

(Inside front cover)

THE EQUALITY

(A Study of Phil. 2:6,7)

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

These verses set forth two distinctive presentations of Christ. While there has been considerable discussion as to what is known as "the *kenosis* theory," it is our purpose herein to make a careful study of the words used, and thereby seek to arrive at a reliable conclusion.

There are six Greek words that must of necessity receive our attention. They are as follows:

1. **HUPARKON**, translated "**being**."

This word is important in that it indicates an original state of existence. As used here of Christ, the word indicates His original state of existence "**in FORM of God**," but not His original state of existence as God.

Note the occurrence of this word in Luke 16:23, "**being** in torment."

2. **MORPHEE**, translated "**form**."

The word occurs in Mark 16:12. The word is used in a profound, deep, abstract sense -- something within itself and unlike any other object; that transcendental means of expression of which He as God was alone capable.

I. THE EQUALITY

1. BEING.

Indicative of a prior state of existence.

2. FORM OF GOD.

3. EQUAL WITH GOD.

4. ESSENTIAL.

5. FIRST BORN (Cp. Col. 1:15).

6. PREINCARNATE.

There is set before us in Phil. 2:6, 7 a most graphic portrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ: **first**, in the transcendency of His being in the form of God for the purpose of creation; and, **second**, in the condescension of His becoming in the likeness of men for the purpose of redemption.

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LISTENING IN

J. CLYDE STILLION

Yes, it is difficult to be wiser than that which is written--in fact, it's impossible.

When Scripture is torn from its setting and used out of its rightful connection, it ceases to be the Word of God.

The things that are revealed belong to us, though not all ARE written to us.

If the theory of evolution be true to fact, murder is not a sin.

All the Psalms are either Messianic or Millennial.

There are seven "precious things" in First and Second Peter. Look them up.

And don't forget that Peter, like his Lord, was a minister of the Circumcision. See Gal. 2:7-8 and Rom, 15:8.

Orthodoxy which is heartless is powerless.

Three-fourths of Pray is Pay. Think it over.

Every true servant of God works on the commission basis—commissioned of God.

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot, come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:1-5).

It is always a "coming down" on the part of any Christian to cease the work to contend and combat. Controversy has never been conducive to a deeper spirituality, but rather to baser carnality. The servant of God may contend for the faith — this is Divinely exhorted — but the servant of God must not contend in the faith. This is Divinely prohibited.

THE UNIQUE CHRIST OF THE SCRIPTURES

by Russell H. Schaefer

The essential Deity of The Lord Jesus Christ has been under increasing attack these last few years. The following study is addressed to the believer in The Lord Jesus Christ. Seemingly, it would be more fitting to address this study to the man of the world, the unbeliever. Strangely enough, regardless of the moral refinements or educational attainments of this type of man, unless he has experienced that LIFE IN CHRIST of which The Scriptures speak, no spiritual discernment is possible; nor can rules be devised or impressed upon the unbeliever that would result in faith. The deity of Christ is of little interest to the one who has never felt the reality of a personal God or the need of a personal Savior to resolve the issues of personal sinfulness in seeking to fellowship with God Who is Infinite holiness.

In the realm of spiritual verities, the experience of meeting God in Christ will communicate more of experimental knowledge of God than all understanding derived from religious dialectics or academic theological studies. In the realm of spiritual things, the humblest saint may well be more qualified to testify than the most learned man of the world. The man Christ healed testified to a simple truth, and it is echoed in the heart of the believer: "Whereas I was blind, now I see." That God should communicate and dwell with one who is of a broken and contrite heart, one who embraces and affirms the claims and ownership of The Redeeming Savior, is frustrating indeed to our proud minds. That simple faith should obtain what mere intellectualism cannot secure engenders assaults upon the very foundations of Christianity, the person and deity of its Christ.

It is our firm conviction that the rejection of the Deity of Christ via the unique conception involves the rejection of Bible Christianity as a whole. The Uniqueness surrounding the

inceptiveness of Christ into the world stands or falls on the issue of what has been called The Virgin Birth of Christ. It is not merely the mode of His birth, but whether we have indeed the Incarnation of God in human form and fashion as initiating the final step in bringing God to man and man to God.

The following questions have been raised, and it is hoped that at least a partial answer will be found in this study:

- 1. Is the Deity of Christ via the Virgin Birth based upon a peculiar interpretation of Matthew's and Luke's Gospel accounts?**
- 2. Is the Deity of Christ via the Virgin Birth the result of esthetic imaginative religious writers?**
- 3. Are there parallels of so-called supernatural births in other religions on which the New Testament writers freely drew for their accounts?**
- 4. Is the so-called Virgin Birth a basic truth upon which other truths are built or freely assumed?**
- 5. Why doesn't the Apostle Paul specifically state or mention the Virgin Birth if it is of any importance?**
- 6. Why do the Gospels of Mark and John omit the account of the Virgin Birth?**
- 7. Is the Virgin Birth based upon an erroneous interpretation of Isaiah 7:14?**
- 8. Do the Scriptures portray Christ as Deity Incarnated?**
- 9. Do the Scriptures portray Christ as superior but sharing a common universal divinity with all men under a common Creator?**

10. Is Christ unique in His total advent into this world and in His exit from it?

11. Is Christ the ethic teacher of the Sermon on the Mount, Christianity, or is the unique Christ spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4:

- ... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
- ... He was buried,
- ... He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Is this The Christ of Christianity?

