

1205

CHRISTOLOGY

PART A



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JESUS THE CHRIST

1. INTRODUCTION: The Place of Jesus Christ in Christian Theology

1.1 The Appreciation of Christ

'Adam was a pattern of the one to come (Jesus)' (Rom. 5:14).

'All things were created by Him and for Him' (Col. 1:16).

'For in Him the whole fullness of Deity dwells bodily, and you have (come to) fullness of life in him' (Col. 2:9-10).

'The humanity, became God... in order that I might become God as far as he has been made human.'

(Gregory of Nyssa)

'Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ to right of me, Christ to left of me, Christ in my lying, my sitting, my rising, Christ in heart of all who know me, Christ on tongue of all who meet me, Christ in eye of all who see me, Christ in ear of all who hear me.' (*St. Patrick's Breastplate*)

'So it is final, says St Paul, the whole total Godhead dwells bodily, that is personally, in Jesus Christ.

Therefore the fellow who does not find or get God in Christ shall never again and nowhere else have or find God outside of Christ, even if he goes, as it were, over heaven, under hell, or into space.' 'I know of no God other than the one who became man; and I will accept no other.' (Luther)

'To know Jesus Christ is to know his benefits' (Melanchthon)

'If our Christian experience tells us anything, it is not about ourselves in the first place, nor about our Creed, but about Christ.' (P.T. Forsyth)

'I have no Christological principle and no Christological method. Rather, in each individual theological question I seek to orientate myself afresh - to some extent from, the very beginning - not on a Christological dogma but on Jesus Christ himself.' 'All my thoughts circle around one point which in the New Testament is Jesus Christ.' 'To look to him is to see him at the very centre, to see him and the history which, accomplished in him, heals everything and all things, as the mystery, reality, origin and goal of the whole world, all human beings, all life.' (K. Barth)

'What role does God play in our lives? It is an inevitable but wrong question. We shall be freed from it only by captivation to the right question: what role do we play in God's life? The story is not our story with a role for Christ. The story is Christ's story with roles for us. To state the most audacious of Barth's propositions straightaway: the God-man Jesus Christ, as an historical event, is the ontological foundation in God of all reality other than God' (R. Jenson).

'That there is only one work of salvation, that it has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, that it is identical with his person, and that being perfect it needs no supplementation but only acknowledgement, reception, participation, anticipation, and proclamation for what it is - these are the great themes of Barth's soteriology.' (G. Hunsinger)

'The key to everything is the "in Him". All that we might rightly expect of God and ask Him for is to be found in Jesus Christ. The God of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with what God, as we imagine Him, could do and ought to do' (D. Bonhoeffer).

'Anything which cannot be read and understood as a christological assertion is not a genuine eschatological assertion.' (K. Rahner)

'When men have Christ they not only have everything one needs, they have everything one can possibly have' (Haupt).

'If we can imagine God drawing up the plans for the universe before He created it, and if we could examine these plans, we would not see Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but Jesus Christ in the Gospel' (G. Goldsworthy).

'The Bible is our compass, and Christ is our North, South, East and West.' (Van hoozer).

'When we see that the whole sum of our salvation, and every single part of it, are comprehended in Christ, we must beware of deriving even the minutes portion of it from any other quarter.' (Calvin *Inst* II, 16. 19)

"God is Christlike, and in him is no un - Christlikeness at all." "Christus *totus in nobis* - Christ totally one with us." (A.M. Ramsey)

Jesus as:

1. The historical point of departure for Christianity.
 - a response to the events of Jesus' life.
2. The revealer of God.
 - makes God known in a distinctive and specific way.
 - 'God is Christ-like'.
3. The bearer of salvation.
 - based on the life, death and resurrection.
4. The definer of the shape of redeemed life.
 - 'being conformed to Christ'.
 - 'Christomorphic'.

(A. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994, pp. 272ff.)

1.2 Christ as the Content of All True Knowledge

1. This is the effective claim of the Bible
2. 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' are in him (Col.2:3)
 - 'the truth is in Jesus' (Eph.4:21)
 - 'the truth' (of God the Father) is Jesus (John14:12)
 - Jesus is 'holy and true' (Rev.3:7)
 - Jesus is the 'faithful and true witness' (Rev.3:14)
 - Jesus exegetes the invisible God (John 1:18)
3. All the major subdivisions of theology find meaningful content in Christ
 - 1.The doctrine of the Word of God

Jesus as the Word of God (John 1:1; Rev.19:13) is the eternal ground of the possibility of creatures receiving the knowledge of God through revelation.
 - 2.The doctrine of God
 - 1) The knowledge of God available through creation (general revelation) is mediated to all people by Jesus for it was through Jesus that God created (John1:2; Col 1:16; Heb1:2) and it is in him all things are sustained (Heb 1:3). He is the light of the world and the light which enlightens everyone (John1:9; 8:12).
 - 2) The knowledge of God available through Scripture (special revelation) is centred on the person of Christ and is in total that Word of God which corresponds to Jesus himself.
 - 3) The particular Christian doctrine of God, the trinity, is an unveiling of the reality of who God is as Father, Son and Holy Spirit made possible through the coming of Jesus (Matt 3:16 –17: 28:19).
 - 4) The attributes of God find their fullest and clearest expression in the life of Christ, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily on earth (Col 2:9) . This is especially true of the crucifixion and resurrection where the the love of

the Father and Son for each other (John17:23,26), and so for us, is fully shown (John 3:16;1John3:16; Rom 5:8).

3. The Doctrine of creation.

- 1) all things were made through Christ.
John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2
- 2) all things hold together in Christ.
Col 1:17; Heb 1:3
- 3) everything will come together in Christ.
Eph 1:10, 18; Col 1:20; Revelation.
- 4) all things were made for Christ.
Col 1:16
- 5) as the First and the Last (Rev 1:17; 2:8) Christ sets the framework in which the whole of creation is to be understood.

4. The doctrine of humanity.

- 1) Adam : the first Adam is only a type or pattern of the reality which comes in Christ (Rom 5:14)
- 2) The image of God : the fullness and reality of the image of God is found in Jesus' true sonship (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:1 – 3)
- 3) Humanity as male and female : the bipolar and complementary opposition in humanity finds its origin in the diversity which exists in the Godhead .The “let us” of Genesis Genesis 1:26 is grounded in the Father - Son relationship.
- 4) Marriage : Eph 5:32 tells us that the real marriage upon which the wedding of Adam and Eve is based is that between Christ and the church.
- 5) Multiplication and dominion: the author to the Hebrews points out that the command to be fruitful and multiply finds its fulfilment in the salvation and exaltation of Christ (Heb 2:5 –10).
- 6) Sin: in a state of sin (Jer 7:29) we could never appreciate the meaning of sin (in terms of breaking relationship with God) apart from the sinlessness of Christ and the horror of the cross (2Cor 5:21)
- 7) Covenant: Christ is the covenant (Isa 42:6; 49:8) , the one who keeps faithfulness with God, the permanent dwelling place of God in the Spirit (John3:34) , it is in his blood (Matt 26:28;Heb 13:20), that is, true filial obedience to the point of death that the new covenant is constituted.

5. The doctrine of Christ

This fills out in detail who Jesus is and what he has done for us in completing the purposes of God.

- 1) The person of Christ
- 2) The work of Christ

6. The doctrine of redemption

This tells us of the application into our lives of what God has done for us in Christ

- 1) Grace : this came to us through Jesus (John1:14) and is ours in Jesus (2 Tim1:9).

- 2) Election and predestination : we were chosen in Christ in eternity (Eph 1:4) and are predestined to be like him(Rom 8:29).
- 3) Conversion : our repentance and faith in God are a participation in the faith and obedience of Jesus for us (Matt 3:15; Gal 2:20;Heb 12:2).
- 4) Regeneration : we are born again through the death and resurrection of Jesus who put the old sinful nature to death on the cross and raised humanity to a new level in his resurrection (Rom 6:5:11 ;1Peter1:3).
- 5) Justification : we share the status of the perfectly righteous Son of God which he reached through the cross and receive in the resurrection (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Tim3:16; Heb5:7 – 9).
- 6) Adoption : being sons of God means to share Jesus relationship with the Father (Gal3:26).
- 7) Sanctification : Jesus is the content of our holiness (John17:17 – 19; 1Cor1:30).
- 8) Perseverance : this depends upon our sharing the new nature of humanity in Christ (2Cor 5:17; 2Peter1:4; 1John3:9).
- 9) Union with Christ : this is our sharing in the life of Christ, being ‘in Christ’ and he being in us (1Cor1:30; Eph1:4,11;Rom 8;10;Gal 2:20).
- 10) Glorification : this refers to the perfecting of our humanity when Jesus raises us from the dead; at this point we will be completely like him sharing in all his glory (1Cor15:20 – 23;Phil 3:21;1John3:2).

7. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit

- 1) The personal nature of the Holy Spirit : the fully personal nature of the Spirit could not be revealed until the coming of the Son of God, it is relationship with Jesus at all stages of his life that unveils to us that the Spirit is personal and has the nature of God (Luke1:35; Acts10:38; John 20:21;Acts1:18; Rom1:4 etc).
- 2) The revealing work of the Spirit : whether in the inspiration of the Scripture, or in personal revelation, the revealing work of the Spirit always relates to God’s action in Christ (John15:26; Acts8:26ff;1Peter1:11).
- 3) The empowering of the Spirit : the Spirit could not be outpoured in the way prophesied in the Old Testament until Jesus had been glorified (Joel2:28 – 32; John7:37 – 39; Acts2:33)
- 4) The baptism and fullness of the Spirit : this relates to our entry into the kingdom of God, where we share all of the riches of God in Christ (Matt3:11 – 12;John14:20; Acts10:44- 47).
- 5) The sanctifying work of the Spirit : whilst the agent of sanctification is the Spirit, what he imparts is a fuller share in the character of Jesus (1Cor1:30;2 Cor3:18; Gal 5:22 –23).
- 6) The gifts of the Spirit : the gifts of the Spirit are means by which the risen Christ guides and governs the church in his Lordship (1Cor12:3ff).
- 7) The unifying work of the Spirit : the Holy Spirit creates unity in the body of Christ (Acts2:44- 47; 2Cor13:14;Eph 4:3;Phil 2:1 – 2). This must be a participation in the unity of the Father and Son (John17:20ff).

8. The doctrine of the church.

- 1) The meaning of 'church' : to be 'church' means to be gathered for a purpose. The church has existence as the people of God gather to Jesus both on earth and in heaven (Matt18:20; Acts13:2; Heb12:22 – 24; Rev 5:1ff; 7:1 – 9).
- 2) The nature of the church : the dominant images of the church in the New Testament identify it with her relationship with Jesus, as the body and the bride of Christ (1Cor12:12 – 27; Eph1:22 – 23; 4:15 – 16, Col 2:19; Eph 5:32; 1Cor11:2)
- 3) The ministries of the church : the key activities of the church in worship, discipleship, evangelism and service find their power and pattern in Christ (1Peter2:4 – 10; Col 2:6 – 7; Rom 15:7 – 8; Phil 2:7; Col 1:24 – 29).
- 4) The means of grace in the church : the Lord's Supper, baptism and the ministry of the word are all means of the proclamation of the gospel of Christ through which Jesus shares his own life with us (Rom 6:1 – 11; 1Cor10:16; 11:23 – 26)
- 5) The ministers of the church : the entire range of the ministries of the church are not only given by Jesus (Eph 4:7 – 11), but draw their reality from him who is the true apostle, pastor, deacon, teacher etc. (Heb 3:1; 1Peter5:4; Mark10:45; Matt 23:10).
- 6) The government of the church : the various forms of the government of the church express the character of Christ as embedded in the ministers of the church (1Peter5:1– 5).

8. The doctrine of the last things

- 1) The framework of eschatology : this is set by the fact that Jesus is the alpha and the omega (Rev 1:8,17;22:13), as such the last days have come in Jesus (Acts2:17;1John2:18).
- 2) The book of Revelation : the book of Revelation is Jesus own testimony to his people concerning his post – ascension purposes (Rev 1:2,9;6:9;19:10;22:16)
- 3) Individual eschatology : the Christian experience of death is transformed by the forgiveness which is in Christ and our expectation of being immediately with him (2 Cor5:8; Phil1:21 – 24,Heb12:22).
- 3) The second coming : the return of Jesus is about the unveiling of his glory and the completion of his reigning purposes on the earth (1 Cor1:7;15:25 – 27;Col 3:4;2Thess5 – 12).
- 4) The general resurrection : this is patterned after the resurrection of Jesus(1Cor15:20,23; Phil3:21; Col 1:18)
- 5) The last judgment : the judge will be Christ and the standard of judgment will be the revelation of God in him (Matt25:31 – 32; John5:27; 2Thess2:8).
- 6) Israel : Jesus is the true Israel, and the future of national Israel is set in relation to him (Matt2:11,15;Acts3:19 – 21;Rom11:14,30 – 31).
- 7) The millennium : the content of the millennium is believers sharing in the reign of the glorified Christ (Rev20 : 1 – 6).
- 8) The final state : the ultimate destiny of the righteous is to share in the fellowship of God with his Son forever (Rev21:22 – 22:5), the final abode of the wicked is to be excluded from the presence of God which is given us in Christ (Matt 25:31;2 Thess1:9) .

1.3 The Priority of Christology for Soteriology

1. The narrative of scripture reveals that Jesus transformed the hopes for salvation anticipated from the Old Testament as read by the people of his time.
2. The current expectation was not that the Messiah be God's own Son, but of a much more physical deliverance.
3. Only the incarnation itself could reveal the full meaning of salvation which is implicit in the titles that the apostles came to use of Jesus ("Lord", "Son of God", "Word" etc.) under the impact of personal encounter.
4. The perpetual danger is that each generation will project onto Christ its own culturally based hopes of human salvation.
5. This would be to neglect Jesus as the only true foundation (1 Cor 3:11).
6. The tendency to prioritise soteriology over christology is particularly pronounced in contemporary western evangelicalism and pentecostalism, where salvation is individualised in terms of an experience of Christ as personal saviour.
7. "Salvation *in* man becomes the central moment of preaching. The main questions are: Am I reborn? Am I a child of God? People are looking for *special experiences*." (K. Runia).
8. In this culture personal experience can easily become the arbiter of christological truth, rather than the reverse. It is easy to equate my own experience with the identity of Jesus, thus (unwittingly) compromising his sole Lordship.
9. The approach to be taken in this course of study is as follows, "Their (patristic) chief concern was to insist that the saving work of Christ has an objective reality prior to its subjective appropriation by us... The work of Christ *for* man was done *in* man prior to its appropriation *by* man and thus to establish an objective ground for the work of Christ in its *vicarious character*." (George Hendry).

2. CHRIST IN THE GOSPELS

a) The Prophetic Background

The pages of the New Testament centre on the person of Jesus and the events surrounding His earthly life and ministry. The coming of the Christ however had been prepared by the Father since before time began, and had been progressively revealed to His chosen people through His prophets.

From Genesis (3:15) and the times of Abraham (Genesis 12:7) through all the major and minor prophets (e.g. Isaiah 61:1; Micah 5:2) there is repeated reference to the coming One. Jesus Himself demonstrated that “Moses and all the prophets” bore witness to His life and death (Luke 24:25-27). Throughout the gospels there is also the constant refrain in relation to Jesus “... that the Scriptures might be fulfilled” (e.g. Matthew 1:22; Mark 14:49; Luke 4:21; John 17:12).

While a full Christology cannot be extracted from the Old Testament, nevertheless there are numerous pictures given of the nature of the one to come e.g.:

King-Messiah (e.g. 2 Samuel 7:12-14 promises an eternal kingdom).

Prophet (e.g. Deuteronomy 18:18,19.)

Suffering Servant (e.g. Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12).

Then, during the inter-testamental period, the development of the Messianic concept led to the expectation of a political leader who would overthrow the intruders and return the promised land to the chosen nation. And so, “in the fullness of time,” the gospel account begins (Galatians 4:4,5).

b) The Nature of the Gospels.

A new type of literature. Not:

1. Biographies - lack background, psychology.
2. Book of ‘Great Acts’ - focus on cross.
3. Memoirs - by a disciple of a famous man.

Jesus a present reality to authors.

History written in light of resurrection.

Gospels = preaching materials which express the theology of “the gospel” evangelistic.

2.1 The Gospel Events

2.1.1 The Virgin Birth

(a) Old Testament Background

That God should come in human form is not exclusively a New Testament concept. Of particular significance is the reference to the birth of one who was to be called “Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). While the translation of the Hebrew word for the mother of this child, *alma*, as “virgin” rather than “young woman” has been the subject of some debate, Matthew did not doubt either its meaning or its prophetic purpose (Matthew 1:18-25). He followed the Septuagint translation *parthenos*, whose clear meaning is “virgin”.

(b) Scope of the New Testament Witness

Sometimes it is argued that the virgin birth (preferably, conception) is a doctrine only known to Matthew and Luke, but there are allusions to this belief in the other writings of the New Testament. In Galatians 4:4 Paul uses a term (*genomenos*) that is more strictly translated “become” rather than “born” of a woman. Similarly in Romans 1:3 and Philippians 2:7 Jesus is said to “become” part of humanity rather than be born. This is compatible with a widespread knowledge of and adherence to the virgin birth of Jesus.

Both Luke and Matthew declare the birth of Jesus to be virginal (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35), thereby indicating that from the moment of conception God had entered fully into human experience. The conception was not merely a miraculous one (as in the case of Sarah, or Elizabeth), nor an immaculate one (declaring Mary to be sinless), but a virgin one.

This is a mystery, yet, if we are to accept the pre-existence of Christ and His deity, then the virgin birth becomes less difficult to accept.

(c) The Significance of the Virgin Birth

1. Unique, unrepeatable, not open to scientific or historical investigation. A matter of faith. It is a mystery, which means that we cannot comprehend how God can be human.
2. Matt. 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-35 - Holy Spirit, not Joseph, is the source of the life of Jesus Christ. This means that the human nature of Jesus only ever exists as the humanity of God. (Adoptionism is avoided.) Jesus has only one Father cf. Luke 3:23.
3. In Luke 1:35 are brought together all of the ingredients necessary out of which the doctrine of the Trinity was later to be formulated – “the Most High,” “the Son of God,” and “the Holy Spirit.” The unity of Word and Spirit enacting the plan of the Father is the foundation of revelation, regeneration, justification, sanctification and adoption of humanity.
4. The action that begins the life of the human Jesus is fully from God's side, His initiative leaves no room for a positive human contribution. Human nature in its' sinfulness is contradicted; no room remains for any synergism or natural theology, e.g., adoptionism of an already existing human person. The virgin birth points to the judgement of God on the state of humanity. It is a sign of the radical nature of grace.
5. The supernatural birth of Jesus means a radical new beginning for humanity. God has entered the scene by erupting into the world of humans. “The point of the doctrine of the virgin birth is not to “prove” the divinity of Christ, but to link together divine initiative and true humanity. Jesus is within the world as human, and yet as new act of creation by God. (C. Gunton).
6. The virgin birth of Jesus by the power of the Spirit means that humanity is now available to God.
7. The omission of male parentage points to Jesus pre-existence as begotten of the Father. (This is not explicit in Matthew and Luke, as it is in Paul and John.)
8. The holiness of Jesus has its origin in His pre-existence, this is preserved by the action of the Spirit. Sanctified by the Father and sent into the world apart from Adam's heritage Jesus is free from any necessary connection to original sin and guilt. He is the 'man from heaven'. This fits Him to bear our guilt.
9. First step in the way of humiliation and lowliness, which terminates in the Cross.

2.1.2 The Baptism

It is clear that Jesus had no need to be baptised by John, if baptism stood only for repentance. Nevertheless, He saw it to be necessary. His entering into this experience:

1. Was in obedience to His Father (Matthew 3:15) that He might thereby glorify God;
2. Identified with the sinner (Hebrews 2:17);
3. Pointed to His death (Luke 12:50) cf. how the High Priest washed before entering the Holy of Holies (Lev 16:4);
4. Began His public ministry (John 1:29); note how the tearing of the heavens (Mark 1:10) is linked with the tearing of the temple veil (Mark 15:38) designating the beginning and ending of Jesus' ministry.
5. Received His Father's approval (Luke 3:22; Gen 22:2; Psalm 2:7; Isa 42:1)
6. Jesus baptism sums up the scope of all Old Testament promises: Law (Gen 22:2); Prophets (Isa 42:1); Writings (Ps 2:7).
7. Anointed Him for service in the power of the Spirit (Luke 3:22 alluding to Isa 42:1, cf. 11:2; 61:1; Acts 10:38). The theme joining together the paradoxical theme of a suffering, unrecognised Messiah Psalms 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1 is Messiah's inheritance of the nations. The empowering of Jesus is for this purpose, to bring glory to the Father by returning universal obedience to God. This takes up God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3) and has numerous biblical connections. The trinitarian nature of this event is outstanding.
8. It is at this point of obedience that Jesus becomes fully aware of his identity as Son and Messiah.
9. With this status he is able to fully proclaim the kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14 - 18).

2.1.3 The Temptation

THE CHARACTER OF TEMPTATION

Fallen Humanity

Choose to give in.

Choose not to do evil.
will)

Centre of temptation is
knowledge of good and evil.

Conscience witnesses against God.

Rebellious.

Victory in Spirit - aided flesh.

Victory through Word of God

In general terms, the temptation of Jesus was part of His identification with humanity (Hebrews 4:15) 'in every respect'.

Jesus

Never gives in " quality of temptation is more incisive/repulsive

Choose to do evil.(already in Father's

Centre of temptation is avoidance of
identification with sinners.

Conscience witnesses to God as good.

Holy.

Victory in Spirit - aided flesh

Victory through the Word of God

Jesus endurance of temptation however involves more not less than ordinary human suffering. "Sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain." (Westcott)

But more specifically, Satan attacks Him with regard to:

- His sonship.
- His route to glory (see also Matthew 16:21-23). i.e. suffering.

We see also that the three temptations cover the ambit of the devil's devices (1 John 2:16).

- Temptation to act in self-interest (Matthew 4:2-4).
- Temptation to achieve, outside the purposes of God (v5-7).
- Temptation to avoid the way of the cross (v8-10).

n.b. how the devil is allowed (by God) to set the scene.

Was Jesus able to sin? Even if as God he could not sin, there is no evidence in the Gospels that he knew this.

"The question is not whether it was possible for Him to sin, or even whether it were possible for Him not to sin. The question is did He who encountered the devil as man come out of the wilderness in full victory? The answer to that is clear and unequivocal: He did." (McDonald).

2.1.4 The Ministry Years: the Gospel of the Kingdom.

From the outset of His public ministry Jesus demonstrated that He had come with a mission, viz. to usher in to human experience the reality of the Kingdom. He took up and amplified the message of John the Baptist (cf. Matthew 3:1,2 and 4:17), both in word and action bringing to Israel the word of forgiveness and life (Acts 10:36-38).

The nature of Jesus message of the kingdom is clear, for example, in his preaching at Nazareth (Luke 4:18 ff) and his reply to the disciples of John the Baptist (Matt 11:2-6). The kingdom is not a proclamation of wrath.

As the years progressed Jesus made it increasingly clear that the cross was His ultimate earthly destiny, and that all He did was dependent upon that event (Matthew 8:16,17; Luke 9:21-27). While on the one hand He described it as the hour of darkness (Luke 22:53) and betrayal (Matthew 26:45), He knew also that it was His hour (John 12:23-33), and so He, knowing when the time was right, "set His face towards Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

2.1.5 The Transfiguration

As Jesus began to turn His disciples towards the cross, he was transfigured before them (Mark 8:31ff. > 9:2ff; Luke 9:28ff), giving great confirmation to Peter's recent confession (Luke 9:18) and doubtless encouraging Jesus, too, as he spoke with Moses and Elijah about his own "exodus" (v31).

John was not overlooking it when he wrote, "we beheld His glory" (John 1:14), and Peter talked of being "eyewitnesses of His majesty" as he recalled the event (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Transfiguration Motifs.

1. Danielic Son of Man: Luke 9:27; Mt 16:28; Mk 9:1; parallel Dan 7:13 ff.

'see Kingdom Of God come with power'

: presence of heavenly cloud (shekinah)

2. Exodus: cloud at Sinai; presence of Moses. Jesus will take all his people with him into the promised land. He will do this, not by means of the fading glory of the old covenant, but through the moral glory of the cross.
3. Glorious presence of God: Moses had been in the cloud of glory on Sinai (Ex 19:16 - 20), this transfigured his appearance (Ex 34:29- 35). Elijah likewise was exposed to a theophany at Horeb(1 Ki 19:11 – 12) and is taken up to heaven in fire (2 Ki 2:11).
3. Parousia: presence of Elijah cf. Mal 4:5.
4. Messianic: voice declares unique Sonship of Jesus.

O.T. background - Ps 2:7 royal son.

2 Peter 1:16- 18 speaks of the majesty of Christ declared in the presence of God at the transfiguration event . “The Majestic Glory” is a circumlocution for the throne of God cf. Ps 145:5,12 etc.). this happened on “the holy mountain”, not Sinai, but Mt. Zion (Ps 2:6; Isa 11:9; 27:13; 56:7; 63:18; 65:9, 11; Jer 38:23; etc.). Psalm 2:6 is the immediate background, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” The transfiguration is the fulfilment of the psalm.

- Gen 22:2 (L.X.X) beloved only son.

- Isa 42:1 chosen servant.

- Deut. 18:15 prophet like Moses (‘listen to him’)

Jesus fulfils mission of suffering servant (Mk 8:27- 9:1)

5. Glorification of the Image of God: Moses and Elijah are not present to Jesus as representative of the Law and the Prophets as such; they were encountered by the Angel of the LORD (Ex 3:2; 34:1 Kings 19:5; 2 Kings 1:3, 15) so as to effect in them a re –creation and glorification of the image of God. (Moses face shone, Elijah was taken up to heaven in glory..)It is this that is happening to Jesus in the Transfiguration.

6. The transfiguration prefigures the entire exaltation of Jesus: his resurrection, ascension, heavenly session and second coming.

It also reveals to us what we will become, something that is in process now (John 17:24; Rom 8:29; 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 John 3:2; 2 Pet 1:4).

2.1.6 The Triumphal Entry

Even had no action prior to this done so, Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey must have caused every Jewish heart to skip a beat. Zechariah’s prophecy was unmistakably fulfilled before their eyes (Zechariah 9:9). The crowd knew it and delighted in it (Matthew 21:8,9), and the leaders knew it, too (Luke 19:39,40). It heralded Christ’s kingship even more publicly than the visit of the Magi at His birth (Matthew 2:1,2).

2.1.7 The Temple Cleansing

The authority of Jesus was seen not only in His teaching and His miracles, but in His dealings with men. It is hard to imagine that one man could take on all the temple traders without opposition, unless He commanded great authority (Luke 20:2,19,20). Jesus’ actions spoke out against both the Jewish authorities and their attitude to worship. No doubt some would have recalled the prophecy of Malachi (3:1-4) as they saw Him striding through the Temple precincts. He acts in judgement with the authority of God to restore the temple to its true purpose, hence he teaches in it daily. Certainly His words would have struck a familiar chord (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). Such blatant exposure could not be ignored. Over the next few days it was met with attempts to catch Jesus out (Luke 20:19,20). Finally, it led to His betrayal and arrest (Luke 22:2).

2.1.8 The Last Supper

Jesus took the greatest event in the Jewish year and by it presaged an even greater exodus as He brought new meaning to the Passover meal. Though the disciples were non-plussed by it all, for Jesus it held great significance (Luke 22:14). He knew what lay before Him (John 13:1). It is clear too that His message at the last was as it had been at the beginning - to usher in the kingdom of His Father (Luke 22:16,18,24-30).

2.1.9 The Garden of Gethsemane

This properly belongs in the section on the atonement, but it is more convenient to deal with it here. Each of the Synoptic Gospels deals with this incident in some detail, thus underlining its significance. Each in its way represents the intensity of the trauma of this experience: Matthew 26:38; Mark 14:33; Luke 22:44. The central issue seems to be Jesus' attitude to the "cup".

Read in terms of our own experience, he seems hesitant or even unwilling to face what the "cup" represents. Jesus seems to be less than a noble martyr and to have lost the boldness which he had earlier in his ministry. The writer to the Hebrews however almost certainly seems to describe this event when he talks of Jesus' suffering as "reverent submission" (5:7) which pleased the Father. John's parallel account has Jesus recognising the cost of obedience to God but resolving to press on, a response which brings honour to the Father and the Son (12:27-28). Other alternatives to ordinary human fear at the prospect of crucifixion must be considered.

The Old Testament background to the "cup" is crucial here, it is typically a metaphor for the wrath of God (Ps 75:6-8; Isa 51:17-22; Jer 25:15-29; 49:12-13; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31-34; Hab 2:16 cf. Ps 60:3; Zech 112:2; Rev 14:10; 16:11). It is because Jesus is anticipating, or beginning to experience separation from the Father that he is so moved in the Garden. Jesus sees the sword of God raised in the Garden (Zech 13:7; Matt 26:31). This is not a natural human response, which sees the judgement of God as oppressive and unjust, but the height of the obedience of the Son. That which he expresses is the true holy fear of a Son, that fear by which holiness is made perfect (cf. 2 Cor 6:16-7:1). "No one ever feared death like this man." (Luther).

Another way of putting this is : "The will of God was done as the will of Satan was done....What shook Him was the coming concealment of the lordship of God under the lordship of evil and evil men....it was a matter of the enemy who had been repulsed as the tempter having and exercising by divine permission and appointment the right, the irresistible right of might....He was ready to pronounce this sentence Himself and therefore on Himself;" (K. Barth). It is the Yes of Jesus to the will of God in the Garden which will permit the devil to attack him with fullness at the cross and so be the agent of his own destruction.

2.2 Christology of the Synoptics

The first three books of the New Testament have come to be called Synoptic Gospels because they give essentially the “same view” of the life of Christ, in distinction to John whose approach is unique (though containing some passages in common with the other writers).

2.2.1 The Gospel of Mark

1. Mark seems concerned to stress the humanity of Christ, using the ‘name’ Jesus more than others.
2. Figure of a suffering servant is prominent (8:31; 9:31; 10:33,45). Here Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man. Mark has been called a passion narrative with extended introduction.
3. The majesty and power of Jesus, particularly in relation to demons is also expressed (3:11; 5:7).
4. While Mark states quite clearly that Jesus is the Son of God (1:1; 1:11), yet he portrays Jesus as God concealed behind a fully human life. This relates to the so called ‘Messianic secret’, e.g. 7:36; 8:26. Mark’s Jesus is not a ‘divine man’ but embodies the “secret of the kingdom of God”.
5. If Jesus really is the Messiah, that is, a king, when will he be enthroned? The answer is given by the final details of Jesus’ earthly life. In replying to the question of the High Priest he equates the three basic titles “Christ”, “Son of God” and “Son of Man”(Mark 14:62). From this point on kingship language is used of him repeatedly (15:2,9,18,26,32). Jesus ascends the throne when he is nailed to the cross. He is a suffering king. This is confirmed by the centurion’s use of the title “Son of God” (15:39). Only after Jesus’ death can he be recognised for who he is. Prior to this, whether to demons or disciples, he could only be (mistakenly) known as a victorious king. That Jesus is victorious is not revealed by a description of the resurrection but in the predictions of his resurrection in the same passages which foretold his death.

2.2.2 The Gospel of Matthew

Matthew seems to be an apologetic to Jewish Christians.

1. Birth narratives, connect to the promise made to Israel of a deliverer.
2. Teacher of true righteousness - greater than Moses e.g. Sermon on the Mount - ‘I say’, cf. Law.
3. Testimonia - fulfils law and prophets e.g. (Note how often phrases like “to fulfill what the prophet said ...” occur in Matthew, e.g. 1:22; 2:5; 2:15; 2:17 etc.).
4. In Jesus and His ministry, God is fulfilling His purposes for Israel and the nations. Not surprisingly, then, Matthew uses the term “Son of David” much more than the other evangelists.
5. The mission of Jesus is to establish God’s Kingdom (Matthew 2:2; 16:28; 19:28; 25:31,34; 26:63,64), and the miracles are signs of the presence and dynamic of the Kingdom (Matthew 12:28).
6. Jesus as judge (this is an attribute of God) e.g. Matt 24-25 ‘outer darkness’ ‘close of age’.
7. Resurrection stories are prominent in opposition to Jewish polemic.

