

**“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”
(1Pet 3:15)**

✠ Lecture III: Biblical Defense of Our Faith ✠

✠ The One Nature (Entity) & Incarnation:

It is impossible to say that Virgin Mary gave birth to the Divine Nature alone, because she gave birth to a visible child. Also, she did not give birth to the Human Nature alone; otherwise, we revert to the Nestorian Heresy. Moreover, the Virgin Mary did not give birth to the Human Nature and the Divine Nature, otherwise, it would be said that she had two sons: one being God and the other a man. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not two Sons, one being the Son of God (Divine Logos) to be adored, and the other being a man (Human Nature) not to be worshiped. As St. Athanasius stated, “He is not bi-natured, to one we worship and to the other we do not. But He is rather of One Nature (One Entity) before whom we kneel down in one genuflection”. Therefore, our worship is not offered to the Divine Nature apart from the Human Nature. There is no separation and consequently all worship is offered to the ONE Incarnate God. For this reason, we worship this born Child and say, ‘Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, **who was born of the Virgin**, have mercy upon us’.

- “That Holy One **who is born** will be called the Son of God.” (Lk 1:35)
- “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; ... His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, **Mighty God**...” (Isa 9:6)
- “Behold the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘**God with us**’.” (Mt 1:23)
- “But why is this granted to me, that **the mother of my Lord** should come to me?” (Lk 1:43)
Notice that Virgin Mary was called “Mother of God” while still pregnant.
- “When the fullness of time had come, God sent **His Son** (Divine Logos), **born of a woman.**” (Gal 4:4)
- “Great is the mystery of godliness; **God** was manifest **in the flesh.**” (1Tim 3:16)

✠ The One Nature (Entity) & Redemption:

The belief in the One Nature (entity) of the Incarnate Logos is essential for soteriological reasons: Redemption and salvation require unlimited propitiation sufficient for the forgiveness of the unlimited sins of all people through all ages. These sins were also committed against an unlimited God and therefore require unlimited atonement. If we mention Two Natures and say that the Human Nature alone was crucified receiving disgrace and suffering, while the Divine Nature astonished us with miracles, then it would be entirely impossible to achieve unlimited propitiation (redemption).

- “For had they known, they would not have **crucified the Lord of glory**” (1Cor 2:8). St. Paul did not say, ‘They would not have crucified the man Jesus Christ’. The term “Lord of glory” affirms the One Nature (entity) and its necessity for redemption and salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified in the body (Human Nature), which was united with the Divine Logos in One Nature. This is the essential basis for salvation
- Likewise, St. Peter said that the Jews killed “**The Prince of Life**”(Acts 3:15). He used a term denoting the Divine Nature when he was speaking about the death of the Human Nature, which emphasizes their unity into One Nature (entity).
- Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself did not separate His Two Natures, He said, “I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and **was dead**, and behold, I am alive forevermore”(Rev 1:17). Thus He who was dead is the same who is the First and Last. Again, no separation, but One Entity.
- “He who did not spare His Son, but **delivered Him** up for us all...” (Rom 8:32), “For God so loved the whole world that He **gave His Only-Begotten Son...**” (Jn 3:16).

- “He loved us and **sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins**” (1Jn 4:10). The one sacrificed is the only-begotten Son, the Divine Logos, the Second Hypostasis (person) of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Bible did not say that He sacrificed His Human Nature even though it was His Human Body that died on the cross. This is a clear evidence of the One Nature (entity) of the Incarnate Logos.
- Likewise, it is written, “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, **in whom we have redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:13-14). When Holy Scripture speaks about the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, it attributes this to the Divine Logos who is the Image of the invisible God. This is more evidence of the One Nature (entity).

✦ Did the Divine Logos suffer?

Surely, the Divine Nature is not susceptible to suffering, but when the Human Nature underwent suffering, it was united with the Divine Logos. The Holy Fathers explained this point through the analogy of the red-hot iron. They said that when the blacksmith strikes the red-hot iron, the hammer is actually striking both the iron and the fire united with it. The iron (Human Nature) alone bends (suffers) whilst the fire (Divine Nature) is untouched though it bends with the iron. Nevertheless, suffering which is related to the Human Nature can be attributed to the Divine Nature without distinction due to their union, as there is no separation between the two Natures.

