



THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY
(Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ)

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Abstract

Death and Resurrection of Jesus is central to Christianity. Imagine, without death and resurrection can not work out salvation. Because of Christ's death on the cross so that sin can be redeemed and believers receive salvation.

To be able to trust and believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus, the first person must realize that Jesus is both God and human. If he is not God, then Jesus could not rise and if not human Jesus could not die.

Faith in the existence of Jesus as God one hundred percent and human one hundred percent is what brings people actually trust the work of Jesus' death and resurrection. So it can be said the death and resurrection of Jesus is the "essence of all Christianity".

Introduction:

Throughout history that is still ongoing, Death and Resurrection of Jesus has always been a question and debate prolonged among people who are always disputed. It is not a new thing when there are teachings that oppose the resurrection of Jesus or against Jesus' death. And, cannot be denied, if a person tend to the opposition of the death or the resurrection of Jesus then the meaning of Christianity in that person will be soon dimmed.

Watchman Nee, a famous Christian Martyr gives a clear picture of the meaning of the death and the resurrection of Jesus in his life by saying: "*Christ is the son of God who died for the redemption on sinners and was resurrected after three days. This is the greatest truth in the universe. I die because of my belief in Christ*" (Angus I. Kinnear. 1973).¹ Not only Watchman Nee, many Martyrs had lost their lives because of their love for Jesus Christ as Savior, and of course because of the unwavering belief in Jesus Christ as God and human who gave Himself to die on the Cross for us all believes that had eternal salvation because of His redemption.

Divinity and Humanity of Jesus.

Talking about death and resurrection of Jesus is certainly closely related to the divinity and humanity of Jesus. Jesus as God's existence can not be directly related to the death and the existence of Jesus as a human being also can not be attributed to the rise. Throughout human understanding even a layman to the experts, none of whom agree that God could die and no one has to agree that humans can rise. Death and resurrection can only be done by a man named Jesus ever existed on this earth. Special human and also fully God.

Divinity of Jesus Christ was witnessed by the entire Bible through words and deeds of Jesus. Evidence of Jesus' divinity can be described as:

- Jesus holds / has a divine titles. He is called the Word (Logos), which is the true God (John 1:1,14,18). He also called the children of God (Matthew 14:33; 16:16-17). The Apostle John calls Jesus the only child of the Father five times (John 1:14; 18; 3:16,18; I John 4:9). Also some times Jesus is said to be the Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and the End in the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13).
- Jesus has the basic properties of divinity. Because of the nature of God possessed by Jesus, God's basic attributes attached to him. And the most surprising is the claim that he existed before Abraham was (John 8:58; Colossians 1:17). The writer of Hebrews affirms immutability of Jesus

¹ Kinnear, Angus I. *The Story of Against The Tide Watchman Nee*. (Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade. 1973).

(Hebrews 13:8). Jesus had power to give eternal life (John 5:21,26; 11:25; 14:6), which can only be given by God himself. Other properties that indicate the divinity of Jesus: Almighty (Matthew 28:18, John 3:35, Ephesians 1:20-21), Omniscient (John 5:42; 6:64; 16:30), Omnipresence (Acts 18: 10, Matthew 28:20), and The Holiest (Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22).

- Jesus is equal with God the Father. As a consequence of the characteristics possessed by the divinity of Jesus, then Jesus is equal with the Father. For example, Jesus is mentioned with the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit in baptism (Matthew 28:19), the spelling of greetings and thanks to God (2 Corinthians 13:13). Also seen in His unity with the Father (John 10:30).
- Jesus does the work that is done only by God. That is the creation and maintenance of this universe. Jesus also actively involved with other elements of the triune God (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 1:2-10). It is said also that he sustains all things by His unlimited power (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3). Miracles performed by Jesus clearly stated His divine nature. He not only has power to forgive sin (Mark 2:5; 9-10), but he was also able to raise the dead (John 5:21; 6:40,54). Even later in the day the Lord Jesus will be the judge who judges all men (Matthew 25:31-46).
- Theophany in the Old Testament. In the OT it told about the appearance of God that can be seen by the human eye called Theophany. Some important examples of Theophany in the OT: Army Commander of God that is worshiped by Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15), as well as angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:7-14; 18:13-33; 22:11-18, Exodus 3: 2-5; Judges 6:11-23; I Kings 19:5-7, 2 Kings 19:35) (Ichwei G. Indra, 1999).

