



Jesus the Christ: Truly the *Theanthropos*

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Abstract

This exegetical paper is research conducted on the theme of Jesus the Christ: Truly the *Theanthropos*. It has been integrated in such a way that relevant texts have been opened up with sensitivity to its various dimensions which include the role in context and even points of vagueness. The article is thus a presentation of conclusions with clear and appropriate support from Biblical texts and it moves beyond mere historical background and literary features to the theological meaning of passages. The paper also considers Eastern Orthodox hermeneutical aspects such as which theological questions of contemporary relevance are raised by the passages on Jesus as a God-Man, how are they used and how do the various passages reverberate with other portions of Scripture and indeed with the Gospel itself. Indeed in view of the Bible's character as divine revelation, the exegete has approached the texts with a belief about its implied receptivity and with a sense of faith and reverence.

Keywords: God, divine being, patristic writings, Christology, mystery, soteriology.

Clarification of term

Theanthropos noun : a man incarnating or believed to incarnate God or a god : god-man (Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary, 2018).

Introduction

In the Eastern Orthodox faith the adherents believe in a single God who is both three entities and yet and one (triune); the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, "one in essence and undivided". The Holy Trinity is thus three distinct divine persons (*hypostases*), who each share in one divine essence (*ousia*); and they are uncreated, immaterial and eternal. The Father is the perpetual cause of the Godhead, from whom the Son is begotten everlastingly and also from whom the Holy Spirit or *Paraclete* proceeds forever. The essence of God is that which is outside all human understanding and He cannot be demarcated or approached by human understanding. The thematic study of the God-Man has a prodigious significance for our salvation and is a great challenge for us all to seek truth and profounder meaning in life in the very person of Jesus Christ the *Theanthropos*.

The notion of God-man (θεάνθρωπος) refers to the incarnation and the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ, which is Christianity's most widely acknowledged and respected christological doctrines. The first use of the term as a theological idea appears in the writing of the 3rd-century Early Church Father Origen (Origen, *De Principiis*) who says: "This substance of a soul, then, being intermediate between God and the flesh – it being impossible for the nature of God to intermingle with a body without an intermediate instrument – the God-man is born." (Origen, *De Principiis*). It was ultimately at The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE,) where it was confirmed that Jesus Christ had two natures, one human and one divine which were linked to one another in hypostatic union. Jesus Christ as the chief figure of Christianity is a biblical mystery. As the incarnate *Logos* of God, He is one person in two natures, both fully divine and



fully human, and both perfectly God (τέλειος Θεός) and perfectly man (τέλειος άνθρωπος). Athanasius argues that the Nicene Creed definition that Jesus was God aptly gives an accurate sagacity of Scripture. However to describe Christ as God would be disregarding the way in which He is "...both less and more, man as well as God within the glory and limitations of His incarnation" (Wainwright, 1957; Cullmann, 1959). Nonetheless at Nicaea, the soteriological role of Jesus as the "true God of true God...who for us men and our salvation...became man suffered and rose" was strongly promoted (Wainwright, 1957).

The primary good news or "proto"-gospel speaks to the notion of human salvation and this is in Genesis where it states "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" (Genesis 3:15). This verse gives us the promise to the *protoplasts*, Adam and Eve, of a Saviour who will redeem humanity. Traditionally considered, the "seed" of the woman denotes both humanity and Jesus Christ and the "woman" relates to Eve, in a very direct sense, and to the Virgin Mary in the fullest sense. Furthermore we read in Galatians (4:4), "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman" (Galatians 4:4). St. Paul advises that the Incarnate Word is in all things, with a soul, body, rationality, uncorrupted desire, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and other human traits. Jesus is "similar in all things to us" but He is "without sin" (Hebrews, 4:15). Christ calls Himself "the Son of Man," thus declaring that He is a perfect man. and he also concedes that He is a descendant of David and He alone as our God offers us the forgiveness of our iniquities (Luke 5:20-24). Furthermore all of humanity will face Him at the final judgment (John 5:24-28).

Jesus as Word Incarnate

A critical question to contemplate concerning Christ's persona, is whether Jesus Christ is simply divine or is He truly God? Countless verses of Scripture totally confirm His status as deity, and they demonstrate that He never lost His divine nature. He is thus a Lord whom we can serve and our God whom we correctly worship. Many names and titles given to Jesus strongly imply His divine status in hundreds of verses. The Holy Scriptures also point to the idea that Christ became fully human but He was the physical manifestation of God. John tells us that from the fall of Adam and Eve until the instant when the word became flesh and dwelt among us (1:14), that God the Father was preparing mankind to welcome His only-begotten Son, Jesus.

