

Hypostatic Union – Part 2

Before starting the lesson, I want to read something from a website.
<https://themosimportantnews.com/archives/americas-biggest-problem>

When a nation that has been founded on Biblical principles and worships the true God and then becomes evil...God's wrath is likely to be manifested. We saw this in the book of Judges. It was the pattern that was repeated several times throughout Israel's history culminating in the exile.

Judges 2:11 Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals,

Judges 2:12 and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger.

Judges 2:13 So they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth.

Judges 2:14 The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.

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Judges 2:15 Wherever they went, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had spoken and as the Lord had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

Let us start with a short review of a couple of points from Romans 1:1-2.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a #1 bond-servant of Christ Jesus, #2 called as an apostle, #3 set apart for the gospel of God,

Romans 1:2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,

Up to this point, Paul has identified himself in three ways:

1. Bond-servant of Christ Jesus
2. Apostle (of Christ Jesus)
3. Set apart for the Gospel

Starting in verse 2, Paul describes or explains the gospel which is centered on the person of Jesus Christ. Arnold Fruchtenbaum identifies three points Paul makes concerning the gospel¹.

1. Gospel of God. The gospel is from God, He is the author.
2. Gospel of Promise. God promised the gospel in the Old Testament.
3. Gospel of Christ. God the Son is at the center of the Gospel.

Remember, the book of Romans is about the gospel. That is the main topic which is described from different perspectives.

Now, verses 3-4 amplify the gospel mentioned in verse 2.

¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Book of Romans, San Antonio:Ariel Ministries, p 23-24

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Last time, I didn't go into the Greek to show the parallelism between Seed of David and Son of God.

Romans 1:3 concerning His Son, who was born (became) of a descendant (seed) of David according to the flesh,

Concerning His Son. In other words, the gospel concerns the Son of God.

Who was born. While the idea is a correct idea that Jesus was born of a descendant of David, the verb here is “became.” This same verb shows up in the Gospel of John.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh,

John 1:14 is describing the same event as Romans 1:3. The 2nd person of the Trinity became flesh. There was a single person, Jesus Christ. He is God who also became man.

The second person of the Trinity always existed as God. But in Jesus, He also became flesh. As the Messiah, He is both man and God. Romans 1:3 identifies the humanity of Jesus. The point is that God took the initiative.

Descendant of David. It is literally, “seed” of David. This links Jesus, as Son of God, now flesh, prophetically to Genesis 3:15 and 2 Samuel 7:12

(“the seed”):

Genesis 3:15 → 2 Samuel 7:12 → Romans 1:3

“Protoevangelium” → Davidic Covenant → Hypostatic Union

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**Romans 1:4 who was declared the Son of God
with power by the resurrection from the dead,
according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus
Christ our Lord,**

Declared the Son of God. From Robby Dean:

“Note there that this phrase “declared the Son of God,” is a bad translation. He is not “declared,” that is not the meaning of the Greek word. The Greek word is HORIZO from which we get our English word “horizon.” Horizon is a definition, it defines the end of our sight; we can only see to the horizon. That is the meaning of the word, it is something that has boundaries; it is something that is set, something that is appointed or determined. So the best translation is that “He was appointed, not to be the Son of God, but to be the Son of God with power. He has always been the Son of God but with the resurrection and His ascension to the right hand of God the Father He is now in hypostatic union, and is awaiting the time that the Father will give Him the kingdom. The phrase “according to the Spirit of holiness” is the only time Paul uses it and it is another term for the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who is the one who enabled Him in His spiritual life during the incarnation².

Before revisiting the first points on the hypostatic union, look at the concepts behind from a human perspective. This is a logical approach. Did unbelievers prior to the cross understand the need for a human sacrifice to appease God?

There was a German-Austrian Catholic priest, Wilhelm Schmidt who during the first half of the 20th century published a study on the idea of God in primitive tribal communities. He also wrote other book concerning that subject. From Wikipedia:

² <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-004b/read>

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“From 1912 to his death in 1954, Schmidt published his 12-volume work *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (The Origin of the Idea of God). As far as I can determine, it was never translated into English from the German. In it he explained his theory of primitive monotheism: the belief that primitive religion among almost all tribal peoples began with an essentially monotheistic concept of a high god — usually a sky god — who was a benevolent creator. Schmidt theorized that human beings believed in a God who was the First Cause of all things and Ruler of Heaven and Earth before men and women began to worship a number of gods:...³”

This agrees with the Biblical witness from Paul:

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Romans 1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Even primitive tribal peoples understood there was a God. Babies do not understand the concept of God. Yet, at some point, as people mature, they will come to what we call “God consciousness.” At that point, if they go positive toward God, He is obligated to provide the gospel

3 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Schmidt_\(linguist\)#Biography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Schmidt_(linguist)#Biography).

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message. Sometimes He sends a missionary. Other times, an individual who is positive toward God consciousness, will receive the gospel, if not locally, then somewhere else as God provides.

