

7. One of Us Was God with Us

“One of Us” Was “God with Us”

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As the revelation of Scripture to man was given through miraculous means and through human personality, so also was the revelation of man's salvation accomplished through miraculous means and through human personality. The incarnation of God in Christ was by a miraculous conception and the one conceived was a human personality, an offspring of the first man, Adam. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews writes,

Therefore, entering into the world he says, “sacrifice and offering I did not desire, but a body you prepared for me, in the whole of burnt offerings for sin you did not take pleasure;” then I said, “Behold I have come, in the scroll of the book it is written concerning me, to do the will of God [Psalms 40:6-8],” (Heb 10:5-7).

The writer of Hebrews draws this text from Psalms 40, which is a song of salvation written by David in thanksgiving to God for his repeated deliverance. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews uses it to reveal the fact that Jesus has replaced the Levitical system of sacrifice; and the incarnation of God was the means of accomplishing this. God came into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, a son of Adam, a human being, who came “to do the will of God,” as it had been written in the scroll of the book. What scroll David had in mind was the same as is found in the first Psalm, “his delight is in the law (*torah*) of *Yahweh*, and on his law (*torah*) he meditates day and night.” Also Psalms 40:8, “your law (*torah*-instruction) is within my heart.”

The person who came to do the will of God in effecting the deliverance of the human race was himself a member of the human race, a son of man/ Adam (*benAdam*). This expression (son of man) is found on the

lips of Jesus in over eighty occurrences, wherein it appears that he is affirming that he was one of us, an offspring of Adam. Some of the usages of the term are a reference to the mysterious figure of Dan 7:13-14, who appears before God in the clouds of heaven as a human being, a son of man, but the greater number of occurrences are references to himself as an offspring of Adam. This is a somewhat mysterious theme that runs through the Gospels, especially Mark, identified by some scholars as a “messianic secret, in that the identity of Jesus of Nazareth to his closest disciples was not fully revealed. They thought he was a prophet and a teacher or rabbi from the little village of Nazareth in Galilee, and hoped that he was the Davidic Messiah. But, as it becomes evident, they did not know the fullness of who it was who was in their midst.

This appears to be the case in the words of the two men traveling on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35. When the stranger who began walking with them asked about their conversation, they replied that they were talking about, “Jesus of Nazareth, he was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.” Of course, before the day was over they would know that he was much more than a prophet from Galilee, he was a risen Lord, and even more, they would eventually come to know that he was the very presence of God in their midst.

As the angel said to Joseph in his dream, “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and they will call him *Immanuel*, which means, God with us,’ ” (Matt 1:22-23). This same truth is found in the opening lines of the Fourth Gospel, where the John affirms that Jesus was in the beginning with God, he was God, and was with God (John 1:1-2), and he became flesh and lived [*eskenosen* – dwelled/tabernacled] among us (1:14). As God had dwelt with Israel in the tabernacle in the wilderness, he would again dwell with Israel in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

“God with Us”

Concerning the identity of Jesus, we read in John 1:1-2,

In the beginning was (hen - imperfect indicative of eimi, continuous action in past time) the word and the word was with (pros - in motion,

with) *God, and the word was God.*

John clearly affirms the existence of Jesus as "*ho logos*." The word John uses here is one of the most multicolored words of the Greek language. It is filled with a variety of meaning that can only be known by its usage in a given context. *Logos* can mean "a word," a sound or symbol used to communicate an idea. It can mean, "a statement, declaration or an oration;" it can mean, "sayings, discourse, instruction, a narrative or story;" it can mean, "inward thought" and is the principal word for "reason or logic." It has a variety of forms, e.g. *logikos* meaning, "rational or reasonable," *logion* meaning, "an oracle or divine utterance," *logios* meaning, "to be learned or knowledgeable."

Of major significance is the fact that to the reader of the Greek OT (the Septuagint/LXX), which would include the greater part of the Judaism of the first century AD, the Jewish Diaspora of the Mediterranean world. *Logos* was the word used to translate the Hebrew *daber*, which is the principal term used in the OT for what God has spoken, revealed, or made known. *Daber* is used in this sense in over eight hundred occurrences in the OT. This fact was of great significance among Hebrew scholars and was very likely true of the Greek equivalent, *logos* in the Septuagint/LXX.

