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The Humanity

of

Christ

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-3,14 NIV). Here John declares the deity and the humanity of Christ. The miracle of Christ's incarnation is a result of a promise made by God in the book of Genesis when he cursed the serpent (3:15). In the book of Isaiah, the coming Messiah is prophesied to be born a child and rule over God's people (9:6). In the fullness of time, His incarnation ushered in the fulfillment of God's promise to save mankind. God, through an angel, gave him the name Jesus, Jehovah our Savior (Mathew 1:21). He came as a substitutionary atonement for our sins; to save us from the wrath of God (Mathew 20:21). Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death was required by God for man's redemption.

Before Jesus was brought into being, through the power of Holy Spirit, birthed by the Virgin Mary; he had no human nature. The moment he became human there was a miraculous uniting of the Son of God and the son of Mary (Luke1:32). Jesus was fully divine and fully human. He did not cease being God and neither was he less human because he was God. This hypostatic union expresses the revealed truth, through scripture, that in Jesus two natures exist (Powers). The concept of the union of human and divine natures in one human has probably been one of the most difficult to comprehend in theology (Spader). In the book of

Philippians, the Apostle Paul writes to help us better understand the humanity of Christ:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (2:6-8)

In his kenosis, Jesus humbly and willingly made himself nothing, took the form of a servant, and became a man - a humble man; a dying man; a crucified man. He did not forfeit the attributes of being God: omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience; but voluntarily submitted to the non-use of these attributes in order to fulfill his purpose for the human race (Meyer). In other words, he did not use the attributes of his deity to make his life as a man on earth easier or make the sacrifice for our sins less painful. He was born a baby and grew to manhood (Luke 2:40). He got hungry (Luke 4:2). He rested and slept (Mark 4:38). He felt pain, he bled, and died on the cross (John 19:30-34). His glory was hidden from everyone. Jesus was truly and completely human; however, he was without sin (1John 3:5).

The Bible proclaims Jesus was both God and man (John 1:1,14). It affirms that he truly was tempted in all points as humans are. Although Jesus was fully God, he did not appeal to his divine nature in fighting temptation. For Jesus to be an example to us, the possibility for him to sin was certain - as it is for every human. After he was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the desert where he fasted for forty days. While

he was weak and hungry, Satan tempted him to turn the stones to bread. When Jesus refused, Satan tempted him to throw himself down from the highest point of the temple, and call on the angels to save him. Satan then offered Jesus power over worldly kingdoms; Jesus refused all of Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1-8). He also had the opportunity to disregard God's plan for man's redemption and satisfy his own will; however, he submitted to God's will (Luke 22:42).

Jesus knew his mission required that he fight every temptation for our sake and our salvation. In order to be our merciful and faithful high priest, it was necessary that he should become a man; that he should experience the infirmities, trials of life, all the temptations of humanity except their sin (Barnes). If Jesus had sinned while on earth, he would have disqualified himself from paying the penalty of sin for humankind.

(Barton). Hebrews chapter two says:

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (2:17 ESV)

In the book of Genesis, Adam brought sin into the world through his disobedience. Sin emerged and became a major problem humanity had to overcome. God chose Abraham's son, Isaac, to make a blood covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Abraham by faith was willing to offer his son as a sacrifice (Hebrews 11:17-19). When Abraham lifted his knife to slay his son, God saw his faithfulness by offering his only son. God provided a ram as a blood sacrifice and the covenant was made (Genesis 22:11-12).

When Israel broke covenant with the Lord, He could have killed them, but instead he offered them a temporary sacrificial system as a way to stay in relationship with him (Psalms 78:10-11). The high priest in the Old Testament were mediators between God and Israel. On the Day of Atonement, they would bring two unblemished goats for the sacrifice. One was slaughtered and the other was set free for the propitiation of their sins (Leviticus 16:21-22). The priest were human and sinful themselves; they were required to sacrifice an unblemished bull for atonement for their sins as well (Leviticus 4:3). The blood of bulls and goats could not completely expiate the sin and guilt from the Israelites; it only covered their sins. In the book of Leviticus, the first seven chapters is dedicated to the five main offerings used in ritual sacrifice that the priest had to offer daily (Guzik):

- Burnt Offering was a general offering of propitiation and consecration to God (Leviticus 1:3).
- Grain Offering was a voluntary expression of devotion to God, recognizing His goodness and providence (Leviticus 2:1-3).
- Peace Offering was a sacrifice of thanksgiving and fellowship followed by a shared meal. It also included the vow offering, thanksgiving offering, and freewill offering (Leviticus 3; 7).
- Sin Offering was an offering of atonement for unintentional sin [Lev 4:1-2]
- Guilt Offering was an offering for when a person realized his sin and guilt after the offense (Leviticus 5: 5-13).

Each one of these offerings was satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Jesus' blood, sacrificial death, and resurrection accomplished forgiveness of sin and removed the wrath of God from humanity (Hebrews 9:12-18).

Because Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb of God, paid our debt by his sacrifice on the cross, we are no longer required to perform the ritual sacrifice of animals to restore our relationship with God (Colossians 2:13-14). The sacrifice and death of Jesus on the cross was the expiation for humanity's sins. We are free from guilt and no longer liable for our sins (2 Corinthians 1:25). God openly made Christ the propitiation for our sins and freed us from the wrath of God (Gill). The penalty for our trespasses was removed, forgiven, and no longer demanded; we were pardoned.

Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection, is all part of his humanity. How he lived, his death on the cross, and his resurrection still impacts us today. Jesus willingly became man; a substitute for the expiation and propitiation for our sins. He also made it possible, for those who believe, to live a victorious life through what he accomplished:

- During Jesus' life on Earth he revealed God (Colossians 1:15). He never sinned, lied, retaliated, or slandered those who persecuted him. He placed his hope in God. When we suffer and are persecuted Christ is our absolute example. Believers in Christ are to follow in his steps for complete peace and trust in God (1 Peter 2:21-23).
- His death defeated the power of Satan. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them. Our sins were cancelled and no can longer hinder us (Colossians 2:13-15). Like his death and burial, by our water baptism, our old nature is dead; we have a new Christ like nature that

is no longer a slave to sin (Romans 6:4).

- If his resurrection did not take place, our faith would be useless and have no effect. There would be no hope for eternal life. Our "religion" would be a lie (1Corinthians 15:14-17). The same Spirit that raised him from the dead resides in every believer and will raise them to life by his Spirit (Romans 8:11).
- Jesus did not just come to pardon us from our sins he came to reconcile us to God. Those who believe now have a relationship with him and are in the family of God (2 Corinthians 5:19).
- Through Christ believers have been redeemed from their sins and rescued from the kingdom of darkness (Colossians 1:13-14). For those who believe, are his possession and look forward to doing good works (Titus 2:14).

Chris's death is the upmost expression of God's profound love for humanity even when we were rebellious and wicked (Romans 5:8).

"It is finished" is the very last words Jesus spoke before he died; he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:30). Jesus paid in full the debt of sin for the human race; he tasted death for every man. He successfully completed the work of atonement, redemption, and reconciliation. Those powerful words continue in our present and are ongoing; nothing more needs to be done - it is finished. After Jesus had been crucified, he was placed in a tomb; God raised him from the dead. He entered into heaven and now sits on the right hand of God representing us as our High Priest.

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