

Know Him More

The Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union



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The Good News

Prior to reading this book please pause to consider who is Jesus Christ.

If you are unsure of who He is take a moment to understand Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father to save anyone that believes in Him.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

This is a gift to the entire human race. God the Father sent Jesus to the earth to pay the price for everyone's sins so all could have eternal life.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

No matter what you have done in the past, you are never too far from God once you tell Him you believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, as the one true savior of the world. You are then entered into His family as a son or daughter forever!

2 Corinthians 6:18 "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!

Introduction

Who is the Lord Jesus Christ? What is His origin and what did He become that was unique? Why did He become such, and since He did, is He created or is He eternal God? If He is God, how could He have died? For what reason did He die, and now that He is resurrected, what is His being in heaven, God or man? These questions and many more like them have often plagued the church since its beginning. It wasn't long into the history of the church that the questions of the nature of Christ were debated, and heretical ideas emerged out of the minds of men who decided it was best to approach the issue with rationalism rather than faith in the plain teachings of the scriptures. These false teachers gained undue popularity and their teachings were followed by others who preferred human rationalism to faith, and the result was that many souls were robbed of the joy of knowing the true person of Christ. It should not be surprising that these false teachings have survived and have thrived in certain places, continuing to spoil and blemish the pure and wonderful relationship that every believer should have with his Lord. It should be clear to anyone that in order to walk in an intimate, personal relationship with another, that person would have to be known well and not just superficially. This book has been written so that you may know Him more.

To study the person of Christ is to delve into an exhaustless treasure of theology. It is vital to preaching any part of the doctrines of the Bible, for they are all founded upon Him, and it is the heart of any true relationship of fellowship to the Savior. Our relationship to Him is to be personal and real and not a mechanical system or procedure. Christianity is Christ and all have been called to be in union with Him. "The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central fact of Christianity. Upon it the whole superstructure of Christian theology depends. In one sense, the remaining discussion of Christology as a whole is an amplification of the incarnation."¹

Chapter 1: The Hypostatic Union

Hypostatic is a term that means the underlying nature of a thing. It comes from the Greek² word *hupostasis* which means substance. Hypostatic union refers to the real nature of the humanity and deity of Christ. Jesus Christ is one person with two natures. He is both God and man in one person forever. The divine and human natures are inseparably united without mixture of loss or their separate identity. There is no transfer of properties or attributes from deity to humanity or humanity to deity. Although there is nothing like this in any other being but Him, we see in the scripture that He is fully God and fully human. His deity has the qualities of deity and His humanity has the qualities of humanity. If either nature were a part of the other it would destroy the quality of the other. Finite cannot enter into infinity, nor can infinity enter into the finite. Our Lord Jesus Christ is one person and His deity and humanity are a personal and eternal union.

He is not an amalgamation that formed a third substance. He is just as much God as the Father and the Spirit and just as much man as we are, except without sin. His humanity was born into the world without sin through the virgin birth. When Mary gave

birth to Jesus by the Spirit of God, His humanity was inseparably united to His deity forever. In Him both the divine nature and the human nature are expressed. He came for us, the fallen, the weak, the sinful, and to do so He had to be true humanity. Yet, God cannot just lose His deity or empty Himself of it. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God united with sinless, perfect humanity for the purpose of saving mankind from sin and death.

The time interval from His human birth to His ascension back into heaven is called the incarnation or the first advent. During this time He voluntarily denied Himself of the independent use of His deity. God cannot suffer and die, and so our Lord laid aside the outward characteristics of His deity in order to accomplish our salvation as well as to show us how to live as those so changed into children of God. We are not gods and never will be. We are humans who have been offered deliverance from sin and death and are given eternal life when we believe in Christ as our Savior. There is a life that goes along with the new creature that God makes of every believer, and Christ in His humanity showed us that life.

God cannot be tempted, but the humanity of Christ could be.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

During the incarnation, Jesus didn't rely on His deity, but His humanity relied on the Father and the Holy Spirit, just as we are commanded to do. He went before us in a finite and limited human body so that He could show us the way of life as well as reveal to us that His life, which He has graciously given to every believer, is the greatest and only life for such who are citizens of heaven.

Rom 5:18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Php 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Because of Christ, every believer can live their life in the plan of God in full reliance on the Father and the Holy Spirit. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection have accomplished this for us and the plan and the life that goes with it have been graciously bestowed upon every believer at the moment of salvation. We are no longer citizens of the earth. The old things have passed away and will remain so forever, but behold new things have come, and they are the abundance of Him who has given all so that we may have them for our own. This would not have been accomplished if He did not become human, for in order for God to be propitiated³ (satisfied) concerning us, a great and sacrificial death had to occur upon the One who was impeccable and who was a Mediator between God and man. The only God Man, Jesus Christ, fulfilled all these qualities and so qualified to be our perfect Savior.

By becoming perfect humanity, Jesus became our Savior, our High Priest, the Mediator between God and Man, and the fulfillment of the promise of the Davidic Covenant, which was the promise that David's son would sit on the throne forever. Therefore, Jesus is everything to the believer as well as to Israel. He will come again to establish the promise that He made to Abraham⁴ so long ago, which He repeated to Isaac and Jacob and David. By becoming our Savior He has delivered us from sin and death. The power of death has been destroyed and eternal life given in its place. By becoming our High Priest we have been made priests. The priesthood in the church does not consist of some specialized clergy; all believers in Christ are made priests. And since our Lord is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, which means that He is divine royalty as both Priest and King; so we too have been made royal priests of His royal house. If Christ doesn't become a man then none of this happens and we are doomed in our sins and death is our covering, for the wage of sin is death.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1Pe 2:4-5 And coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected by men, but choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

As we can see, so much of His divine nature was voluntarily laid aside. But just because its outward manifestation had been masked for a short time, it does not mean that He is anything else than fully God. This dual nature of Christ is unprecedented and has no equal. We must not be like other men who have tried to humanly rationalize it only to end up destroying its truth. As we will see, there is much that cannot be known about it, but that doesn't deny its reality as stated in the holy scriptures. We are called to walk by faith and not by human reason. This does not mean that we don't use our reasoning powers in life, but when we do, it is not of our own invention. We may reason with the revelation of truth, for truth can only come from God who is truth. Any conclusions about anything that is from the source of God cannot be known except by revelation, which is only contained in the inerrant scriptures.