Christ obtains His divine titles in the notion of the *Logos* (Word of God). Jesus Christ is called God in John 1:1 where John asserts in his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God". He also states "Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw His glory – the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father" (John 1:14). In Christology then the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus as the *Logos* (Λόγος, Gk. "Word" or "Reason") is the title of Jesus Christ and this is confirmed in the Book of Revelation (19:13), "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God". Harris (1985) maintains that John modified Philo's notion of the *Logos*, thus categorizing Jesus as an incarnation of the divine *Logos* that fashioned the universe. Nonetheless, John was not simply adjusting Philo's notion of the *Logos*. He simply defines and places the *Logos* in the milieu of Christian understanding.

Although the term *Logos* is not maintained as a title in John's Gospel outside of the preface, the entire gospel asserts the claim that as the *Logos*, Jesus is God in self-revelation and also in redemption. He is God to the degree that He can be extant and comprehensible to humanity. The Gospel of John chronicles Thomas' response to the resurrected Christ in John (20:28) "Thomas replied to him, 'My Lord and my God!'". Thus the *Logos* is one and the same as God, and yet the two are unidentical but one essence or substance. The *Logos* is God who is dynamic in cosmic creation, in revelation of Himself, and also in redeeming fallen humanity.



(Lebreton, 1910). Jesus as both truly God and truly man, is united in one Person hypostatically in an unconfused and undivided manner (Concil of Chalcedon, 451 AD).

Christ's humanity is fundamentally holy, He is the source and model of the holiness for all of humanity. By the incarnation, His human nature was raised to the utmost unity with the divine *Logos* and His hypostatic union is the supreme gift anyone could ever obtain by grace. The *Logos* has a saving and redeeming purpose. Thus in Orthodoxy we acknowledge in the Creed that "For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." (Council of Constantinople I, Symbolum, DS 150). Christ voluntarily emptied Himself of His omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence but did not give them up since He is God. The mystery is to be found in the detail that being a human is not the same as being God. Jesus is totally man and simultaneously fully God. Logic tells us that one can be either fully human or fully divine, but the Holy Bible tells us that is not the situation with Jesus Christ and we are reminded that Jesus Christ is the Son of God existing from infinity and that in the Incarnation He took on His human nature in His divine personhood (*Mysterium Filii Dei*, 21 February 1972).

The Holy Scriptures voice the truth of the divine nature and divinity of Christ in many places. For example in John, 20:28, Thomas proclaims without any misgivings or hesitation, "My Lord and my God!". Christ has the fullness of the Holy Spirit and all its gifts (Isaiah 11:1-3), but He also has imbued knowledge, and this is infused directly by God in the human intellect and not obtained by acquisition directly or by any rationality. "By its union to the divine wisdom in the person of the Word incarnate, Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans He had come to reveal" (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; 14:18-20, 26-30). Jesus had full awareness of His power as expred in for example the following three verses. "I am the light of the world. The one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). "I am the bread of life. The one who comes to me will never go hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6:35)." ... Whosoever drinks some of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

According to the Classical Greek philosophers, the *Logos* is an impersonal force, an inert and immaterial philosophical idea that was required to hypothesize the source of order and ultimately the very purpose in the cosmos.

In Hebrew understanding, the *Logos* is very personal. He holds power of unity, rationality, and resolution,

"...but the distinctive point is that the biblical *Logos* is a He, not an it. All attempts to translate the word *Logos* have suffered from some degree of inadequacy. No English word is able to capture the fullness of John's *Logos* when he declared that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Attempts have been made by philosophers to translate *Logos* as logic, act, or deed—all of which are inadequate definitions. God's *Logos* does include action. The *Logos* is the eternal Word in action. But it is no irrational action or sheer expression of feeling. It is the divine Actor, acting in creation and redemption in a coherent way, who is announced in John's Gospel. That the Word became flesh and dwelt among us is the startling conclusion of John's prologue. The cosmic Christ enters our humanity. It is the supreme moment of visitation of the eternal with the temporal, the infinite with the finite, the unconditioned with the conditioned." (Sproul, 2010).

