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Christology

Radical, Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



Bishop D.R. Vestal, PhD

Larry L Yates, ThD, DMin

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CHRISTOLOGY

What is the Meaning of Christ's Death?

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The Problem - Alternative Interpretations in the Church - Biblical Teaching - Systematic Formulation - Apologetic Interaction - Relevance to Life and Ministry

The Problem

The death of Christ has held a place of prominence in Christian theology, since the days of the Apostles. Their stress on this aspect of Christ's life, is evident, by their many references to His blood. That the divine stage of Christ's crucifixion played a central role in Paul's theology, is evident from his words to the Corinthian Church: "For I decided to know nothing among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

There is no doubt, that Christ's death occurred in history, but why was it emphasized as much as it was, in the NT? What was the significance of Christ's sacrifice? Why was it important? All historical events need interpreting. Doctrine is the attempt to interpret the Biblical-historical story. It is not enough to say, that Christ died. There is no good news in this message. The death of Christ on the cross, is only good news if it is interpreted in a certain way. The question, we concern ourselves with, is how to interpret the cross.

The Biblical authors did not give us a full, or systematic explanation of the meaning of Christ's death. Trying to piece their sporadic sayings together into one meaningful understanding, is like trying to assemble a puzzle, without the picture of the puzzle on the cover of the box to guide you - it can be done, but with much greater difficulty and caution. This course attempts to make sense out of the Biblical data, constructing as accurate of a picture as possible, concerning the meaning of Christ's death.

Alternative Interpretations in the Church

There have been several varied interpretations of the meaning of Christ's death and several explanations, as to who was affected by the giving of His life. There are also differences, pertaining to the way in which man is affected by the atonement. We now turn our attention to these various theories.

Ransom Theory -- Victory Over the Forces of Evil

This was the earliest theory to gain predominance in the Church. It remained in this elevated status until the late Middle Ages with the advent of Anselm of Canterbury's (1033-1109) Satisfaction Theory. The Ransom Theory varied in its explication over the centuries, but the most common explanation of Christ's atonement was that it was a ransom, paid to the Devil. There is a cosmic battle between God and the Devil, good and evil. Satan was able to establish control over mankind and is now, the governing power over the world. His rights as the leader and authority over man were not set aside by God by taking man back to Himself, because God would not stoop to the methods of Satan. As a result, all of mankind remained enslaved to an unfit ruler.

God made a bargain with Satan, which entailed a transfer of the sinless soul of Jesus Christ, for all other souls of men. Jesus' soul became a ransom to be paid to the Devil. The Devil, who did not realize that Jesus was God, manifest in flesh, agreed to this. After releasing all the souls of men, back to God, the Devil realized, that Jesus was God and that His deity had been concealed from him. Because Jesus was the Son of God, He rose from the dead. In the end, God gained all the souls of men, back to Himself, including Jesus' soul, and Satan was left, with nothing. Christ was the victor over Satan, triumphing over evil.

It was the Devil, not God, who demanded the blood of Jesus. The atonement was primarily for Satan, not God or man. Man was affected by the atonement, but it was not done to change man toward God or God toward man.

The Scriptural support for this theory comes from 1 Corinthians 6:20, where Paul said, “For you were bought with a price, therefore, glorify God in your body.” Origen relied heavily, on this verse. Mark 10:45, was also used as support: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom, for many.”

Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, were the early developers, of this view. Most of the Post-apostolic Fathers subscribed to this theory. The major exceptions are Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus.

Satisfaction Theory - Atonement as Compensation to the Father

Anselm of Canterbury developed this view in medieval Europe under the feudal system of his day. Having a high view of God’s Holiness and Law, Anselm pictured God, as a feudal lord, who, to maintain His honor, insists on adequate satisfaction for any encroachment on that honor by His “surfs.” Great attention is focused on God’s injured honor, to the neglect of the idea of a penal substitutionary death of Christ. Sin is seen, as a failure to render to God, due honor, which injures God’s Person. This violated honor can be rectified, either by the punishment of those who violated it or by accepting satisfaction for the violation. God chose the latter method because a certain amount of men needed to be saved, to replace the number of angels who fell from heaven.

Man not only needs to restore God’s honor but needs to make satisfaction (reparation) to God, for dishonoring Him. The idea is similar to the modern idea of punitive damages. It is a price that needs to be paid above and beyond that which was accrued in debt. Unfortunately, man could not provide his own satisfaction. To the medieval mind, “the recompense must be proportional to the dignity of the offended party, in this case, God. Consequently, finite persons cannot make an infinite satisfaction for the offense committed against the Lord of the universe.” Even if man gave his best, he could only give back to God, what was due Him, nothing more. Man

needed someone qualified who could make an infinite satisfaction to God. Since God alone, is infinite, only He could make such satisfaction. But, if satisfaction was to be of any avail to man, man would have to be involved also. This necessitated the incarnation of God. As the God-man, Jesus Christ, in offering His life to God, on behalf of man, went beyond that which was required of Him, because He was sinless and had no need of death. Christ's death brought satisfaction to God's wounded honor, for all of mankind.

In Anselm's theory of the atonement, God is the one, primarily affected, by Christ's death. The atonement was not directed toward man. Man did not need to be restored to God *per se*, for it was God, who could not commune with man because of His wounded honor. Man desired fellowship with God, but God had to rectify His honor first. Christ died, to satisfy something within God's very nature, and thus, restore fellowship between He and His creation.

Moral-Influence Theory - Atonement as the Demonstration of God's Love

This view was first developed by Peter Abelard (1079-1142), in reaction to Anselm's Satisfaction Theory. He did not agree, that Jesus' death served to satisfy God's wounded honor, but saw the atonement, as the perfect example of God's love for man. He emphasized the divinity of Christ. Abelard contended, that God has never needed to be reconciled to man, but that man, because of their sin and ignorance, have alienated themselves from God, through fear. The natural response of sin is that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden -- hiding from the presence of God. What needed to be rectified, then, was our fear of God and ignorance of His love. Man need not fear God's judgment, because God's love is so abundant toward us.

Christ showed us, that God is not against us. He demonstrated, through His suffering and death, God's great desire to relate to us in our pain and suffering. When sinners view God's love for us, through Christ, they will be compelled to cast off their fear of God, and fellowship with Him, as was originally intended.

Abelard contended, that Jesus' death was not the purpose of His coming, but was a consequence of it. All of Jesus' life, demonstrated God's love for us. His death was just the ultimate expression of that love.

Scriptural support for this theory comes from Luke 19:10, where Jesus said, that He came to seek and save, that which was lost. The idea, here, is that man cannot find their way to God, because of the barrier of fear, but Jesus came to seek these souls out and demonstrate, that they have no reason to fear God. Paul's statement, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" was also used (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Socinian Theory - Atonement as Example

This view of the atonement was developed in the sixteenth century by Faustus and Laelius Socinus. They did not accept any idea of Christ's death being a vicarious satisfaction to God. Their view of Jesus was that of a purely human being. Their understanding of man, was Pelagian, denying that man is inherently sinful and estranged from God. Man is inherently good and can keep the Law of God with the right motivation to do so. God is not a God of retributive justice, so He does not demand satisfaction from, or in behalf, of those who sinned against Him. In contradistinction to the Moral-Influence Theory, which said Jesus' death was the demonstration of God's love for us, Socinus and Faustus said, Jesus' death was the most beautiful example to man, on how we should love God and be humble. The death of Jesus shows us the love for God we need, in order to be saved, and inspires us, to believe that we can love God completely.

Scriptural support for this view is found in Peter's statement to the scattered Churches. "To this, you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). John's injunction to believers, to walk as Jesus walked, also demonstrates the fact, that Jesus' life is a pattern to follow (1 John 2:6).

Governmental Theory - Demonstration of Divine Justice

Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was the major champion of this view. Being a lawyer and not a theologian, he stressed the Law of God and the seriousness of the violations against this law. While the Moral-Influence and Socinian Theories paint a picture of God as being sympathetic to sin, the Governmental Theory elaborated on God's Holiness, Law, and seriousness of sin. It was not enough, to simply do one's best or respond to God's love.

God is very Holy and He gave man certain laws. Violations of those laws are not attacks of God's Person, as Anselm had claimed, but they are an attack on God as *Ruler* over man. God is not like a creditor or a master who can forgive debt or sin. Because He governs man, He must always act in the best interest of those under His authority. As a result, His justice must be demonstrated against sin. He could not just freely forgive sin, thus bypassing justice. God thought it to be in the best interests of man, to send Christ to die.

Christ's death was not just an example, but it objectively satisfied God's justice. It was not a substitutionary death for us, so that we could escape the penalty due us, but was a substitution for a penalty. It made punishment unnecessary. Grotius did not believe it even possible, for one person to pay the penalty for another individual's transgression of the law. Punishment, it is argued, cannot be transferred. Christ could not have borne our penalty.

Because of the atonement, God was made able to deal with us mercifully. The atonement impacted God, but it primarily affected man. Millard Erickson explained, that in the Governmental view, "the purpose of Christ's death was not to satisfy the demands of God's nature so that he might be enabled to do what he otherwise could not have done, namely, forgive sins. Rather, Christ's death enabled God to forgive sins or remit punishment in a new way, which would not have unfavorable consequences or adverse

effects upon humans.”

The atonement also demonstrated what would happen to us if we continue in sin. On the subjective level, it also was a deterrent to sin, by demonstrating the vile consequences that sin brings. Thus, salvation was not for retribution, but for deterrence from sin.

Penal-Substitution

This view of the atonement was primarily popularized by the Reformers. They agreed with Anselm, that sin was very serious, but they saw sin, as breaking the Law of God, rather than merely wounding His honor. God’s Law is Holy. The infringement of God’s Law brings God’s wrath, and a curse, on the evildoers. To avert the wrath of God, Christ took the sinner’s place, making atonement for their sin. Instead of us receiving death for our sins, Christ tasted death for everyone, that they might experience life.

Neo-Orthodox

Karl Barth maintained, that Jesus’ death reconciled the world to God. He did not believe, that Christ appeased the wrath of God against sinners, however. Because of the incarnation, Jesus took humanity with Him to the cross, representing all men with Him. Jesus did not bear our sin in our place, but we were with Him in His humanity on the cross.

Jesus’ death achieved a cosmic victory. Ontologically, (pertaining to the nature and essential properties of existence), all men have won back to God, but not all men have come to realize their redeemed status (epistemological). Once the Spirit brings the realization of redemption to a man’s mind, he will be saved.

Biblical Teaching

Pentateuch

The Levitical sacrificial system was based on the sacrificing of innocent blood for the sin of the worshipper offering the sacrifice. The worshipper would put his hand on the head of the animal to be sacrificed, and then slay it to Jehovah. This was to make an atonement for worshippers (Leviticus 1:4; See also 4:20; 5:10, 13; Numbers 5:8).

The Day of Atonement was an annual festival in ancient Israel. On this day, known today, as *Yom Kippur*, the high priest would sacrifice animals to atone for his own sins and those of the priesthood (Leviticus 16:11-14). Then, he would sacrifice one of two male goats and sprinkle its blood on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies, as an atonement for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:15-19). Following this, he would lay his hand on the other goat, and after confessing the sins of the people, would send the goat into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:8-10).

That which atoned for the sins of Israel was the blood. God said, "For the life of the flesh, is in the blood: and I have given it to you, upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood, that makes an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). Without the shedding of blood, there could be no atonement for sin.

Atonement, was also made, for the Israelite males of twenty years old and upwards, by paying a ransom price (*koper*) of a half-shekel. This was not for sin, but for God, which was then given to the service of the Tabernacle. In other cases, as explained above, the ransom was the life of an animal or even the life of a human (2 Samuel 21:2-7). In such cases, we understand atonement to mean, "to avert punishment, especially the divine anger, by the payment of a *koper*, a ransom, which may be of money or which may be of life."

Poetry and Wisdom

David believed, that the Lord had atoned for the sins of the faithful (Psalm 65:3). Another psalmist believed, that in the Lord, was the full redemption and that this redemption would be received, by Israel (Psalm 130:7-8).

In Psalm 40:6-8, David speaking prophetically of the Messiah (Yeshua), said that God did not desire sacrifices and offerings, nor did He require burnt offerings and sin offerings. What God did require, was that His Law be in the heart of believers and that they do His will. Mercy could be gained, apart from sacrifices, for sin (Psalm 40:11).

Another psalm declares that the Lord “will redeem Israel from all their sins” (Psalm 130:8). The Hebrew word here, is *padah*, meaning the transference from one owner to another, through payment of a certain price or suitable substitute. This is the only time, of the sixty times, this word is used, in the sense of redemption from sin. It draws its significance and parallel, from its secular references, and the references in the Law to redeeming property and individuals, with a certain price.

The Prophets

Isaiah prophesied of the coming suffering servant (Yeshua). It was said of Him, that “He took up our weaknesses and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53:4a). He was smitten of God, stricken, and afflicted (53:4b). He was also fatally wounded for our transgressions, the punishment bringing us peace was on Him, and by His wounds, we are healed (53:5). The Lord has laid on Him, the iniquity of all (53:6, c.f. v. 8), which will lead to others’ justification. Language, such as “carried” and “laid on,” in connection with “for us,” is clearly substitutionary. The fact, that this suffering was penal, is indicated by the fact, that the punishment was for iniquity. The suffering servant was to suffer, on behalf of others’ iniquities, bearing their punishment.

Daniel prophesied, that a period of seventy weeks, were appointed for Israel, in order to “finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in

everlasting righteousness” (Daniel 9:24). Immediately, after this, the Messiah (Yeshua) is mentioned (9:26). It seems, that Daniel was connecting the coming of the Messiah (Yeshua), with this activity.

Synoptic Gospels

Matthew begins his Gospel with the angelic announcement, to Mary, to name the baby conceived in her womb, Jesus (Yeshua). He was to be named such because He “would save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21b). Matthew also quoted Jesus’ Words saying that “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom [*lytron*] for many [*anti pollon*]” (Matthew 20:28; cf. Mark 10:45). *Lytron* (used only in these two references, in this form) indicates the means, by which, release from something, is made possible. This word, usually carries with it, the idea of payment for release, and was commonly used in classical Greek and the LXX, to denote a payment to release a slave from his bondage. The significance of *anti*, is that it is used in the genitive to mean, “instead of.” Jesus gave His life for a ransom in our stead.

All three of the synoptic authors mention Jesus’ statement at the Last Supper, when He said, “This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you” (Luke 22:21; Mark 14:24; Matthew 26:28). Luke and Mark specifically use the preposition, *hyper*, translated “for.” This word means, “on behalf of.” Matthew uses *peri*, which is used in similar meaning. Here again, we see the idea of substitution. Jesus was dying on behalf of others.

Pauline Corpus

The Apostle Paul has the most to say, concerning the meaning of Christ’s death. He declared Christ’s death to be redemption, and propitiation for us, through His blood (Romans 3:24-25). Jesus was delivered over to death, due to our wrongdoing, and was raised again, for the sake of our justification (Romans 4:25). This statement echoes the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Jesus’ death was for us.

Christ's death was wrought for us, while we were sinners so that we might be reconciled to God, once again (Romans 5:8, 10). It is through Christ, that we receive the reconciliation (v. 11). It was we, who needed to be reconciled, to God. We had wronged Him, causing the rift in relationship, but God came in Christ, to reconcile us back to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). God made Jesus to be sin, *for us (hyper)*, so that we might be made the righteousness of God, in Him (v. 21). Jesus was made to be sin, on our behalf. His death was substitutionary. Jesus receives our sin, while we receive His righteousness.

To the Ephesian Church, Paul noted, that we have redemption by means of Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 1:7; c.f. Colossians 1:14). Christ's death also brought the Gentiles near to God, who were once alienated from Him (Ephesians 2:12-13). Though we were once enemies of God, being alienated from Him, God reconciled us to Him, having made peace, through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20-21). Christ's death, even took the barrier of the Law of Moses out of the way of the Gentiles, by nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:14). Now, we are no longer subject to ordinances that are opposed to us.

In Paul's pastoral letter to Timothy, he noted that "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:6). To Titus, he also added, that Christ gave Himself for (*hyper*) us, to redeem us from sin, and purify a people, eager for good works (Titus 2:14).

Johannine Corpus

In John's Gospel, he recorded John the Baptist's assessment of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). John saw Christ, as the Servant of Isaiah 53:10 and 11, who would bear the Paschal Lamb for the Passover feast. John uses this same imagery, in Revelation, where the Lamb is seen, to be slain (Revelation 5:6, 9, 12; 13:8).

Jesus is the propitiation (*hilasmos*) for our sins. This Greek word has to do with expiation, the means, by which, sins are forgiven. It carries with it, the idea of the removal of wrath. John used this word again, in 1 John 4:10, when he said, that it was not our love for God, but God's love for us, that He sent Jesus Christ, as an expiation for our sins.

John believed, that Jesus' blood, had the power to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7). It was for this purpose, that Jesus was manifested (1 John 3:5).

Other New Testament Writings

Peter reminded his readers, that they were redeemed (set free, liberated) with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:18-19). The Greek word for "redeemed," *lutroo*, was used for the freeing of slaves. The imagery here is that Jesus Christ has freed us from the bondage of sin so that we might live Holy (vs. 14-17).

Probably, the most significant contribution Peter makes to our understanding of the atonement, is found in 1 Peter 3:18, where he said, "For Christ also has suffered, once for sins, the righteous for (*hyper*) the unrighteous, so that he might bring you to God..." (1 Peter 3:18). The purpose of the righteous Christ's suffering, was on behalf of (*hyper*) the unrighteous so that they could be brought to God. This clearly demonstrates the substitutionary death of Christ, and the fact, that His death was for the purpose of reconciling man, to God. According to Peter, the death of Christ primarily affects man.

The author of Hebrews said that Jesus suffered and died, so that "He could taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Again, we see the substitutionary aspect of Christ's death. Instead of man having to suffer death for our own sins, Jesus tasted that death for us, so that we might escape it ourselves. Christ's death, also accomplished a Spiritual defeat of the one who has the power over death, i.e., the Devil, and to deliver, from bondage, those who fear death (2:14-15). This passage would lend credence to

the Ransom Theory of the atonement.

The author continues to say, that remission can only come through the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22). For this reason, Jesus shed His blood once, and thus, “put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself” (9:26). This offering was, “to bear the sins of many” (9:28; c.f. 10-12). This seems to be another reference to the suffering servant of Isaiah.

Systematic Formulation

Our understanding of the atonement is highly dependent on our understanding of God and the nature of sin. So, before we can examine a systematic understanding, regarding the atonement, we must first examine these two key concepts.

God is a Holy and just God, who cannot tolerate sin (Leviticus 11:45; Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Kings 23:26; Isaiah 30:27-31; Lamentations 3:42). His Holiness sets the standard of the Law, while His justness demands that His Law be obeyed. If His Law is not obeyed, punishment must be inflicted on the trespasser.

It might be wondered why God is so strict, concerning His Law, and why He needs to punish those who transgress it. God’s zeal for His Law, is due to the nature of the Lawgiver. The Law of God is not an external code that God keeps or has made up specifically for mankind. Neither is God’s Law arbitrary. He does not simply decide to approve this and condemn that. Rather, God’s Law flows from His nature. It is a portrait of His Person. When we obey God’s Law, we are not merely keeping a code of conduct, but relating to God Himself. The Law has no inherent value or dignity apart from God. When we keep or break God’s Law, we are relating to God Himself. Sin, is not merely, the breaking of a Law, but transgressing against the very nature of God, thus creating a personal attack on God Himself. Breaking God’s Law, then, hinders the relationship between us and Him.

We must not think of God, however, as merely being, a God of wrath. God's mercy is seen all throughout the OT (Psalm 85:2; Isaiah 55:7; Micah 7:18). He is not a God, who is looking to punish everybody who sins, every time they sin. Instead, God is slow to anger and eager to forgive (Jeremiah 26:12-13; Joel 2:13-14).

Because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, mankind is in a place of spiritual separation from God. As a result of Adam, all of mankind is in a state of Spiritual death, condemnation, and judgment (Romans 5:12-21). Isaiah testified, that our iniquities have separated us from God, and our sins cause Him to hide His face from us (Isaiah 59:2). Paul demonstrated the utter sinfulness of all men, declaring that there are none who are righteous who will seek after God, but all men have turned aside from Him (Romans 3:1-12). The natural result of our Spiritual state is death (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3). The only deliverance, from this condition, is the Grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Having examined the nature of God and man, we now turn our attention to the nature of the atonement. We look first at the OT. The Aaronic sacrificial system did prefigure Christ's ultimate sacrifice. It demonstrated, that there was the necessity of reconciliation to God, by blood; however, it did not reveal the nature of the reconciliation. This is important because we must find the deeper meaning of the atonement from the anti-type, not the type. The OT sacrifices were a precursor to Christ's ultimate sacrifice, and thus, give us some knowledge of the nature of the atonement, but it is the NT, that gives us the broader meaning of its nature. For this reason, the NT data carries greater weight for our understanding of the atonement. This is not to say, however, that the OT never painted us a good picture of the nature of atonement. Surely, Isaiah 53, was a tremendous prophetic utterance, concerning the nature of God's atoning plan for the world.

