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**Another Look at the Source of Jesus' Humanity A Reexamination  
of the New Testament and the Βεοτόκος Statement of the  
Chalcedon Creed**

John Wesley Larson

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Another Look at the  
Source of Jesus' Humanity  
A Reexamination of the New Testament  
and the Θεωρόκος Statement  
of the Chalcedon Creed

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the faculty of  
Western Evangelical Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Divinity

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By  
John Wesley Larson  
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## PREFACE

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. (Hebrews 1:1-4, NIV)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God--the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:1-7, NIV)

These two portions of Scripture present some of the basic Christology which I, along with a great host of Christendom, have grown up to believe.

The writer of the book of Hebrews sees God speaking through prophets in the past, but today He is speaking to us through His Son. To the writer of the Hebrews this son was preexistent and creator of all and equal to God. This son provided purification for man from his sin. In the body of the Hebrews text this "provided purification" is explained. This "provided purification" was the offering of a perfect sacrifice for sin, the perfect High Priest himself. Thus from my early age of conversion to faith in Jesus Christ (age 15) to the present I have held the position that Christ was sinless. This conviction came to me from preachers, Sunday School teachers, and whatever folk theology picked up along the way, to that of formal training in college and seminary.

My discovery was that Christianity as a whole--Catholic, Western or Eastern --Protestants, both liberal and shades in between to evangelicals and ultra-fundamentalists, all seem to feel the Christ must somehow come from outside the sin problem or at least have overcome the sin problem.

For me, an Evangelical of Wesleyan persuasion, any theological position which threatens the sinlessness of Christ must be dealt with, even if it comes from within my own communion.

The Apostle Paul, writer of the letter to the Romans, speaks of the "gospel (God) promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son." Paul here states that Jesus, the Son of God, was as to his flesh or human nature a descendant of David and that this Son a descendant of David was declared to be the Son of God.

Again, as mentioned above, I grew up as a young Christian not only believing in the sinlessness of Christ, but that this sinless man was the Son of God who descended from David. So also this I have defended along with most of Christendom that Jesus was and is (by His resurrection) the God-Man of the early Church (Chalcedon, 451 A.D.).

It was not until about 1963, while taking a class in Seminary on Christian Holiness, that I realized that there was here a possible paradox between the sinlessness of Christ and the sinfulness of man. From time to time my interest would be aroused, until I thought of an idea that at first seemed to me to be heretical and contrary to all that I had been taught or had taught.

Could it be that the Christ was not a part of Mary's flesh as had been suggested in the past, and thus not part of Adam's race, for "in Adam all died."<sup>1</sup> As I continued my studies it became evident, that the commentators might be wrong and that neither

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<sup>1</sup>Bible, New International Version(Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978), I Corinthians 15:22.

one of the genealogies, Luke's or Matthew's (they didn't agree as to which), was Mary's, and that both were Joseph's despite the differences in them. This opened my thinking to the fact that I may have come across the possible answer to the theological dilemma in which I found myself. Since then I have written four papers which research into the human nature of Christ. The one for my M.A.R. degree was entitled What Is the Difference Between the Carnal Nature and the Human Nature? This was an exploration into the difference between pure man (Jesus) and sinful man (the fallen of Adam's race). This research convinced me that it was very possible that Jesus was a new creation in the womb of Mary "a body prepared"<sup>2</sup> thus sinless "without father or mother."<sup>3</sup> About 1979 I discovered one other person in history (there may be others, I do not know) that agreed with this position. This was said of Menno Simons that:

The problem which disturbed him was this: How could the sinless divine nature of Christ be incarnated in the flesh of sinful descendants of fallen Adam? Because of his earnest desire for the truth and his great fear of unbelief and error, Menno came into a serious conflict on this question. He fasted and prayed to God 'that He might reveal to him the mystery of the conception of His blessed Son' in so far as this was necessary for the glory of God and the lightening of the burden of his conscience. . . . After several months Menno felt that he had come to a satisfying conclusion on his question by adopting a theory of the incarnation which made the incarnation a new creation of the human flesh of Christ in Mary so that Christ took being in Mary but was not born of Mary's flesh.<sup>4</sup>

This stimulated my thought enough to continue with a paper entitled Another Look at Chalcedon. My first research was an inductive study of the New Testament and this second was a look beyond the New Testament into the Second through the Fifth Centuries of the Christian Church.

My third paper was for a course in Modern Christian Thought from the Enlightenment to Vatican II. This convinced me that even for modern theologians the Christ event was paradoxical.

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<sup>2</sup>Hebrews 10:5.

<sup>3</sup>Hebrews 7:3.

<sup>4</sup>Menno Simons, The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, 1496-1561. p. 14.

A fourth study was made on the Apostolic Fathers to try to discover where the "flesh of Mary" idea originated. My study convinced me that it began with, or at least was first recorded by Ignatius around the last of the First Century or the first part of the Second Century.

This is an account of how I came to the position that I now present as my thesis, that the New testament does not support the theotokos statement of the Chalcedon Creed, or any present view which includes "Mary's Flesh" as the source of Jesus' humanity.



## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Thesis Statement

The Chalcedon creed of 451 A.D. states that:

Following, then, the holy Fathers, we all with one voice teach that it should be confessed that our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same God, the same perfect Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same [consisting] of a rational soul and a body; homoousios with the Father as to His Godhead, and the same homoousios with us as to His manhood; in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of the Father before ages as to His Godhead, and in the last days, the same, for us and for our salvation, of Mary the virgin Theotokos as to His manhood.<sup>1</sup>

The thesis is, that the New Testament does not support the Theotokos statement in the Chalcedon Creed, or any present view which includes "Mary's Flesh" as the source of Jesus' humanity.

#### Justification of Thesis

In 451 A.D. the prevailing view of Theotokos was that Mary was "the Mother of God" or "Bearer of God" (θεοτόκος).<sup>2</sup> The Chalcedon theologians interpreted "Bearer of God" literally, that the man, Jesus, can be called God and is God, (communicatio idiomatum), that is to say that the human nature of the Son of God was made from the body of or flesh of Mary thus making her the Mother of God. If this is true then surely Mary was "the Mother of God."

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<sup>1</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 390.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 310.

This involvement of Mary's flesh has been a part of Christian theology from Ignatius who in the beginning of the Second Century wrote: "There is one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and yet not born, who is God in man true life in death, both of Mary and of God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ Our Lord."<sup>3</sup>

From Ignatius through the Council of Chalcedon and on to the present we find this same attitude toward Mary's involvement. Let us look at just a few quotations.

Bishop Pearson says, that 'as he was so made of the substance of the Virgin, so was He not made of the substance of the Holy Ghost, Whose essence cannot at all be made. . . . There were no material elements in the person of Christ except those He received from her.'<sup>4</sup>

The Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles include this statement:

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were co-joined in one Person.<sup>5</sup>

It may be true as H. Orton Wiley states that:

Protestantism, however, uniformly rejected the Theotokos, . . . as objectionable and misleading. Otherwise the Chalcedonian statement has become the orthodox creed of Protestantism, whether Lutheran, Reformed, or Anglican.<sup>6</sup>

Even though the Theotokos has been rejected by some and left out of the Methodist statement of faith, there is still a deep-seated psychological need for it. This can be seen from this quotation from Harold Lindsell:

God indeed has chosen to work out the divine will in a variety of strange ways that defy our imaginations and perplex us. He created Adam without the benefit of either father or mother. He created Eve out of man without

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<sup>3</sup>Ignatius' Epistle to the Ephesians, Vol. II:2. Underlining mine.

<sup>4</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. II (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1952), p. 180. Underlining mine.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 167. Underlining mine.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

benefit of woman. He made Jesus out of woman without benefit of human father. And he makes us out of fathers and mothers.<sup>7</sup>

As this writer has struggled with this problem, he has had discussions with persons from several theological backgrounds which have proven to his satisfaction that this problem is still with us. There seems to be a deep-seated psychological need to tie Jesus into our own flesh, back to Adam. We just cannot accept a Jesus as human which is not part of our Adam experience. We are racially prejudiced. If Jesus is not part of our Adam-Human Race he is not human. Jesus, it seems, is a threat to us, if he comes from outside our sin problem.

The real issue is the sinlessness of Christ as stated in the Chalcedon Creed ("sin only excepted") which is so explicit in the Scriptures. When the sinlessness of Christ is placed next to the sinfulness of man, which too is, without question, explicit in Scripture, it is at this point that we can see a Christological problem. If Jesus is somehow in Adam he too has the sin problem. The many proposed answers do not solve the problem.

The Immaculate Conception (a belief that Mary was born without original sin) falls short on several accounts. First, it is not found in the New Testament. Second, if Mary was spared the result of sin in order that Jesus would be born sinless then, how far back in her genealogy should one go? The Eastern Church, along with many Protestants who propose an assumption view, fails to produce a Jesus that does not need cleansing. According to this assumption view the λόγος assumed the flesh of Jesus which had come from Mary and cleansed it. Dr. H. Orton Wiley put it this way: "This one personality is the pre-existent Logos, or the divine Son, who assumed to Himself human nature, and in this assumption both personalized and redeemed it."<sup>8</sup> If Jesus'

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<sup>7</sup>Harold Lindsell, "The Mystery at Bethlehem", Christianity Today, December 9, 1977, p. 22. Underlining mine.

<sup>8</sup>Wiley, op. cit., p. 178.

human nature needed to be redeemed, then the Christ would not be sinless by nature; this body assumed from Mary transmitted an Adam relationship that needed to be redeemed.