2.2.3 The Gospel of Luke

1. Luke stresses the fulfilment of prophecy in Jesus (Luke 4:14-21); he sees Jesus Himself as having a prophetic role (4:24; 13:33), and of Jesus' insistence on the necessity to do the Father's bidding (2:49; 24:7, 26,44). There is also a strong emphasis on the place of the Spirit in Jesus' life and ministry.
2. Jesus as Saviour
 - 'salvation' in birth narratives e.g. 1:47,69.
 - *euangelidzomai* 4:18, 7:22 etc.
 - arrival of Kingdom Of God = arrival of salvation.
3. Jesus as King - 22:22 f; 23:42.
4. Jesus as Saviour for Gentiles
 - Nazareth Manifesto highlights God's favour to Gentiles (4:25- 27)
 - parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25 -37)
 - omission of the account of the Syro- Phoenician woman
4. Jesus as pattern for Christian disciples.
 - Luke precedes Acts.
 - prayer, Spirit.

2.3 The Gospel of John

1. In John's record we see Jesus as uniquely revealing the Father and the way to know the Father (John 1:18; 3:16-21; 5:24-26; 14:6-10; 17:3).
2. We are given an exalted view from the outset (1:1-14) which is confirmed in the "I am" sayings, asserting His authority and the pre-existent nature of His being. This is confirmed by John's use of 'Son of God'. (See later for more details).
3. Evidence of Jesus dignity is given in signs (works) and witnesses (the Baptist, Samaritan woman, blind man etc.)
4. Jesus is also the Messiah in John (7:26 ff; 10:24 etc).
5. Yet he speaks often of His humanity (e.g. 4:6; 7:46; 9:11).
6. Jesus' role as High Priest is brought out in John 17. As one close to the Father he intercedes for his disciples e.g. vv. 11, 15, 17, 20.
6. Much of John's thought revolves around the divine-human theme, centred around the poles of glory (*doxa*) and flesh (*sarx*). Jesus had left God's presence (6:33,62; 8:38; 10:36) and His love (17:25), and was sent into the world (3:17; 9:39; 10:36 ...) to bring men by word (1:18; 14:6-10) and deed (6:40) to the Father. The divine glory shines through the flesh of His humanity without detracting from it (1:14; 4:34; 7:15-18).

3. TITLES GIVEN TO CHRIST

NB The titles properly belong to Christ.

Even today a title is given to signify function. Hence titles such as king, pastor, doctor, all describe the action and status of the person so designated. Thus it was in ancient times. We discover that there are many titles given to Jesus, a number of which have their origin (and in some cases only use) in the Old Testament.

The name “Jesus” itself, while not strictly a title, has meaning of itself, and quite quickly became, by virtue of its association with this figure of history, no longer the common name that it was at the time of His birth. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew “Joshua,” meaning “Yahweh is salvation”. It was chosen, by God Himself (Matthew 1:21). Luke’s account shows that it was given in the context of the eternal kingdom over which He was to reign (Luke 1:31,32), signifying that the salvation the Father was offering in Jesus was into a kingdom, and not into a purely individual experience.

3.1. Messiah

- (a) This title and concept is the most important of all Christological concepts - it became the central way of designating the Christian understanding of Jesus.
- (b) This is indicated by the fact that it soon became a proper name, i.e. 'Jesus Christ' or 'Christ Jesus'.

3.1.1 Messiah in the Old Testament

1. Terminology

Christos (Greek L.X.X.) translates **Mashiach** (Hebrew) - 'anointed one'. It is not used as a technical term for the coming saviour, with the possible exception of Dan 9:25-26.

Anointing with oil - set apart in Divine economy to fulfil an ordained office in the theocracy.

2. Who is anointed?

- (a) Prophets (1 Kings 19:16; Isa 66:1)
- (b) Priests (Ex 29:7; 30:30; Lev. 4:3; 6:22)
- (c) Kings (1 Sam. 24:10; 2 Sam. 19:21; 23:1; Lam 4:20).

'His anointed' - set apart to carry out a divine purpose, even if **not** anointed with oil, e.g., Cyrus (Isa. 45:1), patriarchs (Ps. 105:15), Israel (Hab. 3:13).

3. The significance of anointing

- (a) An authorised separation of an individual for God’s service. The king, for example, was separated to Yahweh (1 Chron 29:22)
- (b) The anointing (1 Sam 10:1 etc.) indicated that the person belonged to a special circle of the servants of God and that their persons were sacred and inviolable (1 Chron. 16:22). The person was conceived of as participating in the holiness of the office (1 Sam. 24:6; 26:9; 2 Sam. 1:14).
- (c) Anointing is associated with divine enablement. ‘The Spirit of God came mightily upon him.’ (1 Sam 10:6ff.).

4. The earliest development of messianic features: Saul

- a. A charismatic leader: 1Sam10:11;11:6
- b. Victory over Israel's enemies: 1Sam11
- c. Graciousness: 1Sam11:13

5. The earliest expectations of a Davidic Messiah

There is an unelaborated reference to the permanence of a Davidic monarchy in Genesis 29:9 – 12. The foundational promise however comes to David in person.

- (a) The oracle of Nathan is found in 3 forms (2Sam 7:11 – 16; Ps 89:20 – 38; 1Chron 17) and contains the following elements:
 - 1) the election of David by God: “I took you...”
 - 2) the promises of victory and wide dominion: “I will cut off your enemies...”
 - 3) the adoption of David and his successors as sons: “I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.”
 - 4) the covenant of God with David and his house: “my covenant with him will stand firm.”
 - 5) the promise of an eternal dynasty not conditioned on the fidelity of David's successors to God: “I will punish him, but I will not take my steadfast love from him...Your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever...” cf.Ps 132:11-12.

This does not limit itself to one successor, nor look into the eschatological future. The assurance is of a dynasty which will endure into the future through a chosen human agent of God's deliverance wrought in political history.

- (b) The “Royal Psalms” belong to this period of history. They were applied, it seems, to various monarchs on important occasions, such as coronations.
 - 1) Psalm 2:7 describes the king as God's “son” and emphasises his rule over the rebellious peoples. The Israelite king, totally subordinate to Yahweh, and his representative, is sure to be victorious in any conflict. The world rule becomes his inheritance. In practice, this was exaggerated language, and could not find literal fulfilment in the immediate Israelite experience. Thus in the New Testament it is repeatedly applied to Jesus (Acts 4:25 – 26;13:33; Rev 2:27;12:5)
 - 2) Psalm110:1 describes the king ruling at the right hand of God. Psalm 110:3 speaks of an eternal priesthood “according to the order of Melchizedek”. This appears to be an appropriation of the hereditary titles of the Canaanite priest – kings of Jerusalem (Gen 14:17 - 24). The priest – king is a conquering warrior (vv.5 – 6). This Psalm is extensively applied to Jesus in the New Testament (Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts2:34; 1Cor 15:25; Heb 5:6,10;6:20;7:11,15,21).
 - 3) Psalm 72 details an idealised reigning successor of David. This ideal king reigns with justice (vv.1- 3), he is the saviour of the poor and needy (vv.4,12 – 14). He delivers his people from their enemies (vv.8 – 11). His dominion is universal (v.8). Through him, the blessing of God brings fertility to the land (vv.3,16). The Psalm is a magnificent prayer (vv.1,20) for a reigning monarch (Solomonic?). Its features however spill out beyond the possibilities of any human monarch, and as such it points to the Messiah.

6. The development of royal messianism from the eighth century B.C.

a. Background

The repeated reign of wicked and inept kings, like Ahaz, meant a decreased hope that each successive monarch would be like David. The messianic expectation in the prophets becomes more detailed and eschatological.

b. The expectation in Isaiah

These prophecies are set in the midst of the Assyrian crisis, when the state of Israel is threatened by external powers and internal corruption.

- 1) Isaiah 7:14 – 17 speaks of the birth of a child to a young woman, whose presence will be a sign that God is still with his people (Immanuel). In the New Testament this is applied to the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:22 – 23).
- 2) Isaiah 9:6 – 7 elaborates this in terms of a charismatic Davidic king who will in the establishment of a vast empire rule in peace and justice. He is worthy of all the courtly titles: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. This is the ideal for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.
- 3) Isaiah 11:1- 9 looks to a more remote future. By charismatic power the coming ruler will save the kingdom from external threat and internal injustice. What follows is a return to the conditions of paradise. Universal peace flows from ‘the knowledge of Yahweh’ (v.2), that is, the experience of the personal knowledge of God that comes by revelation. Through the mediatorship of Israel the whole world comes to the knowledge of God (v.9).

c. Other prophetic expectations

- 1) Micah 5:1 – 6. This is contemporary with Isaiah. He expects a new David to come forth from Bethlehem in the midst of struggle and defeat. This person will deliver the nation from the Assyrian power. In analogous times under Roman oppression the New Testament records the birth of Jesus (Matt 2:6).
- 2) Jeremiah 23:5;30:9,21; Ezekiel 17:22;34:23;37:24. These prophecies look to the coming of a king – saviour, sometimes referred to as ‘the branch or shoot’ of David. This person restores the dynasty and rules in justice.

7. The messianic expectation in the apocalyptic books of the Old Testament

a. The book of Daniel.

- 1) Daniel 7:13 - 14 speaks of a ‘son of man’ who receives royal , eternal and universal dominion from God. Whilst these images are repeatedly applied to Jesus in the New Testament (see later), there is nothing in the text itself to suggest that this figure was associated with the Davidic Messiah. He is heavenly rather than earthly and is not linked to the Davidic dynasty.
- 2) Daniel 9:25 – 26 describes the time ‘of the anointed prince’ and the cutting off of an ‘anointed one’. The interpretation of these texts depends on the larger approach to the book of Daniel. Some scholars see the reference in v.25 to the time of the rebuilding of the temple under Zerubbabel and Joshua (Zech 4:14), and the allusion in v.26 to the Antiochene crisis. Others, who generally date Daniel to an earlier period, see a direct prophecy of the coming of Jesus and his death.

b. Zechariah 9:9 – 10.

This prophecy represents a significant transformation of concepts. The global rule of the king is effected directly by God himself. This figure possesses no warlike traits. The image is taken up of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Psalm Sunday (Matt 21:2 – 7; John 12:12 – 15).

c. General trends

In general terms, once the restoration of the Davidic line seemed an historic impossibility, the expectation of a Messiah became more specific and eschatological. The earlier scriptures which were applied from the time of David in general terms were now re – read in this light. There is however no real evidence that the Messiah was expected to be a supernatural person. The victory of God would come with the inbreaking of divine power in the form of a new exodus, that is, in historical circumstances.

3.1.2 Messiah in the Intertestamental Literature

1. Diversity of material

No single, or clear, messianic expectation concerning the role of a 'Messiah' in the end-time kingdom of God. In some books eschatological questions are treated without any reference to Messiah, for all hope had been lost in the Davidic dynasty.

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls

At Qumran the community awaited 'the Prophet', the Davidic Messiah ('the Messiah of Israel') and the Anointed Priest ('Messiah of Aaron'). The eschatological High Priest has priority over the kingly Messiah. Neither Messiah is superhuman and both are subject to God who will bring in the end.

3.A composite Messiah

Similitudes of Enoch (48:10; 52:4) combines a heavenly, pre-existent Son of Man called Messiah with Isaiah's Chosen or Elect One. This book however is difficult to date, and is either edited or authored by Christians.

4. A political Messiah

Psalms of Solomon (c.63.A.D?) - the promised king (17:5,23) is the Son of David, 'the Anointed of the Lord' (17:6). He will smite the earth with the word of His mouth, purge the earth from sin, crush the heathen nations, deliver Jerusalem, gather the tribes of Israel and reign as King forever.

This is a politico-religious hope. The Messiah has supernatural powers 'with a rod of iron He shall break in pieces all their substance, He shall destroy the godless nations with the breath of His mouth' (17:26-27).

cf. 4 Ezra 7:28,29; Apoc. of Baruch 29:3; 30:1 etc. - late first century, but preserve ideas current in the time of Jesus.

3.1.3 A suffering Messiah?

1. The Servant Songs of Isaiah

a. Isaiah 42:1 –9; 49:1 –13; 50:4 – 11; 52:13- 53:12

b. Controversy over the identity of the Servant of Yahweh among scholars.

1) Moses

2) Isaiah

- 3) Messiah
- 4) Israel
- c. The servant brings deliverance. This is however in terms of justice and mercy, not by war (42:1,4,7).
- d. The range of the servant's ministry extends to the gentiles (42:1,6; 49:6).
- e. An exodus of more than a physical kind is in mind (49:8,10,13).
- f. Salvation is secured through the suffering of the servant (50:6,53:5,9,11).
- g. 'The many' for whom the servant suffers is all inclusive (52:15;53:11 - 12).

2. The Servant in the development of the messianic hope.

There is no clear pre – Christian description of a suffering Messiah in Jewish literature.

- 3. The New Testament regularly applies the Servant passages to the person of Jesus as the Messiah e.g. Matt 12:18 –20; Acts 8:32 – 35; Romans 4:25; Hebrews 9:28; 1Peter 2:21 – 25.

3.1.4 The New Testament

1. Jewish Expectations

- a. Messiah would appear (John 1:20,41; 4:29; 7:31; Luke 3:15), a Son of David (Matt. 21:9; 22:42), born at Bethlehem (John 7:40-42; Matt 2:5) but sudden appearance and obscure origin (Mark 8:29;John 7:26-27), He would remain forever (John 12:34). These issues were matters of speculation.
- b. The expectation was strongly political, e.g., Herod's reaction (Matt 2:1-18), fear that Jesus' popularity would lead to Roman repression (John 11:47-48), attempt of the people to make Jesus king (John 6:15), decline in Jesus' popularity when He refused to take a political stance (John 6:66). Jesus is hailed as he enters Jerusalem as Son of David (Matt 21:9,15). 'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David which is coming' (Mark 11:10).
cf. violent reaction when Jesus failed to act the part.

2. Jesus' Use of the Title

- 1. Doesn't take initiative in referring to himself as Messiah because of its popular meaning cf. 'Messianic secret'.
- 2. Accepts the title when applied to Himself by others, e.g. Luke 4:41; John 11:27, approves Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:29).
- 3. Refers to Himself indirectly, discussion of Davidic descent (Matt 22:42;Matt 23:10).
Accepts the use of titles associated with Zech 9:9, the peaceful king.
- 4. Conversation with Samaritan woman precedes Caesarea Philippi (John 4:25), but is outside Jewish territory.
- 5. On trial He affirms He is the Christ (Mark 14:61), but makes it clear that His Messiahship is of the heavenly Son of Man type.
- 6. After His resurrection the Messianic category has undergone a complete transformation (John 20:31) so that Jesus' mission is now clear. His mission is in the first place to suffer, not reign (Luke 24:26,46).

7. The second stage of Jesus' Messianic mission awaits the second coming: the glorious king (Matt 25:34) will be manifested in great power (Matt 13:41-43; Luke 22:29-30).

3. The Disciples Understanding of Messiahship

1. The initial phase of enthusiasm.

The early recognition of Jesus' Messianic role by the disciples (John 1:41,49) seems innovative and enthusiastic. Later they begin to realise that He also has the words of eternal life (John 6:68-69).

2. The confession of Peter

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi marks a decisive turning point. Jesus deliberately elicits their interpretation of His person. The equation of Messiah and Son of God (Matt 16:16) required special divine revelation. There seems to have been some anticipatory recognition that Messiahship did not mean immediate earthly rule. Jesus was then able to instruct them about His suffering and death (Matt 16:21, 17:12, 22-23; 20:18-19).

3. After the resurrection

The full identity of Jesus as the suffering Servant and Lord was established by his own immediate teaching at the time of the resurrection appearances (Luke 24:26,46; Acts 1:3).

4. The Recognition that Jesus is the Messiah

In the terms of the Old Testament and the Synoptic Gospels, this is best thought of not in terms of the incarnation but that in Jesus' life, death and resurrection the kingdom of God has come in power (Matt 12:28; Mark 1:15; Acts 1:3). To proclaim Jesus is to proclaim the kingdom (Matt 28:19; Luke 24:47).

5. Messiah in the letters of the New Testament

1. The resurrection clarifies and certifies the titles of Jesus

This is explicit in the preaching of Peter (Acts 2:36) and implicit in the way Paul uses the title 'Christ' to describe Jesus in 1 Cor 15:3 - 7. The same idea is found in Romans 1:4 and Philippians 2: 9 - 11.

2. Christ becomes a proper name for Jesus

With Paul, Christ has become a personal name used alone, or in various combinations, several hundred times in his letters e.g. 'Jesus Christ', 'Christ Jesus', 'Lord Jesus Christ'. By Paul's time it was no longer controversial to claim that Jesus of

Nazareth was the fulfilment of Old Testament expectations. (Romans 1:3 for example is a set formula.)

3. In some places *Christos* retains the titular sense 'the Christ' e.g. Rom 9:3 -5; 1 Cor 10:4; 15:22; 2 Cor 5:10; 11:2 - 3; Eph 1:10,12,20; 5:14; Phil 1:15,17;3:7.

The central scandal concerning Jesus identity as Messiah is not the claim as such (though no historical person seems to have claimed to be Messiah before Simon Bar Cochbar in 130A.D.) but that the Messiah had been crucified (1 Cor 1:23).

3.1.5 Messiah as a Corporate Figure

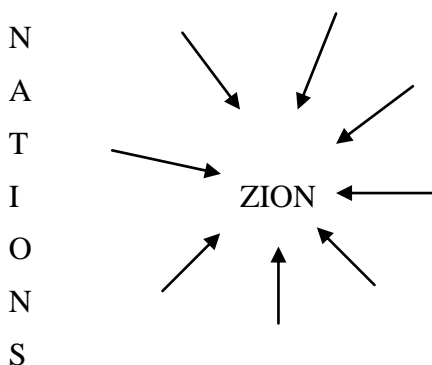
1. Includes his people in his destiny -

- a) as prophet cf. Moses Exodus 28:29-30 - promised land.
- b) as King cf. David Ps 132:13-18 - prosperity.
- c) as Son of Man cf. Daniel 7:27-28 - dominion.

2. Universal Dominion

Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Mic 4:1-4 etc.

- a) Messiah brings the nations into Israel.
(Ps 2; Isa 9:6-7; 40:1-11; 49:1-6; 55:4-7; 60:22; 61:1 f; Jer 12:14-16; Zech 2:11)



- b) In the New Testament this gathering is to Jesus.
Rom 1:5; 11:23-24; Col 1:27; 1 Pet 2:9-10 etc.

3.1.6 Messiah and the Spirit

1. This is developed at length in subject devoted to the relationship between pneumatology (theology of the Holy Spirit) and christology
2. The totality of what it means for Jesus to be Messiah or anointed can be summed up in these terms.
3. The incarnation of the Word enables the Spirit to dwell in a hitherto alien environment, the fallen creature now receives the Spirit.
4. The victory and exaltation of the Messiah reconstitutes humanity so that humanity is now made new as a living being so as to become a life giving spirit with a spiritual body which can naturally dwell in the Father's presence. The mission of Christ is to draw the Spirit into humanity and humanity into the Spirit.
5. "in the name of Christ is implied he that anoints, he that is anointed, and the unction with which he is anointed' (Irenaeus). That is, the threefold God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3.2 Son of David

3.2.1 Old Testament Background

- a) Davidic (Solomonic) kingdom Israel's golden age.
- b) prophetic promise of a perpetual dynasty through a son
 - 2 Sam 7:11-16
 - Ps 2, 89 etc.
- c) picture of complete Ruler in the prophets
 - Isa 9:6; 11:1 f - righteous, just.
 - Jer 23:5 - 'righteous branch from David.'
 - Ezek 34:23; 37:24 - 'one shepherd, my servant David.'
- d) these pictures go beyond mere earthly imagery, the 'Son of David' is the visible expression in physical terms of the cosmic sovereignty of God (1Chron 28:5 etc.). God is present to his people through their ruler.

3.2.2 Intertestamental Period.

'Son of David' a fixed Messianic title, with attendant expectations. Cf. Matt 22:41-46.

3.2.3 New Testament

- a) Gospels
 - Matthew to Jewish Christians, " focus and theme: 1:1 start of the gospel and genealogy 9:27; 12:23; 15:22 etc. hailed as Son of David
 - Luke
 - genealogy 4:23, 31
 - angelic promise of eternal throne 1:32.
 - Other foci
 - use of Ps 110 e.g. Mark 12:35-37. The exalted Son of David is his Lord (as Son of God)
 - triumphal entry e.g. Matt 21:1-11 expectation of imminent reign.
 - b) Acts and Letters
 - i) preaching
 - Messiah / Lord beyond corruption.
 - Acts 2:30 - 37, 13:37; cf. Ps 16:10.
 - ii) resurrected - Rom 1:3-4; 2 Tim 2:8.
 - iii) authority to admit to heavenly banquet.
 - Rev 3:7 (Isa 22:22) ' key of David'.
- Not a primary N.T. title, inadequate to Jesus' status

3.3 Son of God

Outside Bible: used of kings/emperors (Babylon, Rome) heroes (Greece)

In general, it has a two-fold meaning:

(a) Office - role in God's purposes.

(b) Origin - in the case of Jesus this points to His divinity.

3.3.1 Major Uses in Bible

1. Used of a person because of their creation by God:

- Adam (Luke 3:38).
- Angels (Job 1:6; 2:1).
- Israel (Ex 4:22; Mal 2:10).
- Jesus (Luke 1:35) direct action by God.

2. Used of a person because of their relation to God:

- Israel (Ex 4:22). God's firstborn son, the special object of his fatherly love (Deut 14:1; Jer 3:19; 31:9; 20; Hos 11:1).
- Christians (Rom 8:14,19; Gal 3:26; 4:5, etc.).

3. Used of Messiah:

- Official position of Messiahship. No implication of divinity.

2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:27,29. Psalm 2:7: 'you are my son, today I have begotten you'. As anointed king He is called God's son. Promises not fulfilled in David or successors, therefore Judaism awaited a greater son of David who would be prince of all the earth, e.g., Enoch 105:2; 4 Ezra 7:28, etc. But 'Son of God' was not a common Messianic title in the time of Jesus.

Only of Jesus is it said that he is "the s/Son of God", this expression never appears in the Hebrew Bible. (This reminds us that the term "son" is used by analogy.)

4. Used by Christians of Messiah:

- Has implications of divinity.
- Purpose of John's Gospel is to demonstrate that Jesus is both Messiah and Son of God (20:30).
- This is expanded in John's prologue (1:1-18).
- It is the background to Paul's view of the incarnation (Rom 8:3 cf. Gal 4:4).

3.3.2 Sonship and the Earthly life of Jesus.

Jesus never uses the term of Himself in the synoptic Gospels. It is however used by God - Mk 1:11; 9:7; Satan - Matt 4:6; High priest - Mark 14:61; Jn 19:7-12; crowds at the cross - Matt 27:40; disciples - Jn 1:49 (Nathanael); Matt 16:16 (Peter); Matt 14:33 (all - after walking on the water.)

Jesus' uses "Father" only three times in Mark, 31 times in Matthew, 100 times in John. His uses tends to reflect private conversation.

1. Jesus' Baptism:
 - Installation to Messiahship.
 - Sonship is the basis of election.
2. The Temptation:
 - Jesus is challenged to call on the angels to protect Him, this indicates that His Sonship involves a supernatural element.
3. The Transfiguration
 - affirms unique Sonship (Luke 9:35), this is primarily a revelation to the disciples (not Jesus).

N.B. common element. 1. Mk 1:11 echoes Is 42:1 Suffering Servant

2. Temptation is to use Sonship to avoid suffering.

3. Luke 9:31 refers to Jesus 'exodus' at Jerusalem.

The essence of sonship is willing submission to the Father (Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 5:17; 6:57; 15:10 etc).

The transfiguration strengthens Jesus for the coming passion.

4. Matthew 11:25-27 - what Jesus means by His use of the expression:

(a) Understanding of Jesus' ministry comes only by God's revelation:

'I thank you Father.....hidden these things.....revealed them to babes' (v.25).

(b) God's revelation comes only through Jesus:

'all things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no-one knows the Son except the Father, and no-one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him' (v.27).

(c) God has made this revelation (v.25) because Jesus is the Son.

The ground of God's choice of Jesus as the one who will reveal is His Sonship.

As Son he can receive the things of the Father of whom he possesses unique revelation.. The Messianic mission of revelation is dependent upon His antecedent Sonship. This is something of such depth that only the Father penetrates it. The mutual knowledge of the Father and Son is direct, intuitive, immediate - it is underived divine knowledge.

5. The uniqueness of the relationship between Jesus and the Father is indicated by:

Mark 12:1-12 - the Son is not one of the servants.

Mark 12:35ff - the Messiah is David's Lord, i.e., the judge of David.

Mark 14:61 - the charge of blasphemy could not be directed against an ordinary Messianic claim.

- Jesus claim to judge (Mk 14:62) is a claim to divine prerogative.

Matt 11:27; Luke 2:49 - called God 'my Father'.

Matt 5:16,45; Luke 12:30 - God is 'your Father'.

'Our Father' - Lord's prayer is given to the disciples.

John 20:17 - 'my Father...your Father...my God...your God', i.e., He is not a son of God.

The Jews understood the distinctive nature of this claim e.g., John 5:18, 10:31ff.

3.3.3 Sonship in the Johannine literature

1. The title “Son of God” expresses the essential nature of the relationship between Jesus and God. Father and Son are inseparable.
(John 1:18; 5:23; 1 John 1:3; 5:20)
2. John distinctively describes Jesus as the “only” (*monogenes*) Son (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).
3. Against the use of this term in the L.X.X. (Judges 11:34; Ps 25:6) and the New Testament (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb 11:7), it indicates uniqueness: “one and only Son”.
4. Context suggests someone uniquely loved (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9 cf. Gen 22:2).
5. Sonship is eternal.
(John 3:17; 11:27; 17:1,5; 1 John 3:8; 4:9 - 14)
6. The relationship between Jesus and the Father is constituted by mutual love and filial obedience.
(John 3:35; 5: 19 - 20)
7. Jesus is in constant communion with the Father and so the revealer of the Father.
(John 1:18; 3:13; 8:29; 16:32)
8. For this reason Jesus is the Saviour.
(John 11:41; 12:27; 17:1 cf. 3:16 – 21; 34 – 36; 20:31)
9. The Son shares the functions of the Father, especially authority and judgement.
(John 3:35; 5:17 – 30; 12:49; 17:11f.)
10. The Son will return to the glory of the Father through the cross where God’s love is fully revealed (11:4,40; 13:1; 15:13; 17:1,5).

3.3.4 Sonship in Hebrews

1. The fullest statement is in Hebrews 1:3.
2. The term “radiance” (*apaugasma*) is more than reflection, Jesus shares the same glory as the Father.
3. The term “exact representation” (*charakter*) means Jesus bears the exact impression of the very nature of God.
4. Hebrews 1:8 affirms the Son is God.
5. To reject the Son has the status of blasphemy (6:6).

3.3.5 Sonship in Paul

1. “Son” is used fifteen times.
2. In passages to do with the redemptive initiative of God (Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4).
3. In passages to do with the sacrifice of Christ (Rom 5:10; 8:32; Gal 2:20)
4. In relation to the exaltation of Christ (Rom 1:3- 4; 1 Cor 15:24 -28; Gal 1:16; 1 Thess 1:10).
5. Used in relation to Jesus’ deity (Col 1:13,15 -20).

3.4 Son of Man

3.4.1 Significant Uses:

1. Jesus' favourite self-designation. (more than 80 times in the N.T. where Jesus uses the definite article, "the").
Not simply a reference to his humanity.
2. In the Gospels it is not used by disciples or others of Jesus.
3. Only three references in rest of N.T. - Rev 1:13; 14:14, citing Daniel 7:13; Acts 7:56 - Stephen's description of Jesus at God's right hand. (Heb. 2:6 cites Ps.8.)

3.4.2. Background

1. Old Testament

(a) Synonym of Man:

Num 23:9 'God is not a man that....or a son of man that....' cf. Psalm 8:4; 144:3; Job 25:6.

(b) Ezekiel is addressed as 'son of man' (2:1,3,6,8; 3:1,4 etc).

(a) and (b) = weakness of man before God.

(c) Daniel 7:13-14:

Vision of one like the Son of Man who receives universal dominion from the Ancient of Days. So the Kingdom of God is brought to earth, all nations serve the Son of Man in the exercise of His everlasting kingdom.

There is a corporate or social element - Dan. 7:18,27 indicates, that the Kingdom will be possessed by the saints forever.

It appears that the Son of Man is a representative of the nation of saints.

(As the four beasts of 7:3ff are representatives of the world empires.)

2. Aprocryphal Literature:

- 4 Ezra (c.90A.D.)
- apocalyptic redeemer riding in clouds (13).
 - Most High delivers creation through Him (26).
 - spoken of as Messiah.

Ethiopic Enoch (46;48f;52;62;68)

- single personality, not a personification.
- created before all other creatures.
- hidden until the end when He will come to judge and rule the world.
- will gather His people to a banquet.
- will be the light of the Gentiles.
- occasionally called Messiah.

Not like the dominant Messianic expectation of an earthly order. A superhuman figure with transcendent features and universal significance.

3.4.3 Jesus' use of 'Son of Man'

1. Aramaic

- no 'Son of Man' expression linguistically possible.
- **'bar enasha'** - 'the man/human being'.
- 'Son of Man' doesn't appear in Gospels as a way of speaking about 'man' (paraphrases). Often wouldn't make sense in context.

it is possible that, if Jesus is referring to himself as "the man", he is picking up the language of the creation of humanity in Genesis 1:27 (*ha – adam*). He would then be saying that he is the heir of Adam and Eve in the purposes of God.

2. Clearly used at times for 'I'

- e.g. Luke 6:22.
- of the 51 Son of Man sayings in the Gospels 37 have a parallel forms in which another term, usually 'I' (**ego**) is put in its place.
- Jesus used the term to refer to man in particular i.e., Himself. To the disciples Jesus was the Man **par excellence**.

3. As the Messianic title the use of the expression falls into three categories:

1. Jesus' present Messianic ministry:

Mark 2:10, 27, 28; Matt. 11:18-19; Luke 6:22 etc.

All these occur before Caesarea Philippi. After the disciples know he is Messiah the title is given a new two-fold content.

2. Jesus is the Son of Man in humiliation and suffering:

'the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected....' (Mark 8:31). See also Mark 9:12, 31; 10:33,34. This is essential to his mission 'to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45).

This is the one title which is not contested at the cross.

3. Jesus will be the Son of Man in glory:

'will the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (Mark 8:38).

The day of the Son of Man will be like lightning shining (Luke 17:24). He will come in the clouds in glory to gather the elect (Mark 13:26,27). He will sit on the throne as king and judge (Matt. 25:31-46).

Jesus explicitly identified himself with the figure in Daniel 7:13ff, 'You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven'

(Mark 14:62).

Jesus combines the concept of the glorious Son of Man with the role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. This is unique. (This combination however is built up from distinct contexts.)

4. The Gospel of John combines the Synoptic uses of the Son of Man title Jesus is the presence of God among humans, therefore historical encounter with Jesus brings people into the arena of judgement.

(John 5:27; 9:35 – 39; 12:24 – 36)

The cross of Jesus is intimately linked with his exaltation. The “lifting up” of the Son of Man conveys a two fold meaning.

(John 3:13 –14; 8:28; 12: 23, 32 – 34)

The term Son of Man was sufficiently exalted to be used by Jesus of himself, sufficiently flexible to be adapted to his mission and sufficiently rare as to be devoid of political connotations. (It is not a title that Jesus ever explained.)

N.B. there are many allusions to the Son of Man in the N.T. e.g. in Dan 7:13- 14 the Son of Man “was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him”. This is the background to Matt 28:18, “All authority...”.

3.5 The Lamb of God

3.5.1 General Background

ho amnos tou theou - first occurs in John 1:29 - an indefinite expression gathering up all the O.T. pictures of sacrifice and atonement.

3.5.2 O.T Background

1. Passover lamb (Exod 12:3-13; 21-24) - avoidance of judgement cf. 1 Cor 5:7 but no ‘lamb’.
2. Daily sacrifice of lambs (Exod 29:38-46)
3. The servant who takes away sin (Isa 53:7, 12)
4. The lamb that God provides (Gen 22:8)

McDonald says of the lamb - ‘It runs right through the whole unfolding record of the history of salvation. If Exodus tells us of the necessity of the lamb, then Leviticus may be said to specify the purity of the lamb - it must be a lamb without blemish. Isaiah suggests the personality of the lamb - *He* is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. But it was left to John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, to affirm the identity of the lamb’ (p.117).

3.5.3 New Testament

1. John 1:29 - ‘of God’ viz sent by, belongs to, special relationship with.
- points to God’s initiative in salvation viz. the Father provides the Lamb.
2. 1 Pet 1:18-19 - ‘ a lamb without blemish’
- redeemed by his blood.
3. Revelation - Christ triumphant.