To say that Jesus was the *logos*, who was "in the beginning," "was God," and "was with God" is virtually identical to the way wisdom (*hokmah/sophia*) is personified in the wisdom literature of the OT; especially, Proverbs 8 & 9. In Proverbs "wisdom" (Hebrew *hokmah*, LXX *sophia*) is spoken of in such a way that it is difficult to tell where the author is speaking of an attribute of a person (Prov 1:2, 7; 2:2, 6; 3:13; 4:5-7; 5:1; 12:8; 13:10; 14:6-8; 16:16; 21:30), or a personification of wisdom (Prov 1:3, 20; 3:19; 7:4; 8:1; 12-, 14; 9:1 2; 15:33; 24:7). This personification of wisdom is also seen in the apocryphal book, The Wisdom of Solomon 1:4, 6; 6:12-20; 7:7-14, 21-8:21; 9:1-4, 9-11, 18; 10:1-11:1. A curious piece of imagery is used of, the personification of "the word of God" in Wisdom of Solomon 15:16, "thy all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne into the midst of the land that was doomed." This is an intriguing thought and was an idea that was active in some quarters of first century Judaism.

To be in the presence of the Word of God was, to the Jews, to be in

the presence of God. This fact is evidenced in synagogue services of the present day when the scrolls of the Sacred Writings are carried through the congregation on their way from the "Ark of the Covenant" (a large wooden chest) to the podium for reading. As it passes through the people, it is revered as though it were the very presence of God in their midst. In Orthodox Synagogue services when the Scriptures are read the congregation stands, when the rabbi gives an explanation of the text read, he sits, as does the congregation; one stands in the presence of God, but may sit in the presence of man.

Why the term *logos* was chosen to express the pre-existent identity of Jesus would be difficult to say, but it is very likely that this word (a noun of masculine gender) is being used as a personification of revelation from God, just as the word *sophia* (wisdom) is personified in Proverbs 8 & 9. In fact, this very term *logos* was personified in this way in the writings of Philo, a Jewish scholar located in Alexandria of Egypt who lived and did his writing during the first century AD. It would be useless to try and make a "disjunctive" argument (either/or) for any one of the meanings listed above; but it would be fairly easy to make a "conjunctive" argument; i.e. "both/and" or "one or all the above."

Jesus' Consciousness of His Identity

In John 8:23, Jesus said to his Jewish antagonist in Jerusalem, "You are from beneath, I am from above: you are of this world, I am not of this world." In 8:51, he referred to himself as the, "living bread that came down out of heaven." In 8:58, he clearly affirmed his existence with the Father, "Before Abraham was (*genesthai* - was begotten) I am" (*ego eimi* - a combination of a personal pronoun and the verb "to be"). If Jesus had desired to say, "I was" he could have most naturally done so the verb "*emen*" (I was); however, he used the same pronoun-verb construction found in the Septuagint reading of the name of God in Exodus 3:14, "*ego eimi*." Jesus is affirming his existence with the Father. Further, in his prayer recorded in 17:5, Jesus prayed "And now glorify me with yourself Father, with the glory which I had with you before the world was." There can be no serious question to the fact that this apostle understood Jesus to have been in existence with God before he was Jesus of Nazareth.

He Existed in the Form of God

What is poetically expressed by John is found in Paul's writings as well. In Phil. 2:5-6 he writes,

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God counted not being the same (isos - equal, the same) with God a thing to be grasped (harpagmon - to hold on to, clutch).

Here it is affirmed by Paul that Jesus pre-existed with God, in the form (essential characteristics or attributes) of God. The word translated "form" is curious. It is *morphe*, which in Greek usage meant, "the appearance of a thing." God is "spirit" and had no physical form or appearance, so *morphe* must be understood metaphorically as the characteristics or attributes of God (*cf. Lightfoot's Commentary on Philippians*, p 132). In fact, we have the same issue with the term *eikon* in the expression "image of God."

To this descriptive poetry of John can be added the theological insights of the Apostle Paul, as he does in Phil 2:5-11, where he describes Jesus as, "equal to" or "the same as" God. The grammatical construction of these words from Phil 2:6, is the dative case, "*theo*," which allows for several translations such as, "equal to God," "equal with God," or "the same as God." Paul's words here (which are possibly taken from a hymn sung to Christ), simply affirms the statement made by Jesus concerning his "oneness" with God (John 10:30; 17:11, 2-23).