The Alternatives To A Supernatural Christ

If there were no God-in-Christ revelation in the highest sense of the term, then with such a shortened bridge, what is left? Further, if Christ be but an ethical, mystical or mythological hero bereft of that unique deity and supernatural origin and nature that would qualify Him to be The Savior of the World, as well as its rightful coming King, then with such a shortened bridge, what is left?

1. Speculative philosophy. The dim lamp of Greek philosophy, with its quest for wisdom or cultured reasonings of whatever gods one wants to imagine, is rapidly filling our seminaries and churches.
2. Humanism. The deification of man, his knowledge, intellect and attainments.
3. Animalism. If man does not have the capacity or endowment of a moral-spiritual nature and is incapable of a vital relationship

with God as his creator and redeemer, then animalism is a complete logical sequence. That over half of the world has endorsed this concept is a matter of history. Its excesses and blood baths are also a matter of history. To say the least, they make all crimes done in the name of religion seem like child's play.

4. **Religious atheism.** This movement is gaining ground. The "God is-dead" type of teaching in certain seminaries is a reflection of this. The death of a personal God, the death of a holy, loving, creating, redeeming and communicating God, is but the outcome of the denial of the unique Christ of Scripture. Morality and (pseudo) spirituality is supposed to be self-sustaining, springing out of the self protecting herd instinct.

To say that the right view of Christ (as God's appointed Savior and Redeemer) would set all the world's problems right is hoping for too much. Still at least the heart of the problem would be touched upon and dealt with:

To be strengthened with might
by His spirit in the inner man;
that Christ may dwell in your
hearts by faith; that ye, being
rooted and grounded in love ...

(Ephesians 3:16, 17).

The Old Testament Background For The Virgin Birth

1. **Genesis 3:15.** Here a biological miracle is foretold. The Seed of the woman, not the man, would crush that arch enemy of the human family beneath His feet. Under the symbolism of the great serpent (shining one), the Seed of the woman would be injured in the process.

2. Isaiah 7:14 -- "Behold a virgin shall conceive." This is quoted in Matthew 1:21-23 (Fr. the *LXX*), and the Greek word for a literal technical virgin is used. The two-fold possible interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 will be dealt with later in this study. At least the New Testament writer who quotes from Isaiah 7:14 meant that a literal virgin woman was to conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit and bear a Unique Son.

3. Jeremiah 31:22 -- "... for The LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." Dr. Harold P. Morgan points out that *bara*-create has reference to God creating a child without a man. Also, that man is *Amith*, a Mighty One, that is, The Lord. While holding firmly to the uniqueness of Christ's conception and birth, Dr. E. W. Bullinger teaches that this verse has reference to Israel as the spouse that shall one day turn and cleave unto The Mighty One, her Redeemer.

4. Isaiah 9:6, 7 -- "... for unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given...and His Name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE...", etc. A child is to be born but the SON is given. This calls to mind John 3:16, "He gave His only begotten Son." A child being born recalls Hebrews 10:5, "... a body hast Thou prepared Me."

5. Isaiah 53:2 -- "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a ROOT OUT OF A DRY GROUND." The chapter details the life, ministry, rejection, crucifixion and final victory of Christ. His birth was indeed a root-sprout made bare or revealed of The Lord. The root-stock was indeed barren in Joseph, His legal father, albeit He was descended from David.

The Gospel Accounts

These accounts afford no diverse interpretations. They are simple, clear and comprehensive.

Matthew sets forth the lineage of Joseph, the heir-apparent to the throne of Solomon and David. Joseph, being the legal father of Christ, aligned Him with the throne of David.

Luke, in contrast to Matthew's account, gives the lineage of Christ through Mary. The lineage follows the other son of David, Nathan. No direct descendent from Solomon was to prosper sitting on the throne of David; Coniah, son of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, was to be childless and be given over to the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. No direct seed was to prosper on the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:24-30). Thus, through Nathan, David's other son (Luke 3:31), the throne rights were secured to Christ; hence, He is rightfully King of Israel and King of Judah.

In Luke 3:23 (A.V.), the statement is made that Joseph is of Heli. The term, the son, is omitted in the Greek text and should only read, "of Heli," that is, his son-in-law. Looking at Mary's lineage we see that "Heli" was Mary's father, hence, father-in-law to Joseph. In Matthew's account, Joseph is declared to be the son of Jacob (Matthew 1:16). It should be pointed out that the phrase, "... Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus ...," (Matthew 1:16) may be misleading in the A.V., as it seems to state that Jesus was born of Joseph. The Greek text corrects this concept by rendering the *ex hes* OF WHOM in the feminine gender -- Mary only. The *New English Bible* translated this, "... Mary who gave birth to Jesus "

