

The Epistle to the Hebrews

Hebrews – Excursus Regarding the Person of Christ- Lesson 8

Hebrews 2:10,17-18; 5:7-9; 7:28; LK 2:40,52 September 11, 2016

INTRODUCTION: There is a key element in the background of the passage we have just looked at, and this element will appear again in later verses of this book. I believe that what is found here in Heb. 2:10,17-18; 5:7-9; 7:28; & 12:3 needs to be fleshed out – so to speak. As we get into this study, I hope we will all be better equipped to see our Saviour and Lord, and His accomplishments on our behalf, and on behalf of God. Certain passages of Scripture, for me at least, can pull at you, but you tend to move on, and not let the implications really get under your skin enough to really search out solutions to what these passages are really saying.

What was nagging me as I studied Hebrews in preparation for teaching this class late last year, was verses like those I have listed above. For example, in Hebrews 5:7-9, question after question should assault our thinking. Christ, whom we know to be God in the flesh – of that there is no doubt whatsoever – is said “to learn”, and “to be made perfect”. In what sense does God ‘learn’ or be ‘made’ anything more than He is now? With all of His attributes, which are also the attributes of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in what sense can these things said of Christ be so?

J.C Ryle, as far back as 1879, made this pertinent comment,

“It is impossible to conceive a Saviour more suited to the wants of man’s heart than our Lord Jesus Christ, suited not only by His power, but by His sympathy, suited not only by His divinity, but by His humanity. Labour, I beseech you, to get firmly impressed on your mind that Christ, the refuge of souls, is Man as well as God. Honour Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. But while you do this, never forget that He had a body, and was a Man. Grasp this truth, and never let it go. The unhappy Socinianⁱ errs fearfully when he says that Christ was only man, and not God. But let not the rebound from that error make you forget that while Christ was very God He was also very man.”ⁱⁱ

Although I tried to deal with this marginally within the lessons where this theme has come up so far, I [I believe because of traditional thinking] tended to shy away from accentuating the humanity of Jesus, but now I have felt a strong compulsion to deal with this subject head on. These passages are an excellent vehicle to display the real humanity of Christ, to really see Him as “the second Adam” which Scripture tells us He is, and the very real implications of that with regard to our faith.

On occasion, we run into verses and passages like Heb. 5:7-9 all the time in the Bible – LK. 2:40,52; Phil. 2:5-11; Acts 17:31; I Tim. 2:5, and even some of the OT prophecies carry this theme; II Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 7:14-15, etc. In these passages, the manhood of Jesus is stressed to the (at least temporarily) exclusion of His deity. In Matt. 24:36, Jesus expresses ignorance of the time of His return to earth, and that is not the lone

example of such a situation (cf. “*Who do people say that I am?*”; “*Who touched the hem of My garment?*”; “*If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.*”). He is 100% God and 100% man, but we tend to be so afraid of seeing Him in His life as a man, that we often gloss over such verses, appeal to mystery, or simply add bromides like “well, He voluntarily set that knowledge aside” and that is true to an extent, but I think more true than we are often willing to go in our theology. Much like the nervousness or aversion we feel when we consider the Holy Spirit as fully God [likely as a result of some Charismatic abuses], we also have an aversion to considering the humanness of Jesus to the exclusion of His deity.

What I want us to wrestle with and understand here is this: In His life of pure obedience to the Father, so important to our situation and salvation, was Jesus obedient by depending on His own inherent deity, or was His obedience accomplished in His humanity, empowered by the Holy Spirit?

This became a compulsion for me to follow this [sort of] rabbit trail when I read Bruce Ware’s book, “The Man Christ Jesus” back in December. I highly recommend it as a book every Christian in this class should read. Ware is not a fringe author, but a highly respected Reformed theologian. Since then, I have read a few other books on this topic (Gerald F. Hawthorne, “The Power and the Presence” – about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus Christ; Michael Rydelnik, “The Messianic Hope”; Bruce Ware, “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”; Donald MacLeod, “From Glory to Golgotha”, and RT France, “Jesus and the Old Testament”), and recently, HD McDonald, “Jesus: Human and Divine”; John Clark & Marcus Peter Johnson, “The Incarnation of God”, Elyse Fitzpatrick, “Found in Him”, and portions of Loraine Boettner, “Studies in Theology”. My conclusion to this point is “where were these books 10 or 20 years ago”? But God is sovereign, and I am convinced that until I arrived at this study of Hebrews, which may be my last major Sunday School endeavour, He knew I didn’t need to know.

Think of pieces of the puzzle as you’ve studied the NT on your own with regard to Jesus’ life and works. Do you not find it odd that barely a word of His childhood is given to us, with the lone exception of Luke 2:40-52, when He was 12 years old, and in that passage, we are told, in v. 40, “*And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon Him.*”, then in v. 52, “*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.*” Could it be that this growth in wisdom and stature, surely as a result of His personal study of the Scriptures is what delayed His ministry until He was 30 years old? (Luke 3:23) – and He responds to Mary & Joseph, “*I must be about My Father’s business.*”... But not for 18 years yet?

Gerald Hawthorne adds to the discussion;

“Luke also takes note that Jesus’ childhood was like that of other children. He grew up and grew strong physically, while at the same time he developed mentally, religiously, and socially (Luke 2:40, 52). Subject to all the normal laws of growth and development (I Sam. 2:21b), Jesus was not in any way exempt from the stresses and struggles that are

commonly involved in that very human process of growing up. In fact, one of the Greek verbs Luke uses to describe this process is *prokoptein* (Luke 2:52), a picturesque word that literally means “to cut one’s way forward”, as one might chop a path through a forest. It suggests that Jesus experienced no fantastic developments in his early years or easy shortcuts on his way to maturity.”ⁱⁱⁱ

We are all familiar with the gospel record of His humanness, as He walked about, could only be in one place at a time, had friends, attended weddings, hungered, thirsted, grew weary, slept, cried, was dependent on His human parents during His younger years for food, water, hygiene, & instruction, escaped from deadly mobs, and so on. But our tendency is to focus on those aspects of His human life which appear to be the direct result of His deity – the miracles, healings, raising people from the dead, exorcising demons, calming the sea, etc. We shuffle His humanness to the background too quickly. As a result, we do not reflect on the full picture and as a result, we do not meditate on or exult in who our Saviour really is. I believe that the evidence shows that He, though God in the flesh, lived out His life, and everything He did, every temptation He faced and mastered, He overcame in the power of the Holy Spirit, and did not have to draw on His own deity, although He certainly could have, to face off against the Devil in the wilderness, for example, but instead, through the Holy Spirit, He mastered the Word of God and used it as the sword we are told it is in Hebrews 4:12. So, in that light, let’s begin to look at the evidence and analyse it. The first question that arises is:

How did Jesus live His life of full obedience, resisting temptation completely, and carrying out perfectly His Father’s will?

The answer we are most familiar with (and it is not really a wrong answer) is that Jesus was fully God and had all His divine power at His beck and call, and thus was able to resist temptations and carry out obediently the will of the Father out of the intrinsic divine nature of who He was. IOW – “He was perfectly obedient because He was perfectly God.”^{iv} This answer makes sense to us – has for years – but is it as accurate as it could be? The second question is:

If Jesus was perfectly obedient because He was perfectly God, then how can we, His followers, be called to live like Him, following in His footsteps As Peter commands us to do (I Pet. 2:21)?v

Since He was born without a sin nature, by virtue of the Virgin Birth, yet we are born as sinners who inherited Adam’s sinful nature, how is it we are called to live as He did? We do not have a sinless nature, so we do not have His nature which He had to carry out His flawless mission, but is that the sense in which He did it? On His own? Or is the role of the Holy Spirit indwelling Christ the key for us?

Our instincts and understanding of the Bible tell us that the NT is stressing the deity of Christ because so many of the gospel passages key in on actions He did that only

God could do: Mark 2:1-12 (forgiving sin); Walking on the water; calming the storm; Matt. 17 (Transfiguration); JN 11 (raising Lazarus from the dead); JN 11:25 (claiming to be the Resurrection and the life); atoning for sins – because of the infinite value of which only God could do.^{vi}

However, the predominant way, the day by day gospel record and many passages in the epistles and the OT prophecies of His first advent indicate that His incremental progress toward being our perfect substitute were lived out in His humanity, and this is what we see in Hebrews 2:10, 17-18; 5:7-9; 7:28 and elsewhere.

Robert E. Coleman comments;

“Just as the prophets had said, in the fullness of time the Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin so that she conceived and gave birth to the only begotten Son of God (Matt. 1:18,20; Luke 1:35). Thereafter, the Spirit directed Jesus during the days of his incarnate life. Everything he said and did was in the strength and demonstration of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-19).”^{vii}

He was not alone. His prayer life, and the Holy Spirit were huge contributors to His successful mission. He was the Spirit-empowered Messiah, empowered by the Spirit to accomplish all He came to accomplish. Gerald Hawthorne rightly comments here;

“The presence and work in Jesus’ life is one of the most significant biblical evidences of the genuineness of His humanity, for the significance of the Spirit in His life lies precisely in this: that the Holy Spirit was the divine power by which Jesus overcame His human limitations, rose above His human weakness, and won out over His human mortality.”^{viii}

Bruce Ware adds;

“The Holy Spirit was the divine power by which Jesus overcame his human limitations, rose above his human weaknesses, and won out over his human mortality.

