

THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

Christ the Mediator (5)

A. Introduction

1. Two things we are commanded to do as elders are to watch and to hold.

We are to watch what we believe, to make sure we are believing what God's Word says.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Timothy 4:16)

We are to hold firmly to the truths taught in God's Word.

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:9)

It is vital we do these two things, not just for our own sake, but also for the members of this church and in fact those who live in the community God has placed us in.

To help us to watch and to hold, we are spending our elders' meeting working through the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith a paragraph or so at a time.

2. The Lord Jesus was chosen and appointed to be the mediator between God and man by fulfilling the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, for those people He was given as a gift in eternity.

But who is the Lord Jesus?

That's the question the second paragraph of Chapter 8 of the Confession answers. In this wonderfully dense paragraph we learn about His full deity, His true humanity, His sinless integrity, His miraculous nativity, and His singular personality.

"The Son of God, the second person in the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholds and governs all things He has made, did, when the fullness of time was complete, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities of it, yet without sin; being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit coming down upon her: and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures; so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man."

First, we see that the Lord Jesus, the only mediator between God and man, is the eternal God and the revelation of God.

Next this paragraph discusses the humanity of Christ, the truth that Jesus, as well as being fully God, is truly man.

B. Christ added human nature to His divine nature

1. The incarnation is the moment when the fully divine Son of God became truly human.

"...did, when the fullness of time was complete, take upon Him man's nature..."

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law."
(Galatians 4:4)

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14)

"He became what He was not, while not ceasing what He was."

In becoming a man, Christ did not give up or lose His full deity, but added to it true humanity.

2. Jesus was a real man.

"...with all the essential properties..."

Scripture asserts that He was a man and remains a man after His resurrection.

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know." (Acts 2:22)

"For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

He spoke of Himself as being a man.

"Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things." (John 8:39-40)

He had the appearance of a man and looked no different to any other human being.

"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did." (John 4:29)

"No-one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared." (John 7:46)

"We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." (John 10:33)

He had the body of a man.

"Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me." (Hebrews 10:5)

"...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)

"And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40)

"Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well." (John 4:6)

"Jesus said, "I am thirsty." (John 19:28)

"After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." (Matthew 4:2)

"Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." (Luke 24:39)

3. Jesus was a complete man.

He did not merely take on a human body but had human soul (mind, emotions, and will) too.

"Now my heart is troubled..." (John 12:27)

"After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit..." (John 13:21)

"And Jesus grew in wisdom..." (Luke 2:52)

"No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32)

"When Jesus heard this, he was astonished..." (Matthew 8:10)

"Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

"With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." (John 19:30)

C. Christ added fallen human nature to His divine nature

1. The human nature which Christ added was human nature in its fallen condition.

Christ's human nature, we know was sinless, but it did suffer from the infirmities that are part of the curse.

"...and common infirmities of it..."

We do, however, need to take care in how we understand this phrase, 'common infirmities'.

First, we need to distinguish between 'painful infirmities' and 'sinful infirmities', affirming that Jesus was subject to the former but not to the latter.

But then with regards to these 'painful infirmities', Jesus did not experience them all in their entirety.

2. The painful infirmities that human experiences can be divided into those which show themselves in the form of disease and those which are natural, showing themselves in the form of pain, grief and sorrow.

It appears that Jesus did not experience the painful infirmities in the form of disease. Nowhere do we read of Him getting sick. Did the baby Jesus ever need Calpol?

It is clear though that Jesus experienced grief and pain and death.

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering." (Isaiah 53:3)

"Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." (Matthew 26:38)

We can conclude that, *"Whatever is natural to the human nature, apart from sin, must be affirmed of Christ, just as whatever belongs to the divine nature must likewise be affirmed of him."* (Mark Jones)

D. How then shall we lead?

1. This truth that Jesus is man is amazing.

Never lose the wonder of the incarnation.

2. This truth that Jesus is man is to be accepted.

We must affirm His true humanity.

"Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." (1 John 4:3)

Why? Because if he did not have both a human body and a human soul, then the incarnation did not fully take place, and there remains some aspect of our humanity that has not been redeemed.

"For that which He has not assumed He has not healed." (Gregory Nazianzen)

Praise God that we can know that there is nothing in us or about us that Christ has not saved.