

Christ: Incarnation, Sonship, Subordination
Placerita Bible Church, Adult Equipping Class
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1. Incarnation

1.1 Deity

- Jesus was the God-man — truly and fully God as well as truly and fully human. See Philippians 2:6; John 17:5; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:15; John 1:1–3.
- The second person of the Godhead exhibits and exercises the divine characteristics and attributes of God.

Divine Characteristics or Attributes	Biblical References
Eternality	Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; Colossians 1:17
Self-existence (Aseity)	John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16–17; Revelation 1:8, 17–18
Immutability	Hebrews 1:10–12 (see Ps. 102:25–27); 13:8
Omnipresence	Matthew 18:20; Ephesians 4:10
Omnipotence	1 Corinthians 1:23–24; Hebrews 1:2–3
Omniscience	John 1:47–49; 21:17; Acts 1:24; 1 Corinthians 4:5
Sovereignty	Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22
Glory	Matthew 16:27; 24:30; Luke 9:32; John 17:5
Life	John 1:4; 5:21; 11:25; 14:6; Acts 3:15; Revelation 1:18
Holiness	Luke 4:34; John 6:69; Hebrews 7:26
Love	Mark 10:21; John 11:3, 5; 14:21, 31; 15:9–11
Mercy	Mark 5:19; 1 Timothy 1:2; Hebrews 2:17
Grace	John 1:14, 16–17; Romans 1:7; 16:20
Righteousness	Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 2 Peter 1:1
Truth	John 1:14, 17; 14:6; Ephesians 4:21

1.2 Kenosis

- The Son voluntarily yielded the independent exercise of his divine attributes to the will of his heavenly Father. See Philippians 2:5–7.
 - “emptied himself” (Greek *kenōō*)
 - “form” (*morphē*) does not mean either that Christ became a servant only in external appearance, nor that he was God merely in external appearance; the essential, unchanging character of something — what it is in and of itself.
 - “being” stresses the essence of a person’s nature — his continuous state or condition.
- The Son accepted some sort of limitation as to his independent or free exercise of His divine attributes. He did not cease to be God.
 - He laid aside the external divine glory which he possessed.
 - His internal divine glory was still present, though temporarily veiled by his

being in the form of a servant.

1.3 Virgin Birth

- Genesis 3:15 (“her offspring/seed”) and Galatians 4:4 (“born of woman”)
- Compare Luke 3:38 (“Adam, the son of God”) and Matthew 1:1 (with Genesis 5:1)
- Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22–23 — a virgin will conceive
- Isaiah 9:6 — “a child is born, ... a son is given”
- Descendants of Adam are sinners — Romans 3:23; 5:12–19; 6:23
- 1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 7 — Jesus has come in the flesh
- Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:5; and 1 Timothy 3:16

1.4 Humanity

- *The Hypostatic Union* = a permanent union of Christ’s two natures in one God-man person, brought about by the incarnation. This is a matter of dual perfect natures in one person, not dueling personalities.
 - Humanness involves undergoing, not just encountering, what mankind commonly experiences. Hebrews 2:17–18 and 1 Timothy 2:5
 - Distinguishing the natures and person of Christ in reading Scripture:

Self-Study

1. References to Christ’s whole person — in which both natures are essential: Isaiah 9:6–7; Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 4:14
2. References to the whole person, but the attributes are true of his deity: John 2:24–25; 3:13; 5:17
3. References to the whole person, but the attributes are true of his humanity: Matthew 4:1–2; Luke 2:7, 40; John 4:6
4. Apparent contradiction in references describing the whole person according to an attribute of his divine nature, but predicated of his human nature: Acts 20:28; Revelation 1:17–18
5. References similar to number 4, but the whole person described according to his human nature, but predicated of his deity: John 6:62; Romans 9:5
6. References describing the whole person according to his deity, but predicated of both natures: Luke 23:43; John 6:11, 61; Colossians 3:3–4
7. References describing the whole person according to his humanity, but predicated of both natures: Matthew 27:46; John 5:27

- *Christ’s Limited Knowledge*
 - Mark 13:32 — Jesus spoke these words during the time of His incarnation. His words do not reflect the state of His knowledge following His resurrection.
 - Acts 1:6–7 — Jesus knew the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel,

but would not reveal it at that time to his disciples.

- *Christ's Baptism* — Mark 1:1–10. The purpose in the baptism was that the personal presence of the Messiah in fulfillment of the OT prophecies might be revealed.
 - Why was Jesus baptized? Matthew 3:15
 - It pictured his death and resurrection (see Luke 12:50).
 - It prefigured the significance of Christian baptism.
 - It marked his first public identification with those whose sins he would bear (Isaiah 53:11; 1 Peter 3:18).
 - It was a public affirmation of his messiahship by testimony directly from heaven (Matthew 3:17, which combined the Messianic language of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1).
- *Christ's Temptation* — Matthew 4:1–11
 - Satan's temptations attacked Jesus in his humanity, since God himself (therefore, Jesus's divine nature) "cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13).
 - Jesus was tempted "in every respect . . . as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrew 4:15). Jesus was able to be tempted, but not able to sin.
 - Being "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1), Jesus could not fail the testing.

2.0 Sonship

2.1 The Trinity — a plurality of persons in the Godhead even in the Old Testament.

- Genesis 1:1–2 ("God" and "the Spirit of God"), 26 ("us . . . our"); 19:24
- Isaiah 48:12–17; 61:1–2 (compare with Luke 4:18–19)

2.2 Eternity Past: Preexistence

- Micah 5:2, "from of old, from ancient days"
- Plurality of persons in creation: Genesis 1:1–2, 26; John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:2, 10
- John 1:1 ("with God") indicates a distinctly separate identity for the Logos.
- The Second Person's divine glory "before the world existed" (John 17:5)
- John 3:16–17 and 1 Peter 1:20 ("before the foundation of the world")
- Love exercised between persons of the Godhead (John 17:24, "before the foundation of the world")
- Names of the Second Person in Isaiah 9:6 — Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

2.3 Appearances in the Old Testament (Theophanies)

- John 1:18 — no one has seen God the Father
- Genesis 16:7–13 — the Angel/Messenger of the LORD
- Genesis 18:1–33 — the Angel/Messenger of the LORD
- Genesis 15:1–16 — the Word of the LORD

3.0 Subordination?

3.1 Eternal Sonship?

- Psalm 2:7 — Hebrews 1:5
- John 1:14 — “the only Son from the Father”
- Eternally God (ontological Trinity), but Son in programs of kingdom and redemption (economic Trinity).
- Birth: Luke 1:32, 35 (incarnational Sonship?)
- Baptism: Matthew 3:17
- Transfiguration: Matthew 17:5
- Resurrection: Romans 1:4

3.2 Voluntary Submission ≠ Subordinationism

- 1 Corinthians 15:27–28 — Who is subjected to Whom?
- Hebrews 1:3 — “sat down at the right hand”
- Hebrews 5:5–6 — appointed High Priest and appointed Son