Now, one must ask the question: why did Jesus need the Spirit of God to indwell and empower his life? After all, he was fully God, and being fully God, certainly nothing could be added to him, for as God, he possessed already, infinitely and eternally, every quality or perfection that there is. Yet, Jesus was indwelt with the Spirit and ministered in the power of the Spirit. So, we ask: What could the Spirit of God contribute to the deity of Christ? And the answer we must give is: Nothing! As God he possesses every quality infinitely, and nothing can be added to him. So then we ask this question instead: What could the Spirit of God contribute to the humanity of Christ? The answer is: everything of supernatural power and enablement that he, in his human nature would lack. The only way to make sense, then, of the fact that Jesus came in the power of the Spirit is to understand that he lived his life fundamentally as a man, and as such, he relied on the Spirit to provide the power, grace, knowledge, wisdom, direction, and enablement he needed, moment by moment, and day by day, to fulfill the mission the Father sent him to accomplish.”^{ix}

There is plenty of OT and NT support for what Ware says here. Notice a couple of prophetic passages; Isa. 11:1-3 (v. 2) and Isa. 61:1-2, which Jesus quotes in the synagogue in Nazareth in Luke 4:18-19, and note Luke 4:14. This text in Luke indicates (because Jesus chose it to reveal His identity as the “Spirit-anointed-

Messiah”) – was the very heart of who He was to those in His hometown. Thus, we must see Him as having come in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Ian Hamilton, in his outstanding chapter in “The Inerrant Word”, says the following; “Jesus’ submission to the Scriptures was complete, without hesitation, disputation or compromise. He knew the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and because God cannot lie, his Word cannot be broken or annulled. There is, however, a question that is both generally interesting and theologically significant: How did Jesus come to embrace the absolute authority of God’s Word and willingly allow it to shape and style his whole life? If his humanity was a true humanity and he truly “became flesh”, we have to take seriously the ordinary mental and psychological processes by which any human being learns anything. We must guard against thinking that Jesus short-circuited the normal intellectual process of maturation. Luke tells us that Jesus “increased in wisdom” (2:52). The writer of Hebrews tells us that “he learned obedience” (Heb. 5:8).”...

“In his outstanding commentary The Prophecy of Isaiah, Alec Motyer writes: “He (the Lord’s Servant) was not endowed with an instant gift, and instructed tongue, but was subjected to the training procedures appropriate to all discipleship – concentration on the Word of the Lord...The sharpened sword and the polished arrow (49:2) did not happen automatically or all at once. They were the products of prolonged attention, defined here as the discipleship of the ‘morning by morning’ appointment with God.” Our Lord Jesus’s submission to the truthfulness and authority of Holy Scripture came in the context of personal discipleship. We need the ministry of the Holy Spirit to persuade us inwardly of the inerrancy of Scripture, but ordinarily he does this in the context of discipleship. As our ears are opened to ‘hear’ the things of God, God is pleased to seal to our hearts and minds the divine truthfulness and infallible character of his Word...

Our Lord’s human nature was...a true human nature. It was a nature capable of maturation and growth. He ‘increased...in favor with God and man (LK 2:52). His knowledge of Scripture was therefore an acquired knowledge. It was a developed knowledge. Just as Jesus’s holiness was an incremental holiness (not from the less holy to the more holy, but from the perfect holiness of a one-year-old to the perfect holiness of a thirty-year-old), so his knowledge of Scripture was an incremental knowledge. We surely know that ‘morning by morning’, our Lord applied himself diligently, willingly hearing and receiving God’s Word. He was an ever-ready student of the Scriptures. He had an unstained landing ground for Scripture in his mind and heart, unlike us. But he did not circumvent the ordinary intellectual process of learning as he continually submitted himself to the authority of God’s Word.”^x

One more text: Matt. 12:22-32 – We usually center our attention on this passage in vv. 31-32, however, pay close attention now to 2 other aspects of this passage;

- (1) V. 28 – the OT prophecies of the coming Messiah predicted One who would be Spirit-anointed (cf. also Isa. 42:1-4; 61:1-2 & Acts 1:1-2) and He is reminding the Pharisees of this, which they should have known rather than jealously attributing His power to a demonic spirit.
- (2) Jesus does not claim that He has used His own divine power and authority as God, but instead, He attributes this power to the Holy Spirit at work in Him and through Him! Their blasphemy thus, was not ultimately against Him, but

against the Holy Spirit who empowered Him. That was the point of their blasphemy, whether they realised it or not., because that is the fact which Jesus points out to them.

Have you ever considered that Jesus was here on earth only 33 years? And that His actual ministry time was a mere 3 years? It began at 30 years old. Why not 18 or 20, or 23? He could have had many more years of impacting the world. What was He doing on earth before His ministry began? Bruce Ware comments,

“How well did [Jesus] need to know those Scriptures to be prepared for the public ministry the Father had designed for him? Perhaps the fact that he commenced that public ministry at age thirty gives us a part of the answer. For three decades the Spirit worked within Jesus, instructing him and bringing him yet greater and greater insight, until finally the day came when he was ready to face the Devil, the Pharisees, the demons, and his disciples, all with the Word of God deeply enmeshed in his soul. Marvel that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, grew in wisdom.”^{xi}

In fact, Luke 2:40 & 52 tells us this very thing, picking up the narrative of His human life with a glimpse of Him at 12. So, when we arrive at Heb. 5:7, and this passage is introduced by, “*In the days of his flesh...*”, we are aware that this speaks mostly of His ministry years (the only context we really have), and although some commentators focus here on Gethsemane, and admittedly, the context bears that out, I believe this is a reference to His whole life of prayer. He was always praying, and while His prayer life was nearing its earthly culmination at Gethsemane, and on the cross, I do not confine this verse to those events alone because the next verse says, “*He learned obedience through what He suffered.*” And His suffering was not confined to Gethsemane or the cross, as explosive as those examples are. The “days of His flesh” cover 33 years.

Elyse Fitzpatrick adds a very appropriate comment here;

“When we consider Jesus’ work on our behalf, we usually think it began with his baptism in the Jordan when he was about 30 years old. And in one sense that is true, for his public ministry did begin there in those muddy waters in Palestine. But if we consider only three-and-a-half years of his public ministry, if our understanding of his work pauses after a brief celebration at Bethlehem to resume only at his baptism in the Jordan, we rob ourselves of the comfort that his whole life of isolation, obscurity and obedience are meant to bring us.

Jesus willingly hid himself away in Nazareth for thirty years. Generally ignored, he toiled without complaint, suffering humbly on our behalf. He lived as Jesus the child, big brother, carpenter, and single man providing for his family. He voluntarily adopted all these roles for us. His life as a young man with sawdust in his eyes, serving his widowed mother and siblings, was no meaningless placeholder while he counted the days until he could step onto the scene and do something really important. No, he wasn’t merely treading water. He was living life for us, and he was being perfected through the suffering of life in a sin-cursed world. It was for us that he suffered, lived, and loved every day for thirty years. The one who didn’t grasp equality with God that was rightfully his, “emptied himself” and became a servant (Phil. 2:6-7) and learned by experience what it was to be `gentle and lowly in heart` (Matt. 11:29) as he suffered in human frailty year after year.”^{xii}

John Clark & Marcus Peter Johnson add:

“We confess then, that just as the mortifying, vivifying power and presence of the Holy Spirit immediately sanctified Christ at the moment of his conception, the Spirit continually and progressively sanctified Christ through the whole of his sojourn from Bethlehem to Golgotha. Christ sinlessly assumed our sinful flesh in the womb of Mary, and then sinlessly bore our sinful flesh all the way to the cross, where that flesh met definitive dissolution and destruction. From incarnation to crucifixion, our sinful flesh was condemned in the flesh that Christ took from us and made his own, in order that our human constitution as created by God might be redeemed and transformed to newness of life. *“In the days of his flesh,”* reads the epistle to the Hebrews, *“Jesus...learned obedience through what he suffered”* (5:7-8). Does this imply that our Lord was ever disobedient, that he ever sinned? No. This same epistle plainly states that in those days Jesus was tempted in every respect as we are, *“yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). God the Son experientially grasped what it meant to render utter obedience to his Father in our flesh, in our actual state of human existence east of Eden. He took for himself our corrupted humanity, decisively bent toward sin and, being battered and buffeted by ever-stiffening headwinds of opposition, he bent it back toward God. Our Lord was not glorified at conception. Rather, he was glorified after being made *“perfect through suffering”* (Heb.2:10; 5:8-9), after fully, completely, spotlessly obeying his Father within the very realm of our fallen existence. Sinlessly bearing our sinful flesh, Jesus Christ became the light shining in our darkness.”^{xiii}

The phrase we just looked at In Heb. 5:7 – “he learned obedience through what He suffered” also ties into v. 9 – “being made perfect...” and again, Ware makes an excellent point;

“Consider a couple of indicators that seem to warrant this reading of Heb. 5:8. First, look at what Hebrews had just told us in v. 7. We read there not only that Jesus offered up prayers and supplications to the Father throughout his life (“in the days of his flesh”) but that he did so “with loud cries and tears”. Unless we trivialize what this is declaring, would we not have to conclude that the situations this verse points to are ones in which Jesus experienced agonizing hardship and difficulty in his endeavor to obey the Father? Does this not indicate that Jesus’ trust in the Father and his dependence on what the Father alone would provide him was hard fought and won? Throughout his life he fought to believe and fought to obey and fought in prayer as he hoped in what the father would provide. To put this point differently, Jesus’ faith and obedience during these times of testing, in which he offered supplications with loud cries and tears, were not experiences of an easy walk of faith or effortless acts of obedience. Jesus’ obedience was not automatic, as though his divine nature simply eliminated any real struggle to believe or effort to obey. No, in his human nature, Jesus fought for faith and struggled to obey; otherwise the reality that Heb. 5:7 describes is turned into theatrics and rendered disingenuous. The inclusion of “with loud cries and tears” tells us, then, of the reality of the struggle Jesus endured as he trusted and obeyed his Father, praying earnestly for what he needed to fulfill the Father’s will.”^{xiv}

Jesus’ spiritual life was anything but static. It was dynamic and full of growth in His humanity. He lived from His heart consistent and complete obedience, and submission to His Father’s will. In fact, in my personal study, I have identified at least 91

statements by Jesus or assertions in the text in the 4 Gospels that He ascribed all authority for everything He did to the Father and about 9 times to the Holy Spirit.