From the various sacrifices that ancient people performed, it can be surmised that they understood God needs to be satisfied with a sacrifice. In many cases, this was an animal sacrifice. That is easily seen in the Bible from Cain and Able. Only the animal sacrifice was accepted, the shedding of blood.

Hebrews 9:22 And according to the Law, *one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

From the sacrifice by Abraham of Isaac, we see that there was a foreshadowing of the actual sacrifice of Jesus. In the Law, only animals were sacrificed. They were a shadow of the death of a human being, Jesus Christ.

So, some primitive religions sought to satisfy or propitiate their gods by human sacrifice.

Take for instance, human sacrifice in the Aztec culture:

“Sacrifice was a common theme in the Aztec culture. In the Aztec "Legend of the Five Suns", all the gods sacrificed themselves so that mankind could live. Some years after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, a body of the Franciscans confronted the remaining Aztec priesthood and demanded, under threat of death, that they desist from this traditional practice. The Aztec priests defended themselves as follows:”

“Human sacrifice as shown in the Codex Magliabechiano, Folio 70. Heart-extraction was viewed as a means of liberating the Istli and

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reuniting it with the Sun: the victim's transformed heart flies Sun-ward on a trail of blood.”

“ Life is because of the gods; with their sacrifice, they gave us life. ... They produce our sustenance ... which nourishes life.[10]”

“What the Aztec priests were referring to was a cardinal Mesoamerican belief: that a great and continuing sacrifice by the gods sustains the Universe. A strong sense of indebtedness was connected with this worldview. Indeed, nextlahualli (debt-payment) was a commonly used metaphor for human sacrifice, and, as Bernardino de Sahagún reported, it was said that the victim was someone who "gave his service"⁴.”

Notice the reference to debt-payment. For religions set up by demons, there was a system that was an attempt to replicate what God did in his Son. The point I am making here is that ancient peoples had an understanding that people owed their god a debt payment. In Christianity, we understand that only a perfect sinless human being, Jesus Christ, could, by his work on the cross purchase out of the slave market of sin. But remember, the pagan religions, although outwardly worship of idols, was actually demon worship.

Human sacrifice was the Devil’s counterfeit to Christ’s work on the cross. Satan possession is the Devil’s counterfeit to Christ’s hypostatic union. Demon possession is Satan’s counterfeit to the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Let us take up some points on the hypostatic union. I make no claim that this is comprehensive. It is presented in a different manner than some others. One of the questions I want to answer, is why there was a need for the hypostatic union. It is nice to know that Jesus Christ was both God and man in one person. But the next question is, so what?

4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sacrifice_in_Aztec_culture

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I. **Definition.** Before proceeding, let us examine a definition provided by Herman Mattox: “In the person of Jesus Christ are two natures, inseparable, united without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.” Jesus Christ was both fully man and fully God. There was a single person, not two.

On the surface, it is easy to say. But it is difficult to grasp the reality of God and man combined into a single person.

Two natures combined into one person. This is an important doctrine over which many early church leaders fought leading to splits in the Church. Much of the discussion misses the point of why this union of God and man was necessary. Why did God do this? Why was it so important. We’ll get into that.

Here is another explanation of the hypostatic union from GotQuestions.org that might be helpful:

“The doctrine of the hypostatic union is an attempt to explain how Jesus could be both God and man at the same time. It is ultimately, though, a doctrine we are incapable of fully understanding. It is impossible for us to fully understand how God works. We, as human beings with finite minds, should not expect to totally comprehend an infinite God. Jesus is God’s Son in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). But that does not mean Jesus did not exist before He was conceived. Jesus has always existed (John 8:58, 10:30). When Jesus was conceived, He became a human being in addition to being God (John 1:1, 14).⁵”

There was a Satanic attempt at duplicating the hypostatic union: Satan possession. Actually, there are many throughout history. For instance, there is Judas Ischariot who became indwelt by Satan. Judas was fully man. In his case he also had a sin nature. At one

5 <https://www.gotquestions.org/hypostatic-union.html>

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point, Satan “enters into him” and possesses him. But here, there are two persons, not one. The human nature is directed by Satan. It is perhaps helpful to read that episode in John:

John 13:21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.”

John 13:22 The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.

John 13:23 There was reclining on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

John 13:24 So Simon Peter *gestured to him, and *said to him, “Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking.”

John 13:25 He, leaning back thus on Jesus’ bosom, *said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

John 13:26 Jesus then *answered, “That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him.” So when He had dipped the morsel, He *took and *gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

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John 13:27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus *said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”

John 13:28 Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him.

John 13:29 For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, “Buy the things we have need of for the feast”; or else, that he should give something to the poor.

John 13:30 So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night.

Different facets of the Angelic Conflict are evident throughout the Bible. The text does not center on the Angelic Conflict, but from Genesis through Revelation, there is a backdrop of conflict between God and fallen angelic creatures.