That which might seem to be a paradox can no longer be considered a paradox. If the "Flesh of Mary view," as it will be called, finds its roots in the Second Century with Ignatius, and the sinlessness of Christ finds its roots in the New Testament, then the paradox disappears. Only if both views found their source in the New Testament could it be said to be a paradox of faith. As it is, only the sinlessness of Christ is canonical and thus requires one's explicit allegiance. It is true that at present in the history of Christian thought it is thought of as paradoxical. Christ is sinless and at the same time from a generation of sinful mankind, for all have died and have been found in sin from Adam to now.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned -- for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>9</sup>

To this writer there seems to be only one answer to the problem, that is that Jesus did not receive his human nature from the "Flesh of Mary" but as the Scripture suggests, he had a "body prepared for Him,"<sup>10</sup> that he was a "New Creation" in the womb of Mary as Menno Simons has suggested.

The problem which disturbed him was this: How could the sinless divine nature of Christ be incarnated in the flesh of sinful descendants of fallen Adam? Because of his earnest desire for the truth and his great fear of unbelief and error, Menno came into a serious conflict on this question. He fasted and prayed to God 'that He might reveal to him the mystery of the conception of His blessed Son' in so far as this was necessary for the glory of God and the lightening of the burden of his conscience. . . . After several months Menno felt that he had come to a satisfying conclusion on his question by adopting a theory of the incarnation which made the incarnation a new creation of the human flesh of Christ in Mary so that Christ took being in Mary but was not born of Mary's flesh.<sup>11</sup>

This would break the transmission of sin in whatever mode and meet all the requirements of Scripture, insure the need for the virgin birth, and satisfy evangelicals today. This Jesus would be the sinless Son of God, the sinless Son of man, the sinless High Priest, a perfect Sacrifice; through Joseph He would be the Son of David, Abraham, and Adam, the Son of God, and the second Adam. He would be all of this by one simple step back into the New Testament. This seems to me to be the only answer to the problem of sin's transmission into all of Adam's race, and the sinlessness of Christ.

### Setting the Stage

Could reality, the facts of the New Testament, have been lost in the maze of thought which characterized the scramble for orthodoxy between the first and fifth centuries? Apostolic authority was sought for in the New Testament Canon. This gave

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<sup>9</sup>Bible, New International Version (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978), Romans 5:12-21.

<sup>10</sup>Hebrews 10:5.

<sup>11</sup>Menno Simons, The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, 1496-1561. p. 14.

way to the Rule of Faith along with the need for the Apostolic Succession and the Creeds. Twentieth century Protestants find themselves looking back across the centuries asking questions. What really happened? Which authority should be listened to? Why accept this authority and reject another? Questions like these are being asked by liberal, neo-orthodox, evangelical, and Roman Catholic.

The December 24, 1979, issue of Newsweek has on the front cover the title "Searching for the Real Jesus." The article on pages 48 and 49 was entitled "Who Was Jesus?" This states:

Most New Testament scholarship purposely focuses on what the texts meant to first-century Christians, but some of its implications call into question the authority sometimes claimed by Christian churches today. Roman Catholic analysts, for example, agree that the papacy in its developed form cannot be read back into the New Testament and that the words of Matthew's Gospel, 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church,' were not necessarily uttered by Jesus during his ministry. Protestants, on the other hand, can find little support for the claim that Scripture alone is the basis for Christian authority; on the contrary, modern scholarship demonstrates not only that the church existed before the Gospels were written but also that the church shaped the New Testament writings. 'It is much more difficult now for Protestants to speak naively about Biblical faith or Biblical religion,' says professor Donald Juel of Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. 'The diversity of Scripture is a fact and it is something to which Christian tradition must now speak.'

The Christians most threatened by contemporary scholarship are those conservative evangelicals who insist that every statement in the Bible -- whether historical, scientific or religious -- is literally true. Scholars who accept any form of modern Biblical research are under attack in several Protestant denominations, including the nation's largest -- the Southern Baptist Convention. The issue of Biblical inerrancy has already created a schism in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and now, with the editorial blessing of Christianity Today magazine, influential fundamentalists are pressing a new battle for the Bible at the risk of splitting the already wobbly evangelical movement. In Rome, meanwhile, the Vatican began a formal inquiry last week against Dutch Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx on the widely disputed ground that his recent book, 'Jesus: An Experiment in Christology,' uses modern Biblical criticism to deny the divinity of Christ.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Kenneth L. Woodward, Newsweek, December 24, 1979 (New York, New York), pp. 48-49.

The Roman Catholic theologian, John McHugh, states in the introduction to his book, The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament, that the two main items hindering the reuniting of Reformed Protestant Christians and Romans are the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. His reasoning is that the Reform Churches with their strong view of "Scripture Alone" and the Roman view of "The Church Alone" can get together only if it can be shown that the Roman Church's dogma on Mary, its decrees, traditions, and institutions are Scriptural.

McHugh admits that it is rather clear that there is no precedent in either Scripture or ancient tradition to warrant the late ex cathedra dogma of Pope Pius IX in 1854. Was Catherine Laboures' vision of Mary in 1830 true? McHugh's hope is first to do a thorough study of the New Testament to discover the real Mary and from there see if there can be found a good reason for the final Christian conviction which would lead to this view, the Immaculate Conception.

In 1978 Mary in the New Testament was published. This was a collaborative work by Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars and was edited by Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and John Reumann.

The task force of New Testament scholars did this work for the National Dialogue between Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians. When these theologians were approached to do the study on Mary in the New Testament, they had begun discussion of papal infallibility and teaching authority. The "definitions of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary were the most obvious exercises of the claim of papal infallibility and therefore a Marian study would not be unrelated to the purposes of the Dialogue."<sup>13</sup> Thus another move to discover the "real Mary."

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<sup>13</sup>Raymond E. Brown, ed., Mary in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

As many scholars have sought to find the "real Jesus" and now the "real Mary," this thesis too hopes to go back as far as possible to a hypothetical history of the source of Jesus' humanity. To an Evangelical, this may seem to be heresy.

But before one cries heresy one should read further. Just because hypothetical histories are the favorite pastime of historical critics does not mean that they are the only ones that hypothesize. All of our present evangelical and fundamental Christologies are based on a hypothetical source for the humanity of Jesus.

From the point of pure logic, the historic church, that said Jesus was from the flesh of Mary, hypothesized. The church has made a statement about a subject that it could not know anything about. That is, there were no facts available. There was literally no way for Ignatius, or for that matter anyone after him, to make a statement such as "there is one physician, . . . both of Mary and of God."<sup>14</sup> This hypothetical statement is no different from those of many of folk theologies, or from the hypothetical histories that historical critics make today. The point is that Mary, herself, would have had to make a hypothetical statement concerning what went on inside her womb. She would have had to guess as to what must have been meant by the angel's answer "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."<sup>15</sup> Unless Mary had been given a special revelation as to the real source of Jesus' humanity, she would not have been able to tell others. If she did receive that kind of revelation, it has not been recorded in the New Testament. Let us suppose that she did and that what Ignatius said was the extension of Mary's tradition. It still holds that the New Testament does not support the Theotokos statement in the Chalcedon Creed, or any present view which includes "Mary's Flesh" as the source of Jesus' humanity.

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<sup>14</sup>Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, VII:2.

<sup>15</sup>Luke 1:35.



This line of logic would seem to wrap up the thesis and should need no more discussion. But not so, because we do have the Chalcedon statement and history both before and after which claim that somehow Jesus was of the "Flesh of Mary."

These questions need to be answered. Why did the church make such a hypothetical statement? On what grounds was it made? Where did it start and why? What problems were solved? What problems did it create? Where does the church go from here? Is there an alternative hypothesis? If there is, would it solve any present problems in theology? Does it all really matter? What makes these questions so important? They are important because: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"<sup>16</sup> As many today have sought to re-evaluate their foundation, this writer feels that the cry of the Reformation "Scripture Alone" should be heard again. Present evangelical theology has only gone part way in fulfilling the reformation cry. It has been four hundred years since the Reformation, and the church is still working its way back through the first four hundred years of the church, the Creeds, back through tradition, and Rule of Faith, and on back to the New Testament for its authority.

This writer, a member of the Wesleyan Church and a product of that tradition, must of necessity work from his own background and the problem areas of his theology to discover his biblical "roots."

It should be quite clear to the astute observer that the Wesleyan Church doctrinal statements, in The Discipline, are followed by several proof texts. These texts are, it is understood, to be interpreted by the prevailing Wesleyan-Arminian conviction. This conviction is spelled out in several books and documents produced by the "Holiness movement," which resulted in many organizations of which the Wesleyan Church is just one. To a great extent the Wesleyan Church has used, for its theological authority, writers from outside of its own membership. This is not to say that it has not produced some fine works; but it is to say that the only authoritative statements are the very

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<sup>16</sup>Psalm 11:3 (KJV).

loose statements in The Discipline. Those writers that have spoken within the Holiness movement have used the early creeds as the norm for doctrine. To some extent, it would seem that the New Testament has been judged by the Creeds and not the Creeds by the New Testament.

It is the conviction of this writer that the New Testament does not support the Chalcedon statement which implies that Jesus' body was formed from Mary's body. It is this statement that has caused unnecessary and unresolved tension in present Protestant Christology. One such tension can be seen in a section in the Insights into Holiness compiled by Kenneth Geiger, and written by Roy S. Nichalson. It can be seen here what happens when a theology separates Christology and Anthropology. In Christology, Christ's human nature is dealt with, his sinlessness etc. Then in Anthropology, man is dealt with, his sinful nature, etc. In this chapter by Roy S. Nichalson one can discover a paradoxical problem. He states that:

3. Christ, in order to deliver man from this carnal nature, became man, possessing a very real human nature, bearing those weaknesses and infirmities, which while not sins, were the sad issue of sin, and labored under them, . . .

