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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Matthew 16:13-16

"The Person of the Redeemer"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the opportunity to study the word again. We praise Thee for the Lord Jesus Christ and the truth that we learn from the Scriptures concerning him. We thank Thee for the fact that he is the God-man and we praise Thee for the redemption that he has accomplished. We thank Thee that he is our Great High Priest at the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high that he ever lives to make intercession for us and also to act as our advocate. We thank Thee that he is coming again and we rejoice in the hope of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the meantime, Lord, enable us to live in a way that will be pleasing to Thee and useful to Thee in what Thou art attempting to accomplish in this age. We commit this class to Thee. We ask that Thou would give us illumination and direction as we study about him. For we pray in his' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight in our continuing series in "Basic Bible Doctrine" is "The Person of the Redeemer" and I'm turning to Matthew chapter 16, verse 13 through verse 16 for the opening Scripture reading. It is at Caesarea Philippi and it has become evident that the nation has rejected the Messianic King sent to them by the Father. And now our Lord is getting ready to engage in teaching ministry of the apostles and disciples

in the remainder of his days upon the earth as he carries out his passion. And we read in verse 13,

"When Jesus came into the borders of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I the Son of man am?' And they said, 'Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets'. He saith unto them, 'But who say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!'"

The person of Jesus Christ is basic to the work of Jesus Christ because his work gains significance by virtue of who he is. Now we can turn that around and we can say that the work of Jesus Christ is basic to the person of Jesus Christ. And we can say that his person is significant by virtue of the work that he has accomplished because the Scriptures set forth the fact that he has accomplished a work of redemption. And only a god could accomplish a work of redemption. And so, whether we look at this from the standpoint of his person or his work, they are mutually helpful in understanding each other.

Therefore the question, "Who was Jesus Christ?" is very important. It's not a new question. It was asked by the Lord himself right in this context, "Who say ye that I am? Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" He also asked the question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" And so, it's not a new question. It is a question that was raised immediately by the coming of the Lord Jesus. It's a question that is raised whenever you discuss the Christian faith.

The answers of modern men have been many and varied. For example, one of the greatest of the church historians, Philip Schaff, has said, "The life and character of Jesus Christ is the Holy of Holies in the history of the world." H. G. Wells said that "Judged strictly by historian standards in history, Jesus stands first." One would ask the

question, having studied much history, "If Jesus stands first according to historian standards, why it is in our history texts that only a passing reference is devoted usually to Jesus of Nazareth? And usually that passing reference is to a humanistic Jesus whose life could never change the course of history?" Well, the answer to the obvious question is that modern theologians dominated by anti-supernaturalism have a generally lower view of the Lord Jesus than that expressed by Mr. Wells.

For example, in Hans Conzelmann's article in "*Religionen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*," which is a very scholarly German series of volumes, that article by Mr. Conzelmann or Professor Conzelmann, is entitled "Jesus Christ." It's the lead article on Jesus Christ and consumes many pages in that scholarly series of volumes. In it he says, "Jesus never called himself Son of God nor Son of man. He was only a great teacher and a miracle worker." So that's the reason why in our volumes of history there is so little place given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, of course, we're not interested primarily in what contemporary theologians or historians, for that matter, are saying about Jesus Christ in this series of studies. We're interested primarily in what the Bible has to say about him. Now if you want to know a person, it is clear that it is best to listen to those who have the closest access to him. So if we want to know who Jesus Christ is, if we want to become acquainted with the person of the Redeemer, we should obviously turn to those who were best acquainted with him and listen to what they have to say about him.

Now when we turn to consider the deity of the Redeemer, I want it to be understood that I am coming to this with certain presuppositions. The presuppositions that I have are probably the presuppositions of most of you in this audience. They're nothing unusual. I assume the reliability of the records that we have in our New Testament and Old Testament and the fundamental inability of anyone in the early church to invent a figure like Jesus of Nazareth.

It is common among some of our modern theologians to assume that the high view of Jesus that is given in the New Testament is not the product of our Lord's teaching, but is really a product of the church's teaching of a generation afterwards. And so, when we read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we're not really reading authentic words from the mouth of Jesus, but we are reading for the most part, words put in the mouth of Jesus by the church of later days.