Luke follows the Jewish practice of placing Joseph as the

son-in-law in the genealogical record. The words in Luke 3:23, "AS WAS SUPPOSED," should read as the Greek text (*os enomizeto*) to hold by custom or law, having reference to a supposed illicit birth. The child by law would take the name of the foster father. According to law, a virgin was spoken of as wife (cp. Deuteronomy 22:23, 24 and Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:5). We might add that every intact manuscript of the Gospel of Luke and of Matthew contains the same accounts as found in our Bible. There is no evidence of a later date interpolation. To answer the further charge of the genealogies being inaccurate (since at least five kings are omitted from the record), we state the omission from the record. The reason for the omission is easily found for the one who will take time to look up the history of these kings. The only reason Jehoram was spared so long from judgment was that the heir to the throne was not yet born. Jehoram died of a loathsome disease (II Chronicles 21:18,19). Ahaziah with Joram, son of Ahab, was killed by Jehu (II Kings 9:21-28). Joash was put to death by his servants (II Kings 14: 19, 20). Amaziah was slain by conspirators (II Kings 14:19, 20). Jehoiakim and Jeconiah were puppet kings under Pharaoh-Necho, Josias their father being killed at the battle of Negiddon, thus ending the direct descendants of the David-Solomon line of kings (cp. Deuteronomy 29:18-26, "... the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.").

There is a great deal more that could be said about the genealogies. Why, for instance, ten generations had to pass according to the law (Lev. 20:12, Deut. 23:2) before a descendant issuing from the sin of Judah (the kingly line) and Tamar could sit on the throne -- the tenth generation was consummated in David.

To summarize, in Luke's Gospel the genealogy is traced through His mother, the daughter of Heli, through Nathan, son of David, to Adam. In Mary, He is united to all humanity. Hence, Luke speaks of Him as "The Son of Man," not the son of a man, but kin to all mankind, The Great Kinsman-Redeemer, who became in fashion as a man and humbled Himself to the death of Golgotha for a world's sin. In Matthew's account we have the genealogy of the Coming King whose right it is to rule UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID and UPON HIS KINGDOM, and of this kingdom it is written:

Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. (Isaiah 9:7)

The Gospel Of Mark

The Gospel of Mark does not contain an account of the virgin birth. Each Gospel is very selective in the facet of Christ's life that it presents to the reader. Mark starts out with Jesus' public ministry as SERVANT of Jehovah. A servant's genealogy would be out of place with the intent of Mark's Gospel. Mark unmistakably attests the deity of Christ in Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, THE SON OF GOD." Mark 1:11 records, "There came a voice from heaven, saying, "THOU ART MY BELOVED SON, in Whom I am well pleased." In Mark 6:3 is recorded, "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary ... ?" spoken in derision. Mark was an early companion of Paul (Acts 12:25), but because of a temporizing nature he was rejected by Paul for dangerous missionary work (Acts 15:37-39). However, later he was considered profitable and was asked to join Paul in his later ministry (II Timothy 4:11). Mark's home was in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), so he could easily verify or disclaim any statement as to Christ's birth. The four Gospels are not merely four accounts of the life and times of Jesus, the Messiah, but a four-fold photo, each writer using select material of His person or events to fill out each portrait. These were not meant to be harmonized, and no effort is made to record the same events, the same words, the same addresses or supply the same details.

The Gospel Of John

The Gospel of John is as selective as the other Gospels as to subject matter. One could well say of John's portrait of Christ, "Behold Your God," for of whom else could it be said:

All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made (John 1:3).

and

... the world was made by Him.... (John 1:10)

John presents The Son of God. The term "SON" holds the primary thought of not only genesis of origin (as The Holy Spirit's power coming upon Mary), but also the one to carry out The Father's will and purpose, and to show forth The Father's character. So in John's Gospel we have Deity, God manifest in the flesh -- "And The Word (the outward expression of God, in various forms and in various ways in the O.T.) was made flesh ..." (John 1:14).

John 1:13 should read, "Who (singular, not plural) was born, not of blood(s), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The verse agrees with HIS NAME (verse 11). This introduces the Incarnation of God so that He could dwell as in a tent among us. John does mention His unique birth. However, his gospel starts with Christ, "in the beginning," unqualified as to the ages or time involved, but before creation (John 1:1-5), since creation was His handiwork. Christ's prior existence with The Father is so well expressed in John 17:5: "And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." John often speaks of Christ's unique origin as, "... and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me" (John 17:7).

The statement in John 3:16 is reflective of Isaiah 9:6, "a Son is given." Matthew 2:11 speaks of a child in Bethlehem, while

John states, "The Word became flesh." The essential deity of Christ is seen throughout his gospel. That John is concerned with the incarnation rather than its mode via the Virgin Birth should not suppose that he is speaking contrary to or that he is denying the Virgin Birth. Note the following:

Christ as Creator	John 1:3
Word made flesh	John 1:14
Begotten of The Father	John 1:14
Son of God, King of Israel	John 1:49
Christ - He that <u>came down</u> from Heaven	John 3:13
That all men should honor The Son, even as they honor The Father	John 5:23
The dead shall hear the voice of The Son of God	John 5:25
All judgment committed unto The Son	John 5:22
The living Bread that came down from Heaven	John 6:51
Christ to ascend up where He was before	John 6:62
"Before Abraham was I AM"	John 8:58

John 20:31 sums up the intent of John's Gospel, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is The Christ, The Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name...." Admit the truth of the incarnation and the Virgin Birth becomes a necessity. Admit the deity of Christ and then all His claims, His acts, death and resurrection, all fall into an orderly pattern. Might we add, a very purposeful pattern.