6. Man's infirmities and natural human weaknesses are not, strictly speaking, sins; therefore, they are no effective barrier to holiness of heart and life.<sup>17</sup>

He went on to say:

This must be borne in mind, despite the fact that we recognize a valid distinction between infirmities and sins: 'they both need the Atonement.' . . .

Although such an attitude recognizes that infirmities are innocent in themselves and sinless because they are involuntary, it also recognizes that they 'are from sin, in that they are the effects of sin' and sin--voluntary or involuntary--in the light of God's absolute holiness requires the atoning blood of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

I have here brought together Christology and Anthropology to show the paradoxical nature of this portion of Wesleyan theology.

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<sup>17</sup>Roy S. Nichalson, Insights into Holiness, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

At this point Dr. Nichalson has carried this paradox to its logical conclusion. Dr. Nichalson is not alone in this position. How has the Church handled Christological-Anthropology and come to grips with the sinlessness of Christ? For most people the satisfactory answer is "Jesus is an exception." This, along with other explanations, has satisfied the laity of the Church. But this is not sufficient for a discerning student of theology. The above quotation is from historical theological teaching, that if somehow Jesus was in Adam or David, then he needed the atonement for his own human nature. Hebrews speaks of both a perfect man, high priest, and a Jesus that could understand our infirmities. The paradoxical nature of the sinless-infirm-Adam-bearing-Man, Jesus Christ the God-man does not resolve the tension but increases the tension in theology.

The Virgin birth is not questioned nor are any of the old heresies being reintroduced. What is being said here as a new hypothesis is that Jesus had a complete human body and nature no different from our original parents but that this human body and nature was a new creation in the womb of Mary and not from her body. This means that Jesus "had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."<sup>19</sup> This view breaks the Adamic relationship making Him perfect, sinless man, the second Adam. If this is a heresy, then a new classification needs to be made, because it does not fit into any of the following: Docetism, Ebionism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, or Eutychianism.

This writer affirms:

. . . that Jesus Christ is the second person of the Triune Godhead: that He was eternally one with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus united in one person very God and very man, the God-man.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Hebrews 2:17-18.

<sup>20</sup>Wiley, p. 168.

### Presuppositions

No one can think logically without faith assumptions. It is to this issue we now turn. The first assumption of this thesis is that there is a thought process which is common to all people. From the least to the most educated, one must have faith assumptions whether they are recognized as such or not. Dr. Bob Patterson explains Dr. Carl Henry's view on this subject. "Once assumed, an ultimate principle becomes the foundation for all other patterns of thought. In the strictest sense, ultimate principles cannot be proven, but they can be indirectly verified."<sup>20</sup>

Dr. Patterson goes on to say that Dr. Henry believes that:

If a basic assumption leads to a true world view, then the world view reflects reliably back upon the basic assumption. But how does one test for a true world view? Generally, philosophy has graded a world view as true if it can meet four tests. First, any world view must be free from internal self-contradiction: it must be consistent. Second, its various parts or principles must harmonize: it must be coherent. Third, it must illumine or explain some experience more thoroughly than any other basic assumption: it must be applicable. And fourth, it should be applicable to all possible experience: it must be adequate. The world view that most adequately satisfies these four tests for truth is the one we should choose, even though still incapable of a strict demonstrative proof. Rival hypotheses are eliminated by showing that they do not meet these four tests.

Among the four tests, Henry is especially keen on the first one, consistency, i.e., the priority of the law of noncontradiction.<sup>21</sup>

It is this law that is brought into focus when applied to the "flesh of Mary" view of Christ's incarnation. If present and past theologies produce a tension between the sinfulness of Adam's race and the sinlessness of the Christ by their insistence that Christ was of the blood line of Mary back to Adam, then it follows that Christ was either in Adam and sinful or not in Adam and sinless. If the Bible teaches the sinlessness of Christ, then it follows if the Bible is true, then it will not teach the

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<sup>21</sup>Bob E. Patterson, Carl F. H. Henry (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), p. 61.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

"flesh of Mary" view of the incarnation, and that this view must find its source outside of the Bible.

### Scriptural Presupposition

The second assumption is, that the sixty-six books of the Protestant Scripture:

... is the Word of God and contains all things necessary to salvation  
 .... so that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby  
 is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article  
 of faith, or to be taught requisite or necessary for salvation ... the Holy  
 Scriptures, it is understood, refer to the canonical books of the Old and  
 New Testaments.<sup>22</sup>

The Scripture will be viewed as canon, that is it is final authority. Its history will be approached reverently. The unity of Scripture is assumed. Many of those that use the historical-critical method in evaluating the New Testament evidence, declare the New Testament to be a plural book. As a plural book the authors of the New Testament not only write from their own experience, background, and insights, but they also lack an overall doctrinal and historical unity, so much so that at times it is thought that the author may even have fabricated his story.

A quotation will show what is meant by pluralism in the New Testament.

Second, and more important, we have allowed for quite different outlooks on Mary among the New Testament authors....

Moreover, besides accepting such diversities, we have insisted that they form a part of 'the New Testament picture of Mary,' which now ceases to be a uniform picture. . . . However, we do wish to keep the idea that the New Testament picture is neither static nor uniform, that there is change from one period to another, and that there is diversity even within roughly contemporary Christian communication. Moreover, as we shall see below, we wish to indicate that the picture does not close with the New Testament and that lines of development in the Biblical picture continue into the second century....

All the scholars participating in this study . . . agree on a canon of 27 New Testament books. The very notion of a canon or norm implies a

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<sup>23</sup>Manual of the Pilgrim Holiness Church (Indianapolis: The Pilgrim Publishing House, 1966), p. 18.

responsibility of the churches to these New Testament writings and the word they proclaim. Obviously, this question of responsibility becomes more difficult when we recognize a diversity of views among the New Testament authors. If Christians today wish to be responsible to the biblical view of Mary, how is that done if there are several biblical views?<sup>23</sup>

This quotation shows where the critical method can lead with a plural presupposition.

Affirming the unity of the New Testament does not mean that there is no diversity but that the Holy Spirit superintended the compiling of the canon. It is assumed that in this superintending the New Testament is historical. There is no question that the New Testament was written from the vantage point of history and tradition that had been passed down, as Luke has suggested (Luke 1:1-4), to his present day. But to suggest that Luke may have fabricated an infancy narrative to meet the need of developing theology and to coordinate it with the Old Testament is pure fantasy.

An evolution of Christology is presupposed by most critical historians.<sup>24</sup> They say there are three stages in early religious writings. The third stage is the story that the writer is telling. Stage two is the stories used to write the story. Stage one is the actual "hypothetical" history or what is thought to have really happened. Stage three is not so hard to interpret because you have the final story that the writer is trying to tell. Stage two is a guess or a hypothetical source of the writer's information. The first stage is a pure guess or hypothetical history of what "really" happened. This "guessing" stage depends largely upon the interpreter's presuppositions. Thus they say the "real" story of the Virgin birth may have been made up by Luke and Matthew to back up a mythical tradition they had received. If C. F. D. Moule is right then Christology started with Jesus, himself and not as an evolution stemming from the Church. But,

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<sup>24</sup>Raymond E. Brown, ed., Mary in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 24-25.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

that which came from the Church was just the development of what was already there in the life of Jesus, the real Jesus.<sup>25</sup>

Not only do most historical critics presuppose an evolutionary process behind the New Testament, but this is in the form of a naturalism which excludes miracles. Thus the natural causal systems are not interrupted to allow for an event like the Virgin Birth. Miracles are not possible so the New Testament accounts of miracles must have been myths. Thus, they say beliefs in miracles had to follow in an evolutionary pattern.

It is understood that the historical-critical method of New Testament investigation as a tool has been held by and large in the hands of non-evangelicals and that it is a young discipline. It is believed that with the right set of presuppositions there is a place for some use of this method by evangelicals. For the purposes of this thesis, stage three of the New Testament will be used, because that is all one has to work with. This should satisfy both the evangelical and the modern critic. What the thesis is stating is that the New Testament does not support the "flesh of Mary" theory of the incarnation.

This study has been entered into with the attitude that insights should be allowed to come from any source. This would include historical criticism. One must find out all that is possible about the author and the book he has written, dates, situations which surround the writing, sources for the information, etc. But if one believes that the New Testament is a unit, God's Word, one must seek to find what God is saying. As an intelligent being, surely God is without question trying to say something to Adam's race. God's written word is His message of revelation. What is this message? It would seem that is what theology is all about.

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<sup>26</sup>C. F. D. Moule, The Origin of Christology, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 1.

### Presupposition of the Thesis Statement

This thesis states that the New Testament does not support the Theotokos statement in the Chalcedon Creed, or any present view which include "Mary's Flesh" as the source of Jesus' humanity.

Why was this thesis stated in this way? It was drafted in this manner because it was felt that it could not be stated in the positive and be defended. Therefore a negative statement must be made.

To illustrate let us use the general historical view first and put it into a positive statement. The New Testament does support the "Flesh of Mary" Chalcedon position. The underlying presupposition is that the New Testament teaches that the source of Jesus' humanity was from Mary's substance. With this assumption all reasoning behind all interpretations of Scripture would have to be with the purpose of proving this point. A quote from D. D. Whedon's Commentary on the Gospels will be sufficient for this point.