Now I think it's possible to show that that is a wrong view, but I want you to understand that I am assuming the general reliability of the statements that our found in our Gospels. The early church could never have invented a figure like Jesus of Nazareth. As someone said a long time ago, "It would take a Jesus to invent a Jesus." It is far beyond the intellectual and spiritual capacity of the early church to conjure up anyone such as our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let's turn to the testimony of the texts of the New Testament and the Old Testament. I will look at one in the Old Testament first and we'll just read some texts now for a moment because I don't think there will be any question, but that the thrust of these passages is they teach that Jesus of Nazareth was very God of very God. Let's turn first to Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14; Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14. And this is, as you no doubt know, the prophecy of the virgin birth and the prophecy reads this way. Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Now Immanuel or Emmanuel is derived from a Hebrew prepositional phrase "Immanuw" which means "with us." It's really a preposition with a pronominal suffix. And then "el", as you know, is one of the terms for God. So that Emmanuel means, "God with us." That is to be his name. That is intended by the prophet of the Old Testament to give us some insight into the nature of our Redeemer. Turning over to the New Testament in chapter 1 of Matthew, verse 21 through verse 23, the evangelist here cites that passage and we read in verse 21 of Matthew chapter 1,

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Now that would tell us immediately that he is God because only a god can save us from our sins, but Matthew, recalling the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 7 that we just read, says in verse 22,) Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being translated is, God with us.'"

So I think it is clear from the text of the Old Testament cited in the New Testament that the evangelist Matthew, a close companion of the Lord Jesus Christ regards him as God himself.

Now turning over to the beloved disciple, the Apostle John, in the first verse of his gospel we read these familiar words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now if there is any question about who John is discussing in the 14th verse, we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So he is speaking about the Son of God when he says in verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word." That expresses the eternity of the Son of God. "And the Word was with God" that expresses the community of interests that exists between the Father and the Son. And then in the final, "and the Word was God." in that final clause there is a clear expression of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Turn over to chapter 10 in this gospel and verse 30. Chapter 10 and verse 30 contain some words of the Lord Jesus himself. We read, "I and my Father are one." It has often been commented and it is true to the text of the Greek at this point that the little word translated "one" is neuter in the Greek. It's the word "hen" so that what we read here is, "I and my Father are literally one thing." Notice we have a plurality, "I and my Father" and we have also "we are" one thing. So what he is evidently talking about here that there is a similarity of essence; in fact, an identity of essence between the Father and

the Son. C. H. Dodd, who was a liberal, but nevertheless interpreted this I think in accord with the Greek said, "That this is an expression of absolute unity; absolute unity between the Father and the Son." And that, too, is an expression of the deity of the Son.

In Philippians chapter 2 and verse 6, the Apostle Paul writes a doctrinal passage concerning the Lord Jesus Christ; Philippians 2:6 and the passage that we know because of its expression of the union of the two natures, the hypostatic union in the Son of God. Paul writes, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Now the term "form of God" is a philosophical term and it is designed to express the fact that he possesses all the essential attributes of deity. And that that is right is shown by the words that follow, "He thought it not robbery (a thing to grasped after) to be equal with God (Or a thing to be held onto, if that word is to be interpreted that way, there is a debate over that), to be equal with God." And, again, that is literally to be equal things with God. It is neuter, expressive of the fact that the Son of God and the Father possess the same attributes and in possessing the same attributes, they obviously have the same nature.

Titus chapter 2 and verse 13, the apostle here in Titus chapter 2 and verse 13, makes a statement that confirms the deity of the Lord Jesus as well. Now I'm going to read from the Authorized Version, which is not a very accurate translation here, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Now one reading that statement in the English, "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ", might assume that he's speaking about two different people. But, if you'll look at this in the Greek text, those two, the terms "God" and "Savior" refer to the same person. And it should be rendered, "Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." So that God and Saviour refer to the same person.

Now in case you wonder if I'm telling you really that the true dope on this particular point, go read some of the liberal translations. Go read the Revised Standard Version. Lots of fundamentalists twenty-five or thirty years ago attacked the Revised

Standard Version for denying the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ in many places and there were some cases in which that was true. They overlooked, because most of the critics did not know the Greek New Testament very well, they overlooked several passages in which the testimony to the deity of Christ is much stronger in the Revised Standard Version than in the Authorized Version.

It was rather amusing to me to listen to the comments made by those who didn't study the Greek, who were conservative and they were attacking it and then there were others defending it to also didn't know Greek too well and consequently, there was not a whole lot of truth in that debate. But, if you'll read the Revised Standard Version here, that's the version of our liberal denominations now, it reads, "Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." And so that we have here a clear reference to the deity of the Lord Jesus, it is, "Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

In Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 8, we have another text. In Hebrews 1:8, we read, I'll read verse 7 while you're finding it, "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.'" So you can see the Son is addressed as "O God." And then in order to give you one other text, let's turn to 2 Peter chapter 1 and verse 1 and this, incidentally, is another text that is misrendered in the Authorized Version, but correctly rendered in the Revised Standard Version; two cases in which that more liberal translation is truer to the deity of the Lord Jesus than the old Authorized Version.