When we turn to the book of Revelation, we find that while it contains several pictures of Christ, the Lamb is the one which dominates (28 times). From the beginning he has been the Lamb, he is worshipped (Rev 5:6 ff; 7:9 ff), he defeats the demonic powers (Rev 17:14), and celebrates his marriage to the redeemed church (Rev 19:9). It is because he is the Lamb, that he is the Lord of lords and King of kings and reigns above all, so that this world is not under the control of any political power, but of the Lamb.

3.6 The Word

One of the distinguishing features of John’s writings was his use of the title *Ho Logos*, “The Word”. It is only used in John’s prologue to his gospel (John 1:1-18), in 1 John 1:1 and in Revelation 19:3, though the thought is constantly present in his gospel, and sometimes in Paul (Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-19).

N.B. Jesus is the true Logos.

The word *logos* itself can mean speech, narrative, pronouncement, report, teaching, call, sense etc.

3.6.1 Greek Philosophical Background

a) The intellectual possession of man.

In Greek philosophy the concept is first found in *Heraclitus* (5th Century BC) of the Logos as “the unifying, rational principle holding together a world in perpetual flux” (*New Dictionary of Theology*, IVP, p395). Heraclitus thought of the Logos as being the reasoning power in man. All material things depend on it and all men share in it. It is reason and/or the relation between material things.

b) Plato

Plato took Heraclitus’ thought further, seeing the Logos as expressive of a spiritual world of higher reality, quite above the material world known through the senses. (Plato’s well-known allegory of the cave illustrates his approach very well - all men are considered as being in a dark cave, seeing only shadows, not knowing that a real world exists outside the cave, the world of Logos).

c) Stoicism - world soul

In the 3rd Century BC, the *Stoics* saw the Logos as being the principle of order, design and reason pervading the whole universe. They spoke of *logos spermatikos*, i.e. the seed of reason which is in all men. They also contrasted the logos as reason with the logos as speech - an idea later taken up by John. It was also “the natural law in accord with which people had to live” (NDT, p395).

Logos spermatikos = creative logos.

Logos endiathetos = indwelling logos.

d) Philo

Philo was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher (20BC to AD45) living in Alexandria. He combined Greek and Hebrew ideas to conceive of something which he called the Logos. He uses the term 1300 times in his writings. It has a number of connotations, but over all seems to have a Platonic meaning of the ideal universe behind the material universe as well as meaning the mind of God towards the world. The Logos “denoted the instrument by which the world was created and represented a bridge between a transcendent God and the material world” (NDT p395). intermediary

3.6.2 Hebrew Background

a) Old Testament

In the Old Testament the word *dabar* corresponds to Logos. (In the LXX, *logos* is used to translate the Hebrew *dabar*). There are two prominent uses of the term:

- It is creative - see Genesis 1:3,6,9 etc.; Psalm 33:6. ‘by the word of the Lord were the heavens were made.’
- It is active - see Isaiah 55:1-11; Psalm 107:20; Deuteronomy 31:11-14; Jeremiah 5:14; 20:9 etc.

Consider also the power of blessing and cursing by the spoken word in the Old Testament e.g. Numbers 22:6; Genesis 27:27ff).

Thus, in Hebrew thought, the Word was more than just a verbal expression. It “carried with it the idea of activity and power” (Encyclopaedia Britannica Volume 14, p335). It was a living thing.

Furthermore, some Old Testament references to Wisdom seem similar in nature to references to the Word. See Proverbs chapters 8 and 9. Here Wisdom is represented as more than an abstract ideal: it is personified.

b) Intertestamental Wisdom Literature

Wisdom of Solomon 18:14ff - Logos as personal

Ecclesiasticus 24 - Logos related to wisdom, created before time, rejected in world.

c) Palestinian Targums

Substitute ‘the word’ (memra) for the name of God.

Exod 15:18 - Word of God = primordial light cf. prologue and ‘I am the light’.

d) Rabbis

Word pre-existent, eternal, creative, light and life of Israel.

3.6.4 The Word as the Holy of Holies

James B. Jordan BIBLICAL Horizons, No. 73 May, 1995

And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory . . . (John 1:14).

Commentaries on John, discussing the Word or Logos in John 1, routinely turn to Greek philosophy and say that John is using a term and at least part of an idea familiar in the ancient world. John is showing the Christian truth that is dimly seen in these philosophical concepts.

Fascination with this supposed Greek context of the word Logos has blinded these men to its profound Biblical root. In this short essay I don’t intend to go into all the ramifications of the Word-Logos in John 1 and in the Bible. I just want to point out one significant aspect that, as far as I know, has been overlooked by all.

The Hebrew term for "word" is *dabar*, and a variant of it is *debir*. The word *debir* is used for the Holy of Holies or inner shrine, God’s throne room, in the Temple (though not in the Tabernacle). The AV translates it as "oracle," while many modern versions render it as "inner sanctuary" (1 Ki. 6:5-31; 7:49; 8:6-8; 2 Chr. 3:16; 4:20; 5:7-9; Ps. 28:2). A glance at these passages indicates that it is the room itself, not just the Ark and Cover, that is the *debir*.

Now, when we go back to John 1 and translate the Greek word *logos* as "holy of holies," we get a strikingly pregnant series of associations and meanings:

In the beginning was the Holy of Holies. And the Holy of Holies was with God, and the Holy of Holies was God. This One was in the beginning with God (vv. 1-2).

Jesus is the Holy of Holies. To enter into the Holy of Holies is to enter into Christ Himself, to become one with Him. The Holy of Holies, the room where God dwells, is God Himself. God dwells within Himself.

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being (v. 3).

The Holy of Holies is the archetype of all creation. It is the pattern. The universe is patterned after God Himself as Creator. This is why, in Biblical imagery, the Holy of Holies is replicated in the Holy Place, which pictures the firmament chamber between heaven and earth. Then the Holy of Holies is replicated in the Courtyard, which is the mountain top, the high place of the earth. And the Holy of Holies is replicated in the world and cosmos itself. All these are pictured as "four-square" in Biblical imagery, after the original Holy of Holies. And of course, man himself is created in the image of the Holy of Holies.

In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not overcome it (vv. 4-5).

The Light in the Holy of Holies is God's shekinah glory, which as Meredith Kline has shown in his *Images of the Spirit*, is the Holy Spirit's manifestation. In Genesis 1:2, both the Spirit and the darkness hovered over the deep, but the light of the Spirit overcame the darkness in this primordial "contest." God breathed the Spirit of Life into Adam, and into every man since. Every man is a created holy of holies, containing the light of the Spirit, which men sinfully try to overcome with their own darkness.

And the Holy of Holies became flesh, and Tabernacled among us, and we beheld His Glory, Glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (v. 14).

Once we see that the Word is the Holy of Holies, it is no surprise that He "tabernacles" among us. The Tabernacle and Temple are pictures not only of the cosmos, but also of the human person, with God enthroned at our center. By becoming man, the Holy of Holies put on the Tabernacle around Himself. The shekinah Glory that was enshrined in the Tabernacle was thus enshrined in human flesh. John's Gospel, as I showed in *Through New Eyes*, the proceeds on a tour of the Tabernacle, showing how the Holy of Holies fulfilled its meaning.

Thus, instead of thinking in abstract "logos concept" philosophical categories when we read John 1, we ought to think in terms of the concrete imagery of the Holy of Holies. What was inside the Holy of Holies?

First, the Throne of God, signified by the Cover on the Ark with its two cherubim, on whose wings God sat enthroned. Jesus is the Cover of the Ark. He is the Throne, who glorifies the Father and holds Him up eternally. That is what the Word is, and that is what we as little words, living epistles, are to be as well.

Second, the Ark itself, a chest containing three items. Inside the chest were the three aspects of human life, which are copies of the divine life of the Holy of Holies Himself.

Third, the Tablets of the Law, inside the Ark, are the linguistic Word of God. Usually this is all that commentators see in John 1, though as we are seeing there is more to it. Jesus is the eternal Word of God, which is part of the Holy of Holies, and we are made in His image. Thus, we must be living epistles also.

Fourth, the Golden Pot of Manna, inside the Ark, is the gift of life, mediated through food. The eternal Logos, the Holy of Holies, carries the life of God, which lightens every man.

Finally, Aaron's Rod that Blossomed, inside the Ark, represents the glorified man, aged with white blossoms on his head. The Logos Holy of Holies is the image of the Ancient of Days. He is eternally mature, and eternally a ruler.

When we draw into the Church for worship, we see the elders, we hear the Word, and we eat the sacramental manna. Thus, we come in contact with the created manifestations of the eternal Holy of Holies.

In conclusion, to limit the Word or Logos of John 1 only to language or to some abstract philosophical concept is an error. The Logos is the Holy of Holies, and all it embraces.

3.6.3 Christian Life

1. Gospel preaching as 'word of God' e.g. Acts 4:29, 31, 6:2, 4, 8:4, 14.

2. Jesus encountered not as a personification but a person.

John 1 expresses Christian faith and experience.

3. Revelation 19:11 - the return of the Word, God's Word to end history.

SUMMARY

Thus we might say that the term Logos had two basic meanings at the time of John. First, it meant *Reason* - in an ideal and absolute sense. Second, it meant *Expression* - active and powerful.

When John uses the term, then, he means that Christ was both ultimate, divine truth and the perfect expression of that truth. Just as a word has meaning in itself, and conveys that meaning, so Christ is God in Himself and, by becoming flesh, conveys God to the world.

Now look at John Chapter 1. In this chapter many of the above thoughts are brought into John's discussion of the Logos.

John Chapter 1

Verse 1:

Like Wisdom, the Word was in the beginning with God. Thus a Hebrew might associate it with Wisdom. Note, however, that Wisdom is created (Proverbs 8:22); the Word was not. A student of Philo would interpret it as the mind of God; and so on.

Verse 3:

Agrees with Genesis 1; Psalm 33 etc. The Hebrew idea of a creative Word. (Jesus is the mediator of creation and the controller of history)

Verse 4:

This was Heraclitus' idea - and some element of Stoicism, too.

Verse 9:

Stoicism again.

Verse 12:

Salvation through believing in His name and what name? Probably, the Logos. No other name has yet been given.

Verse 14:

This is the first uniquely Christian element. No-one had ever before conceived of the Word becoming flesh (addition, rather than substitution). From here on, Christianity goes beyond all other ideas of what is meant by the term Logos (Jesus incarnates God's wisdom uniquely). But note that we still have not been told who the Logos is!

Verse 17:

The Logos identified: CHRIST!: living centre of all divine - human relationships.

Thus John takes a term that is well known to his hearers, accepts the current connotations associated with it, but greatly expands upon the common understanding, declaring the personal pre-existence and the incarnation of the Logos as the one who became flesh to enable people to become the children of God.

3.7 The Lord

3.7.1 The Greek Background

1. The term “Lord” was used by Greeks in a variety of ways. It could have been a polite form of address (without the article), or a person in an important position (with the article).
2. When used in a religious context in the East, however, it commonly indicated deity. This included the Roman Emperor when he came to be revered as a god.

3.7.2 Old Testament Background.

When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the Hebrew titles for God, *adonai* meaning “lord,” and *yahweh*, Israel’s covenant name for God, were both rendered as “lord” (*kurios*). Therefore the designation “lord” was established at the time of Christ as a general word for one in authority, but also as a divine title.

Meaning became identical: ‘day of Yahweh’ = ‘day of the LORD’

3.7.3 Gospels

Jesus was frequently called “Lord” by His disciples and by those who sought His help, signifying in most cases, that they held Him in honour, an equivalent of “Rabbi” or “Master”. But it was a title which Jesus took up so that people would think about what they were saying. “You call me Teacher and Lord” he said, “and you are right, for so I am” (John 13:13). In a public encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus quoted Psalm 110 to show that David was subject to the Messiah whom he called “Lord”. Jesus could not be thought of just as any lord. (The fact that this psalm is quoted 21 times in the New Testament suggests a close link between the titles “Lord” and “Messiah”).

There are other occasions when the title “Lord” appears to signify equality with God or worship. The angels who appeared to shepherds said that “Christ is Lord” was born (Luke 2:11, cf. 1:76). Peter’s exclamation following the extraordinary catch of fish may have implied worship (Luke 5:8, cf. Matthew 8:25). Jesus taught that He was Lord of the judgement to come (Matthew 7:21-23). Following the resurrection, Thomas addressed Jesus as “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28).

3.7.4 Rest of New Testament

1. Paul recast his perception of God by introducing Jesus as “Lord”. To attach *Father* to the one God, and Lord to *Jesus Christ* (1 Cor 8:6) was to expand the fundamental Jewish confession of faith, the *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4 -5.
2. Ascension fulfils Ps 110 and commencement of Messiah’s reign as Lord e.g. Acts 1:6
3. Jesus is preached as Lord e.g. Acts 2:36-37, cf. Rom 1:4, 10:9; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Phil 2:7-11.
4. As the crucified Lord he is ‘the Lord of glory’ 1 Cor 2:8 cf. Heb 2:9.
5. ‘Jesus is Lord’, e.g. 1 Cor 12:3, is an ascription of worship and recognition of his complete victory. Having defeated the enemies of God’s people (Luke 1:70-74; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor 8:5-6). He liberates from all false lords including idols, death, Satan, the world (Rom 14:8-11; 1 Cor 2:6-9; 15:24f, 55-56, Heb 2:14-15; Rev 17:14; 19:16).
4. He is Lord ‘for the Church’ (Eph 1:22)

3.7.5 The Lordship of Christ is the product of his Life.

1. Jesus attains lordship by his personal victory in life over all the powers which resist the rightful rule of God. He is Lord by his victory over evil, sin, Satan and death. He has removed all that spoils our true human enjoyment of the lordship which God gave us in creation.
2. The lordship of Jesus then is not something which he possesses simply by being God. It is not external to the reality of human struggle and suffering.
3. Jesus imparts this lordship to the believer so that in him they may also reign in life (Rom 5:17;14:8).

3.8 Titles Given to Christ after his Resurrection

By His resurrection Jesus is made Christ, Son of God, Lord, by God. e.g., Acts 2:36.

This is described in various ways.

1. Formulae of Adoption

Rom. 1:4: Jesus, by His resurrection, is declared to be Son of God. cf. Ps. 2:7 ff; Ps.89:26.

2. Formulae of Enthronement

Jesus is exalted to be Lord - Acts 2:32-35; 10:36.

Express exaltation, rank, status, but also His divine task.

3. Titles of Representation

Christ of God - represents God Himself in an unredeemed world.

Son of God - represents God the Father in a godless world.

Lord - mediator between perishing men and the coming age.

'Access through Christ to God, the Father'.

The Christological titles function between the resurrection of Jesus and our resurrection when God the Father will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:20-28).

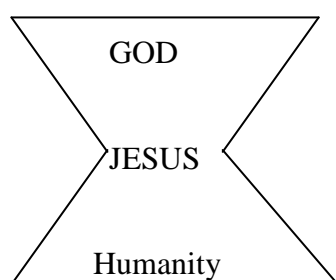
This is a form of 'eschatological subordinationism'.

(See J. Moltmann, **The Crucified God**, London: S.C.M., pp 179-180.)

INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITY AND DEITY OF CHRIST.

Tensions in the History of Christology:

1. Pre-conceptions about the transcendence and immanence of God i.e. philosophy.
2. Misemphases e.g. medieval - transcendence deity
 pietism/liberalism - immanence/humanity.
3. Method - Christology from below
 humanity → deity cf. Synoptics, historical investigation
 - Christology from above
 deity → humanity cf. John, dogma.
4. Appropriate approach - terms to be defined by fact of incarnation itself.



Salvation consists in the coming together of humanity and deity in Christ, only in this way can both who God is and who we are be known.

5. “This means that all the concepts and ideas used in this report (God, humanity, world, eternity, time, even salvation, grace, transgression, atonement and any others) can derive their significance only from the bearer of this name (Jesus Christ) and not the reverse.”

(K. Barth *C.D.* IV/1, 16)

Barth, for example, derives omnipresence from the presence of God in the lowest parts of the earth (Eph 4:6), omnipotence from the ability of God to assume the form of weakness and impotence, and triumph over it, eternity from his coming into our time and living in it under the conditions of sin and death etc. (C.D. IV/1, 188f.).

4.1 The Humanity of Christ: Evidence

- ## 1. Historicity of Jesus

That Jesus is an actual figure of history is scarcely worthy of debate. Conservative scholar, F.F. Bruce once said that “the historicity of Christ is as axiomatic for an unbiased historian as the historicity of Julius Caesar” (*The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable*, p119).

- ## 2. Authenticity of the New Testament

Nor is it appropriate here to discuss the authenticity of the Biblical account. We can therefore accept that the New Testament writers may be trusted to have faithfully portrayed the historical Jesus, if not exhaustively, to the extent that we need be left in no doubt with respect to the quality of life and death that He undertook. (But Robert Graves etc.)

3. Extra - biblical sources

Furthermore, in demonstrating the existence of Jesus in history, we are not restricted only to Biblical sources. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote in about 110 AD of “Christ, whom the procurator Pontius Pilate had executed in the reign of Tiberius” Josephus, a Jewish historian, also referred to the execution in 62AD of “James, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ ...”. These and other independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time by several authors at the end of the 18th Century. There have been great differences of position over the person of Christ, however. Even within orthodox Christian circles, debate has continued through the ages. We cannot expect, then, to neatly deal with all the nuances of the debate. Nevertheless, a clear grasp of the basics is essential, not only because they identify the points of departure of the sectarian extremes of the church, but more importantly, because our knowledge of the person is fundamental to our relationship with Him.

Evidences for the humanity of Christ include: (Luke 2:52).

1. Physical - body, growth.
2. Psychological - emotions, knowledge.
3. Spiritual - prayer, worship
4. Social - fellowship.

4.1.1 His Birth

His conception was above and beyond the natural. His birth itself, however, and His genealogy on both sides of the family are described in Scripture as indicative of humanity (Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38).

4.1.2 His Life

For most of His life, Jesus lived in obscurity, known as the son of a carpenter, with four brothers, and sisters, and having nothing by way of physical appearance which distinguished Him in a crowd (Mark 6:3; John 4:9; Matthew 26:48). He was subject to normal human limitations - hunger (Luke 4:1-4); weariness (John 4:6; Matthew 8:24); thirst (John 19:28); death (John 19:30,34). He spoke of His body (Matthew 26:12); soul (Matthew 26:38) and spirit (Luke 23:46), elements essential to humanity.

4.1.3 His Emotions

Joy (Luke 10:31; John 15:11; 17:13); sorrow (John 11:35; Matthew 26:37); compassion (Matthew 9:36); astonishment (Mark 6:6); indignation (Mark 10:14); anger (Mark 3:5); apprehension, grief and distress (Mark 14:33 -34); loneliness (Matthew 26:37); agony (Luke 22:43 -44; Heb 5:7) were all part of Christ's experience.

4.1.4 His Need for Prayer

Christ shared our need for communion with God (Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 3:21; Hebrews 5:7) / dependence on Father.

4.1.5 His Limited Knowledge

This is expressed in terms of the growth of Jesus in childhood (Luke 2:46, 52); when compared to other passages (1Sam 2:26; Luke 1:80), it is clear that Jesus needed to advance in knowledge.

In common with all people, Jesus lacked full knowledge, he expresses surprise (Mark 6:6; Luke 7:9), he asks questions (Mark 5:30 – 33; 9:21; Luke 8:45; John 11:14,34). At times, things were supernaturally known to Jesus (Luke 9:47; John 1:47; 4:29 etc.). This was evidently a word of knowledge, revealed by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8). (The Gospel record of Jesus' journey from conception to cross indicate a deepening knowledge of his identity as the incarnate Son of God. This came through prayer by revelation of the Spirit, especially in prayer and time of crisis.)

4.1.6 His Temptation

'The temptation stories locate the truth of his humanity in his response to the Father: 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only...' (Luke 4:8) (Gunton)

Temptation is a human experience, not a divine one (James 1:13). Yet Jesus was tempted, just as we are (Luke 4:2,3; Hebrews 4:15). Struggle in Gethsemane.

4.1.7 His Witness

Jesus called Himself a man (John 8:40), and was recognised as such by others (John 1:30; 4:29; 5:12).

4.1.8 His Death

Jesus suffered and died as a man, in weakness and agony of body (Matthew 27:32; John 19:28,30).

4.1.9 The New Testament Witness

The Scriptures claim that Jesus was a man in every way (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15; Philippians 2:8; 1 Timothy 2:5). Paul's attitude 2 Cor 5:16; 1 Tim 3:16; anti-docetic: John 1:14; 1 John 1:1; 'handled touched.'

Post Resurrection: 'a spirit has not flesh and bones' Luke 24:39 cf. John 21).

It is clear we are meant to be left in doubt that Jesus Christ came as a man amongst men, sharing all the experiences of men, and dying a man's death. As we shall see later, if God is just, then only that which is part of humanity can bear the judgement of God upon humanity. That being so, our present and future security is dependent upon the humanity of our Saviour.

4.2 The Humanity of Christ: Theories concerning the Knowledge of Jesus

Key Texts: Luke 2:52; Mark 13:32

1. Human knowledge is finite and necessarily fallible. Therefore if Jesus had ordinary human knowledge he erred.

This implies that to be finite is to sin. The conclusion doesn't follow; nor are error and sin the same thing.

e.g., is the earth flat, Newton's Laws.

2. Two types of human knowledge:

(a) Discursive - non immediate, processive, deductive, learned, finite.

(b) Intuitive - not learned, innate, immediate; infinite in Jesus.

This divides up human knowledge into two compartments, makes discursive knowledge (in Jesus) irrelevant and is not compatible with a revelation model of spiritual illumination.

3. Self-emptying (Kenosis):

Jesus left behind His divine and transcendent attributes e.g., omniscience, but retained communicable attributes e.g., love, mercy.

This may be formally correct, but the methodology is wrong. It presupposes that we know how the divine attributes operate, then fits this model to Jesus life.

Rather, Jesus as Lord and servant (viz. biblical categories) is 'Lord of all knowing' and becomes other than omniscient to fulfil his mission.

4. Accommodation:

R.C. dogma: Jesus possessed completed knowledge and the beatific vision (direct vision of God's face) from conception. He accommodated Himself to the expectations of others concerning His humanity.

This is an imposition of a doctrinal conclusion on the text. It implicates Jesus in deception. The cry of dereliction (Mark 15:34) contradicts this position.

NOTE: The sinlessness of Jesus makes a difference between His 'spiritual knowledge' and ours e.g., His reading of the O.T.

5. Two-minds:

This is a popular modern way of thinking about the incarnation. In Jesus, who is both God and human, there are two minds or two consciousnesses. The mind of the eternal Son of God and the mind of a man. The human and divine minds exchange information and experiences. This would seem to be controlled by a grace - faith relationship, whatever supernatural knowledge, experiences and abilities are exhibited by Christ flow from the grace of God through his human faith. What he knows is then a function of his relationship as the incarnate Son of God with the Father through the Spirit.

The main difficulty with this approach is that it seems to deny that the Word actually now exists as a human; God has not simply adopted a human mind, so that two minds exist in some sort of parallel .

6. A trinitarian mystery

- a) The major texts in question assert the omniscience of the Father (Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7).
- b) Jesus confesses that his limitation of knowledge continues after the resurrection (Acts 1:7). This implies something more than a kenotic limitation.
- c) It seems that Father has knowledge which is a particular property of his person as Father (Matt 11:27), and some of this he does not share at all times with the Son in his incarnate state.
- d) Perhaps the Father withholds this data in order to surprise the Son with the scope of his grace. Or, ignorance of some things is part of the glory of the Son in his dependence upon the Father (cf. Mark 13:31).

7. The most significant aspects to do with Jesus limited knowledge have to do with his role as Mediator.

- a) It means Jesus is the recipient of supernatural rather than infinite knowledge.
- b) Jesus was never ignorant of anything God wished him to know.
- c) To be a true mediator Jesus had to live within human limitations (Mark 15:34).
- d) These are things Jesus shares with us.

4.3 The Humanity of Christ: The Sinlessness of Jesus

4.3.1 The Biblical Evidence

- 1 The opponents of Jesus were unable to name a sin in him (John 8:46), and they were unable to sustain a charge against Him (Matthew 26:59ff; John 18:38).
- 2 There is no record of Jesus ever confessing His sin or praying for forgiveness, unlike the other great figures of Scripture..
- 3 The writers of the New Testament explicitly emphasise the sinlessness of Jesus (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15;7:26; 1 Peter 1:19;2:22; 1 John 3:5).

4.3.2 The Nature of Jesus' Sinlessness

1. This is a function of His **humanity** not of His deity, i.e., it is not even truly possible to think of God sinning (God would not be God, what would be His motive, it implies a law 'above God' being broken etc.) cf. James 1:13.
2. Human beings do not have to sin to be human e.g., Genesis 2; heaven.
Sin is not part of the image of God.
A potential does not have to be actual to be real.
To compare sinlessness to sin in terms of human normality is the wrong way around, i.e., sinlessness is the theological or moral norm.
3. The theological explanation for the **impossibility** of Jesus sinning lies in the fact that the human nature is penetrated by the divine **hypostasis** (see later). The fact of Jesus' sinlessness lies in His actual submission to the will of the Father to become sin on the cross i.e., it is a function of His Holiness John 8:29; 15:10; Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:30; 7:52; 13:35).. Jesus did not draw on the infinite divine reserve as some sort of a 'fallback' to avoid sin. The Holy Spirit is the power by which Jesus is free and truly human, his life entirely directed to the praise of the Father(Luke 4:1 – 2; Heb 9:14).
4. P.T. Forsyth argues (*The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, pp.341 – 342) that Jesus inability to sin is founded on the eternal decision to renounce his heavenly glory. His renunciations on earth had behind them all the power of the renunciation by which he came to earth. Yet his own self- emptying included ignorance of the fact that he could not sin. This secures both our redemption and the reality of his conflict with sin.

4.4 The Saving Significance of the Humanity of Jesus

1. The Humanity of Jesus means God as a human being , God's 'enhumanisation.' God now has a human identity so that a perfect mediation and communication between the divine and human has been accomplished
2. If Jesus did not take upon Himself our humanity then the incarnation cannot be redemptive. The effectiveness of the atonement depends upon 'one of us' without guilt dying in our place. If Jesus is not truly human He is neither our representative nor our substitute.
3. Also, the incarnation is the reconciliation of humanity and deity in the one person. If Jesus is not really human then reconciliation between us and God does not take place IN his submission to the judgement of the cross.

Under such conditions Jesus cannot justify us, sanctify us, etc., because we cannot be united to Him, i.e., union presupposes a common humanity. Neither could Jesus be our High priest, knowing our weakness etc.

“What has not been assumed cannot be restored; it is what is united with God that is saved.” (Gregory of Nazianzus)

4. A true human being does not have to sin. This is not a part of God's normality.
5. Through our share in the Spirit of Christ sin is never necessary for us.
6. Only under the conditions of our life could our fallen state be undone. Salvation is in proportion to the fullness of the humanity (body, soul, spirit, will) of God in Christ.

"Wherever Jesus was found, the humanity of God was found on the same side as humanity under distress" (Ray S. Anderson)

"Christ does not heal us.... as an ordinary doctor might. No, he becomes the patient." (James Torrance)

"It is a familiar fact that the usually accredited test of a realistic doctrine of Christ is whether it yields a realistic doctrine of salvation. Can an inspired person – even with plenary inspiration – achieve what Christians experience in Christ, when they find in him humanity recreated and the new age beginning to be present? If Christ is authentically experienced as not only a teacher but a Saviour, one who rescues the human will from its self-centredness and, when he is allowed to do it, human society from its warped condition, can it be that he is no more than a supremely inspired person? There is no doubt that mainstream Christianity always found in Jesus Christ a Saviour and no less – a creator and not an instructor or example only. Information and example may have a limited effectiveness on individuals, given a will and a capacity to respond. But what if this capacity is diminished and the will is warped and what if something more than individual appeal is needed – something as radical as a new creation? Remaking from within by God incarnate seems alone sufficient." (C.F.D. Moule)

This provokes the question: 'Did Jesus assume a fallen human nature?' It is fallen nature that needs redemption.

4.5 Jesus' Adoption of a sinful nature

4.5.1 Arguments for a Fallen Human Nature

1. "The unassumed is the unhealed": Jesus could not heal our nature if he did not share it. "For that which he has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of him that was begotten and so be saved as a whole." (Gregory of Nazianzus)
2. The humanity of Christ is derived from his mother, who was fallen.
3. Unless Jesus had a fallen nature he was not like us in every respect, except sinning (Heb 4:15).
4. The only human nature that existed to be taken up was fallen.
5. If he did not have a fallen nature he could not be tempted as we are (Heb 2:18; 4:5).
6. The source of the sinlessness of Jesus would then be that the adopted sinful human nature was instantaneously and completely sanctified by the Holy Spirit at the time of the incarnation, or that the nature was progressively sanctified through his earthly obedience.

4.5.2 There seems to be several major objections to this:

1. It can sound like the human nature of Jesus preexisted its union with the Word.
2. It would make Jesus to be of the seed of Adam where scripture speaks of him as the seed of Abraham. The guilt of Adam would be imputed to him by nature.
3. It is inconceivable that a Holy God could unite Himself to a sinful nature, i.e., 'flesh'.

4. The human nature cannot be fallen without the person of Christ being fallen. This would mean that Jesus himself needed redeeming. The very meaning of fallen is to have sinned against God.

Reply:

The first objection holds only if the sanctifying work of the Spirit is not clearly tied to the event of the incarnation itself. The second objection ignores the fact that Jesus is the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). The third objection is a pre-judgement. In the light of the action of the cross such a union cannot be ruled out in advance. The third and fourth objections ignore the difference between the conception of Jesus and ours. If Jesus assumed the human nature of His mother Mary He must have assumed a sinful human nature. However this would have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit instantaneously (cf. Luke 1:35), and so a function of the eternal decision of Father and Son that Jesus would be a sin-bearer. To adopt a sinful nature by choice is not to be sinful but to set out to destroy sin.

4.5.3 Positively it can be said:

1. This view is at least compatible with Scripture, e.g., John 1:14; Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4, 2 Cor 5:21
2. It makes the incarnation immediately relevant to us as sinners: Jesus has saved our nature, not some hypothetical or abstract nature. He has felt to the full the temptations which assail us, not merely the limitations of humanity. He has endured fear, loneliness, hunger, thirst, sorrow, death and separation from God – all effects of assuming a fallen nature.
3. It leads to a proper evaluation of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in Christ and so in us.
4. In its connection to the fallen creation the flesh of Jesus is the means whereby the earth is restored. This brings God into contact with humanity in a way which is more than external or juridical/legal.
5. It shows us that God is not distant from sinners, in a way which would lead to Pharisaism or perfectionism.

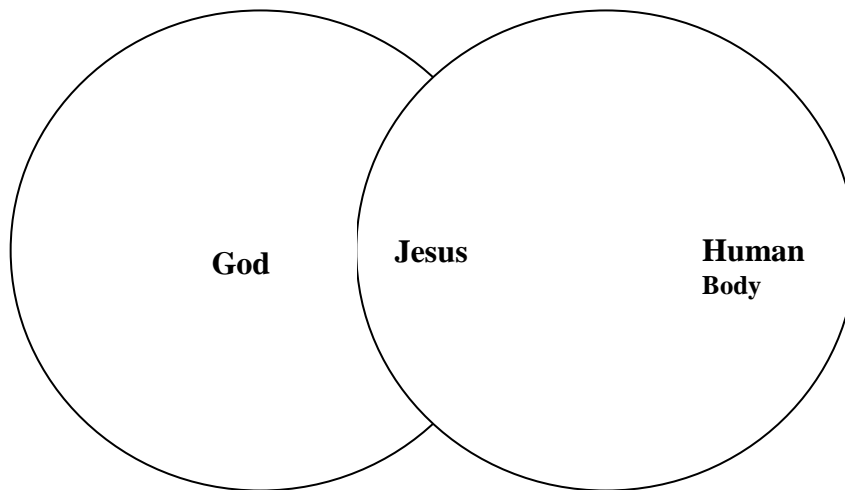
4.6 Christological Heresies Concerning the Humanity of Jesus

4.6.1 Docetism

1. From the Greek dokeo = “to seem”. First century (John 1:14, 1 John 4:2ff; 5:6ff), gnosticism, Marcion.
2. Heir of Hellenistic dualism of matter - spirit, soul-body e.g., soma - sema. Matter was a hindrance to spiritual life, or even evil. God could not experience change or suffering.
3. Jesus 'appeared' material. A phantom. God could not become evil.
4. Mary a vessel who contributed nothing. (Jesus passed through Mary like water through a tube.)
5. Any appearance of humanity was simply a vehicle for revelation and not a saving reality.
6. Therefore no real incarnation, atonement etc. (Docetism is driven by pain avoidance cf. Christian Science.)