Robert Coleman comments again;

“Absolute obedience to the will of God, of course, was the controlling principle in the Master’s own life. Calvary was but the crowning climax of his commitment. Having already accepted the cross in advance (Acts 2:32; Rev. 13:8), Christ took each step on earth in conscious acceptance of God’s eternal purpose for his life.”^{xv}

As a result, He faced the opposition, suffering taunts and ridicule, as well as failed attempts to kill Him; things we would all face if we were so faithful. As Paul tells us, (I Tim. 3:10) “*all who desire to live godly will face persecution.*” And Hebrews 12:3-4 tells us, “*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*”

The author of Hebrews specifies that this trend of Jesus’ humanity was “in the days of His flesh”, so it cannot be extended back into eternity past, where He existed strictly in His divine nature. Although in eternity past, the Trinity had a hierarchy of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, [Titus 3:3-7] all three persons fully God, and fully unified in purpose, yet with ranked roles for the purposes of redemption;

“An authority-submission structure marks the very nature of the eternal Being of the One who is three. In this authority-submission structure, the three Persons understand the rightful place each has. The Father possesses the place of supreme authority, and the Son is the eternal Son of the Father. As such, the Son submits to the Father just as the Father, as eternal Father of the eternal Son, exercises authority over the Son. And the Spirit submits to both the Father and the Son. This hierarchical structure of authority exists in the eternal Godhead even though it is also eternally true that each Person is fully equal to each other in their commonly possessed essence.”^{xvi}

Ware adds this important note as well, citing P.T. Forsyth;

“Father and Son co-exist, co-equal in the Spirit of holiness, i.e., of perfection. But Father and Son is a relation inconceivable except the Son be obedient to the Father. The perfection of the Son and the perfecting of his holy work lay, not in his suffering but in his obedience. And, as he was eternal Son, it means an eternal obedience...But obedience is not conceivable without some form of subordination. Yet in his very obedience the Son was co-equal with the Father; the Son’s yielding will was no less divine than the Father’s exigent will. Therefore, in the very nature of God, subordination implies no inferiority.”^{xvii}

Verse 7 here establishes that Jesus felt strongly His need for divine assistance – hence His robust, constant prayer life – and by this He expressed His full dependence on God. He felt His weakness, vulnerability, His human limitations and even some aspects of the future were beyond His accepted limitations of ability to reckon with (cf. MT 24:36). Yet, other times He demonstrated the ability to know people’s unexpressed thoughts – cf. JN 1: 47-51; Mark 2:6-11.

In verse 8: “*He learned obedience through what He suffered...*” There are two things this cannot possibly mean;

- (1) Millard Erickson postulates that Jesus learned to obey His Father for the first time in the incarnation. IOW – before the incarnation, had He obeyed, such obedience would indicate in some sense He was lesser than the Father, therefore, only as the incarnated Jesus, when He took on human form and nature, could He for the first time experience what it meant to obey His Father.^{xviii} Bruce Ware identifies 2 reasons why this view is not feasible. (1) this view is shown to be wrong by looking at 2 verses – JN 6:38 & JN 8:42. He acted in obedience prior to the incarnation simply by agreeing to come. You could also throw in Phil. 2:5-11 as well here, and (2) Hebrews does not just say “He learned obedience”, but that “*He learned obedience through what He suffered.*” So, the point is not that He learned to obey for the first time ever in His existence, but that He learned to obey within this particular context of suffering, agony, affliction and opposition; things He never would have experienced prior to the incarnation! “*The Son’s obedience in eternity past was true obedience, but it was not forged in the fires of suffering.*”^{xix}

(2) The 2nd thing this cannot mean is expressed here by Ware; “Another possible explanation of what Hebrews means when it says, “he learned obedience through what he suffered” can be eliminated summarily. Some might think that Jesus finally learned to obey the Father, having disobeyed him many times previously. In other words, the point is that Jesus “finally got it”. He finally learned that he needed to obey rather than disobey. While this may be our experience...it simply cannot be what this text means. Just a few verses later, the author declares of Jesus that he was tempted in every respect as we are, “yet without sin” (4:15). Obviously it follows that since Jesus never sinned, that simply cannot be the case that Hebrews means here that a previously disobedient Jesus finally learned to obey.”^{xx}

So having seen what this text (and thus, others like it) cannot be saying, what does it mean? Again, there are 2 main possibilities;

- (1) Jesus encountered hatred, resistance and outright opposition during His ministry years. Even His mother and brothers at one point (cf. MK 3:20-21) felt He was “out of His mind”. Jesus knew that to obey His Father would result in a constant barrage of abuse but He resisted the temptation to avoid the suffering by turning away from God’s will, which He knew would alleviate the suffering, and He resolutely obeyed His Father every step of the way, thus ‘learning’ to obey every direction and leading of His Father through the Holy Spirit and via direct communication with the Father in prayer without failure and without compromise.
- (2) Since His spiritual life was not static, and as He grew as a man in His relationship with His Father, and grew in faith every step of the way as He obeyed in the midst of suffering, “He learned obedience through what He suffered.” In what sense then, did He learn?

“As the Son learned to obey the Father in earlier times of “lighter” divine demands upon Him and consequent “lighter” suffering – lighter that is, in comparison both to the divine demands and the

suffering He would encounter in the end, as He obeyed the Father in going to the cross – these earlier experiences of faith in the Father’s provision, protection, and direction prepared Him for the greater acts of obedience He would need to render as He got nearer to the time of the cross. In other words, those earlier “obediences” we might call them, under circumstances with lighter suffering and affliction, were prescribed by the Father as the training program necessary to prepare Jesus for the later and much harder obediences that were to come. He learned to obey increasingly difficult divine demands with their accompanying increasingly difficult opposition and affliction through the whole of His life, which prepared Him for the greatest attending suffering He would or ever could experience. In this sense, then, the difficulties and afflictions Jesus experienced through the whole of His life were planned by His Father in order to prepare Jesus for the greater – and, indeed, greatest! – acts of faith He would need to render to complete the Father’s mission for His Son.”^{xxi}

Support for this second idea comes from Heb. 5:7 as well – “...with loud cries and tears.” Note the following from Elyse Fitzpatrick again;

“He learned obedience by what he suffered, and this suffering included being weak, finite and limited like you. He wasn’t omniscient. He didn’t know everything there is to know. He wasn’t omnipresent, nor did he use his power as God to shelter himself from suffering. He was limited in all the ways you are limited – in strength, understanding, wisdom and faith. Like you, he had to walk by faith rather than by sight. Jesus didn’t have any special vision that enabled him to see invisible realities. No, when he looked at the sky, he saw just what you see: sky, clouds, sun. Just like you, he had to believe the Word (and the Word he had consisted of only the OT Scriptures). Like you, he had to trust that his Father would accomplish all his will through him at the right time, without having the surety that seeing into the future would have given him. Trust was an act of faith for him just as it is for you, yet he never doubted that his father’s word was true. Think of that. Because he lived the life of a faithful Jewish son; he died the death of an unfaithful, unbelieving infidel – for you, so that you might be found in him.”^{xxii}

This obedience of Jesus is brought into sharp focus at Gethsemane (MT 26:36-46; MK 14:32-42; & LK 22:39-46), where He prayed 3 times for “the cup” to pass, and He agonized to the point of sweating droplets of blood, and an angel was sent by God to come and sustain Him. His obedience in Gethsemane – “*not My will but Yours be done...*” – was not automatic and it was far from an easy decision! It was a hard fought battle. He prayed fervently and in agony 3 times, which at the least means there was no resolution of His plea on the first or second requests. Just consider the agony expressed in MT 26:38.

There are two conclusions we come to as we observe what we have just described:

- (1) Jesus’ struggle to trust & obey the Father was real! Cf. Psalm 22:1-3,4-10,11-31. Imagine Jesus as a boy, or as a teenager, studying Scripture, as He arrives at Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53. At some point, Jesus the human recognises (through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit) that these chapters are about Him, about His mission, His being sent, and His intended goal. What must that have been like for Him? By Luke 24:44ff, Jesus (this is after the resurrection), teaches that the whole OT is about Him.

- (2) His agonizing over going to the cross was His greatest act of obedience – cf. Phil. 2:8 – requiring the deepest commitment of trust and hope in His Father, in light of the most severe suffering He was about to face – deadly suffering – does it not stand to reason that the Father had prepared Jesus for this moment?

