

Christology – Preincarnate-Humanity

The biblical witness affirms that the incarnate person of Jesus Christ is fully and truly God and fully and truly human. The Son of God existed as the second person of the Trinity from eternity past and will do so to eternity future.

ETERNITY PAST

The second person of the Trinity was "with God" (John 1:1), a phrase that indicates a distinctly separate identity. The persons of the Godhead can give and receive love from one another (John 17:24), they communicate with one another and about one another (Matt. 26:39), they appear distinctly in the scene of Jesus's baptism (Matt. 3:16-17), and the Trinitarian baptismal formula indicates distinct identity and coequality of the persons (Matt. 28:19).

Preexistence

The second person of the Trinity, God the Son, was eternally preexistent with his Father in glory (John 17:5) and he eternally knew the Father's love (John 17:24). In his incarnation he was sent to earth from heaven by his Father John 6:38; 17:3; 1 John 4:9; cf. John 3:16).

The Bible identifies the Son as the Creator: "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3; see 1:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2, 10). Therefore, he preexisted all things, for the Creator of all things must have existed prior to the creation of all things.

He is eternal in his nature and existence, as John 1:1 affirms: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This is an absolute "beginning" It marks the point when the eternally (pre-)existent Creator, the Son, "began" the temporary, finite existence of the creation. "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands." (Heb. 1:10-12; see Ps. 102:25-27).

The Son's existence is "from of old, from ancient days" (Mic. 5:2), and he is called "Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6).

OLD TESTAMENT APPEARANCES

Certain appearances of God in the Old Testament are referred to as "theophanies." -Mount Sinai (Exodus 19). "The angel of the LORD Yahweh." (cf. Gen. 16:7-13; Ex. 3:2-4; Judg. 6:11-23). The term "messenger" might provide a better translation than "angel" because this title denotes the function or office of the individual, not his nature.

These appearances "reveal, at least in a partial manner, something about [God Himself, or His will, to the recipient." Since it is the Son (Word) who reveals God (John 1:18; Matt. 11:27), it is proper to see such appearances as the pre-incarnate Son of God (i.e., a Christophany).

OLD TESTAMENT ACTIVITIES

+Creation: Creator (cf. John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2, 10).

+Providence: The son of God, as Messiah, acts providentially, personally, and directly to intervene in world history to establish the kingdom of God on earth (see Dan. 13:1-46; Matt. 23:37-25:46; Rev. 11:15).

+Revelation: The second person of the Godhead fulfilled a vital role in the production of the Bible. The Old Testament speaks often of the appearance of God for the purpose of delivering his people, leading them, or communicating with them and In the New Testament, Jesus himself confirms that the Father sent his Word by his messenger (cf. John 12:49; 14:10; 17:6-8, 14).

+Judgment: The Son of God will judge both the wicked and the righteous (Matt. 25:31, 41); he is appointed as the Judge of all (John 5:22-23). Authority to bring judgment rests on the fact that he is the Son of Man (John 5:27; cf. Dan. 7:13-14), "the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; cf. Rom. 2:16).

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

Jesus said to his opponents, "You search the Scriptures because you think that In them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me" (John 5:39). After his crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus expounded from the Scriptures Moses and all the Prophets," Luke 24:27) "everything written" concerning himself in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:14). This is the only time in Scripture that the Psalms are included with the Law and the Prophets with reference to the Messiah.

Following are a few key examples of Old Testament prophecies of Christ:

The Messiah Is the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:1, 14-15) - The New Testament confirms such an interpretation in Romans 16:20 and in Revelation 12:9. Satan will bruise the heel of the offspring of the woman. The New Testament writers understood that the offspring of the woman is the Messiah (see Matt. 1:23; Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8).

The Messiah Is the Son of God (Psalm 2): The New Testament treats Psalm 2 as prophetic and messianic, citing it seven times in the Gospels, five times in Revelation, three times in Hebrews, twice in Acts, and once in Philippians. Psalm 2:1-3 worldwide rebellion against God's anointed. In verses 4-6 God confirms his chosen king over the nations, and in verses 7-9 he confirms that his king is also his Son.

Trinitarian References to Messiah: Several passages in the book of Isaiah identify three distinct divine persons (cf. Isa. 42:1; 48:16; 61:1; 63:7-10). In these texts, the Lord's servant will be sent by the Lord, and the Lord will empower him with his Spirit. Jesus confirms that Isaiah 61:1 speaks of him as the Lord's servant (Luke 4:17-21).

The Messiah Is the Mediator between God and Man (Job 33:23-28): Job spoke of his need for a "mediator." Job admitted that God was so just or righteous that a person could not be just in God's presence (Job 9:2). People are sinners and can have no fellowship with their just and holy God. They need a mediator. The apostle Paul affirms that Jesus Christ is that mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

The Messiah Is Prophet, Priest, and King

The promise of the prophetic office of the Messiah appears first in Deuteronomy 18 In the revelation concerning a prophet greater than Moses (Deut. 18:15-22; Cf. Heb. 3:1-3). Prophets like Moses (and other prophets who followed, from Joshua to Malachi) fulfilled a mediatorial office.