1Co 2:9-10 Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

2Ti 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Whatever is true of each nature is true of the entire person of Christ. He is not two persons, but one person with two natures. He is revealed as God and as man, but both are Him in perfect union. The reality of this and the beauty of this is inscrutable to man. Every person should behold this (behold Him) and give sincere and deep thankfulness for His indescribable gift.

Chapter 2: Exegesis of Philippians 2:5-8

Php 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We begin with the word "form" in verse 6. "Although He existed in the form of God." This is the Greek word *morphe*. It is the outward expression of His inmost nature⁵. Therefore, the form spoken of here is His divine essence. It is the form of God. Now, the word for God, *theos*, is not given a definite article in the original text, which matches our English translation. If it were it would be, "in the form of *the* God." Without the article the emphasis is not on one particular member of the Trinity⁶ but the essence of deity in general. It then follows from this phrase that Jesus is absolute deity.

Next we look at the words "did not regard." This is the translation of one Greek word *huparcho*. The translators strain a bit here since the actual meaning of the word is "being" or "existence." It is defined as an antecedent condition that is protracted into the present. It is "to be in existence both previous to circumstances and continuing after it."⁷ That is, our Lord gave expression to the essence of Deity which He possesses, not only before He became a man, but also after. So then, we could not conclude from this word that He emptied Himself of His deity when He became a man at the virgin birth. Such a thing is incomprehensible from our understanding of eternal omnipresent deity. In no way did Jesus ever cease to be God. To say so is to deny the very foundation of Christianity.

No man can see God, but during His incarnation people were able to see Christ due to His human nature. If He had not taken on this nature we would never have the opportunity to see God in any form, but through Him we will see God. This is true in heaven as well as in time. In heaven, every believer will be in a resurrection body⁸ and it is likely that this wonderful body will have the spiritual senses to receive the very expression of deity. But what about in time? Do we have to wait for eternity to have an intimate and personal relationship with God? No. God is far more gracious than that. What God has done for us now, through the finished work of Christ, enables us to comprehend many aspects of the essence of God. For instance, we can, in time, comprehend the love of God and "God is love." Love is the capstone of so many other

divine virtues that we can know and live, which are all a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Though we remain in corrupt bodies, these things are given to us to know and to walk in so that we may fully understand them. To understand the essence of God, even in the limited fashion that we can now in time, is to see God. Without the humanity of Christ we would be hopeless to see God at all in time and never in eternity.

1Pe 1:8 though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Php 2:6 did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped"

In this next phrase we again have the noun God without a definite article, and so it speaks of essence or nature of deity. This means that the text does not refer to God the Father. Christ is not said to be regarding equality with the Father a thing to be grasped, but deity in general. This is a reference to His own deity. What does it mean for Him not to grasp His own deity? We must remember that it is not the possession of deity that is in view here but the expression of it. The word "form" spoke of the outward expression of an inward nature. It is here stated that Jesus did not desire to maintain the same outward expression of deity equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Out of the three persons of the Trinity, He alone took upon Himself the nature of a man. Was He going to remain equal with the other members in expressing nothing but the essence of deity? For a time, He said "No" to this so that He could save us. It is the beginning of His ultimate sacrifice.

2Co 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

The phrase "a thing to be grasped" can be translated as "a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards." Jesus did not regard the outward expression of His deity as a treasure to be clutched on to at all costs, in fact, He laid it aside and suffered for it so that we could be saved. The context of the entire passage propels this since it is humility that is the main theme. Context is the whole theme of a passage and it is vital that we interpret passages of the scripture with this in view so that we arrive at the truth. He was not hoping to be God, but is God, who through a humility that is beyond compare, regarded us as more important than demonstrating His deity. For context we look to the prior passages.

Php 2:3-5 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.

Humility as a divine virtue is not some overt show of meagerness but a self-abnegation for the benefit of others. It is the beginning of divine love. This means that Jesus was willing to waive His rights to the expression of divine essence when the necessity arose, and always for our benefit. He is God and never once stopped being God, but he laid aside the expression of His deity for a time so that He could earn our so great salvation and show us other fallen humans, the way of life indeed. This truth is the foundation of Christianity and without it we wouldn't have the faintest of hopes in life.

Now we turn to verse seven:

“but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”

The first thing to note is that we have the word "form" just as before, but now the form, the outward expression of His inmost nature, was that of a slave - human. It must be clearly and strikingly seen right off the bat that He did not come as a tyrant in order to have mankind serve Him, but rather, He came as a slave and a servant. His slavery and His service are to His Father and that equals serving all of mankind in the most dramatic and remarkable sacrifice of all time.

He did not empty Himself of His deity. That would go against what has already been stated in the previous verse. The literal translation of the words do mean that He emptied Himself, but emptied Himself of what? It was the outward expression of deity that was set aside for a time while He expressed Himself as a slave. He was made in the likeness of men though not in sin. He took upon Himself true humanity, which He did not possess before, and He did so in order to serve us who were fallen. This is, bar none, the most dramatic act of selfless humility ever witnessed. The hypostatic union is of such a sacrifice that it should shut up all arrogance and pride in man and cause him to stand in complete fear and awe of God.

In verse six He was in His preincarnate state as deity and now He is in the form of a slave. He could have so easily come to lord it over us rather than serve us, but He came to serve to the point of death, even the most awful and painful of deaths, the cross. This mind, this attitude, this life He has accomplished as a man, and it is the very life that He has gifted every believer with.

Mat 20:25-28 But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

It must be made clear to every believer that he is not achieving such a life, but that this principle, the Master's master principle for the greatest among us, has been given to

each at salvation. Every believer at the moment he believes in Christ as his Savior has been made a brand new creature in Christ (2Co 5:17), been given righteousness (Rom 5:19), been given a justified life (Rom 5:18), been given the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11), been given Christ's very inheritance (Rom 8:17), and even much more. Put all together this spells the life of Christ that has been graciously gifted to every believer. There is no excuse for any child of God not to live this life. If he does not he is simply opting to continue in the crucified flesh and is rejecting the gifts of God. God's gifts are freely given and not earned, yet they are gifts to be used, and by the power of the Spirit, every believer can use them to great success and victory.