4.6.2. Apollinarianism (Apollinarius c. 310-390 A.D.)

1. Extreme anti-Arianism (they denied deity).
2. Considered merely as a man Jesus has no saving power.
3. Humanity consists of a material body controlled by an immaterial and rational consciousness (soul). Jesus is not a man conjoined to God (2 persons), Scripture teaches that Jesus is a unity. Just as there is a single human nature formed out of the union of two incomplete parts, body and soul, so the Logos of God is united to his flesh to give one organic whole.
4. Wished to avoid dualism (Antiochene theology) i.e., there must not be two life - principles in Jesus-two wills, two intelligences, etc. This would mean an inner conflict. As well, Jesus would no longer be a man, but a man – god, a sort of monster.
5. If Jesus had a rational soul (nous) with a free will this would imply sin, as the mind is corrupted through subservience to the flesh; no part of the world can redeem from sin. Jesus had no nous, this was replaced by the Logos.
6. The unity of Christ is found in the fact that the Word became 'flesh' (John 1:14). The Logos took up and penetrated a human body as its life principle. The flesh of Christ is glorified and divine. This results in one divine-human nature (a compound).
7. “He is not man, though like man; for he is not consubstantial with man in the most important element.” “He is divine spirit united to flesh.”
8. As such it is impossible for Jesus to sin, He has no distinctive human nature and His flesh is glorified.



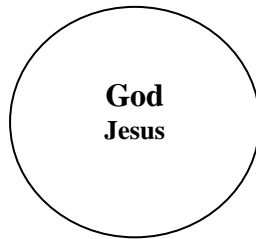
This denies that Jesus took up a real (i.e. full) human nature. It sacrifices the mystery of how there can be two-natures in Christ and the testimony in Scripture to Jesus' genuine human psychology to logic. If Jesus had no soul, he cannot save ours. “The unassumed is the unhealed” (Gregory of Nazianzus). “He gave body for body and soul for soul, the whole person for the whole person, this is the reconciling exchange of Christ.” (Athanasius). “He carries home on his shoulders the whole sheep, not its skin only.” (Gregory of Nyssa)

4.6.3 Monophysitism (Eutychianism)

(Opposite of dyophysitism)

1. 'One-nature-ism' - human nature fused with divine or swallowed up like a drop of vinegar in the ocean (Eutyches. c. 448-9). The two natures are ontologically “squashed” together to form one new nature.

2. Since the divine nature is the stronger partner, Jesus' humanity is glorified in Mary. The divine properties penetrate the human nature. So, for example, Jesus couldn't suffer, or only by an act of will.



This doctrine amounts to a divine nature with a human body as an 'overcoat'. As such it denies Jesus full humanity. Tends to find expression in mystical approaches to Christianity which emphasise loss of self rather than death to self.

4.6.4 Monotheletism c. 634-680 A.D.

(Opposite of dyotheletism)

1. 'One-will-ism' - Jesus' human nature did not include a will separate to His divine nature.
2. The unity of Jesus is found only in the Divine nature. A double will would mean two persons.
3. Modern monotheletists (V. Taylor) argue that the human will is the divine will under the limited conditions of humanity.

This doctrine denies to Jesus a true human nature, but the human will of Jesus was never activated independently of the Logos. Moreover, a double operation of will is required for God the Son to be continually condescending to act and suffer in humanity and for the humanity of Christ to agree with the will of God (John 6:38). (This is not to say that the man Jesus has 2 wills, but the person, who is God and man.) If Jesus did not have a human will he could not free us from the guilt of our fallen wills.

4.7 The Pre-existent Humanity Of Jesus

"For he it was who sailed along with Noah, and who guided Abraham; who was bound along with Isaac, and was a wanderer with Jacob; the chief shepherd of those who are saved, and the bridegroom of the church..." (Irenaeus)

1. Jesus can speak of himself as existing before his birth. (John 6:62; 8:58; 13:3; 17:5; 24 cf 3:13; 7:29; 8:38).
2. Paul speaks of 'Jesus Christ' preceding this creation or of coming to earth (1 Cor 8:6; 15:47; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:15; 2 Tim 1:9).
3. These thoughts are repeated in other parts of the New Testament (John 1:15; Heb 1:2-3; 2:11; 13:8; 1 Pet 1:18-20; Rev 1:8; 13:8; 22:13).
4. This cannot contradict with the Word becoming flesh at a point in ordinary space-time history (John 1:14).
5. The best way of thinking of this is in terms of the eternal election of the Son by the Father (Eph 1:4) to be the man Jesus through whom the world would be saved.

In eternity, the Word of God elected to adopt a specific human nature and the identity associated with it. This obedience to the Father is the foundation of Jesus obedience as the Son of God.

6. This implies that from eternity, since Jesus is alpha and omega (Rev 1:17), God has been (by free decision) human like. Not some general or vague 'human-likeness', but like Jesus: open to weakness, frailty, death - and resurrection.
7. God's decision to become human cannot be measured by space and time, but rules over it.. It is constitutional of all history for it is constitutive of the creator himself.
8. The repeated New Testament exhortation to be like God and Christ is therefore rooted in the depths of the eternal divine decision concerning the incarnation. (Matt 5:48; 6:12; Luke 6:36; John 20: 21; Eph 4:24, 32; 5:2; Col 3:13; 1 Peter 1:15 – 16; 1John 3:3).

4.8 Preparation for Incarnation

1. The God who becomes human in Jesus is the Creator of all things.
2. This must include the humanity of Jesus himself.
3. The ultimate expression of the image of God (Gen 1:26-27) is Jesus Christ (Col 1:15).
4. It must be that in the plan of God creation is predisposed to incarnation. There is a "fit" between God and humanity.

4.9 Summary

1. Jesus is a true sacrifice for us.
2. He can sympathise and intercede for us.
3. Jesus reveals true humanity.
4. He can be our example.
5. Human nature is good.

Erickson's summary: C.T. pp. 721-722.

5. THE DEITY OF CHRIST

5.1 Assumptions about the Deity of Jesus

1. The focus of the New Testament is on a functional not ontological Christology. What Jesus does for us is the primary frame of reference. Who Jesus is, is progressively revealed by his works.
2. If only God can reveal God, no amount of evidence as such can demonstrate that a particular human being is God.
3. Since the knowledge of God is a share in the inner life of God, only the revelation of the Spirit could lead to the conclusion that Jesus was God in the flesh cf. Matt 16:16ff.
4. To know Jesus as God requires an indwelling of the apostolic witness in scripture.
5. Denial of the deity of Jesus implies we cannot have communion with God.
6. The affirmation of the Incarnation is primarily soteriological, we recognize Jesus as God by entering into union with God through him.

5.2 Statements about the Pre existence of Christ

1. The Synoptics

Given that the Synoptics record the public ministry of Jesus, it is not surprising that while there are passages which imply his pre-existence (e.g. Matthew 22:41-45) direct reference is quite limited.

- a. The use of the title “Lord” in Mark 1:2 -3 as fulfilment of Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3 depends on Jesus’ pre – existence.
- b. Jesus is the bearer of the kingdom of God that the Old Testament anticipated God would bring (Mark 1:15).
- c. Use of the title “Son of Man” against the background in Daniel 7:13f. and as one who comes into the world (Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10).
- d. Pre- existence is implied by the status of the son in the parable of the tenants (Matt 21:33 -46).

2. John

The high christology of John, a christology from “above”, means from the very outset of this gospel, we are left in no doubt that Christ came from the Father into the world (John 1:1-4; 9-14). Jesus Himself declared that He came from heaven (John 3:13; 6:33-42). His statement to the Jews that “before Abraham was born, I am,” while revealing more than pre-existence, contained that truth (John 8:58).

Jesus made His most explicit declarations (John 13:3,16:27,28; John 17:5,21,24) in relation to the occasion of his passion. Not only had He come from God and was returning to Him, but He had, in His pre-incarnate state, shared His Father’s glory. This awareness grows as his faith – obedience intensifies through suffering. As such his consciousness of the dimensions of his filial identity becomes more potent. Cf. The reality of election, predestination and hope in the life of the faithful believer.

3. Paul

When we come to Paul’s letters, we find Him in complete agreement with John. In a number of passages, He speaks of Christ’s part in creation and its ongoing sustenance, and in His pre-existent glory (Colossians 1:16,17; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-7). The “sending texts” in Paul confirm this (Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4).

4. Hebrews

The writer to the Hebrews gives a similar testimony (Hebrews 1:1-3,10; 2:9; 10:5). In 7:3 Melchizedek is “made like” the Son of God, who must therefore already exist.

5. Old Testament

In the Old Testament, we have a number of references to the appearance of God in human (or angelic) form, which are recognised by some as being pre-incarnate appearances of the second person of the Trinity (e.g. Genesis 18; 28; Exodus 33). Does the New Testament refer to this?

All of which amounts to a clear demonstration that the Christ of the Scriptures is not confined to the Jesus of Nazareth, that the birth of Jesus did not speak of His beginning, but of His contraction from glory into human history.

5.3 The Qualities of his Life

As we have seen, the testimony of Scripture does not provide a systematic proof of the pre-existence of Christ, nor of His humanity or deity. If we accept that testimony, however, we find a number of clear indications of these truths. Here we look at those qualities of His person, that, while not being proofs, together give cogent witness to His deity.

5.3.1 His Self-awareness

From the very limited account of Christ’s early years, we are given almost no insight into His development, and in particular, into the growth of His understanding of His unique relationship with His Father. Yet it seems that even at the age of 12, Jesus was conscious that His subjection to His Father took precedence over familial relationships (Luke 2:49). Certainly, by the time His public ministry began, He understood who He was, and what lay ahead of Him (as evidenced in His baptism - Matthew 3:13-17). See John 6:38,46,62; 8:32,42 for examples of this understanding. At the conclusion of His ministry, Jesus said to His disciples that both the Father and He would dwell within His followers, thereby demonstrating His awareness of His place and function in the Godhead (John 14:23).

5.3.2 His Self-assertion

Though Jesus often spoke in parables or in terms veiled to the unbelieving, He left no doubt in the minds of His hearers that He knew Himself to be equal with the Father (John 5:18,22,23; 10:30). It was this assertion above all others that angered the Jewish leaders (Mark 14:61-64; John 10:30ff).

He also claimed the right to judge the world (Matthew 7:21-23; Mark 13:4) and to call the dead to life (John 5:25-29). He also claimed to be the sole avenue to God (Matthew 11:27; John 14:6).

5.3.3 His Self-declaration

Frequently Jesus declared His nature and purpose through the expression “I am” (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7-9. 11;11:25; 14:6; 15:11). Normally a Greek verb contains within itself the pronoun indicating who is speaking. Thus *eimi* means “I am” *estin* means “he is”. There is no need for the word for “I” and “he” - except for special emphasis. In all of the “I am” declarations, however, the verb *eimi* is prefaced by the emphatic pronoun for “I,” (*ego*). In effect, Jesus is saying, “I, yes I, am ...”. These claims were exclusive claims, beyond the scope of a man and implying deity.

It is clear that Jesus was making claims of such an extraordinary and universal nature that no mere man could ever fulfil them. They require the speaker to be divine.

This is especially strong in cases where there is an absolute use of “I am” without a predicate (John 6:20; 8:24; 28, 58, 18:5). This seems to correspond to the absolute use of “I Yahweh” in the Old Testament (Ex 6:7; 7:5 etc.) without a connecting verb (“am”). The LXX *ego eimi* to translate “I Yahweh” or “I He” especially in Deutero – Isaiah. In some places this seems to function as a divine name (43:25; 51:12; 52:6). It emphasises the uniqueness of the God of Israel. Jesus reveals his uniqueness not by speaking of his divine being but by taking over the formula used by Yahweh to reveal himself to his people. Jesus is the site of the revelation of God.

In cases where a predicate complement is implied (John 6:20 “It is I”; 18:5 “I am he”), we seem to be witnessing a revelation of God to strengthen or express divine presence. This corresponds to theophanies in the Old Testament which assure (Gen 26:24; Isa 51:12) or indicate the authority of God’s revelation (Ex 6:6; 20:1,5; Lev 18:6; Isa 52:6).

Where there is an expressed predicate complement (John 6:51; 8:12; 9:5; 10:7,9,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5) the uniqueness of Jesus is set against the context of the past (the manna, the light of the feast, the way of the Torah etc.) which has now been replaced by Jesus. Each expresses the unique mission of Jesus as the Saviour sent by the Father.

Note that when Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” He again used the emphatic pronoun, *ego* (John 8:58). Secondly, His use of the present continuous tense, rather than the more correct past tense implied a continuity of existence of a kind known only to God. Thirdly, it corresponds almost exactly to the words of God in Exodus 3:14; “I am who I am”. In fact, the LXX uses the very words *ego eimi* in Exodus 3:6; 3:14; 20:2, etc. Clearly, the Jews understood Jesus to be declaring:

\ His eternal being, and

\ His equality with God.

It was hardly surprising, then, that they attempted to exact the required punishment for blasphemy.

C S Lewis makes a telling point when he says: “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God’. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (*Mere Christianity*, p52).

5.3.4 His Authority

From the outset of His ministry, Christ exercised an authority that was unique. He came with the same message as John (cf. Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17), but He drew men in a way that even John was unable (John 3:36). When He called men to follow Him, there was a compulsion about that call that seemed irresistible (Matthew 4:18-22). (This relates to election, e.g. the rich young ruler.)

In His teaching He spoke, not *from* authority, as did the rabbis of the day, but with authority (Mark 1:22; John 7:46). Whereas the teachers would say, “It is written,” and the prophets would say, “Thus says the Lord,” Jesus said, “I say ...”. It is no wonder that the crowds were amazed at His teaching (Matthew 7:28,29).

5.3.5 His Forgiveness of Sins

Christ not only claimed the authority to forgive sins, but vindicated that claim by His actions (Mark 2:5ff). Nor did He refute the declaration of the Jews that only God could forgive sins. Instead He demonstrated that the power to forgive and the power to heal were both vested in Him.

5.3.6 His Acceptance of Devotion

Only that which is divine is rightly worshipped in the fullest sense. No righteous man would accept another's worship (Acts 10:25,26; Revelation 19:10). Yet Jesus, man though He was, and righteous though He was, accepted the worship of men (Matthew 14:33; John 9:38; John 20:28f). Jesus was adamant that only God was to be worshipped (Luke 4:8), yet freely received the homage of His followers. This is a feature of post-ascension church e.g. Acts 13:2

There are a number of hymns to Jesus in the New Testament (B. Witherington III, *The Many Faces Of The Christ*, N.Y. Crossroad, 1998.) These are identified by rhythmical lilt, couplets, metre and rhetorical devices e.g. alliteration, chiasmus. The fullest of these is Philippians 2:6 – 11 the ending of the hymn “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Cites Isaiah 45:23, where it is used of Yahweh, of Jesus. Paul plainly understand the exaltation of Jesus as a manifestation of the previous two verses in Isaiah (45:22 – 23) “there is no other god besides me. **22** ... For I am God, and there is no other.”

(cf., e.g., 1 Cor 8:5-6, John 17:11, 21, 23 and Mark 2:7 with Deut 6:4 [the Shema] where Jesus is included within the oneness of God.). Other hymns are Col 1:15- 20; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1: 2b – 4.

There are a number of prayers and invocations to Jesus: 2 Corinthians 12:8 “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.” and “all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:2 cf. Joel 2:32) See also, Acts 9:5ff; 1 Cor 16:22; 1 Thess 3:12; 2 Thess 3:5, 3:16; 2 Tim 1:16- 18. Acts 7:59 – 60 shows that Stephen prays *to Jesus* for those killing him and releases his spirit *to Jesus* in exactly the same way as Jesus did to the Father (Luke 23:34,46). Jesus is therefore as much God to Stephen as the Father was to Jesus.

In John's Gospel, Jesus encourages his followers that after his return to heaven (John 3:13; 6:62) they are to, “ask me anything in my name” (14:14) also to pray “in his name” (14:13; 15:16; 16:23 -24, 26).

Prophetic witness is through Jesus, “the word of the LORD/Yahweh” in the Old Testament has become “the word of the Lord (Jesus)” in the New Acts 8:25; 11:16; 13:44, 48; 15:35-36; 16:32; 19:10, 20; 1 Thess 1:8; 2 Thess 3:1; 1 Pet 1:25). Jesus sends prophets (Matt 23:34; Luke 11:45; Eph 4:11). Preaching is in Jesus name (Acts 3:6; 4:18; 5:40; 9:27). Jesus possesses the authority of God in his Word, otherwise this is idolatry.

There are many references in the NT to a readiness to suffer and die for Jesus, such as Acts 21:13, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”. See also Acts 5:40- 42; 7:52- 60; 14:3, 7, 19; Phil 1:20; 2 Cor 4:10; 2 Tim 2:3; Rev 1:9; 3:10; 12:11, 17; 20:4 etc.

5.3.7 His Bearing the Wrath of God

“Because He was God Himself, He could subject Himself to the severity of God. And because He was God Himself He did not have to succumb to the severity of God. God has to be severe to be true to Himself in His encounter with man, and this to be true also to man. God’s wrath had to be revealed against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. But only God could carry through this necessary revelation of His righteousness without involving an end of all things. Only God Himself could bear the wrath of God. Only God’s mercy was capable of bearing the pain to which the creature existing in opposition to Him is subject. Only God’s mercy could so feel this pain as to take it into the very heart of His being. And only God’s mercy was strong enough not to be annihilated by this pain. And this that could happen only by the divine mercy is just what did happen on the cross of Golgotha: that double proof of omnipotence in which God did not abate the demands of His righteousness but showed Himself equal to His own wrath; on the one hand by submitting to it and on the other by not being consumed by it. In virtue of this omnipotence God’s mercy could be at one and the same time the deepest and sincerest pity and inflexible and impassible divine strength. He could yield His own inexorable righteousness and by this very surrender maintain Himself as God. He could reveal Himself at once as the One who as the servant of all bore the punishment of death which we had deserved, and the One who as Lord of all took from death its power and for ever vanquished and destroyed it. In this twofold sense God’s righteousness triumphed in the death of Jesus Christ.”

Karl Barth from *Church Dogmatics* II 1:330

5.4 The witness of others

Given the claims that Jesus made, and the hostility that it produced amongst the Jewish leaders, the response of His followers becomes significant. It is not that of the gullible, but of those who had opportunity to observe the actions and attitudes of the man over three years.

Peter, acting as spokesman for the disciples, declared Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God - a direct reference to His deity (Matthew 16:16). *Thomas*, too, acknowledged the risen Jesus as “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Notice that Jesus made no attempt to correct him, but rather encouraged him in his belief (John 20:29). Compare that with the reactions of Peter and John, and later, Paul and Barnabas, when mistakenly taken to be divine (Acts 3:12ff, Acts 14:11-20). Cf. Rev 19:9-10.

Stephen’s witness was unmistakable as he paid in the ultimate to proclaim Jesus as the Righteous One predicted by the prophets, and then betrayed and murdered by the people of his day (Acts 7:51-60).

And then *Saul*, breathing out murderous threats against the disciples, is confronted by Jesus on the road to Damascus and at once begins preaching that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 9:1,20).

Such acclamations spring from the deep conviction that the Jesus of Nazareth was none other than God in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

Cf. Titles of Jesus

5.5 The Testimony of Scripture

There are a number of passages which directly declare Jesus to be God, and many more in which the inference is unmistakable. Consider for example:

Titus 2:13 - “our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ”. While this might be translated “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (KJV), the Greek construction is literally “of the great God and Saviour of us Jesus Christ,” where “Jesus Christ” carries the same (genitive) case as “the great God and Saviour”. It is therefore more accurately translated as does the NIV.

Hebrews 1:8 - in which the Son of God is addressed by the words “O God”. These words form a part of a tribute to the deity of Christ, coming as a prophetic word, from God Himself.

1 John 5:20-21 - where Jesus is described as the true God and eternal life.

Romans 9:5 - “Christ, who is God over all, forever praised”. Again, the original Greek construction favours this translation, rather than one which separates the phrase “God who is over all be forever praised”. As the NIV Study Bible puts it, this is “one of the clearest statements of the deity of Jesus Christ found in the entire NT, assuming the accuracy of the translation” (p1719).

2 Thessalonians 2:16 - This passage, along with many others, links the names of Jesus with God in such a way as to infer equality. Note that Jesus’ name is placed first, and that the verb (v17) is singular rather than plural, implying unity of Father and Son. (See also *1 Thessalonians 3:11*; *1 Corinthians 1:3*, etc.).

2 Timothy 4:8 - The term “the Lord, the righteous judge” appears to refer to God, but the latter part of the verse makes it clear it is a reference to Christ, for it speaks of “his appearing”.

Colossians 2:9 - A very popular philosophy among the Greeks was known as Gnosticism. Briefly, it taught salvation by knowledge (hence its name) and was in some ways like modern day Scientology. It postulated a whole universe of Gods, among whom were Yahweh and Jesus, who *together* make up what was called the *pleroma*, which is the Greek word for fullness.

Clearly, Paul is saying that, far from being just a part of the *pleroma*, Christ actually *is* the fullness! He does not dwell in the fullness - the fullness dwells in him! All that can be called God is found in Jesus. A stronger claim to deity could hardly be made.

5.6 Functional Equivalence Between God and Christ

5.6.1 The Lordship of Jesus

The figure of a ruler is the normative one in Semitic religion used to describe the Godhead. This is the reason why the sacred name Yahweh is always replaced in the Hebrew OT by Adonai (..Lord), and translated in the LXX by *kyrios*. The NT applied to Christ the title *kyrios* that in the OT had been used of God. The return of Christ thus becomes ‘the day of the Lord’ (Matt. 24.42; Acts 2:20b etc.). To call on ‘the name of the Lord’ is now to call on the name of Christ (Acts). The functions of God, are ascribed to Jesus. In the OT God is the Lord who in his mercy forgives sins. In Acts 7.60 Stephen prays to his heavenly Master: ‘Lord lay not this sin to their charge’ (cf. Luke 23.42). The crucified Lord prays to the Father, in the words of the Psalmist: ‘Into thy hands I commend my spirit’ (Luke 23.46; Ps. 30.6a). Stephen prays: ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ (Acts 7:59). The Church prayed to Jesus, and called on him as their Lord, their God: ‘Maranatha—O Lord, come!’ (1 Cor 16:22).

There are many places in the New Testament where Old Testament quotations applied to Yahweh are applied to Jesus as *kyrios*. (1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17; and Gal. 6:14 from Jer. 9:24; 1 Cor. 2:16 from Isa. 40:13; 1 Cor. 10:22 from Deut. 32:21; 2 Cor. 3:16 from Exod. 34:34; Eph. 4:8 from Ps. 68:19; Phil. 2:10-11 from Isa. 45:23; 2 Thess. 1:9 from Isa. 2:10, 19, 21; and 2Thess. 1:12 from Isa. 66:5.) This means that the functions of Yahweh, at least, are attributed to Christ.

5.6.2 The Interchangeability of God and Christ

As we compare various passages, we see that the names “God” and “Christ” are used interchangeably in the New Testament.

1. Forgiveness comes from God (Colossians 2:13) or Christ (Colossians 3:13).
2. Revelation is from God (Galatians 1:16) or Christ (Galatians 1:12).
3. Churches are of God or Christ (Romans 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:14).
4. The judgement seat is of God or Christ (Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10).
5. God purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
6. In the book of Revelation the Lamb and the One on the throne are treated as one by the use of singular verbs, (7:9-10; 20:6; 21:22; 22:1-4).

The above verses represent just a fraction of the texts which allude to the deity of Jesus Christ. Indeed, it could be argued that the whole of Scripture is testifying to the person and nature of Christ. Someone has said that the Old Testament is Christ concealed and the New is Christ revealed. While there is some value in such a statement, it would be more accurate to describe Jesus as the culmination of the revelation of God to His people. As only God the Son truly knows God the Father, so only God the Son can fully reveal God the Father (John 1:18; Luke 10:22).

N.B. scandal of particularity.

5.6.3 Jesus Is Paralleled with God

- (1) The Glory Is of God and Christ Rom. 5:1–2; 1 Cor. 2:8; 1 Pet. 4:13–14; 2 Pet. 1:17
- (2) The Glory of God Is in Christ 1 Cor. 4:6
- (3) Majesty Is of God and Christ Heb. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:16–17
- (4) The Spirit Is of God and Christ Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19; 1 Thess. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:11–12
- (5) Only God Is Wise and Christ Is Our Wisdom 1 Cor. 1:21–24
- (6) The Power Is of God and Christ 1 Cor. 5:4–5; 2 Cor. 6:7; 2 Cor. 12:9
- (7) Christ Is the Power of God 1 Cor. 1:24
- (8) The Truth Is of God and Christ Rom. 1:25; Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:10
- (9) The Authoritative Word Is of God and Christ Matt. 4:4; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 1:8
- (10) God and Christ Love Us Rom. 5:8; Rom. 8:35; Gal. 2:20
- (11) The Love of God Is in Christ Rom. 8:39

- (12) Mercy Is from God and Christ Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Jude 21
- (13) The Gospel Is of God and Christ Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor. 10:14; Gal. 1:7; Phil. 1:27;
1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8
- (14) Salvation Is from God and Christ Eph. 5:23; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 5:9; Titus 2:10–11;
Titus 2:13
- (15) God and Christ Rescue Us Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:10
- (16) God and Christ Redeem Us Gal. 3:13; Gal. 4:4; Col. 1:13
- (17) God and Christ Forgive Our Sins Col. 1:13–14; Col. 2:13
- (18) We Are to Believe God and Christ Acts 16:31; Rom. 4:1–3; Gal. 2:16–19
- (19) We Are to Know God and Christ Gal. 4:8–9; Phil. 3:10; 2 Pet. 1:8
- (20) Peace Comes from God and Christ Eph. 2:13–14; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; Col. 3:15;
1 Thess. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:23
- (21) Grace Is of God and Christ Gal. 1:6; Col. 1:2; Col. 1:6; Phil. 1:2; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess
1:1; 1 Thess. 5:28
- (22) God and Christ Dwell in Us Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:16–17; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:27
- (23) God and Christ Sanctify Us Acts 20:32; Acts 26:15, 17–18; 1 Cor. 1:2
- (24) God and Christ Are Our Strength Phil. 4:13; Col. 1:10–11
- (25) God and Christ Strengthen Us 2 Thess. 2:16–17
- (26) God and Christ Comfort Us 2 Cor. 1:3–5; Phil. 2:1
- (27) We Are to Obey God and Christ Acts 5:29; 2 Cor. 10:5; Eph. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:1–2
- (28) We Live by the Will of God and Christ Eph. 1:11; Eph. 5:17
- (29) We Live in the Presence of God and Christ Acts 10:33; 1 Thess. 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:1
- (30) We Are to Live Worthy of God and Christ Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:11–12
- (31) We Live in the Sight of God and Christ 2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Tim. 5:21
- (32) We Are Servants (Slaves) of God and Christ Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Col. 3:23–24; 1
Thess. 1:9
- (33) We Boast in God and Christ 1 Cor. 1:28–31; Phil. 2:16
- (34) We Hope in God and Christ Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 15:19; Eph. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:1
- (35) We Joy (Rejoice) in God and Christ Luke 1:46; Phil. 1:26
- (36) We Are to Glory in God and Christ Rom. 15:17; Phil. 2:11; Phil. 3:3
- (37) The Fullness of God and Christ Is Ours Eph. 3:19; Eph. 4:13
- (38) The Kingdom Is of God and Christ Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:12
- (39) The Church Is of God and Christ Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:1; 1 Thess. 2:12

- (40) The Mystery (Secret Things) Is of God and Christ Eph. 3:4; Eph. 3:8; Col. 4:3
- (41) The Great Day Is of God and Christ 1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:2
- (42) We Stand Before God and Christ Gal. 1:20; 1 Thess. 2:19
- (43) We Appear before the Judgment Seat of God and Christ Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10

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¹Elwell, W. A., & Buckwalter, D. 1991. *Topical Analysis of the Bible : With the New International Version*. Baker Reference Library. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids

5.7 The Context of the Direct Ascription of Deity to Jesus

1. The title “God “ is not given directly to Jesus in his ministry.
2. In John’s writings it is the preexistent Word that is God, or the Son in the Father’s presence (John 1:1, 18). The resurrected Lord is hailed as deity (20:28).
3. Most of the passages are in doxological context, this is true of Hebrews 1:8 – 9; Romans 9:5.
4. In every case it is the response of believing subjects to the sovereignty and lordship of Christ, and not abstract metaphysical speculation (1Peter1:1; Titus 2:13)
5. Since it is the glorified Lord who is recognised as divine, there is no contradiction with the pre - resurrection texts that seem to imply that Jesus is less than God or the Father.

5.8 Eternal Sonship

1. Christ does not become Son but is eternally Son (within the Godhead).
2. Father and Son are eternally and mutually related.
3. Divine sonship is the pattern for human “sonship” and not the reverse.
5. Denial of this removes the cost of redemption from God.
6. Denial of this means the inner being of God is not revealed.

5.9 The Kenosis

“He left His Father’s throne above
So free, so infinite his grace
Emptied himself of all but love
And bled for Adam’s helpless race...”
(Charles Wesley)

5.9.1 Kenotic Theory.

Amongst all of Paul’s writings it would be difficult to find a passage that is more frequently quoted than the hymn of Philippians 2:5-11. Popular though it be, however, it has also been a source of contention with respect to its assumptions, inferences and assertions of the incarnate Christ. It has given rise to what is known as the Kenotic Theory.

The basis of the theory is that, in becoming man, Christ ‘emptied’ (laid aside, suspended, retracted, restrained) Himself (Greek *kenosis*) of His divinity, or of the divine attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, laying aside His deity while he took up humanity. This theory has considerable limitations, however, for it leads to the following:

5.9.2 Difficulties with Kenotic Theories

1. No incarnation. The kenotic view does not give us a real incarnation. God does not become man, but turns into a man and then turns back to God - there is no God-man. (We have a theophany, or metamorphosis). If it is not God, one fully God, but a depotentiated divinity that meets us, then the gospel is void, for that holds that in Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.’ ‘God is always God even in his humiliation....Any subtraction or weakening of it would at once throw doubt upon the atonement made in Him. He humbled himself, but he did not do it by ceasing to be who he is.’ (K. Barth)

2. No real humanity. Though kenotic views are supposed to stress Christ's human nature in fact they deny it. They see the taking of humanity as purely temporary. Thus Christ did not assume that part of our nature that is permanent and therefore the most significant part. Before the resurrection he acts under conditions of humanity. After the resurrection he acts under conditions of deity. The concept is used, for example, in Cyril of Alexandria. The emptying was a voluntary reduction to our level, undertaken as an act of pure love...: "He who fills all things lowered Himself to emptying". (G.L. Prestige)
4. No revelation. That which is transformed cannot tell us anything about what it was, only what it is. If there is no revelation there is no reconciliation.
3. Disappearance of the Trinity. It would seem that the Logos, the second person of the Trinity, disappeared altogether during the thirty years of the "self-emptying". God cannot cease to be God. How would he resume deity? The kenotic model finds it difficult to maintain continuity between the pre-existent and incarnate Son.
4. Preservation ceases: How was the universe sustained during the kenosis (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3)?

NB In his self-emptying love, the Son is most fully divine. (Kenosis is plerosis/fullness).

5.9.3 Rethinking Kenosis

1. The starting point.

"We discuss the divinity and even the humanity of Christ in terms of ready-made ideas of God and man that we bring with us, without allowing these to be corrected or even drastically changed by what we learn about God and man in and through the incarnation." (John Macquarrie)

2. The attributes of the Incarnate Son.

a. knowledge.

The infinite knowledge of the Logos was accessible to Jesus when the Father permitted this through the Spirit. As such the omniscience of Jesus was actual but latent.

b. power.

Jesus exerted his omnipotence in relational dependence upon the Father in the Spirit. He could not, for example, raise himself off the cross, but he could raise Lazarus.

c. presence.

This is an especially difficult subject. It must be remembered that God is not present "in" space as we are. Even while the Logos must have been present throughout the universe, God in Christ was restricted to a particular place and time.

5.9.4 The biblical material.

The active voice of *kenoo* in Phil 2:7 is unique in the New Testament and suggests a Hebrew original (Isa 53:12 "he poured out his soul to death" ?). The self-emptying is interpreted in the light of the words that follow: "taking the form of a servant" "being born in the likeness of men" "being found in human likeness". The result is addition – the infilling of humanity by God.