Notice:

“Can we not now see that all the previous tests of faith, the divine demands that he followed and the sufferings that he experienced, were preparatory and strengthening for his obeying the Father in the garden? Here’s an interesting question: Could Jesus have obeyed the Father and gone to the cross to die for our sins when he was twelve years old? Could he have done it at the outset of his ministry, at age 30? Or did the Father know just when His Son’s faith would be strengthened sufficiently so that at this time he was able to engage the fight and withstand the temptation and declare in the end, “Not my will but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42)? Indeed, Jesus learned obedience from the things he suffered. That is, he learned to obey increasingly difficult demands of the Father, preparing him for this hardest of all demands – going to the cross. Could he have faced this Gethsemane challenge successfully at the ages of 12 or 30? I think the answer is no. As remarkable as his obedience was each step of the way, all of these experiences were meant to build his faith and strengthen his character so that he could, in the end, succeed in fulfilling the will of the father in choosing to endure the agony of the cross for the remission of our sins.”^{xxiii}

We have one more thing to look at, and it is found in Heb. 2:9. “*And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...*”

“made perfect”? How can this be referring to the Son of God our Lord and Savior? Note also Heb. 2:10. The Greek word used here means “to bring to completion or a desired end”. The words “complete” or “mature” could also be inserted here.

So the issue is not the idea that Jesus moved (as he lived) toward sinless perfection, because He was always sinlessly perfect, but this is a reference to character formation and maturity of faith so that, when the time came, He would be prepared to obey the Father’s most demanding command – to go to the cross and die on behalf of those whom the Father had given to Him before time began (cf. John 17,2,6 - twice,9,10,12,24).

This is a difficult concept to swallow for the main reason that we seldom approach the topic of Christ’s humanity from this viewpoint, or with this intensity. I have wrestled with it for quite a while, hoping I could someday make sense of it in the passages that express it. Thank God for His timing in directing my attention in personal reading to include this book and others in my reading regimen since December, as I was studying and teaching Hebrews, where this truth is quite prominent.

Marcus Rainsford makes this statement as he comments on the unity of the Godhead as well as the unity of all believers in Christ in John 17;

“The highest union in existence, and the closest possible, is the union between the Man Christ Jesus, and the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God. This is what is termed as the hypostatic union. The human nature complete in all its fullness, and the divine nature complete in all its attributes, are united in one glorious Person; the Godhead not interfering with the essentials of the manhood; and the manhood not interfering with the essentials of the Godhead; but both natures remaining complete in their perfection of one Person – the Lord Jesus Christ – who is in all points like unto His brethren because He is man, and also in all points one with and equal to the Father because He is God: and this union doth not destroy or hinder the human feelings of the man, nor doth the manhood dim the luster and the glory of God. This union is altogether ineffable and inconceivable, but it is clearly revealed for the obedience and joy of faith.”^{xxiv}

Bruce Ware comments,

“His “being made perfect” is precisely about his growth in faith and his strengthening of character and resolve through his lifetime of testings and sufferings so that he was fully mature and able, through prayer and divine enablement, to accomplish the work his Father had sent him to do. And as Heb. 5:9 reminds us, it is only because he was so perfected, it was only through the pathway of this process of the maturity of his character and faith, that Jesus was able to be the “source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.”^{xxv}

He continues,

“So, let us rejoice that Jesus “died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3). But let us remember that this happened only because it is also true that Jesus “became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). The life he lived prepared the way for the death he died. Praise be to a Savior, the only savior of sinners, who gave himself with resolve and passion to the will of his Father, “learning obedience” and “being made perfect” through the trials and testings of life, that he might be able, in the end, to save all who believe and follow him.”^{xxvi}

It is clear that the author of Hebrews must be referring to some way that Jesus was made perfect, mature or complete – but in a way He was not before this. But, as mentioned earlier, it cannot possibly be a reference to a change from some extent of sinfulness to sinlessness, because He was never, ever sinful in the least iota ever. The connection to verse 8 makes it plain that this “perfection” is the result of having “*learned obedience from what he suffered.*”

The maturity accomplished in Christ, then, was the strengthening of both His character and faith (as a human) sufficiently enough that He was able, through His prayer life, testing, suffering and divine enablement in the Holy Spirit to go to the humility & separation of the cross, having overcome every temptation and thus to be qualified as the second Adam to be the “*source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*”

When He went to the cross, it was both as man and God – Richard Phillips helpfully explains why His humanity and divine nature were necessary to make His atonement effective;

“How can God’s Son represent and identify with us? The first answer is the incarnation, when the second person of the Trinity took up human flesh to undertake our cause. Hebrews 2:14 says, *“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.”* As we saw when studying that text, Jesus’ death on the cross counted for men because it was men who owed God the debt, and in Christ it was a man who paid it. It was his divine nature that made Christ’s blood valuable and able to propitiate God’s wrath, but it was his human nature that he offered for us. If it had been angels he had come to save, then he would have come as an angel; since he came to be the Savior of men, it was a man that he came. Hebrews 2:17 sums it up this way, *“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”* The incarnation stands behind the atonement. It was because Jesus became man that he represented men while dying on the cross.”^{xxvii}

In this explanation by Richard Phillips, I believe we find the key to what His deity was all about while He was on earth. It allowed for His atonement to be eternal in scope.

Application of These Truths

There are at least 3 main applications we can take away from these truths we have just reviewed. These are Bruce Ware’s 3 points^{xxviii}, but my own commentary.

- (1) There are no insignificant obediences. In every trial, temptation, affliction, suffering and ‘fork in the road’ that God allows into our lives, God is using that event or opportunity for us to either trust or obey, or to decline to trust and obey Him. We have observed that Jesus came under that same sort of testing- i.e. Heb. 4:15, *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*

Once it begins to dawn on us that Jesus has walked this path before us, it should transform our thinking about the “little things” we face as ‘tests of faith’ every day. They may seem trivial, but we have to realise that God is using them to sanctify or perfect us, to enable us to ‘learn to be obedient’ and this strengthens our character and makes us more like Christ. Every obedience matters!

- (2) Suffering, affliction, trials, testing – these are gifts granted to us by God for our growth, necessary paving stones along the pathway that leads to our fullness of character and joy. We have all seen the verses that indicate God’s purpose in bringing things we would never desire into our lives for our good and His glory. Note [Designed for our good: Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 1:3-7, 9-10; 4:16-28; Jas. 1:2-4; I Pet. 1:6-12; 5:10-11; For God’s purpose: Rom. 8:28-30; 5:3,4; Heb. 5:8; Isa. 48:10-11; 2 Tim. 3:12; Acts 5:41; Gen. 50:20; 45:5-8; Granted by God: Phil. 1:29; I Thess. 3:2-3,4-7; etc.]. Every instance is intentional and purposeful. Nothing is accidental – nothing.

Since God “*declares the end from the beginning*” (Isa. 46:10) and “*works all things after the counsel of His will*” (Eph. 1:11), then He is in complete control of everything good or bad that we come across in our lives. That includes how His Word interacts in our lives – cf. Isa. 55:11 & Jer. 1:12.

- (3) The life of growing faith is one that involves a fight for faith and enduring to the end through difficulties. This life of faith is never lived on auto-pilot; it is never a life of passivity and ease; it is not something done to us without our full and active participation. If anyone could have lived a life of faith on auto-pilot, it would have been Jesus. Yet we’ve seen Him in agony in Gethsemane, in all night long prayers, and battling in the flesh against Satan Himself (while extremely hungry and thirsty). His human nature was sinless at the start and remained so – He was without sin, right up to the cross. That was not because He called on His God-nature to stifle temptation, but because He fought it in His humanity and prevailed, so that Hebrews 2:17-8, and Heb. 4:14-15 are true. We do not possess a sinless nature, so we must fight to be obedient and trusting, and yet, through God’s empowering grace, His sustaining us by the indwelt Spirit, we can obey. But this divine enablement does not replace our responsibility to fight and labor [to agonize – cf. Acts 14:22]. “Rather, such divine enablement activates our resolve and puts in motion the fight of faith necessary to obey”^{xxix} and to persevere to the end.

May God the Holy Spirit work in each of us to teach us to obey Him in love.

Word Faith Heresy

As a post-informational aspect of the rather eye-opening information we’ve been looking at here, I ran across a quote in a book that kind of rocked my thinking on this topic, then Ken Baird quoted something very similar from Kenneth Copeland in his introductory lesson on Philippians back in January. I am not sure if this is the same quote, but here is one that John MacArthur brought to my attention;

“Kenneth Copeland, defending his infamous “prophecy” that seemed to call doubt on the deity of Christ wrote, “Why didn’t Jesus openly proclaim Himself as God during His 33 years on earth? For one single reason, He hadn’t come to earth as God, He’d come as man.”

The Word faith Jesus often sounds like nothing more than a divinely empowered man: (J.M. now cites Kenneth Copeland)

“(Most Christians) mistakenly believe that Jesus was able to work wonders, to perform miracles, and to live above sin because He had divine power that we don’t have. Thus, they’ve never really aspired to live like He lived.

They don’t realize that when Jesus came to earth, He voluntarily gave up that advantage, living His life here not as God, but as man. He had no innate supernatural powers. He had no ability to perform miracles until after He was anointed by the Holy Spirit as recorded in Luke 3:22. He ministered as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit.”^{xxx}

Then, shortly after this quote, he added,

“The Spirit of God spoke to me and said, “Son, realize this.” (Now follow me on this, don’t let your tradition trip you up .) He said, “Think this way: A twice-born man whipped Satan

in his own domain.” And I threw my Bible down and I sat up like that. I said, “What?” He said, “A born-again man defeated Satan. The first-born of many brethren defeated him.” He said, “You are the very image and the very copy of that one.”

I said, “Goodness gracious sakes alive!” I began to see what had gone on in there. And I said, “Well, now you don’t mean – You couldn’t dare mean that I could’ve done the same thing.”