Looking at the OT briefly, however, we will examine the central idea of atonement. The Hebrew word, most commonly used for this concept is, *kaphar*. It is used approximately 150 times. It is commonly believed, that the basic meaning is "to cover."

The authors of *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, have this to say, concerning this idea:

There is an equivalent Arabic root meaning, “cover,” or “conceal.” On the strength of this connection, it has been supposed, that the Hebrew word means, “to cover over sin,” and thus, pacify the deity, making an atonement (so BDB). It has been suggested that the OT ritual symbolized a covering over of sin until it was dealt with, in fact, by the atonement of Christ. There is, however, very little evidence for this view. The connection of the Arabic word is weak and the Hebrew root is not used to mean, “cover.” The Hebrew verb is never used in the simple or Qal stem, but only in the derived intensive stems. These intensive stems, often indicate, not emphasis, but merely, that the verb is derived from a noun, whose meaning is more basic to the root idea.

The meaning of *kaphar* is “to atone by offering a substitute.” It is almost always used, in contexts, speaking of the removal of sin or defilement. It was a symbolic expression on the part of the worshipper, giving an innocent life in the place of a guilty life.

Coming to the NT, we find, that Jesus’ sacrifice of atonement was both, representative and substitutionary. He was our representative, in that, He acted on our behalf, in such a way, as to involve us in His action. He was our substitution, inasmuch, as He acted in our place, causing our action, in the event, to be unnecessary. That Christ acted on our behalf, is evident, from the use of *hyper*, in Romans 5:8; 8:32; Galatians 2:20; and Hebrews 2:9. These verses, clearly demonstrate, that Christ stood in for us. Christ did not merely represent us, however. He also became our substitute. By submitting to, and receiving the divine wrath for sin, that we should have received, Jesus redeemed us from that wrath. He took the punishment for us so that we would not have to.

The reason Christ could be a suitable sacrifice for us is because He was sinless (2

Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15). Being sinless, He did not have to pay any penalty for sin. Jesus did not have to die for sin as we do, but He willingly, submitted Himself, to death (Philippians 2:8), so that He could taste death, for everyone (Hebrews 2:9), and thus, destroy the power of death (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54-55; 2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 2:14).

The idea of Christ's sacrificial death, as a substitution for us, is very clear in the Scripture. It is said, that because Christ died for all, "therefore, all have died" (2 Corinthians 5:14). If by one person dying, all can be said to have died, clearly the one individual stood in their place, so that their death, is no longer necessary. Paul said Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, "having become a curse for (*hyper*) us" (Galatians 3:13). The author of Hebrews said, that Christ was "offered once, to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28). Peter declared, that Jesus "bore our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). God made Jesus "to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our sins have been transferred from our account to Christ's.

Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice completed the work of atonement. It was not necessary to perform many sacrifices, as they did in the OT. Christ's one sacrifice for sin, that of Himself, secured salvation for us (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10). There is no more sacrifice for sin. The blood of bulls and goats are no longer necessary. Christ's one sacrifice has forever perfected those, who are being sanctified by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:12, 25-28; 10:10-14). The atonement is finished. All that is necessary for men, is to receive the effects of the atonement, by faith (2 Corinthians 5:20).

How exactly did Jesus' sacrifice affect the relationship between God and man? The effects of the atonement are seen in many areas, but the primary effects are propitiation and reconciliation/justification.

Propitiation has to do with appeasing someone's wrath. That God possesses wrath against sin, has already been established, previously. If people die in their sins, without

settling the matter with God first, they can only expect to face divine displeasure. This is none other than God's abiding wrath against sin.

That God's wrath against man, because of his sin, needed to be appeased, is evident, from a few explicit passages. Leviticus 4:35 says, "And He [the priest] shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the Lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for His sin, that He has committed, and it shall be forgiven him." The fact that forgiveness would only come after an offering to Jehovah for atonement indicated, that it was God, who needed to be appeased for the sin committed.

Wrath is the divine reaction to those who sin (Romans 1:18; 2:5, 8; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4-5; Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 3:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:16). God's wrath is His "settled opposition of His Holiness to evil," not to the evildoer *per se*. In fact, if we do not give full credence to the wrath of God, and man's deserving of such wrath, we make the forgiveness of God, empty and meaningless.

The clearest example of this is found in Romans, where Paul said, God presented Christ as a propitiation (*hilasterion*) to demonstrate His justice. The reason for this, was because God, in His forbearance, did not visit His wrath in its fullness on the sins committed, prior to Calvary. This left God open, to be charged, with being unjust. His righteousness and justice could be called into question. The death of Christ removed this attack, by visiting on sin, the judgment it deserved, thus showing God to be just, and the justifier of those who will believe in Him (Romans 3:24-26).

God's wrath against sin is not contrary to His love for the sinner. Robert Culpepper made the case that "God's wrath is an integral constituent of His love. The wrath of God is the active manifestation of God's essential incapacity to be morally indifferent and let sin alone. It denotes the attitude of God in His Holy love toward willful sin. God's wrath is God's grace. It is His grace, smitten with dreadful sorrow. It is His love

in agony.” While God may will to redeem man because of His love for them, He must fulfill this desire according to the nature of His Holiness, without denying His righteousness. This is why Paul said, that “God put [Jesus] forward, as an expiation by His blood, to be received, by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness because, in His divine forbearance, He had passed over former sins” (Romans 3:25, RSV). God could not let sin go unpunished, or it would make God unjust. In order to fulfill the divine desire to forgive man of their sins, and yet remain just, God presented Christ as a propitiation for our redemption (Romans 3:24-25).

This conception of the Father should not give us the idea, that the Father is the angry God in heaven, and that the Son is the meek and lowly God-man on earth, who averts God the Father’s anger from humanity. The Scriptures do not portray the love of the Father for humanity to be the effect of the atonement, but rather, the cause of the atonement. God desired to redeem man all along. God does not love us because Christ died for us, but it was the Father’s love, for which, caused Christ to die for us (Romans 5:6-8; 1 John 4:9-10). Even after saying, that God demonstrated His love for us by having Christ die for us, Paul still maintained, that we were enemies of God before we were reconciled (Romans 5:8, 10-11). Even while we were enemies of God, because of our sinful state, God, in Christ, still died for our sins to reconcile us to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Apart from God’s manifestation of love in Christ’s death, the only manifestation of God we would expect from God, is the manifestation of His wrath. In Christ’s death, God’s mercy and justice could both be met, thus allowing the Father to deal with the sin problem, and acquit the believer from all guilt. Jesus’ death assumed our legal guilt and made our forgiveness possible. Just as Adam’s sin brought condemnation to all men, Christ’s righteousness brought justification (Romans 5:16, 18). He assumed our sin, so that we could assume His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:14, 21). Our guilt was transferred to Him, as our vicarious sacrifice (endured or done by one person, substituting for another), so that we would no longer experience God’s condemnation of our sin. In a very real sense, Christ experienced the wrath of God against sin, in our

stead, so that we might experience life in Him.

Whereas propitiation appeases God's wrath against sin, and hence, the sinner reconciliation primarily affects man. Reconciliation is necessary between individuals, who have had a harmonious and peaceful relationship, hindered by some offense so that there is a breach of relationship. Reconciliation, then, is a restoration of relationship with God. In our sin, we are estranged from God, separated from His face (Isaiah 59:2). We are hostile towards God, in our carnal minds (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21), thus making us, God's enemies (Romans 5:8). It was in this state of being enemies of God, that God reconciled us to Himself (Romans 5:8, 10). God is the one who initiated and objectively finished the process of reconciliation. He is the subject, and humanity or the world is always the object. It is not God who is being reconciled to man, but man to God. Paul said, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19), and again, "And you who were once estranged...has He now reconciled in the body of flesh, by His death" (Colossians 1:21-22; c.f., Romans 5:10).

The reconciliation of man is pictured, as a finished work. It is not a work, which is being done, but a work, that is done. After noting that God was reconciling the world to Himself, through Christ, Paul pleaded with the Corinthians, "Be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). It has already been accomplished, on our behalf, at Calvary, but it is not realized subjectively, in the life of an individual, until He receives it, by faith.

The character of reconciliation is found in Paul's statement, that God "was not counting their sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Reconciliation affects God's attitude toward us. Because man is inherently sinful, which is in opposition to God's Holy nature, we are, by nature, the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). God must count our sins against us. In the atonement, however, God through Christ's vicarious substitutionary death, was able to judge sin, once for all, and thus, no longer be hindered in His desire to show mercy and forgiveness, to those who were unjust (Romans 6:10; 8:3; Hebrews 9:26, 28). As Peter said, "For Christ has also suffered

once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive, by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus' death brought us (those who were unjust), to God. Through the atonement, God took care of the sin problem, so that He could deal mercifully and graciously with man, instead of pouring out His Holy wrath. George Ladd said it this way:

For it is an ethical and religious necessity, that the Holiness of God, manifests itself in wrath, against sin. Reconciliation is an act of God, initiated by His love, by virtue of which, God no longer counts people's trespasses against them; it has to do with the divine attitude toward human beings, as the result of which God no longer looks upon them, as enemies, as occupying a hostile status. ...Thus, reconciliation makes a difference to God, as well as, to humanity.

Apologetic Interaction

The Ransom Theory

The Ransom Theory has little to commend for it. It's major weakness, is that Christ's death was a ransom, paid to the Devil. There is simply no Scriptural support for such a teaching. The closest Biblical backing is found in Hebrews 2:14, where it is said, that through death, Christ destroyed the one who had the power of death, the Devil. All this verse demonstrates, is that Christ's death defeated Satan. It does not postulate the notion, that Christ was a ransom, paid to the Devil.

It is true, that the Devil is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and that he is ruling over the kingdoms of this world (Luke 4:5; Ephesians 6:12), but there is no evidence, that all the souls of men are in possession of Satan. Satan is not the ruler over hell. He is only one individual, who will be cast there, by God. God is the ruler over hell (Revelation 19:20; 20:20). Although man is fallen and willingly subjects himself to the devices of Satan, he does not belong to Satan. God said that all souls were His (Ezekiel 18:4). The fact that man is fallen, does not mean that man belongs to

Satan. Every human belongs to God. This is why God can do with us, what He pleases. He can bring us to Him, in heaven, or send us away, from Him to hell.

The idea, that God made a bargain with Satan, exchanging the sinless soul of Jesus for the sinful souls of mankind is lacking, for Biblical support. Of the many Scriptural references giving the purpose for Christ's death, nowhere is this stated as one of them, let alone, the primary reason. It must be asked, why the Devil would even be willing to make the trade? What made a sinless soul better than the billions of other souls, that the Devil possessed? Maybe it was the fact, that God was giving Satan something that did not belong to him, and this stroked Satan's pride. Again, however, the Bible is silent.

The theory also states, that the Devil did not know who Jesus really was (God Himself), and this is why he agreed to the exchange. However, the Bible indicates, that the Satanic kingdom was very aware of who Christ was (Luke 4:41). The Devil was aware of Christ's identity when he tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:3-11). If he was not aware of His identity, there would have been no need to be tempted in the ways that the Devil tempted Him.

Paul's statement, that if the "princes of this world" had known of God's hidden wisdom, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8), is often used to support the idea, that the Satanic kingdom was not aware of who Jesus really was. Although the phrase, "the prince of this world" is used of Satanic forces elsewhere (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2), it is used in the singular, not the plural, presumably referring, to Satan himself. The Corinthian passage, uses this phrase, in the plural. Although it could be taken to mean, that there is more than one demonic being in view here, the context demands otherwise. Paul declared, that he worked miracles so that the Corinthians' belief would not stand in the wisdom of men, and that the wisdom he spoke of was not the same as the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 2:5-6a). He goes on to say, that the wisdom he spoke, was not understood by the princes of this world, "who are passing away" (1 Corinthians 2:6b). This cannot be

referring to demonic forces, who are immortal, but to earthly rulers, whose rule is always passing away with the changing of offices and passing of time. Grammar and context, both point to the fact, that it was earthly rulers who were not aware of who Christ was, not demonic rulers.

This view of the atonement also makes the Devil, not God, the originator of the atonement. God did not initiate the redemption of mankind, but the Devil, although unknowingly. It was he who demanded the blood of Christ. The Biblical portrait is that Jesus was the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8). The atonement was not a plan, in response to Satan, but was planned for man’s redemption before there was ever a Satan, to demand Jesus’ sinless blood from God.

The Ransom Theory also states that the atonement did not change man toward God or vice versa. Again, this smacks in the face of many Biblical passages.

Paul said, “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now, has He reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death, to present you Holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight” (Colossians 1:21-22). The atonement did affect our relationship with God. It brought about our reconciliation.

This truth of this theory is found in its assertion, that there is a cosmic battle going on, over men’s souls -- Satan trying to subvert them from God, and God trying to lead them to Himself. This is about as much truth, that can be found, in this historically popular, yet, un-Biblical view.

Satisfaction Theory

Anselm’s main thesis was, that sin is the wounding of God’s honor. Jesus needed to offer satisfaction to repair this wounded honor so that God could offer mercy to man.

This view is commended for its high view of God's Holiness and the seriousness of breaking God's Law. It also seems to be correct, in claiming, that Jesus had to be both, God and Man, to make an atonement for us that would be efficacious. However, the idea that the only thing barring man from fellowship with God was God's wounded honor, is Scripturally lacking. Man was separated from God because by breaking God's Law, men are at enmity against God Himself. It is not merely God's honor that is offended, but His Person (Romans 8:7).

Socinian Theory

This theory states, that Christ's death was an example for us, of the kind of love we should have toward God, and the kind of life we should live. The problems with this theory are numerous. First of all, the main tenants, that Jesus was only a man, God does not require vicarious suffering for sin, and that man is not inherently sinful, have already been proven to be Scripturally false. God does require a sacrifice for inherently sinful man. Since the basic premises of this view are in dire contradiction to the abundant teaching of Scripture, there is not much else to commend this view.

This is not to say that there is not an element of truth in this theory. The truth lies in the fact, that Christ's death is an example for us to follow, as 1 Peter 2:21 and 1 John 2:6, attest to. We will suffer in the flesh, as did Christ Himself. He is our example. The problem with the Socinian theory is that it takes this one aspect of the atonement, which is not given much attention Biblically and makes it the thrust of the atonement. If Socinus would have read just a little farther, in 1 Peter, he would have noticed that Peter taught that Jesus' death was a vicarious sacrifice, for our sins (1 Peter 2:24).

Most importantly, if Christ's death did nothing *for* us, it would not be much of an example. It would be a meaningless act. Jesus would have given His life for no purpose. Does God approve of men giving up the life that He gave to them, for no particular reason? There is honor in giving up one's life, for a purpose, but not simply,

to show how dedicated one is to God. God desires us to praise Him, in our lives.

It could be likened to a man who set off a grenade and then jumped on it to show the rest of his platoon the dedication it takes to be in the Army. There would be no honor in such an act. It would not be viewed, as an example for others to follow, but sheer stupidity. If however, the man jumped on a grenade thrown into the bunker of his platoon, by the enemy, his act would be an example of dedication and would be honored. The Socinian theory of the atonement is both, Biblically lacking for evidence, and is logically absurd.

The Moral-Influence Theory

Abelard's main tenant was, that Christ's death, was only an example of God's love for us. It did not do anything for us Spiritually, except to provide an example for us, so that we could understand God's love for us, cast off our sinful ways, and our fears, which kept us from fellowship with Him, and return to God.

Abelard's view, has much, to commend it. He was correct in seeing that man was alienated from God, because of sin and fear, and that man needed to be reconciled to God, as a result. He was also correct in demonstrating, that God is not against us, but desires for us, to return to Him. Surely, God's sacrifice of His only begotten Son, for us, is a great example demonstrating God's great love for us, that can provoke us to return to Him, without fear.

Where the Moral-Influence Theory falls short, is not in what it affirms, but in what it does not affirm. Although Christ's death is a great example of God's love for us (John 3:16), this is not the totality of the teaching of Scripture. As in most false doctrines, there is a strong element of truth presented, but the element is only one aspect of the totality of truth. Abelard made this one aspect of the atonement, the entire purpose of the atonement.

This theory denies any objective element to the atonement. Nothing was truly accomplished, on our behalf, at Calvary. There was no true atonement for sins. God could have forgiven us, apart from Christ's innocent death. There was no true obstacle in the way for God to forgive us of our sins. His death is only subjective, giving us an example of God's love, to overcome our fear of Him. The wealth of Biblical statements, cited previously, demonstrate that God did need a penalty paid for sins. He needed to take care of the sin problem before He could justify man and restore him to a right relationship with Himself.

The Governmental Theory

The Government Theory's main proposition is that Christ's death was a demonstration to the world, of the seriousness of sin, and the Ruler's responsibility to judge that sin.

This theory is correct in its assessment of God's Holiness and the seriousness of sin. Grotius was incorrect, however, in his view of sin. Sin is not just an attack on God, as a Ruler, but is an attack against God, Himself. God's Law flows from God's nature. It is not external to Him, as has been previously demonstrated. An infringement on God's Law is a personal attack on God. God Himself testified, that sin was against Him, personally (Exodus 32:33; Jeremiah 33:8). David proclaimed, that his sin was against the Lord (Psalm 51:4).

Grotius was also correct in claiming, that Christ's death accomplished an objective basis, for the forgiveness of our sins. He was wrong, however, in denying, that this death, was a substitution for the penalty of our sins, but rather, a substitution for a penalty. He claimed, that sin and punishment cannot be transferred from one person to another, but Paul made it clear, that Christ was "made a curse for us," and God "made Him to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13).

His error is due to a misunderstanding, of the nature of sin. It is not a physical substance, that can be transferred from one person to another. Sin is falling short of God's Holy nature, by transgressing His Law. To transfer the guilt and responsibility from one to another, is not impossible, nor is it unjust. Justice is not violated, if someone else, willingly takes, the punishment for someone else's crime, so that the guilty individual may be justified.

Neo-Orthodox

Barth was correct in asserting, that Jesus' death reconciles the world to God, but he took this idea too far, to the point the bordered on Universalism (all men will be saved). He was also mistaken in his view, that Christ's death did not appease the wrath of God. This has been belabored previously, so nothing more will be said here.

His view, as it pertains to how Christ's death could be effective for all other men, is basically federalistic (Jesus is appointed as the representative for all others). The Scripture does seem to teach this, by calling Jesus, the "last Adam" who was sent to reverse the effects of the first Adam's sin (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45). Barth is wrong, however, in his rejection of a substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, for all others. Jesus may have represented all men, at the cross, but this does not make all men physically present with Him. The Scripture affirms, that He bore our sins, by Himself, on our behalf, so that we would not have to pay the penalty for our sins (Isaiah 53:6; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24).

Objections to the Penal-Substitution Theory

Mercy and Justice are Incompatible

Some have seen God's mercy and God's justice to be at odds with one another. It is argued, that God's justice would lead to the punishment of mankind, while His mercy would lead to the forgiveness of mankind, without exacting punishment for their sin. This line of reasoning is a false dichotomy. It is not an either/or decision. God's mercy

and His justice, both function, in redemption. God's mercy is what motivated God to act in history, to redeem us, while God's justice demanded the means, by which, that redemption would take place. God's mercy led to His decision to redeem. His justice led to the particular method chosen to accomplish this end. Both, God's justice and His mercy are satisfied, in the atonement.

The Concept of Substitution is not Just

This objection may seem valid, at first glance. How could a judge be considered righteous, if he knowingly accuses an innocent victim of a crime they did not commit, and knowingly acquits the real criminal, of his crimes? Substituting the one for the other does not seem righteous. What must be remembered, is that Christ willingly offered Himself, as a substitute for us (John 15:13). His sacrifice was voluntary. The judge was not the one sentencing the innocent party, against his will, but the innocent party requested to take the place of the guilty party. Jesus willingly, laid down His life, for us (John 10:17-18).

The Greek Preposition Does Not Support the Idea of Substitution

Many have claimed, that, *hyper*, with the genitive case (on behalf of), which is the preposition usually used, in connection with the idea of atonement or reconciliation, does not carry the idea of substitution. It is said, that only *anti* (instead of) carries this idea, which is only used in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 (excepting the compound uses, found elsewhere, in connection with redemption). Although at first glance, this seems to be a convincing blow to the idea of substitutionary atonement, on second glance, this distinction between prepositions, does not fit the logical or contextual usage.

If one acts on behalf of another, the one representing the other is acting in a substitutionary role. If I have been given the power of attorney over my spouse's assets, when I act in a legal capacity for her, my presence is a substitute for her presence, rendering her presence, needless. This idea of "substitution," is found in

several passages, which use the preposition, *hyper*. In 1 Timothy 2:6, Christ is pictured as giving Himself as a ransom, on our behalf. The reason for this, was because we could not have been freed by ourselves. He had to act, on our behalf, so that what He did, could be considered to have been done by us. The only way this could be accomplished is if Christ was acting in our place. Whereas we could not redeem ourselves, He could, and did so, by acting in our stead.