Of what, then, did Christ empty Himself (v7)? He did not grasp *existence in a manner equal to God* but laid aside:

- a) His relationship to the divine law (Galatians 4:4f). The *Heidelberg Catechism* says “ during the whole time of His life on earth Jesus...bore the wrath of God against the human race.” The spotless one was made “to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- b) His riches. He who was rich became immeasurably poor (2 Corinthians 8:9), giving up even life itself (John 10:11). What is altered is that Christ took up a form of humanity in a post fallen state which is quite different from the normal form of God. He became one without rights and under the law.
- c) His glory in heaven (John 17:4,5).
- d) His exercise of divine attributes (John 5:19). He assumed a fully human image.

How then can Christ, having given up so much, remain God? Calvin, in his commentary on this passage, reasons that He gave up His favourable relation to the law, His riches and His glory not in relation to His divine nature, but with reference to His human nature. We should not be surprised, however, if this explanation does not fully satisfy. It will doubtless remain an unfathomable mystery.

We can assert, though, that the passage gives us no grounds for reducing Christ to less than deity. Verse 6, on the contrary, declares that he was and is in very nature God. The word “being” indicates both past continuous and present continuous tense. This tells us that in taking upon the limitations of humanity, Christ lost nothing of His deity, its attributes or its prerogatives. The word translated “nature” or “form” is the word *morphe* which in Greek defines the very essence of a thing, retained as long as the thing itself exists. Thus a tree remains in form (*morphe*) a tree even though in fashion (*schema*) it may change seasonally from budding to blossoming to bearing fruit and then shedding both leaves and fruit. Thus also Paul exhorts us not to be fashioned after this age but be transformed (Romans 12:2). Here, then, we see that Christ was and is essentially God and took the essential nature of a servant. It is, after all, Christ’s relationship to His Father that makes for His deity. (This separates Western from Eastern theological understandings of “person”; the former sees a person in terms of self –possession, the latter as an aspect of relationship.) There is nothing to suggest that that relationship was altered in His incarnation. Finally, we must see that Paul’s intentions here were not to declare some unattainable metaphysical theological thought, but to give us a simple yet profound model of humility, to be copied. The subject is not the deity and humanity of Christ but the humility of Christ, which can be imitated by us in Him. The emphasis is on the fact that Christ is God ‘plus’ not God ‘minus’. The action of humble humanity reveals, rather than conceals deity, that is, the Son’s obedience to the Father. Here is an action opposite to the Fall.

Note: How did Christ perform miracles if He relinquished the use of His divine attributes? The answer is simple - through the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is no Biblical record that He worked any signs or wonders prior to His being anointed by the Spirit (although some apocryphal stories have survived).

John distinctly says the miracle at Cana was the first of Jesus’ signs (John 2:11). And Luke makes it clear that it was after His baptism at Jordan and His temptation in the desert that Jesus returned “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14).

Peter plainly declares that God anointed Jesus with the Spirit and power and as a result He went about doing good and healing the sick (Acts 10:38).

Indeed, if Jesus was to be truly man then it was essential that He only draw upon the same resources that are available to us - even though He had the right to do more (Matthew 26:53f). If we think of the acts of Jesus as the acts of God as such, the divine nature acting

independently of the human nature, then we are not thinking of the operation of the incarnate Word at all.

There is a great challenge here for us - if Jesus did what He did through the power of the Spirit, and not because He was God, we can do the same! For the same power is available to us! (See John 14:12; Luke 24:49 etc.).

5.9.5 Kenosis and Exaltation.

1. This subject of Christ's glorification will be covered more fully in a later section.
2. The kenosis of Jesus relates especially to his earthly life.
3. As exalted to the Father's right hand Jesus possesses the divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence.
4. These attributes are never exercised other than in relation to the will of the Father and in the Spirit.

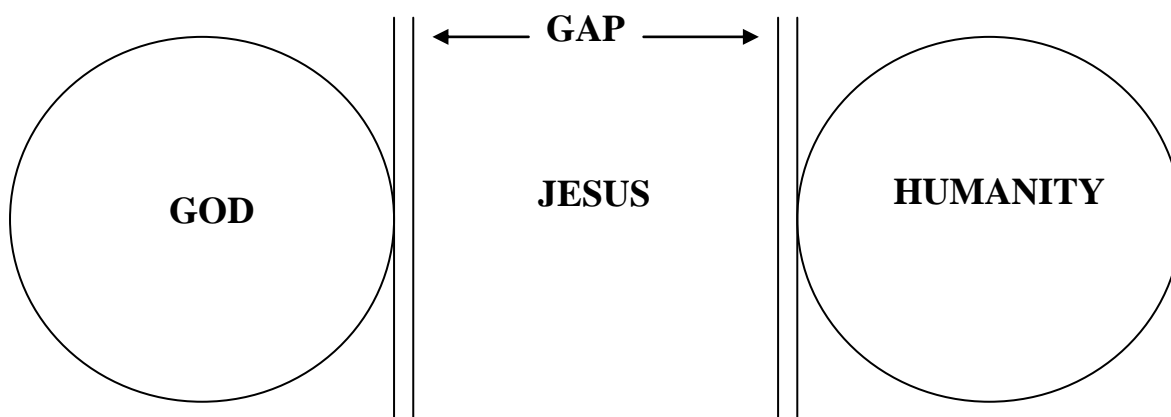
(See for example, Ephesians 1).

5.10 Christological Heresies Concerning the Deity of Christ: Arianism

5.10.1 The Arian Position

Arius d.336. denied that the Son was equal with the Father. God (Father) was immutable, unique, unknowable, "without beginning and absolutely one". Christ, or the Logos (Word), had to be a created being, the first born of God's creatures. The Word was pre-existent and incarnate in Jesus, but 'there was when he was not.' As a Son he had to post-date the Father. Arians found support for their view in biblical texts like Proverbs 8:22; Luke 22:42; John 17:3; Acts 2:36; Colossians 1:15 and John 14:28 "The Father is greater than I..." Subordination was equated with inequality and inferiority.

Jesus however was the only creature made directly by the Father. As the cosmological and soteriological intermediary he was fit to be worshipped, prayed to, and baptism was in his name.



- 5.6.2 At the time of the Arian controversy it was pointed out (Athanasius of Alexandria) that if that which was not God and not man died for us then there was no basis for our salvation.

The Arian position cut the relationship between Father and Son by denying the internal relations of the Trinity. It cut the relationship between God (the Son) and humanity by denying Jesus' deity.

The following points can be made in summary:

1. The Incarnation is necessary to our knowledge of God because only God can reveal God. This makes Christianity distinctive. **God** is revealed **in** Christ. cf. Col. 2:9; John 14:9.
2. The Incarnation reveals **God's** costly, sacrificial love. It is God who bears the cost of sin and makes reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19). This effects an objective atonement (see later), rather than some sort of "child abuse". The bridge between God and us is bridged from God's side.
3. The Incarnation defines the nature of God. He is not an abstract omnipotence guided by omniscience but is known in Christ in terms of a gracious personal relationship.
4. God and humans are reunited (eternally) in the person of Christ. This is the assurance of our salvation and at the same time the revelation of our humanity. What God had eternally desired for us, that we might relate to him as Father in the Son, has been effected. "By no fictitious imputation, or technical transfer, but by virtue of a real union between the life of Christ and our own life, His relation to the Father becomes ours." (R.W. Dale) Incarnation is the realisation of God's will for humanity.
- 5 God in Christ is the fit object of human worship. Christian life and worship is framed incarnationally.

6. THE TWO-FOLD NATURE OF CHRIST

The Incarnation is the act of God whereby the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, without ceasing to be what he is, God the Son, took into union with himself what he before that act did not possess, a human nature, and continues to exist after that act as two distinct natures, God and man, in one person, forever.

Jesus is not at one moment Jesus the man and at another becomes Lord and God. He is a single undivided person, acting with a single consciousness and will. The Son of God did not change into a human being, nor did the man Jesus rise to deity.

Jesus never spoke of His two natures as separate. He always spoke of Himself as a single person (e.g. John 17:23). There was no conflict of wills within, and always a single motivating purpose (e.g. John 4:34; Luke 9:51). The union of His two natures was such that one did not permeate or absorb the other. They came together in such a way that there was no conversion or weakening of either. Nor was it a temporary expedient thing. From the moment of incarnation, He was and is and always will be the God-man (1 Timothy 2:5).

As Baillie says, "... it is vain for us to try to penetrate the mystery of *how* Jesus is both God and Man, since we are only men ourselves and not God" (p83). If we were to understand it, we would be rising above the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16). What we can say is that it is essential that He is both. Had he not been man He could not have fully sympathised with us (Hebrews 2:17,18; 4:15); had He not been God, He could not have saved us (Romans 5:8-11). Again, Baillie says, "A toned down Christology is absurd. It must be all or nothing - all or nothing on both the divine and the human side" (p132).

When logical analysis leaves us facing a divine paradox, we do best to accept what we know rather than reject for want of understanding. We reach a point where theological prose is too mean an expression and we must grasp for something more lyrical to come close to satisfying us. N.B. Logic must submit to reality of Incarnation.

As Charles Wesley put it:

*Let earth and heav'n combine
Angels and men agree,
To praise in songs divine
Our God contracted to a span,
Incomprehensibly made man.*

6.1 Thinking about the 2 Natures of Christ

A: The Pattern of Classical Christological thought.

1. In practice the nature of the trinity is discussed by exposition of the attributes of God in a non-relational manner. For example, this is so for omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, eternity is conceived as atemporality.
2. This flows on to a Christological discussion dominated by the abstract concepts of substance metaphysics. How can God be true man is set in terms of a number of impersonal dualisms: time-eternity, space-matter, necessity-contingency.

3. Humanity is not interpreted by Christ but the kind - essence of human nature exemplified in Adam in the unfallen state.
4. From this it follows that the questions of salvation are answered in the form of apersonal categories of legal exchange: debt, cancellation, status etc.

B: A Trinitarian Hermeneutic for Christology

The proper Biblical sequence is:

Trinity → Christology → Soteriology

(Practically, for us in our sinful condition, the order is soteriology (atonement), christology (incarnation), trinity.)

1. Any discussion of the attributes of God is a result and not a presupposition for trinitarian theology.
2. The discussion of the relationship between the 2 natures in Christ will be in terms of persons rather than natures defined in substance categories. The locus (centre) of the divinity of Christ will be found in the relationship of Sonship to the Father through the Spirit, not an isolated divine nature.
3. The type of metaphysics employed will be a metaphysics of relationship. It will follow for example the narrative or story line of the Gospels, rather than philosophical speculation brought to the biblical text.
4. Humanity is interpreted in terms of the image of God in Christ rather than by an attempt to reach back into an original and unrecoverable state.
5. Salvation is understood entirely in personal terms, even where legal metaphors are used by illustration.

(Schwobel, C. 1995. 'Christology and trinitarian thought'. In *Trinitarian thought today*.

Edited by C. Schwobel. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 1995, 113 - 146.

6.2 The Unity of the Person of Christ

The early church struggled to resolve the balance between the two natures and the one Personhood of Christ.

6.2.1 Antiochene Christology

This represented one of the two main schools of Christological thought in the Fourth Century. It stood in opposition in terms of church politics to what was to become the dominant teaching, that of the Alexandrian school (Athanasius, Cyril).

The Alexandrian theologians stressed the dominance of the deity of Christ, and so ended up with a 'Word-flesh' Christology. (Unity Δ duality). (Apollinarianism is an extreme position of this).

Antiochene theologians (Eustathius, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia) emphasised the necessity for Jesus to be fully human. (Duality Δ unity . The incarnation was interpreted as a union of natures after the manner of the union of soul and body, which moves in the direction of dualism. This implies less than a full ontological union.)

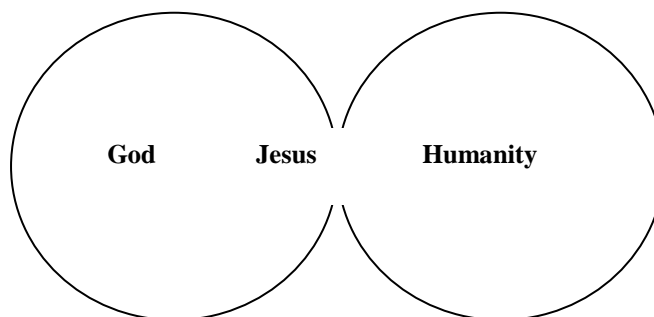
They stressed the concrete rather than a general human nature. (This was in reaction to the Arians, who denied that the Logos had assumed a human soul and who thereby ascribed the struggles, sufferings, ignorance and temptations of Jesus to his divinity (not deity). This did not embarrass them (Arians) because Jesus was a creature and not God, but was intolerable to the Antioch scholars, whose special interest was in Jesus as a moral example. They emphasised the moral union of Jesus and the Logos through oneness of will.)

Nestorius realised that if either the human or the divine nature were changed by the incarnation the result would be the existence of a third kind of being, neither God nor human.

The result was a 'Word-man' Christology which expressed itself in the following ways: contrasting 'the Word' and 'the man', God and his 'shrine', the 'assumer' and the 'assumed', him who 'indwells' or 'puts on' and him who is 'indwelt' or 'put on'. Jesus, for example, can thank the Father for adopting him. They did not speak of a 'union' of natures but of a perfect 'conjunction' of natures in Christ, feeling that the former blurred the distinction of God and man in Jesus. The distinct qualities of the two natures were woven together into one, but the natures remained distinct. It is the common appearance of the properties which is called "Christ". (This could be compared to the common appearance to an observer of two aligned stars, the reality observed is merely phenomenological.) The oneness of Christ does not belong to his essence, but to his appearance. Any union is voluntary not substantial, that is, a moral union.

Nestorius, who was a part of this tradition, became deliberately involved in controversy (preaching warfare) as patriarch of Constantinople (428). He denied that Mary could be called **theotokos** (a term used for 2 centuries) 'God-bearing' (this seemed to deny Jesus humanity) without also using **anthropotokos** 'man-bearing'. No creature could generate or bear God, whereas Mary bore a man who was a vehicle for God. To call Mary **theotokos** was to accept the "the Son of God was born of Mary", this would imply that the Son of God was subject to the sufferings which belong only to humanity, the divine could hunger, thirst, suffer and die. God could not suffer however because God was not a human being.

Nestorius preferred the title **Christotokos** ('Christ-bearer'). 'Christ' is the common name of the 2 natures. Not 2 sons or 2 'only begottens'.



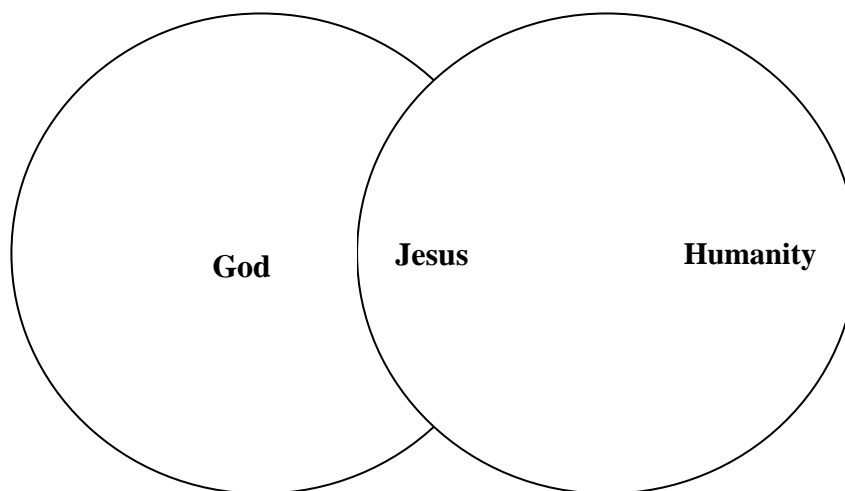
6.2.2 Alexandrian Christology.

This was taken by Alexandrians to (inaccurately) imply that there were not just two natures but two persons in Christ - a divine person and a human person (2 'sons' in partnership). Logically it seemed to lead to adoptionism. Jesus seemed less than fully God, an inspired man through whom the Logos worked. *Theotokos* guarded the full deity of Jesus from his conception. It does not mean that Mary gave birth to God as God. It means that she birthed the Word who had assumed our humanity. n.. b. *theotokos* is a dogmatic not a kerygmatic statement

Cyril of Alexandria taught that Christ was one reality and not two. This one reality was the divine Son existing as a human being. This he summed up in the formula "the one nature of the Word incarnate". The subject or *who* of the one nature is the eternal Word, the manner or mode of the existence of the Word is humanity. Just as the union of soul and body results in one entity and not two, that is a man, so the union of divinity and humanity brings about the one Christ. This does not involve any change, mix or confusing of natures (as the Antiochenes thought), but the person of the Word taking on a new manner of existence. Jesus is the person of the Son existing as a human. He who is truly God lives an authentic human life without ceasing to be God. This maintained the *homoousios* with the Father from eternity through all the earthly events of the life of Christ.

Nestorianism was condemned (431 Ephesus). Nestorius was exiled; Nestorian missions etc.

Gradually the 'Word-flesh' model of Alexandria became accepted orthodoxy. This was enshrined in the Chalcedonian Creed (451).



6.3 MAJOR CHRISTOLOGICAL CREEDS

The Apostles' Creed (third-fourth centuries A.D.)

I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth.

And Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed (A.D. 325; revised at Constantinople A.D. 381)

I believe in one God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets. And the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge on Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Chalcedonian Creed (A.D. 451)

We, then, following the holy fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin, begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and occurring in one Person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

N.B. How the categories become more philosophical and precise.

6.3 MAJOR CHRISTOLOGICAL CREEDS (CONTINUED)

The Athanasian Creed (Fourth – Fifth centuries A.D.)

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic [apostolic/universal] faith, which except everyone shall have kept whole and undefiled, without doubt he will perish eternally.

Now the Catholic faith is this: We worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is One, the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit; the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, and the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet not three eternals but one eternal, as also not three infinities, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one infinite. So, likewise, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet not three almighties but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God; and yet not three Gods but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet not three Lords but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be both God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say, there be three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. So there is one Father not three Fathers, one Son not three Sons, and one Holy Spirit not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but the whole three Persons are coeternal together and coequal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity is to be worshipped. He therefore who wills to be in a state of salvation, let him think thus of the Trinity.

But it is necessary to eternal salvation that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The right faith therefore is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.

He is God of the substance of the Father begotten before the worlds, and He is man of the substance of His mother born in the world; perfect God, perfect man subsisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh; equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood.

Who although He be God and Man yet He is not two but one Christ; one however not by conversion of the Godhead in the flesh, but by taking of the Manhood in to God; one altogether not by confusion of substance but by unity of Person. For as the reasoning soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life eternal, and they who indeed have done evil into eternal fire.

This is the Catholic faith, which except a man shall have believed faithfully and firmly he cannot be in a state of salvation.

6.4 The Essential Problem – The Nature of Hypostatic Union

One of the most important and difficult of all theological issues is the relationship between the natures in Christ. How can two apparently contradictory natures combine in one person. God is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, etc., human nature is finite, temporal, limited etc. If salvation depends on a genuine union between the divine and human in Christ then the deity and humanity must be combined in one Person. That is, if Jesus were two persons - one human and one divine - in some sort of parallel, then we would not have a genuine incarnation at all. This discussion is over the 'hypostatic union', a term based on the Greek word **hypostasis** which is usually translated in modern English as 'person'. Thus we are dealing with how:

1. Jesus can be one person.
2. The two natures of Jesus are united in his Person.
3. The Son of God the subject ("I") of all human experiences.

These terms need to be defined more closely:

(a) Nature - all the essential qualities of a thing, that which makes it to be what it is.

(b) Person - a nature which is self-conscious, self-referring, a subject, able to enter into relationship with other 'persons'.

The important thing to notice here is the Person of Jesus is the Person of the Word which upholds all things (John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3). Jesus is therefore not an individual (localised) but someone who is related to the whole creation. N.B. creation is directed to incarnation.

6.4.1 The Unipersonality Of Christ

In all other beings except God and humans (angels?) a nature can exist without a person, e.g., rocks have a complete nature but are impersonal cf. animals, computers, etc. When a human nature e.g., in a developing foetus/infant is related to by an already existing person (e.g., mother) in a personal way, viz. as another subject or developing person, this nature becomes personal (ised). As such it then becomes able to relate (personally) to both itself and others over time.

We must assume that the Logos as a divine Person (already constituted as such by his eternal generation from the Father as the Son: the Father personalised the Son) assumed an impersonal human nature in the womb of Mary. This impersonal human nature was however not a developing human being as such for it had not been through the process of human conception. It simply possessed the potential to become a personalised human nature. This potential was not activated by means of the union with another potential personal nature i.e., by male semen, but by the Holy Spirit uniting the Logos to the humanity in Mary's womb viz. virginal conception.

Thus an impersonal human nature is united to an already existing Person (the Logos) and is not only activated in its potential to be personalised (by humans) but is personalised in and through its union with the Word. The result is two natures in one divine-human Person.

Prior to John 1:14:

Word	Flesh
Nature-God	Nature-human
Person-Son	Person-zero

at John 1:14:

God the Son + human nature = 2 natures - 1 divine-human Person. (theanthropic)

Since the divine Person (the eternal Son of God) pre-existed Jesus of Nazareth, we cannot consider the personhood of Jesus in isolation from it as the foundation of its actuality in the man Jesus Christ.

(That is to say, the miracle of the Incarnation is a creation of the new type of Person, since the Logos actually **unites himself** to the humanity in Christ a divine-human person comes into existence for the first time. That is to say, humanity is taken up **into** God **forever**. God now exists as a man.) Technically, the person of Christ is said to be 'enhypostatic', it is the eternal person of the Word, the human nature taken up however is as ours.

The result is what is known as the 'unipersonality of Christ'. Through the incarnational act, the person of the Son has united himself to a human nature so as to exist personally as a human. If the 'I' of the person of Jesus cannot be identified with the person of the Son there is no incarnation. This is something more than saying that the Son of God has a human body, mind, will, emotions etc; he has a human centre from which these can be expressed and experienced. The 'I' of the Son is the human 'I' of a divine subject or person.

6.4.2 The Communication of Attributes

This involves a discussion of how the two natures of Christ are affected by the union in one Person.

1. It is essential to the truth of the Incarnation to recognise that the attributes (properties) of both natures can be attributed to the one (theandric) Person not the natures. It is not appropriate to refer some of the properties of the *person* of Jesus to his humanity and some to his divinity. It must be said that Jesus Christ is almighty and limited, immortal and able to die etc.
2. This however does not mean that the properties of the natures interpenetrate one another. (Union is not fusion). Jesus is not, for example, an omniscient man, or a dying God: God as a man dies. The properties of the natures are properties of the Person but not of one another, for this would make a third kind of nature i.e., a divine-human nature uncommon to God or humanity.
3. The human and divine natures of Christ are united not in one another but in the Person of the Logos, it is this which they have in common, not one another. The natures do not have a status considered outside of the Person.
4. It needs to be said that the person of the Son of God is truly born, grieves, suffers, and dies, not as God, but as God as a human. God the Word suffers these experiences, not in his own nature as such, but in his assumed nature as human. Within the incarnation God never suffers as God, for this would deny the reality of the incarnation, but as human.

(It should also be remarked that the incarnation does not relate to God-as-such assuming humanity but to God in His nature as the Person of the Word. If the nature of God simply 'became flesh' the whole Trinity would be incarnate. 'God without remainder.' H. Thielicke).

5. Another way of putting this (Calvin) is to say that the human and divine natures do not overlap (co-extensive). There is more to the Logos than his humanity, whereas the humanity only exists-as-such in relation (assumed) by the Logos. If, for example, I partake of the Lord's Supper I do not participate in the human nature of Jesus (which is located in heaven) but in the Person of Jesus.
6. Sometimes this is put in terms of "simultaneous presence." "He departed not from the Father, and he came to us. He sucked the breast, and he contained the world. He lay in the manger and he fed the angels....at once continuing to be God and by assuming man's Flesh....there he is, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and here he is needy in his poor." (Augustine)

"While his body was forming within the womb, his power was fashioning all members....While he was slain, he opened up the graves." (Ephraim the Syrian)

6.4.3 Implications of the Hypostatic Union

1. The distance between God and humans no longer exists.
2. Jesus must be worshipped as God.

"Low within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies,
He who throned in height sublime
Reigns above the cherubim"

(Luther, cited in McGrath, C.T. 1994: 293)
3. What Jesus does, God does. This communication of actions makes him the perfect revelation of God.
4. The divine-human Person suffers and dies as a person on the cross. That is, the humanity does not die in separation from the divinity: even if God cannot die physically we must say that if the Person of Christ dies on the cross the divine nature must somehow die with it. (God is not apathetic).

This can only be resolved trinitarianally. It is not the general nature of God which undergoes death on the cross but the concrete nature of God as existing in the incarnate Son.

As the human nature of Christ bears the wages of sin this can only be experienced and known in his Person (in which it exists as such). This means that the penalty of sin is taken up in the Son into the very being of God. It must be the case that God the Son is separated from God the Father. This means that the atonement is an event within the life of God himself.

5. The two- fold nature of Christ is the ground for the nature of the working of grace and salvation. Revelation is both historical and supernatural, a Christian is *both* righteous and sinful, the church is both holy and unholy, the Bible is both the words of men and the Word of God, the sacraments are ordinary physical objects and means of grace. “We say: ‘This is the Son of God’, and we show - the man Jesus.” (Christensen).

6.5 The Necessity of the Incarnation

Is the Incarnation contingently or absolutely necessary? That is, would God have become human even if sin had not entered the world? Theologians have long been divided on this issue.

Those who deny the absolute necessity of the Word becoming flesh argue that without sin Adam and Eve would have been elevated into the glory of God. The circumstances of the Incarnation, the Fall, are inseparable from the fact of the Incarnation. Scripture gives no indication that apart from sin thee would have any need for the Incarnation.

Alternatively, it can be argued that the concept of Incarnation is contained in the very nature of creation, particularly of humanity in the image of God. For the complete union of God and man to take place, God himself had to become human. The Incarnation was not from man’s wickedness but from God’s goodness. The actual circumstances of the Incarnation have made it more glorious for Christ.

1205

CHRISTOLOGY

PART B



1205 CHRISTOLOGY

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7. THE WORK OF CHRIST

Not only does all of history depend upon the cross, but all eternity will marvel at the greatness of its action. The cross was no mere future event to Jesus as He taught and healed during His earthly ministry. It was deeply embedded into His being, “it pervaded subliminally His holy person. He was born for the cross. It was His genius, His destiny” (P T Forsyth, *The Work of Christ*, p108). There we see Him as prophet declaring both the grace and judgement of God, as priest effecting forgiveness, sanctification, justification, and full atonement for His people, and as king conquering all rulers, authorities, powers and dominions in order to rescue His people from a kingdom of darkness into one of life and light.

Nor should Christ’s work be separated from His person. He did what He did because He was who He was. It was in His complete trust in His Father that He faced and experienced the cross. In another of His books, Forsyth, says, “We are speaking of that which is the centre, not of thought, but of actual life, conscience, history and destiny ... and the sole meaning of Christ Himself. Christ is to us just what His cross is. All that Christ was in heaven or on earth was put into what He did there ... You do not understand Christ until you understand His cross” (*The Cruciality of the Cross*, p44f). The preaching of the cross is more significant than anything else (1 Corinthians 2:1ff; Galatians 6:14).

Although the great events of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection and His subsequent ascension can be and will here be treated as distinct, they together constitute that one triumphant happening which will be the subject of our praise for eternity. For ease of analysis they are viewed separately, but in reality are so interdependent that they must be received and experienced as one.

7.1 The States of Christ

7.1.1 Meaning of the States

1. Traditional way of describing the work of Christ.
2. Relates to the condition of Jesus during his earthly life and beyond, i.e., not who he is but the circumstances under which he lived, e.g., under the law.
3. Two basic states:
 - (a) Humiliation
 - movement of Christ’s work downwards.
 - earthly conception to death.
 - (b) Exaltation
 - movement of Christ’s work upwards.
 - descent into hell to return.

J. Rodman Williams (1988, 1, 381)

7.1.2 The Unity of the States

1. It is the one person in both states (Acts 2:33-36), the humanity is most visible in the humiliation, the deity in the exaltation.
2. The two states form a necessary sequence in the redemptive history of Christ, humiliation is the ground of exaltation.
e.g., Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9; 4:15; 9:25ff; John 12:23-38; 13:1-16; 17:1-5.
3. The States are Progressive
e.g., Jn 7:39 the Spirit can only come when Jesus is glorified.

7.1.3 Importance

- (a) Manner of work - not 'power' but obedience to death is the basis of exaltation (John 10:17-18).
- (b) Motive of work
 - love of Father and Son
 - the way of the cross is the will of the Father.
- (c) Pattern of example - for the Christian life (Phil 2:4-5).

7.2 The State of Humiliation

7.2.1 Incarnation

1. The **kenosis** - surrender of the exercise of his divine attributes (Phil 2:5ff).
2. Assumption of a human nature as it has become since the Fall, weakened and subject to suffering and death (Rom 8:3; 2Cor 8:9).

7.2.2 Suffering

1. Jesus' whole life involved suffering - sinless one in the midst of sin, holiness amidst evil, love before hatred, empathy.

'active obedience' of Christ to the Father, e.g., law-keeping.

The cross threw a shadow over Jesus' **life**.

(passio magna)

2. Suffered in body and soul - tired, hungry, agony of Gethsemane etc.
3. Unique sufferings - unique sensitivity to moral pain and evil, grief and empathy etc., cf. Isa 53:6,10.
4. Sufferings in temptation - 'passive obedience' of Christ, i.e., allowed himself to be tempted, submits to will of Father in order that things might be done **to** him.
5. Death
 - the death of body and soul, i.e., person cf. Jn 14:6 'the life'.
 - loss of conscious union with the Father.
 - dies with criminals (Isa. 53:9).
 - worst form of death (1 Cor. 2:2; Phil 2:8).
 - died under a curse (Gal 3:13). Cf. Rom 6:9.

6. Burial

- return to dust is a humiliation (Gen. 3:19).
- descent to the place of the dead (Acts 2:27, 31; 13:34,35).

7.3.3 The Descent into Hades

1. A late insertion into the Apostle's Creed. c.390A.D
2. Does not mean eternal place of punishment, i.e., 'hell' of second death (**gehenna**).
Can mean 'place of dead' (neutral cf. **sheol**) or paradise.
3. Church Fathers - Christ descended to **hades** and liberated the O.T. saints from the powers of darkness.
4. Middle Ages - part of the ransom paid by Jesus to liberate the souls of men.
'tables are turned' on the devil **or** closer to (3).
5. Lutheranism - first stage of exaltation, between death and resurrection. A 'spiritual' descent and destruction of hell.
6. Calvinism - descent into hell takes place in Gethsemane and upon the cross, i.e., death of a sinner.
7. N.T. Texts:
 - Luke 23:43 - 'today....in paradise'.
 - Acts 2:25-27 (Ps. 16:10) 'you will not abandon my soul to hades', i.e., Jesus must be in paradise.
 - Ephesians 4:8-10 'he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth' - in context, means a descent from heaven to the earth, i.e., incarnation.
 - 1 Peter 3:18-19 'preached to the spirits in prison'(Jude 6) - as an act of the ascended Christ (v.22) 'made alive' = resurrection in S/spirit (1 Tim 3:16; Rom 1:4; 8:11).
 - Preached to the evil angels (spirits) of Gen 6:1ff, his universal triumph. Or to unbelieving in the time of Noah.
8. Conclusion:
 - original patristic interpretation modified in the light of N.T. texts. Jesus entered paradise as the abode of the O.T. righteous (1 Pet 4:6) and revealed to them his glory.

8. THE DEATH OF CHRIST

Christ's death on the cross was no mere step in a process of events. It was a climax, a crisis of cosmic proportions, for it dealt in the one act with all the forces and consequences of evil and at the same time provided for the redemption of man, and for his ultimate glory. It was both a cataclysmic defeat and a resounding triumph which, in the cry "It is finished," was fully complete (Colossians 2:14f).

The cross is first and foremost the action of a holy God. While love is expressed there, it is a holy not a sentimental love, in which judgement is at work. The word of the cross is not that God is ready to forgive, but that God has redeemed, and in that redemption, has created a new order of righteousness and holiness through His judgement of sin.

What was it that occurred on the cross? The totality of it can hardly be captured here, but in simple terms the following took place:

8.1.1 Sin was Conquered

On the cross, sin, together with its penalty and its power, was fully overcome. All the moral pollution (including our "good deeds" - Isaiah 64:6) was placed upon Jesus (Isaiah 53:6). The penalty of sin, being the alienation from and the wrath of God, has been paid (Colossians 1:21,22) and its power nullified (1 Peter 2:24).

