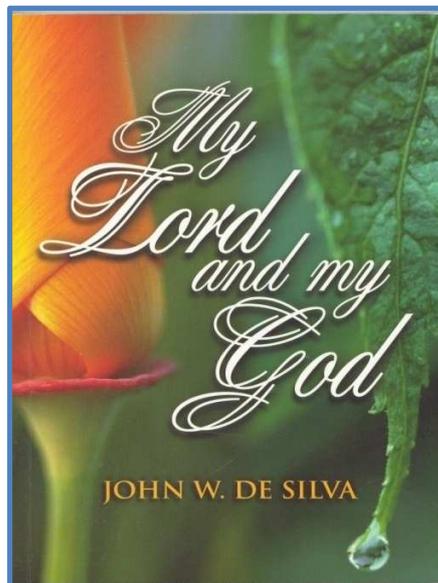


# The Deity of Christ

Why it was and is absolutely necessary

- To declare the Divine Father and the Divine Son
- To defeat sin
- To defeat death
- To defeat the curse of the law
- To defeat Satan
- To determine our sanctification
- To destroy the "middle wall of partition"
- To declare our cause as our Great High Priest and Advocate
- To declare God's perfect government on earth
- To deliver the eternal kingdom to the Father

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Belief in the deity of Christ is not a baseless credulity. In addition to the explicit revelation of His deity through His words, works and titles, Scripture gives us clear and abundant teaching as to why Christ *had* to be God in all His uncreated, undiminished and unceasing deity. This is the biblical line of evidence we examine in this article. It brings into view the holy character of God and the fallen condition of man. Here we enter the great moral revelation of Scripture. It invites us to consider Christ not only as Emmanuel - God *with* us, but the exalted truth of Him as Jehovah our righteousness, Jehovah Tsidkenu - God *for* us. The moral reason for the divine Man has a unique strength, in that it is untouched by the quibbling of gainsayers over grammatical principles. Let us begin by focusing upon two inseparable and pertinent questions:

**Why did God in His undiminished and unceasing deity become man?**

**Why was God in His undiminished and unceasing deity as man, a matter of absolute necessity?**

There are, as we shall see, a number of specific answers to these questions, but the general answer embraces two truths:

**The HOLY  
nature of God  
demanded it.**

**The SINFUL  
nature of man  
required it.**

The first truth reveals that God is Light, and it speaks of His infinite holiness (1 Jn 1:5-7). The second declares God is Love. It proclaims His infinite grace to fallen man (1 Jn 4:8). God as Light and Love means that He is also Life - manifested in the Person of His Son the Incarnate Word, "the Word of Life" (1 Jn 1:1). The two truths above embrace the entire compass of Calvary, where mercy and truth met and righteousness and peace kissed.

God's righteous demands and man's salvation could never be met by a being of diminished deity or imperfect manhood. Those who deny Christ's deity, do so because they have little understanding of man's spiritual poverty and/or the absolute holiness of God. If we fail to acknowledge man's hopelessness in sin, then we see little necessity for a Saviour-God, and much less the need for salvation through divine grace. Failure to acknowledge God's holiness, is to deny that God Himself must be the One to put away sin and take away the sin of the world.

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## Ten reasons why God had to become man and that Man was God

The list below identifies ten aspects of the *work* of Christ. Each one reveals why it was **absolutely necessary** for God to become man, and why that man must be God in all His undiminished and unceasing deity. This is one approach to apprehending something of the grand truth of Christ's deity based on its absolute necessity.

While each aspect of His work highlights a particular insight as to why God became man, their interdependence must not be overlooked in the divine work of reconciliation, particularly evident in regard to the defeat of sin, of death and of the curse of the law. The practical and dispensational distinctions between them is also vital to note, for they identify the *past*, *present* and *prospective* ministry of God as the man Christ Jesus (1-7; 8; 9-10, respectively).

This is not our present task. However, as we consider these ten imperatives that reveal why God became man, the redeemed heart will rejoice in an absorbing truth in regard to them. The present and prospective ministry of the divine Man is predicated upon His past ministry that, gloriously, is a *completed* work, a work accomplished upon the *cross*. All manner of fearful heresies evolve from the failure to acknowledge and apprehend these two vital truths. These ten imperatives also reveal why Satan opposes the truth about Christ's Person. Deny His Person and we deny His all-sufficient work. If Christ is not the divine Man then He cannot be the perfect sacrifice for sin. Liberty is then given to the erroneous idea of salvation through works, through which Satan continues seduce many souls into eternal ruin.

God, the divine Son, in His undiminished and unceasing deity, had to become man in order to:

1. Declare the divine Father and the divine Son
2. Defeat sin
3. Defeat death
4. Defeat the curse of the law
5. Defeat Satan
6. Determine our sanctification
7. Destroy the "middle wall of partition"
8. Declare our cause as our Great High Priest and Advocate
9. Declare God's perfect government on earth
10. Deliver the eternal kingdom to the Father

### To declare the divine Father and the divine Son

#### The revelation of God as our Father

In the OT God is revealed as Father to His earthly *nation* Israel (Deut 32:6; Jer 31:9; Mal 1:6 etc.). No Israelite could draw near and call God "my Father." They knew Him as God in His awesome power and covenant prerogative. Now however, to Jew and Gentile redeemed in His Son, He is God the *Father* having a paternal prerogative. He is unchanged in His Person and power as God, but now revealed in His infinite loving fatherhood through the Person of His own beloved Son. God is the *divine* Father, and through faith in the *divine* Son we become children of God (Jn 1:12). This brings into view the *fellowship* we have with God as our Father as His children. The nature and conduct of this fellowship depends upon:

- the Father's divine **Person**
- the Father's divine **purposes**
- the Father's divine **provisions**

No voice pealing from the excellent glory, no prophet's inspired pen, angel or theophany however vivid, could reveal such intimate and earnest matters dwelling in the heart of a loving and paternal God. The Father's very own Son, who possessed His divine nature and essence, had to come forth from His bosom and walk among men, so men may know first-hand of God as the divine Father. For this reason the Son declared to Philip, "He that hath seen me [the divine Son] hath seen the [divine] Father." The revelation of the divine Father cannot be undertaken by anyone but the divine Son, for then it becomes a revelation of something less than the divine Father. John declares the reality of it. They beheld the Son and saw the glory of the only begotten of [from] the Father, full of grace and truth (cf 1 Jn 1; Jn 12:38-41). Any glory of the Father must be the divine glory.

Scripture is clear concerning why the revelation of the *divine* Father's Person, purposes and provisions to men, could only be made by the *divine* Son.