George Ladd has offered some tremendous insight, in opposition to the idea, that Christ only acted on our behalf, rather than, *in our stead*. He said:

If...Christ voluntarily came under the blight of sin, entered into its deepest gloom, and shared with humanity its awful weight and penalty, it is difficult to resist the conclusion, that He not only died *for* me but that he died *in my stead* since because of His death, I shall not die, but shall live eternally with Him. By suffering death, the penalty of sin, He delivers me from that very experience. In submitting to the judgment of God, upon sin, He has delivered me from the same judgment. The rationale of this, is difficult to understand, unless Christ suffered the penalty and judgment of God, in the stead of the sinner, by virtue, of which, the sinner will never experience that awful penalty.

The fact that Paul said that because Christ died, “therefore all have died,” points to an objective reality, that occurred in Jesus Christ, at Calvary, which had effects on everyone who was not present there (2 Corinthians 5:14). This is not a mere identification with Christ at His death, but is an accomplished reality, performed by one man, and considered to have taken place, in all men. Christ’s death accomplished by death. This can only be understood in the context of substitution. What should have happened to me, will never have to happen to me, because it happened to Christ; and when it happened to Christ, it happened to me.

Although it was not as common to use, *hyper*, to denote substitution in Classical Greek, it was used sometimes (Plato, *Republic* 590a; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 7.4.9-10).

The LXX uses the preposition for substitution in Deuteronomy 24:16, Isaiah 43:3-4, and in the apocryphal book of Judith 8:12. The use of *hyper*, in Hellenistic Greek, (ostraca and papyri), is often used, with the force of *anti*. It is used in the papyri, of one who writes a letter, in someone else's stead. Although this could be interpreted as, "on behalf of," the point is clear, that one person is acting in the stead of another, so that the other no longer needs to perform the same action. Instead of Mr. A, writing the letter, Mr. B, wrote the letter for Mr. A. This is a clear example of substitution.

Daniel Wallace proposes, that *hyper* and *anti*, had little overlap in the semantic domain in Attic Greek, but that this changed in the Koine period. *Hyper* began to be used much more frequently and its semantic domains were broadened to that, and it began to approach closer to the meaning of *anti*, although it never phased out the use of *anti*, for the idea of substitution.

Context dictates the force of any preposition. Words have no inherent meaning. Meaning is derived from usage. The contexts of John 11:50, 2 Corinthians 5:15, and Galatians 3:13, give a clear indication, that *hyper* can carry the force of substitution. A.T. Robertson went so far as to say, that in these verses, "*hyper* has the resultant notion of, 'instead' and only violence to the context can get rid of it." In the first reference, Caiaphas said, that it was better that one man should die *hyper* the people, that the whole nation would not perish. Jesus was to die instead of the whole nation, not on behalf of the nation. This was an exchange of one, for the many. The other two references, though not as clear as John, do sustain the same understanding. Other passages, also heavily lend themselves to this understanding, but are less conclusive (Romans 5:6-8; 8:32; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 2:9). The use of *hyper*, for substitution, is even found non-soteriological verses, such as Romans 9:3 and Philemon 13.

To haggle over whether, *hyper* can mean, "instead of" is almost meaningless, because the logical necessity of acting on behalf of someone, is that the original individual who was supposed to act, no longer needs to do so, because of the actions of another. This is the meaning of substitution.

Objections to the Idea of Propitiation

Some find the idea, that God's wrath needed to be appeased before He could save man, is an abhorrent and un-Biblical doctrine. They say, that this makes God the Father into a wrathful God, who desires judgment, and the Son into the one changing God's attitude toward man, from wrath to love.

As has already been stated previously, the Father is not the angry God, in heaven, and the Son the meek and lowly God-man on earth, who averts God the Father's anger from humanity. Rather, it was the love of God the Father, that brought about the reconciliation of mankind, to Him, through the death of Jesus Christ. God had always desired to be merciful to man and to redeem him, but this merciful side of God could not override His Holy wrath against sin. Likewise, God's wrath could not override His desire to show mercy. Both needed to be satisfied. God's justice and mercy were satisfied, as they met in the Person of Christ. Through His death, God's mercy and justice, could both be met, thus allowing the Father to deal with the sin problem, and acquit the believer, from all guilt.

The Bible is abundantly clear, that God hates sin, and that the sins of men anger God's Holiness. Without the removal of the sin problem, God could not deal mercifully with man. God's nature is opposed to sin, and thus, God is opposed to those, who commit sin. His wrath against sin is only expected. Without something to avert this wrath toward man, who committed sin, we could only expect punishment. Truly, God's wrath did need to be appeased, and God's attitude toward man and his son, had to be changed, for reconciliation to take place. Although the Scripture nowhere explicitly states this, in such terminology, it is nevertheless safe to say from the general tenor of Scripture, that Christ experienced the wrath of God, in our place, thus appeasing God's Holy anger against us, allowing Him to deal mercifully with us.

Relevance to Life and Ministry

How exactly does the penal-substitutionary atonement relate to our personal lives and ministries? Is it irrelevant to the modern reader of Scripture? I do not believe so. It is relevant to us, in many areas.

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First of all, this understanding of the atonement, allows us to see the multifacetedness of God. He is not one-sided. Many times, one's conception of God, is limited to one attribute or characteristic. Either God is viewed as the exacting judge in heaven, who is just waiting to drop the hammer on anyone who drops the ball, or else God is viewed, as a big grandfather in the sky who lets us get away with murder. God is not *just* a God of justice, and neither is He *just* a God of mercy. We know that God is both, a God of justice and mercy. We need not view Him, only as a policeman, or only, as a friend. We need to both, love God, because of His mercy and love, and fear God, because of His hatred of sin.

This understanding of the atonement also makes it clear to us, that we cannot do anything for our salvation. Having been sinners by nature, all of us were destined to hell. There was nothing we could do, to avoid this, or change our course of destiny. Our just sentence, was death, because of our sins. But, God, who is rich in mercy, while we were without strength, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6). It was God, who made the move, to save our souls. We did not first love Him, but He first loved us and gave Himself for us (Titus 2:14; 1 John 4:10, 19). Salvation began with and will be finished, by Christ. He accomplished our reconciliation to God. All we are left to do is receive reconciliation, by faith (2 Corinthians 5:20).

If Christ did all that is necessary for our salvation, making an atonement for our sins, in our stead, we can be assured that we will be saved, when we continue to place our faith in Christ's work, on our behalf. We can know, that we have security in our relationship with Christ. It is not based on our own merits, but on His merits. Jesus is both, the author and finisher, of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). He can act in this capacity,

because He did all that was necessary, to secure salvation for all those who will believe. What we must do, is trust in what He has done for us, and await the redemption of our bodies.

On a more subjective level, the atonement should lead us to a greater hatred of sin. The Scripture declares, that the beginning of wisdom, is to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13). God's hatred of evil and sin led Him to make a tremendous sacrifice, i.e., the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Sin is serious. God does not excuse sin. When we sin, we sin against God Himself. It is God that we are hurting, and not just ourselves. God's love for us, in spite of our sin, may be beyond our areas of knowledge (Ephesians 3:19), but this love was costly. It cost Jesus, His life. The fact that God needed to come to earth as a human being and suffer and die for us so that we could be saved, should wake us up to the seriousness of sin. The next time we are tempted to sin, we should look to Calvary and see the price with which we were redeemed, and in seeing both, God's hatred for sin and love for us, turn away from sin to righteousness.

For ministry, understanding the nature of the atonement is extremely important. Paul said, that God "has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). As ministers, our specific ministry is that of reconciling man to God. If we do not understand the nature of the atonement/reconciliation, we cannot effectively preach the message of reconciliation to an estranged world. A lack of understanding of the atonement will result in a ministry, which is out of focus. The atonement for our mission, i.e., is the reconciling of lost souls, to their heavenly Father.

Finally, the atonement is a motivation of us to live for God, as the Socinian Theory states. Paul said, that the love of Christ compels us to no longer live for ourselves, but to live for Jesus Christ, the One who died for us and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). When we look at Christ's death, it compels us to live our lives in total obedience to God, as did Jesus. Just as Jesus was so committed to the fulfilling the Will of God, and pleasing God, that He went so far as to willingly give His life as a ransom for many, we

also will experience this same passion, when we look to Christ.

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Is a Chalcedonian Christology Coherent?

James Moulder has written an article in the *Modern Theology* journal entitled, "Is a Chalcedonian Christology Coherent." This article is in the July 1986 issue. (ISSN 0266-7177). He examines the Chalcedonian Formulation of A.D. 451, which says, that Jesus is both, fully God and fully man, simultaneously. He is not so much interested in the wording of the creed, as he is to the conception of Jesus, that the authors of the creed possessed.

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Our modern-day understanding of Christology is relatively the same as it was in A.D. 451. Although we do not set up the creed as the standard for truth, most Oneness Pentecostals do agree, that most of the Creed does reflect the Biblical teaching. Moulder contends, however, that the Chalcedonian understanding is like saying a square is round, i.e., it is contradictory. He has attempted to rid Christology of this contradictory language, by seeking a better understanding of what it means to be God, and what it means to be man.

Moulder is not the only one to argue the incarnation of God, as it has been traditionally understood, is a contradiction. Soren Kierkegaard also proposed this view, claiming that God and man are two infinitely different things. The world of God and the world of man are as different as fire and ice. But, is saying that Jesus was both, ontologically divine (in His essence of Being), and ontologically human (in His essence of Being) a contradiction?

A contradiction exists between two propositions; the one denying the claim of the other. For example, to say that a man is a Spiritual being and that he is not a Spiritual being, at the same time, is a contradiction, but to affirm that a man is a Spiritual and a material being simultaneously, is not. We have no problem believing that Spirit and flesh can be joined in on, in our own person, so why is it so difficult to accept, in the case of Jesus Christ? Surely, there are some other variables in this situation, that do not allow for such a simplistic comparison. The way Jesus is both, God and man, is

more complicated than the way we can be a Spirit being and a physical being, but the same general principle applies.

There are many aspects concerning the mechanics of the incarnation, which we do not understand, but a mystery is not the same thing as a contradiction. God's existence and man's existence are not wholly other, as Kierkegaard has claimed. It must be remembered, that man is made in God's image, and therefore, resembles God. If God's image can be found in man, why is it so difficult to imagine that God could assume a human existence, while still retaining His Godhood? Although we may not have a full understanding of the way in which deity could unite metaphysically with humanity in the One Person of Jesus Christ, it is not a contradiction to believe such a thing. Rather, it would be considered a paradox, which is a seeming contradiction that cannot be adequately explained, but nonetheless, is within reason.

From this point forward, I will offer a point-by-point affirmation/criticism to Moulder's claims.

When speaking of who became incarnate, Moulder points out from John 1:1, that the following equation could be constructed: Jesus = the Logos = God the Son. I would disagree with the terminology "God the Son," because it is not a Biblical term, but I do agree with his basic assumption. Jesus is the Logos, who is God.

I will also agree with him, when he said that, "we can be puzzled about what we are because there is no uncontroversial account of what it means for us, or for Jesus, to be a human being" (p. 292). There have been many theories of what it means to be human, even among Christians, but the abundance of theories does not mean, that we cannot have any basic understanding of what it means to be human, or any knowledge of at least, some basic constituents of humanity, upon which, all humanity is contingent. For even among the various opinions, there is always a considerable amount of overlap in ideas.

Moulder has rightly pointed out, that every Christology is founded on anthropology (study of man). Every Christology is also founded, on a particular understanding of God, to which we will speak later. It is the anthropological understanding, presented in the Chalcedonian Creed, that he challenges. The Chalcedonian's claimed, that "Jesus was *homoousios* [of the same substance] with us, as to His humanity." This claim, Moulder has rightly said, is open to dispute, because what it means to be human, is open to dispute. Being open to dispute does not necessarily mean, that the claim is illogical or contradictory, but only that it can be questioned.

I do not want to go into much detail concerning Moulder's philosophical approach to the topic of what it means to be a man, but I would like to address one particular statement he made. He believes, like Athanasius, that it was the embodiment of the Logos, in flesh, that made Him a human being (p. 295). It is not clear, but if what he means by this, is that the mere assumption of a human body is the essence of humanity/human existence, without the need for a human Spirit/Soul, then I sharply disagree with him. Being a human is much more than having a body. The body may be a part of human existence, but it is not the totality of what it means to be human. If God would have clothed Himself with pig-skin it would not have made God a pig. Skin is not the essence of Personhood.

If Jesus only took on some of our characteristics, namely a human body and behavior, then Jesus was only pretending to be like us and was never really a true human being. It may be argued here, that no one can say for sure, what all a being, a human being entails, so my claim is invalid. Although it is true, that we may not be sure of what *all* it means to be human, the Bible is very clear that we are, at the very least, something more than biological flesh-beings. We are Spirit-beings. If Jesus did not have a human Spirit/Soul, then He was only acting, as a man. But, the Bible is very clear, that the Word, who was God, *became* flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14). He did not just take on the characteristics of flesh, but He became flesh. God did not put on a costume of man, but became man, with all that that entails.

Moulder went on to argue from the Book of Hebrews, that Jesus is perfectly human, “because He has been tempted to lead an inauthentic life...” He referenced Hebrews 4:15, which speaks of Christ as being tempted in every respect like all other humans, but without sinning. His basic claim is that Jesus is a human being like us because He was tempted like we are. This ability, along with physical flesh, are the only two distinguishing characteristics of humanity, that Moulder says Jesus shared with us, and thus, can be said to be human.

I think limiting Jesus’ humanity to these two areas is reductionistic, at best. He has limited Jesus’ humanity, confusing ontology (the essence of being) with ability. Ability does not make one what they are, but what someone is, makes them able to do such and such. One cannot *do* before one *is*. Being tempted is not the *sine qua non* (essential element or condition) of being human. Angels can be tempted and did fall to that temptation, but they are not humans. Jesus’ temptations were the result of His ontological existence, as a genuine and complete human being, not the cause of His humanity. He experienced temptation with us, not *to* identify Himself with us, but because *in* His complete human existence, He *was already* identified with us. Even if Jesus would not have been tempted, this would not disqualify Him from being a human being. It would only show, that He had an ability, that other human beings, did not share with Him.

Reinforcing his claims, Moulder continued to say, “...an incorporeal person [lacking a material form] is a human being if, but only if, he knows what it means to have a body, and therefore, be tempted to lead an inauthentic life” (p. 296). This seems to back up my understanding, that he is claiming human existence, primarily consisting of the embodiment of an incorporeal (Spirit being) person. To Moulder, the Logos is the incorporeal Spirit, who becomes man by taking on human flesh and being tempted in that flesh. This is a deficient understanding of the incarnation, at best, and wholly un-Biblical, at its worst.

The main thrust of Moulder’s argument centers on what it means to be God.

Traditionally, it has been said, that the essential properties of God that distinguish Him as God, are His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. I would add to this list, God's eternity, and immutability. It is the three "omnies," that Moulder challenges because he claims it creates an inconsistent triad for Christology. Moulder details this triad, which the Chalcedonian understanding breeds:

1. "Jesus is neither omnipotent nor omniscient nor omnipresent, because of what we are told, for example, in Mark 6:5; 13:21; and 1:37."

2. "God the Son, is both, omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent because He is *homoousios* with God the Father, who is both, omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent."

3. "Jesus = God the Son" (p. 298).

He says, that any of these two propositions can be true, but together, they make the third proposition, false. It is claimed, that any way we slice it, there are logical contradictions, in these three assertions. If God is the omnies (1), but Jesus is not the omnies (2), then Jesus and God cannot be the same person, which is false (3). If Jesus is not the omnies (2), and He is God, then God is not the omnies, which is false (1). If Jesus is God (3), then either (1) or (2) has to be false, because "x = y, if and only if, every property of x is a property of y, and conversely" (p. 298). This is the law of identity. If in any way, or at any time, x is ever different than y, x cannot be y. Jesus cannot be both, the omnies and the non-omnies, simultaneously. Because Orthodox Christology must affirm all three propositions simultaneously, the Chalcedonian definition is seen, as being a contradictory understanding of Christ.

Moulder's conclusions are indeed contradictory, *as presented*. I say, *as presented* because there is a way to affirm all three propositions without being contradictory, or dying the death of a thousand qualifications. It is His presentation of the three propositions that makes them *appear* contradictory.

I want to take a particular argument with Moulder's last conclusion, to demonstrate my point. In his argument, he is assuming that one cannot be both, limited and unlimited, in one existence. Though his contention seems valid, because to say that something both, is and is not, would be a contradiction, it is not necessarily so.

The root of Moulder's problem is that he is confusing ontology, with function. We have already demonstrated that the idea of God, becoming a man, is not a contradiction. *Now, all we must demonstrate is that Jesus **is** both, **fully** God and **fully** man, and explain how His being ontologically both, God and man simultaneously, is worked out, **functionally**.*

That Jesus was ontologically God, is evidenced in numerous passages. I will only cite a few, here. First, Jesus said, the Father was in Him (John 10:38; 14:10-11, 20). It is not said, that part of the Father is in Jesus, but that the Father was indeed, in Christ. If Jesus did not possess the omnies of the Father, then it cannot be said, that the Father is in Him, because the Father is the omnies. If all of God was in Jesus, except the omnies, it could not be said, that God was in Him, because this is essential to being God.

It is also said, that in Christ "all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). Christ possessed the full measure of deity. It was not part of God, that was in Him, but all that makes up God's Person, was in Christ.

Many Scriptures could be quoted to demonstrate the completeness of Christ's humanity, but only a few examples will be examined. Hebrews says, "Wherefore, *in all things He had to be made like His brethren*, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that, He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to help them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18, emphasis mine). Notice, that Jesus was made like other humans *in all things*, not some things. So whatever it means, to be man, Christ was fully this.

In support of Jesus' authentic humanity, the author of Hebrews also said, Jesus descended from the line of Judah (7:14) in a genuine human body (10:5). Hebrews 2:14, says, that Jesus partook of flesh and blood in the same manner as all humans do. It seems clear, that Jesus was like us, in every way.

Being a genuine human being, Jesus was limited in where He could be, what He could know, and what He could do. Mark 5:30 and 13:32, demonstrate the limitations of Jesus' knowledge. The limitations of His power is evident from the fact, that He said He could do nothing by Himself, but only what He saw the Father do (John 5:19). The limitation of Jesus' presence, goes without saying. If God is unlimited, and Jesus is limited, then how can Jesus be God? Can He be both, limited and unlimited? The passage which best informs our understanding of this dilemma is Philippians 2:6-11, to which I will now turn my attention.

This passage is often called the kenosis passage. Pages could be written on this passage, examining all of the Greek, but I will limit my comments to the most pertinent section. Paul stated, that Christ existed in the form (*morphe*) of God, but did not think that it was robbery, to be equal with God. This phrase is translated from *ouch harpagmon hesesato to einsai isa theoi*. The meaning of *harpogmos*, translated, "robbery," is "something to take advantage of." Christ did not consider equality with God, something to be taken advantage of, but in His incarnation.

Instead of retaining this form, Christ "emptied Himself" (*heauton "Himself," and ekenosen, "made of no reputation"*). We get the term, "kenosis" from the root of *ekenosen*, which is *kenoo*. This word is the crucial hinge to understanding the nature of the incarnation. *Ekenosen* is in the aorist active indicative, third-person singular, meaning that the action here, genuinely happened, and that being, in the past. Christ actively "kenosed" Himself. "Made of no reputation," is a poor rendering, from the Greek. The meaning of the word is to empty; to divest one's self of one's prerogatives, abase one's self; to deprive a thing of its proper functions.

Although *ekenosen* relates the fact that Christ did empty Himself, it does not indicate that which He emptied Himself of. *Labon*, a modal adverbial participle, serves this purpose. Being a form of *labano*, the word means, “to take.” As a second aorist participle, it describes past action on the part of Christ, taking place after His emptying (at the incarnation). Christ emptied Himself, *by taking* upon Himself, the form of a servant. He emptied Himself, by adding a new existence, to His eternally divine essence.

This does not make any sense to us. Mathematically, we know that to empty, means to take away. If you are to empty a room of the people in it, you have less people in the room than before, not more. The sum of a subtraction can never be larger than the original integer from which the lower integer, was subtracted from. With God, however, it was possible. When Christ emptied Himself, He did not give up His essential deity with all of its attributes and characteristics, but added to that, genuine and complete humanity, to exist in the form of a servant. God did not lose His divine attributes in the incarnation but gained human attributes. It can be said, then, that this emptying was accomplished, by adding.

God laid aside the expression of divine essence. He did not consider His existence, as deity, nor this visible form, something to be taken advantage of, but willingly relinquished its exclusiveness to accommodate His existence, as a genuine human (Philippians 2: 7-8). This does not mean, that God laid aside His divine essence. This passage only refers to His willing humiliation, by the assumption of a human existence. God willingly, set aside the exercise of the divine prerogatives, to take up human existence.

As Millard Erickson has said, this willing limitation God imposed upon Himself, when He became a human being, could be likened to the world’s fastest sprinter, pairing up with the world’s slowest sprinter, to run a three-legged race. By willingly and intentionally binding Himself to another runner, the fastest runner is going to slow Himself down, considerably. This type of running is a new experience for Him.