God selected the people of Israel for Himself, and He forged a Covenant with them. He sent the patriarchs and also prophets to prepare them for a new and faultless Covenant that would



be created in Jesus Christ. God would reveal Himself totally to them via the Incarnate Word and consecrate all of humanity for Himself "...When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth..." (Vatican Council II, 1964:9). The derivation of the Incarnation is God's total love for humanity. The love of God was made manifest among us, in that "God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). Acts 14:16-17 tells us that Jesus continued to give evidence of himself to all people and not only to the Jews.

Anselm of Canterbury (Anselmo d'Aosta) was a Benedictine monk, abbot, philosopher and theologian of the Roman Catholic Church, who held the office of archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 CE to 1109 CE. He was known as "the father of scholasticism" (Smith, 2014). In his discourse on atonement, *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man) tells us that:

If it be necessary, therefore, as it appears, that the heavenly kingdom be made up of men, and this cannot be effected unless the aforesaid satisfaction be made, which none but God can make and none but man ought to make, it is necessary for the God-man to make it (Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo*, Book Two, Chapter VI).

Anselm held a philosophical and theological stance in which he endeavoured to concentrate on Christian tenets of faith, which were habitually taken as being a revealed truth, and which were based on a rational system of thought. He argued that once faith is held onto, an effort must be made to demonstrate its truth by using rational thought. Thus to him it was important to study, after confirmation in the faith, that which one believes. (Holland, 2012). On the *Theanthropos* he states:

Therefore the God-man, whom we require to be of a nature both human and Divine, cannot be produced by a change from one into the other, nor by an imperfect commingling of both in a third; since these things cannot be, or, if they could be, would avail nothing to our purpose. Moreover, if these two complete natures are said to be joined somehow, in such a way that one may be Divine while the other is human, and yet that which is God not be the same with that which is man, it is impossible for both to do the work necessary to be accomplished. For God will not do it, because he has no debt to pay; and man will not do it, because he cannot. Therefore, in order that the God-man may perform this, it is necessary that the same being should perfect God and perfect man, in order to make this atonement. For he cannot and ought not to do it, unless he be very God and very man. Since, then, it is necessary that the God-man preserve the completeness of each nature, it is no less necessary that these two natures be united entire in one person, just as a body and a reasonable soul exist together in every human being; for otherwise it is impossible that the same being should be very God and very man (Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo*, Book Two, Chapter VII).

Paul in his discourses refers to Christ as God, for example, when he says, "... as we wait for the happy fulfilment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1). Jesus Christ accepted the worship due to God but also demanded it for Himself (Matthew 4:10; John 5:23) and He claimed to be the ultimate entity of faith and thus required that people give Him the same kind of faith which they sited in God (John 17:1-3). In John's gospel He asserts "The Father and I are one" (10:30). The Incarnation then becomes for us the utmost sign of God's love for all of humanity. God offers Himself to humanity through His beloved Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He comes to share in human nature in the unity of the God-Man's divine being. In the second century, Ignatius contends that Jesus is God. Using Ephesians 18:2, he says: "Our God Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary"; and in 19, 3 he states " God was manifest as man". In Smyrnaeans 1, 1 Ignatius speaks of "Jesus Christ, the God who has thus given you wisdom". He states:

I Glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom. For I have observed that you are perfected in an immovable faith, as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit, and are established



in love through the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded with respect to our Lord, that He was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, Romans 1:3 and the Son of God according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John, in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled Matthew 3:15 by Him; and was truly, under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, nailed [to the cross] for us in His flesh. Of this fruit we are by His divinely-blessed passion, that He might set up a standard Isaiah 5:26, Isaiah 49:22 for all ages, through His resurrection, to all His holy and faithful [followers], whether among Jews or Gentiles, in the one body of His Church (Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans).

Christ emptied Himself for us in what is termed *kenosis* (self-emptying) (Philippians 2:5-11). This *kenosis* is associated directly with Christ's nature as a *Theanthropos*. God and man. In Philippians verses 6-8 we read: "...who though He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross!"