- **proximity:** No created man or celestial being has the required *eternal* nearness to God. The uncreated man Christ Jesus does, for He is the Son who is in the bosom of the Father eternally, as noted earlier (Jn 1:18). The Son (the Word) was with God in the beginning (Jn 1:1). He was "*that eternal life which was with the Father*" (1 Jn 1:1-2). It is not with *God* here (cf Jn 1:1), but with the *Father*, the Spirit placing emphasis upon the unique *eternal relationship* between the divine *Father* and the divine *Son*.
- **perception:** Seeing and knowing. "No man hath *seen* God at any time", that is, *God* as He Himself is, the *Eternal One* (Jn 1:18). The verb *to see* here refers to a physical act, and emphasizes an accompanying mental discernment. This is consistent with the Son "declaring" the Father, this word meaning to 'interpret' Him. Only deity has the capacity to see deity in this way.<sup>1</sup> Further, "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son (Matt 11:27). The word 'knoweth is "'fully-known"' in both instances.<sup>2</sup> The Son has complete knowledge of the Father. This is corroborated in the reciprocity given in Jn 10:15; "as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." The Father's knowledge of the Son cannot be less than total knowledge. Neither then can the Son's knowledge of the Father be less than total.
- **prerogative:** No created being has the divine prerogative to *reveal* the Father. It is the Son revealing the Father to whomsoever the Son *will* reveal Him (Matt 11:27).
- **personality:** The Father's divine nature cannot be appreciated apart from the divine nature of the Son. Conversely, we cannot appreciate the Son's divine nature apart from the divine nature of the Father: "I and *my* Father are one"; "the Father *is* in me and I in Him"; "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him"; "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jn 10:30; 38; 14:7-11).

It was only through the Son who was man yet very God, that the *invisible, incomprehensible* and *inaccessible* divine Father, became *visible, knowable* and *accessible* to fallen man. What ineffable grace!

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<sup>1</sup> See Vincent *Word Studies* Vol II p 59. In John 1:18 the object to be seen is not God's attributes or personality - *theiotes*, but His *eternal* essence - *theon*. This divine essence no man can see - only the Son, for He possesses that same essence. He is thus able to declare - 'interpret' the Father to men (cf I Jn 4:12, even a stronger word for 'seen'). In John 14:9 Philip was 'to see' the divine Father in Christ, in that Christ manifested the divine glory of the Father (cf Jn 1:14). Christ could not have done this unless he possessed the divine essence.

<sup>2</sup> See Vincent *Word Studies* Vol I p 67; A T Robertson *Word Pictures*, Vol 1 p 91.

But the high myst'ries of His name,  
An angel's grasp transcend;  
The Father only (glorious claim),  
The Son can comprehend  
(Josiah Conder)

### The revelation the Father's nature

Whatever we know of God as our divine Father, is based upon the revelation of His paternity by the divine Son (Jn 1:12,14,18; 1 Jn 1:2-3). In the course of His Father's business, the Son revealed the Person and nature of the divine Father. "I have manifested thy name (Jn 17.6); He is our "heavenly Father" – His character (Matt 6:14, 26; 15:13 etc).

Only the divine Son can reveal the divine Father's *moral* attributes. He declared the divine Father's holiness and righteousness (Jn 17:11, 25); He taught and manifested the divine love of the Father (Jn 3:16; Jn 17:25-26; 1 Jn 3:1 etc). As the Son is the object of His Father's fellowship, so we come to appreciate "our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:3). The Father's transcendent grace and truth is manifested *in* His Son (Jn 1:14). The parable of the prodigal son is a lesson of the heavenly Father's grace and truth as much as it is a lesson of restored man. The Son revealed the *natural* divine attributes of the Father, His omnipotence and omniscience. As man the Son engaged men, searched their hearts and worked miracles, evincing the heavenly Father. The divine Son "declared", or as we noted more appropriately, "interpreted" the divine Father to men (Jn 1:18). To do this the Son must possess the divine attributes entirely, equally, eternally and exclusively.

### Our worship of the Father

We note here the purposes of the divine Father in relation to the nature of the fellowship we have with Him." I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (Jn 17:8). The divine Father is to be honoured and worshipped according to His character and Being. It is the Son who instructs how this must be done - "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:21-23); the Father is to be supplicated as "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matt 6:9). The Son teaches us as only He as the divine Son can, that the proper motive and manner of practical spiritual life is in regard to the "heavenly Father", who is God (Matt 6). Because the divine Man among men *personally* declared His Father unto men during the days of His flesh, John is fitted for inspiration and his pen enabled to write his precious First Epistle. He tells of the blessed intimate communion each believer can now have with God as his/her personal heavenly Father. No OT worthy could scribe John's testimony - "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God (1 Jn 3:1). It required the coming of One among men as Man who had the divine prerogative to declare "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jn 2:1). Who else but the sinless Man who loved righteousness and hated iniquity can be our Advocate with the Father? "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6).

### The provisions of the Father

Only the divine Son could reveal the paternal blessings of the divine Father to His children. The Son having come from heaven can declare the Father as having sent the true bread from heaven, His provision for their *salvation* (Jn 6:32); He speaks of their *security* provided by the divine Father. "My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. I and *my* Father are one" (Jn 10:29-30). He tells of the giving of the Holy Spirit by the Father, His provision for their *sanctification* (Jn 14:16); the divine Son reveals the existence of the Father's heavenly house containing many mansions, wherein a place is being

prepared by the Son for the Father's children (Jn 14:1-2); As the beloved Son, he lovingly tells of their daily needs supplied by the Father (Matt 6:8) and of their rewards from the Father (Matt 6:1).

How can the Son speak to man of such intimate things concerning the infinite Father if he were not of the same divine nature and essence of God the Father and yet truly man? If the Son is to reveal the Father as the Father *is*, then the Son must be God, for this is who and what the Father is, infinite in all His natural and moral attributes. It is through the divine Son as man that these blessed revelations of the Father become apparent and assured.

### The revelation of our sonship

Apart from *fellowship* with God as His children, believers possess *sonship* as sons of God. We are no longer servants but sons (Rom 8:14-15; Gal 4:6-7). These are edifying and elevating truths. The fact of our sonship and our appreciation of it, had to wait until the fulness of time when God sent forth His Son into the world as man. In these last days God spoke to men "in Son." Why? Only God's Son among men could impart the essence and reality of sonship to redeemed sons.<sup>3</sup> Through His life of obedient dependence upon His Father, the Son as man revealed what it meant to be a son of the divine heavenly Father. The fulness of the Godhead did not dwell *bodily* in the Father or the Spirit, only the Son. It was during the days of His flesh that the Son promised the Comforter, the Spirit of adoption, whereby as sons of God we cry Abba *Father*.

## To defeat sin

When we speak of "the defeat of sin" or "sin as defeated", we mean that sin need no longer be a barrier to peace with God. It is in this sense, too, that we say sin has been "put away." Man can be reconciled to God. How and why this is so is our present subject. It is vital to note, that for those who have not been reconciled to God, sin remains an undefeated foe. They remain under its eternal condemnation and, in their unreconciled state, they will themselves in a day to come bear God's eternal wrath against their sin. "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20).

### The ministry of reconciliation

God was, through Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Three vital related elements abide in this grand truth. Note that it is never God being reconciled to man, but man having to be reconciled to God.

