

INCARNATION

Like many other theological terms, this term can be misleading. It might suggest that the eternal Logos by the act of incarnation was confined to the human body of Jesus of Nazareth. The implication of such a construction of the result of the incarnation is that God the Son, κενωτικαλλψ "emptying" Himself, divested himself of his attribute of being always and everywhere immediately present in his universe.

But to hold such a view is tantamount to contending that He who ενφλεσηδ Himself as Jesus of Nazareth, while doubtless more than man, is not quite God. Divine attributes are not, however, characteristics separate and distinct from God's essence that He can set aside when he desires. To the contrary, it is precisely the sum total of God's attributes that constitutes the essence of His deity and expresses His divine glory.

Jesus, during the days of His flesh, claimed omnipresence for Himself in Matthew 18:20 and 28:20 declared that Jesus Christ possessed "two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the distinctiveness of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the properties of each nature being preserved. The doctrine, thus clarified, means that in the incarnation the divine Logos, while in the body of Jesus and personally united to it, is also beyond the bounds of the human nature He assumed. Scripture support for this doctrine is replete [John 1:14; Romans 1:3; 8:3; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7-8; I Timothy 3:16; I John 4:2; 2 John 7, also Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 1:21-22; I Peter 3:18; 4:1).

It is very important, in light of what has just been said, to underscore that in the incarnation the divine Logos did not take into union with Himself a human person; otherwise, he would have been two persons..

The Scriptures will not tolerate such a view. Never does Jesus Christ, when referring to Himself, say "we" or "us" or "our"; He always uses "I" or "me" or "my." What the divine Logos, who was already and eternally a person, did do, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, was to take into union with Himself a human nature with the result that Jesus Christ was one person with a divine nature (i.e., a complex of divine attributes) and a human nature (i.e., a complex of human attributes).

This is not to say that the human nature of Christ is impersonal. The human nature of Christ was not for a moment impersonal. The Logos assumed that nature into personal subsistence with Himself. The human nature has its personal existence in the person of the Logos. It is εν-περσοναλ rather than impersonal. The Son of God did not become personal by incarnation. He became incarnate but there was no suspension of His divine self-identity.

The Effecting Means of the Incarnation: according to Scripture, whereby the incarnation came about is the virginal conception (a more accurate description than virgin birth) of the Son of God by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:16, 18, 20, 23, 25; Luke 1:27, 34-35; 2:5; 3:23; Galatians 4:4). Due to the interpenetration of the Persons within the Godhead (John 14:20; 17:21-23; Hebrew 9:14), the Holy Spirit, by means of the virginal conception, insured the divine personality of the God-man without creating at the same time a new human personality.

If Christ had been generated by man, He would have been a human person, included in the covenant of works, and as such would have shared the common guilt of mankind. But now that His subject, His ego, His person, is not out of Adam, He is not in the covenant of works and is free from the guilt of sin. And

being free from the guilt of sin, His human nature could also be kept free, both before and after His birth, from the pollution of sin.

Representations of the Incarnate Person: Because Jesus Christ is the God-man (one person who took human nature into union with His divine nature in the one divine person), the Scriptures can predicate of His person whatever can be predicated of either nature. In fact, can be predicated of either nature. Also, the person of Christ may be designated in terms of one nature while what is predicated of Him so designated is true by virtue of His union with the other nature.

1. The person, and not a nature, is the subject of the statement when what is predicated of Christ is true by virtue of all that belongs to his person as essentially divine and assertively human; that is, redeemer; prophet, priest, and king.

2. The person, and not a nature, is the subject of the statement when what is predicated of Him, designated in terms of what He is as human, is true by virtue of His divine nature.

In Romans 9:5 Christ is designated according to His human nature ("Christ according to the flesh"), while what is predicated of Him is true because of His divine nature ("God over all, blessed forever"). The Scriptures do not confuse or intermingle the natures. It is the person of Christ who is always the subject of the scriptural assertions about him.

3. The person, and not a nature, is the subject of the statement, when what is predicated of Him, designated in terms of what He is as divine, is true by virtue of His human nature.

In I Corinthians 2:8 Christ is designated according to His divine nature ("the Lord of glory"), while what is predicated of Him is true because of His human nature (man "crucified" Him). Again, there is no confusion here of the divine and human natures of Christ. It is not the divine nature as such which is crucified; it is the divine person, because He is also human, who is crucified.

HYPOSTASIS

The word is a transliteration of the Greek hypostasis, "substance," "nature," "essence" (from ηψπηιστασθηαι, "stand under," "subsist," which is from ηψπο, "under," and ηισταναι, "cause to stand"), and denotes a real personal subsistence or person. In philosophy it signifies the underlying or essential part of anything, as distinguished from attributes that may vary.

It developed theologically as the term to describe any one of the three real and distinct subsistence- in the one undivided essence of God- and especially the one unified personality of Christ the Son in His two natures, human and divine

The classic Χηαλχεδονιαν definition of God, one essence in three hypostases (μιαουσια, τρεις ηψποστασεις - μιαουσια τρεις ηψποστασεις), was unfortunately translated into Latin as "one substance [Gr. hypostasis] in three persons" (υνα συβσταντια, τρες περσοναε). This not only confused threefold substance with the one ουσια (Λατιν εσσηντια, "essence"), but the Latin word persona ("face" or "mask") is very different from the Greek hypostasis.

Bible translators tried unsuccessfully to resolve the conflict by defining hypostasis as synonymous with the very different word persona. Although much confusion still reigns, orthodoxy has generally held to the one substance of God, known in the three persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God is “One in essence, three in Hypostasis” is quite different from “One in essence, three in persons”. Hypostasis emphasizes the equality of the Godhead- eternal, infinite and absolute but different in functions.