The Incarnation clearly demonstrates God's immeasurable love for humanity and His unlimited mercy. It also shows His impartiality and total authority, and especially His Incarnation of the Word to redeem a fallen humanity. Christ personally states that the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10; Matthew 18:11). He also explains that God the Father sent His Son into the world not to condemn it, but rather that the world might be saved by Him (John 3:17). In Hebrews (2:10-15), Paul states "since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who had dominion over death, that is the Devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage." Given that all human beings are comprised of flesh and blood, so likewise the Son and Word of God took on the same form. Paul instructs us that "Christ assumed flesh and blood so that by His death as man, He could defeat the Devil, who has the power of death; so that He could destroy death, "by death trampling down death."

Early thoughts – Arius, Irenaeus of Lyon and others

The Church defended the truth of faith against heretics during the first centuries. In the first century small groups of Christians who were of Jewish origin, the Ebionites, asserted that Christ was only a holy man and was not imbued with any divine characteristics or essence. There was also the movement of "Adoptionism" which rose up in the second century. Its adherents maintained that Jesus was the adopted son of God such that Jesus was only a simple man to whom God had given power. God was thus considered to be a single entity. This group of heretics was condemned by Pope Victor in 190 CE, and also by the Council of Antioch in 268 CE, and by the First Council of Constantinople (Council of Constantinople I, Symbolum, DS 151 and 157-158).

Arianism later emerged as a nontrinitarian Christological doctrine (Berndt and Steinacher, 2014). Arius (c. AD 256–336), was a Christian presbyter living in Alexandria, Egypt. He was vehemently opposed to the theological interpretations of the *Homoousian* Christians, concerning the nature of the Holy Trinity and the nature of Jesus Christ. Arius and Apollinarius of Laodicea denied that Jesus Christ had an actual human soul. Arius stated: "If the Father begat the Son, then he who was begotten had a beginning in existence, and from this it follows there was a time when the Son was not." (Anatolios, 1998).

The Arians believed that that the Son of God did not always exist but was created at a certain time by God the Father (Schaff, 1882). Arius asserted the that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was caused by God the Father at a certain point in time, is a creature distinct from the Father and is therefore subordinate to Him, but the Son is also God (Berndt and Steinacher,



2014). The Arian heretics, by their disavowal of the divinity of the *Logos*, also then denied that Jesus Christ was God. Arius was thus condemned by the Council of Nicaea (325 CE). The Church reminds us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God subsistent from all eternity and that at the Incarnation he adopted a human nature in His one divine Person (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1972). Ferguson states "The great majority of Christians had no clear views about the nature of the Trinity and they did not understand what was at stake in the issues that surrounded it." (Ferguson, 2013).

Athanasius was a Christian theologian, and an Early Church Father. He was the principal guardian of Trinitarianism against the heresy of Arianism. Athanasius thus drove a trinitarian (*homoousian*) viewpoint, and he maintained that *Homoousianism* theology was the true nature of God and based on the instructions of Jesus (Anatolios, 1998). Athanasius detailed in his First Letters to Serapion, that "the tradition, teaching, and faith proclaimed by the apostles and guarded by the fathers" is the only one. He believed that the Son of God was consubstantial with the Father, as was the Holy Spirit. This belief greatly influenced the development of later doctrines on the notion of the Trinitarianism (Hanson, 1998). Athanasius wrote numerous polemical writings against his theological adversaries. Such works include *Orations Against the Arians*, his defence of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, in *Letters to Serapion* written in 360-365 CE, and in the work *On the Holy Spirit*. He also wrote against Macedonianism and a two-part work *Against the Heathen*, and *The Incarnation of the Word of God* (Rubenstein, 1999). Eventually, The Ecumenical First Council of Nicaea (325 CE) convoked by Emperor Constantine to safeguard Church unity, considered Arianism to be a great heresy. Arius was once more anathemised and marked as a heretic at the First Council of Constantinople (381 CE), also known as the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople. There was an assembly of 150 Eastern Orthodox bishops who were summoned by Emperor Theodosius I to approve his earlier decree in support of the doctrine of the Council of Nicaea. This council dealt a final blow to Arianism and essentially settled debates on the notion of trinitarianism and stopped the disagreement that had divided the empire since the period of Constantine the Great (Davids, 1990).

The doctrine of Chalcedon was confirmed in 553 CE by the Second Council of Constantinople. This repeatedly emphasised the unity of Christ (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 423) and furthermore, it acknowledged that the union of the two natures in Christ takes place by means of an *hypostasis* (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 425). A hypothesis can be likened to a phase in nature. For example ice, water and steam may look different but they are in essence all composed of two Hydrogen and one oxygen atom.