He said, “Oh yeah! If you’d known that – had the knowledge of the Word of God that He did, you could have done the same thing. Because you’re a reborn man too.” He said, “the same power that I used to raise Him from the dead, I used to raise you from your death in trespasses and sins.” He said, “I had to have that copy and that pattern to establish judgment on Satan so that I could recreate a child and a family and a whole new race of mankind.” And he said, “You are in His likeness.”

MacArthur comments - That utterance is glaringly blasphemous. It is astonishing to me that anyone with the barest knowledge of biblical truth could accept it as true revelation. But judging from the response to Copeland’s ministry, hundreds of thousands do.”^{xxxii}

Do you see the dilemma? Parts of these quotes read a lot like what I have been sharing with the class, so I must get you to understand why John MacArthur calls this blasphemous when I believe he would whole-heartedly agree with what I have been teaching. There are significant differences.

First of all, notice the underlined portions of both quotes. The first one – “Why didn’t Jesus...He’d come as man.” There are 2 major theological problems in this statement. The first is that Jesus did proclaim Himself to be God numerous times in the gospel record. Now, He didn’t state it just in those specific words, but it is unmistakable in many passages, including: JN 1:1; 8:16-19,23,42,47-51,54-58; 10:14-18,25-33; 12:44; 13:20; 14:1,8-11; 17; 18:4-8, etc. Many times the disciples called Him the “Son of God” as well. This idea that Jesus never claimed to be God is a common error (sometimes agenda-driven) by atheists and liberals, ‘believers’ to apostates (i.e., John Shelby Spong, Bart Ehrman) and apparently, Ken Copeland and his ilk. But we cannot cast aside His Deity, even if, in God’s divine plan, He, being in the form of God did not count equality with God something to be grasped.

The second issue with this statement is that Jesus did come as man, but He also came as God – many of the verses above state this, and there are numerous verses and passages which express the fact that He pre-existed as God before Bethlehem – cf. Micah 5:2, which is likely the pre-eminent passage in the OT to teach this truth. Also note, that in the NT, phrases like “I was sent”, “I have come”, and so on, tend to look back on His pre-existence. Logically, to be ‘sent’ means He had to have existed in order to be sent – cf. John 17:5; MT 27:63-64; MK 9:37; LK 3:22; 4:34-35; 5:32; I Pet. 1:20, Phil. 2:5-8, etc.

In the second quote above, the first underlined issue is glaringly obvious; “A twice-born man whipped Satan.” Ignoring his ridiculous statement that the Spirit of God spoke to him to let him know this!; Jesus was never born again! That phrase, as used

in the NT & understood in an orthodox way, is only used of sinners, born with a sin nature, to whom the Holy Spirit has given new life! The prerequisite then, the reason sinners need this is that we were born with a sin nature (Rom. 5:18-21) and have committed sins. Neither of those facts is true of Jesus! This is a lie of Kenneth Copeland's, and note the drama of how he received this "revelation"! He accentuates it this way because he knows it is ridiculous, but he's not alone – virtually every Word Faith preacher says the same thing!

Secondly, "You are the very image and copy of that One." In fact, all he says from this point to the end of the quote is a bald-faced lie. He uses "very image" as the semi-biblical hook (much the way that cults do) to make us believe that what follows is biblical – based on Genesis 1:26-27. Yes, we are created in God's image, but we are not, because of our sin, "the very copy of that One" or "Jesus' image" in that sense. Now, we certainly strive to be like Christ – cf. Rom. 8:29-30; Phil. 3:20-21, 8-11,13-14, and when we are saved, we are declared righteous, we do not become righteous. Copeland wants us to believe he is righteous and a copy of Jesus Christ [in another place he calls himself a "little God"] cf. "because you're a reborn man too."

His last 2 sentences in the quote are also ridiculous and anti-biblical. It is hard to see what he means by the first sentence, "I had to have that copy...". Theologically, this is a statement of utter nonsense. God needed Christ to defeat Satan, not us – cf. Col. 2:13-5. Copeland just skims the edges of biblical truth by using phrases, words and clauses that appear to be biblical, so the ridiculous points won't be so easily questioned. This is cultic Scripture twisting of the worst sort, because the intentions of Word Faith teachers ["*by their fruit you shall know them*" – MT 7:20] is to suck people in so they will send them money. By making himself appear to be a copy of Jesus Christ, that goal is one step closer, by making people think that they too, can be even better, because they think they are supporting a "little god".

I hope the difference is apparent here. I am pointing us to focus on these passages of Hebrews with the intention of glorifying Jesus and in awe, worship Him because He fulfilled Adam's God-given original intention, where Adam had failed miserably. Word Faith teachers want people to glorify them because they are copies of Jesus, thus they become (in their own minds) personally worthy of our praise and alms, and of course, all the riches and blessings that "God" sends their way through their followers.

The Role of the Holy Spirit (see also notes on pg. 4ff of this lesson)

The original Adam was born without a sin nature, in a state of 'untested righteousness'. He was created, not deity, human only and he fell in sin. The second and last Adam – Jesus – was born without a sin nature by virtue of the Virgin Birth, and He was both God and Man. He was not created, but pre-existed, was born not just sinless but holy (LK 1:31-33); did not fall, never sinned and was 100% obedient to God throughout His life, being fully man and fully God.

Gerald Hawthorne comments,

“Just what was the nature of the Spirit’s work at the conception and birth of Jesus? Was the Spirit the creator of a new humanity? Was he the agent through which the eternal Son joined himself in space and time to the human race? What significance can be attached to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus? Was its significance that which John the Baptist attached to it – concrete proof that Jesus was the Son of God? What does Luke mean when he writes that Jesus was filled with the Spirit? In what way or ways did this filling manifest itself? How did Jesus’ performance of miracles differ from that of his disciples? Was his knowledge of what was in people’s minds different from that of Peter’s when Peter knew, apparently without being told, that Ananias and Sapphira had lied about the sale of their property? Was the redemption of the human race really brought about not simply by the death of Jesus, but by the death of Jesus made effective through the eternal Spirit? Was the resurrection of Jesus contingent upon the power of the Spirit? These questions are many, and yet they can be resolved into one: What role did the Holy Spirit play in Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection; what was the significance of his work in the total earthly experience of Jesus?”^{xxxii}

And he adds;

“The presence and work in Jesus’ life is one of the most significant biblical evidences of the genuineness of His humanity, for the significance of the Spirit in His life lies precisely in this: that the Holy Spirit was the divine power by which Jesus overcame His human limitations, rose above His human weakness, and won out over His human mortality.”^{xxxiii}

Sam Storms adds his own understanding of this concept;

“Jesus is specific in identifying the nature of this sin: it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The religious leaders were not accused of blaspheming Jesus Himself, a sin for which there is forgiveness (Matt. 12:32). Their sin was against the Holy Spirit because it was by the power of the Spirit that Jesus performed his healings and miracles. Jesus himself said in verse 28 that it was “by the Spirit of God” that he “cast out demons.” Here we see that the life Jesus lived, he lived in the power of the Spirit. The miracles he performed, he performed in the power of the Spirit.”^{xxxiv}

Isaiah 61:1-2

At this point, I wanted to bring into this the way Jesus interpreted at least one OT passage as it related to Him. See [Luke 4:16-21](#). Again, in the interest of time, we cannot go too deep in depth on this, but here, in the synagogue at Nazareth, as Jesus begins to minister in His home town, prior to moving out into Israel proper, teaches about Himself from [Isaiah 61:1-2](#). Notice the very first statement in Isaiah 61:1, “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me...*”. This is followed by a general summary of all the things He would do as the Messiah among His people, and the obvious implication of this is that He would accomplish these things in the Spirit of God’s power.

Possible Problem Passages with regard to the Thesis that Jesus Lived Life only as a Spirit-empowered Human Being

As can be said about just about any Bible position, there are obstacles that could be put forth to show weak points in the argument and theology of it. In the case of this thesis, although almost every objection can be overcome by using the main tenets of what I have already pointed out – especially the prayer life, knowledge of the Word and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit of Jesus in overcoming temptations, performing miracles, knowing parts of the future, knowing what people are thinking, and so on. Some of His miracles though, seem to transcend this and appear that He is performing them under the power of His own deity. Is that what was happening?

Some of the miracles or events that appear to form this sort of objection include such passages as: Mark 2:5-12 [and cf. JN 5:27; 20:23], where Jesus forgives sin; MK 4:35-41 as He calms the storm; Matt. 14:28-33 (par MK 6:45-51) where He walks on water; and Matt. 17:1-9 (& pars) where Christ is transfigured before 3 of the disciples, as well as Moses and Elijah. There are a few others, and the parallels to these named here, but we will look at these 4 main events / miracles to see if they refute (or form an exception to) or support the evidence we have looked at.

Before we look at these 4 passages, I do want to point out by way of reminder that many other Bible characters performed miracles, who were not deity. Joseph and Daniel had the power to interpret dreams, even when they were not told to them; many (if not all – although only many are recorded for us) of the disciples performed miracles, including raising dead people to life; Moses performed miracles (cf. Ex. 4:7-11,14); Elijah brought about a 3 year drought and ended it by prayer, he made the woman's flour & oil pot stay filled during the drought (I Kings 17:8-16), brought her dead son back to life (I Kings 17:17-24); & Elisha performed miracles (floating axe head – 2 Kings 6:4-7), healed Naaman's leprosy (2 Kings 5:8-14), parted the waters of the Jordan River with Elijah's cloak (2 Kings 2:13-14), and purified the poisonous stew (2 Kings 4:38-41). Even angels performed miraculous things – for example, the angels in Sodom in Gen. 19:11 struck the persistent wicked men with blindness. In all these cases, the source of the miracles was God, operating through His prophets, or angels who were all born as sinners, (at least the prophets were) just like us.