1. God was, in His heart, occupied with reconciliation.
2. God was, through Christ, undertaking a work of reconciliation.
3. God was reconciling the world unto Himself.

From these three elements, three aspects of the divine *work* of reconciliation are brought into view:

- The divine **means** of reconciliation. Christ was the Person through whom God was reconciling the world unto Himself. It invites us to consider the Son's *incarnation* – the *needed Sacrifice*, the holy Son of God coming into the world to enable reconciliation.
- The divine **matter** of reconciliation. In its broader aspect, reconciliation involves the settling of "all things" unto God through Christ - the "blood of His cross" (Col 1:20). Then there is the particular

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<sup>3</sup>The absence of the article in Hebrews 1:2 ("God in Son"), and in verses such as John 1:12, 1 Jn 3:1 ("children of God") and Romans 8:14 ("sons of God"), place emphasis upon the "character" of the person or persons in view, rather than upon their identity.

aspect of it relating to the settlement of matters between the sinner and God through Christ. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21). The underpinning truth here is Christ's *crucifixion* – the *perfect Sacrifice*.

- The divine **motive** of reconciliation. Peace! It brings before us God satisfying His holiness that was slighted by sin. It is peace consummated on the ground of divine righteousness. We have here Christ's *resurrection, ascension and glorification* – the *accepted Sacrifice*.

### **What is meant by "reconciliation"?**

Reconciliation is the removal of the enmity between creation and the Creator. It requires a work that settles *forever* the matter that brought that enmity about. Peace with God is its eternal legacy.

### **Why was reconciliation needed?**

Sin separated man and God and brought enmity between them, bringing God's righteous condemnation upon men and His curse upon the earth (Gen 3:17-18). Adam, the representative head of man sinned by disobeying God. He brought sin and its penalty of death among men (Rom 5:12). If reconciliation is to take place, then sin must be defeated. This necessarily involves the matter of an individual's sins, the work of sin-bearing, where a person's sins and condemnation before God are taken away forever. While sin is the "precipitating" factor in reconciliation, the "initiating" factor in reconciliation is divine righteousness. God's holy nature demanded the defeat of sin. His righteousness however must not be considered apart from His love, for "he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:10).

### **How was reconciliation to be undertaken?**

Scripture makes it very clear that sin could only be met by death, the death of a *spotless* sacrifice, spotless because it is in accordance with God's holiness. The physically spotless sacrifices of the OT were typical of the holy *nature and character* of Christ.

Reconciliation in all its aspects requires the defeat of sin and this requires sin's penalty of death to be paid. How was this to be accomplished? In the OT economy it was through *atonement*. God demanded that sin be met by the substitutionary death and shed blood of a spotless animal. The life is in the blood. It is the blood that "maketh atonement for the soul" (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:11-13). These sacrifices however were only a 'covering' for sin, evident in their seemingly endless repetition. They could never completely satisfy God and defeat sin. Even during Solomon's opulent reign, where the animal sacrifices "could not be told nor numbered for multitude", sin could never be put away forever (1 Kings 8:5). "For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb 10:1-4). "In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure" (Heb 10:5-6; Ps 40:6-8).

### **What of man? What of the Law?**

In his pride man believed he could meet God's righteousness and defeat sin through his works. So God brought in the law and demanded righteousness from him. The law is the standard God requires man to keep if man is to earn His righteousness before God. But as a sin-crippled victim of the Fall, man could never keep its righteous demands. The law therefore served to reveal him as hopelessly sinful and under divine judgment. In man's flesh dwells no good thing, for all his righteousness are as "filthy rags" (Isa 64:6; Rom 7:18). The law itself is perfect and holy, for it reveals God's moral demands upon men. But it "was weak through the flesh" (Rom 8:3). It can never make man righteous before God, because fallen man is incapable of keeping it (Js 2:10). The law was given not to bestow life, but to reveal sin as sin, to expose man's helplessness in sin and to declare his absolute dependence upon God for salvation.

Christ the **needed**  
Sacrifice

What hope was there for sinful man in the light of God's certain judgment upon sin? God in grace took up man's cause and God *Himself* became the perfect Sacrifice for sin. But it was not only man's cause that God took up. Sin affronted His glory. His absolute holiness had to be vindicated, and He alone as the absolutely Holy One could accomplish this. God is the Initiator, the Executor and Guarantor in reconciliation. Scripture *never* speaks of man reconciling God or of Him being reconciled to man. God is not a pagan deity whose wrath is to be placated by man or some other created being – “we were reconciled to God” (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-20). God was *Himself*, through Christ, reconciling the world *unto Himself*.<sup>4</sup> If God *alone* had to be the Sacrifice for sin as Scripture incontrovertibly declares, then Christ is God, because Scripture also teaches that Christ *alone* was the Sacrifice for sin.

To become that needed sacrifice God had to become man, which He did through the Person of His Son. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom 8:3).<sup>5</sup> And, given that God became man, that Man was undiminished and unceasing in His deity. Deity cannot cease to exist where it does exist.

The glorious work of creation did not require a body, but a body was needed for the gracious work of reconciliation. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.'" That body of flesh was holy, spotless, undefiled, sin apart! Our salvation rests on Christ's perfect humanity as well as His deity. "The humanity of Christ

Christ the **perfect**  
Sacrifice

guarantees the validity of His redemption, His deity its value."<sup>6</sup> When writing to the Corinthians concerning the ministry of reconciliation, Paul presents Christ as the needed perfect sacrifice for sin, the perfect Man. "For he [God] hath made him *to be* sin [a sin offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made [become] the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:21). Peter also mentions the moral imperatives and the necessary death of the perfect Man. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God [not God to us], being put to death in the flesh" (1 Pet 3:18).

But we must consider again the matter of God's glory. Who could defeat sin and bring glory to a God whose holiness had been slighted by sin? Only One who was the perfect Sacrifice. Speaking of His impending sacrifice for sin, the Lord declared "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him" (Jn 13:31-32).

The following scriptures are among many that testify that reconciliation is wholly through the *death* of the *Man* Christ Jesus. When writing to the Romans concerning reconciliation and justification, Paul declares that though once enemies of God, they have been "reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Rom 5:9-11). When writing to the Colossians of their sanctification and reconciliation unto God through Christ, he reminds them that it was through "the body of his flesh through death" that they are presented "holy and unblameable and unreprouvable" in God's sight (Col 1:21-23). The broader matter

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<sup>4</sup>We should add, too, that Scripture does not teach that God was in Christ who *has* reconciled the world unto Himself (Why then would there be the need for a "ministry of reconciliation"?) There are those who have now been reconciled unto God - the believers in Christ who are of the new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Col 1:21). The enmity between Jew and Gentile too *has* been removed (Eph 2). There is, however, that which *will be* reconciled unto God in a day to come (Col 1:20). All these aspects of reconciliation depend on the defeat of sin through the death of Christ!

<sup>5</sup>Christ's sinless life bore testimony to the defeat of sin that was accomplished by His death on the cross.