Rom 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Rom 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Salvation, eternal life, and victory over the sin nature, the world system, and Satan and the kingdom of darkness⁹ are all made possible because our Lord set aside one expression so that the other could become the true and perfect sacrifice for all mankind. Philippians 2:6-7 show the hypostatic union of our Savior emphatically and clearly. Christ set aside His legitimate and natural expression and prerogative of deity so the He could suffer on our behalf. No human work can be added to what He has done. He said from the cross, "It is finished." All that is left for any person to do is to believe in Him as his Savior, the One who has died for the sins of the world and risen again in glory.

Let's consider for a bit what is the prerogative of deity. Deity is to be glorified. Only for God is this not arrogance as it is for any man. Even perfect man without sin as we began in the Garden of Eden is not to be glorified. Only God, the self-existent eternal one, the Creator, the only one of pure truth and love and righteousness and justice is to be glorified. It is right for glory to go to Him and only Him. Glory aimed at anything else is blasphemy and evil. Such an idea was the cause of Lucifer's fall, Isa 14:12-14; Eze 28:15-19. The astonishing thing is that the Son of God set this prerogative aside. He set self aside. Instead of glory our Lord took upon Himself sin and death. Instead of a throne of majesty our Lord rode the colt of an ass into Jerusalem. Instead of a grand castle our Lord allowed His hands and His feet to be nailed to a rugged cross. Instead of the cheers and adoration of subjects our Lord received jeers and mockery as He hung on the cross, dying for the very sins that were being hurled at Him. This is the attitude that the apostle Paul is holding up in front of us all in Philippians. In the grand example of our Lord, we are to follow. But we can only follow because He has gone before us in the same manner. At salvation, the very moment that you put your faith in Him for eternal life, He gave you the power to do so.

Without knowing the truth of this doctrine we might set off on such a life through our

own human power. This is the root of all legalism, which is built on the merit of mankind. That's why all legalists are insufferable snobs and self-righteous prigs. They are proud and reliant on their own personal effort and they likely do more to hurt Christianity than anything else. It is grace, which is a small word that refers to the enormous gifts that God has given to every believer, that enables us to have the mind of Christ. We learn what that mind is through the Spirit of God and then we walk in the gifts that have so graciously been given to us.

*1Co 2:9-10 Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And which have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him."
For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*

We serve and work by the grace of God, which means that we rely completely on the power of God's word and the filling of the Spirit. We are filled or fully influenced by the Spirit of God when our will is adjusted to God's will. We learn that will through consistent study of the word of God. Together, these produce an unmatched wisdom and power within the new creature that enable him to joyously walk in the life of Christ. He is never alone, never forsaken, never without purpose, and never without hope. He is wise as God has shown him wisdom and he is gracious as only Christ could show genuine graciousness and benevolence to others. This is the way that our Lord revealed to us since He laid aside the use of His deity and in His limited humanity He relied upon the Father's provision completely. The word and the Spirit produce in us the power, wisdom, and guidance for the work that is God's will for our lives.

1Co 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Human power is frail and corrupt. There is not one heavenly or divine thing that it can do, and to think that it can is to have the greatest darkness within - how great is your darkness when you think you are in the light. Christ's humanity was necessary as a Mediator between God and man. He is both and so becomes the reconciliation that destroys the barrier between God and fallen man. He was, and is today, seated at the right hand of God, a person with two natures.

We are still in verse seven:

*but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant,
and being made in the likeness of men."*

"Likeness" refers to the fact that He was a real man and not some kind of phantom. There were many groups in the early church who believed Docetism, which is the belief that the human form of Christ was just an illusion. This is why John would write, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us," and "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." He is not fully like us since He is much more than a man, but a true man in nature none the less. One might rightly ask, "How does the Lord expect me to follow Him in His way, truth, and life if He's God?" Though He is God, Jesus emptied Himself of the outward expression of His divine nature and this means that His deity did not assist His humanity. He thirsted, He hungered, He was punched, slapped, spit on, whipped, nailed to a cross, and died. God cannot die. How does one punch God? It sounds like a very bad idea to be sure, but the real problem is the physics of it all, God has not the form that an object such as a fist can transfer a force of energy into Him. But Christ was flesh, bone, and blood. So if He did not get assistance from His deity to live the supernatural life that He did, then where did He get it? It should put a big fulfilling smile on our faces to answer - the same place where we get our assistance. Christ fully relied on the Father, meaning the plan and provision of the Father, the word of God, and the Holy Spirit to empower, guide, and instruct Him. The Son of God became so limited that He received instruction from the holy scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Luk 2:52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Php 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

"Obedient unto death" does not mean obedient to death. He was always the master of death. He died as no man ever has, will, or could. He died of His own choice, but not suicide. He allowed Himself to be crucified by the hands of evil men, but He could have easily stopped it at any moment. He was willing to be judged by the Father for the sins of the whole world and then He willfully dismissed His own spirit. No one has ever done this and never will. His death is as unique as His salvation - it is in no other person. The cross was His ultimate obedience since it was the will of the Father. The humanity of Christ took the greatest humility upon Himself and fulfilled the Father's command.

*Heb 10:5-7 Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired,
But a body Thou hast prepared for Me;
In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken
no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come
(In the roll of the book it is written of Me)
To do Thy will, O God.'"*

The type of death chosen was a Roman cross. This type of death is not coincidence or an arbitrary type of execution. Death by crucifixion is emphasized in both the Old and New Testaments. It is the most shameful, disgraceful, degrading, painful, and slow

deaths that man ever devised. Even to the Romans this type of execution was only for the worst criminals and could never be performed on a Roman citizen. I could offer opinion as to why the Father chose such a death, but even though I think some of them are obvious, I do not dare. This is too precious to weaken with human speculation. This is the humiliation of the perfect sinless humanity of our Lord as He was forsaken by the Father and judged for the sins of the world.

Anyone who has studied this passage understands its importance in God's revelation.

Php 2:5-9 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Chapter 3: An illustration: John 13:1-17.

Joh 13:1-4 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about.

Christ's genuine humility was not just in His words but in everything that He did. In this example, we have our Lord leading the Passover meal which was a celebration of the independence of Israel from slavery through the blood of the lamb. This feast was a type¹⁰ of the One true Lamb of God who would set all men free through His substitutionary spiritual death. The true Lamb of God was officiating the Passover, which He celebrated with the twelve only. Despite the significance of the feast and especially this particular one - the last true Passover, the minds of these not so humble disciples are wondering who was the greatest of them.

Luke 22:24 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

The Lord was well aware that His hour had come, meaning that the shadow of the cross loomed large over Him and would occur on the following day. But rather than seeking solitude somewhere else in prayer, He is more concerned for His disciples. It

is clear that there is much that they don't understand and without this understanding they will not survive the vicious attacks that are sure to come upon them. If they maintain their foul attitudes of self-development the kingdom of darkness will make minced meat out of them. Their whole outlook has to change and quickly, and the Lord is not going to only teach them with words, but in one of the most astounding actions of His three and a half year public ministry.

The Father had given all things into Jesus' hands and He was to soon return to heaven from where He came, but the disciples would not accompany Him. They would be left behind for the purpose of spreading the good news about Him and His finished work to the four corners of the earth. To do this they would need humility, and not the pseudo kind that is only an outward shell, but genuine humility and lots of it. They would need to serve one another and be servants of all as He was in hypostatic union. They would need to rely on God alone and not on any self effort or self worth. The best virtues of fallen humanity are useless to God. If their goal remained self-promotion, as it is with so many who seek to "change the world" then they would miserably and immediately fail. Humility is the beginning of divine love. It was love that motivated Christ to become a man. It was love that led Him to the cross to defeat all enemies of God. And it would be love that the disciples needed in order to accomplish their divine mission. Jesus wouldn't just teach them about humility as He had done countless times, the time was too short for this alone; rather He would show them. He gets up from the table, lays aside His own garments and puts on the apron of a servant.

The towel was a linen cloth commonly worn by house slaves. This is significant. When He laid aside His own garments and wrapped this apron around Himself, He revealed in type what He had done in reality - laying aside the overt manifestation of His deity and wrapping Himself in humanity. He took upon Himself the form of a slave. And as a slave would do in that day when washing the feet of his master or his master's guests, he would fill a basin with water and bend down at the dirty feet. In that time the streets and byways were usually filthy and the sandaled feet of anyone walking on them would become exceedingly dirty. Each home would have some water at the door for feet washing. It was customary for a person to wash their feet before entering a house, and at a meal, and especially the Passover meal, it was imperative that a person do so. If the person were an honored guest then the host or a slave of the host would wash their feet for them as a gesture of respect and honor.

Joh 13:5-11 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, Lord, do You wash my feet?"Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter." Peter said to Him, Never shall You wash my feet!"Jesus answered him, If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."Jesus said to him, He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, Not all of you are clean."

The Lord, the Creator of the heavens and earth, the Almighty and Lord of all, puts on a slave's apron and washes the feet of twelve arrogant men. It is amazing to note that the betrayer, Judas Iscariot, was among them, and in all likelihood, the Lord washed his feet as well. This makes sense since Christ died for all mankind, including all who would reject Him as Savior and so Christ served everyone; the saved and the condemned. Jesus actually bows before and serves the one who has plotted to betray Him, and would indeed betray Him with a kiss. He commands us to love our enemies and to pray for them, and He shows us that He was willing to serve his enemy and wash his feet.

Despite their unworthiness, He serves them. Even in its striking beauty, this is a small picture of what He will do for them and the whole world on the cross, but it is also a means of instruction. If He is like this and His life is theirs, then it follows that they must be like this. If they are not like this then they have no part with Him in the divine work of service to all men.

Peter seems to always say the wrong thing at the wrong time, but isn't that why we love him so much? Peter reveals that he has no idea what the Lord is doing. First, he feigns humility, "Lord, do you wash my feet? Never shall You wash my feet!" He is giving a good show of humility, but he has none. Ignorance of the truth is never humility. It's just ignorance and nothing more. The Lord assures Peter that he will understand later, but this isn't enough for him. That statement would make a humble man quiet, but Peter is ready to fire at the Lord his next verbal gaff. His gaff gun is far from empty. Hating to be told that he will only understand later, likely taking that as an insult to his intelligence, Peter rushes to his next shot at understanding. If the Lord has to wash his feet then why not all of him? His logic is, "If the Lord is going to make a part of me clean then why shouldn't He make all of me clean. The cleaner the better."

The Lord reveals to Peter that he is already clean throughout, and that just his feet need to be washed. The one among them who is not clean is the one who has rejected Jesus as Christ (Messiah) and Savior, but the other eleven have accepted this truth in faith, and so they are clean forever. This is their position in Christ that was given to them the moment they believed in Him as their Savior. This is stated over and over again in the Bible; salvation is by faith alone and not by works. Yet though every believer is clean and possesses eternal life, he can still have unclean thinking. One thing about the disciples is filthy, and it's not so much their feet. It is their thinking. Their attitudes are not of humility, grace, mercy, and love and so their souls stink with the foul stench of the selfish thinking of arrogant, fallen man. Hence Christ states, "If I don't wash you [of your arrogant ambition] then you will have no part with Me." Peter is clean and always will be. Our performance does not determine our eternal destiny - Christ's performance does. Salvation is by faith alone and Peter has done that. The "part" that Christ is referring to is the part with Christ in the work.

Mat 9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Our Lord revealed clearly in this action that He was the servant of them and that since He was they have to be servants of one another and the world. It will not be easy. The sin nature will fight it tooth and nail, the world will hate it and persecute fiercely, Satan will oppose it with everything he can, but none of this matters because the battle is the Lord's and the humble servant depends fully on God's provision and protection. Christ never fought back against His accusers and executioners, though He could have destroyed them all, and He overcame them all through divine humility and love. Every believer becomes an overcomer in the same way - humility, love, service. Christ wrapped Himself in true humanity and showed us the way.