In the book of Acts [in fact, even in the gospels – cf. LK 9:1-6; 10:16,20] the apostles performed miracles – admittedly, none over nature though (for example, Paul did not calm the storm in Acts 28) – but plenty of healings and even resurrections (Acts 3:1-10; 9:32-35; 14:8-10; 19:11-12; 28:7-9; exorcisms – Acts 8:7; Paul survives a deadly viper bite – Acts 28:1-6; dead are brought back to life – 9:36-42; and blinded a magician – 13:9-12.

So, the act of performing miracles is by no means limited to Jesus or to deity in general, although the miracles all originate from God and probably more accurately, from the Holy Spirit. This may in fact be at least in part, what Jesus meant when He told His disciples, in JN 14:12-14: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”*

Now, having said all this, let's look at these examples that seem to go beyond the miracles performed by prophets, apostles, or even Jesus Himself, and try to determine if they could have been done by Jesus as a Holy Spirit empowered human or if His own deity had to be called into service. I hope you will understand that the exegesis of these passages, for the sake of time will be necessarily brief and to the point.

Mark 2:5-12 Jesus Forgives Sin

E. Earle Ellis provides an interesting counterpoint of view with regard to this passage, expressing a position that seems to refute our thesis:

“Would it not be better exegetically to let the deity and humanity, Spirit and non-Spirit texts stand in tension? It is a mistake, I think, to put on a Procrustean^{xxxv} bed of logic the question of how God be man and yet remain God. A logical synthesis has usually ended up denying one or the other. Indeed, if Jesus was God incarnate, he was a unique being and rules of analogy cannot be applied. Deity manifestations no more impugn his humanity than do human characteristics impugn his deity. It does not satisfy – even logically – to say that Jesus was the God-Man and then to reject the grounds offered by the gospels that he was (and is) Yahweh. His claim to forgive sins in his own name cannot, especially in the light of the rightful observations of the theologians, be softened by an implication (unspoken in the text) that he really only did it in the name or authority of another.”^{xxxvi}

So, does that opinion seal the issue? Must Jesus have done this action of forgiving sins only in His own deity? Must this divine forgiveness have come only through the God-side of the God-man?

However, this is not the only time Jesus mentions the authority He has been given to forgive sins. Note: JN 5:19-27; & 6:39,44. In JN 20:23, He even passes this authority (to some extent) along to the disciples (before – LK 10:17-20 - and after the resurrection). Before His resurrection, in Matthew 18:5-13, the Church has His authority in the discipline process. And another principle is at work here in Matthew 8:5-13. One of two instances of remote healing is recorded for us here, and another in JN 5:46-53.

In the Mark 2 account, Jesus demonstrates this God-given authority in Holy Spirit empowerment and extends the forgiveness of sins to this paralytic man, as v. 8 tells us, he even “*perceived in His Spirit*” the very thoughts of those there who considered this a blasphemy, and thus He healed the man’s physical ailment using the argument “from the greater to the lesser” to provide visible proof of the power being channeled through Him. I do not see this as an exception to the thesis...although I could be wrong, and perhaps such passages need to be allowed to “stand in tension” as Earle Ellis says above. I do contend though that this could have been done, and I believe, was done in the Spirit’s power.

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus Calms the Storm

The reality of Christ's humanness is an underlying tenet of this account. It had been an exhausting day, and as the group set out across Galilee in their boat, Jesus is asleep on a cushion of some sort on the back of the boat, so exhausted, He is seemingly oblivious to the terrifying plight of the boat and disciples in this storm which has come up quickly. Details like this bring the force of the reality of the Incarnation to bear on our minds.

It is the fearful disciples who bring their somewhat sarcastic pleas to Him, waking Him with, "Teacher, don't You care that we are perishing?" Note Psalm 107:23-32, where all the elements of this story are set for us in type. Storms on Galilee were not uncommon – and these men knew that. Many of them were fisherman, but this storm was so violent that it had them terrified for their lives, but once they had woken Him up, Jesus' action is immediate and He rebukes the waves and wind and the sea and the wind are immediately stilled! Then they feared Him and that immense power He displayed.

I consulted a number of commentaries on this passage, but not surprisingly, none picked up on our thesis regarding any other source for this power other than Jesus (despite Psalm 107). Alexander MacLaren did point out something though, that I found a bit helpful;

"In the second place, let me ask you to notice how we got from our Lord's own words a glimpse into the springs of this wonderful reality. There are 3 points which distinctly come out in various points in the Gospels as His motives for such unrelenting sedulousness and continuance of toil. The first is conveyed by such words as these: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me." "Let us preach to other cities also; for therefore I am sent." "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." All these express one thought. Christ lived and toiled, and bore weariness and exhaustion, and counted every moment as worthy to be garnered up and precious, as to be filled with deeds of love and kindness, because wherever He went, and to whatsoever He set His hand, He had the one consciousness of a great task laid upon Him by a loving Father whom He loved, and whom, therefore, it was His joy and His blessedness to serve."^{xxxvii}

Again, I would thus appeal to Christ's God-given authority and the indwelling Holy Spirit who empowered Him as the source of His power to do this; the Holy Spirit, of Who it is said in Genesis 1:2, "*And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*"

Matthew 14:22-23 (par MK 6: 45-51) Jesus Walks on Water

The account of Jesus walking on the water has long been held as a unique aspect of His control over nature – both over gravity and the well-known property of water to

cause us to sink in it, unless we know how to swim, and even then, we sink to an extent that we must stay 'afloat' by physical exertion.

D.A. Carson is correct in saying that the real focus of this story is the confession and worship of the disciples in v. 33 – the first time it is recorded that they claimed “Truly You are the Son of God.”^{xxxviii} However, our focus is on the action of Jesus here. This is, of course, a revelation of divine power. It is one of the few miracles affecting Jesus Himself, and may perhaps be regarded as being, like the Transfiguration, “a casual gleam of latent glory breaking through the body of His humiliation, and so, in some sense prophetic. But is also symbolic...It is generally over a stormy sea that He comes to us, and golden treasures are thrown on our shores after a tempest.”^{xxxix}

Jesus' response to the disciples' fearful expression, “It is a ghost!” in v. 26, is found in v. 27, “Take heart, it is I”. He says literally here, “I am!”, and expression used often by Jesus (most often, in John's gospel) to denote His deity.

This is definitely an aspect of this miracle (much like the one where He calms the storm in Mark 4), that seems to militate against what we have been looking at in this lengthy lesson. There is an element here of both omniscience – He walks out to the middle of the sea of Galilee at night in a storm to exactly where they were; and omnipotence – power over the created elements. Can that be explained through an appeal to the presence of the Holy Spirit in Him?

One clue (to me) to the answer to that question is what Peter does next. See vv. 28-31. Peter walked on water – v. 29 – until his faith failed him and he sank. Note Jesus' retort to Peter in 31b; “*Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?*” Note that Jesus' rebuke of Peter was “not as a result of a lack of faith on Peter's part, but rather his vacillating faith once he had started out.”^{xi} With a little faith, Peter was able to walk on water too, just like Jesus, but unlike Jesus, his faith faltered as he saw the waves and felt the wind, and he sank. Could we not say then that Jesus' faith in God which never faltered ever, allowed Him to perform this action? I believe this is a plausible explanation. So on to our last passage, the Transfiguration, which is not so much a miracle, as a revelation.

The Transfiguration Matthew 17:1-9 (pars MK 9:2-9; LK 9:28-36)

This account is in a real sense, not so much a miracle, as it is a revelation. It is most likely a fulfilment of Jesus' promise in Matthew 16:28. Here, Jesus was revealing (or more accurately, God was) Jesus' glory. (cf. MT 17:2; II Pet. 1:16-18) This is not the reflected glory that Moses acquired temporarily in Ex. 34:29-30, but a revealing of Jesus' inner, intrinsic glory, reminiscent of His High Priestly prayer in JN 17:1-5.

John Piper makes this comment regarding the Transfiguration,

“For one brief moment, the transfiguration broke the pattern of the incarnation. It pulled back the curtain on the future when the glory of Christ would not be clothed in fragile lowliness any longer. And that too is part of the peculiar glory of Jesus Christ – the sheer brevity yet wonder of it.”^{xli}

The words of the Father in v. 5 (MT 17) seem to be telling us that the purpose of the event was two-fold; (1) God the Father was ensuring that the 3 disciples chosen to attend this event “got it” – that they fully understood who Jesus was without any possibility of error; that they knew He was to be listened to and obeyed in the same sense they would obey God’s written Word, that He was in fact, although veiled in human flesh (cf Heb. 2:6-9), the Son of God incarnate, thus deity. The veil is lifted here to show the real personality of Jesus the Son. Up to then, they’d seen only Jesus the man. Picking up on this fact, Charles Wesley penned the words we love to sing at Christmas time;

“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;

Hail th’incarnate deity,

Pleased as man with men to dwell,

Jesus our Emmanuel.”^{xlii}

And (2), God the Father was encouraging Christ as the time of His sacrifice drew near. Luke is the only one who records the following aspect of what Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus on the mount. Note LK 9:30-31. This reveals that the Father in bringing Moses and Elijah there, these stalwart OT persons, was to bolster Jesus’ courage as “the Day” rapidly approached. In Gethsemane, the Father sends an angel to minister to Jesus in LK 22:43, to strengthen Him for the night and day ahead during the apex of His agony in the garden.

