

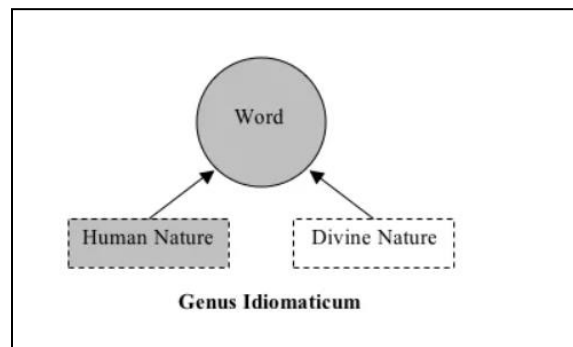
Session 5: The Communication of Christ's Attributes

There are three genera, or ways of speaking, about how Christ's attributes relate to the person of Christ, his work, and each other. Note that these are distinctions we make for the sake of clarity and because other denominations or heretics accept some of these ways of speaking while denying others.

The three genera (ways of speaking) about Christ are as follows: **the genus idiomaticum** (the way of speaking concerning properties), **the genus apotelesmaticum** (the way of speaking concerning official acts), and **the genus maiestaticum** (the way of speaking concerning majesty).

Theological definition: the *genus idiomaticum* or "the way of speaking concerning properties"

Because the divine and human natures of Christ make up *one* person, the attributes are always ascribed to the whole person. (At the same time, it does not follow that what is ascribed to the person of Jesus is a property/attribute of both natures, but it is distinctively explained what nature it is according to which anything is ascribed to the person).



1. Read Galatians 4:4 and 1 Corinthians 2:8. How do these passages demonstrate the *genus idiomaticum*?

Galatians 4:4: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,"

1 Corinthians 2:8: "None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

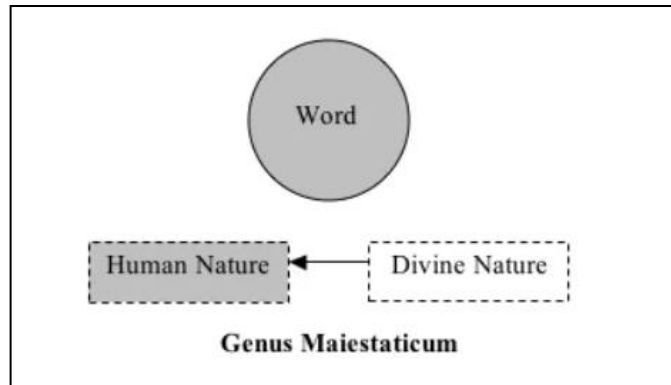
2. True or false: The Son of God suffered *according to/because of* his divine nature.
3. Read Malachi 3:6. How could the Son of God really share in the suffering of humanity if he's really not able to suffer due to the fact that He's unchanging (i.e., He's impassible)?

Malachi 3:6 "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed."

4. Read Romans 5:10. Why does the *genus idiomaticum* matter?

Theological Definition: The *genus maiestaticum*, or “the way of speaking concerning majesty”

Though the human nature of the person of Christ remains truly human, yet all divine properties and perfections and the honor and glory pertaining to this divine nature are communicated to His human nature; the divine perfections, which the divine nature has as *essential* attributes, the human nature has as communicated attributes.



5. Read Matthew 28:18, Luke 10:22, Hebrews 5:9, and Ephesians 4:10. How do these passages demonstrate the *genus maiestaticum*?

A) Matthew 28:18: And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

B) Luke 10:22: All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

C) Hebrews 5:9: And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

D) Ephesians 4:10: He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

6. Read John 4:3-4; John 20:19; and Ephesians 4:10. What are the four ways Christ Jesus can be present due to the *genus maiestaticum*?

A. John 4:3-4: he left Judea and departed again for Galilee. 4 And he had to pass through Samaria.

B. John 20:19: On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

C. Ephesians 4:10: He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

D. Sacramentally (in a way that we don't know). This is the way in which Jesus is present in the Lord's Supper and Baptism. (c.f. Matthew 26:26-28).

7. Read John 6:51; 1 John 1:7; and John 1:14. Why does the *genus maiestaticum* matter?

A) John 6:51: I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

B) 1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

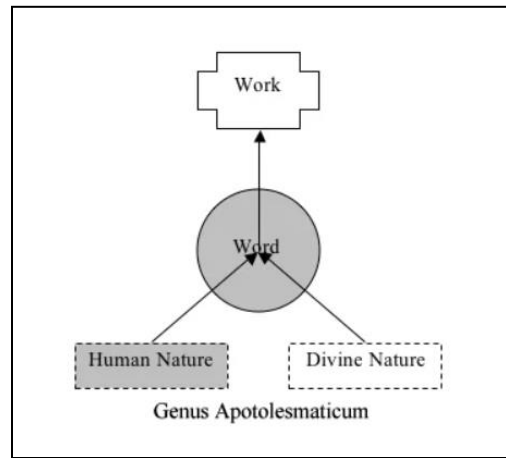
C) John 1:14: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

8. Read Malachi 3:6. Does the human nature communicate human attributes to the divine nature? Why or why not?

Malachi 3:6 "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Theological Definition: The *genus apotelesmaticum*, or "the way of speaking concerning official acts"

The works pertaining to the office of Christ are not of only one and solely of that nature, but are common to both, inasmuch as each nature contributes to them what is its own, and thus each of the two natures acts in communion with the other.



9. Read Matthew 11:2-6; 14:33. How were the miracles of Jesus different from those performed by Peter or the other apostles?

Matthew 11:2–6: 2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” 4 And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

Matthew 14:33: And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

10. Read 1 John 3:8; 4:2. By the works of what nature did Jesus save us all? (Think back to the first lesson – human and divine).

1 John 3:8: Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

1 John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

11. What are the consequences of NOT affirming the *genus apotelesmaticum*, i.e., that whatever Jesus does because of one nature the whole person does, including the other nature?

A. Consider His prophetic office – Read Hebrews 1:1-2. John 1:18; 3:13, 31-34. By what knowledge did Jesus teach?

Hebrews 1:1–2: 1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

John 1:18: No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

John 3:13: No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

John 3:31–34: 31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. 33 Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure.

B. Consider His kingly office – Read Ephesians 4:10; 1:20-23 and Matthew 28:20. What do these verses teach about where Christ is?

Ephesians 4:10: He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Ephesians 1:20–23: 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Matthew 28:20: teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

C. Consider His priestly work – Reminders from our first session: Galatians 3:23; 4:4-5, Romans 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Romans 6:4 – human works; Habakkuk 1:13; Romans 5:19; Psalm 49:7-8 and Mark 10:45. What do these verses teach about the significance of Jesus being God and Man at the same time for our salvation?