With these words of Paul there is no room for the later heresy teaching that Jesus was a demigod created by *Yahweh*, a lesser god than the Father, or the doctrine of adoptionism (i.e. that Jesus was only a man who was adopted by God). This doctrine has appeared several times through the centuries and is somewhat popular among a good number of theologians today. One of the major teachings of this hymn of Phil 2:5-11 is that the followers of Jesus should exemplify his behavior in the matter of self-effacement as contrasted with self-importance. Even though Jesus was equal to or the same as God, he emptied himself of the exercise of his divine lordship and took upon himself the identity of a servant, a human offspring of Adam.

He Is the Radiance of the Glory of God
and Exact Expression of his Being
(Heb. 1: 1-3)

God, in various ways long ago having spoken to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has at the end (eschatou) of these days spoke to us by the Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the ages (aionas); 3 who being the radiance (apaugasma) of the glory and exact expression (charakter) of his being (hupostaseos), upholding all things by the word of his power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-3, my translation).

In the opening lines of the epistle to the Hebrews the writer declares Jesus to be the radiance of the glory of God. The Greek word underlying the English "radiance" is "*apaugasma*" which literally means, "a breaking forth of resplendent light, a radiant reflection." The deity within him kept breaking through the fabric of his humanity; as Vincent Taylor says of the deity within the humanity of Jesus, "A curtain there is, but through it shines a celestial glow, and there are breaks in the fabric through which the light shines." (Vincent Taylor, *The Person of Christ*, p 294).

Not only is Jesus the radiance of the glory of God, he is the exact expression of his being. The Greek reads, "*charakter* (impress, reproduction, representation; cf. Arndt & Gingrich, *Lexicon*, p. 884) of his being (*hupostaseos autou*, the substantial nature, essence, actual being; (Vincent Taylor, p 854). Jesus is here described as "an exact representation" of the actual being of God. Again Jesus is identified as God.

"One of Us"

The technical term for God becoming man is "incarnation," a Latinism (*incarnates*) meaning, "embodied in human flesh." In the discussion above we discussed the identity of Jesus as the "*logos*" who was with God and was God. As Paul writes in Gal 4:4-5,

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his

Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

In the fullness of time the word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:17). This coming of God to dwell among men was foretold in the messianic prophecies of the OT Scriptures. In Isaiah 7:14, a miraculous conception of a son by a virgin maiden was foretold; at his birth he was to be called "Immanuel" - God with us. Another prophecy is given in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Then in Isaiah 40:3, a prophecy is given of a voice crying in the wilderness, heralding the coming of God. The Hebrew text literally reads, "A voice of one calling in the desert prepare the way of *Yahweh*; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our *Elohim*."

That the coming of the Messiah would result in the presence of God himself was never understood by those to whom these inspired words were originally given; perhaps because the old Hebrew Scriptures also spoke of him as a man: a son of David, a son of Abraham, and a son of Adam. He was to be of the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15), a descendant of Abraham (Gen. 22:18; 26:6), a prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:15-19), and he, by virtue of human birth, would be an heir to the throne of David (2 Sam. 7: 12-13). These Scriptures the Jewish scholars readily understood; and that he would be a son of God in the sense of an anointed king in Psalms 2:2-7 they understood, but that God himself was coming into the world, they understood not. Herein lies the paradox of the doctrine of the incarnation; and this fact the NT affirms and beautifully documents.

He Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us (John 1:14)

That the Hebrew Scriptures foretold of the coming of the Messiah as the coming of a Jewish king, a son of Israel is clear. In this there is no contradiction of Scripture; rather, it is a matter of "both/and." The Messiah would be the son of God in a sense that went far beyond the concept of the adoption of the king of Israel. The Jew were not wrong is

perceiving the Messiah to be a son of Abraham, a son of David, a son of Abraham, or a son of Adam.