The fact that with this exceptional revelation of Jesus’ intrinsic glory, His deity was otherwise veiled in His cloak of humanity, is proof of our thesis, not a detraction from it. Hebrews 10:5-7 tells us, most of it quoting Psalm 40:6-8;

“Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,

but a body have you prepared for me;

in burnt offerings and sin offerings

you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, ‘Behold I have come to do your will, O God,

as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.”

A body was prepared for Christ by the Godhead. He was to come as the second and final Adam to live as a human being the obedient life that Adam failed to live. As Adam was our human representative – our ‘Federal Head’ – and thus his sin nature became the sin nature of everyone ever born since Genesis 3, now that Jesus Christ has come and as our sinless, spotless substitute, lived a perfect life, with no sin to His account except the sins of those He came to seek and save which were imputed to Him at Calvary, all those who put their trust in Him for salvation are saved and He says, “*I will raise them up on the last day.*” (JN 6:44) (cf. Romans 5:12-21).

In the Book, Who is Jesus? by Greg Gilbert there is a chapter that deals in part with this very topic, and I included here 2 quotes from it:

“God the Creator, the great Other, the great “I AM” became human.

Christians call that reality the incarnation, which is a Latin term that means “enfleshment”, the idea being that, in Jesus, God took on human flesh. We have to be careful though, because that word could be a little misleading. Understood wrongly, it could give you the idea that Jesus’s humanity was just a matter of skin – that God put a human hide like you or I might put on a coat, and that was the extent of Jesus’s humanity. But that would take us too close to Docetism, the idea that Jesus only seemed human. Whatever else you think, surely we can agree that the essence of humanity is not skin; it’s deeper than that, and the Bible says that Jesus was human all the way to the core, in every way. That’s why Christians through the centuries settled on describing Jesus as being “fully God and fully human.” He isn’t part God and part human, or a mixture of God and human, or even something halfway between God and human.

He is God.

And He is human.

And here’s the thing: that’s not just a temporary reality. Jesus is human now, and He will never be anything other than human – forever.”^{xliii}

“Jesus is human, and He always will be. Right now, sitting on the throne of the universe, is a human being. When He judges the entire world, He will be human. For all eternity, age after age, God is human and always will be. He didn’t just put on human skin like a coat, only to take it off again when He got home to heaven. He became a man – heart, soul, mind and strength – a man!

Just imagine for a minute how much the Son of God must have loved human beings to decide that, yes, He would become a human forever. He had existed for all eternity, the second person of the Trinity, in perfect and harmonious and beautiful relationship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and yet He decided to become human, and He knew when He did it that He would never be not-human again. There’s only one thing that would lead the Son of God to do that: He deeply loves us, and you can see that fact in every detail of His life.”^{xliiv}

“The figure of Jesus as it is presented to us in the Gospel story and interpreted to us in the rest of the NT is that of One who was no unearthly angelic visitant, no demigod in human shape. It was a real man who lived a perfect life amid the human realities of our common way. It was as man Jesus came and lived and died. It was as man He came back from the secret gloom of the sepulcher after three days. After the resurrection He still bore the nail prints, and with the marks of the passion yet on Him they saw Him go up into heaven. At the right hand of God is a real man glorified. Here is a comfort to faith. At the throne of God we are understood. Mercy still has a human heart and pity a human face. Christ as man stands beside God for us. He who knows our human pathway with its toils and twists still cares. He has been on our human level and understands the stuff of our human nature. He who has shared so intimately with us can sympathize with us fully.”^{xlv}

– H.D. McDonald

In Revelation 5:1-14, there is an amazing passage that takes our breath away as we attempt to imagine what John saw there. Notice what he saw as recorded in v. 6, but read again vv. 4-6. John saw a Lamb standing as if slain. Yet the elders tell him that the “*Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has conquered*”, and He is the One

who takes the scroll. When He takes it, He is immediately worshipped by all at that scene, an uncountable number of angels and saints. The fact that John says He saw a Lamb as if it had been slain says this; the nail holes and the spear wound are still there, even in His glorified state in heaven. He resurrected and ascended as a glorified man who is also God the Son. It is as a glorified man that He reigns in heaven now. If not, then He cannot be our High Priest who makes intercession for us. Note Hebrews 7:23 – 28. He “*has been made perfect forever*.” It does not say that He returned to heaven after His sojourn on earth to revert back to being the second person of the Trinity, but as the God-man who was perfectly obedient, and did not have to die because of His own sin, but in order to forgive ours. Hebrews 9:11-15 (& cf. I Tim. 2:5; Acts 17:30-31).

As we work our way through the remainder of Hebrews, I felt you should have this background information that will be so important in exalting Christ for who He really is, and thus seeing Him not only as God in the flesh, but especially, in Hebrews, as the real human man who was sent from God, and who, by His iron will, lack of a sin nature and empowered by the Holy Spirit and prayer, lived the life you or I could never live so that we can spend eternity living a life in union with Him that will consist of constant rejoicing, praise and awe-struck worship!

My Confession

At one point in this process [actually at many points], to finish this lesson and bring it to present to the class, I was concerned (although I was 98% convinced that my thesis was correct and biblically sound by about April of this year), it might just be too shocking a departure to what we are all used to hearing. We all have been programmed to see the hypostatic union (God-man) of Christ with a lean towards His actions being the result of His own Deity acting in concert with His humanity, that to actually recognise His humanity as ‘the second Adam’ all the way through His life, and to relegate His power to the Holy Spirit is “a bridge too far”. I thought that perhaps I should modify my thesis to do as Earle Ellis mentioned in his quote earlier in the lesson, and “leave it in tension”. I began to feel like I was going into “intellectual paralysis”, a term Alva McLain uses in one of the quotes below, and wondering too, where the God side of Jesus played into His earthly life. Was it just a necessary aspect to cover the eternal nature of the atonement, as Richard Phillips suggested earlier)? Perhaps I was overstating the case to say that Jesus never appealed to His God-side during His earthly life, especially as related to His miracles, and especially those that involved His power over nature.

Pastor Scott and I had a few conversations about this early in 2016, and I sent a copy of this lesson to him in May / June to get his opinion of my thesis, and he concurred completely. Ken Baird and I had begun to talk about this in some detail in probably April / May of 2016, and I drew him into this conversation because I knew that as he taught through Philippians that he would be studying Phil. 2:5-8, and what I was working on here would either trip him up or help him understand it better. He was

going to have to deal with v. 7, and tell us what “*emptied Himself*” means in relation to Jesus because it is an essential component to understand and exegete the passage. It is not my intention here to exegete this passage – Ken has done that admirably, but it plays a large role in this lesson I am presenting here.

During our drawn-out conversation, Ken emailed me a paper by Alva J. McLain from the Master’s Seminary Journal from 1998^{xlvi}. This is an excellent paper by the way – covering the historical theological positions on this subject as well as outlining Dr. McLain’s personal position. His question which precedes any pondering of the passage (and the concept in general) is an excellent one – “How can we reconcile true Deity and real humanity in the historic Jesus?”

Much of what he said in this paper got me thinking that I might be slightly off-track in my own thinking – obviously a big concern for a teacher of the Bible. Rather than go through the whole paper here, I have collected together some quotes on areas that were helpful to me by Dr. McLain:

“Nothing beyond a cursory review of the astonishingly numerous interpretations of this Philippian passage is enough, as someone has suggested to afflict the student with “intellectual paralysis”. This is especially the case in regard to that section (v. 7) which speaks of the “self-emptying” or kenosis, of Christ. Some make of this a mere *skēnosis*; Deity was veiled, but was limited in no important or essential respect. Others think the self-limitation was real, though very inconsiderable. A third view holds that the logos, in becoming man, retained full possession of His divine attributes, and that the kenosis consisted in His acting as if He did not possess them. Another school supposes that He actually gave up certain of His attributes, the ones designated by theologians as relative, such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Still others go farther in asserting that He gave up all the Divine attributes, so that Deity was stripped to a bare essence. Finally, there are those who, excluding from the passage all reference to a pre-existent state, regard the kenosis as having taken place wholly within the earthly life of the man Christ Jesus.”^{xlvii}

“The phrase, “being on an equality with God,” is exegetical and explanatory of the phrase, “existing in the form of God.” The only question is, whether these two phrases are exactly equivalent, or whether the former adds to the latter the important idea of actual historical manifestation. This second interpretation is very suggestive and is not lacking in considerations which support it, but I prefer the first as more in harmony with the entire viewpoint of this article. In the mind of the writer then, to exist “in the form of God” is to be “equal with God”, whatever else may be in the latter phrase. Absolute equality with God was the possession of Jesus in His pre-incarnate state. But, when the need arose in the world for a Savior, He did not regard His being equal with God “a thing to be grasped” as a robber might grasp an object not his own. This “equality” with God was so surely and incontestably Christ’s own possession that He could with “royal un-anxiety”, lay it aside for a season for our redemption, being fully assured that it would return to Him once He had accomplished our redemption.”^{xlviii} [cf. John 17:4-5]

“The form of God in this passage is not the nature of God. God-form certainly presupposes a God-nature, but is not essential to it. Verse 7 draws a similar distinction on the human side of the kenosis; there is here a servant-form and also a human nature. A man may cease to be a servant, but he cannot cease to be a man. Likewise, Deity may change form, but not nature.