Irenaeus of Lyon (120-202 CE) was a student of the Apostle John's disciple Polycarp (69-156 CE). He states that John relocated to Ephesus from Patmos and wrote about the *Logos* in order to repudiate the teachings of a certain Cerinthus of Ephesus (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.11; 3.3.4). Irenaeus' works comprise robust denunciations of rival theological positions that were believed to be conflicting with nascent Christian Orthodoxy. Cerinthus stated categorically that the world was created by a force who was not in essence involved with and poorly informed about the Father, and that the Christ descended on the man called Jesus at his baptism. He also asserted that stern observance of Mosaic Law was non-negotiable for human salvation. Irenaeus defended the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John in the New Testament in 170 CE and he states in *Against Heresies*:

But it is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the church has been scattered throughout the world, and since the "pillar and ground" of the church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing incorruption on every side, and vivifying human afresh. From this fact, it is evident that the *Logos*, the fashioner *Demiourgos* of all, he that sits on the cherubim and holds all things together, when



he was manifested to humanity, gave us the gospel under four forms but bound together by one spirit. (Against Heresies, 3.11.8)

Irenaeus was determined to put an end to false doctrines, and desired to establish truth in the early Church, such that there is only one Almighty God, who created all things by His *Logos*, both visible and invisible. Thus demonstrating that only through the *Logos* is there hope for salvation. All that was created was life in Him, and the life was the light of all humanity. But the light shone in darkness, and the darkness failed to realize it (Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 3.11.1). With absolute faith, the Church Fathers preached the divinity of Christ. Irenaeus highlighted that his faith was received from the Apostles and their disciples, believed, "in one God, Father almighty, and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation." He also confirms that the Son of God is truly God. "If man had not been joined to God (i.e., united in Christ), he would not have been in a position to partake of incorruption."

Irenaeus, believed that the zenith of salvation history was the arrival of Jesus who would have been sent, even if humanity had never sinned; but the fact that humanity *did* sin determines his role as the Saviour. He viewed Christ as the new Adam, who methodically *disengages* the wrongs of the protoplasts. So where Adam disobeyed God's regarding eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Christ was dutiful right up to His death on the Cross. Irenaeus was also the first to draw comparisons between Eve and Mary (Roberts, 2007), contrasting the faithlessness of the former with the fruitfulness and faithfulness of Mary, the God-bearer (*Theotokos*). Irenaeus established from Psalm 33:6 that the *Logos* (the Son), and Wisdom (the Spirit), were present with the Father before creation and by them the Father made all things (Irenaeus, Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, 5). Irenaeus also believed that Christ went through every phase of human life, from infancy to an old age, and thus by living it, sanctifies it with His divinity (Grant, 1997).

The first existing Christian reference to the *Logos* in writings outside of the John's body of work is that of John's disciple Ignatius (35-108 CE), the Bishop of Antioch, who states "there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence," (Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Magnesians, 8). He also says Jesus is "both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible and then impassible" (Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Ephesians, 7). In Orthodoxy we find exactly the same instruction about the divinity of Christ and His divine nature, in the writings of inter alia, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Symeon the Stylite, John Climacus, Athanasius the Great, and in many other personalities and Early Fathers of the Church. The Fathers elucidate that the Son is not the equivalent Person as the Father, and that with His Incarnation, the Son did not suffer "change or alteration." He remains our perfect God.

Theophilus of Antioch, in the 2nd century, describes the Holy Trinity as "God, his Word (*Logos*) and his Wisdom (*Sophia*)," (Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolyucus* 3. 26). In his *Apology to Autolyucus*, he recognizes the *Logos* as the Son of God, who was once internal within the Father, but was fashioned by the Father before creation:

And first, they taught us with one consent that God made all things out of nothing; for nothing was coeval with God: but He being His own place, and wanting nothing, and existing before the ages, willed to make man by whom He might be known; for him, therefore, He prepared the world. For he that is created is also needy; but he that is uncreated stands in need of nothing. God, then, having His own Word internal within His own bowels, begot Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom before all things. He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things . . . Not as the poets and writers of myths talk of the sons of gods begotten from intercourse [with women], but as truth expounds, the Word, that always exists, residing



within the heart of God. For before anything came into being He had Him as a counsellor, being His own mind and thought. But when God wished to make all that He determined on, He begot this Word, uttered, the first-born of all creation, not Himself being emptied of the Word [Reason], but having begotten Reason, and always conversing with His Reason (Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, 2.10, 22).

