

Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union

1. The hypostatic union is the theological term used to describe how God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human nature, yet remained fully God at the same time.
2. The term “*hypostatic*” is from the Greek, *hupostasis* which is translated “*reality*” or “*person*”.
3. Jesus always had been very God of very God (John 8:58; 10:30), but at the incarnation Christ permanently took on human flesh - He became a human being (John 1:14).
 - *John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*
 - *John 10:30 I and my Father are one.*
 - *John 1:14 And the Word was made 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.*
4. Prior to the incarnation Christ appeared in various forms called a theophany from the Greek, *theophaneia* meaning “*appearance or showing of God*”.
5. The existence of the human nature with the divine nature makes Jesus, the God-man. This is the hypostatic union, Jesus Christ, one Person, fully God and fully man.
6. This doctrine was affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon which was held from October 8 to November 1, 451 AD. Chalcedon was a city of Bithynia in Asia Minor. Today the area is the district of Kadikoy in Istanbul, Turkey on the Asian side of the Bosphorus.
7. Apollinaris of Laodicea (in Syria) who died in AD 390 was the first to use the term *hypostasis* in trying to understand the Incarnation. Apollinaris described the union of the divine and human in Christ as being of a single nature and having a single essence - a single hypostasis.
8. The Council of Chalcedon declared that in Christ there are two natures; each retaining its own properties, and together united in one subsistence and in one single person. How this is effected remains a great mystery.
9. Jesus' two natures, human and divine, are inseparable. Jesus will forever be the God-man, fully God and fully human, two distinct natures in one Person. Jesus' humanity and divinity are not mixed, but are united without loss of separate identity. Jesus sometimes operated with the limitations of humanity and other times in the power of His deity.

- The limitations of His humanity.

John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

- The power of His deity.

John 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

Matthew 14:18 He said, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. 21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

10. In both, Jesus' actions were from His one Person. Jesus had two natures, but only one person or personality.
11. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is a human attempt to explain the great mystery of how Jesus could be both God and man at the same time.
12. Humility is needed in studying this doctrine for we, as finite human beings, should not expect to be able to comprehend an infinite God. Jesus is God's Son in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
 - *Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*
13. The necessity of and the purpose for the incarnation is so that Christ could identify with us in our struggles (Hebrews 2:17), die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and ultimately be glorified on high (Philippians 2:5-11),
 - *Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*
 - *Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

14. In summary, the hypostatic union declares Jesus to be both fully human and fully divine, that there is no mixture or dilution of either nature, and that He is one united Person, forever.