<sup>6</sup>Wm Hoste, *Studies in Bible Doctrine* p48, Gospel Tract Publications

of reconciliation also rests wholly on the death and shed of blood of Christ. "[God] having made peace through the blood of his cross [Christ's death], by him [Christ] to reconcile all things unto himself" (Col 1:20).

Such clear teaching compels us to consider both the *person* and the *process* required to defeat sin - the Man and His death. No sooner had sin entered creation than the righteous heart of the Creator responded in grace to put it away and reconcile all things unto Himself. The seed of the woman will bruise the head of Satan and He Himself will be bruised (Gen 3:15). In this blessed foundation prophecy we first come to know of God, through Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

### **Christ the Lamb of God, the needed perfect Sacrifice**

"God will provide Himself a lamb" (Gen 22:8). It is not simply God providing a lamb, but God providing a lamb *for* Himself and He *Himself* is that Lamb. The Baptist's words marked the fulfilment of this divine provision and prerogative, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29 cf Rev 5:6-14). Peter speaks of the absolute holiness of the Lamb and His perfect sacrifice, when he declares that we are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained [in regard to His sacrifice] before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet 1:19-20).

We have here, too, the infinite love of God. He did not send some extraordinary created being, some adopted son to bear His wrath against sin. It was His *own* Son, foreordained as the sacrificial Lamb who He sent and gave (Jn 3:16). To deny the deity of the Lamb of God is to deny the eternal efficacy of the cross and to rob God of His love to fallen man. "He "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom 8:32).

#### Christ the **accepted** Sacrifice

Sin *has* been defeated and God's holiness *has* been satisfied by Christ's sacrificial death. Christ therefore was also the *accepted* sacrifice. The Hebrew Epistle identifies three transcendent blessings that confirm this exalted truth.

Their finality marks a striking contrast to the fleeting atonement obtained through the sacrifices and offerings of the OT. They also testify to the utter foolishness of man seeking salvation from the penalty of sin through his works. Together they compose a three-fold chord in the eternal anthem of those who are reconciled to God in Christ:<sup>7</sup>

1. There is no more **conscience** of sins (Heb 10:2).
2. There is no more **remembrance** of sins (Heb 10:17)
3. There is no more **offering** for sin (Heb 10:18).

These imperishable blessings rest on Christ as the accepted sacrifice. He who was God became man in order to defeat sin:

- By appearing *once* to put away *sin* by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb 9:26).
- By offering Himself *once* to bear the *sins* of many (Heb 9:28).

We have here the *necessity* and the *eternal efficacy* of the Man Christ Jesus. Scripture bears further testimony to this in that "after He [Christ] had offered one sacrifice for sins [He] forever sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb 10:12); He is exalted by God (Phil 2:9); "we are sanctified through the offering

<sup>7</sup> There is an important distinction between "sins" and "sin" here and elsewhere in Scripture that must be recognised.

of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10); the redeemed are "accepted in the beloved" (Eph 1:6), and they are "the righteousness of God in Him."

### Christ the suffering Sacrifice

Christ spoke of His suffering with the same deep conviction and inevitability with which He spoke about His death (Lk 22:15; 24:46). The sorrows and sufferings of Christ are as impenetrable as they are infinitely sacred. Scripture never encourages us to fathom their depth. But it does invite us to reverently enquire as to their cause. When we do, we are told that the suffering of Christ was due to man's sin and on account of the holiness of God. His suffering was not confined to the physical agony of the cross, horrendous though that was. It was also the suffering He willingly bore as One who was made sin, who knew no sin, in order that that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Only the divine perfect Man could to bear the divine wrath against sin.

A young Buddhist student enquired, "What is the essential difference between Christianity and other religions?" Surely it is *Christ*, the divine Man who suffered for the sin of man at the hand of a Thrice Holy God. "*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord [Jehovah] hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger*" (Lam 1:12). Could such sublime words that foreshadow the divine love and grace of the Man Christ Jesus, emanate from the heart of Buddha, Confucius, Krishna, Muhammad or his god? Indeed not, for their deepest sentiments spring from the shallow fallen hearts of mortal men. In the light of Christ's infinite love, grace and truth, all men are constrained to confess, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God (Jn 6:68-69).

### Christ - the needed and accepted Sacrifice typified in the OT

The Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, was an ordained day set aside each year to make atonement for the sins of the people of Israel. Atonement rested on God meeting His *own* righteous demands in regard to sin. The many procedures required on that day in their sum and in their parts, typify the Person and work of Christ. Our interest is in regard to that part involving the high priest bringing two goats without spot before Jehovah. "And he [Aaron, the high priest] shall take of the congregation of *the children of Israel* two kids of the goats for a sin offering" (Lev 16:5). One goat by lot was for Jehovah - *Godward*, and the other for the people - *manward*. The goat for Jehovah was for a sin offering (v.9). It was slain and its atoning blood sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat by the high priest clothed in his holy garments. The blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat speaks of what God is and what He demands, holiness and vindication respectively. *Sin* had been dealt with. Once this had been done, the high priest laid his hands upon the head of the live second goat confessing the *sins* of the nation. This goat was then released into the wilderness. It was the "scapegoat." It symbolized the bearing and carrying away of the peoples' *sins*, *in virtue* of the accepted shed blood of the first goat.

The first goat foreshadows the *propitiation* made by Christ, typifying the necessity and acceptability of His sacrifice before God in regard to the matter of *sin*. This, we noted, was done 'once for all', which marks the essential difference between Christ's propitiation and the atonement made in the OT. Christ's perfect sacrifice completely met the holy demands of God in regard to sin. As the divine Man, He was the needed and perfect sacrifice for sin. He satisfied God's wrath against sin and, in so doing, vindicated the holiness of God forever. Sin therefore has been defeated, put away— Hebrews 9:26.<sup>8</sup> God sent His

<sup>8</sup>It is God who is propitiated by the vindication of His holy and righteous character, whereby, through the provision He has made in the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, He has so dealt with sin that He can shew mercy to the believing sinner

own Son for *sin*, and His Son has not covered but *condemned* sin in the flesh. This is the divine ground upon which God is able to show mercy to the guilty sinner. The second goat brings before us what man is and what he needs. He is a guilty sinner in need of a Sin-Bearer. This, the peoples' goat, typified the work of Christ in *substitution*, as the Scape-goat who bore our *sins* – Hebrews 9:28. Whereas propitiation is Godward and concerned with meeting God's holy nature and character, substitution is manward meeting man's need. Peter, addressing *believers*, speaks of "[Christ] who in His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." The two goats as the one sin-offering foreshadowed one entire truth regarding Calvary. God became man, and as the Perfect Man He put away *sin* forever by the sacrifice of Himself. In so doing, He bore the *sins* in His own body on the cross for those who believe.

The above truths afford further insight to the two questions and their respective answers given earlier. Why did God in His undiminished and unceasing deity become man? Why was this a matter of absolute necessity? The holy nature of God demanded it. The sinful nature of man required it. Isaiah declared that it "pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isa 53:10). What was it about the Son's death that brought pleasure to God? It was that God's holiness was satisfied by the death of His Son and sin was put away.<sup>9</sup> That same death enables fallen man to have peace and fellowship with God on the ground of divine righteousness. Surely, this brings pleasure to a holy God of love, grace and mercy!