Both these views (His foregoing comments on the genealogies of Matthew and Luke) secure the true Davidic descent of Mary; which is indeed absolutely necessary to fulfillment of that most explicit divine promise (Samuel 7:12), 'I will set up thy seed after thee which shall proceed out of thy bowels.' So Peter affirms (Acts 2:30) that God swore to David, 'that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ.' Words like these cannot be fulfilled by any adoptive or marriage paternity.<sup>27</sup>

So then with such a presupposition one will proceed to exegete the genealogies in such a way that one or the other of the genealogies must be Mary's despite the fact that Matthew and Luke state it to the contrary.

Now let us look at a different thesis stated in the positive. This one follows the reasoning of this writer. The New Testament teaches that the source of Jesus' humanity was by an act of God's creation; therefore Jesus was a New Creation in the

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<sup>27</sup>D. D. Whedon's Commentary on the Gospels, p. 81.



womb of Mary.

With a presupposition that Jesus was not in the blood line to David or Adam, then all Scriptures will be interpreted in the light of said presupposition. To apply this to the genealogies is to accept them just as stated by their authors, not trying to unravel the differences in the genealogies by attributing one to Mary, without biblical grounds to do so.

But please note, this last thesis statement was not made as the writer's thesis statement because he believes that neither the first nor the latter can be supported by the New Testament. But rather he has chosen to state the thesis in the negative which he does feel is supportable by the New Testament.

To state that the "Flesh of Mary" view is not supported by the New Testament is demonstrable, and with that statement the only presupposition that is suggested is that one does not believe what has been taught by history. The question then can be asked: If history is not provable and the alternative suggested is not provable, then what is the basic presupposition that this writer will use in the process of his thesis?

The answer to this is that his presupposition is that a "new Creation" in the womb of Mary is a more probable hypothesis than the "flesh of Mary" hypothesis; and that this assumption will lead to a true world view, "even though still incapable of a strict demonstrative proof. Rival hypotheses are eliminated by showing that they do not meet these four tests."<sup>28</sup>

Test one: It should be free from internal self-contradiction.

Test two: It's various parts must harmonize.

Test three: It must explain some experience more thoroughly than any other basic assumption.

Test four: It should be applicable to all possible experience: it must be adequate.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Patterson, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

It is believed that the following studies will prove that the underlying assumption of this thesis will be a more adequate position than those presently held by historic Christianity.

#### One Further Consideration

Before continuing with the study in the New Testament and church history to prove the "Flesh of Mary" view is from outside of the confines of the New Testament, one other item should be mentioned. Integral to the underlying purpose of this thesis, is the defense of the sinlessness of Christ with the emphasis upon His disassociation from Adam's family or race. Although it is here believed that this is true, one point that would lead to a complete new study and thesis must be explored and a presupposition stated before proceeding with this study.

This crucial point could be stated in this proposition: In Adam all died. Christ died. Therefore, Christ was in Adam.

Without dealing with this in length just a few words to establish the presupposition of this writer and with that the rest of the thesis should fall into place.

This writer is convinced that Jesus' death on the cross was not as a result of any personal sin of his own nor as a result of a physical human existence which would tie him to Adam's sin. Without question His death was provided for in God's economy before the creation of the worlds. His death was made necessary, because of Adam's sin. He died for us, Adam's race. So from this point of view, Jesus died because of Adam's sin. Thus in Adam all died.

Lest this seems to be begging the question, a definition is needed for the idea of death. Borrowing some of Dr. Wynkoop's thoughts, the symbolism of "dust," should enlighten us at this point.

Man was "formed of dust" but made in the image of God. Sin will cause man to go back to dust. "Dust is not the cause of death; it is death which fathers dust."<sup>30</sup>

Speaking of the Hebrew thought of man, Dr. Wynkoop says:

Man himself, made in God's image, would ever be reminded of his sin and constant need of God's mercy by the mournful divine 'sentence' delivered against him. 'You will return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust,' precisely because it separated him from the unifying power of life and the solidarity of his social nexus. To him death was not necessarily extinction but disintegration, separation, loneliness, darkness. Death did not liberate him from the sorry prison of his body, for he knew nothing of an existence of his spirit denuded of flesh. Death was something that happened to him as a whole man.

But final redemption is to be in connection with this 'man of dust,' who shall be taken up into eternal life, where death has no sting nor the grave victory (see I Cor. 15:49). This completes the story begun at man's genesis. Made of dust, he will experience the full dynamic of eternal life in the Son through the resurrection of the body.<sup>31</sup>

It is the position of this thesis that Jesus was a new creation in the womb of Mary. That is, he was not made of dust, the "stuff" of Adam's creation. There was no connection between Jesus and Adam. With Christ's death, there is nothing that speaks of the kind of "disintegration, separation, loneliness, and darkness" that is found in the death of those dying in Adam. There is no intent here to dehumanize Jesus. He did die as a human and on account of sin, for sin.

The immediate question would be that "If that is so, then He did not taste death as a sinner tastes death." No, He did not. Let us look upon the scene. The death of Jesus was not normal; He did not die as other men have died. He laid down His life; no one took it from Him.

'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay

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<sup>30</sup>Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, A Theology of Love (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), p. 113.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.<sup>32</sup>

Listen to what Jesus said on the cross, θεέ μου θεέ μου, ἵνατί με ἔγκατέλιπες; literally, God of me God of me, why me did you forsake?<sup>33</sup> This was a man dying as a substitute for, instead of, the sinner. He was not a sinner. There is here a clear case for his continued relationship with God. My God! Why? At that moment there is no question that he felt forsaken, but at no point did he question his relationship to the father. This might be a cry of bewilderment. "How can you? You are my father." Further, he said, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit."<sup>34</sup> Note again this was not the death of a sinner but that of a saint. This was the righteous for the unrighteous. Neither did he see corruption.

'Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.'<sup>35</sup>

And again Luke writes:

'We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is stated elsewhere: 'You will not let your Holy One see decay.'<sup>36</sup>

Let us look again at what Peter had to say with the added dimension which brings the picture of the Glorious Hope of the dying saints of all ages into view.

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world,

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<sup>32</sup>John 10:14-18.

<sup>33</sup>Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34 (ὁ θεός μου, the God of me).

<sup>34</sup>Luke 23:46.

<sup>35</sup>Acts 2:29-31.

<sup>36</sup>Acts 13:32-35.

but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, 'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.' And this is the word that was preached to you.<sup>37</sup>

The death of God's "saint" son has made it possible for sinners to become "saints" in order to die "like" Jesus died as a saint, but not "like" Jesus in the sense of bewilderment, "Why have you forsaken me?"

For a final note at this point on the image of Jesus in relationship to God and the likeness of Jesus to that of man. Jesus was a human, just as human as Adam. Adam was said to be created from dust. This thesis just states that Jesus was created and was at all points like Adam's race but was of different "stuff" yet without sin. A quotation from Dr. Wynkoop should sum up this point:

The distinction which needs to be made can be most clearly pointed up by noting the following passages. Melchizedek was like the Son of God in specific ways, not as to identity as a person (Heb. 7:3).

In Phil. 2:6-8 there is found an interesting conjunction of terms. Christ, who was 'in the form [morphe] of God' 'took . . . the form of a servant' (contrasting a relationship, not an ontology). As a Servant, He then was born in the likeness of men; and as such He died on the Cross, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh,' Paul says in Rom. 8:3. Christ's flesh resembled sinlessly the flesh of the race stained by sin.

There seems to be a significant semantic difference between image and likeness, a difference not lost on the early Church fathers in their defense of the Christian faith.

Eikón always assumes a prototype from which it has been derived and drawn; while homoiótes, homoíosis, and words of this family express a similarity or resemblance which implies no ontological kinship. Only the term image could be applied to Christ in His relationship to God, never merely a likeness. The first is a family tie, a solid filial relationship; the second is a comparison of some detail, an approximation. It may be important to

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<sup>37</sup>I Peter 1:18-25.

observe that Christ is never said to be like God in the sense that He was said to be like man.<sup>38</sup>

One could conclude that Jesus as to his humanity was finite but immortal as was Adam before the fall. But as Adam became mortal as a result of sin, so Jesus' humanity was subjected to death by the laying down of his life for the sinner. This was a free gift of love (John 3:16). As the laying aside of the Son's glory, the incarnation was the mystery of Bethlehem; so the laying aside of his life was the mystery of Calvary.

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<sup>38</sup>Wynkoop, op. cit., p. 120.

## Chapter II

### THE NEW TESTAMENT SOURCE OF JESUS' HUMANITY

The question, "What is the source of Jesus' humanity?" lies deep in the history of Christian thought. It touches on biblical Anthropology, Christology, and Soteriology.

In the fourth century, the controversy about Christ's divine nature was settled at Nicaea (325 A.D.). It was in this arena that Athanasius and Arius fought their battle. But it was true, as James Orr states, that the questions concerning Christ's humanity "could not be satisfactorily investigated till the general doctrine of God had been firmly established--that, in logical order, they came later, than it."<sup>1</sup>

The Nicene symbol settled for the church the question of the deity of Christ. So now the next question concerning His humanity was taken up by the great champion of the faith, Augustine of Hippo. Thus, in the fifth century, the work of Augustine laid the foundation for the great Chalcedon creed which came out of the council called by Marcian the Emperor at the request of Leo of Rome in 451 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

It was this work done by the Council of Chalcedon that closed the controversy concerning the full humanity of Christ. That Christ was man, God-Man, is not questioned by this thesis. Christ's full humanity is not being examined. It is being presupposed. But the Chalcedon statement as to the source of Christ's humanity is being questioned, "of Mary the virgin Theotokos as to His manhood."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James Orr, The Progress of Dogma (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1897), p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), p. 171.

<sup>3</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 390.

