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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Philippians 2:5-13

"The Hypostatic Union: or the Union of the Two Natures in Christ - I" TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we again thank Thee and praise Thee for the privilege of studying the word of God together and seeking to understand the things that have to do with the Christian faith. We rejoice in the truths that Thou hast revealed to us, and we do ask, Lord, that Thou will continue to unfold the truth to us, and may it lead, also, to the embracing of the truths in a truly heartfelt way. We pray for each one of us that the ministry of the word of God may be fruitful, that our lives may be transformed, that our walk may become pleasing to Thee. We ask that this hour may continue to those ends. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] We are starting tonight a series of several messages in "The Hypostatic Union, or the Union of the Two Natures in Christ." Now, this is a very important subject, and it unfortunately is a rather technical subject, and so I hope you will bear with me tonight as we deal with the most technical side of it. In the following hours we shall turn to this key passage Philippians chapter 2, verse 6 through verse 11 and attempt to treat it in some detail exegetically and theologically and also practically. But tonight we must also be a little bit technical, and I hope that you will be able to bear with me as we begin our study of the hypostatic union.

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In this series of messages on the Christology of the New Testament, what I have been seeking to do is to combine the exegesis of the text with theology. In other words, when we come to the theological questions that are important, I am trying to turn to the normative passages that have to do with the subject, so that we obtain our theology not simply as we would study history, but from the text of Scripture itself. But in some of these topics, we must deal with the theological background in order that we might understand the questions that we should answer when we look at the text.

One of the greatest benefits of the study of theology is that it enables us to come to understand the questions that we must be asking as we read the word of God. It is amazing how many people read the Bible but do not ask themselves any theological question. So when they reach the end of their studies, they frequently do not know anything much about the Bible so far as its theology is concerned. They often have an acquaintance with the text of the Bible and are able to even recite verses, but do not know what these verses mean in connection with some of the discussions that have taken place down through the years as to the meaning of the text. In other words, they know the text by rote. They know it even by memory. They can recite it. They know the words in it, but they don't really know the meaning of it. So what we're trying to do in theology is to pose the questions so that you will be able to look at the text to find answers for these questions that have been asked by the Christian church and by others down through the years. This is our first study then on the hypostatic union, or the union of the two natures in Christ.

And in my introduction first of all, I was to say just a word about that expression, hypostatic union. The word hypostatic is derived from the Greek word *hypostasis*, and I have it here on the outline. Hypostasis spelled in English, transliterated H-Y-P-O-S-T-A-S-I-S, *hypostasis*. Hypostasis is a word that means "substance," but in theological language it came to mean person. So we should think of it as person. The hypostatic union is the personal union. So when we talk about the doctrine of the hypostatic union we are

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talking about the doctrinal of the personal union of the two natures, the divine and human natures of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the hypostatic union then is a study of the union, the personal union of the two natures of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Council of Chalcedon took place in 450 AD. It was a very important council, and it added a great deal to the formulation of the church concerning the person our Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose of these councils was, generally speaking, negative. That is, they were not so much designed to set forth positively the doctrine of Christ as to guard against the heresies and abuses of that doctrine that had developed. So this council is a council that set forth certain teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, primarily in a negative way. Let me read you, perhaps the most important section of it, and one that we will be referring to from time to time throughout tonight, and also throughout our entire study. The Council says, "We confess one and the same Jesus Christ, the Son and the Lord only begotten, in two natures, *en duo phoosisan* in two natures, without mixture, without change, without division, without separation." Now, you can see that all four of these statements, they are adverbs in the Greek text, without mixture, without change, without division, without separation are all negative. In other words, they were attempts to attack certain heresies that had arisen. The first two adverbs were attempts to attack the doctrine of Eutyches who denied the distinction of the natures. And so they write, "Without mixture, without change." And then the next two, "without division, without separation" were designed to attack Nestorius whose doctrine was a denial of the one personality and the communion of the two natures. And so they write with reference to him, "without division, without separation" so that there are two natures, not to be divided, not to be separated.

James Orr has written a book on the progress of dogma. And in this book he has commented on the Christological controversies. He's made the statement that they are some of the most unlovely in the history of the church. Now one of the reasons for this is that these issues were fought over very rabidly. Now, we should not think that it is bad

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that there were such controversies, and even that they were unlovely, because in the midst of these controversies the men who were involved in them were guided by the Holy Spirit, and down through the years we have had a clearer view of the person and the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ as a result of these so-called unlovely controversies. We know, of course, that we are not perfect human beings as long as we are here in the flesh, and so we should not be surprised that there is controversy in our midst over biblical doctrine and that it should be sometimes somewhat unlovely.