8.1.2 All Evil was Defeated

Jesus came to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8). It was on the cross that He accomplished that aim (Colossians 2:14,15). As Jesus predicted, the "prince of this world" came against Him (John 14:30; Luke 22:53) and was defeated (Hebrews 2:14). By bearing our sins and dealing with our guilt Christ rescued us from Satan's kingdom, breaking the power of evil (Galatians 1:4; Colossians 1:13,14).

8.1.3 The Condemnation of the Law was Broken

Man has consistently failed to do what God in His grace wants done, and thereby He has come under the curse of God's law (Galatians 3:10). In bearing that curse, indeed, becoming a curse, Christ redeemed us from it (Galatians 2:19,20). Hence we are no longer under the curse of the law, but have died to the law (Romans 7:4) and are alive to God's grace (Romans 6:14).

8.1.4 Death Itself was Defeated

1 Corinthians 15:55,56 makes clear that death's sting is sin, and that the power of sin is bound up in the law (that is, its condemnation). In breaking the condemnation of the law (Colossians 2:13,14) He also dealt with our sin (Romans 6:10) and paid out its wages (Romans 6:23a). Thus death's sting, sin, was borne to extinction, as sin was fully judged in His flesh (Romans 8:3). In some way death, which could not touch Jesus in His sinlessness, had dominion over Him when He became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), and Jesus bore that dominion to its extinction, so that the "it" being finished, included the defeat over death.

As Bingham says, "Sin being defeated, death is vanquished. Jesus did not have to fight a second battle in the grave. To defeat sin was to defeat death" (*The Person and Work of Christ*, p98). But it is the victory over death on the cross that makes the resurrection possible. "Without the resurrection, the cross would be a cause of despair. Without the cross, the resurrection would be an escape from reality." (Dunn)

(Plato *Republic* 361e – 362a : "the just man will have to be scourged, racked, fettered, blinded, and, finally, after the most extreme suffering, he will be crucified.")

8.2 The Resurrection

The resurrection is the first stage of Jesus' exaltation. It was a monumental display of the power of God, by which the Father verified the victory and vindicated the prophetic word of His Son (John 10:18; Matthew 26:32; John 2:18-22; Luke 24:44-49).

Much of the early apostolic preaching was devoted to the resurrection: Acts 2:24,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:30,32; 10:40,41; 13:30-33; 17:31.

8.2.1 The resurrection is a Trinitarian Event

The Author of their resurrection is said to be:

1. God: Acts 2:24; 32; 3:26; 5:30; 1 Cor 6:14; Eph 1:20.
2. Father: Rom 6:4; Gal 1:1; 1 Pet 1:13.
3. Son: John 2:19-21; 10:18; 11:25.
4. Spirit: Rom 1:4; 8:11; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18.

8.2.2 The Value of the Resurrection of Christ

1. It Declared Jesus to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4)

Though other prophets had worked miracles, and others had been raised from death (and subsequently died), Jesus was raised by the direct work of His Spirit, in divine power (Ephesians 1:15ff).

2. It Declared Jesus' Victory over Death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Acts 2:24-32).

Unequivocally, Jesus demonstrated that death could never hold men captive; its power was broken (Hebrews 2:15; John 14:19). Thus He guaranteed everlasting life (John 11:25f; 1 Corinthians 15:20 - the "first fruits" guarantee a harvest to come).

3. It Declared Jesus' Victory over the Place of Death (Acts 2:27-31).

Christ conquered Hades (or Sheol, the place of the dead, the unseen world) by breaking out of it (Acts 2:31) and by claiming its keys (Revelation 1:18), thus ensuring no believer would ever again be held by it. He also conquered hell by redeeming mankind from its torment (Revelation 20:6,15).

4. It Declared Jesus' Victory over Satan (Ephesians 1:15-23)

The victory won at Calvary (Colossians 2:15) was made public at the resurrection (Luke 24:26; 44-47) Satan's defeat was made known in the authority given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20,21; 1 Peter 3:21,22). Eph 1:10; Col 1:20 head of the powers.

Note that Satan is not a being on equal footing with God (he is not omnipotent, omnipresent, nor omniscient). He is only to be feared when we are not under the covering of the blood of Jesus.

5. It Declared Jesus' Victory over Sin (Romans 4:25)

While the justification came through the shedding of blood (Romans 5:9) it was declared in the resurrection (Romans 4:25). Note that Jesus has dealt not only with the sins we've committed, but also with those we've suffered.

6. It Declared the Certainty of the Day of Judgement (Acts 17:31) By Christ's resurrection, God has established that He will judge the world.

8.2.3 The Resurrection as the Redemption of Jesus

A. Pauline Soteriology in General

1. The centre of Pauline soteriology is not justification but the death and resurrection of Jesus.
2. The realisation of the Eschaton occurs in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
3. In the resurrection of Christ the history of redemption reaches its consummation.
4. Soteriology is therefore applied eschatology.

Some structures in Pauline Eschatology

already (present)	not yet (future)
internal	external
invisible	visible
secret	open
inner man	outer-man
non-bodily	bodily
life	glory

B. The Resurrection as the redemption of Christ

1. Redemption in the wider sense of deliverance or salvation.
(cf. ransom price) e.g. Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:30; 4:30.
2. In the life experience of Jesus the resurrection is more than noetic (knowledge shift).
3. Since Jesus becomes the wages of sin on the cross (Rom 6:23; 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21) the resurrection is the transfer from the Father's "NO!" to the Father's "YES!". From wrath to grace. To deny this is to function with a docetic view of Christ's death cf. Rom 6:9-10.
4. No self-initiative is involved in the resurrection of Christ viz: it is entirely the verdict of the Father.
5. The cross is dying to sin, the resurrection is a transfer to the state of being dead to sin (Rom 6:10).
"For him (Paul) the accomplishment of redemption is only first definitively realised in the application to Christ himself (by the Father through the Spirit) at the resurrection of the benefits purchased by his own obedience unto death." (Gaffin 1987: 117).

C. Elements of the Redemption of Christ

a) Adoption

1. The resurrection is the Father's declaration to the Son of his Sonship, this is a judicial act (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Rom 1:4), but one that constitutes the reality of that which it declares. It is his enthronement from heaven, his royal coronation, and in Davidic language, his being begotten as God's Son.

(This theme of the birth of Jesus as Messiah in resurrection finds expression in a number of ways. At the Last Supper in John (16:19 – 22) Jesus compares his departure to the birth pangs of a woman and her later joy when a child is born. It is also behind the imagery of Revelation 12:1 – 5 where the child of the woman in labour, the messianic ruler, is caught up to God and the heavenly throne.)

2. This adoption, paradoxically, must occur for the Son because of his submission to death on the cross.
3. Paul equates resurrection with adoption in Romans 8:23 "we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies."

b) Justification

1. This is spelled out in 1 Timothy 3:16; "vindicated (justified/**edikai**the) by the Spirit". The exaltation of Jesus is his justification.
2. The structure of this verse indicates an eschatological transformation.

Humiliation	Exaltation
flesh	Spirit
nations	angels
world	glory
(earthly)	(heavenly)
(present age)	(age to come)

3. The hinge between humiliation and the exaltation is the Son's experience of the Father's (Last) Judgement at the resurrection.
4. The resurrection is the sign and seal of the obedience of the Son; that he is just in relation to the Father.
5. Does not God justify the **ungodly** (Rom 4:5) ? This is exactly the position Jesus took on the cross (2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; 4:5).
6. Paul takes up this theme in terms of soteriology in Romans 4:25.

"who was handed over to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification". Solidarity in condemnation must be followed by solidarity in justification. No resurrection, no salvation from sin.

N.B. The justification of Jesus is first of all the justification of God. If the cross reveals the Son's love for the Father, then the resurrection reveals the Father's justice to the Son. (Barth: grace). The manifestation (publicly) of the Father's faithfulness to the Son in the power of the Spirit is the self-justification of God. The resurrection is the final sovereign theodicy.

c) Sanctification

1. Paul uses “sanctification” in a definitive once - for - all time sense (Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Eph 5:25 etc), as well as for a process.
2. If Christ had to die to sin (Rom 6:10) and death “no longer” has power over him (Rom 6:9), then before the resurrection there must have been a sense in which he was yet to be fully separated from sin. The passing beyond the power of sin occurs at the resurrection
3. In Romans 6:11, Paul parallels the Christian experience of sanctification with that of Jesus: “Even so...”.

d) Glorification

1. In 1 Cor 15:42ff; 2 Cor 3:17f; 4:4-6, Paul speaks of the glorification of Christ at the resurrection in the sphere of the Spirit.
2. The following contrasts are made:

the body sown	the body raised
perishable	imperishable
in dishonour	in glory
in weakness	in power
natural	spiritual
existence in Adam	existence in Christ
earth	heaven
earthly	heavenly
out of the earth	out of heaven
present age	age to come
psychical	spiritual
incomplete	complete
transitory	definitive
provisional	final

3. Paul ties our glorification to being conformed to the image of the glorified Christ (Rom 8:29 ff. cf. 1 Cor 15:49; Phil 3:21; Col 1:15-18).

D. Conclusion

1. The adoption, justification, sanctification and glorification of Jesus at his resurrection constitutes four elements of a single event.
2. The resurrection of Christ is the point of transition for creation and humanity from the old age to the new creation (Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:17).
3. What is true of Christ becomes true in us from the time of our union with the glorified Lord.
4. What is already true of Jesus in terms of eschatological regeneration (cf. Matt 19:28) effects our regeneration (Titus 3:5).

(K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, 283ff.,

R.B. Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, Philipsburg: Puritan and Reformed, 1987.)

8.3 The Historicity of the Resurrection

8.3.1 The Unique Historical Character of the resurrection

1. N.T. emphasis is on meaning and implications of resurrection cf. proof.
2. A unique event, without analogies . e.g. not resuscitation (John 11 etc).
3. The event is not described cf. Gnostic Gospels.

Resurrection as 'more than historical.' Intersection of the 2 ages, this age and eternity.

H. Thielicke concludes: 'Only he whose existence itself is taken up by the witness and act of the Spirit into the death and the resurrection of the Lord is placed in the situation of analogy from which the resurrection can be a possible object of knowledge.'

8.3.2 The Evidence for the Resurrection of Christ

Belief in the resurrection depends on the accuracy of the NT. As Christians, we accept the NT and thus the resurrection. Here are some of the vital facts concerning the resurrection which establish our belief in it.

1. *Early Witness*

The NT gives a very early witness to the resurrection. Paul gives a fairly complete list of resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15 (written about AD55). This list had already been given to the Corinthians verbally (1 Corinthians 15:3), probably about AD50. Some of this information (e.g. about James - v7), Paul probably got when he visited Peter and James (about AD40). So this evidence comes from a time less than ten years after the resurrection happened. Moreover, Paul says that most of his witnesses were still living (v6).

Mark is also an early witness, gaining his knowledge from Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Moreover, it is likely that Mark was the young man in the garden at Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:51), and the young man at the tomb on the resurrection morning (Mark 16:5). He was also Barnabas' nephew. His gospel was probably the first of the gospels to be written - it thus offers another early testimonial. (See F F Bruce, *The NT Documents*, p32ff).

2. *The Empty Tomb*

The apostolic preaching in the book of Acts assumes that the tomb was empty; it does not try to prove it. Obviously, there was no doubt about this fact. The body was gone. If there was a body, then there were plenty who would gladly have produced it. Clearly, nobody could. What the apostles did was proclaim the reason for its disappearance!

(In the New Testament itself what is challenged is the apostolic credibility: were they lying (Acts 10:41) ? did they steal the body (Matt 28:13)?

3. *Who Moved the Stone?*

If the body was gone, who moved it? The women could not; a dead Jesus could not; the soldiers prevented anyone else from doing so. Further reasons are given later. Only a supernatural event could have done so.

4. *The Testimony of Believers*

For seven weeks, no-one said anything about the risen Christ: suddenly, they burst forth with the message. What happened during the seven weeks? Obviously, something which transformed their whole lives. And they would die, as thousands did in the years that followed, rather than deny it.

It is no good saying, “I still can’t believe. Bill Smith just doesn’t rise from the dead”. Bill Smith may not. Jesus Christ was not Bill Smith.

8.3.3 The Bodily Resurrection of Christ

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul discusses the whole question of resurrection in general. He makes one basic point, however, which applies to the resurrection of Christ - that the resurrection was bodily. (See verses 35-44). Thus, we may say that Jesus “was sown a physical body” and was “raised a spiritual body” (v44). Glorified matter “incorruptible / imperishable.

What is a spiritual body? It is obviously different from a normal body and is not “flesh and blood” (1 Corinthians 15:49,50). But Jesus called it “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:40). It could disappear and appear at will (Luke 24:31; John 20:26-29). Yet it was clearly a body, not a spirit. So we may conclude that Jesus’ original body was raised, but that it was continuity / discontinuity transformed while being raised. This is further evidenced by the fact that the linen bandages and turban were undisturbed by the resurrection (John 20:6-9; Luke 24:12). The original body was evidently somehow “vapourised” and then reconstituted.

8.3.4 Common arguments against the Resurrection of Christ

Over the years, many people have tried to disprove the resurrection. A few of the more popular ones are given here. See if you can refute each one before reading the comment given. (Note: For the full discussion of this subject, read *Who Moved the Stone*, by Frank Morison, Faber, and “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ” by J Anderson in *Christianity Today* Vol. XII No 13 p4).

1. Jesus “swooned”

Jesus was not really dead at all, but only unconscious. In the coolness of the tomb He revived and later appeared to the disciples.

Comment:

Frank Morison writes: “(This theory) ignores the deadly character of the wounds inflicted on Jesus, the frightful laceration of the hands and feet, the loss of strength through the ebbing away of blood, the hopelessness of human aid during the critical moments when it would be most needed, the tight-drawn bandages of the grave, the heavy stone (which three women could not shift). To try even to think of what would happen to an utterly collapsed constitution, bleeding from five torn and unattended wounds, lying on the cold slabs of a tomb in April without human succour of any kind, is to realise at once the unreason of the argument” (p96). Furthermore, Strauss, a skeptic, readily admitted: “It is impossible that a being who had stolen half-dead out of bandaging, strengthening and indulgence ... could have given the disciples the impression that He was a conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of life ...”. (quoted by Morison, p96).

2. Hallucination

Jesus did not really appear to the disciples. What they experienced was in the form of a hallucination (cf. appearances of the Blessed Virgin today). Only disciples “saw” Jesus. Why did no unbelievers see Him?

Comment:

Hallucinations normally occur when one is expecting them to occur. There is no evidence that the disciples were expecting a resurrection: in fact, all the evidence suggests that they were not (e.g. Luke 24:25 etc.).

Hallucinations are normally individual. Two people do not usually see the same thing unless they are together and both undergoing similar psychological pressures etc. Yet different people in isolated places, at quite different times all saw the same risen Christ.

Note, too, that in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul makes no use of the women's testimony. Could this be because he wished to avoid the possible male suggestion that, being women, they were more likely to suffer a hallucination?

The fact that only followers of Christ saw Him is not significant. It is well covered by the fact that they were not expecting Him anyway. Moreover, Jesus said that unbelievers would probably not believe, even if one did rise from the dead (Luke 16:31).

Furthermore, why did the "hallucinations" suddenly cease? Why did they not actually increase as time went on?

Finally such hallucinations could be easily scotched by producing the body from the tomb. No one could.

3. The Wrong Tomb

The women, being strangers to Jerusalem, went to the wrong tomb, where a young man told them, "He is not here (in this tomb) ... Behold (the tomb) where they laid Him" (Mark 16:6). The women misunderstood and thought that Christ was risen.

Comment:

This ingenious theory is based on a misquotation. The words "He is risen" are conveniently ignored (Mark 16:6).

Why didn't the apostles check on the story, in any case? (As John says, in fact, they did). The theory goes on to say that the disciples had left Jerusalem - indeed? Without the women? Thirdly, the story assumes that Jesus' body was still in the "right" tomb. In which case, Christ's enemies could have immediately exploded the whole theory by the simple expedient of producing the body.

4. The Passover Plot

In 1965, H Schonfield wrote a book called The Passover Plot. He suggested that Jesus knew that He could not really rise from the dead; so He organised events in such a way that He would be tried before the Sabbath. Thus He would be only a short time on the cross, and would probably survive. He had previously arranged to be taken from the tomb after His burial to thus reappear to His disciples as the risen Messiah. The spear wound was an unexpected difficulty, and actually He lived only long enough to send a message to the disciples that He would see them in Galilee, but then He died and was buried secretly. A messenger sent to the disciples was mistaken for Jesus, risen from the dead.

Comment:

The character of Christ hardly fits that of a schemer who tried to fabricate a resurrection.

Why did Jesus take some “unknown disciple” into His confidence, yet not His twelve disciples?

Would His disciples have really mistaken another for Christ?

Schonfield likewise ignores large slabs of biblical evidence such as the placing of a guard at the tomb, the miracles of Christ etc.

5. Fabrication

The resurrection story was deliberately fabricated by the Disciples.

Comment:

There was a large number of witnesses to the resurrection: probably too large a number for a fabrication to be effectively put forward.

Moreover, these witnesses were basically of upright character, who themselves taught the need for morality, integrity and honesty: they were not the type of people to promulgate a fraud.

Thirdly, these men were prepared to die rather than deny this fabrication: a most unlikely turn of events.

Fourthly, it is impossible that such disorganised and frightened men as the apostles could organise such a scheme overnight - as they would have had to do.

Fifthly, what did they do with the body?

6. A Spirit

Jesus did not rise bodily; it was only a spirit that the disciples saw.

Comment:

Once again, we ask, where was the body?

Furthermore, all the gospel evidence is that the risen Christ was in some way physical. He ate and drank, he spoke, he felt physical. And see some of the above arguments.

7. The Body was Removed

Either Joseph or Arimathea or the Jewish or Roman authorities removed the body of Jesus from the tomb.

Comment:

It is hardly likely that the authorities removed the body. If they did why did they not say so, or even produce the body when the resurrection story began to get around? It was only seven weeks to Pentecost: plenty of witnesses would have still been available.

It is not likely Joseph would have shifted it. If He was a disciple He would have told the other disciples what He had done: in fact he would have needed their help. If he didn't tell them, we are back to the idea that it was a fabrication.

If he only buried the body of Jesus because he was a pious Jew who wanted to bury the body before the Passover, why didn't he bury the thieves too? And why didn't he tell the Jews what he had done when (if) he shifted the body again?

8. The Resurrection Stories are Symbolical

H J Richards says: “The stories of the appearances of Jesus, even more than those of the empty tomb, are symbols. They are pictorial and concrete ways of expressing faith

in the risen Christ. In story form, that faith can only be expressed in the words, "I have seen the Lord". Outside of such a story, the believer can only say, "I believe in the risen Christ"." (The First Easter, p45).

Comment:

This is a very subtle argument and more difficult to refute. It is one way of avoiding the issue altogether! In simple terms, it is saying: "It doesn't matter whether Christ rose literally or not: as long as He rose for you". Probably, the best answer to this argument is 1 Corinthians 15! See also the evidence given above for a literal resurrection.

8.4 The Eschatological and Teleological Significance of Jesus' Resurrection

1. The end of the world has begun (cf. 1Cor 15:20; Col 1:18), i.e., the new creation has commenced. This is because the flesh of Jesus is transformed.
2. God himself has intervened in history (Acts 2:24) to confirm Jesus' pre-Easter activity.
3. The resurrection establishes Jesus identity as the heavenly Son of Man.
'Lord' and 'Christ' are fulfilled in meaning. Jesus is uniquely marked out as a universal figure, the rest of history is a consequence (corollary) of his life and rule.
4. It means the end of Jesus' humiliation, fulfilling the exile - return types of the O.T. (Eph 1:19-20; Luke 9:30-31).
5. It means that God has been **ultimately** revealed in Jesus. This follows because the expected fulness of the manifestation of God expected at the end of time has broken **into** history. An important point to note is that the resurrection is the point in the life history of the Son of God where the Father is fully able to exert his power. Here he becomes even more like God than before, fully the image of his Father (Rom 1:3 – 4).
6. It is the source of the justification, regeneration and resurrection of God's people (Rom 4:25; 5:10; Eph 1:20; Phil 3:10; 1Pet 1:3).
7. It reveals God's justice to weakened humanity and motivates the church to do likewise.

8.5 Conclusion

For the believer, the resurrection is the greatest Christian celebration of all. Here we have demonstrated very clearly that death can be conquered; Christ is alive; the tomb is empty; there is hope; He will come again; and so on. Without such hope, one might almost choose to be a Moslem or a Hindu or something else; for there would be no real difference.

"... the resurrection was historically unprecedented and its credibility cannot be judged by comparing it with what history has shown to be possible. On the contrary what is possible in history has henceforth to be judged in the light of the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit." (John V Taylor, *The Go-Between God*, p78).

8.6 The Ascension

A very neglected topic in the contemporary church. Why? The ascension is a safeguard against all minimising estimates of the person and work of Christ.

The removal of Jesus from our space – time network is necessary lest his glorified presence initiate the Eschaton immediately. It also means that our primary means of knowing him is through the Spirit's revelation of his historical existence in covenanted space as recorded in scripture. The ascension is a barrier to all Christ- mysticism that would surrender the foundation of his life in our fallen space- time. It positively asserts the continuing incarnation of the Lord.

8.6.1 The Post-Resurrection Christ

The followers of Jesus experienced a kaleidoscope of emotions as they were confronted by the resurrected Christ - disbelief, wonder, guilt, excitement, fear, awe, and great joy at His appearing. In those post-resurrection days Jesus came continually to them to reinforce the reality of His rising, to confirm the prophetic word (Luke 24:27; 36-43; 44-49) and to press home the truth and dynamic of the kingdom (Acts 1:3; Matthew 28:18-20).

Thus Jesus prepared His followers for His ascension.

8.6.2 The Ascended Christ

The Scriptures are surprisingly brief about the moment of ascension. What we do know is that it was not a disappearance of the type Jesus had been making during the pre-ascension days (cf. Luke 24:31; 24:51). There was a finality about it which was later made clear to the believers at Pentecost. It was a transition to a new and higher mode of life.

To the objection that heaven is not immediately above Jerusalem (Luke 24:50f.), we may reply:

- 1) consistent Scripture use is that heaven is “up”, e.g. John 1:32; 17:1.
- 2) this symbolises victory, acceptance by God e.g. Enoch, Elijah.

The clouds are not meteorological, but symbols of the:

- 1) shekinah glory of creation (Gen 1:2 = Ex 32:10- 12 = Heb 1:2- 3) and exodus (Exod 40:34ff.)
- 2) heavenly glory and royal dominion of the Son of Man (Dan 7:14 = Mk 14:62)

The angelic presence (Acts 1:11) is connected to the anticipated return of Jesus (Luke 9:26).

8.6.3 The Exaltation of Christ

1. The exaltation of Humanity.

“To which nature did God say: ‘Sit at my right hand? To that which heard: ‘Dust you are and to dust you shall return.’” (Chrysostom)

2. He is exalted in Title

God has given Him a name which is above every name (Ephesians 1:20-21; Philippians 2:9).

3. He is exalted in Office

God has made Him Leader and Saviour (Acts 5:31). He is thus the Leader and Head of the Church, as well as its Saviour (Ephesians 5:23-25).

4. He is exalted in Authority

This wonderful truth is taught repeatedly in the NT. He is the head of all rule and authority (Colossians 2:10), and He is Lord both of the dead and the living (Romans 14:9). This thought is expressed in detail in Ephesians 1:19-23. Here Christ is said to be far above all rule, authority, power, dominion and every name that is named. All things are under His feet. So too Eph 4:8- captives = demons; 1 Pet 3:22 ‘angels, authorities, powers’.

Cf. Rev 20

5. He is exalted in Position

Christ is now seated at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:20; Mark 16:19). This is an expression which signifies regality (1 Kings 2:19). It tells us that Christ is honoured by God. Moreover, it suggests that He shares the throne and authority of God.

6. He is exalted as Judge

Through the ascension, Christ is exalted to be the judge of humankind (Acts 10:42; 2 Corinthians 5:9,10).

7. He is Enthroned

Acts is the “Beginning of the reign of Christ and the beginning of the renewal of the world” (Calvin)

Jesus fulfils the enthronement psalms of the Old Testament (especially Psalm 110 cf. Dan 7:13- 14). These psalms were enacted in temple festivals with four major elements: 1. a procession that ascended the hill of the Lord to the temple; 2. a dramatic presentation of the Lord’s triumph through his anointed over the forces of evil; 3. a re- enthronement of the Lord as King through the current king; 4. the marriage between God and his people. These elements are all fulfilled in the triumphant ascent of Christ and his coming union with the church.

8.6.4 The Work of the Ascended Christ

1. Christ is our Fore-runner

Christ has entered the heavens on our behalf as a fore-runner, i.e. as a scout before an army, or an advance agent for a king etc. (Hebrews 6:19,20). Thus, He has prepared the way for us to follow. This reveals that human beings have transcendental significance. (See also Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 12:2; Luke 24:51.)

2. Christ gives gifts to Men and Women

The ministries of apostle, evangelist, etc. were given after Christ ascended (Eph 4:8ff).

3. Christ gives the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised that He would give the Spirit after He ascended (John 16:7; Acts 1:4,5). This promise was initially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4; 2:33).

4. Christ intercedes for us

This thought is closely connected with the Priestly office of Christ. It is as High Priest that He becomes our intercessor (Hebrews 7:24,25).

His ministry as heavenly intercessor only began with His ascension. For at this time, Christ the man was exalted. Ultimate Reality now includes the heavenly High Priest at the centre of creation; Jesus “before the face of God” (Heb 9:24). Thus Paul says that our

mediator is “the man, Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Because of this, He understands our needs and weaknesses (Hebrews 4:14,15) and is thus able to have compassion upon us.

We have no need for any other to intercede on our behalf. He is holy (Hebrews 7:26), faithful (Hebrews 2:17), eternal (Hebrews 7:24) and all-sufficient (Hebrews 7:28). Thus, through Him we may boldly approach the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

This leads us to the basic meaning of intercession. Perhaps we think of Christ persuading God to have mercy on us and not to be angry. The basis of God’s mercy has already been worked out at Calvary, however.

The word “intercede” is based on two Latin words *inter* (between) and *cedo* (=go). Thus, Christ is our “go-between”. When we say that He ever lives to make intercession for us, we mean that He ever goes between us and God. Thus He is always ready to act as bridge should we come to Him (1 John 2:1; 1 Timothy 2:5 etc.). Remember that this is on the basis of work already accomplished.

We may say of Christ’s intercession that:

- ⇒ He never lost a case.
- ⇒ He answers all bills of indictment, all accusations (Romans 8:33,34).
- ⇒ He intercedes only for believers and repentant sinners.
- ⇒ He knows each case individually.

The present intercession of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary means that in our prayers we participate in the prayers of Jesus in the holiest place before the Father. Jesus graciously makes his prayers our prayers. The joy of prayer is the intercession of the ascended Lord. “Let us therefore recognise in him our words, and his words in us.” (Augustine).

5. Christ leads us in Worship

This is the teaching of Hebrews 8:1- 2 “Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, **2** a minister (*leitourgos* = worship leader) in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.” All our earthly worship is gathered up and presented to the Father in Christ. Cf. 1 Pet 2:5

6. Christ Unites himself with us in The Lord’s Supper

The glorification of the flesh of Jesus in the resurrection and its acceptance into heaven, means the Supper is a heavenly act. Christ, though absent in body, makes his flesh, through the Spirit, give life to our mortal bodies. “he so raises us to himself as to transfuse the vivifying rigor of his flesh into us.” (Calvin)

8.6.5 The benefits of the Ascension

1. The ascension reveals God’s eternal plan: to unite us with his power and glory forever.

Through the ascension we see the life of Jesus of Nazareth in the eternal life of the triune God. The ascension teaches us that the way to honour is the way of humility; the way to glory is the way of suffering (Luke 14:11; 2 Timothy 2:12).

2. By the ascension we know that the work of redemption is finished. Christ is now *seated* in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:20; Hebrews 10:12). Thus, there is nothing that God needs to do for our redemption, and there is nothing more that we need to do. By the ascension, we now can look to heaven as our home and true country. Christ our Head is there, and there we also must be (Philippians 3:20,21). Thus our interest will

not be in storing up earthly possessions or reputation: we shall concentrate on laying up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:20).

3. By the ascension, we are now in a position of authority over the devil and all his associates. We are seated together with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6) and thus share in His authority, i.e. spiritually we have already what will one day be ours physically. We share his victory over the powers (Eph 2:1-2) and death (Acts 7:55f).
4. Through the ascension we understand that the new creation has now come into being in Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). The kingdom of heaven is opened up to all believers.
5. Our responsibility is two-fold:
 - To ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to the blessings that are ours (Ephesians 1:16ff) (Baptism in the Spirit is important here).
 - To set our minds on things above, not on things below. See Colossians 3:1. See also Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:1,2. What we do with our thinking is *our* responsibility - with the Spirit's help.

8.6.6 The body of the ascended Lord.

1. The resurrection body of Jesus had clear physical properties – it could be seen, touched, it ate, had wound marks etc.
(Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-29)
2. The appearances of Jesus to Saul of Tarsus and to the apostle John on Patmos are less physical and more glorious.
(Acts 9:35; Rev 1:12-18)
3. This can be explained by:
 - a) a condescension of Jesus to the expectations of his disciples before he ascended or
 - b) a two-stage exaltation. The exaltation of Jesus completes what was commenced in the resurrection. This is compatible with scripture. (Acts 2:32-33; 5:30-31; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2)
4. If 3. b) is accepted, the body which Christians will receive at the resurrection will be like Jesus' ascended body (1 Cor 15:20-23; 42-49; Phil 3:20-21).

8.6.7 The Ascension and Eschatological Priority

The church is in continuous danger of trying to derive its reality and identity from the past e.g. traditions of revival. Whilst Pentecost may seem to be a past event which is foundational to the nature of the church, Pentecost is of significance because of its connection with the ascended Lord who has entered the realm of eternity (Acts 2:34- 36).

In this sense eschatology has priority over history. In the ascended Lord believers have entered the sphere of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17). The Holy Spirit is the present authority of Christ, not institutional connections with the past.

The Christ who emerges in the church does so from the future. "The church does not exist out of its past....the future of the church exists first – and then its present." (Ray S. Anderson, referring to Barth CD 1/1, 531). This means openness to discontinuities and innovations. (None of which can contradict the earthly history of Jesus.)

8.6.7 Conclusion:

Thomas Watson writes: “How the scene is altered! When He was on earth, He lay in a manger; now He sits on a throne. Then He was hated and scorned of men; now He is adored by angels. Then His name was reproached; now “God hath given Him a name above every name”. Then He came in the form of a servant, and as a servant, stood with His basin and towel, and washed His disciples’ feet; now He is clad in His prince’s robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns before Him. On earth He was a man of sorrow; now He is anointed with the oil of gladness. On earth was His crucifixion; now His coronation. Then His Father frowned upon Him in desertion; now He has set Him at His right hand. Before He seemed to have no form of beauty in Him; now He is in the brightness of His Father’s glory. Oh what a change is here! Him hath God highly exalted!” (*A Body of Divinity*, p144). Thus Christ is exalted far above all. Humanity has been taken into God. As the resurrection opens earth to heaven, the ascension opens heaven to earth. Let us then exalt Him in our hearts, in our lives and with our lips!

9. THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

Messiah (in the Hebrew) or Christ (in the Greek) means “anointed one,” and thus signifies a person set apart for a particular ministry. In the OT there were three particular ministries or “offices” that were distinguished by an anointing, viz. those of prophet, priest and king: - commissioned to a task, to reveal, reconcile and rule.

Priests and kings were traditionally anointed with oil (Exodus 29:7ff, 30:30ff, 40:12ff; Leviticus 8:10ff; 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:6ff; 2 Samuel 2:4; 5:3 etc.). Prophets, however, were anointed by the Spirit (1 Samuel 10:6; 11:6; 2 Kings 2:9; 15 etc.). Prophets mediated the truth and commands of God, priests the forgiveness and holiness of God and kings the sovereignty and power of God.