With this we turn to investigate the New Testament. Luke's genealogy of Christ declares Jesus to be the Son of God by virtue of His creation through Adam.<sup>4</sup> This was prefaced by "He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph."<sup>5</sup> This same thought is presented to us by Matthew by whom He is styled a "son of David, son of Abraham,"<sup>6</sup> through "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."<sup>7</sup> Matthew declares Mary to be a virgin: "before they began to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit."<sup>8</sup> Luke, in his turn, clearly proclaims Mary a virgin and that "the Holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."<sup>9</sup>

In these verses we can conclude that Jesus was the Son of God by legal descent (through Joseph) from Adam, the first created man, himself a son of God; and Jesus was the Son of God by virtue of His miraculous conception in the womb of Mary; and son of God by His eternal pre-existence as the only begotten Son of God.

It is the firm belief of this writer that there has been failure to see two categories of humans both created, the one Adam the son of God by creation (Luke 3:23-38 - "He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, . . . the son of God") and the other, the second Adam, Jesus, as to his humanity was the Son of God by creation as recorded in Luke 1:35. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the son of God." (NIV). This is clearly creative language. Or, as Hebrews 10:5 (quoting Psalm 4:6-8) states, "a body you prepared for me."

The failure to see these two categories of created humans, the one Adam's race and the other the Second Adam's redeemed race, has led to much confusion in

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<sup>4</sup>Bible, New International Version (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978), Luke 3:27.

<sup>5</sup>Luke 3:23.

<sup>6</sup>Matthew 1:1.

<sup>7</sup>Matthew 1:16.

<sup>8</sup>Matthew 1:18.

<sup>9</sup>Luke 1:35b with 27-34.



Christian theology, and has produced a Jesus that needs himself to be redeemed.

With the foregoing in mind, an examination will be made of the New Testament references to: the Son of God, human; the Son of Man; the son of Adam, the son of Abraham, the son of David, the son of Mary, and the son of Joseph.

### The Son of God, Human

The son of God, as to Christ's deity, is being presupposed. This area will not be touched upon; but, as previously stated, the concept that Jesus was the son of God will be examined as to the source of his humanity.

As it has been pointed out above, both Matthew and Luke show Joseph as Jesus' step-father. The virgin birth is affirmed by both. They clearly refer to the act of the Holy Spirit as producing a child who "shall be called the son of God."<sup>10</sup> This act of the Holy Spirit does not carry with it the same sensualness found in Greek mythology. The gods which had intercourse with man produced children gods with man-like sensual passions.

What is being described is not a hieros gamos, a 'sacred marriage' or mating between a god and a mortal. Luke does not mean that God or the Holy Spirit is a substitute male partner; the 'overshadowing' of 1:35 has no sexual implication. The agency of the Spirit and the term 'overshadow' come, as we have seen, from New Testament Christological formulations where no sexual import is possible. God is not a sexual partner but a creative power of Jesus. The marvelous aspect of this creative power whereby a child is begotten of a virgin reflects no downgrading of human generation which in Hebrew thought (Genesis 1:28; 8:17) is a commanded continuation and participation in God's creative activity.<sup>11</sup>

Luke's account does not mention the actual physical source of Jesus' humanity, this is only known by God. What went on inside the womb of Mary that produced the man, Jesus, no one will know. If Luke's story is true, then a miracle took place seeing

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<sup>10</sup>Luke 1:35.

<sup>11</sup>Raymond E. Brown, ed., Mary in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 121-122.

Joseph was not involved. This is not questioned by evangelicals today, but what is here being questioned in the light of the God-Man view of Christ is how much of a miracle. Was this a complete miracle or a half miracle? We do know that John could say, in rebuttal to the docetist and gnostic, that this eternal being "was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."<sup>12</sup> He was complete man. The description given to us by Luke clearly is a description of God in creative action performing a miracle.

The Apostle Paul, speaking about Jesus, states:

Who being in the form (μορφῇ) of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied himself taking the form (μορφῇν) of a slave, becoming in likeness (ὁμοιώματι) of men; and being found in fashion (σχήματι) as a man he humbled himself becoming obedient until death.<sup>13</sup>

Several explanations have been given as to how this form and likeness of both God and Man (God-Man) came into being.

Throughout history there have been several explanations to account for the phenomenon of the presence of the God-Man, Jesus the Christ. These views range from no body at all to a complete "New Humanity."<sup>14</sup> The explanation can be divided into three major positions: the docetists and gnostics, the Ebionites and naturalistic, and those that believe that the Christ was a miracle.

### The Docetist

Toward the end of the first century of the Christian era, Eastern Zoroastrian influence began to work its way into Christianity. Around the turn of the first century, the Docetists and Gnostics were teaching that Jesus had no physical body. The Docetists

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<sup>12</sup>I John 1:1.

<sup>13</sup>Philippians 2:6-8 (KJV).

<sup>14</sup>C. W. Christian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1979), pp. 125-126.

believed that flesh was evil and spirit was good. Thus, if the Christ was sinless and good he could not have a physical body. This was their answer to the question: What was the source of His humanity? Their answer--no humanity, no source.

### The Naturalists' Source

The Ebionites and pagan doubters of the past and the liberals of the present have solved the problem as to the source of Jesus' humanity by suggesting that Jesus was the natural son of both Joseph and Mary. Friedrich Schleiermacher felt that he must be true to the Renaissance. In accordance with the science of the day, he refused to accept miracles or anything that would seem to break the natural laws of causality. He explained the presence of the man, Jesus, only in naturalistic terms; but he tried to be true to Chalcedon (sin only accepted) and felt that somehow the Christ had to come from outside of man's sin problem.<sup>15</sup>

### A Miracle as the Source

There is one view of the source of Jesus' humanity which could be classified with either the naturalist or those believing in a miracle. Dr. Edward L. Kessel has proposed a biological interpretation of the virgin birth, Parthenogenesis or the Female Incarnation. This view is naturalistic in its scientific explanation of what might have happened, but it is here considered a miracle because of the odds that this could happen only with the superintending hand of God. In Dr. Kessel's conclusion, he accepts the Scriptural belief of the virgin birth, along with the need for the superintending hand of God. "Having used the natural biological process of parthenogenesis to give Jesus chromosomal femaleness, God again used a natural biological mechanism to add the complementary sexual quality of maleness. This time God used the biological process

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

of sex reversal which is fully supported by the known facts of genetics that have been described."<sup>16</sup> The positive points about this view are: One, there is a recognition of and faith in the Matthaean and Lukan account of the Virgin Birth. Two, it recognizes God as immanent. God is here active in the process, "this time God used the biological process of..."<sup>17</sup> and the odds against this happening required the miraculous hand of God. Thus a natural-miracle took place. The third positive point is that Dr. Kessel is here giving the world a universal man, one which all can identify with, male and female. A fourth point would be that it does fit into the creative mood of the Scriptural references.

But where does parthenogenesis fall short as a viable position for the source of Jesus' humanity? First, it still leaves Jesus tied into the Adamic blood line through Mary, or it still is a "flesh of Mary" concept. Secondly, God's immanent miracle hand depends upon the naturalism of the liberal view that refuses to accept a break in the natural causal systems. Thirdly, it has no roots in biblical history and is dependent on scientific knowledge for our understanding of it. Fourthly, Dr. Kessel's universal man presupposition is presented to solve a present day cultural problem and does not draw on the Bible to develop equality of the sexes, but on science. Dr. Kessel states that: "If this proposal is correct, the inequality of the sexes taught under the Old Covenant has been transcended and no one can longer argue effectively against the ordination of women in the Church on the grounds that Christ was a man. Christ was also a woman."<sup>18</sup> It should be added that the foregoing universal man concept is preserved if Jesus was a new creation in the womb of Mary. Being the second Adam, he would embody all sexes just as the first Adam did. Fifthly, this view is as much a guess as any of the hypothetical answers of the past, and it speaks to the specific source, the egg of Mary, as to Jesus'

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<sup>16</sup>Edward L. Kessel, Journal of the Scientific Affiliation, Sept. 1983, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

humanity. Thus my thesis rejects this view as impossible to know for sure and not taught by the New Testament. This becomes an extra-biblical faith assumption.

Under the Miracle Source view, the naturalistic miracle is not acceptable. This view is divided into two positions; one believing a half miracle, and the other believing in a complete miracle.

Unlike the God-superintending, naturalistic half miracle of parthenogenesis in which the egg of woman is used, the view that Jesus was a half miracle dates back to pre-genetic times. This view appeared about the beginning of the Second Century. It affirms Scripture, the virgin birth and the real body of Christ. This early view that Jesus was a half miracle does not state how or of what particular substance was used as the source of Jesus' body, such as an egg. It just states that Jesus was of Mary and implies that this body was of her substance. This view believes that Christ was a miracle. In this group, the earlier views described the physical appearance of the Man, Jesus, as being a shell of a man which was animated by the Spirit of God, the Logos. This view came to be known as the Logos-flesh view.<sup>19</sup>

In this concept, the Logos assumed the flesh received from Mary and redeemed it.<sup>20</sup> The underlying presupposition is that the flesh taken from Mary to form the man, Jesus, needed to be saved or redeemed.

It seems that Athanasius takes for granted that there was in Jesus no human rational soul, and the Word took the place of that soul. . . . Although Athanasius does not seem to have become aware of this, this interpretation of the person of Jesus Christ does not agree with his own soteriological principles, for--as the Cappadocians would later point out--the Word took human nature in order to free it from sin, and as the soul is also involved in sin, the Word must also have taken it in order to save it.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Gonzalez, p. 356.

<sup>20</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. II (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1952), p. 178.