The first Messianic prophecy was that the seed of woman would bruise the head of the serpent, as *Yahweh* says to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel," (Gen 3:15). The one to bring punishment on the reptile was a son of Adam and Eve; but in the encounter the serpent would bruise the heel of the son of Adam. According to the prophecy of 2 Sam 7:11-16, the Messiah was to be an offspring of David, a Jew of the tribe of Judah. Isaiah describes him as a servant of God whose birth is seen in the second servant song of Isaiah 49:1, "Before I was born the Lord called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name." In the fourth servant song of Isaiah, he is called "a man of sorrows," (53:3) who experiences human death (53:8-9), and was delivered out of death and made alive (53:10-12). In the night vision of Daniel he appears before the Ancient of Days as a human being, a son of man or Adam (Daniel 7:13-14). There was every good reason for the sages of Judaism to understand that the Messiah would be of the human race, a son of Adam, but they could not see that he was more. The fact that he was an offspring of Adam is our point of interest here and this occurred through a conception that occurred by the divine overshadowing of a Jewish maiden, a virgin named Mary. This conception was an incarnation of God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The "word" did not become "a body" although a body was prepared for him in the miraculous conception (Heb. 10:5); rather, he "became flesh," he did not simply clothe himself in human flesh. The term *sarx* implies "humanity." B. F. Westcott says of the word *sarx*:

. . . 'flesh' expresses here human nature as a whole regarded under the aspect of its present corporeal embodiment, including of necessity the 'soul' (xii. 27), and the 'spirit' (xi. 33, xii. 21, xix. 30), as belonging to the totality of man (comp. Heb. ii. 14), (B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel*

According to St. John, p 11).

Jesus of Nazareth, in his earthly existence, possessed all the characteristics of an offspring of Adam. Paul opens his letter to the Romans by identifying himself as a servant of the gospel of God, which he says,

*. . . he [God] promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures **3**regarding his Son, who **according to the flesh was a descendant of David, 4**and who through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 1:3-4).*

Further, concerning the human nature of Jesus, Paul writes, “great is the mystery of godliness: who **was manifest in flesh**, vindicated in the spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among the Gentiles, was believed on in the world, received up into glory,” (1 Tim 3:16). Further, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews writes,

*Since the children **have flesh and blood**, he too **shared in their humanity** so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – **15**and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. **16**For he took not on him the nature of angels; but **he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17**For this reason he had to be **made in the likeness of his brethren in every way**, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. **18**Because he himself has suffered, having been tempted he is able to help those who are being tempted (Heb 2:15-17).*

Addressed here in this text of Hebrews is the purpose of the incarnation; Jesus came as a son of Adam, to become the second Adam, that he might reverse the curse of the first Adam, destroying the powers of sin and death, “What it was impossible for the law to do, in that it was weakened by the flesh, God sending his own Son **in the likeness of sinful flesh**, and for sin, condemned sin **in the flesh**,” (Rom 8:3).

What is important to see here is that Jesus was a descendent of

Adam, he was as much man as he was God and as much God as he was man. He was not simply "a god" or "a man;" rather, he was "God" and he was "man." This is an inescapable truth that is found throughout the NT. Jesus of Nazareth was a man (*anthropos*), a human being, a son of Adam:

(1) He was called "man": Matt. 8:27; John 7:46; 8:40; 10:33; 19:5; Acts 2:22; 10:38; 17:31; Rom. 5:15; I Cor. 15:21,45,47; Phil. 2:8; I Tim. 2:5.

(2) He possessed the nature of man; i.e., body, soul, and spirit: Body: Matt. 26: 12, 26; Luke 24:39; flesh and soul: Acts 2:25-27; soul: Matt. 26:38; John 12:27; spirit: Matt. 27:50 (Luke 23:45; John 19:30); John 11:33; 13:21.

(3) He appeared as a man: he had a human body (Luke 2:16; Heb.10:5); a human genealogy (Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38); he grew and became strong, and was filled with wisdom (Luke 2:40); he was thought to be Joseph's son (Luke 4:22); was called a man by the Jews and Pilate (John 18:29; 19:5); was a Jew (John 18:33-35); he bled and died as a man (John 19:17-18; 32-34); appeared as a man even after his resurrection (John 20: 14-17; 21:4-5); and was called a man (a new humanity) even after his ascension (Acts 2:22; 17:30-31; 1 Tim. 2:5).

(4) He behaved as a man: Matt. 4:2; 21 :28 (hungered); 8:24 (slept); 9:36 (was moved with compassion); Mark 3:5 (felt anger and grief); 10:21 (loved); John 4:6 (became weary); 11:33 (groaned and was troubled); 11:35 (wept); 19:28 (experienced thirst); 19:17-18, 23, 28-37 (suffered, bled and died).