Jesus' perfect humanity expressed either directly or indirectly, and some evidence can be seen:

- True human nature in Jesus. This means Jesus has all the elements of human, either physical body (Hebrews 10:5) that can be seen and touched (I John 1:1-3) and soul with all its dimensions, such as: knowledge, mind, emotions and will (Matthew 26 :38-39), John 2:25, 1 Corinthians 2:16). As a man Jesus also experienced growth phases mental, physical, knowledge, social awareness, and so on from infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood

(Luke 2:12, 21-22, 40 and 52). Fairness is a natural progression, therefore in some cases He could feel the physical weariness (John 4:6); drowsy and fell asleep (Matthew 8:24); thirst (John 19:28); angry (Mark 3:5, Luke 19: 45); anxiety, trepidation and fear (Luke 22:44); moved, saddened and wept (John 11:33,35); Jesus also been feeling very hungry while fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:2).

- Jesus had a family, and his pedigree as the son of Man. No less than 80 times in the four Gospels Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man (Matthew 26: 63-64, Mark 2:10, Luke 7:34, John 12:23). By using this title for sure he identified himself as a human being. Additionally premises Jesus also called the child's name or a descendant of David (Luke 1:31, Isaiah 9:5-6). Jesus also had a family (Matthew 1:1-6 and Luke 3:23-38). This proves that Jesus ever existed in human history.
- Jesus was born of a human womb. Although we acknowledge and confess that Jesus is God who became man. But his presence on earth through the process of birth as men in general (Matthew 1:18-23; 2:11, Luke 1:30-33; Galatians 4:4).

As a man Jesus was tempted. The nature of the human of Jesus was strengthened through trials He experienced. Temptation is a crisis, but neutral in the midst of the trials and tribulation. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested while Satan came to tempt Him repeatedly (Matthew 4:1-11). The testimony of the four Gospels about the temptations that faced by Jesus can be summarized in Hebrews 4:15, *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (KJV) The toughest test faced by Jesus was when he had to face crucifixion. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus fought so hard until his sweat dripping to the ground as blood (Luke 22:44) (Indra, Ichwei. G. *Systematic Theology*. 1999).²

So Jesus is the eternal Son of God who had previously been with the Father, and the incarnation and birth through a virgin, He took human form in order to

² Indra, Ichwei. G. *Systematic Theology*. (Bandung: Institute of Literature Baptist. 1999) Pgs. 108-109

express God's man in one person. There are two forms, Divinity and Humanity; may be distinguished but not separated, making He is the Mediator right between God and human. Jesus is the perfect, sinless life, was crucified, died, was buried, rose up to heaven, and He will come again in glory for His people.

The existence of Jesus as God and human is not easily accepted. History proves that there are followers of Christ who are not in line with the truth. They question about the two natures of God and man in one person. Some reject the divinity of Jesus, they believe that Jesus was only a special and unique human being . Some refused Humanity of Jesus and believe that Jesus is God alone. These are the views that have emerged against both divinity and humanity of Jesus.

- *Ebionitism*: Is Christian Jewish background. Their views about the humanity and divinity of Jesus is: Jesus is a man, though appointed by God as the Messiah, which will be reset at the end of time to rule the world by the power of a sovereign God. They deny the deity of Christ, because they believe in only one true God. Jesus was human. They only know one God is Yahweh. And there is no other God but Him.
- *Gnosticism*: His view is the opposite of reject the humanity of Christ. Christ is said to descend from the highest heaven or "fullness". For some time he joined the historical person of Jesus, the body of the psychic and material contained on these two elements are not closely related. They distinguish between Jesus and Christ. Jesus was a man, and Christ is the Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus in the Jordan down, but left Jesus on the Cross.

The meaning of the Greek word *gnosis* is knowledge. Gnosticism is built from a variety of systems from mytologi, philosophy, and theosophi. They tried to form his philosophy by combining the teaching of biblical doctrines with disbelief.

- *Arianism*: Arius was the leader of the church in Alexandria. The teaching is argued that "the child was created", because he was not eternal. Christ indeed was the greatest thing, but actually just being alone. They rejected the eternity and equality of Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- *Apollinarianism*: Apollinaris was bishop of Laodicea. His view denies that God truly became man. The teaching is that Christ has the body and the soul,

but does not have the spirit and the mind. This is because they are hard to explain the union of two beings in one person of Christ.

- *Nestorianism*: Nestorius, a bishop of Constantinople, who taught that the two properties that (God - Human) is not unified. His eyes refused unity of the divine nature and the human nature in Christ by saying that the Logos (personal deity) who dwells in the person of Christ. Jesus was just a man filled with the Spirit, now man filled with God without having a divine nature and human nature in one person.
- *Eutychianism*: His view says that the person of Christ is united. Divinity and humanity mixed together and form a third trait. Therefore, Jesus is not a true man and true God instead. Thus he was not able to act as an intermediary.