<sup>21</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 308-309.

It can be seen that Athanasius believed that Jesus was flesh from Mary but was not a complete person. That is why Athanasius believed that:

In Christ, the flesh becomes an instrument of the Word, and the union between these two is such that that which is properly said of one of the terms of that union can also be transferred to the other term. This is the typical Alexandrine doctrine that is usually called 'communication of properties'--*communicatio idiomatum*.<sup>22</sup>

Because of this he felt it proper to worship the man Jesus, even though worship belongs to God. As dogma progressed, this flesh from Mary became more than just a shell of man. It became a complete man, human. Thus a θεός - ἄνθρωπος concept developed. As long as the Logos-flesh view was in vogue, it was conceivable that just a half miracle took place, the flesh from Mary alone. It would seem that when the call for a complete man entered into theology, then the need for the virgin birth diminished, because the half-man from Mary gave way to the complete man which could conceivably have come from both parents, Joseph and Mary, with the infusion of the Logos as the Ebonites suggested. Thus the God-Man. The questions could be asked whether the virgin birth taught in Scripture is true because the Scripture teaches it or the Scripture teaches it because it is true.

If it is the latter, then the virgin birth was a necessity and not just God doing something to fulfill what he had said. If it was a necessity, then a new creation without either parent would be the most logical. Or to put it another way, if neither parent was involved, other than the development in the womb, then the virgin birth would be necessary to the whole process and God would have had to prophesy and use the virgin birth because there was no other way, short of a creation that would make Him just appear out of nowhere as a complete independent man. But no! God chose rather to bring Christ into a sinful society, feeling, hurting, knowing all that His fellows were going through, because His redeemed sons would have to live in the same sinful setting

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 309.

and come off as victorious as He was.

The half-miracle view sees Joseph as a non-participant and Mary's body as the source of Jesus' humanity. There seems to be a feeling that if Joseph was not involved then Jesus would have a better chance of being the Christ. The reasoning has been so varied that one can chart but a few of these thoughts.

As Christianity entered into the non-Jewish cultures, the Jewish woman's fear of being childless became a desire to be a virgin. Celibacy replaced marriage as the life for the holy. Thus the Virgin Mary became the heroine of the day. Her recorded children became step-children and she became a perpetual Virgin, the "Mother of God."

Somehow through the centuries to this present day the idea, that if Jesus came from Mary, that would be sufficient for Jesus to be the Son of God. God's present method of making human beings is to use a woman, but this method has not always been the case. In the case of Adam, it was dust. In the case of Eve, it was Adam that was used. So not all humans have come into the world in the same way. One could say: Yes, this is true, but they were our first parents. That too is true, but should God wish to again do another first, what would he do? Why do we feel that we must join with those who wish not to break the complete causal chain when God stepped into time in the person of Jesus Christ?

If God had chosen to bring Jesus into the world from his other parent, Joseph without Mary, would he be as pure and sinless as some feel him to be coming from the single parent, Mary? But it would no doubt be argued that God would not do it that way. He did it in the case of Eve and she was pure. But, no one would believe it. Not so. The virgin birth, which is just as unbelievable, is believed by millions.

If God had wished to do so, he could have saved mankind by creating the first Adam and the second Adam in Eden, the second created the same as the first, except that he would be also the eternal Son of God as well as the Son of God by creation, just like the first Adam. Both Adams would be subjected to temptation, the first falling

and the second giving his life as a sacrifice for the sin of the first.

God did not choose this method, but he did use the womb of a woman. It is very unlikely that he used the flesh of woman in a way that would make Jesus "in Adam."

Despite the claims of some, the effects of sin would be the same had Jesus come from either parent no matter what mode of transmission. God had to have a more clever idea to accomplish the feat.

J. K. S. Reid, quoted by W. T. Purkiser in God, Man and Salvation, said:

An account that would plausibly break the entail of sin would have to be much more clever than to leave him connected on even one side of his parentage with the human race and thus so far involved in corrupt human nature.<sup>23</sup>

This more clever way is here believed to be the way God used to bypass both Joseph and Mary and resort to one of God's oldest methods, that of creation. The second Adam was not from dust. The substance is not mentioned, if any. This last view that Jesus was a "New Creation" in the womb of Mary is a guess, like the other views. This complete creationist view seem to be the most probable and is less problematic. The weight of factual evidence is in favor of this view.

Christ as a complete new creation protects the need for the virgin birth. It makes the virgin birth have a real purpose in the economy of God. This view does not state the material source of Jesus' humanity as those in the past have done, but it does state the biblical source, the act of God which made the presence of the objective creation of Jesus the Son of God. This view most adequately satisfies the four tests for truth. This is the one that we should choose.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>W. T. Purkiser et al., God, Man and Salvation (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1977), p. 355.

<sup>24</sup>Bob E. Patterson, Carl F. H. Henry (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1983), pp. 61-62.



## Son of Adam

Very little is said in Scriptures concerning Jesus as the son of Adam, Luke being the only reference. Luke said that "He was the son, so it was thought of Joseph . . . the son of Adam."<sup>26</sup> This reference is to Jesus' adopted father, Joseph, and Jesus' adoptive genealogy. No amount of juggling of Scripture can change the meaning of that Scripture. This is not approaching Scripture from the plural point of view. The New Testament is a unit. As has been stated earlier, this study views the unity of Scripture as important to proper interpretation. This writer holds that if there were genealogies floating around in the eighties A.D. and Matthew and Luke had access to them and used only Joseph's genealogies, no doubt there was no genealogy for Mary or if there was it was not a factor in Matthew and Luke's thoughts nor that of their readers. Unlike the implication of historic critics who suggest a possible fabrication on the part of Luke, this thesis approaches all Scripture as true. Thus, when Paul wrote Romans 1:3 and said ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, he was aware of the prevailing genealogies. If the Luke of the Gospels and Acts was the Luke that was Paul's companion, then both genealogical sources might be the same. This is dating Paul's writings in the late fifties. Thus his sources were pre-Lukan sources. So also all other references to Jesus being of Judah (Hebrews 7:14), or Jesse (Romans 15:12) are interpreted from the unity view of Scriptures. The Church has no other genealogies to work with, unless it goes to extra-biblical, apocryphal, infancy narratives. The only other reference of Jesus to Adam is as a counterpart, a redeemer of Adam's race, the last Adam (I Corinthians 15:45-49).

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<sup>25</sup>C. D. F. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 11. For a good explanation of this term, the Son of Man, one should read this book.

<sup>26</sup>Luke 3:23-37.

It can be seen here that unlike those which view the Scripture as a plural book, this writer sees God as the overall author of the New Testament. What God wanted us to know, we can know, from the objective record which we have in the Scriptures. This record is viewed as true. The writers were of like passion as we and their writings are subject to study just like all writings. These writings were written in time, spoke to their times, reflected their time, were chosen and compiled in time, and by this Word as with the incarnation he has spoken to us in time and for all time (Hebrews 1:1-2). Thus when we receive two authoritative genealogies as clearly Joseph's, we must accept them as Joseph's and not Mary's because this is what God is saying. "They are Joseph's." If then Paul says Jesus is ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, he is saying of the "seed of David" through Joseph. Why should one make the New Testament a plural book, with Matthew, Luke, and Paul each with a different view? The genealogy that Paul used, when referring to David, is not available, unless it was that of either Matthew's or Luke's, so it is by some hypothesized to be a genealogy of Mary, because as true evangelicals we believe the Bible to be true and if the genealogies in the New Testament do not fit our fancy, we must resort to a critical approach by going outside of the New Testament for our source and thus pluralize the Scriptures by some sort of prooftexting. This can be seen by the quotation from Whedon previously cited on page 16 above. But if we truly believe in the unity of Scripture, and God as its author, we will find our answer in Scripture. But what if we cannot solve what seems unsolvable in Scripture, then admit it. This writer has no answer for the difference in the two genealogies. That does not mean he has not read many views but none are satisfactory so far. He will continue to read new ideas in the future that may take care of the problem. If so, he will be grateful. It is not the purpose of this thesis to solve that problem. This will be left to someone else. But it is presupposed that all references to Jesus' relationship to humans will be through the records we have in the New Testament for it is this thesis' purpose to pit the New Testament record against the traditional histories of the Church.

## Son of Abraham

Both Matthew and Luke accord to Abraham a conspicuous place in Christ's ancestral line.<sup>27</sup> It seemed that when John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees to repentance, he anticipated their retreat into their self-righteousness. He accordingly told them, "do not think you can say to yourselves, 'we have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham."<sup>28</sup> Just how John the Baptist thought this possible is not known. It was Paul who said to the Roman church that "it was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world . . . by faith."<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.<sup>30</sup>

Here Paul uses (πᾶσι τῷ σπέρματι,) all the seed not just of the law but (ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ,) of the faith of Abraham, who is Father of us all.

The promise was that his offspring, or seed (σπέρμα)<sup>31</sup> though in number "like the sand by the sea, [yet] only the remnant will be saved."<sup>32</sup> God said to Abram:

'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.'<sup>33</sup>

The task now is to discover Paul's hermeneutics. When he referred to the Promise and used σπέρμα did he use it figuratively or literally? Did Paul take this promise,

<sup>27</sup>Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:23-34.

<sup>28</sup>Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8.

<sup>29</sup>Romans 4:13.

<sup>30</sup>Romans 4:16.

<sup>31</sup>Romans 9:8.

<sup>32</sup>Romans 9:27.

<sup>33</sup>Genesis 17:4-8.

and others, as referring to a literal blood line, or not?

Both Matthew and Luke outline for us the significance of the Davidic-Abrahamic ancestral theme. Paul took this and used it in a figurative manner.