In Acts 3:22-23, the apostle Peter declared that the Messiah fulfilled the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15-22 (cf. Acts 7:35-38; and Ex. 3:2). First-century laws understood Moses's prophecy as a reference to their Messiah (John 1:21,25), and the people of Jerusalem recognized Jesus as a prophet (Matt: 21:11; see Luke 7:16;24:19). Jesus knew himself to be a prophet (cf. Luke 13:33).

In the future, that prophet, the high priesthood, and the kingship over God's people will be combined into one person. The Old Testament announced that this person would also bear the title "the Branch" (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:14-22; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). Zechariah 6:12-13 specifically revealed that this Messiah-Priest-King would build the temple about which Haggai had prophesied (Hag. 2:1-9).

Incarnate Christ - INCARNATION

Deity

Jesus was and is the God-man-truly and fully God as well as truly and fully human. In his incarnation he manifested outwardly his internal divine essence (Gk. *morphe*, "form" Phil. 2:6). Christ possessed the divine glory (John 1:14; 17:5; see Isa. 42:8). Thus, the writer of Hebrews most emphatically proclaims that Christ was the exact representation of the divine nature (Heb. 1:3; see Col. 1:15).

Jesus is the worthy recipient of worship (see Heb. 16; cf. Matt 2:2.14:43, Phil. 2:10-11; 1 Chronicles 29:10-11 (see Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 3:18; Rev. 4:11; 5:9-10). The Christ ought to be worshiped as the God of the Old Testament was worshiped.

The second person of the Godhead also fully exhibits and exercises all the divine characteristics and attributes of God, such as eternity (Mic. 5:2; John 1:1;8:58; Col. 1:17); glory (Matt. 16:27; 24:30; Luke 9:32; John 17:5); holiness (Luke 4:34; John 6:69; Heb. 7:26); immutability (Heb. 1:10-12; cf. Ps. 102:25-27; Heb.13:8); omnipotence (1 Cor. 1:23-24; Heb. 1:2-3); omniscience (John 1:47-49; 21:17; Acts 1:24; 1 Cor. 4:5); self-existence (*aseity*) (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 1:8, 17-18); sovereignty (Eph. 1:21; Col. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:22).

According to the New Testament writers, Jesus is "the image of the invisible (God)" (Col. 1:15; see 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:3). Therefore, anyone who saw Christ could be said to have seen the Father (John 12:45; 14:7-10). In other words, the attributes and characteristics of the Father reside also in the person of his Son.

Incarnation:

In his incarnation, the eternal Son made himself of no reputation by taking on a full and true human nature in addition to his divine nature. The biblical basis for this fact is found in Philippians 2:5-7. Drawing from the Greek word for "emptied himself" (v. 6), The apostle Paul affirms that, "though he was in the form of God (Phil. 2:6), Christ (the Son) voluntarily took on himself the form of a slave. That Christ "was in the form" is a reference to the reality of Christ's deity, just as "taking the form of a slave (Phil. 2:7) speaks about the reality of his slavery.

In the state of humiliation, the Son of God fully possessed his divine nature, attributes, and prerogatives but did not fully express them. At times he expressed them (eg, his miracles, cf. Luke 5:3-10). But he submitted himself to the life of a slave (Phil. 2:7; cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). He concealed his divine glory and left the worship of saints and angels to be "despised and rejected by men" (Isa. 53:3). As the suffering servant of Yahweh, he surrendered himself to the will of the Father in everything (John 5:19, 30).

Virgin Birth

Jesus Christ was fathered by God, not by a human male (Matt. 1:18-20). During the reign of King Ahaz, king of Judah, the prophet Isaiah received a revelation from God to pass on to the king: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). According to Matthew 1:22-23, that prophecy was fulfilled at the miraculous conception of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

The doctrine of the virgin conception and birth of Jesus is significant for several reasons.

-First, the integrity of the Gospel record concerning Jesus rests heavily on the truth of the virgin birth. If Matthew and Luke are undependable in their accounts of the virginal conception and birth of Jesus, then their entire histories of Jesus become suspect.

-Second, the virgin birth allows for the preexistence of the divine person and nature. The eternal Son of God existed **before** the miraculous conception in Mary's womb. Natural conception would have produced a second person, but Jesus, as the God-man, is but one person with two natures. As Isaiah said, "to us a child is born: to us, a son is given.

-Third, without a virgin conception of Jesus, there can be no guarantee of his sinlessness. The descendants of Adam are sinners because Adam sinned (Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:23; see Ps. 51:5). The sinless Jesus can experience death according to his human nature only as a result of God imputing to him all of the elects' sin and guilt (2 Cor. 5:21).

-Fourth, the elimination of the virgin birth would jeopardize the entirety of Jesus's life and ministry and the attendant doctrines. If any single doctrine within the biblical teaching concerning Jesus failed, it would lead one to question everything concerning him in the New Testament record.

-Lastly, the virgin conception/birth of Jesus ought to be part of the Christian's confession of faith. Jesus's birth gave him a body of flesh. The spirit of the antichrist denies that Jesus came in flesh (1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7). The believer's confession states that Jesus took on himself flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14) in order to put away sin (1 John 3:5). That confession appears in the first line of the early Christian hymn cited by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:16: "He was manifested in the flesh." Humanity

Memory Verse: John 1:1-5 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.