I have suggested above that this “form of God” may include a reference to the divine attributes. For it is through the exercise or function of these that, from an external viewpoint, God appears most truly as God. In this functioning we find, in the deepest sense the *morphe* of God. The Logos then, in putting off this form, must have experienced to some degree a limitation as to His exercise of the divine attributes. The question is, What was the nature and extent of this limitation? He could not, as some suggest, have actually surrendered the divine attributes, for they are functions potential in the very nature of God. Granted that the active functioning might cease for a time. Still the potentiality remains. To suggest that this also might be given up is to say that God may cease to be God.”^{xlix}

“It is better to say with Dr. Strong that Christ gave up the independent use of His divine attributes. This leaves room for those exhibitions of divine power and knowledge which appear during His earthly ministry, and at the same time modifies in no essential respect the doctrine of the real kenosis.”^l

All these quotes caused me to rethink my position with regard to the miracles, and I was on the verge of rewriting a large portion of the lesson, when by God’s providence, I read Sam Storms’ book, “Kept For Jesus” – a book about assurance of salvation. In that book, I encountered an unlikely paragraph – an answer to prayer really, which I have quoted – see page 17 of this lesson. At that point, I saw this quote as an answer to prayer, and I knew my thinking was on the right track.

This approach to this topic is pretty intense and much more nuanced than most references to Christ’s humanity that are found in commentaries or other theology books. Therefore, it may be tough to assimilate into your own theology. I am now fully convinced of it, and I hope that you will be too. If you are not, I pray that God will open your eyes to the truth of the full humanity of our Great High Priest, because I believe this will result in your more expansive exaltation of Him as you consider that He did what Adam failed to do – live a perfect life in full obedience and submission to His Father, in the face of the same (or worse) temptations that we face, and “*for the joy set before Him*” went willingly to the cross to die an awful atoning death on our behalf.

I am going to wrap up this lengthy lesson with another quote by H.D. McDonald, followed by a lengthy one by Richard Phillips;

“The Holy Spirit not only endowed the human nature of Christ with all the necessary equipment, but He also caused these to be exercised, gradually, into full activity. During His days in the flesh, Jesus was under the constant and penetrating operation of the Spirit. It was as a man that Jesus carried out His duties in the carpenter’s shop in Nazareth, and there submitted to the rule of His earthly home. He was prepared of the Spirit for the time of His showing forth and sending forth to fulfill His Messianic office. In and by the Spirit he fulfilled all righteousness and resisted all temptation, and in the power of the Spirit He returned into Galilee (LK 4:14).

At the baptism He was consecrated for His office by the Spirit’s descent in the form of a dove, the inner strengthening and equipping for the task He needed.”^{li}

And Richard Phillips...

“If you have long been a student of the Bible, then you know the fellowship you have with its heroes. You find yourself struggling to leave behind the pleasures and treasures of this sinful world and then as a result encounter the reproach of God’s people. Then you realize that this is just what Moses endured, and you enter into fellowship with him. You engage in lonely service, unnoticed by those around you, and you recall David’s experience tending his father Jesse’s flocks in the field. You find yourself surrounded by a pagan culture, struggling to be useful in the world while not becoming part of it, and you think of Daniel. You read his account in the Bible, and your heart draws close to him with thanks for the example he set. You come to a trial of some sort; perhaps it is a thorn in the flesh. You cry out to God time and again, and He tells you, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Then you realize that you are sharing the very experience of the apostle Paul in II Corinthians 12. Or perhaps while being persecuted by an unjust authority, you find grace to stand fast, and your mind turns to the fourth chapter of Acts where Peter and John rejoiced to have been “counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.” Someday we will see them, and we will have much to talk about, all the saints in the Lord who have fought this good fight of the faith! But even now, on the peaks and in the valleys of our lives as believers, we see evidence of their passing, and we are encouraged to remember that their faith and patience have earned them a share in all that God has promised.

If that is true of the merely human figures of the Bible, how much more true is it of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, although God, entered into our very struggle so as to lead us through this barren world to a paradise with Him in heaven. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus came into this world in part because he wanted to gain sympathy for us in our weakness. He wanted to know us intimately, to experience for himself the pains and trials of human life. Therefore, in all our trials and sorrows, our chief aspiration should be to have fellowship with him, to draw near to his heart, to know him through obedience, following the example that he set. This was what the apostle Paul set down as his chief ambition: “I [want to] know him and the power of his resurrection, and [to] share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3:10-11).

What Paul had realized – and this changed everything in his life – is that in every valley and on every peak he traveled, he saw marks of Jesus’ prior passage. It was a path Jesus walked so that he could leave a trail for us, so that he could open the once-barred way to heaven, and so that he could encourage us with strength along the way. “Jesus was here” is etched into the rock of every trial, tribulation and sorrow we can ever know. So, Paul reasoned, if Jesus wanted to love me and know me like that, then I want to love him and know him in his sorrows as well, because I see that path that leads to the cross takes me to the light of an open tomb, the dawn of a new creation in the glory of Christ.

“[Be] imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises”, says our author (Heb. 6:12). This is great advice with regard to all those who walked before us in faith. How much more is it true with regard to our savior himself. Through faith in him, with patient endurance on the trail he blazed before us, we will inherit all that God has promised in him. And we will come to know him, to be his disciples, and to know forever the reality of his love, which is the greatest gift of all.”^{lii}

ⁱ Definition of Socinianism: A heretical system named after Italian theologian, Faustus Socinus (1539-1604), which denies the doctrine of the Trinity, says Christ is a mere man with no pre-existence, yet he believed in the virgin birth,

the sinlessness and resurrection of Christ, and called Christ God and said he was a suitable object of worship. This view later on led to Unitarian Universalism. Source: Alan Cairns, editor, Dictionary of Theological Terms, Ambassador-Emerald Inc., 1998; p. 347

ⁱⁱ J.C Ryle, Holiness, Evangelical Press, 1879 – reprint 2009, p. 197

ⁱⁱⁱ Gerald F. Hawthorne, The Presence and the Power – The Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Life and Ministry of Jesus; Wipf & Stock, 2003, p. 26

^{iv} Bruce A. Ware, The Man Christ Jesus – Theological reflections on the Humanity of Christ, Crossway, 2013, p. 31

^v IBID, p. 31

^{vi} IBID, p. 32-33

^{vii} Robert E. Coleman, from Da Carson (ed), Telling the Truth, Zondervan, 2000, p. 268

^{viii} Gerald F. Hawthorne, The Presence and the Power; p. 35

^{ix} Ware, p. 34

^x Ian Hamilton, from: The Inerrant Word, p. 86-87, in John MacArthur (editor), Crossway, 2016

^{xi} IBID, p. 54

^{xii} Elyse Fitzpatrick, Found in Him – The Joy of the Incarnation and Our Union With Him, Crossway, 2013; p. 59-60

^{xiii} John C. Clark & Marcus Peter Johnson, The Incarnation of God, Crossway, 2015; pp. 123-124

^{xiv} IBID, p. 65

^{xv} Coleman, Telling the Truth, p. 261

^{xvi} Bruce Ware, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Crossway Books, 2005 Pg.21

^{xvii} IBID, p. 81

^{xviii} Millard J. Erickson, “Who’s Tampering With the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate, Kregel, 2009, p. 121

^{xix} Ware, pp. 61-62

^{xx} IBID, p. 63

^{xxi} IBID, p. 64

^{xxii} Fitzpatrick, p. 64

^{xxiii} IBID, p. 66-67

^{xxiv} Marcus Rainsford; Our Lord Prays for His Own; Kregel, 1985; p. 379 (written in late 1800’s.)

^{xxv} IBID, p. 68

^{xxvi} IBID, p. 68-69

^{xxvii} Richard D. Phillips, Hebrews – P & R / Kindle, 2015, LOC 2010

^{xxviii} IBID, p. 69-70

^{xxix} IBID, p. 71

^{xxx} John MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, Zondervan, 1992, p. 276

^{xxxi} IBID, p. 276-277

^{xxxii} Gerald F. Hawthorne, The Presence and the Power, Wipf & Stock, 2001, p. 4

^{xxxiii} IBID, p. 35

^{xxxiv} Sam Storms, Kept for Jesus, Crossway, 2015 / Kindle, LOC 450-452

^{xxxv} Procrustean – definition / Oxford Dictionary: “seeking to enforce uniformity by forceful or ruthless methods – this comes from the name of a legendary robber who fitted victims to a bed by stretching them or cutting off parts of them to make them fit.

^{xxxvi} Earle Ellis, cited in Hawthorne, The Presence, p. 8

^{xxxvii} Alexander MacLaren, The God Who Serves, Fleming Revell, NJ, (orig. 1894), reprint 1987, p. 113

^{xxxviii} DA Carson, Matthew, in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary – volume 8, Frank Gaibelein, editor, Zondervan 1984, p. 345

^{xxxix} MacLaren. P. 302

^{xl} James Montgomery Boice, The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The King and His Kingdom, Matthew 1-17; Baker, 2001, p. 274

^{xli} John Piper, A Peculiar Glory, Crossway, 2016, p. 248

^{xlii} Charles Wesley, Hymns of Grace, # 238, Master’s Seminary Press, 2015, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

^{xliiii} Greg Gilbert, Who is Jesus? Crossway Books, 2015, p. 69

^{xliiv} IBID, p. 70-71

^{xliv} HD McDonald, Jesus-Human and Divine, Zondervan, 1968, reprint 1974; pp. 41-42

^{xlvi} Alva J. McLain, The Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8, TMSJ, Spring 1998; pp. 85-87 – available online at TMSJ website.

^{xlvii} IBID, p. 87-88

^{xlviii} IBID, p. 91

^{xlix} IBID, p. 92-93

^l IBID, p. 93

ⁱⁱ HD McDonald, IBID, p. 34

ⁱⁱⁱ Phillips, p. 205-206 (in hard cover)