Although His individual physical strength and speed has not diminished, it has been circumscribed by the condition in which it now exists. The essence of ability and strength has not been diminished, but the conditions willingly imposed upon them, have limited the exercise of their full potential.

The solution to understanding the dual nature of Christ (a seeming contradiction) will not be found in minimizing or redefining Jesus' deity or humanity. The solution lies in the acknowledgment of Jesus' complete, authentic, and genuine humanity; humanity which imposed limitations (accepted willingly and intentionally) upon the fullness of Christ's deity, so that He could live on the same plane as any other human, sharing in all of their experiences, so that He could relate to man and be a sufficient High Priest (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 5:1-9; 7:13-28).

This kenosis explains the functional relationship between the genuine and complete humanity and deity of Christ. The deity was latent (there, but not being utilized) within Christ. In the willing limitation of His deity, living life as a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost, the exercise of Jesus' knowledge, power, and presence, as God, was limited. If the fullness of the deity of the Father was in Christ, but the exercise of this deity was willingly limited so that Jesus could live within the limits of every human being, then there is no contradiction. Jesus, because of His complete humanity, is limited; because of His complete deity, is unlimited. Functionally, however, the two natures exist, in a fashion, where neither is compromised. His two natures exist, "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the difference of the natures, having been in no wise, taken away by reason of the union, but rather, the properties of each being preserved....," as the Chalcedonian Creed says. The full ontological existence of God was in Christ (who was also ontologically, a complete human being), but the essential properties (omnies) were not being exercised in Him.

Moulder makes the mistake of equating Jesus and God. In doing so, he sees it contradictory to find anything different, be said of Christ, or done by Christ, that is not said of God, or done, by God. It must be realized, that although Jesus is God, He is

more than God. Jesus' identity goes beyond that of the Father, in that, the Son has a component to His existence, the Father (God in His transcendence) does not have, namely, humanity. In a sense, it can be said, that Jesus was more than God; not more in His deity, but more, with respect to the addendum (addition) of His human existence. Because this is so, Jesus and the Father are functionally distinct, which accounts for the differences we read about in the NT.

Having said all of this, I would, therefore, modify Moulder's presentation of the three Orthodox propositions to read:

1. Jesus, *because He is a genuine human being with all the limitations of a man*, is *functionally*, neither omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor omnipresent, because of what we are told, for example, in Mark 6:5; 13:21; and 1:37.

2. Jesus is *ontologically* omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent because He is *homoousios* with God the Father, who is omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent.

3. Jesus = God and man.

These three assertions are not contradictory, when it is understood, that the exercise of Christ's complete deity was willingly limited, because of the addendum (addition) of humanity, to God's Person. This limitation is one of function, not one of being. There is a vast difference between the two. Neither Christ's ontological (pertaining to the nature and essential properties of existence) divinity or ontological humanity, had to be diminished, in order to coexist in One Person, but the exercise of the divine nature, was limited functionally, in the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures.

Having demonstrated that Christ can be the omnies, due to His ontological existence, as God, and that He can be limited, due to His human nature, and that there are functional limitations placed on the exercise of Christ's deity, I believe I can say, that I

have demolished Moulder's argument, that says, Jesus could not be fully God and fully man, simultaneously, without encountering a contradiction. The contradiction is avoided, by understanding the *functionality*, between Christ's two natures.

Moulder's way of keeping consistent with the Chalcedonian claim, that Jesus is both, God and man, is by redefining what it means, to be God. To avoid a contradiction, as he sees it, he denies that "omnipotence, or omniscience, or omnipresence, are God the Father's essential properties" (p. 299), the second of the three

affirmations of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. Instead of being *homoousios* with the Father, with regards to the omnies, Christ is *homoousios* with the Father, in respect to having the love of the Father, or as Moulder would term it, *homoagapen*, with the Father.

Before examining what Moulder means, by saying that Jesus is *homoagapen*, with the Father, I want to examine his contention, that God's essential properties are not His omnies. He believes, that by maintaining such, he can still claim, that Jesus is God.

Although not the only determining factor, examining the distinctive characteristics of something or someone is the best way to determine what makes something/someone what he/she/it, essentially is. When speaking of God, the Scripture is clear, that God is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-13; Proverbs 15:3; 1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 66:1; Acts 17:27-28), omniscient (Job 42:2; Proverbs 15:3; Acts 2:23), and omnipotent (Romans 13:1; Revelation 19:6). How these aspects of God's nature can be denied, is beyond me. The Bible is too explicit, that these are at least, some aspects of God's nature, if not some of the very things which make up the essence of His Being.

If Moulder was to maintain the truth of the above statements, as they apply to God, and yet deny these "characteristics" to Jesus' deity, claiming they are not essential to God's essence, then the best picture of Christ he can present, is that of a demi-god. He may be God, but there is a Deity greater than Him, 'out there,' still. Since he seems to

deny them of God also, he is denying the Scriptural portrait of God. He has redefined God, so that Jesus, can still be considered God, even though He was limited.

Moulder's whole case for Jesus, being *homoagapen* with the Father, is based on the parables which speak of the Father and Son having mercy and loving the lost. Those that show the Father and Son, as punishing the wicked, namely the eschatological passages and parables, are recognized to be a problem to his Christology (p. 303). The way he gets out of this dilemma is to claim that he cannot know whether it is he or the Bible, "which peddle false beliefs about Jesus" (p. 303). At this point, I can understand how he can deny the Biblical statements of God, which speak of God's omnies -- because of his view of the Scripture. I am not exactly sure what his view of inspiration and inerrancy is, but when he can say, "...I have to live with the fact, that I do not know whether it is I, or some of the authors of the New Testament, who hold false beliefs about Jesus and about God the Father." (p. 303), I am assured that his view of inspiration and inerrancy, is not conservative.

We must question Moulder's basis for making love and mercy, the *sine qua non* attribute of God? Why not make something else the *sine qua non* attribute of God, such as peace or wrath? He has chosen to focus on only one of God's distinguishing characteristics, to the neglect of all others. He has only focused on God's character/moral characteristics. If nothing else, this is a deficient view of what constitutes the essence of God's Person. In the end, nothing can attack Moulder's view, because he picks and chooses what parts of the Bible are the most important and carry the most weight: "I therefore, attach more weight to the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the two sons who were lost, than to the eschatological passages in the New Testament" (p. 303). When confronted with the option of redefining his concept of love, in light of the parables and passages which speak of God's wrath, he says, "Finally, I am not tempted to revise my account of what *agape* involves, because of my convictions about 'justification by faith,' rest on the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-farmer (Luke 18:10-14), rather than on the letters of Paul" (p. 303). Whatever he cannot get by with on these claims, he resorts to the claim of

“ambiguity” as to the nature of God and men, taking a near-agnostic position, or an ‘it-doesn’t-really-matter-all-that-much’ approach, to what we believe (p. 304). What is so amusing, is that after he has said all of that, he then asserts that we need to take the stories of Jesus’ compassion and mercy, with the greatest weight. Moulder’s opinions and concepts seem to be the final authority for his beliefs, not the Bible, at least in its totality. I find his logic and approach to Christology, without a valid source of authority, and ultimately without any solid base.

I will conclude, by reinforcing that to confess that Christ is both, fully God and fully man, is absolutely essential to a proper interpretation/understanding of the Bible. What we must wrestle with is not the ontological nature of Christ, but the functional outworking of the divine and human natures in Him. How exactly the divine Spirit and the human spirit could dwell in Christ, in their entirety of properties, and not end up with a contradiction, or two people in Christ. Solving this dilemma can only be accomplished through our understanding of the incarnation. If we understand, that the Word *became* flesh (John 1:1, 14), then we can see, at least on a theoretical basis, how Jesus can be fully God and fully man, with all that that entails, and still be One Authentic Person. God did not come and dwell in a man, and neither did God just create a human body to live in, but the Almighty Spirit of God, *became* a human being.

Jesus was both, God and man, but in the incarnation, these two natures were joined in such a way, that they are united into one, and not divided; inseparable, yet distinguishable; the properties of each being, present in Christ in their fullness, yet united, as One Person. That this is so, is known from the revelation of the Scripture. How exactly this is so, is a mystery. Mystery, however, is not contradiction!

Christology is Discovered Soteriologically

Orthodox Christology is discovered soteriologically. The Godhead/Christology debates of early Church history were based on soteriological (salvation) considerations

all centered around the question, “What must Christ be, in order for Him to do what He did (provide salvation for fallen mankind)?” It was understood, that for Christ to do a particular something, He must be a particular somebody. There are particular constructions of Christ’s Person that destroy His ability to save us. Every Christology that has been rejected by the Church, has been rejected, for soteriological reasons. The Christology that has been accepted has not been accepted, because it can explain everything about the incarnation (which is impossible), but because it was the best construction through which to understand how it was, that Jesus could claim what He claimed, and do what He did.

The fathers of Chalcedon understood, that if Christ was not fully divine, His death would not be sufficient to atone for the sins of all mankind, because it would not have infinite value, thus causing them to reject Arianism.

Apollinarianism was rejected, because it denied Christ a genuine human psyche. The Cappadocians (and others) argued, that if man fell through the faculties of a human psyche, man had to be redeemed through the faculties of a human mind, as well. Jesus had to overcome the temptation, man succumbed to, with the same facilities in which he succumbed to them. For Jesus to redeem every aspect of human existence, demands that He possess every aspect of human existence, including the human psyche.

Adoptionism and Nestorianism were rejected, because both views, were insufficient to ground Christ’s deity in reality. Jesus was not God, but a man, who was really, really close to God! But, no matter how close the human person may be to the divine Person, Jesus is never actually God Himself.

Monophysitism was rejected, because it overwhelmed and consumed humanity, in order to preserve the deity. This makes Christ sub-human and is deficient for similar reasons to Apollinarianism.

Eutycheanism was rejected because, in the incarnation, two realities are fused into

one new reality, making Jesus neither God nor man, but some new thing. Only if Jesus was both, God and man, in one existence, however, could He be the mediator and accomplish salvation, on our behalf.

The Fathers understood, that if Christ was not genuinely and fully man, He could not redeem fallen humanity, and thus, rejected Monophysitism, Apollinarianism, and Arianism. Furthermore, they understood, that if the full humanity and full deity of Christ did not relate in a certain way, even though Christ was fully God and fully man, He could not truly mediate our salvation, and thus, rejected Monophysitism, Eutychianism, and Nestorianism.

All of the above views have devastating soteriological ramifications, and that is why they have been rejected in the past, and why I believe they must still be rejected. A Nestorian Christ cannot save us; a deified man cannot save us; a divinely adopted man cannot save us. Apart from soteriological considerations, Christology would not be a relevant issue. It is for soteriological reasons, that the Church has held, and should continue to hold, a Chalcedonian Christology.

So, in doing Christology, we work somewhat backward from what is necessary, to accomplish our redemption to what must Christ be, to the nature of the incarnation that would be necessary to make Christ that way. This is not to say, that Scripture is not the driving force behind Christology, but it is to emphasize, that the guiding force of Christology, is the soteriological question.

Christology

Introduction - The Deity of Christ - The Humanity of Christ - The Hypostatic Union - The Kenosis - The Ministry of Christ as it Relates to the Kenosis - The Work of Christ as it Relates to the Kenosis - The Relationship of Jesus to the Father - Relevance for Life and Ministry

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Introduction

Christology is the study of the relationship between the deity and humanity of Christ, as they exist in One Person. The Scriptures declare Jesus to be both, fully God and fully man, simultaneously. The infinite Spirit united with finite humanity, to become the Son of God. These two natures seem contradictory. Deity is infinite in knowledge, power, and presence. Humanity is limited in knowledge, power, and presence. How can the two distinct worlds of God and man, come together, into One existence? This is the very question Christology attempts to answer.

Although the Bible infers, that there is a relationship between the deity and humanity of Christ (called the *hypostatic union*), no one passage was specifically penned to explain its mechanics. The New Testament writers simply affirmed that it was true. They taught that Jesus was both, God and man at the same time, accepting this truth, by faith, apart from full understanding. What we must do, then, is meticulously scrutinize all that Jesus said about Himself, relating to His identity (His self-concept), and statements made by the writers of the New Testament, concerning His dual nature.

No matter how much we do know, concerning the mechanics of the incarnation, it must be remembered, that we can never truly comprehend it. We can affirm and believe to be true, the declarations set forth in Scripture, but we can never truly understand, how God, Who is the eternal Spirit, could become a man. We must accept, by faith, that deity conceived in a woman, and united with humanity, and that humanity

united with deity, neither nature compromised or overridden, by the other.

Paul spoke of the “mystery of the incarnation” (1 Timothy 3:16). This mystery is none other than that, “God was manifest in the flesh...” (1 Timothy 3:16). The incarnation is the greatest miracle to ever occur. A miracle by nature, is something unexplainable and mysterious, to the human mind. This is why faith, must always play a major role, in Christology. We can know, by faith, the Scriptural declarations concerning the hypostatic union (a term, referring to the way in which the deity and humanity existed in Jesus) to be true, but we will never fully understand how it is possible, and the mechanical details, of how it occurred.

In this discussion, I will explain how the Person of Christ, relates to the work of Christ. Christology, fits hand in hand, with Soteriology (the study of salvation), because the Person of Christ, was necessary, to perform what was essential to our salvation, namely a sinless sacrifice, to atone for sins. God became a man for specific purposes, relating to the redemption of mankind.

The deity of Jesus is at the heart of our faith, and rightly so. We follow Him, because of Who He is; not a mere man, but God. Unfortunately, we tend to focus on Jesus' deity, more so, than His humanity, taking the latter for granted. By doing so, we bypass the reasons God assumed a human existence, in the first place. The lightness, in which some view Jesus' humanity, results in an attitude that minimizes its genuineness. It is possible to fall into the trap of minimizing the genuineness of His humanity, to “protect” the fullness of His deity. This can be witnessed in the way Jesus' prayers are viewed. Some, trying to protect Christ's identity, as Yahweh in the flesh, have gone so far as to deny the genuineness of His prayers, minimizing them to a mere charade He went through, to give us an example. This kind of minimizing is not necessary. It only leads to a misunderstanding of the Person of Christ and false concepts of our Saviour.

Both the complete deity and complete humanity of Jesus must be emphasized, for

both are of utmost importance for our salvation. We can debate over which nature was more important, the divine or human, but it seems best to understand the importance of both. From God's perspective, it could be said, that the humanity was more important because, without it, He could not have died for us on the cross, redeeming us from our sin. Without a body, the eternal Spirit could not be sacrificed. From our perspective, it could be said, that the deity of Jesus was more important because if Jesus was just a mere man, His death could not have atoned for the sins of the whole world, even if He was a sinless man. It is best to emphasize both, Jesus' deity and humanity, as it relates to His Person and to His work. The believers of the first century emphasized both, and so must we. We are not stopping at mere faith, in the reality of Jesus' two natures, but we are seeking understanding of the relationship between these natures, as they existed in Jesus bodily (Colossians 2:9).

Even though I have, and will continue, to speak of the deity and humanity of Jesus as "natures," understand that I am doing so, for lack of better terminology. When I talk about His human nature, I am referring to His genuine, complete, and authentic humanity. Jesus Christ was as much of a human being, as we are. When I speak of His divine nature, I am not speaking of a divine entity that is somehow different, or of a smaller magnitude than that of the Almighty God. I am speaking of God Himself. Jesus is everything God is, and at the same time, is everything we are. When we think of God, we do not think of Him as a nature, but as a Person or Being. When we see a fellow human, we do not think of them as a human nature, but as a person. "Nature" is only used when we try describing the essence of our being. This term is used, in like manner, for this discussion. It should be interpreted as, "essence of being," and is only being used as a word, that I believe, best describes the respective aspects of Christ's identity.

Before attempting to reach an understanding concerning the hypostatic union, we must first establish the Scriptural basis for Christ's deity and humanity. The Scriptural teaching of Jesus' deity will be examined first.

The Deity of Christ

The best testimony we can get concerning Jesus' identity, is His own. What did Jesus think about Himself? How did Jesus view His relationship to the Father? Jesus made some statements, that overtly and boldly *declared* His deity. For example, one time He said, "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30). He did not mean that He was one in purpose with the Father, as some scholars suggest, but that He was of the same essence, as the Father (deity). The Jew's response to Jesus' statement allows us to see the force of what He said. They took up stones to stone Him (v. 31). Their reasoning was, that Jesus, who was a man, had made Himself God (v. 33). This was blasphemy to the Jews and was deserving of the death penalty. They understood perfectly, that Jesus was claiming to be the Father Himself. If Jesus was not declaring equality with the Father, it would have been the perfect opportunity to explain what He really meant. Instead, He continued to back up His claim (vs. 34-38).

On another occasion, Jesus told the Jews, "He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me" (John 12:45). A parallel to this statement, occurred during Jesus' discourse with His apostles, as found in John 14:5-9. Jesus declared to Thomas, "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth, ye know Him and have seen Him" (v. 7). Philip could not understand this statement, so he asked Jesus to show the Father to all the disciples, and then they would be satisfied. Jesus responded, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet, hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (v. 9). According to Jesus' own testimony, to see Him was to see the Father (God). One can not get a much clearer statement than this, as to who Jesus claimed to be.

Other statements, which Jesus made, and prerogatives that He exercised, *imply* His deity. If Jesus was not God, indeed these statements and allusions He made, concerning Himself, would have been blasphemous. For example, Jesus forgave sins. He said to the paralytic who was lowered through the roof, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:15). The scribes, present in the room, thought Jesus' statement

blasphemous saying, “who can forgive sin, but God alone?” (v. 7). If Jesus truly did not have the power to forgive and had not truly forgiven this man’s sins (which only God can do), then He had the perfect opportunity to clear up the matter when the Jews inquired of His Words. Instead of pointing out the scribes misunderstanding of His Words, Jesus said, “Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But, that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house” (vs. 9-11).

Jesus claimed authority in respect to the Law of God. One such example is the law of the Sabbath. God established the Sabbath for Israel, as one of the 613 commandments of the Law of Moses they had to obey. Because God had made the Law, He alone had the power to alter or repeal it. We see Jesus, however, claiming the authority to alter the Sabbath, when His disciples were questioned by the Pharisees for picking grain heads on the Sabbath. Jesus’ response was to remind them of the time that David ate of the shewbread when fleeing from Saul (Mark vs. 25-26). The shewbread was strictly for the priests. For anyone else to eat it, was a violation of the Law of Moses, but God never punished David. In conclusion, Jesus said, “the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore, the Son of man is Lord, also, of the Sabbath” (v. 27-28). Jesus clearly claimed the right to redefine the Sabbath, or disregard it altogether, if He found it necessary, a right that clearly belonged to God alone.

Jesus claimed that He would judge the world (Matthew 25:31-46), but this is only a divine prerogative (Psalm 50:6). Jesus also claimed a relationship with the Father, that was unique to Him alone (John 14:23). Jesus claimed to have the power of life when He said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). The Old Testament declares, that only God has this power (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6, 2 Kings 5:7).

It is particularly interesting to note the response of those to whom Jesus spoke these

profound statements. After Jesus told the Jews, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17), the Jews sought to kill Him. John gave us their reasoning, when he said, “Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath but said also, that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (v. 18). The Jews understood, that Jesus was laying a claim to be God Himself. The Greek word *isos* is translated here, as “equal.” It means to be, “the same as” something. Jesus put Himself on the same plane, or grounds of deity, as the Father.

From our perspective, Jesus’ terminology of “Son” and “Father” seem to imply some sort of subordination to God. It gives us the feeling, that He is less than God. The Jews, however, did not view this terminology in the same manner. Jesus calling God, His “Father” is tantamount to saying, He is God. This is clearly witnessed in the above passage.

When Jesus claimed that He and His Father were One (John 10:30), again the Jews took up stones to stone Him (v. 31). When Jesus asked them for what good work they desired to kill Him, they responded, “For a good work, we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God” (v. 33). The Jews did not understand Jesus’ reference to God, as His “Father,” to mean that Jesus was less than God, or some sort of a second-rate god. Rather, they understood His claim, to be that of Jehovah God Himself.

Now that we have heard Jesus’ own testimony, concerning His deity, let us turn our attention to what the apostles thought of Him. After Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas said to Jesus, “My Lord and My God” (John 20:28). The Greek word, *kurios*, translated “Lord,” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *adonai*; and the Greek *theos*, translated, “God,” is the Greek counterpart to the Hebrew *elohim*. For Thomas, being a monotheistic Jew, to call Jesus his Lord and God, knowing that the only Lord God, was Jehovah (Deuteronomy 6:4), would have been blasphemy, if Thomas had not believed that Jesus was Jehovah Himself, in flesh.

Peter's bold declaration to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), demonstrates Peter's belief in His deity. Jesus told Peter, that flesh and blood had not revealed this truth to Him, but the Father, which is in heaven (v. 17). If "Son of God" here, only refers to Jesus' humanity, no revelation from the Father, would have been necessary. Anybody could have seen, that Jesus, was a human being by just looking at Him. Even the Jews understood that He was a genuine human being. It is what the Jews could not believe, that Peter understood by the revelation of God; Jesus was divine, being both, God and man, at the same time.

