two natures in one Person, and the Eutychians failed to distinguish properly between the two natures. Arius failed to do justice to the full deity 神性 of Christ and regarded Him as a demi-God. Truth: Jesus was fully God and fully man, two unmixed natures in one person.

The Links and Limit of these Two Natures

1. How do we link the two natures – the human nature with the Divine nature?

a. Jesus himself linked his humanity with his Divinity; he showed he was man and God.

John 3: 13 "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Jesus Christ has automatic access to heaven...and came from heaven. So he is God. At the same time he said that he was the Son of Adam (man), meaning that he is human – fully so.

b. The Apostle Paul links the two natures of Jesus Christ directly as well.

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; Those who argue that Jesus Christ was only God, sin. Those who argue that he was only man, sin. Those who emphasize his humanity over his Divinity, sin. Those who emphasize his Divinity

over his humanity, sin. Jesus was fully human -100%...and fully God-100%. This you must believe.

c. How can that be? It is a mystery. But something that is a mystery may be true.

1Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

“Wisdom” is referring to Jesus Christ...like Solomon called Jesus “Wisdom.”

2. Why was the link necessary between Christ’s humanity and Deity necessary? Jesus Christ had to be fully God and fully man in one person. He had to be God so his sacrifice would have infinite 无限 value to save the world and also be able to bear the wrath of God, rise again, and deliver man from death.

Psalm 130:7 O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is mercy, And with Him is abundant redemption. 8 And He shall redeem Israel From all his iniquities.

Jesus Christ had to be fully man (and a perfect one) because only a perfect man could be the substitute for man...and suffer and die for him.

3. Now let’s consider the limits of the two natures that are in the one person: Your Redeemer.

a. Jesus Christ’s Divine nature has no limitations. He is the Creator of everything seen or unseen...he is the Sustainer of all things. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

b. Jesus Christ’s human nature (his human body and his human soul) has limitations. Don’t squirm 辗转不安 It is true.

Mark 13:32 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

He could only be in one place at one time. Noticed how Jesus came “late” to his sick friend’s house. Even though he was nearby, his body wasn’t at Lazarus’ house.

John 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

3. These two natures are bound forever. Jesus must continue to be your Savior as God and man in order to save you – even in heaven. Do you see how precious you are to him? The Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth took on a human nature for you...nail scars and all.

John 20:26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

Conclusion:

Jesus has 2 unmixed natures in 1 person. He is God and Man. **As God** he is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. **As man**, he is body and soul, and limited. Both distinct natures were necessary for your salvation and both natures had to be

inextricably有着千丝万缕的linked. He had to be God to fully take God's punishment and free you from his judgment. He had to be man because only man could be punished for your sins. He couldn't be God alone...otherwise he would be unjust. He couldn't be man alone...If he were, he could only die for one...

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You have a human/Divine Savior who perfectly fulfilled all the conditions for your redemption. God cannot make any more demands on you for your salvation. **Celebrate that knowledge** – in your heart, with your family, and in your church. Worship God as he says...not how you might like...or what you think is best for God. Get to know the psalms we sing...practice at home so you can sing with understand. Teach your children to worship at home. And since you belong to him, as his children, **work for him** in your home, in circle of family and friends, in your church, and as far as God would permit you. Work by living a holy life in front of others...be truthful in your speech, be loving in your actions, sincere in your promises...These are the things that speak volumes...and of course speak the Gospel when you have opportunity.

Finally: Is Jesus Christ your infinite God/Man Savior? If he isn't you are still in your sins, you will die in your sins, and you will suffer eternally for your sins. But open your eyes and see that you can avoid this most horrible future by asking God to take away yours sins because of Christ's work, make you his child, and give you a future of hope.