The Church Fathers all concur that Christ “became man in nature and in truth and assumed human nature with all of its properties...Not another kind of flesh, but the same flesh with which we are all afflicted.”

Scriptural support for the *Theanthropos*

Jesus is referred to as God in numerous Old Testament Prophecies. He is the Divine Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, for example In Isaiah (7:14) we read: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” The word “Immanuel” literally means: “God with us.” Matthew (1:23) tells us that Jesus was “God with us.” Isaiah (9:6) advises that “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Jesus Christ is called the Son of God in an abundance of passages (Matthew. 16:15-17; Luke 3:22; John 10:36). He is also referred to as Lord in many passages (1 Corinthians 12:3; Phillipians 2:11). The Greek Septuagint anticipates New Testament practice of using the word *Logos* in Psalms 33:6 which relates directly to the Genesis creation. In addition, Theophilus of Antioch references the linking of the word *Logos* in *To Autolycus* 1:7 (Skarsaune, 2008). Similarly, Augustine of Hippo maintained that in Psalm 33:6 both the words *Logos* and *Pneuma* (Spirit) were "on the verge of being personified" (Rotelle, 1991). The scriptural argument for the fact that Jesus Christ is in fact God is additionally reinforced by Christ's divine characteristics and His profound and spiritually significant utterances. Jesus is referred to as being eternal (John 17:5; Hebrews 1:11-12). He is also omnipresent (Matthew 28:20), and omnipotent (Hebrews 1:3). Christ's human soul enjoys true human knowledge. Thus as a man, Christ had learnt knowledge and imbued knowledge, and of course the deepest spiritual knowledge. We should note that Christ's developed knowledge could not in itself be limitless. “This is why the Son of God could, when he became man, increase in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Jesus also learned from each situation as humans do (Mark 6:38; 8:27). However, the Holy Bible also points to Him as the Creator of all things (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2; Colossians 1:16).

The Bible, gives us very clear evidence as to the humanity and also the complete deity of Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in Colossians: “For in Him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form” (2:9). Origen of Alexandria sees in it the manoeuvres of the Holy Trinity, a sacred mystery intimated previously by David in Psalm 33.

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν (Origen, *De Principiis*, 1.3.7, 4.30)

By the Logos of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the host of them by the spirit (pneuma) of his mouth (Psalm 33:6)

In Luke 1:2 we find a reference to *Logos* and Beginning:

... just as those who from the beginning (Greek *archē*) were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (Greek *logos*) have delivered them to us.



The Church protects the full authenticity of Christ's human soul, with its processes of intellect and will, and of His human body. However we cannot lose sight of the fact that Christ's human nature has its place in the divine person of the Son of God, who took it up. Jesus tells us about Himself in John (8:58-59) "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!' At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds." In John 10:30-33 Jesus states "I and the Father are one.' Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?' 'We are not stoning you for any of these,' replied the Jews, 'but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.'" Hebrews gives us God's direct proof about Christ: "But of the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever" and John calls Jesus "the only begotten God" (John 1:18).

The Holy Bible supports Christ's full humanity consequent to His Incarnation. Many passages inform us that He that underwent a human birth and growth, and had a body, soul and spirit (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:4-21, 2:52,23:46 John 1:14, 2:21, 12:27; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 John 4:1-3). All Christ's actions in His nature stem from an hypostasis of the Holy Trinity. Jesus thus communicates His human condition to His personal personal means of existence in the Holy Trinity. In both His soul and body, Christ expresses in a human way the divine behaviours of the Holy Trinity (cf. John 14:9-10). In Hebrews we learn of His sinless nature "For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin" (4:15). He is the One who holds all things in the universe in the palms of His hands (Colossians 1:17). He understands all things: "the Son in his human knowledge also showed the divine penetration He had into the secret thoughts of human hearts" (CCC, 473). Even though the Son and Word of God became Perfect Man, He became truly flawless, which infers that He became man without sin, just like Adam and Eve who were in the beginning created as sinless beings. Christ has no link with sin as He is flawless and without spot of blemish. Sin however, entered humanity through the interference of the devil.