Paul, who wrote the most, concerning Christ's Person, said, that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15; See also 2 Corinthians 4:4). What did Paul mean, when he declared Jesus to be God's image? We know that a physical likeness is not in view here, because God is a Spirit, and therefore, cannot have a physical body. The Greek word translated, "image" in the King James Version, is *eikon*. Its root, is *eiko*, meaning likeness, resemblance, or representation. *Eikon* denotes both, the representation and manifestation of a substance. Notice, that Paul contrasted Jesus' image, to that of the *invisible* God. The point Paul was trying to get across to his readers, was that Jesus, is the visible representation of God, to man. That is why Jesus could say, "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

For it to be said, that Jesus is like God is to say, that He is God. God is unique. What likeness could Jesus have had with God, other than that of His divine essence? It cannot be speaking of the likeness in which all human beings bear of God (Genesis 2:7), because this would not have distinguished Jesus' likeness with God from ours.

The likeness, then, must be that of the divine essence. Because the divine essence of God, cannot be changed. Jesus' deity could not have been any different than that of the Father's. To have the Father's deity is to be the Father because His divine essence cannot be fragmented.

Paul could have used other Greek words if all he meant to say was, that Jesus was

similar to God. If Paul be

lieved Jesus to possess a likeness to God, but not His very essence and Being, being some sort of a different substance from Him, he could have used *homoioima*. This word indicates a “likeness,” but stresses “the resemblance to an archetype, though the resemblance may not be derived...,” or Paul could have used *eidos*, meaning “a shape, or form.” This word, however, is only an appearance, “not necessarily based on reality.” Paul used *eikon* instead, to express that Jesus was the exact representation of the Father, in His essence and being.

The author of Hebrews said, that Jesus is the “express image of His [God’s] Person” (1:3). The English phrase translated, “express image” is from the Greek word, *charakter*. It is this word from which we get our English word, “character.” This is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament. It means, “to impress upon, or stamp.” It denotes an engraving from a tool, which impresses an image into that which is being engraved. This impression, then, is a characteristic of the instrument used to produce it. What is produced, corresponds precisely, with the instrument.

The Greek word translated, “person” is *hupostasis*. It is from this word, that we get the term, “hypostatic union,” describing the unification of deity and humanity in the man, Christ Jesus. *Hupostasis*, although rendered as, “person,” is more properly understood as, “essence of being, or the substance of a thing.” The etymology of this word has to do with “the sediment or foundation under a building.” It is that which underlies, makes up, or supports a thing. In this context, we are talking about what underlies, or makes up God; namely God’s essence, or substance.

Hupostasis is translated as, “confidence” in 2 Corinthians 9:4, 11:17, and Hebrews 3:14. In these contexts, it is either boasting, or faith in God, that is in view. The idea in these verses, is that there is a foundation and fullness of essence of the boasting, or in the faith. The only other time the word appears in Scripture, is in Hebrews 11:1, where faith is said to be the “substance” of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Here, the true meaning of the word, can be clearly seen. Faith is the essence,

substance, underlying support, or foundation of things, that are hoped for.

Jesus, therefore, is not just a representation of God but is the very visible impression of God's invisible substance and essence. He is God's very nature, expressed in humanity, as the Son of God, or to say it another way; He is the corresponding engravement of God's essence of being, in human form. Liddon summed it up best when he said, this verse implies that Jesus "is both, personally distinct from and yet, literally equal to, Him of whose essence He is the adequate imprint."

Jesus' being the image of God, is not the same thing, as our being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:10). God's image, in us, seems to be one of moral, mental, and Spiritual capabilities, rather than a representation of His essence. Only Jesus holds that glorious role. Whereas Jesus was God, made flesh, we are merely the dust of the earth, made flesh (Genesis 2:7). Our very being is different from Jesus' Being, and therefore the image of God in which we were made, must of necessity, be different from the image of God, found in Jesus Christ.

In another place, Paul said, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). The New International Version translates this verse as, "For, in Christ, all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." "Dwelleth" is the translation from the Greek word, *katoikeo*, meaning "to permanently settle down in a dwelling." "Fullness" is from the Greek word, *pleroma*, indicating that which "is filled up." It is the fullness of the Godhead, that dwells in Jesus, but what is the Godhead? The word is translated from *theotes*, meaning "divine essence, or the very Person of God." Considering the Greek, behind this verse, then, Paul said, that the fullness of the divine essence has permanently settled in Jesus' body.

This verse, gives us some very important truths, concerning Christ's deity, in relation to His humanity. First of all, we know the fullness of deity in Jesus, consisted of the completeness of divine attributes and characteristics, lacking nothing. Jesus did not

merely possess some divine attributes, but rather, He possessed every aspect of deity. This verse also demonstrates the permanence of the incarnation. Lastly, this verse declares, that the deity resident in Jesus, was resident *bodily*. This indicates a specific and defined form.

I have only touched the surface of Scriptures, declaring and alluding to the deity of Jesus Christ. A whole book could be written on this subject alone. I believe the Scriptures I have discussed here, give a solid foundation, as to who Jesus Christ is - the Jehovah of the Old Testament, became flesh.

The Humanity of Christ

The importance placed upon Jesus' deity, must also be placed upon His humanity. The full or partial denial of this aspect of Christ's Person has caused just as many heretical views in Church history, as has the full or partial denial of His deity.

As I said in the introduction, the humanity of Christ cannot be minimized under His deity. The incarnation is soteriological, in that it directly affects our salvation. Without His humanity, God could not have saved us, and could not be our High Priest. I will expound upon this, in more detail later, but let it suffice for the time being to say, that God had to become a genuine, complete, and authentic human Being to redeem those who are of genuine, complete, and authentic humanity.

This is explained in Romans 5:12-21, where Paul contrasted Adam to Jesus. Paul called Jesus, the "last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). The analogy between the two only goes as far as their sinlessness is concerned, and their existence, as caused by God. Even the latter does not have an exact parallel, because Adam was created from the dust of the earth, whereas Jesus was begotten of God, and conceived in the womb of a woman. The only true parallel between Adam and Jesus is that both, were sinless.

Because Adam lost his sinlessness and consequently brought the curse of sin and death upon all mankind, being our representative head, God had to come as a sinless man, and after perfect obedience from this sinless “God-man,” reaching as far as His obedience to the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8), is now able to grant His righteousness to all those who are bound by the dominion of sin, thus reversing the curse, as brought on by Adam, bringing physical and Spiritual life, instead of physical and Spiritual death (Romans 6:6, 9, 11, 14, 16-18, 20-23; 8:2). Jesus, the last Adam, was sent to reverse the effects of sin, caused by the first Adam. This could only be done, in the same humanity, in which Adam came.

To be human, one must have a body, soul, and Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Man is made up of a material (body), and an immaterial (Soul and Spirit) existence. If Jesus was truly human, we would expect to find Scriptural testimonies to His possession of these two components of human existence, and upon examination, it is found that we do.

Jesus Himself testified, that He has a soul when He said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matthew 26:38; See also John 12:27). As to His Spirit, Jesus told His Father, “Into thy hands, I commend My Spirit” (Luke 23:46; See also Luke 2:40, Mark 8:12). Not only did Jesus have a human soul and spirit, but He also had a human will. Jesus said, in John 5:30, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent Me.” In the Garden of Gethsemane, before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless, not *My* will, but *thine* be done” (Luke 22:42, italics mine). From the account in Matthew, we find that Jesus actually prayed this prayer, three times (26:38-44). These kinds of statements, by Jesus, can only lead us to the conclusion, that He had a genuine human will that was separate from, albeit completely submitted to, the will of His Father. In no way, was Jesus’ human Spirit or will replaced by a divine Spirit or divine will. If this were the case, Jesus could not be truly human at all.

Jesus had a complete human nature, differing only from ours, in that He was spared

the sin nature, by way of the virgin birth and conception by the Holy Ghost. This does not make Him any less human than we, because we know Adam and Eve to be true human beings, and they existed without the sin nature, previous to their transgression. If anything, Jesus was more human than we are because we are tainted by the sin nature. We live an existence that limits our relationship with God. Jesus was not limited by this sin principle or bound by its effects: alienation from God, sickness, disease.

There are a host of Scriptures relating this all-important truth. It is important, because God needed a perfect, sinless sacrifice, to atone for sin. A sinner cannot atone for the sins of other sinners.

Romans 8:3 says, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (italics mine). The wording chosen by Paul to express Christ's humanity is very precise. If Paul had said, Jesus came "in sinful flesh," he would have denied His sinlessness. If he would have said, Jesus came "in the likeness of flesh," he would have denied His authentic humanity. Paul chose the wording he did, to communicate the true nature of the incarnation: Jesus was made in genuine, yet sinless flesh (See also Matthew 27:4, 19; Luke 23:41; John 8:29, 46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

In support of Jesus' authentic humanity, Hebrews 2:14, says that Jesus partook of flesh and blood in the same manner, as all humans do. Verse seventeen further elaborates upon this when the author said, "Wherefore *in all things*, it behooved Him to be made *like* unto His *brethren...*" (italics mine).

John thought the confession of Jesus' authentic humanity to be of such importance, that he said those who denied such, were of the Spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7). To combat the heresy of docetism (an early form of Gnosticism), which denied the reality of Jesus' humanity, John asserted that he and others had heard, seen,

looked upon, and handled the Word of Life (1 John 1:1-3). Jesus' humanity was not a mere charade or facade, but was true and authentic, in every way.

The Scriptures declare Jesus to be of the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16) and of the seed of David (John 7:42; Acts 13:22-23; Romans 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:8).

“Seed,” is an expression for “offspring” or “descendant.” When He is spoken of as being the seed of Abraham, it is identifying Him, as a descendant of the Hebrew people (See John 8:33, 37; Romans 11:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:22). When He is spoken of as being the seed of David, it is identifying Him, more specifically, as being through the kingly lineage of David. Because Christ came through David's lineage, He is able to rule as King on David's throne, during the Millennium. It is this time, that the Covenant God made with David, that a king from his lineage would rule on his throne forever, will be fulfilled (2 Samuel 7:8-19; Psalms 89:3-4, 20-37; 132:11; Jeremiah 33:25-26). If Jesus was not truly human, He could not be King. Peter understood Jesus, to be the King prophesied of, by David, and that Jesus was a real human, when he said that “of the fruit of his [David's] loins, according to the flesh, He [God] would raise up Christ, to sit on his [David's] throne. (Acts 2:30).

The fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant is why Matthew and Luke gave so much emphasis to Christ's genealogy, at the beginning of their Gospels. Mary was in the lineage of David, and Joseph, who although was not the physical father of Jesus, but represented His father, was also in the Davidic line. By means of the virgin birth, through Mary, God was able to qualify Himself for Kingship in Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus was made from a human being, He, by necessity, received human DNA, genes, and chromosomes. The genetic makeup He received, is that from the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Not only was Jesus human, but He was also Jewish because His mother and her descendants were Jewish. Jesus was born to a Jewish woman, in the nation of the Jews, with Jewish customs, habits, and culture. Jesus was a Jew! He looked and acted as any other Jewish person would. Surely,

Jesus danced in the folk dances, attended social events (John 2:1-2), and played with other boys in His village.

Although His conception was miraculous, Jesus was born like any other human being is born. He grew physically, intellectually, socially, and Spiritually like any other man (Luke 2:40, 52). Sometimes, we have the concept, that Jesus came out of Mary's womb, looked at Mary and said, "Hi mom, I am God!" then cut off His umbilical cord, and taking off running, He preached to the world. Jesus did not know He was God, manifest in the flesh when He was born. His human mind had not come to know or understand that, yet. He came to realize this, at some point in the future. When and how this occurred, is not discussed in the Bible, but we do know that Jesus understood His identity, at least, by the age of twelve. It was, at this time, He told Mary, "Wist ye not, that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:42, 49).

Jesus lived a childhood like every other Jewish boy. He had to learn and memorize the Hebrew Scriptures, be potty-trained, fed, taught how to speak, learn a trade, walk, and all the other things children must do. I am sure that Jesus drooled on Mary's shoulder, and wet His pants. As a carpenter, surely He received splinters, and when hitting His hand with the hammer of His day, He must have yelled. I am not being sacrilegious, but truthful. This is what must have happened!

Jesus experienced the same physical limitations we do. He experienced hunger (Matthew 4:2; 21:18), thirst (John 19:28), fatigue (John 4:6), and He needed sleep (Mark 4:38). His human body functioned in the same manner as our human body.

The Bible also depicts Jesus, as sharing in the same sort of emotional and psychological qualities, found in other men. Jesus was not the straight-faced, stoic, emotionless man, the movies typically portray Him as. The Bible says He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus thought, reasoned, and felt as any other men would do. It is recorded, that Jesus loved. John 13:23, speaks of the apostle, "whom Jesus loved" (See also Mark 10:21; John 11:3). Jesus had compassion

on those who were hurting or in some sort of dilemma (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34) but is seen, as joyful at other times (John 15:11; 17:13; Hebrews 12:2).

Not only do we find positive emotions in Jesus, but we also find what we would call, “negative emotions.” Jesus got angry and was grieved with the hardness of the Jew’s hearts (Mark 3:5). When the disciples rebuked those who brought children to Jesus, the Scripture says, “He was much displeased” (Mark 10:14). This phrase is from the Greek, *aganakteo*. It means, “to be moved with indignation.” This same word is used in Matthew 20:24, referring to the sentiments of the ten disciples toward James and John, after they asked Jesus to sit on His right and left hand, in His Kingdom. It is used in Matthew 26:8, of the astonishing dislike for the expensive ointment, which the apostles thought was “wasted,” as the woman with the alabaster box, anointed Jesus’ feet. This word indicates, a serious dislike, with a twist of disgust.

The Scripture also implies that Jesus was lonely. Jesus was sorrowful and troubled in His Spirit, before His crucifixion (Matthew 26:37). In the Garden of Gethsemane, before His betrayal, Jesus wanted Peter, James, and John to pray with Him (Mark 14:32-34). He obviously did not want to be left alone, during this grievous time. The knowledge of what was to befall Him is said to have troubled His soul and caused great sorrow and heaviness (Matthew 26:37; 12:27). On the cross, He cried, “My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken Me?” (Mark 15:34). This is an obvious human cry, resulting from the feeling of aloneness.

On two occasions, we find Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem, turning over the tables of the money changers (first - John 2:15; second - Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15). Although the action was premeditated, (as indicated that He first took time out to make the scourge - John 2:15) and not done in some sort of uncontrollable rage, nevertheless, it demonstrates Jesus’ emotional spectrum. He was truly angry with the people. His anger does not mean that He sinned because it is possible to be angry, and yet, not sin (Ephesians 4:26). Jesus’ anger was against sin and the hypocrisy of those, who claimed to be Holy and religious. God is seen, as being angry, yet, we know

that He is not sinning in His anger, so surely, Jesus could be angry, and yet, sinless (Psalm 106:40; Jeremiah 4:4).

Jesus had intellectual limitations. Although we find Jesus knowing things beyond human knowledge, at times, we also find Him, ignorant in other matters. The same Jesus who knew the thoughts of men (Luke 6:8, 9:47), is frequently found, asking questions. Nothing in the context gives us any indication, that Jesus asked for any other reason, but to gain knowledge of what He did not know. The Jesus that knew the Samaritan woman, had five husbands in the past and was presently living with another man (John 4:18), was the same Jesus, who asked the father of the epileptic boy, “How long is it ago, since this came unto him?” (Mark 9:21). Jesus honestly did not know! The same Jesus, who knew that Judas would betray Him, and Peter would deny Him (Matthew 26:25, 34), is the Jesus, Who on another occasion, expressly declared, His lack of knowledge concerning the second coming when He said, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). Jesus was not trying to hide the day and hour from the disciples. He truly could not tell them, because He Himself was ignorant, concerning the day and hour.

When the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of Jesus’ garment, He asked, “Who touched My clothes?” (Mark 5:30). He only knew that *someone* had touched Him because He felt virtue come out of His body, but He did not know who that someone was. It was not until the woman identified herself, that Jesus was aware of who that someone was. Although, at times, Jesus had knowledge of the past, present, and future events, or motives of men’s hearts, other times, He was just as limited in knowledge, as any other human being.

Jesus also had a religious life. Because I will expound on this later, here, I will just give the facts. The Bible says, that Jesus went to the Synagogue, the Jewish place of worship, and on a regular and habitual basis (Luke 4:16). He prayed regularly and very intensely, at times (Luke 22:44). He prayed all night before choosing His twelve

apostles (Luke 6:12). Jesus relied upon God for strength and guidance in the same manner we do.

The Hypostatic Union

Up to this point, we have discussed Jesus' deity and humanity, and the fact that these two natures form His identity, as the Son of God. I have only touched on the implications and ramifications of this truth. Now, however, I will attempt to explain, in more detail, how the deity and humanity exist in Christ.

Although He was born into this world like any other man, Jesus was conceived in a very unique way. He did not have a human father but was begotten by the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:34-35). God was His Father. Jesus received His deity from His Father. He did have a human mother, but she conceived in her womb, in a way different from any other (Galatians 4:4). Instead of sexual intercourse and fertilization by the sperm of a male, the power of the Highest, overshadowed her (Luke 1:35). It was, at that point, that God became a human, as a fetus in Mary's womb. Jesus received His deity from the Father and part of His humanity from Mary (Luke 1:34-35; Galatians 4:4). This will never be fully understood or comprehended but must be accepted, by faith.

I want to focus, for a moment, on the way in which Jesus was conceived. The traditional view is that it is a mystery, that cannot be explained and we can never know how it happened. I disagree with this view, because the mechanics of the conception, are not said, to be the mystery of the incarnation. The mystery is how the all existing Spirit of God, could become a human being. Although this mystery occurred at the time of the conception, the conception is not the mystery.

The Scriptures simply affirm that Mary conceived a child of the Holy Ghost, without ever addressing how she did. Some would argue on this basis, that it is not important for us to understand how the conception occurred since God did not include it in His Word. My response to this objection is that God did not explain the manner in which the

deity and humanity existed in Jesus Christ either, yet, we still seek to understand this aspect of the incarnation. In fact, the attempt to understand this union is the essence of Christology. Consequently, it cannot be said, that we should not seek understanding of this matter, because it is not specifically addressed in the Scriptures. It is useful to speculate, but at the same time, it is realized that no hard lines can be drawn where the Scriptures are silent. Our conclusions can only remain speculations, yet, these speculations can be sound, in that, they are based upon the rest of Scripture and good logic, harmonizing with the Word of God, without ever contradicting it.

It is commonly viewed, that Jesus received *all* of His deity from God and *all* of His humanity from Mary. I agree with the first assertion, but the latter cannot be true. Jesus could not have received the entirety of His humanity from Mary. If He did, Jesus would have been a female. All that Mary's egg could have offered, were X chromosomes. X chromosomes produce females. It takes the presence of Y chromosomes, to produce a male child. Only men have this Y chromosome. Without a contribution of this Y chromosome, Jesus could not have been born a human male. Where did this genetic influence come from then? The only answer can be, that it was supplied by the Holy Ghost, in the conception. Erickson noted the same when he said:

Jesus was not produced after the genetic pattern of Mary alone, for, in that case, He would, in effect, have been a clone of her, and would necessarily have been, female. Rather, a male component was contributed. In other words, a sperm was united with the ovum, provided by Mary, but it was specially created, for the occasion, instead of being supplied, by an existent male.

Because God contributed an element necessary to Jesus' human existence, it is necessary to confess, that Jesus received part of His humanity from the Father.

Mary was not a mere surrogate mother for a flesh created by God. She was not some sort of incubator, which contained a "heavenly flesh." The flesh, truly originated, from Mary's egg. If Jesus did not receive His humanity from Mary, then He could not be

said, to have been “of the seed of David.” The Scripture, clearly affirms, the contribution Mary made to the existence of Jesus. Galatians 4:4 says, “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” The Greek word translated, “of” in the phrase, “of a woman” is *ek*. This word means, “out of.” Jesus was *made* out of a woman, He was not just *born* out of one. The author of Hebrews said, “he took not on Him, the nature of angels; but He took on Him, the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16). David was promised, that it was through his genetic line, that God would raise up the Messiah, to rule on his throne (Psalm 132:11). If Mary was just an incubator for a created flesh, Jesus could have still been considered a genuine human being (Adam was a created man, that did not have a human mother, but yet, he was still completely human), but He would not have been part of the Adamic race. If He was not part of the Adamic race, He could not save those who were separated from God, because of Adam’s sin (Romans 5:12-21; Hebrews 2:9-10, 14-18). Mary, undoubtedly contributed, to the humanity of Christ.

There are two Greek words referring to conception. The first is, *gennao*, which simply means, “to beget” or “to be born.” It refers to either, the conception of the child, or its birth. This word is used in Matthew 1:20, when the angel told Joseph, “for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.” The other word is, *sullam-bano*, meaning “to take together.” When this word is used in the context of conception it specifically refers, to the taking together of the sperm and egg, that caused the conception. Conception, by definition, refers to the penetration of the female egg, by a male sperm.

