The Biblical Unitarian Podcast - by Dustin Smith, PhD

Episode 444–"God is Immortal, but Jesus Died"

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Introduction

Let's continue our exploration of the divine attributes, that is, the attributes that being the true God, the Most High God, innately possesses. We have already explored the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, aseity, and impassibility. Several texts clearly indicate that God the Father possesses these divine attributes, and even more texts plainly demonstrate that Jesus Christ is not innately all-powerful, omniscient, *a se*, and impassible. Jesus is empowered by someone other than himself, proving he is not all-powerful; Jesus does not know the day or hour of his second coming, so he is not omniscient; he was given life by God, so he does not have aseity, and Jesus suffered on the cross, so he is not impassible. Thus far, there is no evidence to conclude that Jesus is fully God or some God-man.

In this week's episode, we will look at the divine attribute of innate immortality. To be immortal means to be incapable of dying. But the Christian gospel is that the King of the kingdom of God died for our sins. God raised Jesus from the dead, granting Jesus immortal life at that time. So, we should be clear from the start that Jesus is immortal now, but he was not innately immortal. He only has immortality because God gave it to him at the resurrection. But Christians will receive the same immortality at their resurrection as well, and we know believers are not innately immortal. The saving gospel message proves that Jesus is not fully God because Jesus died, which is something one who is innately immortal plainly cannot do.

So, was Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the savior of the world, innately in possession of the divine attribute of immortality?

I. God the Father is Immortal

- Indeed, I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, as I live forever, (Deut 32:40)
  - God speaks in the first person, I lift up…my hand…as I live forever
  - God is one person, not three, God is the Father alone
- Are You not from everlasting, O Yahweh, my God, my Holy One? (Hab 1:12)
  - Are you (*atah*)
  - *Qadosh'i* (my holy one)
  - Yahweh is the Holy One, only 1 person, the Father alone
- who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (1 Tim 6:16)
  - *O monos echon athanasi'an* (the one who alone has immortality), only one person, "whom" is a singular relative pronoun, "to him" is another singular relative pronoun.
    a) Who alone has immortality, only one person, not one God, that is true, but all of these singular pronouns, adjectives, and verbs prove that only 1 person, the Father, innately has immortality. It is not three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit.

II. Jesus Christ Died

- I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 2:20)
  - The Son of God gave himself, with the reflective pronoun *eautonI*

        - Son of God is not a description of Jesus' divine nature, which is fully God, since the Son of God died. Son of God is a title for the Christ, the Messiah.
    - and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (Eph 5:2)
        - Reflexive pronoun *eauton*
    - For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. (1 Tim 2:5-6)
        - Again, the human Jesus gave himself, the reflective pronoun *eauton*
            a) Remember Gal 2:20, the Son of God gave himself. Now, the human Jesus gave himself. Conclusion, the Son of God just is the human Jesus.
    - how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:14)
        - Reflexive pronoun *euaton*
        - Offered himself to the God (*to theo*), and this God is the living God, but Christ died.
    - I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (Rev 1:18)
        - Not "my human nature died" or "my body died" or "my soul left my body." I was dead. I am alive. No qualifications. No two natures. Jesus is one person, a human person, and all of Jesus died.

III. God Gave Immortality to Jesus

- But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. (Acts 2:24)
    - Jesus was suffering the agony of death, but God, someone other than Jesus raised Jesus, lifting Jesus out of the power of death, because God raised Jesus to immortality.
    - The one who is innately immortal gave Jesus immortality.
        a) Jesus only has immortality because God gave it to Jesus. No text says Jesus was innately immortal; he gave up being immortal, and then personally took it back up after dying.
- knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. (Rom 6:9)
    - Jesus is never to die again, because God gave Jesus immortality

        - Death is no longer master over him, but from Friday to Sunday, death was master over Jesus.
    - who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. (Heb 7:16)
        - God gave Jesus indestructible life. He didn't possess it innately because he died, but God gave it to Jesus.

Summary and Conclusions

- God possesses innate immortality. Yahweh said that he lives forever. He, the Holy One, is from everlasting, and he alone innately possesses immortality. Only one person has innate immortality, not three persons, because God is one person, the Father alone. God is the one who alone has immortality, 1 Tim 6:16.
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross, proving he was not innately immortal. Several texts say Jesus gave his entire self, himself, using the reflexive pronoun several times by many biblical authors. Jesus himself plainly admitted, without any qualification, that he was dead.
- Finally, we saw that for a brief period in the grave, death overpowered Jesus, but God raised Jesus and gave Jesus immortality. The one true God, the Father, shared his attribute of immortality with the human Jesus, and since Christ is the firstfruits of those who sleep, the very same will happen to the faithful when Jesus returns. The faithful will be given immortality. So Christ is immortal now, but he is not innately immortal, proving he is not fully God. He is, as 1 Tim 2:5 states, the human Messiah Jesus.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode!

Join us next week as we compare and contrast the attributes of God and Jesus, looking at eternality. God has always existed, but Jesus was created by God. Is this another instance where the Son does not possess a divine attribute?

Please look forward to our next episode.

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