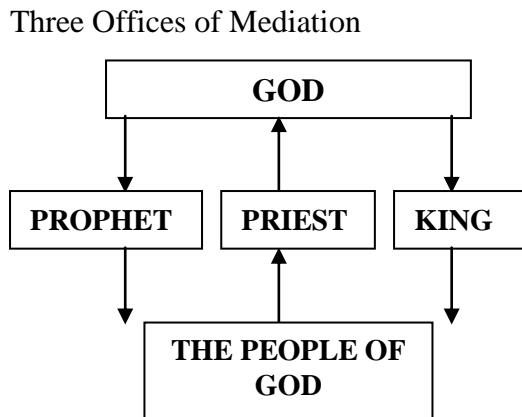
The three offices of Christ can be distinguished but not separated. They are united in the person of Christ. Jesus is Prophet in a priestly and royal manner; Priest in a prophetic and kingly way and King as prophet and priest. At every moment he acts in all three capacities. This will effect the fullness of his humanity and be the answer to the range of human need: ignorance, sin, slavery.

This can be illustrated from the major events in the life of Christ. In the wilderness Jesus is tempted to supply food (for himself) supernaturally as Moses and Elijah did. A true prophet however lives by God’s directive Word. The pinnacle of the temple from which he is tempted to cast himself is the height of the priestly position. According to Satan, a perfect priestly Messiah will not need to engage in self – sacrifice. The perfect sacrifice however will suffer without complaint. The temptation to rule is resisted because all worldly notions of sovereignty are misplaced.

The royal aspects of Christ’s atoning work, concerns the power of the cross as the means by which our bondage to sin, evil and death is dramatically broken. The priestly aspects concerns the intercession of the cross as the means by which Christ freely assumes and removes the objective guilt that separates us from God. The prophetic aspect, finally, concerns the proclamation of the cross in terms of the basic unity Christ’s person and work as the Word made flesh - a unity that is essential to both his royal and priestly operations. (T.F. Torrance).

In his offices, as prophet Jesus demonstrates the love of God, as priest substitutes his obedience for our disobedience, as king defeats the powers that held us captive. His words were characteristic of the office of a prophet, his lordly miracles bore witness to his kingship, his personal actions revealed his office as priest.

9.1. The Offices of Christ as Mediation



9.2 Christ the Prophet

9.2.1 Prophecy in the Old Testament as God he reveals God (Heb 1:1-3)

The three Old Testament words for prophet *nabhi* (called), *chozeh*, *ro'eh* together indicate that the prophetic function contained two elements, the one passive or receptive, and the other active or productive. The prophet or “seer” receives divine revelations in the forms of dreams, visions, or verbal communications, and then, in obedience, passes these on to the people in oral, written, or dramatic form. While the second element is the more prominent, the first is the more important, as it controls and determines the second.

9.2.2 Jesus fulfils Old Testament Prophecy

a) prophetic ministry.

The Old Testament makes clear that a prophet like Moses was to come (Deuteronomy 18:15). The apostles declared that Jesus was the fulfilment of that promise (Acts 3:17-23). We see Him doing the work of a prophet in teaching (Matthew 5-7), in declaring the secrets of earth (John 4:19,29) and heaven (Matthew 24-25), and in the miracles He wrought (Matthew 8-9). But all this took place because of His dependence on His Father (see John 9:28; John 12:49,50; John 5:19,20). There are a number of parallels between the prophetic ministry of Christ and that of the Old Testament Prophets. Jesus is the antitype who fulfils the prophecy of one who will mediate the law (Matt 5:17; Acts 3:22; 7:3, 37).

PROPHETS		JESUS
1	Revealed the will of God. (This is the general theme of all the OT Prophets. Examples are on almost every page. See 2 Chronicles 20:14ff; and the first verse of each of the prophetic books - e.g. Joel 1:1.)	Matthew 7:21; John 6:39-40. (Of course there are pages of Christ's teaching - revealing God's will - in the New Testament.)
2	Spoke with authority (Joel chapter 1 etc.).	Matt 7:29; “I am’ saying
3	Often worked miracles (2 Kings 4:1ff etc.).	Matt 11:1-6

4	Proclaimed God's deliverance (Joel 2:20ff).	Proclamation of the gospel (Luke 4:18 ff)
5	Proclaimed God's Kingdom (Joel 3:18-21).	Mark 1:15, Parables of the Kingdom of God.
6	Proclaimed the future (Joel 3:1ff).	Predicts his death (Mark 8:28f etc).
7	Anointed by the Spirit (Isaiah 61:1)	Anointed by the Spirit (Luke 4:18)
7	Warned of coming judgement (Joel 3:12ff).	Woes to cities (Matt 11:20-24), prophecy over Jerusalem (Luke 19: 42 – 44; 23: 28 – 31) , Return (Mark 13).
8	Called for repentance (Joel 1:14).	Mark 1:15
9	Were concerned for justice and integrity (Amos 5:7ff; Micah 6:8).	Luke 4:18-19.

b) recognition as a prophet.

Jesus was called a prophet (John 4:19; 6:14), (not by disciples), and referred to Himself as a prophet (indirectly) (Matthew 13:57; Luke 13:33). Jesus applied the Word of God to current circumstances, had a burning social conscience and looked to the future fulfilment of God's promises. All of these are essential to prophetism.

c) the scope of Jesus' prophetic work.

Indeed it can be said that Christ's prophetic work is eternal, having existed before His advent (John 1:9). It was Jesus who inspired the Old Testament prophets (1 Pet 1:11). This prophetic work continued during His earthly ministry. Jesus as ascended is presently active as a prophet (Acts 7:37) in the witness of his apostles (Acts 3:22 – 23 cf Luke 21: 15). His prophetic word exists now through His Church (Acts 1:1). He preaches wherever the gospel is proclaimed (Eph :2:17). This he does by His Spirit (John 16:12-14). All biblical revelation is a result of Jesus' prophetic ministry. This ministry continues into eternity (John 16:25; 17:26).

d) Jesus' prophetic action in the epistles.

Jesus is never called a/the prophet in the N.T. letters. This seems to be because:

1. He is the subject of the entire witness of biblical prophecy (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:45 -47; 1 Peter 1:11)
2. Jesus is the source and content of all revelation of God. (John 1:1; Heb 1:1-2 etc). To call him a prophet might suggest one among many.

e) the importance of Jesus' prophetic work.

1. Jesus is the consummation of all prophecy.

2. He proclaims himself in the gospel to be the one in whom the Father has revealed himself by putting all good things in Jesus. (The Father is known only in the Son.)
3. “That is, outside Christ there is nothing worth knowing, and those who by faith perceive what he is like have grasped the whole immensity of heavenly benefits.”
(J. Calvin)
4. Without Christ as prophet offering himself to us in the gospel, the wonderful exchange in Christ would profit no one.

9.3 CHRIST THE PRIEST

9.3.1 Priest and Prophet

Priestly work is a prophetic action. God rules through his word. The word of Christ about the cross explains who God is. Whereas in Biblical times both prophet and priest received their appointment from God (Deuteronomy 18:18f; Hebrews 5:4), their roles were quite distinct. The prophet's primary role was to be God's messenger to His people, and to interpret His will. Thus he stood as God's representative to the people.

The priest had the special privilege of approaching God, on the people's behalf, and in particular of offering sacrifices for sins. The high priest as Israel's representative in the presence of God (Ex 28:17 -21; 29). There was a prophetic function, the urim and thummim (Ex 28:30; Lev 18:8), these fell into disuse after the rise of prophecy. The priest was the mediator of right relation between a holy God and his covenant people. The high priest and other priests also pronounced covenantal blessing on Israel (Num 6:22 -27). Israel was to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests offering right sacrifice to God. The task of sustaining this relationship was delegated to the priests and their place in the sacrificial cult. This climaxed in the role of the high priest on the day of atonement (Lev 16).

The whole shape of Jesus' life is a self-offering to God. This starts with his dedication to God as the first-born (Luke 2:22 - 24). The baptism and temptations are the beginnings of a conscious priestly action of self offering to the Father on behalf of humanity. The Spirit which descends upon Jesus at his baptism is directed towards the cross (Heb 9:14). The role which Jesus takes is to reconcile humanity to God's holiness; holiness must be recognised as righteous.

Jesus laid claim to a special relationship with the temple (Luke 2:49; Matt 12:6; Mark 14:57 -58; John 2:19,21). He sees himself as fulfilling the temple and its rituals (John 2:13 -22). He assumes a place of centrality at religious feast (John 7 - 8) and his conflict with the high priest is an implicit claim to the Melchizedek priesthood.

Jesus relates the purpose of his life to the cross e.g. John 3:14 'lift up', John 10, Mark 10:45 etc. This includes the High Priestly prayer of John 17, the last Supper and the sacrificial significance of 'blood' (Mark 26:28). It is now God as priest who supplies the food and drink for the sacrificial communal meal, in the terms of his own body and blood (Mark 14:22 - 24; Matt 26: 26 - 28; Luke 22: 14 - 20 cf. Num 28:2 - 3).

When Jesus departs the earth he does so with benedictions (Luke 24:51; John 20:19).

Jesus is our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). There are clear references to the priesthood of the coming Redeemer within the Old Testament writings (Psalm 110:4; Zechariah 6:13). Moreover, the Old Testament priesthood, and particularly the high priest, clearly pre-figured a priestly Messiah. When we come to the New Testament, only the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to Christ specifically as a priest (see Hebrews 3:1; 4:14; 5:5; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1).

9.3.2 The Order of Christ's Priesthood

The Levitical priesthood is a type of Christ. The other Old Testament priesthood which is compared to that of Christ is the priesthood of Melchizedek (see Hebrews 7:1ff).

Melchizedek appears in Genesis 14:18- 20. He blesses Abraham in a manner parallel to Yahweh's blessing in Genesis 12, he is thus the priest of the Abrahamic covenant. Psalm 110:4 sees in Melchizedek the union of kingly and priestly offices that was forbidden in Israel (2 Chron 26:16 -21). His priesthood is permanent and irrevocable, unlike the family of Eleazar around the time this psalm was written.

Of Melchizedek, Hebrews says:

He is the king of Salem (i.e. Jerusalem), king of peace.

He is a priest of God most High.

He blessed Abraham (and was by implication greater than Abraham).

Abraham tithed to him.

He is the King of Righteousness (*Melech* = “king; *zedek* - righteousness”).

He has no recorded parentage (thus symbolically eternal).

He has no recorded beginning or end (thus symbolically eternal).

He was greater than both Abraham and Levi, preceding them both.

All of the principles here apply to Jesus Christ. At this point it is essential to read Hebrews 7 carefully. Note how the prophecy about the eternal Melchizedek priesthood (Ps 110:4) was made after the Levitical priesthood was established. Further, Christ’s ministry was based not on ancestry (He was of Judah, not Levi) but on the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16).

To summarise, Jesus Christ also:

- was King of righteousness and peace
- was greater than Abraham
- had no human father
- had an eternal priesthood

He made a once-for-all sacrifice that has eternal validity and has been “made perfect forever” (Hebrews 7:28).

Finally, His priesthood was established by an oath sworn by God Himself! (Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7:20f).

9.3.3 Priesthood and Sacrifice

1. The Old Testament Sacrifices

- (a) Sacrifices symbolise atonement - sacrifice ‘covers’ an offence to make ready the worshipper before God.
- (b) Dedication to God - the consuming of the animal e.g., whole burnt offering, indicated total dedication of offerer to God.
- (c) Substitution (sin and guilt offerings) stated as such Lev 1:4; 4:28, etc., laying on of hands symbolised transfer of guilt (Lev 1:4; 16:21-22) sprinkling of blood as a covering for sin (Lev 16:27); led to pardon of sin (Lev 4:26, 31, 35).
- (d) Deal with unwitting worship faults (sin and guilt offerings) – subsequent worship becomes acceptable to God.
- (e) Fellowship offerings - sense of peace with God, communion (eaten in God’s presence).
- (f) Day of Atonement - (Lev 16) atonement is made for the people by the High Priest in the closest presence of God.
- (g) Passover - celebrated deliverance and redemption.
- (h) Blood - Lev 17:11, giving up of blood indicates violent death.

NOTE: No Old Testament sacrifices for hard-hearted sin. The worshipper must come before God in purity - this is taught by the sacrificial system. Right motive (repentance) is essential for atonement. (Prophets attack a view of 'automatic atonement' through sacrifice eg. Amos 5:21 – 27; Mic 6:6 - 8.) Sacrifice achieves only what the attitude of the offerer allows. This is not to say that sacrifice is accomplished by humans; right attitude enabled God to accomplish the purpose of the sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22; Ecc 4:17; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21ff; Matt 9:15; 12:7; Heb 10:5,8 etc.).

The sacrifice of Christ presents a perfect attitude of approach to God in the real and heavenly sanctuary.

- (i) Active/Preceptive Obedience - whole life, 'offers himself up through the eternal Spirit' (Heb 9:14). Faithful obedience to all God's requirements – positive righteousness.
- (ii) Passive/Penal Obedience - allows himself to be sent to the cross 'I have come to do your will O Lord' (Heb 10:7). Bears the sanctions of the broken law (legal imputation).

Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 37, Jesus bore the wrath of God against our sin his whole life.

2. Christ's Sacrifice in Hebrews

Ch. 1-4: Jesus greater than angels, Joshua, Moses, priests.

5-7: Jesus' priesthood is of Melchizedek i.e., greater than the Aaronic order.

8-10: Jesus' offering:

- (a) actual cf. symbolic atonement (9:12).
- (b) new covenant is real and eternal cf. symbolic and temporary.
- (c) redemption is eternal - 'once for all' (10:10).

11-13: Proper response - faith for a new life, following Jesus' example.

3. A Complete Mediation.

In studying the priesthood of Christ, it is necessary to put both concepts - the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Melchizedek - together. The former shows us clearly how the shedding of blood was necessary for remission of sin and how a high priest was needed to administer atonement. The latter shows how an eternal priesthood was necessary to provide an eternal and sufficient sacrifice for sin.

As priest Christ takes upon himself every evil thing we have (sin, guilt, curse, eternal death) in order to bestow on us every good thing we lack (holiness, righteousness, grace, eternal life). The "wonderful exchange".

NB 1 Peter 2:5 - Church offers spiritual (real) sacrifices to God through Christ as Spirit gathers his people

4. Distinctive features of the Priestly Sacrifice of Christ

- (a) He does not need to make atonement for himself (Lev 16:6; Heb 9:7). He acts exclusively on behalf of the people. This means that he is the one who is essentially priest (Heb 4:1).
- (b) He is not authorised by the Law which precedes and succeeds him. He is before and after the Law in direct relation to God (Heb 7:1f; 20 – 24). He does not exercise his office within the framework of an institution.

- (c) He does not offer sacrifice external to himself.(Heb 7:27; 9:14; 23,26, 10:2, 14). As the one true priest he offers the one true sacrifice.
- (d) He offers his own life as a perfect sacrifice, where the other priests offered a substitute for the real sacrifice of life itself.
- (e) God's own activity and will is present in Christ, he is not a representative for God.

9.3.4 The intercession of Christ

Christ's work as High Priest continues in heaven. Whilst the priestly work as a sacrifice is complete his work as intercessor continues.

9.3.4.1 Jesus as Intercessor

Jesus is called **parakletos** in the New Testament (John 14:16; 1John 2:1). The word involves advocacy and counsel. Christ as our advocate pleads the believers' cause with the Father against Satan the accuser (Zech 3:1; Heb 7:25; 1John 2:1; Rev 12:10), while the Holy Spirit pleads the cause of believers against the world (John 16:8) and also pleads the cause of Christ with believers (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:14).

9.3.4.2 The Importance of Christ's Intercession:

'It is generally acknowledged that sinners could not be saved without the death of Christ; but it is not so much considered that believers could not be saved without the life of Christ following it' (John Owen). Intercession inevitably points to judgement. Intercession is the work of the High Priest from the standpoint of the cross, judgement is the work of the High Priest from the standpoint of the Eschaton. Not prayer to get 'into Christ', but prayer 'in Christ'.

The intercession of Christ at the right hand of the Father is itself an atoning act. Through it the Father accepts the sacrifice of the Son for sinners.

'To this we have to add that this living being of Jesus Christ the Mediator is the immovable barrier opposed to all who have tried to make themselves another saviour than the Saviour of sinners crucified between and with the thieves; to all who are too proud to pray with the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner;" to all who try to believe that they can treat and act on their own account in relation to God. They must be clear that even in Christian history and the Christian church, in spite of the *kerygma*, with or without the sacraments, in spite of their faith and discipleship, they would necessarily be lost and damned were it not that as their Representative between themselves and His and their Father there stands "above" the crucified Son of God, the Saviour of sinners between two thieves as the One who gave Himself up for our trespasses. "If we say that we have no sin, deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:8 f). In this sense the *intercessio Christi* is not simply the origin and the lasting basis of our righteousness and hope, but its continual turning point, the way which is also open to God and the sharp corner around which it leads us. And to this twofold sense it is the eternal act of the crucified and risen One for us, the one truly contemporaneous divine act to us, the To-day, To-day! of atonement against which we must not harden our hearts (Barth C.D. IV/1 315-316)

Because of the intercession of Christ the impact of his death does not diminish with time.

9.3.4.3 Christ the Perfect Intercessor:

1. Perfect access to God - at God's right hand in the true tabernacle in heaven (Heb 9:24; Rom 8:34).
2. Perfect understanding of our needs:
 - (i) a human being (1 Tim 2:5).
 - (ii) tempted (Heb 4:15).
 - (iii) suffered (Heb 5:7).
 - (iv) sympathetic (Heb 4:15).
3. Perfect sufficiency:
 - (i) his life is the prayer, he is in complete unity with the Father (John 17:9,11,15,17,20,24). Does this exclude or include specific requests?
 - (ii) the Father always answers the Son in the affirmative (John 11:41-42 cf. Luke 11:22,31f). (It is not petition as usually understood but flows from the Father's full authorisation of the Son.)

See especially Hebrews 7:24-25.

9.3.4.4 The Content of Christ's Intercession

1. Carries humanity into the presence of God (Heb 9:24). cf. the twelve tribes of Israel - the breastplate of the High Priest.
2. Makes any charges brought against the elect invalid (Roman 8:33-34).
3. Makes all the offerings of God's people in prayer, worship and service acceptable to God (1 Pet 2:5).
4. Asks for the sanctification, protection and preservation of the people of God (John 17:17,24; Heb 4:14,16; 10:21-22; 1Pet 2:5).

9.3.4.5 The Subjects of Christ's Intercession

1. John 17:9 is exclusive, referring to the elect v.20ff includes others who will believe.
2. Other scriptures (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24) likewise refer to believers.

9.3.4.6 Christ's Intercession and Holy Spirit

1. The sending of the Holy Spirit is a comprehensive blessing of Christ's High Priesthood for which we are indebted to his intercession (John 14:16f; cf. 7:39; 16:7).
2. The intercession of the Holy Spirit in the temple of our bodies (1 Cor 6:19; Rom 8:16, 26f; cf. Eph 6:18) is united with the intercession of the Son in the sanctuary of heaven and brings the joy of heaven into every believing heart.

9.3.5 Christ's Sole Priesthood

1. Israel was elected to be "a kingdom of priests" (Ex 19:6).
2. In the New Testament this is applied to the church (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).
3. Our priestly role is a corporate one, not so much "the priesthood of all believers" as "the priesthood of the church".

9.4 CHRIST THE KING

(See also the material on Messiah and Son of Man.)

As the second person of the Trinity, Christ shares the dominion of God over all His creatures (Psalm 103:19). But more specifically He reigns over the kingdom of the redeemed. No one may be a citizen of this kingdom by virtue of their humanity alone. Only the redeemed have entry into the kingdom over which Christ, the God-man, exercises His kingship of grace. Rules by grace / mercy and justice / wrath.

When we speak of the kingship of Christ we are not referring simply to the sovereignty which He possesses as co-creator. We refer rather to His sovereignty as the divine-human redeemer by which He now rules all things in heaven and earth. This is a kingship he has received from the Father (Matt 28:19). The rule of God is actualised in the humanity of Christ.

His royal authority and victory is shown in his triumph over evil powers (Mark 1:21 – 27; 5:1 – 20; Matt 12:28 etc.), his healing of diseases (Mark 1:29 – 34; 3:22 – 37; 14:34 – 36 etc.) and his refusal to submit unwillingly to worldly rulers (John 18:33 – 38; Luke 13:31 – 32). Jesus' ability to still the waters (Matt 8:23 – 27; Mark 4:35 – 41; Luke 8:22 – 25) likewise indicates that God is ruling through Christ (cf. Ps 89:8 – 9; 107:28 – 31; Jer 31:35; Isa 51:15). All this is done by the anointing Spirit.

In all his acts and supremely in his passion, Jesus returns kingship to God and therefore to humanity as the covenant partner. He makes it finally clear that the people of God do not have a king over them like the other nations (1 Sam 8) and that the kingdom of God is not like any human dominion. Jesus transforms his people from being opponents to allies.

His kingship:

9.4.1 Eternal

It is generally accepted that, just as the subjects of the kingdom were chosen before time began (Ephesians 1:4), so Christ has been King over those subjects from eternity, and began to function as such from the fall (Berkhof; *Systematic Theology*, p409f). We receive glimpses of His kingship typified in the judges and then the kings of the Old Testament.

9.4.2 Universal

All authority is His (Matthew 28:18) as He upholds all things by His word (Hebrews 1:3). His title of Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords is not rhetorical, but actual and permanent (Ephesians 1:19-23; Revelation 19:15,16). It is not bounded by space or time i.e., is co-extensive with the kingdom of God.

9.4.3 Spiritual

Administered not by external or earthly forces but by the spiritual means of Word and Spirit. The same means by which he was sanctified and entered into his kingship.

From the annunciation (Luke 1:32), and throughout His earthly life we are introduced to His kingship (John 1:49). It was not a worldly one (John 18:33-38), not one of might (Matthew 26:52-53), nor of popularity (John 6:14f). It was a humble one (Matthew 21:5).

9.4.4 Gracious

All we experience of God, whether beyond or within ourselves, is initiated by the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Christ Himself has founded and now administers, defends and extends His church as the earthly expression of His kingdom (Ephesians 1:22f). As Luther has said, "We tell our Lord God, that if He will have His church, He must look

after it Himself. We cannot sustain it, and, if we could, we should become the proudest asses under heaven". We are freed by grace (Ephesians 2:8,9) in order to enter into grace (Hebrews 4:16).

This involves an incorporation into his death and resurrection, the means of his kingship.

9.4.5 Glorious

The glory of Christ is being revealed (John 17:24) and will be both revealed to us and experienced by us at the end of time (2 Peter 1:11). This is the Christian's great reward (Philippians 3:13,14 cf. 3:8-10), the source and content is the cross.

9.4.6 Defeats the Powers

Has a special focus on the defeat of the powers - Col 2:15; 2Cor 2:14; 1John 3:8; Eph 2:6; 6:11-12; Heb 2:14 ff; Rev 5:10. Cf. Jesus' exorcisms. This is achieved only through the work of the cross (John 12:31).

It is at the cross that the king (John 19:19-22) brings about complete victory. His victory is over the evil one and His kingdom (Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8) and comes about not through the exertion of brute force but through suffering obedience (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 5:9-10). His victory on the cross is the sole basis of our own present and future victory (Romans 8:31-37; Revelation 3:21).

9.4.7 A Moral Reign

The real conflict is not one of power but moral authority. Jesus is by nature stronger than the devil (Luke 11:20) and demons (Mark 1:24; 5:7 etc). The victory of Jesus is in his refusal to overpower; in submission to the will of the Father, by suffering, he undermines the authority of the powers; 'might is not right.'

9.4.8 For the Church

There is a special focus on Christ's role 'for the church' (Eph 1:22) as this is his body. Jesus reigns for us.

1. Present - all the resources of heavenly power are available to his people.
 - he shares with us all that he has received from the Father.
2. Future - the people of God will reign with Christ over the earth (1Cor 6:2; Rev 2:26; 5:10; 20:4,6; 22:5).
 - they will judge angels with him (1Cor 6:3).
 - the dominion of Gen 1:26-27 will be perfectly fulfilled.

9.4.9 To the World

Christ extends his rule through the Church over the world.

Matt 28:18-20 'all authority is given to me, go therefore....'. The discipling of the nations is the extension of his universal rule **de facto**.

This involves the defeat of his enemies (1Cor 15:25) through the proclamation of the Gospel (Matt 24:14; 28:20) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33).

9.4.10 Now He reigns and will continue to do so until all is consummated (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) and humanity's original kingship is restored.

9.5 Order in the Offices of Christ

9.5.1 Office and Person.

As in all the aspects of the work of Christ there is an essential relationship between his person and his task. If we are to understand the 3 offices in the Old Testament as drawing their reality from Christ, his identity as Prophet, Priest and King is eternal. (This follows from the previous discussion on the pre-existence humanity of Jesus (4.7)).

Jesus begins to function as Prophet, Priest and King in a fully conscious way as a human being from his baptism. This is his Messianic anointing in relation to each of the offices.

9.5.2 Offices and the States of Christ.

1. The Prophetic Office.

The main feature of the prophetic office in the state of humiliation is the predictions of the passion and resurrection (Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15). The focus on suffering and death shows that Jesus is the fulfilment of the fate of all the prophets from Abel on, who gave their lives for the Kingdom of God (Matt 23:35; Luke 13:33). Here there is a strong element of continuity.

Once Jesus is glorified however, a strong element of discontinuity is introduced. There is a sense in which that of which Jesus now speaks through the church as the exalted Lord can only be a manifestation or unveiling of his present state. Jesus, for example, is already the exalted Son of Man of Daniel 7:13. (See discussion of major terms to do with the Second coming in eschatology notes.)

This means that the prophetic action of Christians, unlike that of the Old Testament saints, is in communion with one who has passed beyond the prophetic horizon. The End has already come in Christ, even if it is still future for us. This explains why Jesus could both say that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet, but all those in the Kingdom of God were greater than he (Matt 11:11).

2. The Priestly Office.

As already discussed in the notes on the Incarnation, the Incarnation itself is mediatorial. The priestly office however realises its climax in the passio magna of the cross, for here the intercessory work of Christ (cf. Isa 53:12) reached its fulness.

Paradoxically, the death of the Word is the coincidence of the ultimate prophetic action of the Father's behalf, and the substance of priestly office. Here, Jesus, as a Son, and so in all of His offices, is perfected (Hebrews 2:10; 5:9).

3. The Kingly Office.

Although always King, the order of Christ's kingdom from the time of his resurrection reaches a new level. He now has all authority (Matt 28:19) and actively re-establishes the true universal authority of God in fellowship with Humanity (1 Cor 15:24ff; Heb 2:5 ff). Not only the scope but also the new creation (eschatological) character of Christ's present reign, marks a discontinuity between himself and his kingly antecedents in Israel. Again, this new reality is constituted by his suffering, cf. Luke 24:26; Ph 2:5-11 etc.

4. The Offices of Christ and Christian Ministry.

The church shares in the three-fold office of Christ. This must not be restricted to a separate clerical or charismatic class, for to receive Christ, the hope of glory (Col 1:27), must be to receive into one's life the three-fold anointing. Whilst there may be degrees of

expression, designated by various descriptions, biblical or otherwise, for example, apostle, prophet, teacher, intercessor, these cannot indicate differences in status.

Given the central place of suffering in the perfection of Christ's own offices, this must be so for the life of the individual believer. Paul repeatedly takes up these issues at length (Rom 8:18-30; 2 Cor 1:3-11; 4:7-18; 12:1-10; Eph 3:13; Col 1:24; Phil 3:10 etc). The essence of the inner and hidden working of the offices of Christ in the heart of the Christian is willingness to suffer for the cause of God's Kingdom. To focus on the outer manifestation of the prophetic, priestly and kingly rule of Christ, is a denial of their very eschatological and non-worldly order. The states of Christ and his offices are inseparable in the life of his people.

9.6 Problems of Overemphases:

1. On prophet favours rationalism and moralism – liberalism e.g. social justice.
2. On priest favours pietism and mysticism – evangelicalism e.g. blood of Christ.
3. On king favours triumphant theologies – Pentecostalism e.g. church growth.

9.7 The Three- Fold Office of the Church

9.7.1 Biblical Reflections

(M.G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, Wipf and Stock 1999: 90 -93)

Revelation 11 introduces various themes from Zechariah 4 in relation to the image of God reflected in priests and prophets and fulfilled in Jesus. The two witnesses = olive trees/ lampstands to whom the verse 4 symbolism refers are the faithful church. As their career unfolds in verses 3—12, the reader cannot miss the similarity of its pattern to that of Jesus' ministry. A time of proclamation and signs, issuing in Satanic opposition and the violent death of the witnesses in the great city "where also our Lord was crucified", is followed by the resurrection of the martyrs and their ascension in a cloud.

The figures in whom the likeness of Christ is reproduced are expressly denoted as witnesses (v. 3) and prophets (vv. 10, 18) and their mission is described as one of prophesying (v. 3), p (v. 6), and testimony (v. 7). The details of the picture of their mission come from the lives of Old Testament prophets, particularly Moses and Elijah. The three and a half years of their witness (v. 3a) during which they restrain the rain matches a period in Elijah's ministry of the same duration and character (1 Ki 17:1). Threats against them are met with destruction, as were those against Elijah (2 Ki 1:10ff.). And, like Moses, they execute plagues(v. 6b). There is also the identification of the two figures by the lampstand-witness imagery of Zechariah 4 (v. 4).

In Revelation 11, it is the Lord Jesus who commissions the church as a prophet church in his own likeness. To see the whole picture properly it is necessary to look back into the tenth chapter. In Revelation 10, John is directed in his task as apocalyptic seer by the Glory-Angel, as he was in Revelation 1 by Jesus, the incarnate Glory. According to Revelation 10:11, John is to prophesy before many peoples, nations, languages, and kings. The prophetic character of his task is also brought out by the motif of the eating of the book. (vv. 8—10), which is drawn from the experience of the prophet Ezekiel (3:1- 3). The witness character of the Angel - Lord is also conspicuous. He stands as witness in oath posture and, affirming continuity with the tradition of God's "servants the prophets" (v. 7), prophesies the finishing of the mystery of God. In effect, then, the commissioning of the apostle-witness by the Angel-Witness is a fashioning of the apostle in the prophetic image of his Lord.

After the apostle-witness has received the prophet commission 10), that commission is extended to the church as a whole (Rev. 11). The stamp of apostolic prophethood is placed on the entire church depicting it by the symbol of the two witnesses (lampstands), who possess the prerogatives and powers of prophet-apostles. The parallel between the church of Revelation 11 and the apostle of Rev 10 includes the universal extent of the mission in each case, as well as the common function of witnessing with authoritative power. The two witnesses must carry through to completion the world-commission given to the apostle-seer (Rev. 10:11). It is in the sequel of their mission, described in Revelation 11:9 in terms echoing the universal commission of John in Revelation 10:11, that its world-wide scope becomes evident. Tragic though its effect was, their mission reached the peoples and tribes and languages and nations of those who dwell on earth. Moreover, when the theme of the anger of the nations against the two witnesses and their resurrection-vindication by the Lord is taken up into the chapter's concluding doxology, the persecuted-rewarded church symbolised by the two witnesses is "servants the prophets" (11:18)

The line of prophetic continuity can thus be traced back from the church (Rev. 11:18) through the apostle's commission (Rev: 10:11) to the commissioning Angel-Lord who took his stand in the tradition of God's "servants the prophets" (Rev. 10:7). It is, in fact, the Angel- prophet of Revelation 10 who gives the two-witness church of Revelation 11 its great commission (v. 3). For the opening verses of chapter eleven are a continuation of the Angel's instructions to John begun in chapter ten. In sum then, the scenario of the whole Revelation 10 and 11 complex is taken over from the Old Testament model of the Angel- prophet directing the prophets, fashioning them in their covenantal office in his own prophet-likeness. Under this figure of the Angel, the Apocalypse portrays Christ structuring the apostle-church in his prophetic image.

9.7.2 Practical Dimensions

(Jeffrey Kirby, *The ecclesial priesthood of Jesus Christ*, Homiletic and Pastoral Review July 2005 24- 28)

1. Priestly Ministry

As a kingdom of priests (Rev. 1:16; Rev. 5:9-10; I Pet. 2:5,9), the Church exists as a priestly community. She breathes as one mystical person with Christ the Head, participating in his very own priesthood to God the Father. As one person, the Church is not a loose society, but instead shares, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the charism of being an organically-structured, priestly people.

What, then, does it mean to be a member of this priestly people? Popular definitions of a Christian include: "A person professing belief in Jesus as the Christ or in the religion based on the teaching of Jesus." Although accurate, this articulation is ontologically incomplete. ...In Christ, therefore, each member is himself also a "christ," an "anointed one." By such a consecration, the Christian is incorporated into the Church's unique, priestly identity and vocation.

....Their own field of evangelizing activity is the large and difficult spheres of politics, society and economics, as well as the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts of international life, of the mass media. It also includes the family education, professional work, and suffering. The baptized should see their activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfill his will, serve other people, and lead them to communion with God in Jesus Christ.