Think of the controversy of the Council at Jerusalem. That was not very lovely. There was a whole lot of dialogue there that was not very happy. But nevertheless, as a result of it, the early church came to a very significant understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith. Some others have said that the problem of the creeds of the Christian church, such as the creed of Chalcedon is that it is a kind of metaphysical definition. And since it's a metaphysical definition it's not of great value to us. But it was not a metaphysical definition. It was a very practical and a very pointed definition of certain aspects of the nature of Christ. They said specifically that the Lord Jesus Christ was confessed in two natures without mixture, without change, without division, without separation.

Those things were so practical and so pointed that when they wrote them up, anyone who had been involved in the controversies would say, "Now that is written against Nestorius or that is written against Eutyches or Apollinaris is handled there." So these particular statements of these creeds were points by which the early church in a sense delimited the doctrine of the person of Christ. They never intended to let us think that they understood the person of Christ perfectly. They knew, just as the Apostle Paul, that "great is the mystery of Godliness." But they knew some things that were not true, and other things that were not true, and by marking them off as being non-Christian it enabled those who were students of the word of God to center upon the things that were right concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

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The formula of Chalcedon continued by saying "The distinction of the 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." Now let me read that again, because this is fundamental to what we are going to be talking about tonight. The creed said, "The distinction of the natures, the human and the divine, is not taken away by the union of them in the Lord Jesus Christ, but rather the property of each nature, the human and the divine is preserved and they concur, these properties concur in one person and one subsistence." And the Greek expression is literally, "in one person and one hypostasis," on subsistence. Not parted or divided into two persons, so what they're saying then is that the distinction of natures is not taken away by the union. They are still two natures. They concur, however, in one person, one person. He is not divided into two persons, because of the union of the divine and the human, that union is such that it is a union in one person, not two persons. And the two natures are still distinct. So we have a distinction of natures and a unity in personality, or uni-personality so far as our Lord is concerned. We have two natures, but we don't have two persons. We have one person, but we don't have one divine human nature, one mixture, one third kind of nature made up of a divine and a human, two distinct natures, one distinct person.

The Westminster Confession of Faith many centuries later confirmed this by saying, "Two whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and manhood were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion." That is, the human did not become divine; the divine did not become human without composition. There is no kind of mixture of the two, no confusion without confusion, no confusion of the divine and human. They are distinct and separate.

Let's turn now to the outline, and first the definitions of nature and person. What do the Scriptures say? Well, first of all, we have to define our terms. I know that we use these terms nature and person constantly, but how would you feel if someone put you on a platform and said, "Define nature." Well, chances are you would feel like I often feel

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when somebody asks me to define some common term which is a little abstract. I'm usually at a loss for words. I'm afraid that I might say something that is wrong, might not really center on the thing that is important. How would you define nature? Well on theologian has defined nature as the "sum total of all the essential qualities of a thing that which makes it what it is. The sum total of all the essential qualities of a thing." That's its nature. A nature is a substance possessed in common with all the essential qualities of such a substance. In other words, a nature is a certain substance, and it has all the essential qualities of that particular substance.

We'd say the nature of an animal, or say the nature of a lion, well the nature of a lion is a certain substance, which possesses all the essential qualities that make a lion a lion. It must have a mane, I guess. It must have four legs. It must have a coat, a skin. It must have two eyes. It must have a roar that transfixes animals and men and various other types of qualities that make up a lion. Someone else has defined it this way; in fact this is the dictionary definition of nature, "It's the essential character of a thing, the essence." Any or all of the instincts, desires, appetites, drives of a person, a substance with its essential qualities." So let's just sum it up by saying it's a substance with its essential qualities. That's what a nature is.

Capital B, the definition of a person. What is a person, a hypostasis? Incidentally, the Greek term for nature is *ousia* that comes from the verb "to be" so it really means something like being; the definition of nature then, a substance with its essential qualities. Person, the same theologian that I quoted just above defined a person as a complete substance endowed with reason, and thus a responsible subject. So a person is a complete substance with reason. It's a nature with something added. That is, and independent subsistence. A substance endowed with reason, it's like the individual self, a person. So let's just use these two terms. Nature, a substance with its essential qualities; person, a substance endowed with reason. And we'll think of nature and person in that way.

