

THE DUAL NATURE OF CHRIST

THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTMAS

Who Was Jesus Christ?

Jesus was the God-Man.
How does this work?

THE PROBLEM

For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have **begotten** you”?

Hebrews 1:5

Elsewhere: “Firstborn”

If Jesus was BORN,
then he was MADE,
therefore he was
not GOD.



Begotten/Firstborn

To Father — to become the male agent responsible for the conception of a child (and its eventual entry into the world).

THE BIBLE CLEARLY REVEALS WHO CHRIST WAS...

- Vast amount of text
- Open to some interpretation.
- Systematic Theology / Our task, to seek to understand what scripture says about the person of Christ.
- If we get it wrong, we risk misunderstanding the gospel, and causing others to misunderstand the gospel.

FROM THE CREEDS

The Apostle's Creed

And in Jesus Christ, his only
begotten Son, our Lord

Who was conceived by the Holy
Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary

- Historic Creeds and Confessions, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

FROM THE CREEDS

Council of Nicaea 325 A.D.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

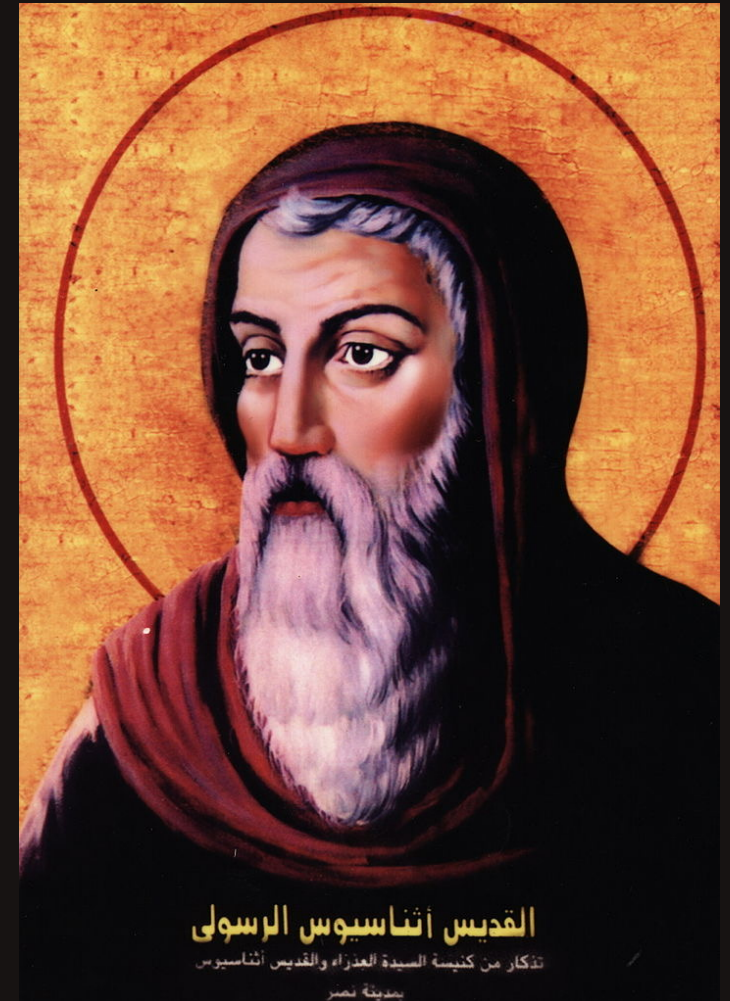
- Historic Creeds and Confessions, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

ATHANASIUS

**EARLY
THEOLOGICAL
HERO**

**THE BLACK
DWARF**

D. 373



The image features a dark navy blue background. On the left side, there are three vertical, wavy lines. The outermost line is a light cream color, the middle line is a vibrant green, and the innermost line is a slightly darker green. These lines create a layered, organic effect. In the center-right of the image, the text 'VS' is displayed in a large, bold, cream-colored sans-serif font.


VS



ARIANISM

Arianism Heresy, named after Arius, which denies the full divinity of Christ. Arius held that the Son of God was not eternal but was created before the foundation of the world by the Father. He was therefore not God by nature, but a creature. His dignity as Son of God was bestowed on him as a gift. Full divinity and the worship that goes with it belongs uniquely to the Father.

George Thomas Kurian, Nelson's New Christian Dictionary: The Authoritative Resource on the Christian World (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001).



To Athanasius this was no splitting of theological hairs. Salvation was at issue: only one who was fully human could atone for human sin; only one who was fully divine could have the power to save us. To Athanasius, the logic of New Testament doctrine of salvation assumed the dual nature of Christ. “Those who maintain ‘There was a time when the Son was not’ rob God of his Word, like plunderers.”

131 Christians Everyone Should Know, *Mark Galli, Ted Olsen*



TWO THINGS...

1. FOUGHT HARD FOR A PROPER UNDERSTANDING THE DUAL NATURE OF CHRIST AGAINST ARIANISM.
2. HELPED DEFINE THE CANNON OF SCRIPTURE, "IN THESE [27 WRITINGS] ALONE THE TEACHING OF GODLINESS IS PROCLAIMED. NO ONE MAY ADD TO THEM, AND NOTHING MAY BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM."

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of substance of His mother, born in the world. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;

- Historic Creeds and Confessions, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the **incarnation** of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The proper identity of Jesus (who he is) is essential to our salvation.
 - If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **Romans 10:9**
 - Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. **Acts 2:36**

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is **God and man**.

- Jesus is the God / Man

- **Jesus was God** / In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **John 1:1**
- **Jesus was Man** / “but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” **Phil 2:7**

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

God of the **substance** of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of **substance** of His mother, born in the world.

- Jesus is the God / Man (Clarifications)
 - **The Same as his Father** / “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” **John 14:9**
 - **The Same as his Mother** / “...he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.” **Luke 4:2**

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

Perfect God and **perfect** man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh **subsisting**.

- What Condition?
 - **Perfect** / (1) having desirable elements and attributes, or characteristics; as good as it is possible to be.
 - **Perfect** / (2) Absolute; complete
 - **Subsisting** / dwelling together, existing.

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead,
and **inferior** to the Father as touching His
manhood.

- Personhood and Authority

- **Equal** / [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created... **Colossians 1:15**
- **Subservient** / ...I do nothing of my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. **John 8:28** The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. **John 5:19** **[GNOSIS PHIL 2]**

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but **one** Christ. **One**, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of that manhood into God. **One** altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

- Not a dichotomy, but a unity / Hypostatic Union
 - **NOT PART MAN, PART HUMAN.**
 - **ONE BEING, MAN AND GOD TOGETHER**
 - **Not a schizoid**

Athanasian Creed (400-600 AD)

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is **one Christ**;

- To avoid further confusion, and to defeat current heresies, these documents were written by men who risked their lives for the sanctity of the Gospel of Christ.

SO WHAT?

- This is not *extra doctrine*, it is **basic** and **building-block** doctrine. It matters.
- We are saved because of the dual nature of Christ. **Defend** it, **learn** it. **Believe** and be saved!
- Jesus was fully man. He was tempted in everyway just as you were, yet without sin. **He understands you.** Intimately!
- Jesus is God of very God. **Worship Him!**