That God must have contributed to Jesus’ humanity, at His conception, can be seen by the angel’s words to Mary, when He announced, that she would be the mother of the Messiah (Yeshua). He said to her, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive (*sullambano*) in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS ... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also, that the Holy thing which shall be born (*gennao*) of thee, shall be called, the Son of God” (Luke 1:31). Speaking of Elisabeth’s pregnancy with John the Baptist, the angel

continued to say, “And, behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived (*sullambano*) a son in her old age...” (Luke 1:36). The exact same word used to describe the way in which Elisabeth came to be found with child was also used of the way in which Mary was to be found with child. The angel made no differentiation concerning the way in which they would conceive. It is interesting that Luke, who penned these verses, was a medical doctor. As a doctor, he used precise terminology to explain how Mary conceived. If there was a “taking together” of a sperm and egg in Elizabeth’s conception, in like manner, there must have been some contribution made by God to Mary’s egg causing it to split, and at the same time, contributing the Y chromosome needed to produce a baby boy. Whether or not this was “heavenly sperm” can not be known. What must be confessed, however, is that God contributed some element to Jesus’ humanity. God did not place His deity within a human body, made from Mary, or infuse His Spirit into a human body, but God actually fathered, a Son. That is why Jesus is commonly referred to, as the only *begotten* Son of God.

It is very possible that when the Word became flesh, God actually became the sperm that fertilized Mary’s egg. If it was not actual sperm that God used to father the child, it must have been some type of substance that contributed the male components to the components offered by Mary. If there was no physical substance that caused the conception, how could it be said, that God *became* flesh (John 1:14 NKJV)? Whatever this substance was, it cannot be said, to be created. Jesus was not a Created Being. If any part of His humanity was Created, He could not truly be said to be God. Creation is always separate from the Creator. If I paint a picture, I cannot be the picture, because I created it. Jesus would have been like a painting if He was Created. Jesus, however, was God, made known in the flesh. God became a human Being, at Jesus’ conception. God did not create a man, He is a man! He did not merely make a human body, and then live in it. He became the human body. Some contend, that God caused Mary to conceive in some Spiritual way, Spiritually, adding the components necessary, to beget a male child. If this were true, then Jesus would have to be considered (at least, in part) a Created Being. He would have only been the Son of God, in the same sense, as Adam was. Adam was God’s Son because God Created him. Jesus’ Sonship was

different, in that Jesus was *begotten* and *conceived* by the Holy Ghost.

The “component” offered to Jesus’ conception would not have been a substance, separate from God, but this substance would have contained the essence of His deity that dwelt in Jesus’ body (Colossians 2:9). The time at which this substance united with Mary’s egg must have been the time that deity and humanity were brought into one existence, forming what we call, the hypostatic union of Christ.

Regardless of how this union actually transpired, we do know that it did occur. Jesus received all of His deity and part of His humanity, from God the Father, and the other part of His humanity was inherited from His mother, Mary. This view is consistent with Scripture, in no wise contradicting it, and at the same time, explains the biological processes that we know are necessary to birth a child. This is not trying to naturalize the mystery of the incarnation (how God became a human being) but is trying to understand the means by which the Holy Ghost conceived in Mary’s womb.

Because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and not of man, He is called the Son of God. Although we too are called sons of God (1 John 3:2), our sonship is different than Jesus.’ Whereas we are adopted as God’s sons (1 John 8:14-17), Jesus was born as God’s Son (Luke 1:35). His very being came into existence by the Holy Ghost. Jesus would have never existed, without the contributions made by His Father. Since God physically fathered Jesus through the miraculous conception, He is God’s Son, in a physical sense. We are only God’s sons, in a Spiritual sense. Our existence is not dependent on Him. Our being results from the physical union of two human parents. It is only after this, that we can become sons of God, through the adoption by His Spirit. The difference between Jesus and us, then, is that Jesus’ existence has its dependence on the Father, while ours does not. Daniel Segraves expounded on this truth when he said:

The miracle of the virgin conception means that deity and humanity were as inseparable in Jesus, as the genetic influence of a mother and father is inseparable, in

their son or daughter. Just as no human being could exist if all that was contributed to his existence by, either his father or his mother were removed, so Jesus could not have existed as the Messiah apart from, either His deity (contributed by the Holy Spirit [Luke 1:34-35]) or His humanity (contributed by Mary [Galatians 4:4]).

This union demonstrates the permanence of the incarnation. Once God assumed humanity at His conception in Mary's womb, He acquired an identity He would retain, for the rest of eternity. Jesus' humanity is not something that can be discarded or dissolved back into the Godhead, but He will always and forever exist in heaven, as a glorified human, albeit God, at the same time. His humanity is permanently incorporated into the Godhead. God did not just live in flesh, as a man, but the "Word became flesh" (John 1:14). God, is now, a man. This does not mean He no longer exists, as the omnipresent Spirit, but it does mean that His existence as a man is both, authentic and permanent in a glorified body.

Jesus did not merely, put on a "robe of flesh," when He came to this earth. He was more than "God with skin on." These types of statements imply a separation of natures, within Jesus, as though He is two separate individuals, living in one body. They imply, that the flesh was a mere shell, that Deity moved within. The flesh of Jesus was not independent of the deity of Jesus. The deity and humanity, as resident in Jesus' existence, should not be viewed, as some sort of "room-mate situation" where two entities exist in the same area, but are separated from one another, in reality. In Christ, "the Spirit of God, was inextricably and inseparably, joined with the humanity..."

An example from chemistry might demonstrate this well. A mixture or blend can be separated into its original substances after being blended. Whereas, mixtures (physical compounds) can be separated again, chemical compounds form a new substance, of which, the original substances can never again be separated from the compound. The two natures in Christ, should not be viewed, as blended or mixed together. His two natures cannot be separated. Sticking with this example from chemistry, it could be

said, that Jesus' natures were like a chemical compound. Unfortunately, every analogy breaks down at some point, and the same is true of this one. The deity and humanity of Christ did not form a new substance from the two, for each nature retained all of their respective "properties." The deity was uncompromised by the humanity, and the humanity was uncompromised by the deity; both being perfectly preserved in their wholeness and genuineness, yet united in every way. The deity was not obscured by the complete humanity, and neither was the humanity overwhelmed by the fullness of the deity. The fullness of God's deity was manifested, in every aspect, of His genuine humanity; integrated, and not segregated.

It is commonly said of Jesus, that at times, He acted as God, and at other times, as man. It is explained, that as a man, Jesus prayed, ate, and slept. As God, He healed the sick, raised the dead, and calmed the storms. This seems to imply some sort of duality in Jesus. These activities give an indication of the reality of each nature, but it must be understood, that Jesus' natures never worked independently of one another. His two natures exist, "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the difference of the natures, having been in no wise taken away, by reason of the union, but rather, the properties of each being preserved,...."

The typical way of explaining Jesus' natures, splits up their unity and integration, insinuating that one could be "operated," apart from the other. It almost reduces Jesus to Superman, who is sometimes Clark Kent, and other times, Superman, after a quick change in a telephone booth somewhere. Jesus does not change over, from acting in one nature to acting in the other. He is not like the Wild E. Coyote, who holds up a sign saying, "Now I am acting as a man," and at other times, He holds up another sign saying, "Now I am acting as God." Everything Jesus did, He did, as God, manifest in the flesh (Son of God). There can be no separation of Jesus' natures. "The union of the two natures, meant that they did not function, independently. Jesus did not exercise His deity, at times, and His humanity, at other times. His actions were always those of divinity-humanity."

Did God Forsake Jesus on the Cross?

At this juncture, here, let me address the idea, that God withdrew from Jesus, while on the cross. Based upon Jesus' Words on the cross, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46), some have come to believe, that the deity withdrew from Jesus, on the cross. If this were true, the implications are serious. First of all, if God withdrew from Jesus on the cross, Jesus' death was no different than that of the thieves, crucified on either side of Him. Jesus died, a mere man. It might be argued, that Jesus' death was significant because He was sinless, but a sinless death is not all that was necessary, to redeem mankind. Second Corinthians 5:19, informs us, that it was God, in Christ, Who reconciled the world to Himself. If God was not in Christ, or with Christ when He died, then How could God have reconciled the world to Himself? The time, at which, the reconciliation took place, was when Jesus Christ died on the cross. If God left Jesus on the cross, He could not have reconciled man. We would still be lost in our sins. What makes the atonement efficacious, is that Jesus, Who was God, manifest in the flesh, died on the cross.

Another problem with this view is that if God would have withdrawn from Jesus on the cross, Jesus would have ceased to exist. As I quoted Segraves earlier, the deity and humanity of Christ, were as inseparable, as the genetic influence of a mother and father is inseparable in their offspring. Just as no human being could exist if all that was contributed to his existence, by either his father or his mother, were removed, so, Jesus could not have existed, apart from the deity, contributed by His Father, and the humanity contributed by His mother, Mary.

When turning to the Scriptures, instead of finding any idea, that God left Jesus on the cross, we find that it was through the Holy Ghost, that Jesus offered His body as the sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:14). It was because Jesus offered His body, through the Spirit, that His sacrifice could atone for the sins of mankind.

If God did not leave Jesus on the cross, then what did Jesus mean when He said,

God had forsaken Him? Jesus quoted the words of David, as found in Psalm 22. Jesus' statement must be understood in the context of its usage in this Psalm. David said, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me? *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the Words of My roaring?*" (Psalm 22:1, italics mine). David was not claiming, that the Lord had truly forsaken him. He merely felt as though He had, because He was not offering David any help in his time of distress (See also vs. 2, 4-5, 11, 19, 24). Jesus, likewise, was not claiming, that God had actually forsaken Him. He merely felt forsaken, because His Father was not offering Him any help to bear the sins of the whole world, nor was His Father delivering Him from the lowest point of His life. Jesus felt all alone on the cross. He felt the consequence of the sin of the whole world. His cry demonstrates the reality of His human emotions, not the departure of His divine nature.

Did God Die on the Cross?

Acts 20:28 says: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock...to feed the Church of God, *which He hath purchased with His own blood.*" (italics mine). The antecedent of "His," is "God." Paul declared, that God shed His blood for the Church. Three questions arise from this Scripture: 1. How can it be said, that God has blood? 2. Jesus shed His blood, by dying on the cross. If this blood is actually, the blood of God, did God die? 3. If the blood of Jesus is identified, as God's blood, then Jesus' physical humanity, was God's. This being true, was Jesus' body still God, when in the grave?

We know that it was actually Jesus, who shed His blood on the cross, so calling Jesus' blood, the blood of God demonstrates the deity of Jesus Christ; however, the implications of this verse, does not stop here. If the human bloodshed at Calvary, can be said to be God's, this indicates that even the humanity of Christ can be said, to be divine. When we understand the true nature of the hypostatic union, we must confess, that the humanity God assumed, in the incarnation, has now been permanently

incorporated into His eternal existence, as Spirit. The Scripture declares this when it says, “the Word [God] was *made* flesh.” The humanity of Jesus was not the essence of God’s being, but because of the hypostatic union, the deity was miraculously manifest, in every aspect of Jesus’ humanity. It is in this manner, that the body of Jesus can be said to be, the body of God. As a result, it might be said, that God was born of a virgin, suffered, died, and rose again. This is not to say, that Jesus’ death was any different than any other man’s death. When Jesus died on the cross, He died like any other human being would die. His human spirit separated from His body (Matthew 27:50; James 2:26).

If Jesus’ humanity was permanently incorporated into the Godhead, becoming a part of God’s existence, then was Jesus’ deceased body, the body of God? Daniel Segraves answered this question saying, “The fullness [sic] of deity continued to be expressed, in His immaterial being, even during the time of His death, and at His resurrection, His immaterial and material parts were reunited, permanently.” The body of Jesus, was even God’s body, while in the grave.

When it is implied, that God died, it must be understood, that it is not being alleged, that the Spirit of God died. A Spirit cannot die. What is being referenced, is God’s existence, as a human being. As a man, God could and did die. The way to lessen the impact of this hard-to-swallow truth might lie in the usage of terminology. The term, “Son of God,” is used in reference to God’s existence as a human being throughout the New Testament. This term specifically refers to God’s assumption of, and existence, as humanity. It was in this state, that God died. It seems better, then, to say that the Son of God died. This is consistent with the terminology of the New Testament, and in no way, takes away from the truth of Acts 20:28.

The Kenosis

So far, we have established two important truths: Jesus is divine and Jesus is

human. It has also been shown how these two natures co-exist in the Person of Christ. In this section, now, the attention is being turned to the different aspects and implications of this hypostatic union.

There are two main streams of thought, regarding the work and Person of Christ. The first, and most commonly accepted theory, concerning the manner in which Jesus ministered, is that He did what He did because He was God. Jesus had the ability to heal the sick and raise the dead because He was God. He had the ability to know things beyond normal human intellectual capabilities because He was God. He walked on water because He was God. This view of Jesus gives credit to everything Jesus said and did, to the fact that He was God, in flesh.

The other stream of thought is that He ministered as a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost. This view does not discredit, ignore, or deny the *pleroma* of deity, dwelling bodily in the man, Christ Jesus, but rather views God, as willingly deciding from the foundation of the world, to limit the exercise of His own deity, when He would assume a human existence so that He could live His life, as a man on this earth, in the same fashion, and with the same limitations, faced by ordinary human beings.

I believe the second view to be more Biblical. It is derived from what is called, the “kenosis passage” of Philippians 2:5-11. The kenosis passage must be understood, in light of Christ’s *pleroma* of deity. The two cannot be separated, and are not separated, here, in this passage of Scripture, either. After a thorough exegesis of this passage, I will review the two theories, in more detail. This exegesis will lay the foundation for the discussion ahead.

In order to fully grasp the meaning of this important passage, we must appeal to the original Greek. The English translation, although legitimate, does not clearly express the depth of meaning, found in the original language.

Paul related the event of Christ’s *kenosis* (emptying), not to teach on the incarnation

or hypostatic union of Christ's dual natures, but to give the perfect example of true humility and selflessness to the Philippian Churches, for the purpose of emulation. Paul wanted them to have love, one toward another, be of one mind, be lowly in mind, considering others to be better than themselves, looking to others' needs, and not just their own (Philippians 2:2-4). This intent is seen, in verse five, where Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also, in Christ Jesus." He set up Christ's kenosis, as a pattern to conform to. Although this passage was not intended to just teach the theology of Christ, nevertheless, it does give us some of the best theology, on the subject in the Bible. Let us now examine the Greek behind these verses.

*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery, to be equal with God:
(Philippians 2:6)*

"Who" is the antecedent pronoun, of Christ Jesus, in verse five. Although verse six says, that Jesus existed in this form of God, it is not to be understood, that Jesus pre-existed the incarnation, in human flesh. "Christ" is from the Greek *Christos*, the equivalent to the Hebrew *Messhiac*, meaning, "anointed one." This term, is a strict reference to humanity, for only as a human being, could Jesus be said to be anointed. This term is incarnational, in its focus. This humanity did not exist, until the conception in Mary's womb, by the Holy Ghost at about 4 B.C. "Jesus" literally means, "Jehovah is become salvation." It was not until the time of the incarnation, that God assumed this name (Matthew 1:21). It seems, that Paul's reference to the mind that *was* in Christ Jesus, was not a mind that existed in the Person of Christ Jesus before the incarnation, but *was* the mind in the one we *now know*, as Christ Jesus, before the incarnation when He was the Word that was with God, being God Himself (John 1:1), made flesh in the fullness of time (John 1:14).

"Who being in the form of God," is translated from *hos en morphe theou huparchon*. *Huparchon*, translated as, "being," is from two Greek words, *hupo*, "under," and *arche*, "a beginning." It involves existence, both

before and after conditions, mentioned in connection with it. In this case, it is speaking of the pre-existence of the “form of God.” *Morphe*, referring to the pre-existent “form” of God, speaks of “that external form, that represents what is intrinsic and essential. It indicates, not merely what may be perceived by others, but what is objectively there.” The emphasis is primarily upon the essence behind the form, but recognizes the visible form, also. *Theou* is in the genitive case, indicating possession of. This form was actually possessed by God; His own. The word is also anarthrous, meaning there is no definite article (the) before it. When the Greek text uses an article with *theos*, it seems to be emphasizing, God’s Person. Without it, however, it is referring to God’s Being, essential deity, or essence. In this context, Paul was pointing out, that this existing form of God, was not His Person, but His essential deity.

What exactly this form, that God possessed was, we do not know. Nevertheless, it was existing in eternity, probably until, either the incarnation or the ascension, at which time, Jesus’ body would have replaced the need for the visible form of God.

This form, was at least, visible to the heavenly host, for they presented themselves before God, in some manner (1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6). Since God is omnipresent, there could not be any specific location, at which to gather, unless, that is, God appeared in some type of visible, albeit, Spirit form.

He goes on to say, that Christ “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” This phrase is translated from *ouch harpagmon hesesato to einsai isa theoi*. The meaning of *harpagmos*, translated, “robbery,” is not easy to determine, because the word is only used, here, in the New Testament. Outside of Biblical Greek, it is still rare, but has the basic meaning of “robbery” or “take advantage of.” Although it has commonly been said to mean, “retain,” such usage cannot be substantiated. Others understand *harpagmos* as, “a prize to be eagerly grasped.” Paul Feinberg considers the whole phrase, *ouch harpagmon hesesato*, to be an idiomatic expression, meaning to “take advantage of.” This is because *harpagmos* is being used, as a predicate accusative with a verb, and carries this meaning in extra-Biblical sources. The point seems to be, that Christ, who

was already existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God, something to be taken advantage of.

Isa, from *isos*, has to do with equality and likeness. The picture of Christ, is that, He was equal to God. This does not mean that there are two distinct Beings, who are equal to one another in every respect, for this would, in effect, be ditheism. It must be remembered, that this passage is speaking of Jesus Christ (humanity), and showing that His deity, is the same deity that pre-existed, the incarnation. It is demonstrating that the deity in Christ, after the incarnation, was the same deity as before the incarnation. It cannot mean that Jesus' deity is equal, but distinct from the Father's because God, has no equal (Isaiah 46:5, 9). If equal means, a distinct person, then Jesus would not be a distinct person from the Father, but from God Himself, for it says "equal with God," not "equal with the Father," If "God" is referring to the whole Trinity, then Jesus is "equal to the whole Trinity, yet a distinct person from the Trinity." This would not make any sense, even in Trinitarianism. The proper understanding of the meaning of equal, is that Jesus' deity is identical to that of God's, i.e., it is God's. According to John 1:1, the Word was God Himself. No place is this made more explicit, than in the Jews' use of the word, equal, in John 5:18. Here, they accused Jesus of making Himself equal with God, because He said, that God was His Father. They did not understand Him to mean, that He is another person, like God, but that He was God, Himself.

This passage is purely incarnational in its focus. What is being discussed, is the preponderance God faced as He considered His incarnation. Thus, in His incarnation, God laid aside the expression of divine essence. He did not consider His existence, as deity, nor this visible form something to be held on to, but willingly relinquished its exclusiveness to accommodate His existence, as a genuine human (John 5 verse 7-8). This does not mean that God laid aside His divine essence. This passage only refers to His willing humiliation, by the assumption, of a human existence.

But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him, the form of a servant, and

was made in the likeness of men: (Philippians 2:7).

The first two segments of this verse are translated from *alla heauton ekenosen morphen doulou labon*. *Alla*, translated, “but,” indicates a transition in thought, or a counter thought. In context, this “but” indicates the action taken in response to Christ’s relinquishment of His visible form and equality with the divine essence. Instead of retaining this form, Christ “emptied Himself” (*heauton*, “Himself,” and *ekenosen*, “made of no reputation”).

“Made of no reputation” is not exactly the best rendering of the Greek. The definition of the word, *kenoo* is “to empty, or evacuate; to divest one’s self of one’s prerogative, abase one’s self; to deprive a thing of its proper functions.” This word has two different senses, both of which, could be used here. Used in a metaphorical sense, it means, “of no reputation” or “nothing.” Used in a metaphysical sense, it means “to empty.” Paul’s usage elsewhere (Romans 4:14; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 9:15; 2 Corinthians 9:3 - the only other appearances of this word), favors the metaphorical sense. The metaphysical sense is used in the LXX of things, being literally emptied out, (like a jar or chest). Though either sense could be used here, the metaphorical sense is probably to be preferred, because Paul is using the incarnation of Christ for an example of humiliation. The idea would be that “Christ made Himself nothing.” This would fit well with Paul’s mention of the “empty pride,” that the Philippians were asserting, just a few verses earlier. Whereas, they were trying to make themselves out to be something of importance, Christ made Himself nothing.

Although *ekenosen* relates the fact, that Christ did empty Himself, it does not indicate that which He emptied Himself of. *Labon*, a modal adverbial participle, serves this purpose. Being a form of *labano*, the word means, “to take.” As a second aorist participle, it describes past action on the part of Christ taking place after His emptying (at the incarnation). Christ emptied Himself *by taking* upon Himself, the form of a servant. He emptied Himself, by adding a new existence to His eternally divine essence.