This is the way the Authorized Version reads, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Now that could, from the English, refer to two different persons, "of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." But in the Greek text, due to the particular type of construction, it too should be rendered, "our God and Saviour Jesus Christ; our God and Savior Jesus Christ." The reference is to one person.

The Revised Standard Version translates it accurately and this afternoon while I

was sitting in my study, I said, "Well, I just think I'll get another one of these versions down that have been highly criticized by fundamentalists and I took down the New English Bible and it too has instead of God and our Savior it has "Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." And, in this case, the liberals are truer to the sense than some of the old conservative brethren. That does happen, you know, because in the final analysis we're interested in what the text of Scripture says regardless of who says what it says. And, in this case, these renderings are correct and they attest the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, of course, this series of texts is not the whole series of texts that one might draw from the New Testament. There are many texts that I've not bothered to look at for the simple reason that we don't have time to look at them. But this is sufficient for you to see that the New Testament teaches the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many other indications of the harmony of the Bible with this. Have you ever noticed the Lord Jesus Christ ask his disciples to pray, but he never ask them to pray for him? I think that supposed to be a sign of spirituality isn't it? "Brethren, pray for us", or "Pray for me." We generally think highly of a person who asks us to pray for them. But Jesus Christ never asked anybody to pray for him. Isn't that striking? He never said, "I'd like for you to have a little prayer meeting for me someday." So the texts teach that he has undiminished deity.

Otherwise, our Lord was deceived because he said he was deity or he was a deceiver himself, saying he was deity when he knew he wasn't. Some have said that if the things our Lord said were not true, then he was a liar, or he was a lunatic, or perhaps only a legend. But Christians believe in the light of all that the Bible teaches concerning him, these texts teach the truth, he is truly deity.

Now there is other spiritual testimony of a slightly different character and I'd like to refer to this without going into great detail. The other types of testimony are the witness of the miracles. I don't know whether you've ever thought about the miracles in the light of this because most of you know that other men perform miracles. The Apostle

Paul performed miracles. The Apostle Peter performed miracles. So if I were to say to you, "You can tell he is deity because of the miracles he performs", if you're thinking, well you might say immediately, "Well, Dr. Johnson, the prophets of the Old Testament performed miracles and the other apostles performed miracles so how does that indicate that he is deity?"

Now others did work miracles. We do not deny that. But the works that our Lord Jesus Christ performed throw the others into the shade. Notice the impressiveness of the commands, for example, that he gives. One of the lepers comes to him and says, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." He said, "I will. Be thou clean." He's able to stand up in the midst of the boat and do something that the other apostles did not do, speak to the winds and waves and have an immediate calm take place and all he says are just the words, "Peace, be muzzled." It's almost as if he's speaking to a dog because it is a canine verb, "Back to your kennels", and immediately there is a great calm. He speaks to a little girl and says, "Talitha cumi; little girl, arise" and immediately she arises. But one characteristic difference between our Lord's miracles and the others is very important. So far as I know, others do not do mighty miracles in their own name. Implicit always is a miracle done in the name of the God of heaven.

Now you'll remember that the Apostle Peter performed a miracle. He performed a miracle in connection with Ananias in the Book of Acts in the 9th chapter. And do you remember what he said? He didn't say, "Now Ananias, I the first hope make you well." But he said, "Ananias, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." In other words, he performed his miracle by invoking the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When he performed his miracles in the midst of the apostles, they gained the overwhelming impression that the God of Israel was with them. In the case of the miracle performed in the miraculous draft of the fishes, the Apostle Peter when it took place said, "Lord, depart from me because I'm a sinful man." Those miracles he performed impressed themselves upon them with such power that they stood out from the other miracles.

When he calmed the sea with those words, "Peace be still." They said, "Behold what manner of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him." So there is a testimony to the deity of our Lord by the magnificence of the miracles that he performed and the power that was demonstrated in them.