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Roman II, the biblical doctrine of union. Now, we are talking about union, and so I think it would do well for us to think about the different kinds of union that we do have in the Bible. Here are some of them. I presume there are some others. I didn't try to be absolutely complete in what I have set forth here. It may be that you can come up with some other union. But these three I want to say something about, general union, special union, and personal union. General union, what is meant by that term? Well, what I mean by it is the presence of God, essentially and actively, in all creatures. In other words, there isn't any place in the universe at which we can say God is not there. So this general idea of the union of God with all of his creation is taught in the word of God.

Now, I'd like for you to turn with me to a couple of passages of the word of God. Turn first to a passage in the Old Testament, Jeremiah chapter 23, and let me read verses 23 and 24. Now, I want you to notice from this text how that Jeremiah teaches that God is really present everywhere in this universe. There is a general union between God and the whole of his creation. Jeremiah chapter 23, in verse 23 reads this way, "Am I a God Am I a God who is near, declares the LORD, And not a God far off?" Verse 24, "Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him? declares the LORD Do I not fill the heavens and the earth? declares the LORD." "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth declared the Lord." In other words, there isn't any place in this universe where God is not present. He fills the whole of the universe. Now, we are not affirming pantheism when we say this, but we are saying that the whole of the universe is in the presence of our great God.

Let's turn to the New Testament and read a passage here before I make one other comment in connection with it, Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 10. Paul writes, "He who descended is Himself," that verse, I was reading I think thinking about the Authorized Version and looking at the New American Standard Bible. Have you ever done that? Well, you have seen me do it. "He who descended is Himself, also He who ascended." This is one reason, incidentally, why I do not think the New American Standard Bible in

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all of its accuracy is the most literate translation. It's not a very smooth translation. You see, it did not fit into the words that I was saying out of my mouth. [Laughter] Now, I'm serious. It is a little awkward, and you can sense some of its awkwardness here. "He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens." Now, the last clause is what I really want you to look at, "that He might fill all things." So here in the Old Testament Jeremiah has affirmed what Paul affirms in the New Testament and that is that God fills all things.

Now, this capacity of God to fill all things we call, when we are studying the doctrine of the attributes, his immensity, his immensity. He fills all things, and in fact he overflows all things. He is not only everywhere in this creation, but he is beyond, over and above this creation. But now, when we speak of general union, we are simply talking about the presence of God, actively in all his creatures, and in his creation. And to this union, with the triune God, all created things owe their substance. So we can speak of a general union of God with his creation. B, special union, the union of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with believers. We often call the mystical union. Why do we call the union of believers with the Lord the mystical union? Well, we call it the mystical union in the first place because we don't see it, I presume. And then secondly we call it the mystical union because it is a union in the Holy Spirit.

Now, we know that when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our representative Savior, we are reckoned by God to be in him in his death, burial, and resurrection. He has carried out his ministry in our behalf, so that the things that he has done we are reckoned by God to have done, because of our union with him. He stands for us. He's our representative. He's born our penalty. He's been raised from the dead. So the Bible says that we have died with him. We have been raised up together with him. We have ascended together with him. We are seated together with him in the heavenly places in Christ. That is our union with Jesus Christ. It is fundamental to our salvation. All that is



involved in that union is involved when we say, we have been saved through Jesus Christ. He is our representative who has accomplished it all for us.

But this union we do not see. It's in the Spirit. It's something done by God through the Holy Spirit. And so it is called the mystical union. Often I stand here, and others do too, to marry young people and frequently in the opening words we will comment between the relationship between the husband and the wife, and also the roles that they play. The wife to be in subjection to her husband, as the church is to Jesus Christ. The husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church. And we speak about the fact of this mystical union that exists between the head and the body and what is represented by that. So special union then and this special union is the union of the triune God with believers, by which the communion of the saints becomes the spiritual temple of God. Isn't it interesting that the Bible speaks of the fact that when we believe in Christ we become an individual temple of the Holy Spirit.

