

Nature of Incarnation - Hypostatical Union

by John Murray

The Incarnation and Hypostatic Union reveal the complex and mysterious relationship between Christ's divine and human natures, emphasizing the preservation of each nature's properties and attributes.

Duration: 52:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 24:36, John 1:18, Romans 8:3, Philippians 2:6-7, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:3

Topics: "Incarnation"

Description

The sermon transcript provided is not a video, but rather a written transcript of a sermon. The transcript includes various announcements and prayers, as well as references to a lecture on the nature of the incarnation. The speaker mentions the title of the lecture and discusses the importance of understanding the intimate relationship between Jesus and God. The transcript also includes reminders about upcoming exams and assignments related to the course. Overall, the transcript does not provide a clear summary of a specific sermon or message.

Transcript

O Lord, our God, we praise and bless Thy great and holy Name, the Bowered, the Sovereign, the Everlasting, and the Living God, the lowest in heaven above and the nearest beneath. We praise Thee particularly for the marvel of Thy grace that Thou hast redeemed Thy people to Thy Son, that Thou dost hold them in the hollow of Thy hand, Thou dost hide them in secret places. The ministry which we exercise is of Thy thanksgiving for all Thy goodness to us, for health and strength, for all the blessings of this life, and above all, for the protection of Thy covenant grace.

In Jesus' Name, Amen. ...and do be punctual, but the salvation be before. I don't think I have anything else to say.

So we'll proceed now with... ...and its significance, subject that the incarnation does not mean end of divine identity, of divine attributes, or of divine prerogatives, and that the witness of the scripture itself is very eloquent to that effect. Now I have followed the reading in John 1, 18, God only begotten, but I think it is the preferred reading, I don't know how. Pheos would ever have been changed to Pheos if Pheos were the origin.

Whereas I can well understand if John had written Pheos, why it wouldn't have been changed to Pheos. But even if we were to suppose that Pheos is the proper reading in John 1, 18, rather than Pheos, this

does not make any difference to the theological significance of John 1, 18. For this reason, that in the gospel according to John, the person who is the son of God is equal with God.

And it is simply another way of saying that he is God. That is the theology of John's gospel in respect of the title we are. Say, oh, of Pheos too.

So it makes no difference even if you read that way. Because deriving your definition of Pheos from the gospel itself, the title Pheos is charged with all the significance that belongs to Pheos. Well, that's for John's parable.

Take another passage from Mark 3. That, of course, is one of the greatest incarnation passages in the scripture. Who, being in the form of God, did not think improperly to be equal with God, but made himself of all that he created. Well, let me say at the outset that the verb there, canoes in, could never be rendered literally.

The preponderant usage of the New Testament, the preponderant usage of the New Testament, in the verb canoes and in its cognate, is figuratively a means to make no account of oneself. At least in this instance, make no account of oneself. Mutation, perfectly rendered in 1611 version, perfectly rendered, made himself of no remuneration.

And it is simply an imposture, these modern versions, including the American Revised Version, as well as the Revised Standard Version and others, to throw in there the rendering emptied himself. That is simply an exegetical imposture for non-suspecting people who don't know what the original is. I say it again, it's just an imposture upon unsuspecting people, that no one has whatsoever, that you don't buy very well for a canonic construction of the Incarnation, in Philippians 2, 6 and 7. You find the very opposite.

Just very opposite. For you have to take into account the two preceding clauses, two preceding clauses. Who, being in the form of God, did not consider his being an inequality with God, if rather he were a prize.

The expression, the form of God, means the existence form of God. Existence. The existence form means the sum of those attributes indispensable to the essence.

The sum of those attributes indispensable to the essence. In this case, the sum of those attributes indispensable to the very being of God. So what is advertised in that first clause is the dignity of his divine being.

The dignity of his divine being. In the present participle, being imperfect in idea, has the force of being and continuing to be in the form of God. So that not only is there no suggestion in this passage of divestiture of the form of God, the construction points definitely in the opposite direction.

So that to paraphrase the thought, that is to do so on the basis of strictly exegetical consideration, to paraphrase the thought, it is being and continuing unalterably to be in the form of God. There is no suggestion of surrender. No suggestion of surrender or subtraction in the principle verb.

But not only do you have an index to his unchanged divine identity in the first clause, but you also have in the second, who, being in the form of God, did not consider his being on inequality with God, robbery, or it may be passing or being robbed. It's no substantial difference to what we're interested in now. What is the relation of that second clause to the first? He did not consider his being on inequality with God a prize.

Or rather, here we are simply advised of the dignity of his station, arriving in front of the dignity of his being. His being on inequality with God was not something that he had to acquire. It was not something that he had to cling fast to, lest he should lose it.

It is his by inalienable possession as the colony of his divine being. And there is no suggestion in the text that in becoming man, he surrendered that dignity any more than did he surrender the dignity of his divine being. What you have in Philippians 2.7 is addition, not subtraction.

He takes no account of himself taking, in the earliest part, having taken the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man. Clearly addition. He added to his divine existence his form of a servant.

Well, then, what does the incarnation mean? Simply this, that he took human nature in its integrity, with all its essential properties and common infirmity, into his personality. Divine identity belongs to him natively, essentially, unalterably, but human nature he assumed. He took to it and united it to his divine nature in the unity of his personality.

Now for the hypostatic union, the hypostatic union. What is meant by this is simply the union of two natures in the one person. The union of two natures.

Ever since before 51 A.D., the Catholic Orthodox has followed the formulation of the Chalcedonian Creed. In the language of Chalcedon, I'll briefly quote part of it. One and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same, perfect in Godhood, and also perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhood, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood.

To be acknowledged in two natures inconfusedly, you remember these four adverbs, inconfusably, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, as unquotos, atreptos, adieretos, haporistos, you remember, inconfusably, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures not being taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only begotten God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, you see, it is more succinctly to sum it up in the Levitical Confession of Faith, chapter 8, section 2, which you might do well to memorize, it's easier, more easily memorized than the Chalcedonian Creed, two whole, perfect and distinct natures, two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person without conversion, composition, or confusion. That's the doctrine of the hypostatic union, expressed summarily and accurately as you find anywhere in the whole compass of theological literature.

Two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person without conversion, composition, or confusion. And you will, of course, bear in mind the significance of the adverbs which you have in the Chalcedonian Creed for these three corresponding terms in the Levitical Confession of Faith, without conversion, composition, or confusion. There is no interchanging of the attributes, there is no mixing up of the attributes, and there is no amalgamation of the attributes, two distinct natures in one person.

So the important point to bear in mind is duality of nature, duality of nature, each nature possessing its own attributes and properties without any interference, curtailment, or modification. I would think that duality of nature, with each nature possessing and exercising its own attributes and properties without any interference, curtailment, or modification. Now, it is very easy to have this doctrine abstractly or theoretically in old minds, but we must remember that this same duality must also be applied to the realm

of consciousness, to the realm of consciousness, so that you must possess a duality of knowledge, a duality of intelligence, a duality of will.

Well, a duality is what we call the metaphysical attributes. In connection with this subject, the duality of nature in one person, that is, duality of identity, God, this man, the Catholic Orthodox position has been that the human nature was unhyposstatic, unhyposstatic. That is, that the human nature was not itself self-knowing.

Christ could not be called really a human person, but a divine person in the full possession and exercise of human nature. That is a tenet that has been probably more widely discussed in the last quarter century than any other phase of the doctrine of Christ. Whether what has been called the unhyposstasia of the Chalcedonian Creed is warranted.

The human nature was not itself self-knowing. Personally, I can't go into this debate. It is very interesting and must not be brushed aside summarily or glibly.

Not at all. Ray Dean and his team argue that theology is intensely serious in reference to the construction of our Lord's Passion. But I must say that nevertheless, the Chalcedonian formula of one person, one person seems to me to rest upon a thoroughly biblical basis.

And in terms of our present-day thinking, present-day terminology, it would be expressed this way, that in our Lord there was only one self-consciousness, only one center of self-consciousness, only one self-consciousness, only one center of self-consciousness. Now we must remember that there was a dual consciousness, dual consciousness. No prejudice must be bound to that tenet, that there was the divine consciousness, which is omniscient, human consciousness, which is, of course, limited and acquires its contents by acquisition, but that nevertheless there was only one self-consciousness.

And I'll have to state the evidence in just one sentence. Namely, it is this, that when our Lord's human consciousness, when our Lord's human consciousness, in the reality of its intrinsic limitations and in the reality of the limitations imposed upon Him by the requirements of His specific limitations and in the reality of the limitations imposed upon Him by the requirements of His specific tasks, is thrust into the foreground, even then the consciousness of His intra-divine Sonship, His intra-divine Sonship, is in the foreground as defining the person, defining the personhood. I'm thinking, you see, of such passages as Matthew 24, 36, which is the outstanding one.

The Son doesn't know the day or the hour when He Himself would come. You take passages of that character which clearly point to the limitations of His human consciousness, even then, when He speaks in terms of His passions, in terms of His divine, His intra-divine identity. And I take it that the Chalcedonian Fathers have almost a man-canny insight into the significance of that gospel witness, the very feature of the gospel witness, where the limitations have belonging to His human nature.

So to sum up, there are two centers of consciousness in our Lord, two centers of consciousness, but not two centers of self, not two centers of self, you see. And so His personality can never be defined in terms of human identity or human consciousness alone. And that is the Chalcedonian doctrine of antipostasia in the Thought-Forms of the present day.

Now, why? The consequences of the headless man, the antipostastic constitution. Where was that one that I want to mention first? The antropic constitution, the antropic constitution. By, in virtue of the

incarnation, and because of the hypostatic human, the constitution of the second person of the Godhead, was from the moment of His begetting, is now and forevermore will be.

Antipostasic is God, man, faith, antipostasic. Even when our Lord died upon the cross, He did not cease to be the antipostasic. The integral elements of His human nature were sundered apart, but He was united to both elements, both the elements.

So His human nature was unimpaired in death. When He was raised from the dead, of course, the integral elements of His human nature were reunited. That identity as God, man, He ascended to heaven.

In that identity as God, man, He sits at the right hand of the Father. In that identity as God, man, He exercises His heavenly ministry. In that identity as God, man, He will come again the second time.

Second, economical subordination. Economical subordination. By becoming man, He became subject to the Father, subordinate to the Father.

And the designation which sums up that subordination is the title servant. Servant implies subjection in the doing of the will of another. There is no witness of our Lord Himself that is more expressed than His subordination to the Father and to the Father's will in terms of His messianic mission.

I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him that is set. I can of mine own self do nothing, and I hear, I judge. The Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son also to have life.

The Father is greater than I. And so on. And He was not only subordinate to the Father, He was dependent upon the Holy Spirit. The begotten and the virgin's womb by the Spirit.

He was endowed with the Spirit in order that He might be fully equipped in His human nature for the task given to perform in terms of His commission. He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness. He was in the power of the Spirit.

He is witness to this Himself most expressly. When He went from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue and said, This day is the scripture fulfilled in you. Well, then, we have mediatorial investiture.

Mediatorial investiture. Coordinate with the fact of subordination to the Father is investiture with all authority in heaven and in earth as the reward for His completed obedience. It was in terms of His subordination that He was obedient.

The reward is the highest exhortation conceivable. We are now thinking about exhortation bestowed. Not of that majesty and glory that are intrinsically and essentially His as God.

We are thinking of exhortation bestowed. And the exhortation bestowed is the highest conceivable. God has highly exhorted and given Him the name that is above every name.

He has exhorted God above all principality and power, might and dominion. He has paid head over all things to His body in the church. This authority, this dominion, must be distinguished from the dominion which belongs to Him in His identity as God and in His capacity as the creator and sustainer of all.

It must be distinguished. Now that constitutes a great difficulty for our thought. How are you going to relate the dominion which Christ exercises necessarily on an equality with the Father and the Son in respect of His deity, the authority, the universal authority, which He now wields as the God-man, an authority

bestowed? How are we going to relate these two, the one to the other? There is a great mystery, isn't there? But it is simply another aspect of the mystery, another aspect of the mystery involved in the hypostatic union.

The kernel truth in the hypostatic union is duality of nature all along the line. But involved in that also is duality of prerogative, the prerogative that belongs to Him essentially as God and the prerogative with which He is invested as the mediator, as the God-man. There is mystery in the interrelationships of these two kinds of authority, of these two kinds of dominion.

But we may not dissolve the mystery by failing to take account of the coexistence, the coexistence of these prerogatives, the distinction which belongs to the coexistence. And this mystery is pointed out by the fact that the authority with which He is invested is the authority that belongs because of His divine identity. Now that was that three.

Now we come to four. And this, I'm missing out certain elements here, but this will be the last. This is the important formula *Communio Idiomatum* That is the best way to express it.

More biblically, it's been called *Communicatio Idiomatum*. Now that's the common designation, *Communicatio Idiomatum*. But that is not as felicitous in the expression as *Communio Idiomatum*.

The difference being that *Communicatio* means communication, whereas *Communio* means communion. Communion of mediums, that means attributes, communion of properties. Now, the Lutheran doctrine is very different from that which you find in Catholic Orthodoxy.

The Lutheranism introduced something new into the formulation of the doctrine of the person of Christ with this view of the communication of attributes. The evangelical Lutheran view is that at least on the exaltation of Christ, the human nature of Christ is endowed with divine properties. It doesn't work the other way, that the divine nature is endowed with human properties or human attributes.

No, it just works in one direction. The human nature of our Lord is endowed with divine attributes. And does this occur? Well, there is difference, you see, among those emotions, but the way I put it is that at least subsequent to the exaltation.

And I can't go into the differences that there have been with reference to that in the history of Lutheranism, but that is the more or less practical decision to make, that at least subsequent to the human nature is endowed with divine properties. And that is why there is a ubiquity, ubiquity to the human nature. That is why you can have in the Lord's supper the body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the elements, just because there is ubiquity.

The Roman Catholic doctrine is very difficult to understand. The Roman Catholic position is directed against the Lutheran position, but it is very difficult to understand what the Roman Catholic doctrine is. It is a question of an inexistence.

Think about a Lutheran term. *Perichoresis* is the term in Greek, which the Lutherans also used. But it is very difficult to understand, not to be identified with the Lutheran position of communication or interdependence, peculiar doctrine of inexistence, as they call it.

But I'm not going to deal with that. The real position is simply that whatever may be predicated of either nature belongs to the passion, as it has been maintained in general in Catholic orthodoxy. Whatever is

predicable of either nature is predicable of the passion.

And sometimes he may be denominated, that is, Christ may be denominated in terms of his divine identity by what is predicated of his true only in virtue of his human identity. We state that because that's the kernel of the whole position, that whatever is predicable of either nature is predicable of the passion, and the passion may sometimes be denominated in terms of his divine identity by what is predicated of his true only in virtue of his human identity. And likewise, he may be designated in terms of his human identity when what is predicated of him in virtue of his divine identity.

Well, that's all I can say today. Yes, you take the passage that is the most natural passage in the New Testament. Matthew 24, 36.

...of that day and hour no man knows neither the sun... Now, the kind of sun there, reference to his inter-divine identity, intimate, essential relationship to God the Father. That's the titan. But what is predicated of him can be true only in virtue of his human identity.

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