There is also a testimony to his deity in the witness of his sayings. He appears in his sayings as the supreme revealer of truth. He's a person who is familiar with the scenery of the invisible world. He can say that when a little sparrow hops around on the ground, "Why that's known to the heavenly Father in heaven." He will say, "Even the hairs on your head are numbered." Where did he get that information? Well, he got that information because he was familiar with heaven. He said other things that were unusual. No one so far as we know ever prefaced their words with, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He invoked an authority that we today have no record of anyone else invoking. He has sayings in which he lays claims on the lives and consciences of men. His daily language is, "Follow me." He doesn't say, "Follow the Lord God as I follow him", but, "Follow me." So the sayings that he perform gives testimony to his deity.

And, I guess the supreme testimony, outside of the specific statements of Scripture, is the witness that his claim to forgive sins provides. That's a prerogative of God alone. Only God forgives sins for sins are sins against God. But we know from many miracles such as the one recorded in Mark chapter 2, that the Lord Jesus Christ forgave sins. Other divine prerogatives are his too. He said, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." These are things that no man could ever say. If God did not become flesh, then flesh became God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are objections that people raise and I do want to mention a couple of them. There are some texts of Scripture that seem to suggest that the Lord Jesus was not all that I'm making him out to be. For example, in John chapter 14 and verse 28, in the upper room discourse speaking to the disciples, verse 27, the Lord says,

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

Now that's an interesting text by any reading, "my Father is greater than I." How can we call the Lord Jesus Christ, God? "Very God of very God" as the old Creeds used to say and still at the same time say, "The Father is greater than he." Because of this, some look at this passage and say, "The Lord Jesus Christ has divinity, but not deity." That is, he's a little bit more than other men, but he's not really the equal of God. There are evangelicals who confuse over this make statements like that.

I remember one man, he is no longer living, he was a member of one of our evangelical churches in this city who kept insisting to the end of his days so far as I know; we had many discussions over this, that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but not God. And he tried to maintain that all through his life and then he died. And, of course, I think I know what he believes now, but so far as I know, he never changed his mind, but yet he was a member of one of our evangelical churches located not too far from this here. What then does it mean, "My Father is greater than I"?

Perhaps we can illustrate it by saying that it is possible to have absolute equality and relative inequality. Now let me illustrate it this way. We might, for example, on a faculty of a university, assume that the faculty members gathered together deciding to have a school or a university, and then realizing that some of them had to do some administrative work, and some others had to do some other types of work, though they were absolutely equal in every way, equal in position, equal in degrees, equal in capacities, they nevertheless might appoint someone to be president of the institution, and another one to be a public relations man, and in this case there would be absolute

equality and relative inequality. As a matter of fact, you can have relative equality and absolute inequality. And that often happens in our business world in which there are individuals who inherit a third, say three individuals inherit a third of the capital stock of a firm, but they are far from being equal and yet they are relatively equal, but absolutely unequal.

There is, in this particular city, a Christian organization which has been here for many years, which has been a benefactor to the seminary students at Dallas Seminary. And at one time there were three brothers who were operating this institution. One was the president and one was a vice-president, but in charge of the technical side of the business, it was a manufacturing business, and the other was the head of the sales force. And these three positions were suitable to the personal characteristics of the three. I have no idea about the ownership of the firm, but we might just, for the sake of illustration, assume that since they were brothers, that they each owned one-third of the stock. It's clear that there was absolute equality so far as they were brothers, they had the same ownership of the firm, but there was a relative inequality in that certain things were done by one person, which were not done by another.

If you were a customer of that firm, you might be walking down the street one day and you might see the president of the firm, and you having an engineering business in the city and wanting some new piece of machinery, you might meet the president and say, "Now, Mr. Mitchell, we appreciate very much the business that we've been able to do with you, but I've discovered I have need of a very interesting piece of machinery and I don't know of anyway to describe it then to describe it this way." And then you launch into a very technical description of the piece of machinery that you would like for him to build and knowing that man who is now with the Lord, I can just imagine him saying, "I'm sorry. We'll try to do everything we can, but as far as I'm concerned, I don't know the first thing about this that you're talking about, but Orville, my brother, he knows all about that. He handles all of that." And so, he might refer him to the other brother.