Let's turn to one of those passages, 1 Corinthians chapter 6, 1 Corinthians chapter 6. Let me read beginning at verse 17. Verse 17 is one of the most striking statements the apostle makes in connection with the spiritual life. Listen to him. "But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him." That's a mystical union, spiritual union. "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that <sup>your</sup> body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. There is a union that exists between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit, so that our body is a spiritual temple. All of the things that we do in the body are things that have great significance because the Holy Spirit indwells us. Therefore, the things that we do that displease him have a bearing on this relationship that we have. And incidentally, the contemplation of anything that is displeasing to the Lord should take place in the light of the fact that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It must be very displeasing for the Lord for his saints, whom he indwells in

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the Spirit, to do things that are displeasing to him. I won't say we involved him in them, that may be carrying it too far, but he expresses his displeasure in the fact that he indwells individuals who sin. We ought to glorify God in our bodies as a result of that.

Now, if you turn back just a few pages to the third chapter you will see that not only is our body the temple of the Holy Spirit, but the local church is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Let me read verses 16 and 17. "Do you not know that you," he is speaking here of the local church in Corinth, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are." So the local church is regarded as a temple of God. In other words, when the local church meets together, lets just say this local church that meets here on Sunday evening around the Lord's table, when we meet we meet as the temple of God. For the Holy Spirit is there, and the communion that we enjoy is a communion of the Holy Spirit. So not only is my body a temple of the Holy Spirit, but the local church is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Turn over to Ephesians chapter 2, and verses 21 and 22. Here, and it may be that the apostle is thinking here of the whole church, not simply a local church, but of all the local churches looked at an organism. He says, "In whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." So here we have a rather interesting collection of texts that set forth a remarkable union of God with the saints. A union that extends to the body, the Holy Spirit indwelling this temple of the body, the Holy Spirit indwelling the local church in its meetings and its activities, and the Holy Spirit indwelling the whole of the body of Christ, looked at as one great body of believers. We are the temple of God.

Now, what a great contrast there is between this taught in the word of God and Jonestown's People's Temple, if there ever was anything that was a travesty of the teaching of the word of God. To call themselves the People's Temple and to affirm any

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kind of connection with Christianity must be tremendously distasteful to our great triune God in heaven. And a person who could connect what took place there with true Christianity hasn't the slightest understanding of what the Bible teaches concerning the Christian faith.

Special union, the union that exists between God and the believers, now what we are interested in is personal union. And we're talking about the union of the divine and the human natures in the one person of the God-man. Hypostatic union, this union was affected with the logos, the person of our Lord, assumed human nature into his divine person. Let me say that again, this union was affected when the logos, the person, the divine person of the Son, assumed human nature into his divine person, so that God and man became forever one divided and indivisible person; one undivided and indivisible person, one person, two natures. The human nature brought into union with the divine personality. It is the mystery of Godliness. When two people stand before a preacher and they are wed, there is a union that is instituted that is to be a permanent union. When the Lord Jesus took to himself a human nature, when he assumed that human nature into his divine person, that union was a union that was for better, for worse, on into eternity, and into the ages of the ages. It was a personal union that he will never abrogate. Isn't that an amazing thing? That the second person at a point in time, should take to himself a bride, and wed himself to that bride forever, it's something that really blows your mind to think that he would do this forever. It was an unalterable decision that the Lord made when he took to himself human nature. It's the mystery of Godliness.

Now, this union, this union of the divine and the human is proved by the personal propositions. That is, the passages in which, with reference to the incarnate Christ, it is said that God is man and man is God. And I'm going to have you now turn to a few of them if you will. Turn first to Matthew chapter 16, and verse 13 through verse 17, Matthew chapter 16, verse 13 through verse 17. Let me read these verses, and what I want you to do as we read them is for you to watch the designations that are given

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concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 13, "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Notice the expression, "Son of Man." "And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Doesn't that tell you something about our Lord, too? You often wonder what did people think of him as he walked down the street, what did they really think?

Well, some said he was John the Baptist. Well John the Baptist was one of those hellfire and damnation preachers, wasn't he. Others said he was Elijah. Elijah was a formidable character, too. He's the kind of person you wouldn't have wanted to be around if there were things wrong, obviously wrong in your life. He was the kind of man who would march right into the presence of King Ahab and say, "Look Ahab, it's not going to rain except at my word." And when the king meets him later on and says, "Are you the one troubling Israel?" He says, "It is not I that's troubling Israel, it's you, Ahab. You're troubling Israel." It's like a preacher meeting Jimmy and having Jimmy complain, and then just say, "Well, Mr. President, I'm sorry, but one of the great reasons we're having such trouble in this country is that you're such a flop." [Laughter] Mind you, that's an illustration. But let us the other one.