In the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon reestablished Bible truth or the so-called Orthodox / Conservative. The main article insists "we must confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is the only child of the same, perfect in deity, perfect in humanity, consubstantial (homoousios) with the Father in divinity, consubstantial (homoousios) with the nature of man in humanity. Two natures fused (fuseis) , without intermingling, without change, without division, without separation. Personal (prosopon) and one substance (hypostasis) ". (Charles C. Ryrie. 1999)³

Jesus' death.

No other events of all the time is more important than the death of Jesus on the cross. Other important acts of God such as the creation of the world, the incarnation of Christ, his resurrection, his second arrival, and the creation of the heavens and the new earth becomes meaningless if Jesus had not died. Without the death of Jesus there would be no sacrifice for sins, no salvation, no resurrection and no other elements that have shaped the content of the Christian faith since its beginnings. The fact that Christian churches could withstand persecution for centuries and remain alive for centuries neglected and contested is inexplicable apart from the system of theology that comes from faith in Jesus Christ as God's son actually died, rose again and ascended into Heaven.

³ Ryrie, Charles. C. *Basic Theology 1*. (Yogyakarta: Andi Foundation. 1999).

To properly understand the meaning of the death of Jesus, we need to know a lot of important terms of theology concerned with this. These terms include:

- Atonement (Victim as Sin). It means "to cover", that is the sin that surrounds invisible.
- Expiation (Indemnity Punishment of Sin). Death of the Lord Jesus Christ is interpreted as an act of taking our punishment for sin. Human sin that should be punished but through His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus bore it.
- Forgiveness. An act of God for sinners eliminated on the basis of satisfaction on the part of God.
- Guilt. A fatal error because of sin has been forgiven by Christ's death. In a general sense, is often regarded as a violation of the moral law, but to God is sin.
- Justice. Returns the right to be provided in the form of reward or punishment.
- Justification. Justification is a legal nature of God, who said a "right" to give to that person.
- Penalty. In the case of the Lord Jesus, His suffering is demanding the court, the representative and the value is not limited, and sufficient to pay the penalty and the sins of the whole world.
- Propiation. Jesus' death as a sacrifice of atonement between man and God. Hostility because sin is reconciled. Satisfaction of all God's righteous demands regarding punishment for sinners through the atoning act of Christ's death.
- Ransom. The price paid by Christ to God in giving rescue case that God was satisfied.
- Atonement. Act of atonement in the safety of a man who believes in Christ is the application of the death of Christ to the man by the power of the Spirit, which changed its status from the wrath of God as a person who fully accepted by God.
- Remission. Means "shake off" in the sense of forgiving sin, forgiveness and release from punishment that must be followed.
- Redemption. Payment of the price demanded by a holy God for the deliverance of believers from oppression and the burden of sin.

- Righteousness. The basic concept of righteousness is "adjusting or aligning itself" with moral standards, especially the standard of God's righteousness alone.
- Sanctification. In a broad sense, sanctification is an act of God that separates someone or something for sacred use.
- Substitution. Christ died as a substitute for sinners on the cross for the salvation of those who trust in Him. His death was the perfect God can satisfy. (John F. Walvoord. 1969).⁴

Of some of the terms used above are understood by every Christian is redemption. Learning about redemption as one important terms of the meaning of Jesus' death brings the believer increasingly aware of the importance of Christ's death and is the essence of Christianity itself. The doctrine of redemption is both in the Bible and theology, is an important aspect of the work of God in the salvation of men. Although it is difficult to get a term that encompasses all the work of God for sinful humanity, if the term "safety" is understood as a term that is wide enough for a complete work of God to man in time and in eternity, then redemption is primarily concerned with the safety aspect of that achieved in death Christ.

When studied in depth, the statement of the basis for redemption in the Bible is a verb "agorazo" derived from the word "agora" which means a public or market, and because it "agorazo" merely means 'buy'. Usually means directed to the purchase of goods in the market. Yet in the six examples in the Bible, it says that Christians are redeemed or purchased by the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23, 2 Peter 2:1, Revelation 5:9, 14:3-4).

So the study of "agorazo" led to the concept that Christians are purchased by Christ and therefore are his "slaves". Therefore the conclusion of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reads: *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*(KJV) In 1 Corinthians 7:23 There is also a similar conclusion: *"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."*(KJV) So the doctrine contained

⁴ Walvoord, John. F. *Jesus Christ Our Lord*. (Surabaya: Yakin, 1969) Pgs. 143-145

in it is in the act of redemption that Christ has purchased the Christians and made them his slaves. The fact that believers are in a special relationship with God as one who has been bought by the death of Jesus was used as the theme song which is sung in a new heaven and recorded in the book of Revelation 5:9: *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"* (KJV).