Now when the Lord Jesus says, "My Father is greater than I", I want you to notice, first of all, he does not say, "My God is greater than I." In other words, he uses the term that has to do with office not essence. He doesn't say, "God is greater than I" as if he's not God. But he says, "The Father." But in the Godhead there exists the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. There are three persons who subsist in one essence. So when he says, "My Father is greater than I", he is talking about the fact that so far as his mediatorial ministry is concerned, it is the Father who directs him in his mediatorial ministry. And like he says in the Gospel of John, he does only what the Father tells him to do. He says only those things that the Father says that he should say. So he put himself under the Father's direction. He became obedient as the Messianic King and obedient unto death. In that sense, the Father is greater than he. It is he who directs the Son and that subordinate position is a position that he holds as long as he is engaged in his mediatorial work.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15, "The time will come when he will deliver over the kingdom to the Father and then that God may be all in all." In that case, he will resume again his position both of absolute equality and relative equality. Later on in this very gospel he prays, "Restore unto me", well I'll just read it because I'm not sure I'll start it right, "And now, O Father," Chapter 17, verse 5, "Now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." So, "the Father is greater than I" has reference to the office not the essence of the Son. He is the mediatorial king and serves under the Father for a time.

Now there are other passages that also suggest that there may be some question about the deity of Christ. In Mark chapter 10 and verse 18, there is one. I don't know whether I have time to refer to this. I probably don't so I'll just make a sentence or two statement about it and then you can look it up for yourself. You'll remember the Lord Jesus was met by the rich young ruler one day and in Mark 10:18, we read, "And Jesus said unto him, 'Why callest Thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God'."

Now that is not an attempt on our Lord's part to deny that he is the Son of God.

This man had come to him and called him Good Master. And he had taken an adjective that belonged only to God and put it with the word "master", which is not a word that necessarily implies deity. And he's just saying, "You'd better learn how to use your adjectives correctly. Don't take an adjective that belongs to deity and put it with a noun that is not necessarily a reference to deity unless you know that the person is God." So he says, "Why callest Thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God." Well, sometime we'll talk more about that perhaps. So I'll reply then to the problem, "Who is Jesus Christ?" is that of the centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God." The poet is absolutely right in saying, "He gives a light to every age, he gives but borrows none." But that's one side of the person of our Redeemer. The other side has to do with his true humanity.

Now there are very few people who doubt the true humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ now. In the days of the early church, Docetism was one of the heresies that the early church had to contend with. That was the view that Jesus Christ was not really a man, but only seemed to be a man. He was really a divine being. So in the early church, the problem was not so much the deity as it was the true humanity. Now the problem is not his true humanity so much as it is his deity.

Now we have very little question about the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ so I'll just remind you of a few rather clear texts. John 1:1 said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And then in verse 14 of John chapter 1, the text we read, it said, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Jesus Christ did not enter into a new existence. He entered into a new form of existence at his incarnation. Luther speaking about the incarnation said that we need new tongues to set forth the incarnation. Well John has set it forth here, as "the Word became flesh." That is there was a point in time when he took to himself an additional nature and

that term "flesh" is a reference to his human nature. Turn over to chapter 8 and verse 40. Here the Lord Jesus says, "But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." Now notice he says, "A man which hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." So this text clearly reveals that our Lord considered himself to be human.

Now in Romans chapter 1, verse 3 and 4, we have another passage and then I'll just list some for the sake of time because I want to deal with the result in person. But in Romans 1:3 and 4, a passage we looked at not too long ago in our exposition of the Epistle to the Romans on Sunday morning, the apostle wrote,

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (That is he was connected with history and he possesses a human nature, "the seed of David according to the flesh") And declared to be (or appointed) the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Other passages that you might put down in your notes if you're interested are: Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:6-8, Hebrews 2:14, and Hebrews 2:17. We conclude from these passages that he possessed complete humanity.

Now what is the result in person? A person who possesses full deity, undiminished deity and at the same time, true humanity. The Council of Chalcedon met in four hundred and fifty-one A.D. and they formulated the faith of the church regarding the person of Christ. This statement of faith has stood the test of time. They said that he was to be acknowledged in two natures. Now I'm just going to read these words, this is what that council affirmed, and generally orthodoxy has maintained the truthfulness of this particular statement since that time that, "He was to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of the natures being in no wise taken away by the union (still have human nature, divine nature), but rather

the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence (only one person, two natures), not parted or divided into two persons." That statement, that formula as you can see is primarily negative. It seeks to guard the truth against error. The reason it's primarily negative is because they were formulating it against the errors of the time.

Now let me just sum up what is said by that. He is not God indwelling a man nor is he man brought to the power of deity, but he is a God-man. Professor Emil Brunner, one of the Neo-Orthodox theologians, in some ways orthodox and in some ways not, said, "Jesus acquired divinity." Now that is contrary to the teaching of the Bible. He did not acquire divinity, he always had deity. He is not God in man, nor God and man, but he is the God-man; one person who possesses two natures.