Finally, the truth that God Himself was the needed Sacrifice pervades every aspect of Christianity. Paul writes to the overseers, "Feed the church of God, which he [God] hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). *God* is explicitly said to have purchased the church and He did so with "His own blood." How can this be so except that Jesus Christ the perfect sacrifice is God blessed forever (Rom 9:5).<sup>10</sup>

The typical lesson from Leviticus 16 is *reconciliation*. God's wrath against sin has been appeased and His holiness vindicated. Whosoever will may now come unto Him, boasting excluded with pride abased. All



## The Passover

this can be brought into instructive comparison with Exodus 12 in relation to our subject. Both portions converge at the cross of Christ, which imparts to them their particular glory. Whereas in Leviticus 16 we have the defeat of sin and reconciliation foreshadowed, in Exodus 12 we have man's deliverance from sin and redemption typified. It is God "coming down to deliver" enslaved man from the fetters of sin (Ex 3:8; Acts 7:34). Yet it was not without blood, because it was by virtue of the slain lamb and its blood applied. "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Ex 12:13). Redemption, as with reconciliation is on the ground of divine holiness, the shedding of blood. Whether it was the door post and lintel, the mercy seat or Calvary, it was necessary that God should look upon the blood. O Lord, "Who is like unto thee Glorious in holiness?" (Ex 15:11). And, in each instance it was entirely *God's* estimate of the blood, not man's estimate of it that mattered. Hebrews 10 gives us the anthem of atonement, Exodus 15 the rhapsody of redemption. "The Lord is my strength and song, And he is become my salvation....Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people *which* thou hast redeemed" (Ex 15:2-13). The lamb sacrificed had to be without blemish, an intimation of that perfect Sacrifice (Ex 12:5). When Paul wrote to the redeemed he declared "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor 5:7). He

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in the removal of his guilt and the remission of sins." W E Vine *Expository Dictionary* p 223. We should note that God is not *changed*. Propitiation meets God's unchangeable nature and character.

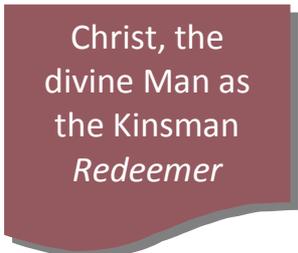
<sup>9</sup> The death of Christ satisfied *every* attribute of God, as it must do in a God who possesses the divine attributes entirely, equally eternally and exclusively.

<sup>10</sup> When faced with the irrefutable testimony to the deity of Christ and the Trinity in this verse, some insert the expression "with the blood of his own [Son]." Such words are not found in any of the Greek manuscripts of the Bible.

had in view our *redemption* through the death of that perfect Man. God came down as man that sin should be defeated in the flesh through His death, and our redemption from sin be secured.<sup>11</sup>

In the light of these truths, may we appreciate that each and every redeemed person is a testimony to the deity and perfect humanity of Christ. When we look upon the symbol bread and wine on the Lord's day, may they be a blessed reminder that God in His undiminished and unceasing deity once walked upon the earth as the divine Man, Christ Jesus. What sublime grace! He did this to vindicate His slighted holiness and to redeem us from sin and judgment. What transcendent joy the unbridled appreciation of this imparts to the redeemed, when gathered by the Spirit of God to remember the Lord and show forth His death.<sup>12</sup>

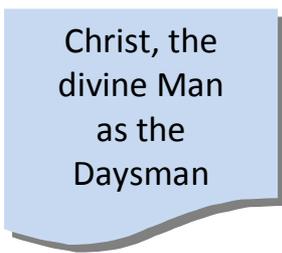
We should also embrace to the joy and profit of our souls, that other essential matter brought before us in the song of the redeemed. God is "glorious in power." He has dashed the enemy in pieces, his captains are drowned in the sea. (Ex 15). So, too, the gospel of Christ, for it is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom 1:16).<sup>13</sup> Far greater than Israel's redemption is ours, for "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (Jn 8:36) – for the Son is the divine Redeemer! "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt 28:19).



Christ, the  
divine Man as  
the Kinsman  
Redeemer

During the year of Jubilee, possessions lost through debt or hardship (with some exceptions) were restored to their original owner. It was a year of *rejoicing, release, restoration* and *rest* granted to the Israelites by God (Lev 25). Lost possessions could be recovered prior to the year of Jubilee by a "kinsman redeemer" (vv.25-28). To be a kinsman redeemer, a person had to be a *near relative* and be *willing* and *able* to pay the redemption price. Boaz was Ruth's kinsman redeemer (Ruth 4:9-10).

Man needed to be redeemed from the bondage of sin. The price? Vindication of a Holy God through a perfect sacrifice! Only God Himself could to pay this price. He became man to pay it and to become a near relative – the Seed of the woman. He did this willingly and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Jn 4:34; 10:17; Phil 2:8). The man Christ Jesus was God and had to be God in all His undiminished and unceasing deity (1 Pet 1:18-19). "Blessed *be* the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman [Redeemer]" (Ruth 4:14).



Christ, the  
divine Man  
as the  
Daysman

Job yearned for a "daysman" who "*is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment*"; a "daysman betwixt us, *that might lay his hand upon us both*" (Job 9:32-33). He saw himself as unjust and unworthy, in need of someone to arbitrate between himself and the unchangeable holy God – a daysman. Who but the divine Man – the Seed of the woman, can stand between God and man and arbitrate on man's behalf according God's absolute righteousness, laying His hand upon both man and

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<sup>11</sup>The defeat of sin speaks against the teaching of limited atonement, that Christ's death was only for an elect few. Neither does it mean, however, that all persons will be saved. As noted above, Christ did not bear the sins of all people on the cross. His putting away of sin makes it possible, "clears the way" for all to be saved and therefore for all to say He bore my sins in His own body on the cross - if all believe on Him! When Paul declares Christ died for our sins (1 Cor 15:3-4) and Peter states He bore our sins (1 Pet 2:24), they are referring to believers, those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour. There are many who sadly will die in their sins and reap the eternal wrath of a righteous God for they have not accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour, never having availed themselves of the fact that sin has been put away!

<sup>12</sup>It is to *remember* the Lord and *show forth* His death, rather than remember His death and show forth the Lord (1 Cor 11:24-26). It is His Person - who and what He is, that gives value to His death. "This do in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19).

<sup>13</sup>"To them that believe." Deliverance is given only to those who have applied the blood and are seen by God to be sheltering beneath it! When God saw the blood, the hand of death was stayed! (Ex 12:13).

God. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh" (1 Pet 3:18).