Jesus has the title of God and also Saviour in two passages, namely Titus (2:13) and 2 Peter 1:1). The confession of Jesus as God as a divine sovereign is stressed in Romans (9:5) where Paul states " God who is over all". Thomas also says " My Lord and my God" ((John 20:28). Such verses stress the soteriological aspects of Jesus life. In many instances Jesus is well aware of incidents that are happening well away from human sight, for example John (1:48-49) and Mark (11:2). In fact Jesus demonstrates superhuman knowledge (Brown, 1967).

Christ functioned on two divine operations - one proceeding from His divine nature, and the other was a human operation that proceed from His human nature. Christ had divine designations but also human names such as "Son of David" (Mark 10:47), "man" (1 Timothy 2:5), and the "Son of man" (Luke 19:10). Christ is Holy, as stated by the archangel Gabriel on the Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:35). Nonetheless Christ exhibited all the human limitations such as hunger and thirst. He wept when Lazarus died, He was angered by money-lenders in the Temple and of course He dies a physical death after being in great pain. When we accept the biblical information through our faith and make rationality subject to the revelation we experience, then we may be able to satisfy our need for greater understanding.

Timothy tells us, " ... there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time" (1 Timothy. 2:5-6). Jesus could not become the intermediary between God and man apart from becoming the *Theanthropos* thus taking on human form. Given that the Logos became flesh by assuming a human nature, Christ's body was determinate (Lebreton, 1910). Thus the face of Jesus can be portrayed in iconography(Galatians 3:1). His image is venerated since devotees who venerate his image, are in reality venerating the Person it represents (Council of Nicaea II, DS 601).



Conclusion

There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) and He is the creator of everything that exists (Genesis 1:1), God has continuously existed (Isaiah.43:10). He exists in three Persons namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Luke 4:21-22). The Trinity is three in one and yet all are distinct hypostases (John 14:26-28).

Luke indicates that from the age of twelve Jesus was undoubtedly aware of His distinctiveness as the Son of God (Luke 2:49). Jesus also had a clear knowledge and comprehensive awareness of His mission as the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of humanity and thus for atoning a fallen humanity to Himself. Before He became a man Jesus continuously owned a divine nature, but since that time He now possesses a divine-human nature. Thus, even though the Son and *Logos* of God became man and is a *Theanthropos*, He has two distinct natures so that the one does not subsume the other. Jesus is dual in nature, but is one being with two natures, but only one person. Christ existed before He was born of the Virgin Mary and that there never has been a time when Christ did not exist (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2, 8:58). The Architect of the heavens and the earth chastened Himself to become a perfect man. Despite His body Jesus has not transformed His essence or His being. To serve humanity as a *Theanthropos*, "... Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and with people" (Luke 2:52).

The Incarnate Word: "Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: 'The Son of God... loved me and gave himself for me'" (Galatians 20:2). In the Trinitarian affiliation, Christ is part of the Triune Godhead. From His fullness of Grace we are all blessed to receive grace upon grace (John 1:16). Colossians tells us that "for all things in heaven and on earth were created by him ... and all things are held together in him (1:16-17). Jesus instigated that all things to exist in the universe and He sustains all of creation at all times and in all places. Jesus is really and fully human and this is evident from the fact that He had a human body (Luke 24:39), mind (Luke 2:52), and a soul (Matthew 26:38). He did not merely have some characteristics of what is indispensable for true humanity but not others. Rather, He enjoyed complete humanity. Thus, the three Persons of the Triune Godhead are not each in any sense one-third of God, but are each totally God. Jesus is fully God since He is God the Son incarnate. Jesus is not part of God or one-third of God but He is totally God. "For in him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9).

That Christ continued being man with a physical body after his ascension is confirmed by the fact that when he returns, it will be as a man in his body. He will return physically. Philippians 3:21 says that at his second coming, Christ "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory." This verse is clear that Jesus still has his body. It is a glorified body, which Paul calls, "the body of his glory." And when Christ returns, he will still have it because this verse says that he will transform our bodies to be like his. Both Jesus and all Christians will then continue living together in their bodies forever, because the resurrection body cannot die (1 Corinthians 15:42) since it is eternal (2 Corinthians 5:1) (Perman, 2006).

The Orthodox Church has never lost sight of the actual character of Jesus Christ. He is the only Messiah, the fulfilment of all creation. He is the "Jesus of our faith", having become one of us without losing His glorious divinity, but He is also importantly the redeemer of humanity from its fallen state.

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