St. Paul said, “Shepherd the Church of **God** which He purchased with **His own blood**” (Acts 20:28). Here we see St. Paul ascribing the blood to God (Divine Nature) even though God is Spirit (Jn 4:24) and the Blood is that of His Human Nature. But as we said that after the union of the Two Natures One Entity resulted to which we refer.

✦ The One Nature (Entity) & The term ‘Son of Man’:

No doubt, the term ‘Son of Man’ refers to the Human Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ just as the term ‘Son of God’ refers to His Divine Nature. However, our Lord Jesus Christ used the term ‘Son of Man’ on several occasions where He meant ‘Son of God’, which proves the One Nature (entity) after the union:

- He told Nicodemus, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is the **Son of Man who is in heaven**” (Jn 3:13). Of course it is the Divine Logos who is in heaven at the same time as this conversation is taking place, but our Lord Jesus Christ refers to the Divine Nature with the same term that is used for the human one indicating the One Entity after their union. Also, “What then if you should see the Son of man ascend **where He was before?**” (Jn 6:62). Obviously, He who was in heaven is the Divine Logos. But our Lord Jesus Christ says concerning the Human Nature what applies only to the Divine Logos due to their unity into One Entity.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “for the Son of Man is **Lord** even of the Sabbath” (Mt 12:8). Since the term ‘Son of Man’ refers to the Human Nature and ‘Lord of Sabbath’ refers to the Divine Logos, then being put in one statement is another proof of the one Nature after their union
- Also, “The Son of Man has power on earth to **forgive sins**” (Mt 9:6). No one forgives sins except God alone and this is why the Jews accused Him of blasphemy (Mt 9:3). But in this verse our Lord Jesus Christ actually meant the One Nature of the Incarnate Logos.
- “The Son of Man will come in the glory of **His Father** with **His angels**, and then He will reward each according to his works” (Mt 16:27). Since the terms ‘His Father’ and ‘His angels’ refer to the Divine Nature also judging the world will be done by the Divine Nature, thus, using the term ‘Son of Man’ indicates the unity of the Two Natures into one Nature of the Incarnate Logos.

✠ Other Examples:

- St. John said, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (**Jn 1:18**). The Divine Logos declared the Father when He was incarnate in the fullness of time. Can we say that the one who declared the Father was his Human Nature? No, because St. John says that it was the only begotten Logos who declared Him. But we know that it is the man Jesus Christ who declared Him indicating the One Nature after the union.
- Our Lord said, “Before Abraham was, **I AM**” (**Jn 8:58**). He did not say ‘My Divine Nature existed before Abraham’, but said ‘**I AM**’ proving the unity and oneness of His Nature.
- St. Paul said about the Jews when they were in the wilderness of Sinai, “They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was **Christ**” (**1Cor 10:4**). It is well known that the Jews were in Sinai fourteen centuries before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. So how could He be with them quenching their thirst unless St. Paul was speaking about the Divine Logos? Yet the Divine Logos was not called our Lord Jesus Christ until the time of his Incarnation. But due to the One Nature (entity) the apostle did not distinguish or separate and spoke about the eternity of our Lord Jesus Christ (the man) and His presence before His birth. Likewise, he said, “Let us not tempt **Christ**, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents” (**1Cor 10:9**). Also, about Moses the prophet, it was said that he was “esteeming the reproach of **Christ** greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (**Heb 11:26**).
- The angel said to St. Joseph that St. Mary will bring forth a Son and that he shall call His name **Jesus** for “He will save His people from their sins” (**Mt 1:21**). Only God can save His people from their sins, but the angel attributes this act to the man Jesus proving the One Entity of the Human and Divine Natures. The same can be said about all the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* This Lecture is adapted from ‘*The Nature of Christ*’ by H.H. Pope Shenouda III.