### Christ, the divine Man as Mediator

We must again assert that which Scripture demands. Mediation involves man being brought to God, not God to man. Only a divine Person can identify with God's holy and righteous nature. Mediation, as with arbitration, is according to the unchangeable righteousness of God. Who among men could meet the divine requirement? Who can pledge eternal peace as the outcome of mediation due to sin? There is only One, the divine Man Jesus Christ the righteous. "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5). Christ the divine Man *has* "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col 1:20). The mediation was made and accepted by God by the "blood of His cross" – the death of Christ. We who have believed have peace with God through Christ who is our peace (Rom 5:1; Eph 2:14).

Atonement, propitiation, reconciliation, redemption, arbitration and mediation, all rest upon the death of the perfect divine Man. Scripture consistently reveals the necessity of God becoming man and that Man is God in all His undiminished and unceasing deity.

### Salvation solely by and in the divine Man our Mediator

If Christ is not God, then His death did not fully satisfy God and man must do his part to appease Him. Those who deny Christ's deity are therefore obliged to preach a doctrine directly opposed to the *explicit* teaching of Scripture. When the Lord finished the work of salvation on the cross He cried "It is finished." They must say it was *not* finished! Paul tells the Ephesians salvation is *not* of man's works (Eph 2:8). They must say it is! Titus, also under the Spirit's eye, teaches that our salvation is *not* by our works of righteousness (Tit 3:5). They must again contradict the explicit teaching of Scripture and say that we are saved by righteous works. Paul exhorts the Philippians to "work out" their salvation with fear and trembling in regard to their practical Christian life (Phil 2:12). They interpret his words to mean "work for your salvation." James declares "faith without works is dead", referring to a Christian's *testimony* toward others (Js 2:20). They must interpret his exhortation to refer to salvation. In the teaching of Christ, salvation is by faith, never through works (Jn 3:16 etc).

Why have these people fallen into such blatant error? As noted above, they have little understanding of man's spiritual poverty and the absolute holiness of God. They have failed to acknowledge man's absolute hopelessness in sin and therefore they see little necessity for a Saviour-God, and much less the need for salvation through divine grace. They have interpreted Scripture according to the vanity of the Fall. Conscience can only end its strife and the soul find blessed assurance in the all-sufficiency of the One who died at Calvary. God Himself has declared it to be so. Paul was a man who spoke, walked and taught as one who was eternally emancipated. He had no doubt that it was upon the middle cross where his salvation was secured. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it [the cross] is the power of God unto salvation" (1 Cor 1:18). His avowal that "we preach Christ crucified", is the inspired theme in his gospel (1 Cor 1:23). Not simply Christ, but Christ *crucified*. For this self-confessed chief among sinners, eternal assurance was never through Christ crucified complemented by his own righteous efforts (Eph 2:8; Tit 3:5). It is all of Christ! The blessed pledge granted to all who place their trust in Christ's death and shed blood is that they are the "righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21); "complete in him [Christ]"; "accepted in the Beloved [Christ]" (Col 2:10; Eph 1:6). Self is excluded absolutely! There are unfailing promises given to us through the Word of God in terms of our reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:21); redemption (Col 1:14); redemption and justification (Rom 3:24-25); justification and peace (Rom 5:1); perfection and sanctification (Heb

10:14); eternal life (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 5:20); salvation (Eph 2:8). Absolute certainty and assurance abides because our standing before God is entirely the work of God. When God the Eternal Son became man to put away sin and to redeem man, it was a complete work. "It is finished"! How foolish and fatal is the idea that man can add to what God Himself has done and declared complete. God in the divine Christ did only what God could do; He did only what God could choose to do; and He manifested the glory of God. To seek salvation through self-righteousness and ritual such as baptism in all its forms, is to regard God as a pagan deity who must be appeased by man.

Salvation is not through reformation or ritual, but by repentance and through redemption in Christ. God justifies us according to faith, not its strength but according to the One upon whom it rests - Christ the divine Man (Rom 5:1). "Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom 10:4). The epic theme of Romans is of righteousness that comes not through the law and works, but by grace and faith. "*It is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace" (Rom 4:16).

Salvation is:

- **provided** by God through grace
- **accepted** by man through faith
- **grounded** upon the precious shed blood of Christ.

May we assiduously avoid the error of preaching works *or* faith as the ground of salvation!

## To defeat death

In the death of the divine Man we have the defeat of sin *accomplished*. In His bodily resurrection we have the *assurance* that sin has been defeated. It declares His *victory* over sin, death and hell. The Eternal divine Son of God had no sin and death therefore had no dominion over Him. Only a Man of undiminished and unceasing deity could claim and consummate the divine prerogative that He lay down His life that He might take it up again (Jn 10:17).

Christ rising bodily from the grave declares too that God whose holiness was offended by sin has been vindicated. Sin had to be put away. The bodily resurrection of Christ is an eloquent testimony to the truth that there is therefore no more sacrifice for sin (Heb 10:18), because the death of the perfect Man fully satisfied God.

Paul champions the eternal worth of the bodily resurrection of Christ to the believer. "If Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor 15:17-19). If sin reigns then its penalty of death also reigns. The grave holds fast its prey. "Sin reigned unto death" (Rom 5:21). Death is the evidence and experience of sin. The fact that Christ arose from among the dead *bodily* is the assurance that sin has been defeated, and the believer's dead body will arise incorruptible and immortal. Wondrous and glorious truth! God had to become man in order to *physically* die to put away sin, to deliver us from our sins, and to *physically* rise from the dead declaring that sin has been defeated. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? ...But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:54-57). The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law, but His bodily resurrection proves He has defeated sin and death.

- The Spirit's **doctrine** of the resurrection is evident. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4).
- The Spirit's view of its **importance** is emphatic. Christ *must* rise again from the dead bodily (Jn 20:9).
- The believer's **estimation** of it is eternal. Jesus Christ our Saviour "hath abolished [nullified] death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim 1:10).

## To defeat the curse of the law

When he wrote to the Christians in Rome, Paul declared the emancipating truth that "now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held" (Rom 7:6). He was speaking particularly to Jewish believers in Christ. But it is important to understand that the law curses both Jew and Gentile. This is because none of Adam's fallen race can meet its righteous demands (Rom 3:20). It is equally vital to understand that anyone can be freed from curse of the law through faith in Christ. This is because of who Christ is and what He has done. "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law." How? It was "By the body of Christ", that sinless perfect sacrifice of the man Christ Jesus (Rom 7:4). Once again the necessity of God becoming man in all His glorious undiminished and uncreated deity is brought before us. The righteous claims of the law and the defeat of its curse upon man could only be achieved on the ground of divine holiness. Scripture repeatedly reveals this could only be secured through a perfect sacrifice for sin. The Galatians were seeking life and light among the dead coals Judaism. Paul reproves them by reminding them of Christ, the perfect sacrifice, crucified among them, who "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal 3:1-13). Christ in His divine manhood as the perfect sacrifice for sin "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

## To defeat Satan

The seed of the woman, "It [Christ] shall bruise thy head [Satan]" (Gen 3:15). This is the first prophecy in Scripture and it was wondrously fulfilled at Calvary. It transports us by faith to that sacred mount via Bethlehem's manger, to consider the One born of a woman who is God and perfect man. Once more we see that which God promises in grace He delivers in His power.