Mat 26:53 Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

*Isa 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.*

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Joh 13:12-17 And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

When Christ asks them if they had known what He had done to them, there doesn't seem to be an offered answer. They at least know that there was more to it than the obvious fact of a foot washing. When He explains, He first reminds them that He is Teacher and Lord. This is without question, but then He states the paradox. The Lord of all just washed your feet. What does that mean? The Lord of all is also the Servant of all. Then comes the conclusion, "You also ought to do the same." Some denominations have actually taken to literal foot washing, but anyone can do that and still have a heart filled with seething pride. No, it's not the actual foot washing that we need, but rather the humble attitude of service of others, laying down our lives for others, and submission to the will of our Father just as the humanity of Christ always was. He is the Master and we are the slaves. It is obvious that a slave is not greater than his master. If this is the Master's mind then even more so it should be the slave's. Now Christ understood that many of us, if not all of us, would assent to this principle in our

minds, giving it an A+ on the grounds of principle and theory. We love to commend things in our minds as virtuous and all the while having no intention of doing them. Christ nips that in the bud. "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." Knowing is the beginning, but doing is the true form of humility and love.

Mat 7:24-27 Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

The hypostatic union is the ultimate act of humility. It led to obedience to the point of death in the service of fallen man who deserved none of it. Through this act our Lord has saved us, and salvation is not the end, but the beginning. It is the beginning of a brand new justified divine life that has been graciously given to every believer. This life is foreign to the world and the disbelieving, but it is home to the child of God. Don't buy the lie that it is only for the heavenly future or that it is impossible with creatures such as us. We are not the old creature any longer, but the new creature in Christ. Not only is it possible, it is commanded. There is no other life for the disciple of Jesus. As He is so are we in this world. Grab hold of the eternal life that was given to you and press on to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Php 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 4: The deity and humanity of Christ.

Deity:

In essence deity consists of ten attributes: Sovereignty, veracity, eternal life, immutability, love, righteousness, justice, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. All three members of the Trinity have identical essence, and even though the second member became a man, He did not forfeit any part of His deity. The incarnation did not diminish the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Orthodox Christianity has been united

on this since the beginning of the church. When we say orthodox we are referring to those who accept the divine inspiration and the infallibility of the scriptures.

The earliest popular attack on the deity of Christ came from a popular teacher from the Alexandrian church in the early fourth century by the name of Arius. "Arius was concerned that Jesus be truly human, and that His divinity be stated, not in terms of substance, but rather in terms of the will - that is, in terms that are capable of imitation and repetition by believers... When the question was posed as to whether the one incarnate in Jesus is divine by nature or is a creature that has been adopted into divinity, Arius and his followers chose the latter option."¹¹ Unfortunately Arianism gained wide support in Alexandria and eventually infiltrated much of the church in all areas of the Roman Empire. The emperor Constantine, who had hoped that Christianity would be the cement of the Empire and saw this as a crack in that cement, decided to call a great council of bishops to deal with the Arian question as well as other problems. This was the famous Council of Nicea of 325. Though the creed adopted by the assembly has some ambiguity, it was set to affirm the deity of Christ as well as His humanity and sacrifice as Savior.

The deity of Christ has been questioned in many contemporary works as well. The point made in these false works is that Christ should be followed but not worshipped. Jesus is depicted as good, sincere, and courageous, and that He served as a new model for men. They claim that He was a man ahead of His time in the evolutionary process, but not God and not Savior. The purpose of these falsehoods is obvious. We are not ignorant of Satan's schemes. Satan wishes to diminish the person of Christ, making Him out to be less than He is so that we will be less than what God has made us to be in Christ. By looking at Jesus as just a good man that we should hope to imitate makes our salvation and our life in Him impossible. To rob Him of deity is to rob Him of His office as Mediator. He is God and man and so the perfect Mediator who destroys the wall between God and man, reconciling us to God and satisfying the justice of the Father. To rob Him of His deity is to also rob Him of His uniqueness as well as the uniqueness of His sacrifice. The incarnation and the finished work of Christ cannot be diminished in our souls by one bit without destroying its efficacy. And, if He is not God and just another creature, than He cannot be our Master, the One that we are to worship and to follow. There is an enormous and disastrous difference between following another creature and following God. The same is true of the difference between putting our lives in the hands of another creature or God. Satan works tirelessly to destroy your relationship with Christ by filling our heads with lies, but we have the truth of the inerrant and inspired scripture, which has withstood the attacks upon it for centuries and will withstand all attacks, for the word of God is alive and powerful.

It is true that Christ was a good man who was virtuous, sincere, courageous and sacrificial, but it is not true that He is only a man. Partial truths mixed with lies become the most dangerous lies due to their deceptiveness. The evidence of scripture is so complete that to reject His deity is to reject the accuracy and authority of the scriptures.

We find that scripture explicitly states His deity: Joh 1:1; 20:28; Rom 9:5; Php 2:6; Tit 2:13; 1Jo 5:20. It applies divine names to Him: Isa 9:6; 40:3; Jer 23:5, 6; Joe 2:32 (compare Act 2:21); 1Ti 3:16. It ascribes to Him divine attributes: Isa 9:6; Rev 1:8;

22:13; Mat 18:20; 28:20; Joh 1:1, 2; 3:13; 2:24, 25; 14:1; 21:17; Rev 2:23; Php 3:21; Heb 1:10-12; 13:8; Col 2:9. It speaks of Him as doing divine works: Joh 1:3, 10; 3:35; 5:19-29; 14:1; 17:2; Col 1:16, 17; Heb 1:2, 3, 6, 10-12; Luk 10:22; Eph 1:22; Mat 9:2-7; 25:31, 32; 28:19; Mar 2:7-10; Col 3:13; Act 10:42; 17:31; Php 3:21; 2Ti 4:1; Rev 21:5; 1Co 15:9; 2Co 13:13.

It is obvious that the modern defections from true doctrine of the deity of Christ are from those who do not consider the scripture to be inspired by God and without error. Jesus Christ is God.

