

The Humanity of Christ: Is He Really Like Us?

I. Wrestling With Christ's Humanity

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (Heb 2:14-17)

A. According to Hebrews, why did Christ need to become man?

“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man...in all things like unto us, without sin; ...to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved...”

- Creed of Chalcedon, 451 AD

Q. 39 - Why was it necessary that the Mediator should be man?

A. It was necessary that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance (i.e., assume) our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

- Westminster Larger Catechism, 1648 AD

II. The Emotional Life of Our Lord (by B.B. Warfield, 1851-1921)

A. His Most Common Emotion: Compassion

1. Individual distress – “Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him...” (Mark 1:41)
2. Man’s universal misery – “I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat.” (Mark 8:2)

“He not only gave the required help...but gave it with an amount of sympathy which doubled its value. Thus, he not only raised Lazarus, but wept with his sisters. In curing a man who was deaf, he sighed as he said ‘Ephphatha.’ All his healing work cost him feeling.”

– James Stalker, *Imago Christi*, 303.

Before feeding the 5,000...

“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” (Matt 14:14)

“When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6:34)

- a) What does each passage say is the reason for Christ’s compassion? What the root cause of all sicknesses, blindness, diseases, etc.?
- b) What do the Gospels say caused Jesus the most sorrowful grief? See Luke 19:41-44, Mark 8:11-12.

B. Jesus' Indignation Over Sin

1. Mark 3:1-5 – “And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart...” (3:5)
2. John 11:33-34 – “When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ³⁴ And he said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’”

“What John tells us, in point of fact, is that Jesus approached the grave of Lazarus, in a state, not of uncontrollable grief, but of irrepressible anger. He did respond to the spectacle of human sorrow abandoning itself to its unrestrained expression, with quiet, sympathetic tears: “Jesus wept” (v. 36). But the emotion which tore his breast and clamored for utterance was just rage.”

-B.B.Warfield, *The Emotional Life of Our Lord*, 36.

3. John 2:14-17 – “In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. ¹⁵ And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ And he told those who sold the pigeons, ‘Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.’ ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’”

a) How is Jesus' ultimate concern here different from reasons we often get angry?

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them.” (Mark 14:34)

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:44)

“His whole being revolted from that final and deepest humiliation, in which the powers of evil were to inflict upon him the precise penalty of human sin. To bow his head beneath this stroke was the last indignity, the hardest act of that obedience which it was his to render in his servant-form, and which we are told with significant emphasis, extended “up to death” (Phil 2:8).”

-Warfield, 56.

C. The Man of Sorrows is Also the Man of Joy

“In any event we must bear in mind that our Lord did not come into the world to be broken by the power of sin and death, but to break it. He came as a conqueror with the gladness of the imminent victory in his heart; for the joy set before him he was able to endure the cross, despising shame (Heb 12:2).” -Warfield, 47.

“In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.’” (Luke 10:21)

III. Conclusion

A. Jesus' only description of His own character – “...I am meek and lowly in heart”

1. Do you rejoice over the humanity of Christ?!?

“He subjected himself to the conditions of our human life that he might save us from the evil that curses human life in its sinful manifestation. When we observe him exhibiting the movements of his human emotions, we are gazing on the very process of our salvation: every manifestation of the truth of our Lord's humanity is an exhibition of the reality of our redemption. In his sorrows he was bearing our sorrows, and having passed through a human life like ours, he remains forever able to be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Such a High Priest, in the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, “became” us. We needed such a one.”

-B.B.Warfield, *The Emotional Life of Our Lord*, 76.