

Naperville Presbyterian Church • Jesus – God and Man: The Journey Toward Understanding
Historical Christological Heresies

Viewpoint:	Ebionism	Docetism	Arianism	Apollinarianism	Nestorianism	Eutychianism
Denial:	Genuine Deity	Genuine Humanity	Genuine Deity	Completeness of Humanity	Unity of Person	Distinction of Natures
Explanation:	Christ had the Spirit after baptism; He was not preexistent; “adoptionist”	Jesus had the appearance of a human, but He was really divine.	Christ was the first and highest created being; <i>homoiousios</i> , not <i>homoousios</i>	The divine Logos took the place of Jesus’ human mind/spirit	The union of divinity and human was moral, not organic, resulting in two persons. The human was completely controlled by the divine.	Monophysitism; the human nature was swallowed up by the divine nature, resulting in a hybrid third nature – a <i>tertium quid</i>
Response:	No official response	No official response	Condemned at Council of Nicea, (325)	Condemned at Council of Constantinople (381)	Condemned at Synod of Ephesus (431)	Supported at “Robber Synod” of Ephesus (449); condemned at Council of Chalcedon (451)
Primary Argument For	They are monotheistic	They affirm Christ’s deity	They teach that Christ is subordinate to the Father	They affirm Christ’s deity	Distinguished the human Jesus, who died, from the Divine Son, who cannot die	Maintained the unity of Christ’s Person
Primary Argument Against	Jesus is only worthy of worship if He is truly divine (John 1:1; 20:28; Heb 13:8)	If Christ were not truly human He could not redeem humanity (Heb 2:14; 1 John 4:1-3)	Jesus is only worthy of worship if He is truly divine; Arianism tends toward polytheism. If Christ were not truly Divine, He could not save us (Phil 2:6; Rev 1:8)	If Christ did not have a human mind/spirit, He was not truly human (Heb 2:14; 1 John 4:1-3)	If the death of Christ was the act of a human person and not of God, it could not be efficacious to save (Rev 1:12-18)	If Christ were neither God nor man, He could neither redeem as man nor God
Time:	2 nd Century	Late 1 st Century	4 th Century	4 th Century	5 th Century	5 th Century
Proponents:	Judaizers	Basillides; Valentinus; Patripassians; Sabellians	Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria; Origen (?)	Apollinarius of Laodicea; Justin Martyr	Nestorius	Eutyches; Emperor Theodosius II
Opponents:	Irenaeus; Hippolytus; Origen; Eusebius	Irenaeus; Hippolytus	Athanasius; Ossius	Vitalis; Pope Damascus; Basil; Theodosius I; Gregory of Nazianzus; Gregory of Nyssa	Cyril of Alexandria	Flavian of Constantinople; Pope Leo I; Theodoret; Eusebius of Dorylaeum

From H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. pp. 53-54.
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The Chalcedonian Definition

*In agreement, therefore, with the holy fathers, we all unanimously teach that we should confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a rational soul and body, consubstantial [or, of one nature] with the Father in Godhead, and the same consubstantial [or, of one nature] with us in manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten from the Father before the ages as regards His Godhead, and in these last days, the same, because of us and because of our salvation begotten from the Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos* [or “God-bearer”], as regards His manhood; **one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis* [or one *person* and one *essence*] – not parted or divided into two *prosopa*, but one and the same Son, only-begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ,** as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ Himself have taught us about Him and the creed of our fathers has handed down.*

Questions for discussion

- 1) In the italicized section, what is affirmed about the *divinity* of Christ?
- 2) In the italicized section, what is affirmed about the *humanity* of Christ?
- 3) According to the boldface section, how many *natures* does Christ possess?
- 4) According to the boldface section, how many *persons* are involved in the Incarnation of Christ?
- 5) In the boldface section, what is being asserted by the phrase “without confusion, without change”?
- 6) In the boldface section, what is being asserted by the phrase “without division, without separation”?
- 7) Summarize the four assertions that we have seen about the natures of Christ and their relationship.
- 8) Why does it matter?