Humanity:

As has been noted, during the incarnation Jesus Christ denied Himself the expression of His divine nature so that He could save us. He did not use His divine attributes to glorify or sustain Himself. For His provision He relied completely on the providence of the Father. Our eternal life depends on this.

His true humanity is accounted for in many places in the scripture. He experienced temptation, distress, weakness, pain, sorrow, and limitation. Deity can experience none of these things. He was tempted in all things but He never succumbed and remained impeccable so that He would qualify as our obedient, perfect Savior.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

The laying aside of deity carried with it the experience of incredible trouble and sorrow. This had its greatest display in the Garden of Gethsemane just hours before His death:

Mat 26:38 Then He said to them, My soul is deeply grieved [very sorrowful], to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

It was also displayed in the face of the betrayal of Judas Iscariot whom Jesus loved until the end.

Joh 13:21 When Jesus had said this, He became troubled [stirred up or agitated] in spirit, and testified, and said, Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

Combining both of these passages we see not only the trouble our Lord experienced within, but also that He experienced them in His soul and in His spirit. This means that His soul and spirit, the immaterial parts of Him, were also truly human. There is no way to attempt to explain them away as some type of divine soul and spirit, for the

divine could never experience agitation or deep sorrow. We see clearly that our Lord possessed a true human body, soul, and spirit.

His true human body was composed of flesh and blood.

Heb 2:14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil

1Jo 4:2-3 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

During His life His bodily growth was no different than for other men. His physical movements were not attested as being alien to other humans. He grew and moved as we all do, and incredibly, He grew in wisdom and in knowledge as we do. Surely He accumulated wisdom much better and faster than anyone, yet still, He had to accumulate it. This is most unlike deity.

Luk 2:52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

This was prophesied 800 years prior:

*Isa 53:2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot,
And like a root out of parched ground;
He has no stately form or majesty
That we should look upon Him,
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.*

And this man would allow Himself to be beaten and abused more than any other man who ever lived, and yet would not fight back. He continued to lay aside the expression of His deity so that you and I could be saved.

*Isa 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you,
So His appearance was marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men.*

Even after His death, the resurrected Jesus demonstrates the genuineness of His human body. When He appeared to the disciples they thought He may have been a ghost, but He responded:

Luk 24:39 See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

Again, for those who accept the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of the scriptures, there is no question. Jesus Christ is God and is materially (body) as well as immaterially (soul and spirit), man. The doctrine of the two natures is not merely a theoretical matter. It is crucial to the understanding of the entire plan of God and our salvation in that plan.

Chapter 5: The necessity for the humanity of Christ; Heb 10:5-10.

The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were not propitiatory, meaning, they did not satisfy the justice of God concerning sin. They were done by God's command and so they gave Him pleasure, but only the pleasure of knowing what they represented. They were not the actual atonement for sin, rather, they pointed to the One who was to come who would fully atone for all the sins of mankind, and in this, they gave pleasure to God. The Old Testament was a pale shadow or a rough outline of the sharp reality that was to come in the person of Jesus Christ. The sacrifices of the Levitical priests only portrayed something real. They could never completely cleanse the conscience of man concerning sin because they were never final. Year by year and day by day the blood of animals was shed for sins and the same was followed the next day and the next year. They served as a reminder of sin as well as a reminder that an innocent, spotless Lamb was to come who would remove sin once and for all.

The sacrifice was instituted right in the beginning, immediately after our fall from the perfect Garden of Eden. God provided two cherubim to stand at the eastern gate of the garden and there, between the cherubim, as it would be depicted in Moses' ark of the covenant, the first sacrifices were made. Adam, Eve, Cain, and Able were instructed in the meaning of the sacrifice.

*Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."*

God Himself was the instructor, performing the first sacrifice and using the very skin of the innocent slain animal to cover the nakedness of the first two sinners.

*Gen 3:21 And the Lord God made garments of skin
for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.*

Cain refused the animal sacrifice and brought to God the fruit (literally) of his own labor. This was unacceptable to God. If God had accepted it He would have justified the work of man, which would indicate that man could earn his own salvation. Only the innocent blood of an animal, a picture of a substitute who would die in the place of the sinner, was acceptable to God. Cain still refused to accept this, and because God approved of his brother's compliance and acceptance of God's will, he slew his brother. There is only one way to salvation and it is through the blood of the perfect substitute, the One that all of the thousands of animals metaphorically represented in type. God made clear from the beginning that only faith in Him would save man.

The sacrifices at the eastern gate as well as all those that were properly offered afterwards reached an important point in the first Passover. That night, wherever the blood of the Pascal lamb was painted on the doorposts of a house, the angel of death would pass by. Where it was not, the angel would enter the house and the first born male of that house would die. The next day Israel was set free from slavery in Egypt and were on their way in freedom to the Promised Land. In that land a city would be conquered by a king and built up into a capital. In that city the king would put the ark of the covenant and the sacrifices would commence on the mercy seat of the ark between the two cherubim. The city was Jerusalem and the king was David. David was promised that he would have a Son who would sit on the throne of Israel forever. This Son, one thousand years later, would come to Jerusalem and become the once and for all perfect Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Passover was fulfilled in three hours on Calvary, where Jesus Christ would lay down His life for the sins of the whole world.

Rom 3:21-26 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Yet Jesus, God the Son, could not do this as deity. God cannot die. He is not subject to death. God cannot be judged for sin. He can only judge sin.

1Pe 2:21-25 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Jesus is the Creator of the world as God the Son and He is the one true sacrifice for sin as the Son of Man.

Col 1:15-16 And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Col 2:13-15 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

This truth is wonderfully magnified in Heb 10:4-10.

Heb 10:4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

It is impossible. This is clearly seen in the fact that the sacrifices had to be performed over and over again. If they took away sins then one sacrifice would be enough and after it all others would cease, but they did not. They were simply a picture of what was to come. It is true that the animal is innocent, but the animal is not obedient. The bull, lamb, bird, etc. do not willfully lay down their life, nor are they qualified to do so. They serve as a pale shadow of the reality that was to come.