As a royal priest, the layman has the privilege of sharing in Christ's sacrifice to the Father. Assimilated into Jesus Christ, the Christian is united to Jesus and his sacrifice to God the Father, in the daily offering of his life. He has the capacity to give his efforts, joys, sufferings, triumphs, failures, and the totality of who he is, to God through Jesus Christ. St. Paul admonishes the Christian to offer his body as a spiritual sacrifice, permitting a renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2). Through Christ, such a sacrifice becomes acceptable and pleasing to God. These offerings find their perfection in the celebration of the Eucharist, when they are given along with the Lord's body. As worshippers in spirit and truth, the lay faithful dedicate the world and its workings to God.

2. Prophetic Ministry

As a sharer in the prophetic mission of Christ, the Christian exists as a witness to Christ and his message in the world....He is summoned to be the salt, light and leaven of the world by working and teach the Gospel and its liberating truths. The Christian as prophet cannot hide the message of Christ nor afford to be ashamed of it (Matt 5:15). This privilege and responsibility has a natural beginning in the family, where parents teach their children, but i beyond the intimate realm of the private home. The Christian's witness is a transmission of the faith to others and to the whole of society. It is an act of justice and love that establishes the truth or makes it known.

3. Kingly Ministry

As a priestly king, the baptized Catholic possesses a Cross-earned freedom so that he might overcome the reign of sin in his life And so that he might also labor for a remedy to the errors and problems of the social order....He should strive to harmoniously unite every temporal affair under the direction of a Christian conscience...The Christian should come to see that his own vocation to rule is also a call to serve, particularly when serving the poor and suffering, in whom the Church recognizes the image of her poor and suffering founder.

4. Human Ministerial Priesthood

In the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the Christian finds his and the Church's identity and begins to see Christ as the source of everything in the Church's life and action.

9.8 CONCLUSION

'As first created by God, man was made to be prophet, priest and king, and 'as such was endowed with knowledge and understanding [in hearing God, Adam was called to be prophetic to all creation], with righteousness and holiness [in being able to speak with God and offer up life in all dimensions Adam was a priest], and with dominion over the lower creation [God ruled in and through Adam so that he was a king]. Sin affected the entire life of man and manifested itself not only as ignorance, blindness, error and untruthfulness; but also, as unrighteousness, guilt and moral pollution; and in addition to that as misery, death and destruction. Hence that it was necessary for Christ, as our mediator, should be prophet, priest, and king. As Prophet he represents God with man; as Priest he represents man in the presence of God, and as King he exercises dominion and restores the original dominion of man'.

(Berkhof, p.357).

1. Forth in the peace of Christ we go;
Christ to the world with joy we bring;
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,
Christ in our hearts, the world's true King.

2. King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings;
kingship with him his servants gain;
with Christ, the Servant-Lord of all,
Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.
3. Priests of the world, Christ send us forth,
this world of time to consecrate,
our world of sin by grace to heal,
Christ's world in Christ to recreate.
4. Prophets of Christ, we hear his word:
he claims our minds, to search his ways,
he claims our lips, to speak the truth,
he claims our hearts, to sing his praise.
5. We are his church, he makes us one:
here is one hearth for all to find,
here is one flock, one Shepherd-King,
here is one faith, one, heart, one mind.

10 THE ATONEMENT

Jesus did not die in the sense that His life was taken from Him, but rather that He laid it down of His own volition, in response to His Father's purpose (John 10:11-18).

The Old English word, "at-one-ment," means a making at one, and points to a process of bringing together those who are estranged. The OT word (and its associated word "mercy seat") has the meaning of "a covering," and occurs about 100 times. The God-given cultus of the OT made clear that atonement is effected by God (Leviticus 17:11) through substitutionary sacrifice, as an answer to:

- the universality of sin (Psalm 14:3; Ecclesiastes 7:20),
- the seriousness of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; Isaiah 59:2), and
- man's inability to deal with sin (Proverbs 20:9).

The Old Testament sacrificial system, it was only a shadow of the one effective event (Hebrews 10:1-18).

10.1 Foundational Issues

10.1.1 Facts Needing Explanation By Theories of the Atonement.

1. Man's plight under God's holy wrath (Rom 1:18ff).
2. Love and initiative of God (John 3:16).
3. Identification of innocent Son of God with humanity, in obedience, humility and love (Mk 10:45).
4. Example and revelation of love in the cross (Rom 5:8).
5. Victory over sin, death, law, wrath, Satan (Luke 11:21; John 12:31; 16:33; Eph 2:16; Col 2:15, etc).
6. Verdict obtained for the guilty, of innocence (Rom 5:1; Eph 1:7).
7. Appropriation and application of salvation by man (Acts 16:33).
8. Complementary to the work of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:11).
9. Consistent with God's character and plan (Rom 3:21-25).

NOTE: The cause of the atonement is not human sin as such but the love and good pleasure of God (Isa 53:10; Luke 2:14; John 3:16; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:5,9; Col 1:19-20).

The setting forth of Christ to deal with our sin is a free act of God the Father in holy love.

10.1.2 The Direction of the Atonement

1. The Notion of an Objective Atonement.

An objective atonement is made by the offending party to the offended party. Atonement makes its primary impression on the person wronged, this is God. (Subjective views of atonement focus on the impact of the sinner.) Thus when David is reconciled to Saul by the leaders of the Philistines it is Saul's anger that is in view, not his own (1 Sam 29:4).

The essence of atonement is suffering (Lev 16:27; Matt 16:21; Lk 9:22; 24:26; Act 3:18 etc). That Christ bears the suffering which is our due is the objective cause of atonement. This satisfaction offered to God reconciles him to the sinner; God is propitiated (Rom 3:20; 1 John 2:2 etc). This is the centre of divine compassion.

Forgiveness, the non infliction of suffering on the sinner, is an effect, subjectively, upon the sinner, which puts their conscience at rest. 'The mystery isn't forgiveness as such, but that God should make atonement in order to forgive.' (G.T. Shedd).

Since atonement has objectively been made by God, sinners need to be induced to accept this reconciliation (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:19-20). This is the emphasis on the apostolic preaching. (Not a change in God's disposition but in his favour).

2. Evidence for an Objective Atonement.

- a) Priesthood and sacrifices are directed to God, e.g. Heb 5:1.
- b) The Hebrew term kipper means 'to cover', this relates to the dangerous position of sinners as enemies of God (Rom 5:10; 11:28).
- c) The Greek words for 'reconciliation' (katalasso / katalage) point to a resolution of hostility. This is clear in relation to an objective reconciliation to an offended brother (Matt 5:23-24). Cf. Rom 5:10-11 - the death of Jesus deals with God's wrath so that reconciliation can be received. If in Romans 5:9 salvation is put in terms of God's justifying sinners, the meaning of verse ten must be that God has made himself our friend.
- d) The terms to do with redemption (lutron / antilutron) are objective terms, ie. 'bought'. Christ is the liberator who redeems from God's retributive justice. (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23).
- e) The people of God are those who have entered into covenant with him. This is a matter of divine initiative and secured by the death of Christ (Matt 26:28; Acts 20:28; Rom 3:25; Eph 1:7; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:9 etc.). Atonement is essentially wrought for, rather than in, humans by Christ's sacrifice.
- f) Since reconciliation in the New Testament is universal it must be objective.

3. Criticism of Subjective Views of Atonement.

- a) Make humans central to the relationship with God.
- b) Underestimate the divine holiness and the offence of sin.
- c) Lead to an emphasis on self - effort. Atonement is a process on our wills and repentance is sufficient to atone.
- d) Do not understand the transforming power of the cross to work good out of evil, not just good after evil.
- e) Are individualistic and not social in their outworking.

10.2 The Theories of the Atonement

That which occurred on the cross is so profound that scholars have found great difficulty in adequately defining it. As a consequence various theories have been propounded, each containing an element of truth, but not covering the totality of the work. No finite theory can possibly describe the infinite, and it must be held that it is not the theory, however accurate, but the action and word of the cross which is effectual in our atonement (1 Corinthians 1:18). Atonement theories are in fact a series of 'pictures', images or metaphors. Each is like the facet of a diamond.

(Historically however these theories have functioned as competitors. T.F. Torrance argues that this was because they were expressed in terms of external moral terms rather than embedded in the unity of the trinity and incarnation. If it is not grasped the Mediator

connects the inner reality of God with the condition of humanity then we are left with some sort of socio – moral or judicial transaction between God and humanity that does not penetrate to the depths of life and being. Only because Jesus is the root of our life can he be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.)

10.2.1 The Recapitulation Theory

a) Details

Originates with Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* Book 5). “He has therefore, in his work of recapitulation, summed up all things,...as our species went down to death through a vanquished man, so we may ascend to life again through a victorious one; and as through a man death received the palm of victory against us, so again by a man we may receive the palm against death.” Melito of Sardis (2nd century), “He is the one who in many folk bore many things. He is the one who was murdered in the person of Abel, bound in the person of Isaac, exiled in the person of Jacob, sold in the person of Joseph, exposed in the person of Moses. This is the one who was made flesh in a virgin, hanged upon the wood, entombed in the earth, raised from the dead, lifted up to the heights of heaven. He is the speechless lamb.” Christ unites himself to us in the incarnation so that we may become what he is. This he does by the Spirit.

Where Adam disobeyed in relation to food, Christ conquers Satan through hunger. Adam disobeyed through a tree, Christ redeems us through a tree. He recapitulates and annuls the disobedience of Adam. Satan is now bound because humanity is now free through Christ.

b) Comments

Requires commitment to the Greek idea that the main impact of the Fall is corruption and death. Depends on the notion that human nature is a generic whole and the Logos unites himself to this nature. This view tends towards universalism.

10.2.2 The Ransom Theory

a) Details

Originating early with the Fathers, claiming that Christ offered Himself as a ransom (Mark 10:45). Origen and others have claimed this ransom was paid to the devil, who had secured some sort of legal hold over humanity. Some taught that Jesus humanity concealed his divinity so the devil was trapped into thinking he had Jesus in his grasp, but was then overpowered by the resurrection. Cf. Paul Billheimer, ‘Word - Faith’ movement.

b) Comments

This is not the dominant emphasis in the New Testament.

The theory fails to distinguish between “price” and “cost”. It is the latter which is essential to atonement.

The slave: master analogy is too limited and too literal to deal with all the dimensions of the atonement.

This theory concentrates too much on human plight and the role of Satan. A usurper possesses no valid authority within an illegal government.

10.2.3 The Classic or Dramatic Theory (Early Fathers, Aulen)

a) Details.

This was a common view of the Early Fathers.

Aulen - three types of understanding of reconciliation:

1. Latin - legalistic, court of law (Anselm, Reformers).
2. Ethical - depends on what happens inside of men.
3. Classic - dramatic 'motif'. Christ is the conqueror of the powers of evil: sin, Satan, death. (Battle scene)

Emphasises the action of **God** in Christ as the divine conqueror entering into the world of sin and death and overcoming. Came to destroy devil's work (1 John 3:8).

cf. Ps 89:19; Isa 53:12; 9:6-7 - ruling Messiah Jesus defeats temptation, battles with demons (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:21-22).

Christ triumphs in humiliation (John 12:31).

Death couldn't hold him (Acts 2:24).

Disarms the principalities and the devil (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14).

In his self-offering and sacrifice the powers are unmasked and defeated.

b) Positives

- a) Evil does tend to destroy itself when it overreaches.
- b) The death and resurrection of Jesus are brought into a harmony.
- c) Christ's conquest of Satan opens up the possibility of overcoming the various ills from this source

b) Problems:

- a) It is in sharing our 'flesh and blood' (Heb 2:14) that Christ conquers.
- b) Overlooks the guilt of man (source of bondage) before God.
- c) Doesn't deal with the past debt.
- d) Can tend to 'might is right'.
- e) The struggle on the cross is not 'Satan-ward' but 'God-ward'.
- f) The final victory over Satan awaits the End, this requires patience.
- g) Can make believers spectators

10.2.4 Satisfaction Theory.

a) Details

First put forward by Anselm (eleventh century) in Cur Deus Homo: 'Why did God become man?' (Elements of the theory appear as early as Tertullian in the third century.)

Dissatisfied with dramatic theories. Prevailing Western theory of the atonement until the Reformation.

1. Scene of feudal court, God as Lord. Connects to the penitential system in the church.

2. Sin as withholding God's honour = greatest offence/debt to man could owe God his maker. The creator-creature relationship is damaged.
3. God must punish or seek satisfaction for this. The whole order of the universe is at stake. Salvation is God's alternative to punishment.
4. Satisfaction involves an objective righting of the balance in the God-human relationship. This involves a (non-penal) substitution.
5. For God to be honoured the sacrifice must be:
 - i) able to pay the debt in full - God (the debt is infinite).
 - ii) one of the kind of those who owe the debt-man
Incarnation.
6. Incarnation exceeds any strict legal requirement on the Son of God. Jesus dies of his own free will.
7. Christ the God-man lives a perfect life, in offering this to God he repays the debt in full, he is perfect priest and sacrifice. Justice is done to the goodness of God and the place of humans in creation.
8. He is rewarded by the Father for his death, he accrues merit. (His life is of infinite worth, far in excess of sin.)
9. He shares this reward with his people in the form of forgiveness of sins. (As per the superfluous merit of the saints available for distribution to others in the medieval penitential system.)

b) Comments

Significant advantages over ransom theory:

1. Integrates Incarnation and atonement.
2. Directed to God (objective).
3. Procures forgiveness as well as redemption.

Limitations:

1. Emphasis on honour ('private law') cf. justice (public law)
2. Too rational, atonement is logically necessary rather than biblical. 'Commercial'. God seems preoccupied with balance. Biblically, it is not a sense of self-dignity that motivates God to atone but his love.
3. Christ does not endure penalty vicariously (dies instead of us, rather than bearing our guilt).
4. No role for Jesus life (cf. death), active obedience Rom 5:19.
5. Tends to equate salvation with remission of penalty.
6. No place for mystical union through faith (too external).
7. Tends to divide Father and Son. (Too much emphasis on the action of Jesus towards the Father.)

10.2.4 Moral Influence Theory.

Elements first appear in Clement of Alexandria (c155 -220): Christ an illuminator who imparts saving knowledge. Also suggested by Peter Abelard (twelfth century). Main influences from the European Enlightenment. Appeared in various popular forms since, e.g. D.L. Moody.

a) Details.

Opposes Anselm's commercial metaphor with a family image. Focus is on Christ's priestly office. God demonstrates his love for us by Christ's death (cf. Rom 5:8) Seeing this, the human heart is softened to repentance (1 John 4:19).

b) Comments

1. Doesn't deal with human impotence in relation to God.
2. Ignores sin, law, justice.
3. The love of God can only be recognised in the light of the righteousness of his holy wrath.
4. Immoral for God to choose to influence us by Christ's death if his sufferings were not necessary.

10.2.5 The Example Theory

a) Details

Advocated in opposition to the 16th Century Reformers, by Socinus, this theory states that God's justice does not prevent Him from pardoning without demanding satisfaction. There is no retribution. Christ's death was that of a noble martyr, and He redeems by His human example of faithfulness to truth and duty.

b) Comments

1. Jesus only human.
2. Jesus' death actually **does** nothing.
3. Pelagian, salvation by moral improvement. How does one copy Christ?
4. It does not relate to the salvation of those before Christ, or infants.
5. Objections to other sorts of subjective theories.

10.2.6 The Governmental Theory

a) Details.

The Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583 -1645) opposed the Socinian view that punishment is not suitable for God. Atonement secures divine government. God's law is seen to be merely the product of God's free will (and not His nature) guided by wisdom, and therefore He can alter it or even abrogate it, just as He pleases. It was only in the interests of maintaining His moral law that He accepted Christ's death as nominally equivalent to the penalty due to man for breaking the law. It was not that Christ took our place or offered a sacrifice or took upon Himself our punishment, but that we needed to see the serious consequences of violating God's justice. The aim of the atonement is to prevent the corruption of human morals. This view has been popular with lawyers e.g. Charles Finney saw it as the solution to the law and order problems of the American frontier.

b) Comments

1. The law is related to God impersonally. The focus is on rectoral (directive) justice rather than on retributive justice (punishment).
2. It splits the connection between sin and punishment.
3. If Christ's death isn't lawful it is arbitrary and unjust.
4. Does not deal with divine-human fellowship.
5. Does not deal with human impotence.
6. Does not deal with salvation of those before Christ.

10.2.7 The Vicarious Repentance of Christ.

This is the view of the nineteenth century Scottish Presbyterian theologian John McLeod Campbell cf. R.W. Moberly. It arose out of pastoral concerns where believers were lacking in assurance of salvation. Campbell attributed this to the teaching of Puritans like John Owen and Jonathan Edwards who reasoned that God's justice was an essential attribute but his love was a free choice. Campbell believed that this led to a legal rather than filial (sonship) focus. In his theory the initiative for the atonements springs from God's "heart" as the father of man.

1. Jesus identifies with humanity on the cross - this is his vicarious (standing in the place of) humanity. He takes up our responsibility before God.
2. Such identification means fully entering into the state of the sinner, i.e., as one 'given up' by God to God - terror, etc., this is the action of the wrath of God as the penalty of sin. Our condition is imputed to Christ.
3. It is not that Jesus as such becomes the object of God's wrath, i.e., the guilt of sin is not imputed to him, but there is a participation in our lostness, a sharing in the existential impact of sin. He enters into a "perfected personal experience of the enmity of the carnal mind to God." Christ bore sin's hate of the light of God.
4. Only a perfectly holy sinless and righteous human being could ever appreciate the depth of the horror of sin, the fullness of guilt and the justice of the wrath of God in his condemnation of sin.
5. In his office as mediator he offers up to God what man bound in guilt and sin could not - a perfect sorrow and turning away from sin. His obedience is atoning: 'a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgement of God upon the sin of man'. Christ confesses the sins of men and that they are sons of the Father.
6. This vindicates the holiness and majesty of God, i.e., God is morally satisfied with the action of Christ on behalf of the human race.
7. Atonement is effected by (flows out of) forgiveness. The deep confession of sonship quickens in man the consciousness of his own created status before God.

b) Comments

1. This view of atonement is incompatible with modern ideas of individuality cf. Col 2:20 'no longer I....but Christ'; John 15:5 'vine....branches'; Rom 5 'in Adam....in Christ'. It depends on views of corporate personality, inclusive humanity, etc.

2. 'We only really repent when we know we can never be penitent enough, that we do not feel the seriousness of the situation sufficiently to be penetrated with the intense earnestness which such repentance demands, when we realise that Christ must repent for us. If we could repent as we should no atonement would be needed, for then repentance would be atonement. Then the righteousness of God would have been satisfied. But this is precisely what we cannot do. We can only do this when we can 'be righteous', for to be 'righteous' and to repent mean the same thing. The point or 'place' at which this happens is Christ' (Emil Brunner, **The Mediator**, London: Lutterworth, p.534).
3. Criticisms of this position usually interpret it as another form of subjective theory. We are moved by Christ's identification to turn to God.

10.2.8 Substitutionary Theory

a) Details

This is the atonement theory of the Reformers and of mainline Protestantism (including Pentecostals) ever since.

1. This doctrine of the atonement stresses its objectivity. Satisfaction influences the person wronged, not the offender. Atonement was intended to appease the wrath of God and to reconcile him to the sinner. Salvation is not an alternative to punishment, but achieved by it. It is now possible, and required, of sinners to accept the reconciliation (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:19-20).
2. The doctrine of substitution seems to be taught in the following places:
 - (a) Old Testament sacrifices were vicarious (see before).
 - (b) Various passages speak of our sins being 'laid upon' Christ or of his 'bearing' sin or iniquity (Isa 53:6,12; John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:24). This can only mean bearing of guilt as liability to punishment.
 - (c) The prepositions used to designate the precise relationship of Christ's work for us:

anti: 'in place of', 'instead of', Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45.

hyper: 'instead of' Jn 11:50; 2Cor 5:15; Gal 3:13.
3. The justice of God the Father is satisfied because Jesus endures the death of a guilty sinner in our place. He bears the penalty (penal) of the broken law of God. Classic substitutionary theories teach that Jesus dealt with objective guilt and condemnation at the cross, not subjective dimensions of sinfulness e.g. memories.
4. This theory can best be expressed in terms of the "wonderful exchange".

"This is the wonderful exchange which, out of his measureless benevolence, he has made with us; that becoming Son of man with us, he has made us sons of God with him; that, by his descent to earth, he has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that, by taking on our mortality, he has conferred his immortality upon us; that, accepting our weakness, he has strengthened us by his power; that, receiving our poverty upon himself, he has transferred his wealth to us; that, taking the weight of our iniquity upon himself (which oppressed us), he has clothed us with his righteousness." (Calvin, *Institutes*, IV. Xvii. 2)

b) Comments

1. Tends to legalism and objectivism.

This is done when:

- a) God's justice and love are set in opposition to each other (as if they needed reconciliation): especially when the former is made dominant in terms of punishment. P.T. Forsyth distinguishes between Christ's receiving the penalty (cost) of sin and the punishment of sin. God had no anger against the person of his Son but against sinners in the office Christ executed on their behalf. God's love is *just* love and his justice is *loving* justice.
- b) Salvation is a sort of 'legal fiction', where God treats us 'as if' we are righteous because of Christ's death. The Bible however clearly says God justifies the ungodly (Rom 4:5).
- c) A primary use of legal/forensic terms is too impersonal. Impersonal justice replaces a personal devil as the recipient of the ransom – price.
- d) It is important to note that analogies to what Christ did in terms of substitution fail in terms of normal law. One person may die in the place of another but they cannot take up another's guilt; especially if this means that the guilty person goes unpunished. In the atonement however God as the moral ruler of the universe redefines the whole moral order. The guilty are in fact punished in the suffering of Christ. (A "soteriological suspension of ethics" Torrance.)

2. Can misrepresent the wrath of God.

It can be represented as an innocent Christ pacifying an angry God. (This divides the Father and Son and so is Arian in tendency.) Yet everywhere in the New Testament it is God who puts forward Christ (who comes willingly), in love, e.g. John 3:16; Rom 3:25; 5:8 cf. Rom 2:4; 8:32; 2 Cor 5:21. God is in solidarity with sinners. The Judge and the 'judged' are one as Father and Son, this is not a normal court-room scene. The penalty for sin Christ takes on the cross is not a quantity, but that which blocks our relationship with God.

The wrath of God should not be understood in a vindictive sense, but the handing over of sinners to the negative effects of their sin. The result is alienation and separation from himself and other human beings.

Jesus is not abandoned by the Father on the cross (Ps 22: 24; John 16:32; Eph 5: 2). If he offers himself up in the Spirit (Heb 9:14) then the Father must have been present with him. The cry of dereliction (Mark 15:34) represents the absence of the experience of God, rather than the experience of the absence of God. There is no New Testament text which teaches that Jesus as a person is cursed by God (Gal 3:13 drops the reference to God in Deuteronomy 21:23). Jesus is nowhere identified with the scapegoat of Leviticus 16: 20 – 28).

3. Can separate the person and work of Christ.

This is the classical weakness of Evangelical teaching on the atonement, the loss of connection between the incarnation of God in Christ and his death. Thomas Torrance puts the point like this: 'We are not saved by the atoning death of Christ..., but by Christ Himself, who in His own person made atonement for us. He is, in identifying His person and work, Priest and sacrifice in one. It is all one indivisible act..., in one indivisible

Person. The atonement is identical with Christ himself. It lives forever in the person of the Mediator. He is the Atonement.'

Jesus is not passive in relation to his sacrifice, he not only receives wrath but actively identifies with sinners (Isa 53:12; John 6:51; 10:11ff, 18; 15:13), he takes up their incapacity to represent themselves before a holy God. He is passive in relation to his submission but active in his self – sacrifice.

4. Tends to an externalised view of atonement.

Jesus' relationship with God is not intrinsically altered at the cross. He is brought (willingly cf. Gethsemane) into that external relation with God that is normally the result of sin (2 Cor 5:21), not into an internal relation of alienation from the Father. Jesus is not rejected by the Father as a person. If the atonement is objectified in such a way that these distinctions are not observed the result flows on to our relationship with God.

The real problem with the penal substitutionary atonement theory is that it is often put forward as if it all happened outside of us. That is, it did not involve us in any way. The solution to this lies in recognising the inclusive substitution of Christ. "Paul's teaching is *not* that Christ dies in the place of others so that they can *escape* death....It is rather that Christ's sharing *their* death makes possible for them to share *his* death." (J.D.G. Dunn)

God gives himself. He does not will to be God in himself alone but God for us. He is Immanuel, the self-revealing, self-imparting covenant God. As such the human cannot be regarded as some sort of being-in-himself apart from God. (Deity and humanity are correlated) 'on this view the statement that God intervenes for man and grants him righteousness means that man **is** righteous and accepted.

When it is a matter of being in relation, the alteration in relation which takes place in justification means also an alteration in being as thus understood'. (H. Thielicke, **The Evangelical Faith**, 1977, vol3, 403, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

Ordinary ideas of substitution and representation, or court room pictures, cannot exhaust the meaning of the above because **God** is at work in Christ. They are bridges or triggers to our understanding.

Christ represents me to the Father and the Father to me. He is my relation to the Father. Inclusive views of atonement are more able to explain the remaking of the sinner in the image of God.

10.3 Arminianism and Atonement

The seventeenth century Arminianism rejected the substitutionary theory of the atonement on the following grounds:

1. Christ suffered for all (Acts 17:3; 26:23; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10; Heb 2:9-10; 13:12; 1 Pet 1:11; 2:21; 3:18; 4:1; 13), but
2. Bible never teaches Christ:
 - a) was punished —————> this is impossible for he was guiltless.
 - b) took the penalty for our sin as this leads to universalism.
3. Death of Christ is a substitute for a penalty, not a substitute bearing our penalty.

4. If Christ a true substitute then forgiveness would not be needed at all. You do not punish your child then forgive them. (Substitutionary punishment is the means of forgiveness not its prelude.)
5. Christ suffered for all so that those who repent and believe can be forgiven.

10.4 The Theology of Glory and the Theology of the Cross

Luther made this distinction (*Heidelberg Disputation*) between two fundamentally opposed types of theology.

The theology of glory claims God is known through his works of power. The cross appears as a compensation for failures in glory. Luther sees this approach as anthropocentric and appealing to the will of the seeker. It is a defence against the theology of the cross.

The theology of the cross sees revelation in another principle, the death of Christ. God is revealed where he is hidden in the weakness of Christ, this is the divine wisdom.

The theology of glory treats rebels as victims and abandons the biblical vocabulary of sin and judgement. It treats the church as a support group where the freedom of the human will is exalted. The theology of the cross gathers sinful men and women around the gospel. The theology of glory is optimistic, that of the cross calls a thing what it really is. Cruciform theology sees the will is bound knows there is no resurrection without death; God must first reduce us, as he reduced Christ, to nothing, before he can raise us.

11. THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

It is clear that the salvation of mankind is totally dependent on the finished, justifying, reconciling and redeeming work of Christ on the cross. There is less concurrence, however, on the extent of that atoning work.

Did Christ die for the whole world, or only for those chosen by God to be brought into His kingdom? Augustine, who is not totally consistent, argues in places that Christ died with the intention of atoning for the elect. Peter Lombard (c.1100 – 1160), Christ's death is "sufficient for all, efficient for the elect." The question is not whether the death of Christ has sufficient value to cover the sins of all persons, but rather whether God sent Christ to provide the means of salvation for all, or only for the elect. The two positions are referred to as universal and particular atonement, respectively.

11.1 Universal Atonement

a) The Scriptural Position

Those who hold to this position point to the following Scriptures for support:

John 1:29 "... who takes away the sin of the world."

John 3:16,17 "God so loved the world ... that the world might be saved ...".

Romans 5:18 "... life for all men."

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 "One has died for all ... He died for all ...".

Hebrews 2:9 "... He might taste death for every one."

1 Timothy 2:6 "... gave Himself as a ransom for all."

See, too, Isaiah 53:6 "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

b) Comments in Response: The Particular Atonement Position

1. The decree of election out of humanity is logically prior to God's decision to save by Christ. Jesus must die for the elect.
2. If Christ dies in the place of all provisionally, he dies for no one particularly. But as all die (organically) in Adam (Rom 5:12), Jesus must die for his people (Matt 1:21).
3. The intercessory and sacrificial work of Christ is a unity, and Jesus prays only for the elect (John 17:2,6,9,10). (Amyraut (1596 -1664) argued that Christ died for all without exception but God gives the Spirit only to those for whom Christ prays. It can be replied that this splits the atoning work of Christ.)
4. God's designs are perfectly effective, this is denied by a universal atonement. Purchase of salvation and bestowal of salvation are one. The atonement is sufficient for all, but not efficient for all.
5. If Christ died for the unbelief of all persons (as well as other sins), why are some of them then punished eternally for their unbelief?
6. References to the 'world' or 'all' as the object of the atonement are general, imply all without distinction (e.g. 1 Tim 2:4 -6 follows vv. 1 -2), not all without exception. Or else universal passages contextually refer to the church (Rom 8:32; 2 Cor 5:14 - 15).
7. Compare this, from C.H. Spurgeon:

“We are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ, because we say that God has not made a satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now, our reply to this is, that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it: we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, ‘No, certainly not.’ We may ask them the next question - did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer, ‘No’. They are obliged to admit this, if they are consistent. They say ‘No. Christ has died that any man may be saved if’ - and then follow certain conditions of salvation. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you. You say that Christ did not die so as infallibly to secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ in death; we say, ‘No, my dear sir, it is you that do it.’ We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it.”
8. In scripture, the Father chooses some (John 6:37 -40; 17:2,6,9 -10, Eph 1:4). The Spirit also applies salvation only to some. If Christ then dies for all, the goals of the persons of the trinity are different.

11.2 Particular or Limited Atonement

a) The Scriptural Position.

The passages which point to a limited atonement:

Matthew 1:21 "... for He will save His people from their sins".

John 10:11 "The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (see v26,27 for a description of His sheep).

Acts 20:28 "... the church of the Lord which He obtained with His own blood".

Ephesians 5:25 "... Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her".

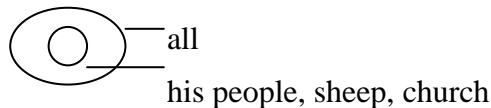
Romans 8:32 "... gave Him up for us all" (as defined in v22-29,33).

John 17:9 "I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me ...".

Matthew 20:28 "the Son of man (came) ... to give His life as a ransom for many".

b) Comments in Response: The Universal Position

1. Scriptures in 11.2 do not exclude 11.1, but 11.1 excludes 11.2.



2. Universal atonement is simpler, no special pleading of scripture
3. Atonement is universal in scope, particular in efficacy.

11.3 Conclusion

1. Both views tend to be mechanical and quantified. But it is God the Son who dies for us. The one who dies has infinite worth.
2. The extent of the atonement is determined by the nature of the atonement. Consistently, if the atonement is forensic then the objective act of cross should automatically secure the salvation of all. (This can only be resisted if some appeal is made to "mystery" or "impossible possibility" .)
3. If Christ is a substitute for sinners in a nonpenal sense then the usual universalistic features of a universalistic atonement do not follow. The righteousness of Christ which obtains for the human race is rendered subjective and personal through its appropriation through faith. (This can only be understood as a participation in the faith by which Jesus offered himself up to the Father. Such faith cannot be comprehended within a strictly legal framework because it is a response of love to God by Jesus as a wholly free action.)
4. It is not contradictory to say that Jesus dies with the intent of atoning for his elect and that the scope of his atonement is universal. (He does not actively not – die for all.)

5. Finally, Forsyth has this to say of atonement: “Christ does not simply pluck us out of the hands of Satan; He does so by giving us to God. He does not simply release us from slavery; He commits us in the act to a positive liberty. He does not simply cancel the charge against us in court and bid us walk out of jail; He meets us at the prison door and puts us in a new way of life. His forgiveness is not simply retrospective; it is, in the same act, the gift of eternal life. Our evil is overcome by good. We are won from sin by an act which at the same time makes us not simply innocent but holy” (*The Work of Christ*, p202).

11.4 Cosmic Salvation

1. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is co-creator with the Father, e.g. 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2.
2. Christ maintains in being the entire created order (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).
3. The reconciliation which is in Christ has been directed to “all things” (Eph 1:10; Col 1:20).
4. The future renewal of the whole universe is tied to God’s eternal purposes in Christ, e.g. 1 Cor 15:25-27; Eph 1:10; Col 1:18.
5. In Revelation the earth is the stage on which the Lamb rules the nations.
6. The cosmos achieves its destiny in so far as it is gathered to Jesus.