Pertinent passages occur in four chapters of Paul's epistles: Romans 4, and 9, Galatians 3, and Ephesians 4.

It was in Romans 9 that Paul spoke to his "own race," the people of Israel:

Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, (καὶ ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σαρκά [according to flesh]) who is God overall, forever praised! Amen. It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children (οὐδ' ὅτι εἰσὶν σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ, πάντες τέκνα).<sup>34</sup>

It is here that Paul showed that not all in the blood line were in line for the promise, because Isaac was the son of promise and Ishmael was not. So also of Isaac, Rebecca had two children, Jacob and Esau; but it was Jacob who was the son of promise, although they both were by blood related to Abraham.

Paul put it this way: ". . . For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, 'it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.'<sup>35</sup> In other words, it was not the natural children who were (and are) God's children, but it was the children of the promise who were regarded as Abraham's offspring. For this was how the promise was stated: ". . . At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son."<sup>36</sup> Not only that, but Rebecca's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac.<sup>37</sup>

Paul went on to state that by this same process he called not just Jews, but also Gentiles, children of promise, quoting Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and,

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<sup>34</sup>Romans 9:4b-7.

<sup>35</sup>Romans 9:6-7.

<sup>36</sup>Quoting Genesis 18:10, 14.

<sup>37</sup>Romans 9:9b, 10.

"It will happen that in the very place where it was said of them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"<sup>38</sup>

Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. . . ." <sup>39</sup> Paul was here showing them two things: 1) that the Gentiles could be and were truly Abraham's seed according to promise, without blood line, using a reverse method in pointing out that some of Abraham's literal blood line, or seed, were not included; 2) that only some of the blood line would be saved, and it was here that Paul included himself in the remnant.

Chapter 4 was what Paul used to prepare the Romans for Chapter 9. In the earlier chapter he introduced Abraham as being justified by faith; and it was also here that he used his hermeneutics to shake the ground out from under the legalists of his day.

Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised. . . .

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written, 'I have made you a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God . . . so [Abraham] became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Romans 9:25-26 quoting Hosea 2:23 and Hosea 1:10.

<sup>39</sup>Quoting Isaiah 10:22; Romans 9:25-27.

<sup>40</sup>Romans 4:9-11b, 13-18. Underlining mine.

Paul again took up the theme in his letter to the Galatian Church.

Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ.<sup>41</sup>

Paul was here stating that the promise to Abraham was not set aside by the law introduced 430 years later, but that the law was put here until the Seed, Christ, came.

In all of Paul's arguments he was asserting that God's promises were not necessarily referring to blood line, but to "children of faith;" and if this held true for his full and complete argument, it would hold true, even to the Seed, Christ.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.<sup>42</sup>

But this was not a human blood line. More of the same line of thought is found in Chapter 4. "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."<sup>43</sup> Paul continued his argument that there is a normal, natural birth and a birth of faith, not of blood line.

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. . . .

Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of

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<sup>41</sup>Galatians 3:15-16.

<sup>42</sup>Galatians 3:26-29. Underlining mine.

<sup>43</sup>Galatians 4:4-5.

the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? 'Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son.' Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.<sup>44</sup>

This whole line of thought was not new to either Matthew or Luke, for Luke, if Paul's companion, wrote about John the Baptist with this same idea in mind.

Mary's song, as recorded by Luke, included this: "He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."<sup>45</sup> What did Mary mean by "his descendants forever"? Could the meaning include faith-offspring such as Paul talked about?

After John the Baptist was born, and Zechariah's speech returned, the new father exulted: "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . . to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham. . . ." <sup>46</sup> Here the house of David is tied into the oath to Abraham. Paul said that this oath was to the seed, not seeds, and that that seed was not blood line but the result of faith--the promise.

Jesus Himself lent weight to Paul's train of thought when He validated His own testimony to the Pharisees, and reprimanded them for unbelief and sin: "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards. . . ." <sup>47</sup> Jesus was here upholding His sonship to God the Father--until this time they had thought Him merely the son of Joseph. There was sharp contrast between public appraisal at this point, and the actual case:

. . . 'we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.'

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<sup>44</sup>Galatians 4:21-24a, 28-31. Underlining mine.

<sup>45</sup>Luke 1:54-55.

<sup>46</sup>Luke 1:69, 72-73.

<sup>47</sup>John 8:14-15a.

Then, Jesus, still teaching in the temple court, cried out, 'Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. . . .'<sup>48</sup>

All of John Chapter 8 was a defense of His divine sonship. Verses 31-58 were a play on who were children of Abraham. Although Jesus recognized natural descent --"I know you are Abraham's descendants"<sup>49</sup>--He went on to say:

'I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.'

'Abraham is our father,' they answered.

'If you were Abraham's children,' said Jesus, 'then you would do the things Abraham did. . . .'

'We are not illegitimate children,' they protested.<sup>50</sup>

Jesus went on to claim God as His Father, and the devil as theirs, and that He told them the truth:

'... if a man keeps my word, he will never see death.'

At this the Jews exclaimed, 'Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if a man keeps your word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are? . . .'

'Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.'

'You are not yet fifty years old,' the Jews said to him, 'and you have seen Abraham?'

'I tell you the truth,' Jesus answered, 'before Abraham was born, I am!'<sup>51</sup>

In summary, the point is that Matthew, Luke, John, Paul, and Jesus were not interested in the blood line to fulfill the promise to Abraham; and that the everlasting promise and the endless throne were not to be to the blood line, physically speaking.

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<sup>48</sup>John 7:27-28b.

<sup>49</sup>John 8:37.

<sup>50</sup>John 8:38-39, 41b.

<sup>51</sup>John 8:51-53, 56-58.



## Son of David

In this thesis, Paul is regarded as the earliest writer on the ancestral theme of Jesus. No doubt the earliest possible mention is found in Galatians 4:4. This will be taken up later under the heading of Mary. Paul takes up the source of Jesus' humanity under the David heading in Romans 1:3 "regarding His Son, who as to His human nature was a descendant of David," (περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ). Here Paul uses σπέρματος or seed.

Keeping in mind that Paul was using the term figuratively will keep us in tune with Pauline thought. The Editors of Mary in the New Testament state this in reference to Romans 1:3.

As for the reference to 'the seed(sperma) of David' in Romans 1:3, it should be obvious that Paul is using sperma in a figurative sense, well-known in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 12:7; Psalms 89:4). It is scarcely intended to refer specifically to male semen; it refers to progeny. Thus, if this phrase does not constitute an argument for the virginal conception, neither does it constitute an argument against it whatever.<sup>52</sup>

The biographers of Jesus are of later date than when Paul reflects on the David theme. We have already seen that Matthew and Luke, in their genealogies, speak of David in terms of Joseph's line. Let us have a closer look at the David theme in the New Testament, beginning with the outside element visiting Jerusalem for the feast. It seems from John's cited reference <sup>53</sup> they did not in fact know where Jesus was born. But it was otherwise for the blind beggars and other locals. It was the Davidic line that was important to the people, especially in respect to their leader and King.

But it was not of importance solely to the ordinary people who had awareness of what the Scriptures had to say concerning Jesus' coming from "David's family," or "seed"<sup>54</sup> (σπέρματος) and from "Bethlehem, the town where David lived."<sup>55</sup> All of the

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<sup>52</sup>Brown, p. 43.

<sup>53</sup>John 7:37.

<sup>54</sup>Renderings of John 7:42.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

basic history of Christ is dependent--very dependent, according to His biographers--upon Jesus' relationship to Joseph, Bethlehem, and David. Let us listen to what some more voices say on this: a. Two blind men--"Have mercy on us, Son of David!"<sup>56</sup> b. (At the healing of the man who was demon-possessed, blind and mute) the people said, "Could this be the Son of David?"<sup>57</sup> c. A Canaanite woman crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!"<sup>58</sup> d. Two blind men by the road--"Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" . . . and . . . all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us."<sup>59</sup> e. A very large crowd shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" . . . the whole city . . . asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."<sup>60</sup> f. Children--"Hosanna to the Son of David."<sup>61</sup> g. To the Pharisees Jesus said, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The Son of David," they replied. He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord?' . . . If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?"<sup>62</sup>

Although Mark said nothing about the birth of Jesus, he did record as common knowledge Jesus' relationship to David (which is seen in the New Testament only through Joseph). a. Blind Bartimaeus began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"<sup>63</sup> b. At the Triumphal Entry--"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"<sup>64</sup> c. Jesus asked, "How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.' David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Matthew 9:27.

<sup>57</sup>Matthew 12:23.

<sup>58</sup>Matthew 15:22.

<sup>59</sup>Matthew 20:30b, 31b.

<sup>60</sup>Matthew 21:9-11.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Matthew 22:42-43, 45.

<sup>63</sup>Mark 10:46-48.

<sup>64</sup>Mark 11:10a.

<sup>65</sup>Mark 12:35-37a.