And others, Jeremiah, now how is Jeremiah known? Why, he's known as the gentle, weeping prophet. One of the startling things, I think, about the word of God is that our Lord Jesus combines all the strains of the prophets in himself. He has all of the virtues of a Jeremiah and all of the virtues of an Elijah. All of the virtues of an Isaiah or an Amos or all of them, they all meet in the Son. God at many times and diverse places and various ways spoke to the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken unto us by his Son. It's as if all the waters from all of the mountains have finally flowed into one stream. And that one stream is our Lord Jesus and all of the virtues of the men find their consummations in him. Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, in other words, he's not exhausted by John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah. He said to them, "But

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who do you say that I am?" That's the preacher who wants personal application. And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

Now, notice what is said about him. He said, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Peter says, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." So the Son of Man is the Son of the living God. It's one of these personal propositions, passages in which with reference to the incarnate Christ it is said that God is man and man is God. He is Son of Man but he's Son of the living God.

Turn over to Luke chapter 1, verse 31 and 32. Luke 1, 31 and 32, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus," stress upon the historical, human person. "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David." In other words, the Son of Mary is the Son of the highest, the two natures uniting in the one person. Let's turn back to Old Testament, Jeremiah chapter 23, Jeremiah chapter 23 verse 5 and verse 6. This is one of the great Messianic passages of the Old Testament in my opinion. I never hear many sermons on the Book of Jeremiah, and to tell you the honest truth, I don't think I ever hear any sermons, not just many, but any. There are some great Messianic passages. I know one of the reasons people don't preach on Jeremiah is he's so repetitious. It is true, he is repetitious, but the things that he repeats are things that we need to know. In the midst of his prophecy are some great passages, and this is one of them.

"Behold, the days are coming," verse 5 of chapter 23, "Behold the days are coming, declares the LORD, When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch." In other words, here's a .branch who's going to be raised up. He is a descendant of David. "And He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land In His days Judah will be saved And Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, Jehovah our righteousness." Here he is a branch of David, a twig off of the Davidic line, but at the same time he is the Lord our Righteousness, Jehovah Tsidkeinu.

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So here we have the combination again of the human and the divine. Well, I won't say anything more about this. You can see that this union is a union of the human and the divine, and yet one person. We cannot illustrate this. The union of our Lord's two natures in the one person is absolutely unique. There is no analog for it. Some have sought to illustrate it by the union of the soul and the body in a man. Or the iron poker put in the fire which soon glows with the fire. But we can say in Christ God is man, and man is God, but we cannot say that in man the soul is body or that the body is soul. We cannot say that, nor can we say that in iron glowing with fire, the iron is fire or the fire is iron. We cannot say that, but we can with reference to our Lord. You see, the union of the two natures is absolutely unique. Great is the mystery of Godliness. There are some things we know it is not, but what it is we do not know completely.

Let me now say a word about the church doctrine positively stated, just a few of the things that we've been talking about and try to sum them up. If we had time, I'd like to give you a series of affirmations, but it would be something of a repetition, so I won't do it. One important point needs emphasis, the Son of God did not become personal by the incarnation. Please remember that. He was a person before he took to himself human nature. The Son of God did not become personal by incarnation. The human nature, however, had no independent subsistence of its own, thus the human nature was never impersonal. It is only impersonal hypothetically, but as it came into existence it was joined to a divine person. So it never had an independent existence impersonally. It has its personal existence in the person of the logos. The human nature is in-personal rather than impersonal. In other words, the human nature of our Lord is a nature that is attached, united to a person. So it is in-personal not impersonal. It does have consciousness. The human nature of our Lord has consciousness. The human nature has a will. In Christ there are two wills, the human and the divine. "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done." He possesses a will attached to his human nature. Christian churches always believed in its

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most orthodox manifestations that consciousness and will belong to the nature, not to the person. Remember that.