The Hebrew Epistle gives us a further insight into this victory in Christ and its liberating legacy to those in Him. "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2:14-15).<sup>14</sup> The word "destroy" in the AV is to "bring to nought."<sup>15</sup> The prince of the power of the air is alive and active, pending the day when he will be cast into the everlasting pit (Rev 20:10).

God became man in order to die and rise again from the dead that He might defeat sin and thus defeat him who had the power of death (Jn 12:31). Satan is the author of death through sin. He is a defeated foe to the believer; his power has been vanquished by Christ, the Captain of our salvation. Christ "hath delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col 1:13). "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8).

<sup>14</sup>The Spirit of God again sedulously guards the deity of Christ. As human beings we are said to be "partakers" (*koinonia*) of flesh and blood, meaning we involuntarily share this in common with other human beings. Jesus Christ the Spirit says, 'took hold of' (*metecho*) flesh and blood. This refers to His incarnation, to Him taking hold of human nature - sin apart! See *Wuest Word Studies*, Hebrews Vol II p 62-63.

<sup>15</sup> From *katargeo* – to make idle or ineffective. A T Robertson *Word Pictures* Vol V p 349. It is not said that Satan had the power 'over' death, but the power 'of' death. He brought death through sin (Js 1:15).

## To determine our sanctification

Sanctification refers to a thing or person being set apart for a particular purpose. Typically it embraces *position* and *purpose*. Believers are "in Christ" (their position) and their life is to glorify God (their purpose). The moment we place faith in Christ as our Saviour we are set apart unto God. When the people in Egypt sheltered under the blood of the slain lamb, they were set apart unto God. It was the blood of a spotless sacrifice that secured not only their redemption but their sanctification as well. The writer to the Hebrews presents the glorious truth in regard to the position and purpose of believers in Christ. "By the which will we are sanctified [set apart unto God] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*" (Heb 10:10). We have here again the *necessity* of the divine Man – His death as the ground of our sanctification. We also have the eternal *efficacy* of the death of the divine Man in our sanctification. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified [set apart unto God]" (10:14). Our sanctification is neither probationary nor prospective, because it has been accomplished through divine *purchase*, through Christ as the spotless, perfect and accepted Sacrifice - the divine Man.

## To destroy the middle wall of partition

In the OT economy God decreed that His earthly nation Israel were to be separate from the Gentiles. It was an "unclean" thing for Jews to mix with the Gentile races. In the NT, the Church (the Body of Christ) comprises God's heavenly people, among whom racial distinctions do not exist. "There is neither Jew nor Greek...bond nor free...male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). What enabled this unity within the Church? It was Christ and His death. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off [the Gentiles] are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph 2:13-16). Again we see the *necessity* and the *efficacy* of the death of the divine Man – the accepted sacrifice. The blessed unity of the Church, which is His Body, is only possible because of Christ's death on the cross, His death and His shed blood. All those in Christ's Body, whatever their race, stand accepted in *Him* before God on the ground of His perfect sacrifice for sin (Eph 1:6). On this ground, the middle wall of separation – the Mosaic economy was made inoperative.

## To declare our cause as our Great High Priest and Advocate

### Our Great High Priest

Though redeemed and accepted in the Beloved we are pilgrims in the wilderness and prone to the spiritual trails therein. Our High Priest is the risen, glorified Son of God who, through His very Person and work, helps us in our infirmities (*not our sins*). He upholds us before God. This is the *nature* of the Son's work as our High Priest. It is unto God *for us*, unceasingly and in regard to

every believer.<sup>16</sup>

He is *able* to be our High Priest because of His deity and perfect humanity. He must be God in all His unceasing and undiminished deity. How else can He possess the necessary divine attributes to intercede continually on behalf of *each* and *every* believer before God and, do so according to divine holiness? The Epistle to the Hebrews especially presents Christ as our High Priest. It begins therefore with an emphatic declaration of His deity. Chapter 2 follows with a presentation of His blessed humanity. This is because He must also be man to effectively sympathize with our trials and intercede before God on our behalf.

<sup>16</sup>As our Apostle, His work is from God *unto us* (Heb 3:1)!

The Word who was God became flesh. His life as man among men was necessary to become a fitting High Priest. "Wherefore [because of this] it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God" (Heb 2:17). As man, God the Son experienced the path of trial, sorrow, hunger, thirst, humiliation, unjust accusation and rejection. He is able therefore to succor those who are likewise tempted (v.18). He knew what was to walk as the perfect Man in the wilderness. He is thus able to uphold those who walk in the wilderness and who are perfected in Him.

The Lord's absolute superiority as our High Priest rests in His deity and perfect humanity. He is our *Great* High Priest, because of His:

- **Person** - He is God the Son, the Son of God, (Heb 1:1-2; 4:14)
- **pedigree** - His divine priesthood is declared in that He is a High Priest forever after the *order* of Melchisedek - without a beginning and end, without father or mother, and without descent (Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6,10; 7:1-20).<sup>17</sup>
- **place** - He is our High Priest who has passed into the heavens from whence He had come (Heb 4:14).
- **position** - He is at the right-hand of God (Heb 8:1)
- **posture** - He is seated (Heb 10:12)

What is the blessing to us? It is that we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in times of need" (Heb 4:16). This blessed provision is secured because our Great High Priest sits at the right-hand of God. Why is He seated there? Because of who He is and what He has done. Here again we see the necessity and efficacy of the divine Man. The high priestly service of Aaron required access to God, and access to God could only be undertaken when sin had been dealt with on the basis of shed blood.<sup>18</sup> Aaron could never sit down, having to repeat his work because of the inadequacy of the animal sacrifices. But the Son of God as the divine perfect Man, was the perfect and accepted sacrifice, who through His precious shed blood "put away" sin. He opened the way unto God for us, which is kept open because of the all-sufficiency of His perfect sacrifice. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God (Heb 10:12). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near ..." (Heb 10:19-22). The terms "this man", "the blood of Jesus" and "his flesh" in these verses, clearly teach that Christ's high priestly work is based upon the necessity not only of His incarnation, but also of His crucifixion. It has been truly stated, there can be no priesthood without manhood. But let us note what must also be accepted as a grand truth of Christianity. There can be no *true* priesthood without Godhood. Christ's perfect manhood is indispensable to His *suitability* as our Great High Priest. His Godhood is essential for His *legitimacy* to be our Great High Priest. In the former He fulfils the required human sympathy; in the latter, he meets the needed divine fidelity!

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<sup>17</sup>Christ is also a High Priest after the *pattern* of Aaron, because He is, as was Aaron, the man who could sympathize with the infirm and who was called of God (Heb 5:1-5).