Jesus of Nazareth was a man in the fullest sense of the word. From the likeness painted of him by the evangelists upon the canvas of ancient Scripture, one sees him truly as a man; a man whose hands were scarred from the carpenter's labor, whose skin was tanned by the Palestinian sun, whose face showed the features of strength and character, whose eyes could pierce one's soul, whose voice was strong enough to shout above a storm yet soft enough to draw little children to him. One sees him as a man capable of deep feeling, whose affections for his fellowman reached out and enveloped him. One sees him as a man who touched people with his mind and his spirit; whose life said to other lives "I care." One sees him as a

man who communicated with his fellowman as one of them; a man whose mind reached out and took hold of other minds and filled them with the teachings of God, teachings so unique and beautiful they held his listeners spellbound. He spoke to people concerning things they had longed for ages to hear. They knew that what they were hearing was marvelous and wonderful, and that the one from whom they were hearing these things was just as marvelous and wonderful. He was a man in the fullest sense of the word, but let it never be forgotten that he was God; God with us in person, or better, in "a person" whose name was Jesus of Nazareth.

He Emptied Himself (Phil. 2:5-11)

*Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus 6 who, existing in the form of God, did not considered being equal with God a thing to be grasped,7 but **emptied himself** (keno'o - to empty something of something), taking the form of a servant, having been born (genomenos - having become) in the likeness of men (anthropoi); 8 and being found in appearance as a man (anthropos), he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, even the death of the cross.9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave to him the name above every name;10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth,11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord (kurios Ieous christos - Lord Jesus Christ), to the glory of God the Father, (Phil 2:5-11).*

The Greek word for "emptied" in this text is *kenoo* which is lexically defined as, "to empty, to make void, to make of no effect, to deprive of power, give up or lay aside what one possesses," (Newman, *Greek-English Dictionary*, Liddell & Scott, Abbott-Smith, Arndt-Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicons*). Moulton & Milligan give examples from everyday papyri letters and document of the first century world as, "unloading a ship, emptying the contents of a box, making something void or without effect," (*Vocabulary of the Greek NT*).

The translation, "emptied himself" is the most accurate in this context. But of what did he empty himself and to what extent did he empty himself? These are questions that most immediately confront us. In the

“kenotic theologies” of the past century, it was argued that the *logos* totally emptied himself of his metaphysical attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence and kept only the moral attributes of holiness and goodness and those attributes flowing from these (cf. Vincent Taylor, *The Person of Christ*, pp.26-76).

The problem rising out of the kenotic theories is that of resolving how Christ could have emptied himself of himself (i.e., the essential attributes of deity), and yet remain deity? Following this is the question of whether it would have been necessary for him to totally empty himself of his metaphysical attributes in order to effect the incarnation. The principle or axiom with which we are dealing here is: *the whole of a thing is equal to the sum of its parts*. If some of the essential attributes of deity are gone, then is he yet deity? The answer to this problem lies in the text of Phil. 2:5-11.

In this text Paul states that Jesus emptied himself of that which he counted not a thing to be grasped; i.e., his existence in the form (*morphe*) of God and his equality (*isos* - sameness) with God. The text does not explicitly or implicitly say or teach that he emptied himself of those attributes essential to his divinity; rather, he emptied himself of that which would have prohibited him from (1) taking the form of a servant (*doulos* - slave); (2) being made in the likeness (*homiomati*) of men; (3) being found in fashion (*schemati* - outward form, appearance) as a man; and (4) his humiliation, obedience, and experience of human death.

We cannot interpret this "emptying" in such a way as to violate the attribute of immutability. It must follow from the definition of the terms involved (i.e., deity and immutability) that he could not have completely divested himself of his metaphysical attributes and yet remain truly deity and truly immutable. Here, however, it must be added that it is not essential that all attributes of deity be manifested or active in order for them to be present.

A given attribute may be latent or dormant (inactive or at rest) rather than absent within a being. The attribute of "spirit" was not taken from him in the incarnation; rather, his eternal divine spirit was very much present within him during his incarnation. He was not "pure spirit," but it is not necessary that he remain so in order to be deity. His presence within

a space-time state of being limited the activity of his spirit as a transcendent reality beyond the limitations of space and time, but that does not render the spirit non-existent.

This reasoning would follow for each metaphysical attribute. Omnipotence (power) and omniscience (knowledge) did not have to become non-existent, only dormant or inactive; so also with omnipresence (universality and eternity). The power of omnipresence must of necessity have become dormant, but not non-existent as a reality. So also with the attribute of immutability (unchanging); he changed in form but not in being; i.e., not in the sense that he lost the essentials to his being. It is evident that the metaphysical attributes became dormant during his incarnation, but not non-existent. It does not follow that one's mental powers are non-existent if they are not overtly functioning within a person in a coma. The attribute of intelligence or ratiocination may be inactive but this does not mean that the one in possession of the attribute has divested him or herself of it or that it is non-existent.