Now, let me say a few words about the church doctrine negatively stated. When we're talking about the union of the two natures, first of all, we're not talking about a nominal union. He's not simply God in name only. The union is real. One of the greatest of the 19th century theologians, a man by the name of Ritschl said concerning Jesus Christ, I'd like to ask all of you this question personally, what's wrong with this statement? Ritschl said, "For us Christ has the value of God." Would you think that is a good statement? "For us Christ has the value of God." No, that's not a good statement. That's a denial of the full deity of the Lord Jesus. He does not say Christ is God. He says he has the value of God for us. Adolph Harnack, also one of the preeminent church historians of the 19th century said this, "Christ may be called the Son of God because he proclaimed to men the Fatherhood of God." Is that good? No, that's not good. The union of the two natures in Christ is not a nominal union. It is a real union.

Second, it is not a natural union. It's not like soul and body, which were created for each other. The creator and the creature are united into one person. The union did not cease when he gave his soul in death. What happened when our Lord's spirit, when his body died, was placed in the sepulcher was the union still in existence? Yes, the union was still in existence. The union did not cease when he gave us his soul in death. The natural union of soul and body ceased, but not the personal union of the two natures in Christ. Maybe later on we'll talk a little about that. It is not an accidental union like two boards that are glued together. That was Nestorius' idea that the two natures, the human and the divine, were like two boards that you glued together. No, when the Lord Jesus Christ suffered, and when he shed blood, and when he died, the Son of God suffered, he shed blood, and he died. In other words, when the Son of God went through his atoning experience it was not simply the human that participated in that, but the divine person participated in all of those activities. We should not think that our Lord

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suffered only with respect to his human nature. But he suffered with respect to the divine personality.

It is not a union sustained by a mere divine presence. In other words, it's not something that is necessary simply because God is present. It's a real union. It's not a relative union with two things in certain relationship with one another. For example, every couple that is married can say, I am joined to my wife, that's a relative union. That's a union that's brought about by love. In fact, you can say, "I am united to a friend of mine, because we have a mutual love for one another." But the union of the two natures in Christ is not that kind of union. In Christ, there is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The two natures are inseparably linked together. It's not a relative union. It's an absolute kind of union. It is not an essential or commingling union so that the two natures coalesce into one nature. Remember the natures are separable. And it is not a union by adoption. It is not that the divine nature adopted the human nature. Our Lord is born Son of God.

What is the consequence of this church doctrine? I want to state these, and with this we will close our meeting tonight. We will pick it up here next time as we turn to Philippians chapter 2. John Murray sums up the consequences of the church doctrine by saying, "There is a God-man, a theanthropic constitution has come into existence. Jesus Christ is God-man, one person who possesses two natures." Second, there is an economic subordination. That is, the Son becomes subject to the Father and dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Have you ever noticed, reading through the New Testament, how the things that our Lord Jesus Christ did, this is particularly true in the Gospel of John, he says he did them in dependence upon the Father. He says, "What the Father said, I have said. What the Father does, I have done."

And then he also says that he performed his works in the power of the Holy Spirit. So there is an economic subordination. In the economy of redemption there is subordination of the second person to the first person, and a reliance of the second



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person on the third person as he performs his works. It's always seemed to me a tremendously important thing to realize that the Lord Jesus performed his works in the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Son of God performed his works in the power of the Holy Spirit, that is if he looked to God for directions and he relied upon the power of the Holy Spirit, if he was dependent upon the Spirit, how much more should we, poor, weak, fallible, frail men, to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit?

And then third, our Lord Jesus is the recipient of a mediatorial investiture of authority. Because he has been obedient unto death, he has now been exalted and been given the name of Son and possessed of all authority, all power in heaven and in earth. Now, I'm going to just close by reading Philippians chapter 2, verse 5 through verse 11, for this is the passage that we want to be studying in our time together as we study further in more detail the hypostatic union. Let's turn now to Philippians 2:5-11, and as you read through this with me, think about some of the things that we have been saying about the personal union. The apostle says in verse 5 of Philippians chapter 2,

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

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[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the things that we have come to understand concerning the Son of God. Great is the mystery of Godliness, but we thank Thee for the personal union of the two natures in the one person. For we know, Lord, that this was a step along the way to the accomplishment of our salvation. And we bless Thee for the sufferings of the Son of God, which are sufferings in our behalf. How indebted we are. And so Lord we worship Thee, we praise Thee, we thank Thee. And we pray that the gratitude and thanksgiving that we ought to have may be what we do have, and may issue in the kind of life, the kind of testimony that will please Thee, that will glorify Thy name, that will make fruitful the activities of the saints and build up the body of Christ. Oh God, we do pray, too, that Thou will give us a deep desire to be an instrumentality in the gathering in...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**