II. History of the Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union.

The doctrine we have from the Bible was developed over centuries. The Bible is not a textbook providing lists of doctrines and explaining them point by point. It was written to address specific events in history. As a result, there were many heated discussions on what the Bible taught. For instance, today we easily talk of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God in one essence with three personalities. It is difficult for humans to understand God since He is infinite. Language

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of accommodation is used to help us understand to a limited extent. But the doctrine of the Trinity was also fought over. Were there three Gods? That would mean Christianity was not monotheistic, i.e. a single God. How is it possible for God to be “three in one?” Many in various “monotheistic” religions reject the Trinity because of this misunderstanding. God has used language of accommodation in order to give us puny humans some idea of the magnitude of God’s greatness.

The human being could be used as an illustration of a multifaceted being. Unbelievers are “dichotomous” in that they have a body and a soul. One person, two essences; one seen and one unseen. A believer is “trichotomous” having body, soul and a human spirit all united in a single person.

So with the hypostatic union. Jesus is fully God and fully human in a single person. Associated with this doctrine is another doctrine, “kenosis.” This indicates that Jesus Christ set aside His divine powers in order to go to the cross as a man.

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Philippians 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

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Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

III. The Rationale for the Hypostatic Union

Often missed in all this discussion is the “why.” God doesn’t do something without a reason. God is not a God of chaos but of order. There is a reason that Jesus Christ had to be both God and man in one person.

A. There is a need for salvation

I find it surprising that when I am referring to the need for salvation, I seem to go back to the Book of Job. It is there in the “ten questions of Job” that the essential problem is expressed. Knowing from Genesis 3 that Adam sinned, and from Romans 5:12 that Adam’s sin is imputed to everyone in the human race as a result of DNA from the man.

Genesis 3:6-7 → Ten Questions of Job → Romans 5:12

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were

naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Job 14:4 (#6) “Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

If we have time, we will read Romans 3:5-26.

B. Job identifies the key issue: righteousness. Once righteousness is lost through the sin of Adam, how can it be regained? Or is that even possible?

Job 4:17 (#1)‘Can mankind be just (righteous) before God? (#2)Can a man be pure before his Maker?

It is obvious that a perfect God and an impure man cannot have fellowship. But if God kept man around after Adam’s sin, there must be something more. A song I heard years ago asked the question, “Is that all there is?...” No, God provided the followup to solve the problem.

Job 8:3 (#3)“Does God pervert justice? (#4) Or does the Almighty pervert what is right (righteous)?

The point is that God cannot unilaterally declare sin to be judged unless someone is judged for sin. That judgment requires death. Otherwise, God would pervert His righteousness and He would no

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longer be God. God cannot be judged for sin. But if all sinned, who is left that can make man clean?

Job 9:2 “In truth I know that this is so; (#5) But how can a man be in the right (righteous) before God?”

From human viewpoint, no one can make the clean out of the unclean. This is true from man’s fallen perspective. There would seem to be no hope. But God can do the impossible. But He must do it.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Paul says the same thing from a different perspective. All.

Here is a summary of why salvation is needed from GotQuestions.org:

“In God’s plan of salvation, first we must understand why we need to be saved. Simply put, we need to be saved because we have sinned. The Bible declares that everyone has sinned (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8). Sin is rebellion against God. We all choose to actively do things that are wrong. Sin harms others, damages us, and, most importantly, dishonors God. The Bible also teaches that, because God is holy and just, He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. The punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23) and eternal separation from God (Revelation 20:11–15). Without God’s plan of salvation, eternal death is the destiny of every human being.”

C. God Must Provide Salvation

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If man could provide salvation, then God is not needed. Jesus Christ is not needed. Only God is able to provide salvation.

Colossians 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

John 3:18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Hebrews 2:9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

D. Prophetic

Up to this point, I have referred to Genesis 3:15 multiple times. It is the first version of the gospel given in the Bible. It indicates that the Messiah would be a man, the seed of the woman. This human being is traced through the genealogies going through the

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Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel chapter 7 through Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3.

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

This is a prophecy of the Messiah. He is both human (child will be born to us). He is also divine (Mighty God). This term Mighty God is used only of God (Is 10:21; Deut. 10:17; Neh. 9:32; Ps. 24:8; Jer. 32:18. Its use here in parallel with child born to us foreshadows the hypostatic union.

Thomas Constable says, “The end of war depends on the coming of a person—a royal person—yet one never explicitly called a king here (cf. Matt. 11:27; 28:18; John 5:22). He would appear as a child (emphatic in the Hebrew text); He would not only be God come to earth, but God born on earth: both human and divine. The "Child born" points to His humanity and the "Son given" to His deity. The first title fits His first advent and the second title His second advent.⁶”

E. Only A Perfect Man Can Be Judged for Sin

Leviticus 22:20 Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you.

Leviticus 22:21 When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord to [p]fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the

⁶ Thomas Constable, Dr. Constable's Notes on Isaiah, 2023, page 90

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herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it.

Hebrews 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

Hebrews 9:12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

F. Hence Only Jesus Christ, the God-Man can provide salvation.
God plans, executes and provides salvation through Jesus Christ.