To the Apostle John was committed the mother of Christ. John had every opportunity to verify any statement made regarding The Deity of The Savior as well as the means and mode of that Incarnation.

Paul's Epistles

Paul accepted the Incarnation and supernatural conception. He states this in I Timothy 3:16:

He who was manifested in the body,
vindicated in The Spirit,
seen by angels:
Who was proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
glorified in high heaven.

New Eng. Bible

We believe that the above, while a modern version, has failed to supply the subject, to Whom does the HE WHO refer? There is no verb to correspond in the context. As such, it is poor Greek and poor English. The A.V. translates it: "God was manifest in the flesh." Ultra-violet light reveals the original reading to be GOD, at least in *Codex A* in the British Museum.* The context personifies godliness and devoutness in The Person of Christ. John 1:17 states that grace and truth became, i.e., came into being or personification in Christ. In Galatians 4:4 Paul states, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." The supposed role of Joseph is omitted entirely. He is stating exactly what Matthew and Luke state. The Davidic lineage is mentioned in Romans 1:3 and also in II Timothy 2:8 and Acts 13:23. Paul was a full and firm champion of the absolute Deity and Divinity of The Lord Jesus Christ. His hope for the future was bound up in Him.

... looking forward to the happy fulfillment of our
hopes when the splendor of our great God and Savior
Christ Jesus will appear (Titus 2:13). *N.E.B.*

Paul supposes Christ to be alive now and enthroned in the heavens (Ephesians 1:20-23). He states without hesitation that all creation will one day bow the knee to This Christ and confess that Jesus Christ is LORD (Phil. 2:11). Everywhere and in all his preaching Paul assumes the Incarnation; he builds upon the incarnation; he bases his doctrine on the incarnation. He states that

* Gr. *OC* (He Who) *ΘC*, the contraction for *ΘEOC*, God.

none other than Christ is the **IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD** (Col. 1:15), and that Christ has primacy over all created things -- in Him and by Him and for Him is creation itself (Col 1:16). He exists before everything, and all things are held together in Him (Col. 1:17). In Christ the complete being of The Godhead dwells embodied (Col 2:9). Paul, in Ephesians 1:7, states that in This Christ "we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." All these statements by Paul argue for a unique Christ, deity, yet of Davidic lineage, Creator, creating yet, Redeemer and redeeming. Hence, before creation, its object and goal, its supreme consummation and summation, is seen in Ephesians and Colossians.

Luke and Paul

The Apostle Paul had as his constant attendant and companion the good physician, Luke (Col. 4:14). Luke was the chronologist of Paul's life and missionary journeys in the Book of Acts. The frequent use of "WE" in Acts is the good physician speaking of himself and Paul. He was with Paul in his imprisonments (II Timothy 4:11). The lives of these two men were closely woven together. Paul had every opportunity to correct Luke in the statements concerning the mode and manner of the conception and birth of Christ, if Luke was in error. Nowhere in any of his writing does Paul contradict Luke's account of Christ's unique origin, but everywhere supplements it with statements of the loftiest kind as to the prior existence of Christ, His creative activity, His redemptive work, His identification with believers, His resurrection, ascension and seating in the high heavens. The purpose of Paul's ministries does not revolve about the earthly life or ministry of Christ, as do Luke and the other Gospel accounts. Paul does not quote Christ's sermons. Paul does not appeal to Christ's earthly activities, but founds his message upon the Sinless Life, the substitutionary death, the resurrection and ascended Christ, the great condescension of God, the communicating form, the fashion as a man, the humbling

and redemptive obedience unto death for us sinners, The Christ of Glory (Phil. 2:6-9). This was the ground of all Paul's ministry. This is The Christ of Biblical Christianity. The meek and lowly Jesus of religious sentiment and art is far removed from The Christ of the Scriptures. The one has only an existence in the imaginations of an effeminate theology; the other is The Christ of God. In the words of the ancient Seer:

**"I am Alpha and Omega,
The Beginning and the Ending," saith The Lord,
Which IS and which WAS, and which IS TO COME,
THE ALMIGHTY. (Rev. 1:8)**

The Mode Of The Incarnation

1. Adam was made directly by God -- no man, no woman.
2. Eve was made by God from Adam -- no woman.
3. Abel was made from Adam and Eve.
4. Christ -- no man, but God's Power from on High, and a woman.

The Manner Of The Incarnation

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the Power of The Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35). No more was needed, no further light was given, no other power was employed to prepare the body of our Lord. Matthew 1:18: "Before their marriage she found she was with child by The Holy Spirit." Matthew 1:25: "And (Joseph) knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn Son."

Luke 1:34: "I know not a man."

Matthew 1:20: "for that which is conceived in her is of The Holy Spirit."

Mary's Song

Luke 1:46-55: How high the heights and how glorious the theme of her song of praise:

Tell out, my soul the greatness of The Lord.
Rejoice, rejoice, my spirit in God my Savior.

(N.E.B.)

This is hardly the song of a woman bearing a child out of wedlock!

The Virgin Of Isaiah 7:14

The word here translated "virgin" is in the Hebrew *ha-'almah*. Genesis 24:43 uses the term of an inviolate virgin (cp. verse 16). Other uses of this word are: Exodus 2:8, Moses' sister; Psalms 68:25, damsels; Proverbs 30:19, seduction of a maid; Song of Solomon 1:3, love of a maid; 6:8, virgins in Solomon's harem.