Heb 10:5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a body Thou hast prepared for Me;"

The next verse confirms verse four. When the Son of God became the incarnate Messiah, taking humanity upon Himself, He performed His priestly work. He did not offer more animals, but offered His own physical body instead. He is the one true High Priest but He never once entered the Holy of Holies with animal blood to sprinkle upon the mercy seat between the two cherubim. He did however allow Himself to be nailed to a cross outside of the city and there the blood of Christ, His judgment for the sins of the whole world, would occur once and for all.

Whether we focus on the body of Christ or the blood in this sacrifice we are referring in either case to the entire person. He didn't bleed to death like an animal would. He was quite alive when the sacrifice was complete, for He said out loud, "It is finished." He was judged for the sins of mankind and in the Bible this is sometimes depicted as His body and sometimes as His blood. The body and blood are not meant to be pulled apart and analyzed. They are a depiction of Him, in total, giving Himself for you and me. Since He has dealt with sin completely and finally, there is to be no more con-

consciousness of sin in the form of guilt or condemnation. This in no way condones sin, but rather it sets us free from it. This is a vital part of our Christian lives. To not understand it is to come short of the grace of God and fail to live the Christ life that was given to each believer. If a believer wants to be set free from the command of sin over his life, he will find it in this truth.

If the Old Testament worshippers had been cleansed by the animal sacrifices then they would have had no more consciousness of sin.

Heb 10:1-2 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

However, that never occurred. "Today, the believer no longer has to feel the guilt of sin. He might still be conscious of it but the consciousness of the guilt of sin is gone; the guilt of sin has been taken away."¹² Animal blood covered sin like paint may cover a termite infested beam, and so God could forgive sin on a credit basis until the sacrifice of Christ, but it did not take away sin just like the wooden beam is still rotten. In the church there are no more sacrifices and therefore no more reminders of sin. We recognize our sins and acknowledge them to the Father, but the guilt of sin was nailed to a wooden cross almost two thousand years ago. The Bible states that we are identified with Christ in His crucifixion and so our old nature died with Him.

Rom 6:3-4 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Because of this fact, when we sin, and none of us ever reaches sinless perfection, we claim this truth and forgo any condemnation. It doesn't mean we aren't guilty of the sin, we chose to do it and we are culpable, but we are not condemned for Christ has once and for all borne our sins in His body. And if anyone thinks that such grace will lead a believer to sin recklessly, they are sorely mistaken. Anyone who uses grace to justify sin hasn't a clue about the reality of what was done for him by Christ. We have been set free so that we may walk in newness of life. The crowd that wants cheap grace so that they can justify carnality does not want Christ at all. They only are looking for any excuse to live away from Him.

Rom 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Now, the blood of Christ has fully cleansed the believer from the works of death - the works of the flesh. What works we did before we were delivered by faith in Christ, no matter how good we thought they might have been, or the people around us praised in us, are all considered dead. They were the work of a fallen creature who was separate from the only One who is good. We no longer look back to them in some auld lang syne sort of way, desiring to go back to our old lives to live out some kind of human based goodness. Our conscience has been cleansed from the old life and given a new one. We now, with the deliverance from sin and death, walk in newness of life and perform the work that is of divine origin - serving the living God.

Heb 9:13-14 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

*Heb 10:5-7 Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired,
But a body Thou hast prepared for Me;
In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.
Then I said, 'Behold, I have come
(In the roll of the book it is written of Me)
To do Thy will, O God.'"*

The reference used by the writer is Psa 40:6-8. The theme of the first verses of this psalm, written by David, is that God has brought him out of the miry clay, set his feet upon a rock, and put a new song in his mouth in order to praise God. How has God done this? "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." In the Old Testament there are hundreds of prophecies indicating the divine will for the coming Messiah. By His own will, the Lord Jesus Christ would lay down His life so that all of us could be brought out of the miry clay, planted upon a firm foundation which is the Rock Jesus, and have a new song put in our hearts so that we may sing songs of praise to Him for His deliverance. It is for this reason that the Son of God became a man.

Psalm 40 shows that obedience brings perfection. Christ's willing obedience to the Father made Him the one perfect sacrifice. Animals can be sacrificed but they cannot obey. Certainly, animals do not qualify for atonement because they are not the God-Man, but also, they do not qualify because they cannot offer their blood with obedience and faith. It was necessary for the God-Man Messiah to come and to offer Himself willingly. We also find this principle of obedience being mixed with sacrifice in the people of the Old Testament. The Jews were given instructions in the Mosaic Law on how to perform the specific sacrifices, but the meaning behind each sacrifice was also revealed to them. They were to cover Israel's sins and so they were to be approached with reverence. They weren't a license for sin but a reminder. So when Israel

brought the sacrifice they were also to be obedient in faith, humble before the Lord God, but often they were not, as many modern Christians are today.

*Isa 15:22 Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams."*

Christ is our example, and He came in voluntary obedience. "I have come to do Your will, O God." We are to obey in faith, and this is pleasing to God. We do not do this for salvation, but because we are saved children of God. Wholehearted obedience is the sacrifice that God really desires, which is what He received from the Servant Son when He came into the world. In the roll of the book it was written of Him, but it wasn't just Him reading the Old Testament scriptures and following orders only. He had the deepest and dearest desire to follow the Father's will. It was His own spontaneous choice. The Law was engraved on His heart and He loved it. If the same is not true of the believer than he does not understand the will of the Father.

Christ's obedience wasn't just words or an expression. That's really no different than offering an animal. It was true obedience from the inner man who knew the will of God and loved the will of God. This is the voluntary aspect of obedience. It's not an obedience based on fear or on reward. Is it obedience if you do God's will grudgingly? Obedience is making God's will your own. It is allowing God to place His own desires into your heart so that they become your desires. It's not a matter of having our own desires and God's desire fighting it out in our souls, but that our desires are His. It is only in the word of God that such enlightenment is found. A believer cannot be a superficial looker of the word but an inculcated student. If he is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he will find God's will and he will see its majesty. Don't hold to a form of godliness without its inward reality, for that is just a hollow shell or a whitewashed tomb.