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church express it this way and I think they are accurate, "He entered into manhood in the womb of the blessed virgin, of her substance: (that's the human nature) so that two whole and perfect Natures, were found together in one Person, never to be divided." The doctrine of the two natures transcends human reason. If you find it difficult to understand all that is involved in this, well that's what you expect. You are finite beings. You are not infinite. Paul said, "Great is the mystery of godliness." We cannot expect to understand all that is involved in the God-man. This very insolubility is in harmony with the source of the truth. The imagination, psychologists tell us, can only rearrange known facts. We could never think up something like this. When man tries to think up something like a God-man, he comes up with a mermaid [Laughter] or a centaur; horse and man supposed to have inhabited the plains of Thessaly in Northern Greece.

Well now, if that then is the make up of the Lord, what is the meaning of the two natures in one person? G. Campbell Morgan made a statement many years ago, which I have never forgotten. He said that man's need is threefold. He is distanced from God by his sin. He is ignorant of God through his sin. He is unlike God in his sin. Well, by

virtue of the fact that the second person of the Trinity took to himself an additional nature, came down here upon this earth, offered up an atoning sacrifice which has infinite merit because of his divine nature and yet may be our substitute because of the human nature, as a result of that, God finds himself in this person and he is with men. And man finds himself in this person and he is with God. And as a result, he who was distanced from God by sin is restored to fellowship with God in righteousness. He who was ignorant of God through sin finds that he knows God through him. And he who was unlike him in sin is one day going to be made like him in all of the purity of the nature with which we shall spend eternity.

Job spoke about a daysman. Well, Job's daysman has been found, the one who can lay his hand on the head of both, on the head of the God-man and on the head of men. Here is the daysman who can put his hand on God and can put his hand on man and bring the two into fellowship one with the other. The message to us ought to be obvious. The Lord Jesus one day stood by the grave of Lazarus and the text says, "Jesus wept." That's an expression of his humanity. But in a moment, he said, "Lazarus, come forth." That's an expression of his deity and Lazarus came forth. In the 10th chapter and the 18th verse of the Gospel of John speaking in that threefold parable in that chapter, the Lord Jesus said, "No man taketh life from me, I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down. I have power to take it again." A martyr can say, "I have power to lay down my life", but only a God-man can say he has power to take it again.

In the 4th chapter of the Gospel of John, we read that the Lord Jesus Christ was about the well wearied with his journey. In a few moments this person who is tired and weary from traveling says, in the 13th and 14th verses of the 4th chapter, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

He is the man full possessed of true humanity, full humanity, can enter into perfect sympathy with us in all of our trials, in all of our tribulations, in all of our sufferings because he has experienced them to the fullest and beyond apart from sin. And, at the same time, he is God possessed of all the power of deity and because he is possessed of all the power of deity, he's able to save us in the midst of our sufferings, trials, tribulations, and any experience in which we may be put.

There was a leper that came to the Lord Jesus once and said, "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst cleanse me." He didn't doubt his power, he doubted his willingness. And the text of Scripture says that "Jesus reached out his hand and touched him." That's very significant. He doesn't have to touch anybody to heal them, he heals with a word. But in this case, because a leper is such a vile character and such a gruesome part of humanity, the Lord Jesus reaches out and touches the leper and says, "I will. Be thou clean." In other words, the word may be enough, but here is a love that stands back of his power expressed by the two natures in the one person. "He saw me ruined in the fall yet loved me notwithstanding all", we often sing.

Well, to sum it up, those that were closest to the Savior and closest to the scene in which he lived, affirm their radiant and life-giving faith in him. They believed that he was truly the Son of God. J. B. Phillips, in one of his little books entitled, "*Your God is Too Small*" says, "If Jesus Christ revealed the true way of living and offered human beings the possibility of being in harmony with the life of God, that is eternal life, it must follow that anyone living in any other way is by that continued action incapable of appreciating the quality of real living unless and until he takes the plunge into it. A man may write and argue and even write poems about human love, but he does not know love until he is in it. And even then his knowledge of it only grows as he discards his self love and accepts the pains and responsibilities as well as the joys of loving someone else." You will never know what it is to be rightly related to the Lord God until you too have taken the plunge and have by the grace of God been brought to trust in the Son of God, a God-man who

has offered all atoning sacrifice. May God help you to take that plunge of faith in him?

Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the greatness of the Son of God and we are thankful also for the true humanity of the Lord Jesus. We praise Thee that we are able to go to him and find him a Great High Priest who has sympathy and compassion and who is able to enter into our sufferings and entering into them, by his mighty power...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]