The other word that concerns us here is the Hebrew word *be-thulah*. This is used in Judges 21:12, II Samuel 13:2, and elsewhere in its 52 occurrences in the O.T. of an inviolate virgin. It is suggested that every usage in the *Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance* be referred to, pages 284 and 943. It has been suggested that the use of *be thulah* in Joel 1:8 rules out this word as the correct one for a technical virgin. However, the virgin that is to wail for the husband of her youth, according to the A.V., is a betrothed virgin, who, according to the law, was considered married even though the vows were not consummated in the marriage act. She had been pledged and the years had passed her by without fulfillment. Rotherham translated the passage, "Wail thou, like a

virgin girded with sackcloth for the owner of her youth.” It is obvious that either term can be used of an inviolate virgin.

The third term that concerns us is the one that is translated “virgin” in Matthew 1:23 (quoting Isaiah 7:14) and Luke 1:27 (Gr. *Parthenos*). This is used 14 times in the N.T., and there is nothing ambiguous about the term; it meant an inviolate virgin in the full meaning of the term. The N.T. quotation in Matthew 1:23 is from the *LXX* version of the O.T. This was the Greek Version of the O.T. used throughout the lands of the dispersion where Greek had become the language of trade and communication. Some of the recent findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls coincide with the *LXX*, making some conclude that the text of the *LXX* was drawn from older manuscripts than our current Hebrew text.

The question is, of course, still open. The point we wish to make is that whatever the word in Isaiah 7:14 means, the N.T. writer uses, under inspiration, the term for “virgin” which befits the unique conception and birth of the Savior. It has been stated that Isaiah 7:14 could not be a sign to Ahaz if the son born had reference to Christ's birth hundreds of years later. Also, if this birth was of a virgin, then two virgin births would be propagated in Scripture, this one at the time of Ahaz and Christ's 625 years later. Some writers suggest the text should read, "The young woman is pregnant and bearing a son." Also that this woman is the prophetess of Isaiah 8:3. It is further suggested that the woman was well known and her son would be one of the three sons of Isaiah (Isaiah 7:3, 14; 8:3). These sons were given to Isaiah as signs to Israel concerning the confederacy of Pekah and Rezin against Ahaz (Isaiah 7:1,2; 8:12-18).

As to how to judge the above, I do not feel qualified. If true, it in no-wise detracts from the quotation in the N.T., since so very frequently The Holy Spirit takes the prophetic word and lengthens its shadows not only to fulfill an event close at hand, but still far into the future. One needs but look at all the Messianic Psalms to see the truth of this. Frequently prophecy is like a widening beam of light; figures, events and persons of the O.T. become the greater image, fulfilled in the N.T.

The Conflict Of Modern Science

Modern science has no experiment or experience on which to base judgment as to how God should act in creation, redemption, resurrection, immortality or incarnation. The Life of our Lord was the incarnated Life of God; it was from heaven (John 3:13). He would ascend from whence He came (John 6:62). He would return to the glory He had before the world was (John 17:5). He was not of this world at all (John 8:23). In Scripture, all of the attributes and actions attributed to God are attributed to Christ, except invisibility. How then shall a science, orientated to this earthly sphere and to the human family, judge one who is different, above, and distinct from us all? Or is God incapable of communicating with creatures of His creation?

Mythology and The Virgin Birth

In all pagan mythology, there is nothing to suggest or compare to the unique conception of The Savior. The so-called case of Terebinthus was post-Christian and a parody of Christ's birth.

Gautama, that is, Buddha (520-440), was supposed to have had a prior life, including having been a goat, pig and frog. No incarnations were claimed for him until the advent of Christianity and some 600 years thereafter. Buddha denied he was divine, claiming to be but a plain man seeking the path of light and truth. What he learned was original with himself. He taught self-realization and self-salvation. Pure Buddhism would not conflict too greatly with the Sermon on the Mount. The so-called virgin birth of Buddha portrays the mother of Buddha as a being assaulted by a tusked elephant; that is, the elephant entered her side, and months later Buddha was supposed to have been born. Buddha died at the age of 80 years of indigestion. His body was burned and relics divided among his followers.

The idea of a unique conception and birth being invented by the disciples of Christ in order to make Christ acceptable to the Jewish state is false on the face of it. Christ's claim to being "one" with The Father (John 10:30-33) was understood as a claim to Deity, and they sought to kill Him for this. Kill Him -- or worship Him -- but Christ would not deny the charge. Anything pagan in origin, in spite of Israel's unbelief, was hateful to the religiously correct Jew, especially tales of lustful gods and goddesses. No, the Virgin Birth was no accommodation to the Jewish mind.

The Conclusion

There is so much more that could be said on this theme, but may we close with Arthur S. Way's translation of Hebrews 1:1-3, 8a, 10 and 11a:

By various partial revelations, under various forms of appeal, did God speak in past ages to our fathers in the person of His prophets. But now, as the age in which we live draws to its close, He has spoken to us in the person of His Son. He has made Him the Heir who takes for His inheritance the universe. Nay, more, it was through His agency that God created all cosmic systems. He is to God as the rays are which reveal to us all known of the sun; He is the image that bodies out for us the essential being of God. It is He Who bears on to its goal all God's universe through The Word which is the conducting medium of God's power. He achieved the cleansing of a world's sin, and then sat down on a throne at the right hand of the Majesty Divine in the high heavens. But in reference to the immutable Son, He says,

“The Throne of Thee, Who Art God, is for the ages on ages.” Again, “It was Thou Who in the beginning of time, LORD, didst lay earth's foundations; Yea, the heavens are creations of Thy Hands: they shall be destroyed, but THOU abidest unchanging.”

Like Thomas, we can fall down to worship and say, “My Lord and My God.”

Oh, the depths of the love and grace of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways, past finding out.

He who knew no sin was made to be Sin for us that we might be made The Righteousness of God IN HIM. (Paul, in II Corinthians 5:21).

Concordance *parthenos*

- Mat. 1:23** a VIRGIN shall be with child,
25:1 ten VIRGINS, which took their ...
:7 Then all these VIRGINS arose, ...
:11 came also the other VIRGINS, ...
Lk. 1:27 To a VIRGIN espoused to a ...
and the VIRGIN'S name was Mary.
Acts 21:9 had four daughters, VIRGINS,
I Co. 7:25 Now concerning VIRGINS ...
:28 and if a VIRGIN marry,
:34 between a wife and a VIRGIN ...
:36 uncomely toward his VIRGIN ...
:37 keep his VIRGIN.
II Cor. 11:2 a chaste VIRGIN to Christ.
Rev. 14:4 for they are VIRGINS (masc.) ...

Biblical virginity is that state of physical wholeness voided by sexual copulation. Figuratively, the relation of the believer to Christ, II Cor. 11:2, and metaphorically of chaste persons, Rev, 14:4.

THE PROBLEM OF THE ANTI-CHRIST (Is the Anti-Christ a Person or a System?)

By Ralph C. Isbell

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Interrogation:** Who or what is the Anti-Christ, a person, a power, a somebody or a system?
- B. **Proposition:** Both propositions possess proponents and propagandists:
1. Some affirm: Anti-Christ is a person possessing personality, entity, character, volition, will, intellect, power, authority.
 2. Others affirm: Anti-Christ is a system, political and religious; great, extensive, powerful, able, adept, attractive; but only a system. Those who hold this opinion usually identify the Papal System as Anti-Christ.
- C. **Notation:** The origin of the latter theory.
First stated advertently in the 12th century by Abbot Joachim.
Supported later by many church historians who refer to the terrible scourge of persecution perpetrated by the Roman Church under the agency of the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, the Inquisition in Spain, Germany, Bohemia, Switzerland and the persecution in England and Scotland. Albert Barnes, a great commentator, stated, "The Papacy perpetrated persecutions that wore out the saints."
- D. **Objection:** The contention for the Papal System is strong and plausible; it is seemingly true and credible; but it fails for various reasons and in various aspects:
1. According to The Prophetic Word, the rule and persecutions of Anti-Christ belong to a future period, not to the present or past.
 2. Anti-Christ will harass certain saints. The saints depicted in prophecy, however, are not the

church saints, but Jewish saints -- the elect remnant of God's earth people, Israel (Daniel 7:21-25).

3. Anti-Christ will persecute these saints during the period of the "Great Tribulation." This is a period following the present dispensation of Sovereign Grace.
4. The Papacy as a system has consistently proven friendly to the Jew; see Neander, Schaff, Milman and other historians for proof. Popes Gregory, Martin, Calixtus, Eugenius, Alexander, Clement, Celestine, Innocent, and Nicholas professed to be the friend of the Jew.
5. The Papacy's attitude toward God and Christ Jesus differs widely from the attitude to be assumed by the Anti-Christ.
 - a. The Anti-Christ will seek to exalt and lift himself above God, and will aim to displace God (cp. Daniel 11:36; II Thessalonians 2:4). This the Papacy has never attempted; the Papacy assumes the Supremacy of God.
 - b. The Anti-Christ will claim to be God; the Roman Pontiff claims Vice-Regency, thus displacing the office of The Holy Spirit, but the Roman church has never displaced The Person of God.
 - c. The Anti-Christ will positively deny that Jesus has come or will come again in the flesh (cp. 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7). This Romanism, with all its guilt, has never done. Romanism really honors the flesh of Christ far more than it honors His exaltation to glory, but the Roman church has never denied His manifestation in the flesh. The various cults denying that Christ has come in the flesh are more truly related to Anti-Christ than Romanism.

E. Proposition: The Anti-Christ is a personal being. He will possess a system and an organization, but this is because he is a person. As surely as Christianity could not exist without the Person of Christ, so the

“Great Tribulation” for Israel will not exist without the Person of Anti-Christ. The names, characters and deeds of Anti-Christ are dealt with in the study, and will identify the Anti-Christ as a personal being with transcendent power, wisdom, ability, and authority. He will be Satan's superman; his king of kings; the rival to The Son of God, Who is God's King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

II. INSTRUCTION

A. His designation: The name of the Anti-Christ

The Anti-Christ will possess many names and titles denoting personality; he is termed:

1. The Little Horn: Daniel 7:8, 20, 21, 24, 25; 8:9-12
2. The Beast: Daniel 7:11; cp. Revelation 13:1-8; 19:20
3. The King: Daniel 8:23-25; 7:20; 11:36; cp. Isaiah 14:4
4. The Coming Prince: Daniel 9:20
5. The Vile Person: Daniel 11:21-30
6. The Man of Sin (Lawless One): II Thessalonians 2:3 (Revised Version)
7. The Son of Perdition: II Thessalonians 2:3
8. The Wicked One: II Thessalonians 2:8; cp. Isaiah 11:4
9. The Anti-Christ: 1 John 2:8
10. The Assyrian: Isaiah 14:25
11. The Idol Shepherd: Zechariah 11:16-17
12. The Desolator: Daniel 9:27, margin; cp. Matthew 24:15

He will have many other names and titles not mentioned here.

B - His origination: The origin of the Anti-Christ

1. He will be a human being related to humanity. Daniel 7:8-20; Daniel 7:24-26; cp. 11:36-39; Ezekiel 28:2-10; Isaiah 14:4-6.
2. He will possess royal rights (probably by acquisition) -- A prince; a king; Daniel 8:23-28; 7:20; 11:36.
3. He will be of Jewish descent: Daniel 11:37; cp.

Isaiah 14:19-20; Daniel 11:37, "The God (*El*) of His Fathers will he not worship." In the O.T. only one people worship God; all other nations worshipped idols. *El* is the omnipotent One.

Note: The term "Fathers" is also significant; it is used in the Scriptures in connection with Israel. Hebrews 1:1-2, "*El*" is the "Omnipotent Creator."

4. He will possess a Supernatural Origin: As Christ possessed a supernatural, divine origin, so Anti-Christ will probably possess a supernatural, diabolic origin.
 - a. He is termed "The son of perdition" (II Thessalonians 2:3); cp. Christ termed "The Son of God."
 - b. He is spoken of as "the beast that ASCENDED OUT OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT (Revelation 11:7); cp. Christ came DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN (John 6:38).
5. He will spring, as a human, out of an obscure place, people, land. (Daniel 7:8, 20, 21, 24, 25; cp. Isaiah 14:14-30)

C. His Characterization: The character of the Anti-Christ

1. He will be arrogant and boastful: Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 8:11; 11:36-37; II Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 13:5, 6.
2. He will be blasphemous: Daniel 7:25; 11:36-37; Revelation 13:1-6.
3. He will be murderous: Revelation 13:1, 4-6 -- conduct warfare:
 - a. Against the nations' rules by his fellow kings (Daniel 7:8; 7:20-24; cp. Isaiah 14:12-17).
 - b. Against the Nation, Israel: Daniel 7:21-22, 25; cp. v. 27; Daniel 8:23-25; Revelation 13:7.
4. He is denoted as "wicked": II Thessalonians 2:3.
5. He is described as "foul and vile": Daniel 11:31, 21.
6. He is a deceiver, a flatterer, a hypocrite: Daniel 11:21-24.

7. He is to be diabolically intolerant: Daniel 8:10.
8. He is to be despotic and arbitrary: Daniel 8:9-11; Daniel 11:36.
9. He is to be inherently lawless: Daniel 7:25; II Thessalonians 2:3 R. V.
10. He is to be a peerless diplomat and statesman: Daniel 11:2-24.
11. He is to be conscienceless: Daniel 9:27.
12. He is to possess great courage: Daniel 8:24-25. (Dares to stand against Christ)
13. He will be contemptuous of all religion: Daniel 11:36.
14. He will be sacrilegious; desecrate The Holy Place: Daniel 9:26-27; cp. Matthew 24:15.
15. He will be superstitious: Daniel 11:38-39.
16. He will be wonderfully successful: Daniel 3:24.
17. He will perform marvelous miracles: II Thessalonians 2:9-12, cp. Matthew 24:24; Revelation 13:13.
18. He will magnify and deify himself; Daniel 11:36-37; II Thessalonians 2:4.

D. His manifestation: The manifestation of Anti-Christ

1. He will be preceded by great defection: apostasy on the part of pseudo-believers: II Thessalonians 2:1-3.
2. The way is now being prepared: spirit of Anti-Christ now in the world: 1 John 2:18; 4:2-3.
3. He will be associated with:
 - a. Satan as Anti-God: Revelation 13: 1-2; II Thessalonians 2:8-9.
 - b. The false prophet who is Anti-Holy Spirit: Revelation 13:11-12.
 - c. The harlot city, Babylon (not Rome): Revelation 17:1-5, 18.
 - d. Deceived dupes of earth: John 5:43; II Thessalonians 2:10-12; 1 John 4:2-3.
4. He will be accompanied by marvelous signs and wonders: II Thessalonians 2:3, 9, 10; Revelation 13:13.

5. He will come in his own name: John 5:43.
6. He will come amidst the plaudits of men: John 5: 43; Revelation 13:3-4.
7. He will come to work his own will: Daniel 11:36.
8. He will come in power, authority and energy of Satan: Revelation 13:1-2.
9. He will publicly manifest himself as Anti-Christ: three and one-half years: Daniel 7:25.
10. He will tread Jerusalem under foot 42 months.
11. He will mightily persecute God's earthly people, Israel: Daniel 11:36-37; Revelation 17:6.
12. He will introduce the era, "The Great Tribulation": Matthew 24:15-22; Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 30:7.
13. He will cause moral and spiritual obliquity to come upon man: Revelation 13:7-8, cp. II Corinthians 4:4.
14. He will control the business of the world: Revelation 13:16-17
15. He will pour prosperity upon his devotees: Daniel 11: 24-28; 39-43.
16. He will mightily destroy men and nations: Daniel 8:23-25, cp. Isaiah 14:16-17; Revelation 13: 1, 4-6.
17. He will deny both The Father and The Son: 1 John 2:22.
18. He will seek to change laws, times and seasons: Daniel 7:25.
19. He will set his diabolic mark upon his worshippers: Revelation 13:16-17; 14:9-10; 19:20.
20. He will be wounded unto death and live again: Revelation 13:3-4; 13:12-14.
21. He will promote his followers to places of power: Daniel 11:39.
22. He will possess and reign in an earthly capital – Babylon: Revelation 17:1-5, 18.
23. He will sit upon a throne (Satan's earthly throne): Revelation 13:2, cp. 2:13.
24. He will wear many crowns or diadems: Rev. 13:1.

25. He will pollute The Holy Sanctuary to be erected, Jerusalem: Matthew 24:15.
 26. He will possess absolute world power: II Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13: 2, 7; Daniel 11:41-43.
 27. He will come to his end -- a Satanic fiasco: Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 11:45,
- E. His termination: The cessation of the rule of Anti-Christ.**
1. He will come to his end in the land (Palestine): Daniel 11:41-45.
 2. He will be broken without hand: Daniel 8:25; cp. Isaiah 11:4; II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19: 19-26.
 3. He will be destroyed by Divine Judgment: Daniel 7:9-11; 9:21-22; II Thessalonians 2:8.
 4. His oppression will be broken: Isaiah 14:4-6; Daniel 8:25.
 5. His dominion taken away -- utterly cease: Daniel 7:25-28.
 6. He will come to his end ignominiously: Isaiah 14:25; Daniel 11:45.
 7. His slain body will be given to the burning flame: Isaiah 4:4; Revelation 17:8; 19:19-20; 20:10; cp. Revelation 14:9-11.
 8. His person: the object of derision in the realm of the dead: Isaiah 14:9-11; 15-20.
 9. His end ... at the Personal Second Coming of Christ in judgment glory: Daniel 8:25; II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:11-21.

De Incarnatione
- Athanasius -

For this purpose, then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far from it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with The Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us. He saw the reasonable race, the race of men that, like Himself, expressed The Father's Mind, wasting out of existence, and death reigning over all in corruption. He saw that corruption held us all the closer, because it was the penalty for the Transgression. He saw, too, how unthinkable it would be for the law to be repealed before it was fulfilled. He saw how unseemly it was that the very things of which He Himself was The Artificer should be disappearing. He saw how the surpassing wickedness of men was mounting up against them; He saw also their universal liability to death.

All this He saw and, pitying our race, moved with compassion for our limitation, unable to endure that death should have the mastery, rather than that His creatures should perish and the work of His Father for us men come to naught, He took to Himself a body, a human body even as our own. Nor did He will merely to become embodied or merely to appear; had that been so, He could have revealed His divine majesty in some other and better way. No, He took our body, and not only so, but He took it directly from a spotless, stainless virgin, without the agency of human father — a pure body, untainted by intercourse with man. He, The Mighty One, The Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for His very own, as the instrument through which He was known and in which He dwelt. Thus, taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered His body to death instead of all, and offered it to The Father. This He did out of sheer love for us, so that in His death all might die, and the law of death thereby be abolished because, having fulfilled in His body that for which it was appointed, it was thereafter voided of its power for men. This He did that He might turn again to incorruption men who had turned back to corruption, and make them alive through death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of His resurrection. Thus He would make death to disappear from them as utterly as straw from fire.

(Inside back cover)

AND THE EMPTYING

3. *HEEGOMAI*, translated "thought."

This word indicates that the whole matter has been brought out before the mind, and an authoritative decision reached. Note Acts 26:2: "I think myself happy." Paul thought himself happy to answer because he had viewed the whole case of his accusation,

4. *HARPAGMOS*, translated "robbery."

This word indicates an act of spoilation — an eager seizing or grasping. He did not consider His being on an equality with God an act of spoilation.

5. *ISOS*, translated "equal."

This word indicates a person or thing identical with another (cp. John 5:18).

6. *EKENOSEN* from *KENOO*, translated "made" of no "reputation."

This word means "to empty, make void." The word is used in reference to His being in the form of God. What He emptied Himself of was the form "*morphe*."

The following comparison and contrast will enable one to comprehend the distinction, and consequently the impressive and marvelous change under which our Lord went.

II. THE EMPTYING

1. **HAVING; BECOME.**

Indicative of a later state of existence.

2. **FORM OF A SERVANT.**

3. **LIKENESS WITH MEN.**

4. **MANIFEST.**

5. **VIRGIN BORN.**

6. **INCARNATE.**

This season, as we contemplate the birth of Christ, let us not forget the fact that He voluntarily emptied Himself. That emptying has made it possible for the believer to be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).

—HOWARD NATHANAEL BUNCE, Ph.D.