Another word that illustrate and clarify the meaning of redemption is the word "exagorazo", four times in the New Testament (Galatians 3:13; 4:5, Ephesians 5:16 and Colossians 4:5). The verb is "agorazo" added the prefix "ex", which means 'buy back' or 'buy from' understanding of which is used in Galatians 4:13 and 4:5. In Colossians 4:5 and Ephesians 5:16 used with the meaning 'to use the time available' is closely again with the return of our Lord. Obviously if "agorazo" emphasizes buying and lead the believer belongs to God, the "exagorazo" is a more intensive form of thought not just "bought" but "bought from the market" or "bought back from the state accountable to the laws of the Torah ". God's intention is that through "exagorazo" is the Gentiles who believe should receive the blessing promised in Christ to all nations through Abraham and also may receive the covenant of Holy Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:14).

The last important word of redemption is expressed in the use of the word "lutroo" and its parallel which means freedmen with ransom payments, redeemed, released, rescued. The verb form is found three times in the New Testament (Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 1:18). In Titus 2:14 thinking about freed from sin by a ransom declared, *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* (KJV) Here ransom is Jesus who gave himself for us.

Of the three words above, it can be summarized that it is very important to the meaning of redemption as a result of the death of Jesus. Human purchased (agorazo) 'as if' in the slave market. Not only bought but bought back by issued (exagorazo) from the slave market. And the most wonderful thing is they are no longer a slave, but to the people who were given independence or liberated (lutroo).⁵

⁵ Ibid., 153-155

Resurrection of Jesus

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the basic truths of the Christian faith. Students who initially encouraged to witness for Christ because they believed that Jesus Christ was truly dead and truly alive. He has defeated death and sin, therefore whoever believes in Him will have life. Christ represents the first fruits for those who will be resurrected.

The meaning of resurrection: The term generally means resurrection re-established. In the New Testament the term resurrection means releasing the body from the dead body revived. So the resurrection of the body is set up again so that the body is released from the power of death and given life again. Death really happened, but come back to life. Resurrection fulfilled the prophecies concerning Christ's resurrection. David foretold Christ's resurrection (Psalm 16: 10). Peter indicated that the resurrection of Jesus fulfills the prophecy of David (Acts 2 :25-28), Christ himself had foretold not only death, but also resurrection (Matthew 16: 21; Mark 14: 28).

Proof of Resurrection: The fact of Christ's resurrection is the best documented in history that can not be denied any longer. Among the evidence is as the following:

- The empty tomb (Matthew 28 :57-60; Mark 16 :42-45; Luke 24 :50). The disciples of Jesus could not have taken the body of Christ, because the tomb guarded by Roman soldiers and had sealed the tomb.
- Sightings himself to his disciples. The Lord Jesus has risen witnessed by the students and a lot of people during the 40 days after His resurrection (Matthew 28 :1-10; Luke 24 :13-35; John 20 :1-10; 1 Corinthians 15: 5-8).
- Changes in students lives. They knew that Jesus had died. At first they were skeptical about the resurrection, but when they saw the risen Christ, there was a change in their lives.
- Sunday Worship. The students immediately began to fellowship as a memorial of Christ's resurrection on Sunday (John 20: 19, 26; Acts 20: 7; 1 Corinthians 16: 2).

- Christian churches. The existence of the Church depends on the fact of the resurrection of Christ. Christian church built on the resurrection and Jesus himself (Acts 2 :24-32; 3:15; 4:2; Romans 4: 24).

Importance of the Resurrection: To ratify and fulfill Old Testament prophecy (Luke 24 :19-27; 44-45; Acts 2 :24-35). Prove the divinity of Christ and the fulfillment of God's work of redemption (Romans 1: 4; Ephesians 1 :18-21; 1 Corinthians 15 :24-28). The basis of the gospel (1 Corinthians 15 :14-15). A guarantee for us in: Christ lives, Preaching Christ who lives is not in vain, our faith is not in vain either. We do not give false testimony, sin and death have been defeated, we have the hope of eternal life. We will also risen and exalted like Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

If until now there are still those who doubt the existence of Jesus as God and human, they would be doubtful whether Jesus really died and rose. Doubt that this will lead to mistrust about all Christian belief in the Bible. Teaching about salvation in the atonement of Jesus Christ, prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament too, will be in vain. At this point, Christianity would be meaningless and dead.

Therefore the Death and Resurrection of Jesus is something that is very important in Christianity and become the "essence". Without the death and resurrection men will not receive eternal salvation. To be able to accept the death and resurrection of Jesus one must believe that Jesus is fully God and human.

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