<sup>18</sup>It is now as it was in the pattern of the Tabernacle, the high priest interceding between *God* and man. The high priest is ordained for men in things pertaining to *God* (Heb 5:1). It is before *God* because it is unto God that reconciliation had to be made - *God* (not the *Father*) was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself - "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17). And, having done the work of reconciliation (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:21 - God, not the Father in this latter verse), He takes up His rightful position at the right hand of *God* - His place of glorification and exaltation as the Man Christ Jesus (Mk 16:19; Acts 2:33, 7:55; Rom 8:34; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 10:12; 1 Pet 3:22).

## Our Advocate

As children of God we are accepted in the Beloved. We have become the righteousness of God in Him. His precious blood has blotted out our sins, past, present and future. Sin can never be imputed to the redeemed in Christ. Glorious truth! It is vital to understand therefore, that the advocacy of Christ is *not* in regard to our *union* with the Father, which is unassailable. It is to do with our *communion* with the Father. *If* a child of God sins communion with the Father is broken, because the Father is holy and He cannot have fellowship with sin. That lost communion must be restored. It is Christ our Advocate who restores it by pleading our cause before the righteous *Father*.<sup>19</sup> An advocate is one who is called aside to speak on behalf of another.

On what ground does Christ act as our Advocate? Sin can only be dealt with on the ground of *divine* righteousness. Our assurance of continuing fellowship with the Father rests therefore on the advocacy of One who is the Father's equal in righteousness, the Anointed Man "Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jn 2:1). He is as the Father is, inherently righteous (Jn 17:25). It is Jesus Christ the righteous who is "the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn 2:2). When He pleads on behalf of the believers, it is not according to extenuation or mitigation, but upon the abiding efficacy of His blood shed in propitiation on the cross. We observe again the absolute necessity and efficacy of Christ's deity and perfect humanity.

As our Advocate and High Priest, Christ meets the spiritual need of each and every child of God. To do this He must search their hearts and discern their thoughts according to divine righteousness. This can only be possible if He possesses the natural and moral attributes of God.

## To display God's perfect government on earth

Divine righteousness is the moral ground upon which God deals and meets with man. In this Church dispensation, it is *grace* reigning through righteousness; in the Tribulation it will be *judgment* reigning through righteousness and, in the Millennium, *government* will reign through righteousness. Our focus is the Millennium, the literal and halcyon one thousand year reign of Christ, that theocratic kingdom of perfect government upon earth (Rev 20:4,7). No angel will rule over this kingdom. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb 2:5). Christ then cannot be an angel. God Himself must reign as King. To what end?

### To fulfil His Sovereign purposes among men and all nations

Only Jesus of Nazareth the divine Man, is able to restore God's glory among the nations and accomplish the reality of God walking among men as Sovereign. Angels are explicitly excluded in such a work. "But to which of the angels said he at any time 'Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?' " (Heb 1:13). Man is also excluded because he carries the seed of sin and rebellion from his fallen head Adam. Biblical and secular history chronicle the abject failure of all kingdoms headed by man.

There is only one Person who can fulfil the Millennial prophecy of righteous rule upon earth, the divine Man Jesus Christ. Isaiah speaks of His government in righteousness. "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins" (Isa 11:5). So too Jeremiah! "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch [a Man], and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer 23:5). The righteous Branch is Jesus Christ the righteous in His undiminished and unceasing deity. He shall be called "Jehovah Tsidkenu", "the Lord our Righteousness"

<sup>19</sup> Not before *God* as is the case when His high priestly work is in view.

(Jer 23:6). "Who is the King of glory? The LORD [Jehovah] strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle..the LORD [Jehovah] of Hosts" (Ps 24).

The Eternal Word who became flesh to redeem man, is the Man who *must* reign on earth (1 Cor 15:24-25). His earthly reign of the Son of God is part of a number of imperatives in regard to His work.<sup>20</sup> He is the Last Adam and the Second man who will restore unto God a righteous Kingdom on earth (1 Cor 15:24-25). Through divine grace the first man Adam was given dominion (Gen 1:26), but he failed and unrighteousness and strife were brought in. There must be another man to restore God's honour in government among men. The Last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), the Man Christ Jesus is that Man. Through divine *right* He will exercise divine *might* over all the earth, again, demonstrating that which God promises in divine grace He delivers in divine power. Through Him righteousness and peace will "kiss each other" in government.

### **To fulfil the inheritance of the divine Son in government.**

The Millennium is the Kingdom in which the once despised and rejected King, the Man Christ Jesus, will reign in universal majesty. He is not only a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, but as Melchizedek the king of Salem He is also the King of righteousness and peace. Jesus of Nazareth will leave that heavenly place that He entered and return as King of kings and Lord of lords to the place of His humiliation. As the Son of man He will rightly receive unto Himself glory and honour on earth.<sup>21</sup> He is given dominion over all because He made Himself obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow - of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of the Father" (Phil 2:9-11). The divine Man, the Lion of the tribe of Judah will return to establish the kingdom reign of God on earth. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*" (Gen 49:10).

### **To fulfil His covenant promises to His earthly people Israel**

The divine Man is required to fulfil the covenants that God made with Israel. They will rule over the nations under their divine Messiah-King, who will inaugurate and sustain peace and prosperity among them.<sup>22</sup> God, as the Man Christ Jesus will:

- Possess the land **for** His people - **Abrahamic** covenant
- Reign **over** and **among** His people - **Davidic** covenant
- Create a new heart **within** His people - **New** covenant

Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15). This New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant because it offers man eternal promises secured by the shed blood of Christ, who was the perfect sacrifice for sin - the blood of the covenant (Heb 10:29).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>His mission (Lk 2:49; 4:43); His death and resurrection (Jn 20:9, Acts 17:3); His glorification (Acts 3:21).

<sup>21</sup>Those who deny the "literal" one thousand year reign of Christ on earth are in fact denying this imperative display of the personal glory of God through His Son on earth.

<sup>22</sup>Seen in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3; 17:8) the Davidic covenant (2 Sam); the New covenant (Jer 31). The term covenant here does not refer to an agreement between separate parties. It refers to God unilaterally determining His manner of dealing with man.

<sup>23</sup>The Old (Mosaic, conditional) Covenant, was not in itself faulty. It was, as noted, "weak through the flesh" (Rom 8:3). The New Covenant is with Israel (Jer 31) and it will be fulfilled literally in the Millennium. In this dispensation of grace, all men through faith in Christ are able to partake of the eternal blessings of the New Covenant (1 Cor 11:25). The Church partakes of the spiritual blessing under this Covenant because of its standing in Christ, who is the Mediator of it on the ground of His shed blood.

## **To deliver up the kingdom to the Father**

Having subdued all things unto Himself and having established the kingdom of God on earth, the Son will then deliver up the Kingdom to the Father and into eternity (1 Cor 15:24). "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto him that put all things under him [God, the Father], that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Reading this statement in the light of verse 24, we have Christ as the obedient and faithful Son who restores into the hand of God the Father that which belongs to Him, the Son always having before Him the glory of the Father - that God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, may be all in all. The divine Man is the "Father of Eternity" - the "Everlasting Father" (Isa 9:6 cf Heb 1:8, "Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever").