

For He Hath Triumphed Gloriously!*Cosmas, the Melodist (?–760); tr. John Mason Neale (1818–1866)*

CHRIST is born! Tell forth His fame!
 CHRIST from Heaven! His love proclaim!
 CHRIST on earth! Exalt His Name!
 Sing to the LORD, O world, with exultation!
 Break forth in glad thanksgiving, every nation!
 For He hath triumphed gloriously!

Man, in GOD's own Image made,
 Man, by Satan's wiles betrayed,
 Man, on whom corruption preyed,
 Shut out from hope of life and of salvation,
 Today CHRIST maketh him a new creation,
 For He hath triumphed gloriously!

For the Maker, when His foe,
 Wrought the creature death and woe,
 Bowed the Heav'ns, and came below,
 And in the Virgin's womb His dwelling making
 Became true man, man's very nature taking
 For He hath triumphed gloriously!

He, the Wisdom, WORD, and Might,
 GOD, and SON, and Light of light,
 Undiscovered by the sight
 Of earthly monarch, or infernal spirit,
 Incarnate was, that we might Heav'n inherit;
 For He hath triumphed gloriously!

ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΩ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Dealing with Implications***Kevin T. Bauder*

Jesus Christ (the Word of John 1) is one person in two natures. He is the eternal Second Person of the Godhead, a fully divine person. In His incarnation, He assumed a complete human nature. His divine nature retains all the attributes of deity. His human nature displays all the attributes of humanity. The properties of each nature communicate to the person, according to their respective natures. But they do not communicate to the other nature. In other words, the divine nature must not be humanized, and the human nature must not be divinized (though some Lutherans dispute this claim).

This rubric accounts for the apparent contradictions in the way that the Bible speaks about Christ. Sometimes Scripture depicts Him as equal with God (John 5:18; 8:58; Heb 13:8). Sometimes it depicts Him as subservient to or dependent upon the Father (John 5:30; 1 Cor 11:3; Heb 10:7). In the first case, Scripture speaks according to Christ's divine nature. In the second case, it speaks according to His human nature.

Sometimes Scripture does both at once. For example, Romans 9:5 points to the human nature of Christ when it says that He came from Israel according to the flesh. The same verse points to His divine nature when it says that He is "over all, God blessed forever."

Occasionally, the Bible will speak of Christ's person according to one nature while focusing upon some property of the other nature. In Acts 3:15, Peter accuses Jews of having killed the Prince of life. Paul uses similar language when he says that the rulers crucified the Lord of glory. Being killed or crucified are activities of the human nature, but Lord of glory and Prince of life are titles of the divine nature.

Speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul says that God purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Blood is a property of the human nature—God as God does not have blood. But the divine title is used for Christ, because He is true God.

Protestants get nervous when they hear Catholics calling Mary the "Mother of God." They want to object that God doesn't have a mother—and He doesn't, as God. But the person of Jesus Christ has a mother, and that person



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is also God. Even if the phrase “Mother of God” risks evoking some of the wrong impressions, denying its truth is the heresy of Nestorianism.

The same principle applies to the sufferings of Christ. Should Christians confess that God suffered on the cross? Should they say that the Father abandoned, forsook, or judged the Son? The short answer is that, according to His divine nature, Christ cannot suffer or be separated from the Father. Yet according to His human nature He could and did suffer God’s wrath for our imputed guilt. Importantly, it was the person who suffered, even if He suffered according to His human nature. If Scripture can say that the Lord of glory was crucified and that the Prince of life was killed, then Christians cannot be wrong to say that God suffered or was forsaken on the cross.

Furthermore, if Jesus truly possessed two complete natures, then He also had two wills: a human and a divine. These two natural wills are not opposed to each other. Christ’s divine will is identical to the will of the Father and the Holy Spirit, for the Triune God has only one will. Jesus’ human will is subject to the divine will, as seen in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42).

Both Christ’s divine nature and His human nature are essential for our salvation. Only a human could suffer the penalty for human sin (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:21–22; Heb 2:10–18). But this substitutionary sacrifice is effective only because it is backed by the power of an endless or indestructible life (Heb 7:16). That kind of immortality belongs to God alone. To save humans, the Redeemer had to be both human and divine, both man and God.

Since both are necessary for salvation, this union of two natures in one person can never be dissolved. Although the Word became flesh at a point in time, once He assumed a human nature He became human for eternity. The union of the Second Person of the Godhead with a sinless human nature is permanent. Christ will always be the God-man.

Since the resurrection and ascension, Jesus’ humanity has experienced glorification. God has highly exalted Him (Phil 2:9). He has been raised “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:21). This glory is distinct from the eternal glory that the Second Person enjoyed with the Father as Adonai and Yahweh (Isa 6:1–5, c.f. John 12:41).

Before He could be glorified, however, He was first humbled (Phil 2:5–8). Even though He had subsisted eternally in the form of God, He did not consider equality with God a thing to be selfishly grasped. Instead, He emptied Himself. This emptying included two elements: (1) receiving the form of a slave and (2) coming to be in human likeness. His humiliation extended to the experience of human death. His death was not just any death, and certainly not a noble death. It was a contemptible death, a criminal’s death on

the cross. Only after Christ’s enduring such profound rejection and misery did God exalt Him.

He dwelt among us. This phrase sums up the incarnation, the self-emptying, the appalling humiliation to which God the Son subjected Himself. Yet He endured all these things, including the cross, because He anticipated the joy of bringing many sons to glory (Heb 2:10; 12:2). He possesses authority to save us now because as the God-man he has earned that right.



This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