This does not make any sense to us. Mathematically, we know that to empty, means to take away. If you are to empty a room of the people in it, you have fewer people in the room than before, not more. The sum of subtraction can never be larger than the original integer from which the lower integer was subtracted from. With God, however, it was possible. When Christ emptied Himself, He did not give up His essential deity with all of its attributes and characteristics, but added to that, genuine and complete humanity to exist in the form of a servant. God did not lose His divine attributes in the incarnation but gained human attributes. It can be said, then, that this emptying was accomplished, by adding.

The contrast, made by *alla*, can be seen in verse six, where Paul said Christ existed in the form of God (*morphe theou*), but contrasts this in verse seven, to the existence in which He chose to be found in at the incarnation, that being, the form of a servant (*morphen doulou*).

Paul went on to say, that Jesus was “made in the likeness of men.” The word describing the way in which Christ came to be a man, is *genomenos*, the second aorist form of *ginomai*, meaning “to come into existence.” Being an aorist tense, again this relates action having taken place in the past. This likeness came into existence at the incarnation, at the time of Christ’s emptying. This too, like *labon*, describes the way in which Christ emptied Himself.

“Likeness” does not indicate that Jesus’ flesh was only *like* our flesh, but not of the same substance. Paul probably chose to use the word, *homoiomati* to refer to his appearance to the ordinary man. Anybody could look at Jesus and see that He was like us in every way. Another possible reason Paul might have chosen this usage of “likeness,” was to bypass any idea that Jesus’ flesh was tainted by the sin nature, inherent in all other human beings.

The proper translation/understanding of Philippians 2:6-7, then, is as follows:

“[Christ] **Who was continually existing in the essence of deity, did not deem this visible equality with God, a thing to be retained: *but emptied Himself*** (by the abasement achieved through depriving Himself of His proper functions and prerogatives) ***of this visible equality with God, taking upon Himself, the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men.***”

And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

Kai schemati euretheis hos anthropos, translated as “and being found in fashion as a man,” explains the time of this humiliation and humbling/emptying of Christ. I have been saying that what is in view here, is the incarnation, and all words referring to action having been performed in the past, refer to the incarnation, and here is where this is demonstrated best. It is seen through the connection with, “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” It is obvious that the events in this passage surround the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry when He became a man, and walked among men, being in solidarity with our kind, namely human-kind.

The point of Jesus’ obedience to God and the extent of genuine humanity is the fact that He submitted to the extent of accepting death, even the death on the cross.

There is a gradation of humbling God, submitted Himself to, of the which, Paul gives us in successive order (Philippians 6-8). God went from existing in a visible form of deity to relinquishing this form (but not divine essence) in order to take upon Himself, the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. Not only did God become a man, but He even identified with us, to the point of death, and this at the hands of His own creation. Not only did He die, but He died the most despicable death, known in that day.

Consequent to this humbling, God also “highly exalted Him [Jesus], and [has] given Him a name, which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus, every knee

should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

This exaltation could not be an exaltation of Jesus’ deity, because He was already the divine essence, dwelling in flesh. His deity could not be exalted, but His humanity could. It was both glorified, and given the place of honor, to sit at the right hand of God. God gave Him the honor of having all humanity acknowledge His Eternal Power and Godhead, Majesty and Dominion, at the Judgment.

The only aspect of identity that God could take back to heaven with Him, that He did not possess before the incarnation, was the humanity He permanently assumed in His incarnation. As Daniel Segraves said, “As far as we can tell, the only difference in the pre-incarnate and post-resurrection existence of Christ, is that now, humanity has been permanently incorporated in the Godhead.”

The final point to be made concerning this passage, is that all appearances of “God” before the incarnation, are anarthrous, indicating that what is in view, is the essence of deity, and not the being of God (Philippians 6:8). After the incarnation, however, the definite article is used with *theos*, indicating that God’s person is in view. This distinction, and the time frame in which the distinction is made, is important. The impact of this, is as follows: “Before he added a full human existence to His previously unmitigated deity, it would have been inappropriate to imply any distinction within the Godhead. The distinction arises from the assumption of a human persona, even though this persona owed its existence to the incarnation.” After God became a man, Jesus is seen as being distinct, but not separate from God, His Father.

The Ministry of Christ as it Relates to the Kenosis

In the beginning of this section, I spoke of the two prevailing theories which

contemplate the way in which Jesus ministered: as a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost (anointed-ministry); as God (God-ministry). The examination of Philippians 2:5-11, did not directly address or explain either theory but paved the path for the discussion of the two.

There are a host of Scriptures that speak of Jesus as being anointed by the Holy Ghost. Even the title ascribed to Jesus numerous times, “Christ,” means “anointed one.” Turning to the Scriptures, Jesus testified that He was anointed by the Holy Ghost when He quoted Isaiah’s prophecy. “The Spirit of the Lord is *upon* Me because He hath *anointed* Me to preach the Gospel to the poor...” (Luke 4:18 italics mine), attributing its fulfillment to His ministry. Just a few verses earlier, it is said, that “Jesus returned in the Power of the Spirit into Galilee,” indicative that He was endued with a Power He did not possess before going into the wilderness, where He fasted and was tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1-14). If He ministered as God, He would have always had all power, and could not have increased in Power. Matthew declared that Isaiah prophesied of Jesus’ ministry, when he quoted Isaiah as saying, “Behold My servant, whom I have chosen; My beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased; I will put my Spirit *upon* Him, and He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles” (Isaiah 12:18 italics mine). If Jesus is the fullness of deity, incarnated as flesh, how can it be said, that God’s Spirit is “upon Him?” Is He not God? How can God be anointed?

The Book of Acts has a great deal to say of Jesus’ ministry. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the Jews, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man *approved of God* among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, *which God did by Him* in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:....” (Acts 2:22 italics mine). Jesus is said to be a *man* who was *approved of God*. Peter declared that even the miracles Jesus performed were orchestrated by God, Jesus merely being the agent, by which, they were administered.

In the prayer meeting held by the disciples after Peter and John were released from examination by the Sanhedrin, they prayed to God saying, “Of a truth against thy Holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed...” (Acts 4:27). Notice two important things here.

First of all, the disciples addressed God in this prayer (verse 24), and spoke to Him concerning Jesus, as though Jesus had a separate existence, or was a separate being from God. Secondly, the disciples agreed that Jesus was anointed, and that His anointing came from God. Again, a distinction is implied to exist between God and Jesus.

When Peter preached to Cornelius, he claimed that “*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him*” (Acts 10:38). This sounds like statements concerning the way in which God would be with and anoint His Church (Mark 16:20; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Jesus received power to do good and heal those oppressed of the devil, because of God’s anointing upon Him to do so. Peter speaks of God as being *with* Jesus, and not as Jesus, being God. Does this mean that Jesus was not truly divine, but was a mere human like us? Does this mean that Jesus is divine, but His deity is inferior to the Father’s?

All of the unanswered questions I have posed, derived from these few Scriptures alone, should allow one to see the inherent weakness of the God-ministry view. The view is not only weak but contrary to Scripture.

The only other logical alternative is to confess, that Jesus Christ was anointed, by God. We need to understand these Scriptures which speak of Jesus as being a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost, in light of God’s kenosis. God made a decision before the foundation of the world, that He would renounce the exercise of His divine powers, attributes, and prerogatives, for the purpose of living within the limitations, a true human being must live in. God did not lay aside His divine attributes (such as omniscience) but made them latent within Him. Although they were existent in Him, in their fullness, He willed to restrain their exercise. “By taking on human nature, He accepted certain limitations upon the functioning of His divine attributes. These limitations were not the result of a loss of divine attributes, but of the addition of human attributes.” In this state, Jesus lived His life and performed His ministry, as a man anointed by the Holy Ghost,

dependent upon His Father for everything He did.

Sometimes we have the idea, that because Jesus was God, He healed whoever He wanted to, said whatever He wanted to say, and knew things which transcended ordinary human knowledge. Jesus gave us an indication as to how He ministered, as it is recorded in the Gospel of John. Although I will deal with the theological significance later, I am going to deal with the practical significance, here. Jesus plainly said of His own ability, “I can of mine own self, do nothing” (John 5:30). Jesus did not even know what to teach, apart from what His Father told Him. The very words He spoke were echoes of what He had first received from His Father (John 8:28, 38, 40; 12:49-50; 17:8). Jesus was a *recipient* of divine revelation, not its originator.

On another occasion, Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He *seeth* the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son, likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth” (John 5:19-20; See also 3:32 italics mine).

The importance of this verse is two-fold. First, it reveals that Jesus had no ability of His own, but was in total dependence on His Father. Secondly, this verse shows us the manner in which Jesus depended upon His Father. Jesus *saw* the works His Father was doing and then performed those same works, here on earth. Apparently, Jesus saw visions and mental pictures of some sort, which allowed Him to know the Will of God. The actions of Jesus ensued from His knowledge of what was occurring in the Spirit realm. He attempted nothing, and said nothing, apart from this knowledge. Nothing in His ministry was done through the arm of flesh. He did not hope that those He prayed for would be healed, He knew they would be healed because it was the Will of His Father to do so. If it was not God’s Will, Jesus would not have attempted to heal them.

A good illustration of this can be seen, in Jesus’s healing of the impotent man, at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:2-9). There were multitudes of sick people, who laid there all

the time, just waiting to be healed. The amazing thing about this story is that Jesus only healed one man. The reason Jesus did not heal the rest, could not be due to a lack of faith on their part. Their presence, at the pool, demonstrated their faith. They were waiting for an angel to stir the waters, believing that the first to get into the troubled waters, would be healed. If this is not faith in the Power of God, I do not know what is! Even if they did not have faith before Jesus healed the impotent man, surely, they would have had faith to be healed after having seen the impotent man walk! It simply was not the Will of God to heal them. It was only the Will of God to heal the one man. On other occasions, it was the Will of God to heal all those who came to Jesus to be healed, and therefore, Jesus did heal them all (Matthew 8:16; 12:15; Luke 4:40; Luke 6:17-19).

Jesus brought the realities of the spiritual realm into the natural realm, by faith and obedience to what He saw. Through this obedience, He was able to bring about the unity God intended to exist between heaven and earth, between the invisible and visible realms. Jesus was perfectly led of the Spirit, completely fulfilling the Will of God on earth (John 5:30, 36). One of the means by which He accomplished this, was through the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Jesus had to pray because He relied upon the Holy Ghost for His strength and power. Jesus used the gifts of the Spirit to perform the Will of God, just as we do. He said Himself, that He cast out devils by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28). He knew the woman at the well had five husbands, in the past, because He was given a word of knowledge from the Holy Ghost (John 4:17). Through the discerning of Spirits, Jesus discerned the guileless Spirit of Nathanael, and the foul Spirit in the man at the synagogue (John 1:47; Mark 1:26). Through this gift of faith, Jesus calmed the raging storm (Mark 4:39-41). Jesus healed multitudes upon multitudes of sick folk, through the gifts of healings. Jesus made the lame to walk, by the working of miracles (Matthew 11:5; 15:30). By the word of wisdom, Jesus directed the Apostles where to cast their nets, so that they might catch the most fish (Luke 5:4-10). Through the gift of prophecy, Jesus foretold many future events.

Jesus' baptism was the time at which He was anointed by the Father with the Holy Ghost and power for ministry. The Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings were always anointed in some way, to signify that they were chosen of God (Exodus 28:41; 29:7; 1 Kings 19:16). The oil with which they were anointed was symbolic of the Holy Ghost. Jesus, then, in like manner, was to be anointed by the Holy Ghost, since He came to fulfill the roles of prophet, priest, and king (Psalm 45:7-8; Isaiah 61:1). Instead of being anointed with oil, that was symbolic of the Holy Ghost, Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of God Himself.

The priests were washed with water and anointed for the purpose of consecration to their office (Exodus 29:4, 7). This may have some bearing upon why Jesus was baptized in water. Surely, He was not baptized because of sin, because He was sinless. He was baptized, as a washing for His ordination, as the High Priest for all mankind (See Hebrews 7).

This anointing Jesus received, does not mean that He became God or the Christ, at His baptism. This was merely the point, at which, God anointed Him for the ministry. Jesus had to be anointed for His calling and ministry, in the same way we are anointed for ours. Notice that it was not until after this anointing, at Christ's baptism, that He performed His first miracle (John 2:11; anointed by God in 1:32-33). Why did not Jesus perform any miracles before this time? Why was it, that God did not use Him to preach and heal, until after He was over thirty years of age? (Luke 3:23) It was because the time for His earthly ministry had not yet come, and therefore, God's anointing and power was not with Him to do so. Unless it is in the Will of God to heal someone, they will not be healed. If He does not heal the sick, raise the dead, give a word of knowledge, a prophetic word, vision, or revelation, none of these things will happen. We cannot force God to do anything, through us. We can only work the works of God, in accordance with divine Will. God, for whatever purpose, chose not to do anything substantial (pertaining to His ministry), through Jesus, until He was over thirty years of age.

In accordance with that thought, note that it was not until after Jesus' baptism, that

He could stand in the synagogue at Nazareth, and proclaim the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in Himself saying, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty, them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD" (Luke 4:18; anointed by God in 3:21-23). It was not until after Christ's anointing, at His baptism, that this Scripture was fulfilled. Before He was anointed, at His baptism, it was still prophetic in nature, although the One who would fulfill it, was alive and well in the world.

Although Jesus ministered, as a man, anointed of the Holy Ghost, this does not deny or minimize His unique and special relationship to the Father. Jesus differed from us, in His identity, as the Son of God. He was God, manifest in the flesh. As a result, He had a special relationship to God, that we cannot have. I am not talking about our closeness to God, or about the extent to which our ministry can extend in its fruitfulness; we can do all that Jesus did. He even said, we would do greater things than He did (John 14:12). Jesus obviously has special privileges, as the Son of God, that we do not have. These include such things as judging the souls of men, raising the dead, and sitting on the throne, as world-ruler, during the Millennium.

I point this out, because some might say, "If Jesus lived His life, as a mere man, anointed by the Holy Ghost, then how could He have said, that He had the Power to call for twelve legions of angels to rescue Him from the cross? (Matthew 26:53). Jesus could have called for legions of angels on the cross, but also could have decided not to go to the cross (Matthew 26:42). Theoretically, Jesus could have done these things, because He was God and had the Power to do so, but the fact remains, that He did not. Based on the kenosis, we see that He did not do these things, because of His predestined choice, to limit His existence, to a man anointed by the Holy Ghost, while living in this world. Jesus did not take advantage of His Powers, because His human Will was completely submitted to the Will of God, so that Jesus always did those things, that pleased His Father (John 8:29). What pleased the Father, was that Jesus, would

not rely upon His identity, as God.

Another objection might be raised, based upon Jesus' exercise of forgiving sins. Only God has the power to forgive sins, so how could Jesus have done so, if He ministered as a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost? Jesus had this prerogative, because of identity as the Son of God, but this prerogative was not peculiar to Him, because of this identity neither was this prerogative arbitrary. Jesus said, that we also have the power to forgive or retain sins. He told His disciples, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). Does this mean that we have the power to forgive sin? Does this mean that we have the power to forgive sin? Does this mean we decide who is forgiven and who is not? No. It is the author's opinion, according to the above Scriptures, that we have the authority to remit and retain sins, only by using the name of Jesus Christ, in water baptism. If a person is baptized, in water, in Jesus' name, his sins are remitted. If a person is not baptized, in water, in Jesus' name, then their sins are retained. I believe, that remission of sins, only comes by the blood of Jesus Christ, through the name of Jesus, at water baptism. This is evidence, why, it is the responsibility of the minister to use the name of Jesus Christ only, at baptism, for converts.

Jesus could not know the condition of the heart, apart from revelation, from His Father. Jesus forgave those, that His Father forgave. Jesus' decision was not arbitrary, nor did it originate within His own Will, but it was the purpose of the Father, being carried out in His ministry.

Jesus forgave sin in obedience to the direction of the Holy Ghost, which allowed Him to know that His Father had already forgiven Him. Jesus pronounced forgiveness to those His Father had already forgiven, in heaven. This was done, as a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost.

The understanding of this restraint, or limitation of deity, by divine choice, is the hinge to understanding the ministry and work of Christ. It is this very thing, that will bring us

understanding, concerning some of Jesus' statements which seem to imply, that He was less than God, some of Jesus' actions, and the terminology of the Scripture, as it relates to the relationship between Jesus and God, the Father.

The Work of Christ as it Relates to the Kenosis

Not only does the kenosis passage have significant bearing upon understanding the ministry of Christ; it also has a significant bearing upon His work. The ministry God needed to fulfill, for man, is the reason He chose to limit His divine essence when He assumed a human existence.

The New Testament has much to say about Christ's priesthood, or mediatorial role, especially the Book of Hebrews. A priest, is one who represents the people, to God. A prophet, on the opposing hand, comes to the people, representing God and His Word. For example, Paul said, that "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Notice, that it is the *man*, Christ Jesus, who is the mediator. If Jesus' deity served as the mediator, then we would have to believe, that His deity was inferior to the Father's. Paul specifically declared, that it was the *man*, Christ Jesus, who served this mediatorial role. In the incarnation, Jesus became the mediator between God (Spirit) and man (flesh) by assuming humanity. He was able to be this Mediator, because God united complete deity and complete humanity, into One, in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus declared His mediatorial role when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

The author of Hebrews stressed Jesus' priesthood to the believers (2:17-18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:1-10; 6:20; 7-8; 9:11, 24-28; 10:11-12, 21-22; 13:11-12). Although this is not the only purpose of the incarnation, it is one of the most important to us. We will better understand, why God chose to limit the exercise of His deity when we understand His

role as High Priest of the New Covenant. Just as any priest must stand in solidarity with those he represents to God, Jesus was also able to stand in solidarity with those He represents to God because He was a genuine human being, like us (Hebrews 2:14, 16-17; 5:1-3, 5-6).

The author declared the purpose of God's incarnation, when he said: "Wherefore, in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them, that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18). God became man so that He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest for lost humanity. As part of being human, Jesus faced genuine temptations (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-14). God desired to be tempted, in the flesh, so that He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest, for us.

Some see a problem with this, because James 1:13 says, that God cannot be tempted. They reason, that if Jesus was God, He could not have been truly tempted; therefore, it only appeared as though Jesus was tempted. The only other avenue for those who see a problem, here, would be to confess, that Jesus was truly tempted, but He was not truly God. This is not plausible, so denying the genuineness of His temptations, is the route usually taken, to explain Christ's temptations. In doing so, they are actually denying the completeness and genuineness of His humanity.

Denying the genuineness of Jesus' temptation is not the answer to reconciling this apparent contradiction. The answer is found in understanding the nature of the incarnation. Because God assumed a genuine human existence, He experienced temptation like any of us do. It cannot be argued, that Jesus could not have been tempted, because He did not have the sin nature, because Adam and Eve experienced temptation, and yet, they were sinless. The difference between Jesus and Adam is that Jesus never succumbed to the power of temptation.

Not only did Jesus experience genuine temptation, but He must have felt the full

force of its power because He never submitted to it. So often when we are tempted, we give in rather quickly, and thus, never feel the full extent of its power. Jesus resisted temptation, by the power of the Holy Ghost, until it was defeated. The more He resisted, the more Satan would put on Him. It was because Jesus felt the full force of temptation, that He “is able to succor them, that are tempted.”

If Jesus relied upon His deity to overcome the temptations He faced, what kind of victory would that be? If Jesus resisted temptation because He was God, it could not be said, that He truly faced or felt temptation, since God cannot be tempted. Instead of relying upon His deity (it being latent within Him), He relied upon the Holy Ghost, as any man must do, to overcome temptation. Jesus succeeded, where Adam failed, not because He was God, but because He was perfectly submitted to the Holy Ghost. He is our example, reminding us that, we too, can overcome temptation if we rely upon the Power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus truly felt our temptations and was able to overcome them, through the Power of the Spirit, and now is able to sympathize with us, and aid us, when we face our temptations.

On this same train of thought, the author declared: “For we have not a 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” (Hebrews 4:15). Because of this truth, the author admonished, “Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace, to help in time of need” (verse 16). Here again, it is said, that Jesus was tempted. It was not a facade or charade, but was genuinely felt, by Jesus. Not only was He tempted, but He was tempted in *all points, like as we are*.

Although I believe Jesus was tempted by some of the same things we are tempted by (drinking, fornication, stealing, lying, etc.), I do not believe He was tempted by every temptation, that we are faced with. Jesus could not have been faced with the temptation to shoot heroine, because heroine was known in that day, and syringes surely were not even developed yet. The culture and technological advancements of a society will affect the ways in which one can be tempted. It seems best to view the, *all*

points, in which Jesus was tempted to refer to the three roots of all sin: the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). No matter what temptation one is faced with, it can be traced back to one or more of these three roots of sin.

I am emphasizing, that Jesus was truly tempted, because if He was not, then He could not be said to be truly human. Although sinning is not a distinguishing mark of human existence, the ability to be tempted is. If God had not given up the exercise of His divine prerogatives, when coming in the flesh, He would not have been a true human being, like us. However, He had to be a human being, in every way, to be able to redeem us from the curse of sin. If Jesus relied upon His deity to function in this life, He could not have truly felt our temptations, and thus, could not be a faithful High Priest for us, in things pertaining to God. Because He felt the full magnitude of our temptations, He can be touched by the feelings of our weaknesses (infirmities) and give us Grace, to overcome them.