This idea is very forcefully expounded in the article on "Kenosis" in M'Clintock & Strong's *Cyclopaedia*:

He veiled his royalty; he folded back, as it were, within himself those ineffable powers which belonged to him as free spirit in heaven. He went into captivity to himself, wrapping in weakness and forgetfulness his divine energies while he was a babe. 'Being found in fashion as a man,' he was subject to the gradual unfolding of his buried powers which belongs to infancy and childhood.

.....

The incessant looking for the signs of divine power and of infinite attributes in the earthly life of Jesus, whose mission it was to bring the divine Spirit within the conditions of feeble humanity, is as if one should search a dethroned king in exile for his crown and his scepter (M'Clintock & Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, S. v. "Kenosis," pp. 45-46).

This view is in harmony with the immediate context of Phil. 2:6-11. In his pre-existent state he fully exercised his equality in lordship with God

as Father and God as Spirit; in the incarnation, however, he became the antithesis of a Lord; he entered into our space-time realm of existence as a servant (*doulos* - slave), and humbled himself in obedience to human death (i.e., the death of his Adamic body, cf. James 2:26). These things he could never have done while fully exercising his divine lordship as God.

In his infancy and childhood one sees nothing more than the humanity of Jesus coming to manhood; from the time of his baptism, however, it is quite a different story. After this event we see him, "with authority (*exousia*) and power (*dunamis*) commanding unclean spirits," (Luke 4:36). It was not deity he received at his baptism, he was deity already; rather, it was his anointing as the Messiah he received, and one sees him from this day forward as the Messiah functioning as did the prophets of old. It is a rational axiom that the attributes of deity are essential to the very claims of deity; one cannot totally divest himself of the essentialities of deity and yet claim to be deity.

It is worthy of note that the earthly existence of Jesus was as the existence of the original Adam who had been brought into human existence by miraculous activity of God, so also was Jesus brought into human existence by the miraculous activity of God. Where the first Adam had been created out of the earth Jesus was begotten, as were all descendants of Adam. This is the significance of the Greek term *monogenes* meaning, "only begotten" not "unique in kind," as many scholars insist. The rule with reference to the meaning of *monogenes* is that when use in reference to things it means "unique in kind;" however, when used in reference to persons, it means, "only begotten," (cf. John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb 11:17; 1 John 4:9).

Conception and Incarnation

The miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus are recorded in Matt. 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20. It is in the miraculous conception that the mystery of the unity between deity and humanity is revealed. To what extent was Jesus deity? To what extent was he human? How did these two natures become one in the incarnation? Did Jesus have two personalities? Did he have both a human spirit and a divine spirit? Jesus did possess a divine/human spirit, but the two were not separate entities.

The divine spirit of Jesus and his human spirit were one; and it took a miracle to bring about a total union of the two.

Luke 1:31-35 gives the details of how this miraculous conception was accomplished. The human female ovum was miraculously fertilized by "the power of the Most High." This act is referred to as an overshadowing (*episkiazo*), which means, "a falling upon," as the cloud abode upon or overshadowed the Tabernacle in the wilderness. This is the same word as is used in the Greek LXX of Exodus 40:34-35,

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of Yahveh filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon (episkiazo), and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35; cf. Psalms 91:4).

The offspring of a conception receives the characteristics of both the father and the mother effecting that conception; so it was with Jesus. He received from his human mother his human characteristics and from his divine Father his divine characteristics. His human body and spirit, and all characteristics essential to full humanity, he received from his human mother; and from God his eternal divine spirit with all the characteristics essential to deity. This is not to say, however, that Jesus possessed two distinct spirits any more than one receives two distinct personalities from a human father and mother. Rather, the two became one in Jesus, as would be the case in any other conception. In his conception and at his birth he possessed one spirit which was both human and divine; and at his death he gave up that same spirit (singular) as is evident from the gospel narratives (cf. Matt. 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30). In his death his soul (singular) was in Hades (Acts 2:26-27) while his human body was in the tomb, dead. He was as truly human as was Mary his mother from whom he received his human nature; and as truly divine as was God his father from whom he eternally received his divine nature.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the NT portrayal of Jesus of Nazareth, he was man (human) in the full sense of the word, but so also was he God (deity) in the full sense of the word. He was "one of us," a descendent of the

original Adam, a son of Adam; yet, he was also, "God with us." Scholars who study the writings of Paul find his multiple usages of "*Yahweh* passages" extremely revealing. These are OT texts in which *Yahweh* is the principle player of the text, but Paul uses it of Jesus. If Paul were not convinced that Jesus was not God he would have been engaging in blasphemy.