There were different types of sacrifices in the Old Testament. "Every species of sacrifice had its own primary idea. The fundamental idea of the burnt-offering was the offering of worship; that of the peace-offering was the knitting of fellowship; that of the meal-offering was sanctifying consecration; that of the sin-offering was atonement; that of the guilt-offering was compensatory payment. The self-sacrifice of the Servant of Jehovah may be presented under all of these points of view. It is the complete anti-type¹³ (footnote definition), the truth, the object, and the end of all the sacrifices."¹⁴ (F. Delitzsch, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, p. 333f.) These wonderful things are all for man by means of Him. We are atoned, our sins have been paid for, we can now worship Him, fellowship with Him, and we are sanctified. The contrast in Heb 10 is not so much between sacrifice and obedience as it is between the involuntary sacrifice of dumb animals and "sacrifice into which obedience enters, the sacrifice of a rational and spiritual being, which is not passive in death, but in dying makes the will of God its own."¹⁵ (J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 232)

"But a body Thou hast prepared for Me." His incarnation itself is viewed as an act of

submission to God's will and an anticipation of his supreme submission to that will in death. He took the body in order "to do Your will," which was the entire life of the incarnation. In light of this truth, it is the utmost in stupidity for a believer to choose his own will above God's. We all fail. If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves (1Jo 1:8), but the question is what do we really hunger for? If it is our own will above His, when we can see that the only perfect man, who is God, chose the will of the Father above all else, we are blockheads.

Heb 10:8-9 After saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them"(which are offered according to the Law), then He said, Behold, I have come to do Thy will."He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

God takes away the first, the Old Testament Levitical offerings, and brings in the second, the New Testament, new covenant in His blood, based on the finished work of Christ. Nothing can be added to the second - no sacrifices are ever again to be made. We are recipients of the gifts that come because of His completed, once and for all sacrifice. We could never add to the work of Christ. Anything that anyone tries to add to faith in Christ is a claimant to doing just that and is the highest of insults to the humble sacrifice of the Savior. It is grace all the way and this is why we are said to be living in the dispensation of grace.

Rom 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Eph 1:7-8 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.

Heb 10:10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

By "this will," the Father's plan for the Messiah, the believer has been sanctified. Sanctification means to be set apart for God. It is our position as saved people. This is positional sanctification, meaning that we have been delivered from sin and death and now belong to God forever. This sanctification is to be parlayed into experiential sanctification, which is living life set apart unto God. In this verse is hailed the position of the believer which he should revel in. It does us a great deal of good to look at a little Greek grammar that is used here. The phrase "we have been sanctified" is composed of a perfect participle and a finite verb. It is the strongest way to communicate the permanent and continuous state of salvation/sanctification into which the believer is brought and in which he lives. "Once for all" adds even more to this permanency. Nothing can be added to the work of Christ. We are saved and sanctified by faith alone. So perfect was the sacrifice of Christ that no repetition of it was necessary or possible. Thousands upon thousands of Old Testament sacrifices are called to a halt

by the once and for all offering of Christ.

We are His and are holy forever. Holy is from the same root Greek word as sanctified. A holy creature has only one destiny, and that is to live holy as our Lord did. Anything else is a failure to exercise the new creature in Christ and to come short of the grace of God. Our sanctification as a result of Christ's offering enables us to offer God acceptable worship. To return to the life of the flesh and not live the holy life that has been given is to fail to see the fulfillment of the work of Christ in our lives. It is to, in time, miss out on the most spectacular and sacrificial event of the history of the universe.

*1Co 2:9 Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And which have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him."*

*Eph 3:20-21 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly
beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works
within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to
all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

Notes

1. J. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord*, p. 96.

2. Koine (common or shared) Greek was the Greek language commonly spoken and written in eastern Mediterranean countries in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. New Testament Greek is not actually on the level of literary Koine, but is conversational Greek.

3. Propitiation is the theological term for the reality of Christ satisfying the perfect justice of God the Father through His vicarious spiritual death on behalf of all mankind. It is the God-ward side of the cross while reconciliation is the man-ward side of the cross.

4. Abrahamic Covenant: the unconditional covenant made with Abraham originally in Gen 12:1-3 and subsequently repeated to Abraham and others multiple times throughout the Old Testament. The Covenant guarantees Abraham's progeny to be as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore, the land grant of the kingdom, a son (David's son) to sit on the throne of the kingdom forever, and that God Himself would dwell in them and among them. The Covenant will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Christ when He establishes His literal one thousand year kingdom on earth known as the Millennial Reign.

5. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, Philippians 2:6.

6. Trinity is not a biblical word but is commonly used to identify the one true God in three divine persons; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each of which are identical in essence, co-eternal, and co-equal. It is a mystery to the finite human mind that God is indeed one, but three in person.

7. NT 5225, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, 1985.

8. The resurrection body is given to all who believe in Christ so that they may dwell with Him in heaven forever. It is an imperishable, heavenly body that is like the one that Christ possesses and which He briefly revealed on earth after His resurrection.

9. The believer has three natural enemies while alive on earth. 1) the sin nature, which is the Adamic nature of our fallen state that resides in the body, 2) the world system, which is the order of the fallen world that is presently ruled by Satan, and as such, fully opposes God's plan for the salvation and spirituality of mankind, 3) the kingdom of darkness, which is composed of fallen angels organized under Satan's authority to greatly oppose God and His children.

10. A type is a representation, usually of Jesus Christ, by an object, a person, a feast, etc. For example, the Passover lamb is a type of the person of Christ and the blood of the lamb is a type of the judgment of Christ on the cross for the sins of mankind. What the type represents is termed the anti-type, which in almost every case is Jesus Christ.

11. Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, p. 84.
12. A. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary, The Messianic Jewish Epistles*, p. 131.
13. See note 10.
14. F. Delitzch, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, p. 333.
15. J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, p. 232.

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Pastor Joseph Sugrue employs a scientific approach to the study of the word of God. Science is simply the natural born man's discovery of God's physical laws; doctrine is the born again man's discovery of God's spiritual laws. Our God is not a God of confusion, and Pastor Sugrue wishes to dispel any of that confusion from the tremendous grace

that began God's plan for the Church Age. It is Pastor Sugrue's intent and desire to open the grace of God to every man that has been fooled into the lie that it doesn't exist.



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