This willing limitation, God imposed upon Himself when He became a man (2 Corinthians 5:19), could be likened to the world's fastest sprinter, who decides to run in a sack-race. By willingly and intentionally binding himself to the sack, the runner will slow himself down considerably. This type of running is a new experience for him. Although his individual physical strength and speed has not diminished, it has been circumscribed by the conditions in which it now exists. The runner is slowed down by the limitation of the sack, not the loss of his running abilities. He could still run just as fast as he always could, but that ability (prerogative) is not accessible, because it is limited by the sack.

Or consider, if an entire baseball team switched batting stances. All those who were right-handed, would bat left-handed, and vice-versa. In both of these examples, the essence of ability and strength has not been diminished, but the conditions willingly imposed upon them, have limited the exercise of their full potential.

The Relationship of Jesus to the Father

The Scripture abounds with statements and terminologies that seem to imply an inferiority of Jesus to God or the Son to the Father. Even Jesus Himself said, that His Father was greater than He (John 14:28). On another occasion, Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son, likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth” (John 5:19-20; See also 3:32). He plainly said of His own ability, “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30).

The Gospel of John abounds with statements like these. According to Jesus, even what He taught He received from His Father. The very words were taught to Him before He ever taught them to others (John 7:16; 8:26, 28, 38, 40; 12:48-50; 17:8). Jesus was the *recipient*, not the *author* of divine revelation. He spoke of the Father, as being *with* Him (8:29), as proceeding from and being sent by Him (8:42; 14:24; 16:27-28; 17:8, 18), as returning to Him (16:5, 7, 10), and as being sanctified by Him (10:36). The Father is even said, to honor the Son (8:55).

The Scripture commonly refers to God and Jesus, as though they are two separate individuals. Jesus continually spoke *of* His Father, and *to* His Father, as though they were separate from one another. He told the Pharisees, speaking of His Father, “Of whom ye say, that He is your God” (John 8:54). Jesus also said, “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. ...If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him” (John 14:21, 23).

Jesus' lengthy prayer to God for His disciples found in John chapter 17, is overflowing with this type of terminology. In verse three, He said, “That they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.” Here, Jesus called the Father, “God.” Even though Jesus was God, He acknowledged God the Father, as

superior to Himself and spoke to Him in a manner as any human being would.

Jesus spoke of Himself in the third person. This gives us an indication of the way in which the Hebrews used language. It does not make any sense to us to speak of ourselves by using our own name as though we are speaking of someone else. This peculiar usage of words might help us to understand the peculiarities of these and other Biblical statements.

Did John record all of these statements to show that Jesus, was in some way, inferior to the Father or separate from Him? It would not seem likely, since John's Gospel also contains some of the most powerful assertions of Jesus' deity and equality with God. Such statements include, "I and My Father are One," "Before Abraham was, I am," and "He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."

Jesus commonly spoke of His relationship with the Father as, "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me" (John 10:38; 14:10-11; 17:21). It cannot be said, that the Son is the Father, or that the Father is the Son. The Son, by definition, is both, divine and human, while the Father, is only divine. Although the deity of the Son is of the same essence as that of the Father, the deity of the Son is inextricably joined with humanity, to form an existence, distinct from God's existence, as a transcendent Spirit. The deity of the Father is in the Son, but the Son's existence is different from the Father's. There is, therefore, a distinction between the Son and the Father, but there is no separation. The deity of the Son, is none other than that of Jehovah Himself, having come down in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men. This is why we find statements like, "He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me" (John 12:44-45). On another occasion, Jesus said, "He that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me" (John 13:20). How is believing on Jesus tantamount to believing in God? Is it not possible to believe in Jesus, but not believe in God? Or, how is it possible to have seen God, when one has, in reality, only seen Jesus' physical body? Can't one accept Jesus without accepting the Father? According to Jesus, the answer is, no.

Jesus made even more profound statements of this nature. Such include, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also” (John 14:6-7). Not only is Jesus the way to the Father, but the Father can only be known, through the Son. It would seem to us, that the Father could be known, apart from the Son, but according to Jesus, it is not possible. To the Jews who hated Jesus because of what He said and did, He cautioned, “He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also” (John 15:23). Probably, one of the best examples demonstrating this point is found in 2 John 9, where John said, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both, the Father and the Son.” (See also 1 John 2:23-24). If you accept Christ’s Person, you will have the Father and the Son. All of these Scriptures relay one common truth: knowing the Father is bound up in knowing the Son.

This can be compared to the Father-Son identities we experience. When a man is born, he experiences the role of a son. Although he knows the role of father exists, he has no personal experience of it. Through the process of time, he can *add* the role of fatherhood to his identity. Then, he is both, a son and a father. His added identity, as a father, does not negate his identity, as a son, but simply adds a role with its corresponding characteristics to his existing role, as a son.

In the same way, but in reverse, God added another identity to Himself, when He became a man. God has always been deity, but in the process of His plan to redeem man, He *added* humanity to His deity. His deity was not compromised or mitigated, by adding this role to His identity, but nevertheless, His role as exclusive deity and Spirit, was changed. God never gave up His eternal, unlimited deity when becoming the Son, just as a father does not give up his identity as a son when he becomes a father. There is no change in his essential person, but there is a change in his life, as he now experiences the role he once only knew, by concept. The role of father went from being *a priori* (prior to and independent of experience) to *a posteriori* (proceeding from and dependent upon experienced reality). That which was once an abstract concept,

became an objectively understood reality, empirical (knowledge gained by experience), in nature.

You may know a person as a son without knowing them in their role as a father. When the identity of a father is added to their identity as a son, knowing the person in their role of a father, assumes knowing them as a son, also. In like manner, but in exactly the reverse order (God assumed Sonship, whereas we assume fatherhood), knowing God in His incarnation (deity and humanity), assumes knowing Him in His deity. For His identity, as a human, was *added* to His identity, as Spirit. Knowledge of the Father is bound up in the being of the Son, because the Father's essential deity, is in the Son. To know Jesus (God, in His immanence), is to know the Father (God, in His transcendence). Knowing the Son, assumes knowing the Father, also, but the opposite is not true. You cannot know Jesus by knowing the Father, because Jesus' identity goes beyond that of the Father, in that, the Son has a component to His existence as the Father (God, in His transcendence), does not have, namely humanity. In a sense, it can be said, that Jesus was more than God; not more in His deity, but more, with respect to the addendum of His human existence.

Probably the most baffling statements of all, are those which speak of Jesus, as having a God. These types of statements create a feeling of uneasiness among Oneness and Trinitarian camps, alike. Paul prayed, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Him" (Ephesians 1:17). Peter also used this same terminology, when he said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant Mercy..." (1 Peter 1:3). In the Greek language, the definite article appears with "God," but not with "Father." This means, that "Father" and "God," are two terms referring to the same individual. The Father of Jesus, is also, the God of Jesus. If Jesus was God, manifest in flesh, how could it be said, that he has a God? This seems contradictory. It seems to imply, that Jesus is not divine at all, or His deity is inferior to the Father's, and thus, the Father is Jesus' God. (See also 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 1:9, Revelation 3:12).

In the benedictions of Paul's Epistles especially, something is commonly said to the effect of, "Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Why this dual usage? Why did the writers of Scripture greet the Churches or people they wrote to with peace from God and from Jesus? They seem to be spoken of as separate individuals. It is interesting that we rarely find a mention of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost in one verse or passage. It is usually just the Father and Jesus that are spoken of. Why is it that the Holy Ghost is always "left out?" There is a purpose for this type of usage among the New Testament writers.

These types of statements cannot be ignored or denied, but we tend to do one of the either or both. The solution to understanding these types of Scriptures will not be found in denying Jesus' deity, nor will they be solved by positing a Godhead in which two beings known as, "God" share equality of deity. The solution lies in the acknowledgment of Jesus' complete, authentic, and genuine humanity; humanity which imposed limitations (accepted willingly and intentionally) upon His deity, so that He could live on the same plane as any other human, sharing in all of their experiences.

When God assumed humanity, He acquired a consciousness and identity which He never possessed before the incarnation. He had a human psyche, not overwhelmed or consumed by His deity. The exercise of Jesus' human nature (such as His consciousness, Spirit, will, mind, emotions, and flesh) in such a way, requires that in the incarnation Jesus be spoken of, as possessing an identity distinct from, but not separate from, the Father. Just as we find a distinction, but not a separation of Christ's two natures, we also find a distinction, but not a separation between God and Jesus; the Father, and the Son. This view does not "compromise the deity of Christ or the radical monotheism of Biblical theology. But it does give credit to the completeness and genuineness of His [Jesus'] human nature. Any other explanation compromises the completeness of His deity or His humanity."

All of the above Scriptures demonstrate the relationship between the genuine and

complete humanity of Jesus (latent deity in genuine humanity) and the transcendent Spirit of the Father. Because Jesus would not rely upon His deity in order to experience the limitations of humanity, He needed a relationship with God. As pertaining to His humanity, Jesus could say, that His Father was greater than He Himself. The Father was greater, not because His deity was greater than that of Jesus' (Jesus was Jehovah, become flesh), but in the respect that the Father (God, as the all existing Spirit) was not subject to any of the limitations of human existence, as was Jesus. In the willing limitation of His deity, living life as a man, anointed by the Holy Ghost, Jesus could say that He could, of His own self, do nothing, but what He saw the Father do. Jesus had to rely upon His Father to give Him what to teach and show Him what He wanted Him to do. In His humanity, Jesus' knowledge was limited, so that He did not know the day and hour of the second coming. Finally, in His genuine humanity, it can even be said of Jesus, that He had a God! The reason Paul most always only mentioned God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ in his benedictions was because we now know God in two major manifestations: God transcendent, as the all existing Spirit, and God immanent, as He came in flesh to redeem our souls. Paul and the others did not write in this manner to show a separation in the Godhead, but to show the distinction between the existence of Father and the Son, because of the addendum of humanity, and yet, at the same time, the unity of the Godhead.

Relevance to Life and Ministry

No matter how much we do know concerning the mechanics of the incarnation, it must be remembered, that we can never truly comprehend it. We can affirm and believe to be true, the declarations set forth in Scripture, but we can never truly understand how God, Who is the eternal Spirit, could become a man. We must accept, by faith, that deity conceived in a woman and united with humanity, and that humanity united with deity, neither nature compromised or overridden by the other.

Paul spoke of the "mystery of the incarnation" (1 Timothy 3:16). This mystery is none other than, that "God was manifest in the flesh..." The incarnation is the greatest

miracle to ever occur. A miracle, by nature, is something unexplainable and mysterious to the human mind. This is why faith and mystery must always play a major role in Christology. We can know, by faith, the Scriptural declarations concerning the hypostatic union to be true, but we will never fully understand how it is possible, and the technical details of how it occurred. We should always maintain an attitude of humility, when contemplating how God and man can coexist in the one Person of Jesus Christ.

What does the kenosis mean to us, practically then? Is it just some bunch of theological garb to get us confused? No! It is the way in which we see how fully God loved us. He loved us so much, that He identified with us, in every way, even to the point of limiting the exercise of His divine attributes and powers, so that He might face the sufferings and challenges we face. The purpose of this limiting was so that He could fully understand what we face in this existence, and after overcoming the temptations and hardships, He could become our example and offer help in the time of need. He showed us, that since He could rely strictly upon the Holy Ghost for strength and anointing to overcome temptation and be perfectly led of the Spirit, we can do the same. Jesus was not “in a league of His own,” but was one of us. He was a man, with whom we can identify, a man we can pattern our lives after.

We need not feel that Jesus does not know what we are going through. When we feel forsaken, so did He on the cross (Matthew 27:46). When we are struggling with the Will of God, we can rest assured, knowing that Jesus also struggled in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed that His Father would change His Will (Matthew 26:36-44). Jesus is our example for ministry, overcoming temptation, and empathizing with others (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).

Christology also demonstrates to us how Christ’s Person affects our salvation. If He was not a perfect man and a perfect God, He could not save us. When we experience salvation, it is not a mere experience, but it is an encounter with Jesus Christ. The early Church understand the soteriological implications of Christ’s Person and fought vehemently to preserve a portrait of Christ, that was consistent with the Scriptures and

their salvific encounter with Christ. Likewise, our doctrine of Christ is not just a bunch of scrabbling over words and philosophical concepts, but defines our understanding of our salvation-experience with Jesus Christ, the God-man from Galilee.

Footnotes

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The Glorification of the Son

“And now, O Father, Glorify thou Me with thine Own Self with the Glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

In John 17, Jesus Christ prayed to the Father shortly before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and subsequent crucifixion. He began His prayer by asking, *“Father, the hour is come; Glorify, thy Son, that thy Son also may Glorify Thee”* (John 17:1). In verse 5, He repeated His request for glorification and specified that He desired the Glory that He had with the Father before the creation of the world.

This prayer raises a number of interesting questions:

- * *Is Jesus an inferior divinity who needs to receive Glory from some other deity?*
- * *Did Jesus exist as a Glorified man before Creation?*
- * *Are Jesus and the Father two distinct Persons?*

To understand this passage, we must recognize that Jesus prayed as a man. The prayers of Christ stem from His humanity, and any time we seek to interpret those prayers, we must keep His humanity foremost in our minds.

Trinitarians say, that Jesus was speaking as a second divine Person here, but if that were so, Jesus would not be coequal with the Father, as they maintain, but inferior. Jesus would be a divine Person, who was lacking in Glory, who needed the Father to

give Him Glory, and who asked the Father for help. Jesus would not be omnipotent (all-powerful), but lesser in Glory and Power, than the Father. In short, Jesus would not possess some of the essential characteristics of deity. Contrary to the rest of Scripture, He would not truly be God.

If we acknowledge that Jesus is God, manifested in the flesh, as the Bible teaches, (Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16), then we must affirm that as God, He always had divine Glory, never lost it, and never needed anyone else to give it to Him. What did He mean, then, when He said, *“Glorify thou Me . . . with the Glory which I had with Thee before the world was?”*

Glory through the Crucifixion and Resurrection

The setting and context provide the answer, Jesus was praying in view of His upcoming crucifixion. He had come into the world to offer His life as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity (Matthew 26:28). He knew that the time had come for Him to fulfill this plan. His flesh naturally shrank from the upcoming agony, but He knew that this was the Supreme, Perfect Will of God for Him. As He had said earlier in John 12:27, contemplating His death, *“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But, for this purpose, I came to this hour”* (NKJV).

The Glory to which Jesus referred in John 17:1, 5 was the Glory that He, as a man, would receive by submitting to the plan of God through the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Immediately after the statement of John 12:27, Jesus prayed, *“Father, Glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both Glorified it, and will Glorify it again”* (John 12:28). Jesus then explained, *“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, “signifying what death He should die”* (John 12:32-33). God Glorified Christ, by lifting Him up before all the world on the cross.

God further Glorified Christ, by raising Him from the dead. *“Christ was raised up from*

the dead by the Glory of the Father” (Romans 6:4). Christ’s atoning death became effective for us, by His resurrection (Romans 4:25j, which transformed His death into victory over sin, the devil, and death itself. At His resurrection, He received a Glorified human body (Philippians 3:21).

God Glorified the man Jesus, throughout His earthly ministry, by investing Him with divine Power and working through Him miraculously, but the Supreme Glorification occurred through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That was the ultimate plan for which Jesus was born and lived.

The eternal Glory of God is not the subject of discussion in John 17. Jesus said of His disciples in John 17:22, *“And the Glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”* Yet, God emphatically declares, that He will never share His divine Glory with anyone else. *“My Glory will I not give to another”* (Isaiah 42:8). *“I will not give My Glory unto another”* (Isaiah 48:11). Jesus could not have meant that He gave the disciples the divine Glory.

Instead, He referred to the Glory that He, as a man, received in God’s plan of salvation for the human race, the benefits of which He has imparted to those who believe in Him. The disciples had already shared in Christ’s glorious, miraculous ministry. Soon, they would also share in the Glory of His crucifixion and resurrection, by receiving the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:1, 1-12). They would have *“Christ in you, the hope of Glory”* (Colossians 1:27), which would be *“Joy unspeakable and full of Glory”* (1 Peter 1:8). Through the Gospel, we can obtain *“the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thessalonians 2:14). By *“the salvation which is in Christ Jesus,”* we have *“eternal Glory”* (2 Timothy 2:10).

Moreover, one day, believers will *“be found unto praise and honour and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 1:7). Just as God Glorified the man Christ, by raising Him from the dead with an immortal body, so we will be *“raised in” Glory*” (1 Corinthians 15:42-43). We will receive a Glorified body, *“like unto His Glorious body”*

(Philippians 3:21). We will be *“Glorified together”* with Him (Romans 8:17), and we shall *“appear with Him in Glory”* (Colossians 3:4).

The end result of God’s plan of salvation is that believers will live with the Glorified Christ, throughout eternity. They will behold His Glory and will worship Him, as the Glorified One. They will say, *“Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and Glory, and blessing”* (Revelation 5:12). With this ultimate objective in mind, Christ prayed, *“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou has given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world”* (John 17:24).

Foreordained Glory

God planned this Glory for the Son and loved the Son before the foundation of the world. Knowing that the human race would fall to sin, He foreordained a plan of salvation, based on the birth, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. *“Forasmuch as Ye know that Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition, from your fathers; but, with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for You”* (1 Peter 1:18-20). Jesus is *“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”* (Revelation 13:8).

Jesus Christ was not actually born before the Creation of the world, nor was He actually crucified, at that time. But, in the plan of God, the atoning sacrifice of Christ was a foreordained, certain, event. God does not inhabit time, as we do; the past, present, and future are all alike to Him. He *“calleth those things which be not as though they were”* (Romans 4:17). He Created the world with the Son in view, predicating all Creation upon the future arrival and atonement of the Son of God.

When Jesus asked for the Father to give Him the Glory, He had with Him before the world began, He was not speaking of a time when He lived alongside the Father, as a second divine Person. Glory from such a time, would be divine Glory, which He could never have lost and which He could never share with His disciples.

Before the Incarnation, the Spirit of Jesus was the One Eternal God, not a second Person. The Glory of which Jesus spoke, was the Glory, He, as a man, would have in the fulfillment of God's foreordained plan of redemption for the human race. That was what Jesus looked forward to, as He prayed, and that was what He asked the Father to give Him, so that He could share it with all believers.

The Glorification of the Name

Jesus asked for Glory, so that He could, in turn, Glorify the Father, and He also affirmed, that He had already Glorified the Father (John 17:1, 4). Throughout His earthly ministry, He exalted God, through His teachings and through the miracles He performed. But, he knew that the Supreme Glorification of the Father would take place through His crucifixion and resurrection. His crucifixion would reveal God's love in an unparalleled way (Romans 5:8), and His resurrection would supremely demonstrate God's Almighty Power (Ephesians 1:19-20).

Jesus prayed, "*Father, Glorify Thy name*" (John 12:28). In the context, the subject of discussion was Christ's death. Jesus wanted God to Glorify the divine name, through Christ's own life and death.

God's name represents His character, power, authority, and abiding presence. (See Exodus 6:3-7; 9:16; 23:20-21; 1 Kings 8:29, 43). Jesus, thus requested, that God's character and presence be revealed, through His human life. In John 17, Jesus stated that He had indeed, revealed God's name, that is, God's character and presence, to His disciples. "*I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world . . . I kept them in Thy name . . . I have declared unto them Thy name, and will*

declare it" (John 17:6, 12, 26). In short, Christ has revealed the Father to us. To put it another way, in Christ, the Father has revealed Himself.

In John 17:1, Jesus prayed, "*Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom Thou hast given Me.*" Interestingly, most scholars conclude today, that in the original Greek text, the word translated as, "those" is actually in the singular, rather than the plural. If so, the meaning would be, "Holy Father, protect them by the Power of your name - the name you gave Me" (NIV).

This reading would correspond to other statements in Scripture, that Jesus bears the Father's name. Jesus said, "*I am come in My Father's name*" (John 5:43). Hebrews 1:4, says of the Son, "*He hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name.*" Since the Son inherited His name, it must have first belonged to His Father.

The name that Jesus actually received, was Yeshua (Jesus) (Matthew 1:21). It was the name He bore all His life, and the name that was broadcast throughout the country, as a result of His miracles and teachings. It was the name given credit for the miracles in the early Church (Acts 3:6, 16). It is the only name, in which, we receive salvation and remission of sins (Acts 4:12; 10:43).

When we invoke the name of Jesus, in faith, all the Power and Authority of God becomes available to us. More-over, when answered prayers, are offered in the name of Jesus, the Father is Glorified in His Son. "*And whatsoever he shall ask, in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be Glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it*" (John 14:13-14).

The Father has chosen to reveal Himself to this world, by the name of Jesus, which literally means, "Jehovah-Saviour" or "Jehovah is Salvation." The Father Glorified the man, Jesus, by investing His name (character, Power, authority, presence) in Him, by leading Him to the cross to die for the sins of the world, and by raising Him from the dead. **Far from manifesting to us, a second person of the Godhead un-**

known to Old Testament saints, the Son has manifested to us, the One, indivisible God, for the purpose of our salvation.

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