God entered into human history and walked among us and took on many identities: the first was that of the only begotten son born to Mary; an offspring of God and an offspring of Adam. He grew to manhood, as do all sons of Adam, and never ceased to identify himself as a son of Adam or the son of man, which is the same thing. In his adulthood, he began very carefully to reveal his identity as the Messiah long awaited by Israel; and with that title, all that it embraced (the son of David, the prophet like Moses, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah).

In terms of usage, however, the designation he most used to speak of himself was that which identified him as a human being, he was the son of man; in Hebrew, "*benAdam*," in Aramaic "*barNasha*," and in the Greek NT, "*huios tou anthropou*," all of which identify him as a descendent of Adam, a human being. He was here to accomplish much, but chief among them was to re-enact the story of Adam in the fall of man, and he did so through the repeated temptations of the flesh and the egocentric arrogance of man that was the cause of the first Adam's fall.

"We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness," says the author of Hebrews "but one who has been tempted in all points just as we are, yet without sin," (Heb 4:15). The words "just as we are," are translated from the Greek word *kathos*, which is the strongest word in the Greek language to communicate, "in the same manner," or as I have translated it, "just as." There is no temptation to which he was not exposed, whether the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, or the pride of life. He entered into human existence and experienced our experience, even human death; and in so doing he reversed the curse of Adam, the curse of the effects of sin and death. As Paul writes, "in Adam all die, in Christ all will be made alive," (1 Cor 15:22). With his resurrection from the curse of death and the power it held over all descendents of Adam he destroyed its power to hold one in death who was filled with the

faith of Christ. With the resurrection of Jesus God brought him out of death as a new creation, the firstfruit of all who through belief are transformed from existence “in Adam” to new existence “in Christ.”

Following his resurrection it became clear to his followers that he was more than an exceptional man. He was one of us, and the best one of us who ever experienced human existence; but he was also “God with us,” and he came into this world (this space-time-matter-energy dimension of existence) to reclaim what had been self-destroyed, the being created in his image after his likeness. God has been here, and because of this the world will never be the same again.

Why did God do such a thing as to enter into human existence in order to save humanity? Jesus’ used stories to make complicated matters easier to understand. We close this lesson with a story similar to the ones Jesus told.

If I Could Only Become a Bird!

There is a story of a farmer who was fond of the many types of birds in his state and enjoyed viewing them as they landed in his harvested fields to eat what had been left behind from the harvest. Winter came in late November with a large snowfall. He noticed that the white field was covered with small birds looking for food where they had found it before. The grain was covered over and they could not find anything to eat. The farmer realized that they would surely die of the cold and starvation if they did not move in out of the cold.

He went to his barn and opened up the barn door and the hayloft, then went out into the field to shoo the birds into the barn, but they flew up into the air, circled around and landed in a different place on the field. He slipped around behind them again to make them to fly into the barn, but the same thing occurred. He tried and tried again to get the birds into the barn, but they, not understanding what he wanted them to do, only flew away from the farmer. He was convinced that they would die during the night if he could not usher them into the barn where they would find food and warmth to sustain them until the snowstorm passed and they could again attempt to fly south. Watching the birds peck in the snow looking

for food he thought to himself, "What could I possibly do to communicate to those birds that there is food and warmth in the barn and all I am trying to do is get them to go into the barn and save them from certain death out here in the snow storm?" As he watched helplessly he thought to himself, "If I could only become a bird, I could go into the midst of them and tell them about the barn and the food and warmth they will find if only they will follow me into the barn?"

This story is a parable of God's dealing with the human race. They are in the midst of a storm that will surely destroy them if they do not find there way out of the environment they are in. As the farmer reasoned, "If only I could become a bird," so also God reasoned, "If only I would become a man, I could go into the midst of the human race and tell them about the salvation that is to be found if only they will follow me into the place I have prepared for them;" and so he did!

MWLIII