Luke showed his personal appraisal of the importance of the expectation of the people concerning their Messiah's coming from David, when he began his narrative of the birth of Jesus with a special emphasis upon "Joseph, a descendant of David."<sup>66</sup> a. To Mary the angel said, "God will give him the throne of his father David" (obviously referring to Joseph, as above characterized).<sup>67</sup> b. Zechariah's song was, "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. . . ."<sup>68</sup> c. Joseph went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, David's town, "because he belonged to the house and line of David."<sup>69</sup> d. This Christ was born "in the town of David" the town of Joseph's ancestry, the shepherds were told.<sup>70</sup> e. Luke in his genealogy was as careful as Matthew was, to show Christ's descent from David.<sup>71</sup> f. In common with the other Synoptic writers who included the blind beggars and a lone beggar among their stories, Luke recalled a blind beggar calling out, "Son of David, have mercy on me."<sup>72</sup> g. Luke was also careful to include Christ's question, "How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David? David himself declares in the Book of Psalms: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"<sup>73</sup>

Luke did not stop this David theme with his Gospel, but carried it over into his story of the early church. We are assuming this to be the same Luke. a. In his record of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost there is this: "God had promised with an oath that he would place one of his [David's] descendants on his throne." Only fifty days had passed since the Calvary event. This was the same man known as Joseph's son--son of David--who had tried so hard to tell the people He was not Joseph's son, but the Son of God.<sup>74</sup> b. It must be remembered that if this was the same Luke who

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<sup>66</sup>Luke 1:27.

<sup>67</sup>Luke 1:32.

<sup>68</sup>Luke 1:69.

<sup>69</sup>Luke 2:4.

<sup>70</sup>Luke 2:11.

<sup>71</sup>Luke 3:23-31.

<sup>72</sup>Luke 18:38-39.

<sup>73</sup>Psalms 110:1; Luke 20:41-44.

<sup>74</sup>Acts 2:30.

furnished the account of the conversation between Gabriel and the virgin mother, he also penned these words from the mouth of Paul: "After removing Saul, he made David their King. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised."<sup>75</sup> c. Paul continued, "What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus from the dead. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is stated elsewhere: 'You will not let your Holy One undergo decay.' For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not undergo decay."<sup>76</sup>

When Paul had completed the sermon above quoted (in part) and had left the synagogue (in Pisidian Antioch) in which he had delivered it, he was not through with the subject: he carried this same theme on over into his own writings. As it has been pointed out that in his letter to the church at Rome, he echoed John in citing the promise of Scripture, that Christ would come from "David's family."<sup>77</sup> Whereas the word John used, *οἰκὸς*, was by the translators rendered family, the identical word used by Paul in Romans 1:3, *οἰκὸς*, was by the same translators made to read descendants. Verse 3 of Romans 1 (NIV) accordingly reads, "regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David."

Paul mentioned this same detail again in his second pastoral letter to Timothy: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Acts 13:22-23.

<sup>76</sup>Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 55:3; Psalm 16:10; Acts 13:33-37.

<sup>77</sup>John 7:42.

<sup>78</sup>II Timothy 2:8.

John, in his Revelation, spoke of the "Key of David"<sup>79</sup> and of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David."<sup>80</sup> Again, in the closing chapter John quoted Jesus as saying, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."<sup>81</sup>

As to Mary's being from David, the New Testament is silent; but it is very vocal concerning Joseph's relationship.

### Son of Joseph

Very little is said about Joseph in the New Testament. But what is said should help one to understand the adoptive relationship between Joseph and Jesus. So much has been written about Mary that it has obscured Joseph's influence upon Jesus and the attitude of the cultural community in which he lived. What follows about Joseph should reveal where much of the David theme, which just preceded, came from. The Man, Jesus, was known as the son of Joseph, son of David, not son of Mary, son of David.

There is no mention of Joseph in Mark's biography of Jesus; but, according to Matthew, the second of Jesus' biographers, Abraham and David were both persons of critical importance in his Lord's genealogy.<sup>82</sup> Matthew took pains to establish that he was giving Joseph's genealogy but it was made clear at the same time that Joseph was not the father of Jesus.<sup>83</sup> This latter detail is further confirmed by such statements as: "before they began to live together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit,"<sup>84</sup> "because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit,"<sup>85</sup> "the virgin will be with child,"<sup>86</sup> "had no union with her until she gave birth to a son."<sup>87</sup> This same detail had this further confirmation, "an angel of the Lord appeared to him [Joseph]

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<sup>79</sup>Revelation 3:7.

<sup>80</sup>Revelation 5:5.

<sup>81</sup>Revelation 22:16.

<sup>82</sup>Matthew 1:1.

<sup>83</sup>Matthew 1:16.

<sup>84</sup>Matthew 1:18.

<sup>85</sup>Matthew 1:20.

<sup>86</sup>Matthew 1:23.

<sup>87</sup>Matthew 1:25.

in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. . . .'"<sup>88</sup>

Luke, Jesus' third biographer, seemed to say about the same thing as Matthew, and to apply similar emphases. Special note is made of "Joseph, a descendant of David."<sup>89</sup> The remarks of the angel to Mary, preserved to us in the same chapter, included this: "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David."<sup>90</sup>

Luke's telling of the birth of Jesus was occasion for further emphasis upon Joseph and David: "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee of Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David."<sup>91</sup> The shepherds heard it heralded, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you."<sup>92</sup>

For the ensuing thirty years the world would see Joseph as the father of Jesus, the son of David. Luke told of their going to the Temple to offer sacrifice and he recorded, "When the parents" (γονεῖς).

Luke told us that Jesus was taught and treated like any other child of His day. At the age of twelve He was taken to the Temple. On the journey home Jesus was discovered missing. After some time His father and mother found Him, still in the Temple. Mary His mother said, "Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."<sup>93</sup> Jesus' reply revealed His awareness of who His real Father was: "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"<sup>94</sup>

When Luke, like Matthew, made mention of the genealogy of Jesus, he referred to Joseph, thus: "Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph."<sup>95</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Matthew 1:20.

<sup>89</sup>Luke 1:27.

<sup>90</sup>Luke 1:32b.

<sup>91</sup>Luke 2:4.

<sup>92</sup>Luke 2:11.

<sup>93</sup>Luke 2:43.

<sup>94</sup>Luke 2:49b.

<sup>95</sup>Luke 3:23.

Whereas for thirty years Jesus was thought to be the son of Joseph, the son of David, it became necessary at His entering upon public ministry, to undertake to dispel in three short years this idea. Although He taught who His Father really was, it seemed no one would truly believe it. Luke recorded such an episode. As Jesus finished speaking to the people in His home town of Nazareth, the people were heard saying, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"<sup>96</sup>

John, the Beloved Disciple, Christ's fourth biographer, took up the Joseph theme. It was shortly after John the Baptist had pointed Him out to some of his own disciples, that Philip told Nathanael, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."<sup>97</sup>

Later on in His ministry He spoke to the Jews about His real Father:

'For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' At this the Jews began to murmur against him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They said, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?''<sup>98</sup>

John went on to say:

At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, 'Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? . . . Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.'<sup>99</sup>

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink' . . . On hearing his words, some of the people said, 'Surely this man is the Prophet.' Others said, 'He is the Christ.' Still others asked, 'How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?''<sup>100</sup>

It can be seen by these references to Joseph that the locals were aware of his earthly father even during Jesus' public ministry. "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?"<sup>101</sup>

<sup>96</sup>Luke 4:22.

<sup>97</sup>John 1:45.

<sup>98</sup>John 6:40-42.

<sup>99</sup>John 7:25-27.

<sup>100</sup>John 7:37-42.

<sup>101</sup>John 6:42.

If Joseph was dead at this time he had not been forgotten. One must keep in mind that the Gospel of John is thought to have been written at about the turn of the first century. Whether or not the writer was John the Beloved Disciple, he did agree with Matthew and Luke who wrote earlier that Joseph was known and accepted by those that knew the family, and Joseph as the father of Jesus, no doubt, by natural descent. For Joseph, no less than Mary, would have been subjected to public ridicule. "Because Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace he had in mind to divorce her quietly."<sup>102</sup>

It would seem at this point in Jesus' ministry that if the virginal conception was known, it was known to very few and not as general knowledge. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus was known as the son of Joseph and Mary, the son of David by human descent through Joseph. Then what about Mary? Where does her relationship fit in?

#### Son of Mary

To this point much has been said about Jesus, the son of Man, son of Adam, son of Abraham, son of David, son of Joseph, the son of God. Jesus is also recorded as the son of Mary.

The earliest possible mention of this theme is found in the writings of Paul. In Galatians 4:4 he states, "God sent His Son, born of a woman," (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός). In this Paul does not mention who the woman was but nevertheless this is a reference to Mary. There is here no mention as to the virginal conception. Γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός is the Greek idiomatic expression "born of a woman." This expression was used by both Matthew and Luke when applied to John the Baptist (Luke 7:28; Matthew 11:11, ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν, "among those

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<sup>102</sup>Matthew 1:19.



born of women").

If one were to ask how Paul could write that Jesus was 'born of a woman,' or even that He 'came into being from a woman,' without implying some reference to Mary, one would have to answer that Paul does thus indirectly refer to her. But it is a reference to her simply as mother, in her maternal role of bearing Jesus and bringing Him into the world. There is not the slightest hint here that Jesus was her 'firstborn' (see Luke 2:7) or that she was a virgin. Paul simply does not mention the virginal conception, and there is no reason to think that he knew of it. On the other hand, a Christological affirmation such as Paul makes here is not at all incompatible with the Christology of other and later New Testament writers who maintain the virginal conception.<sup>103</sup>

Jesus as the Son of Man<sup>104</sup> made Mary without question one of the most important persons in the whole plan of redemption. Mary's dedication and willingness to accept the responsibilities for a child conceived out of wedlock--with all the possible, unjust ridicule that could go with such circumstance---marked her as a very remarkable woman.

Elizabeth's statement about Mary is reminiscent of Abraham and Sarah's faith, "Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished."<sup>105</sup> We could say that Jesus was a child of faith.

But in all of the statements concerning Mary--from the words of the angel to her that she would "be with child and give birth to a son . . . He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High,"<sup>106</sup> to the last word about her in the Book of Acts, that "they all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus"<sup>107</sup> there is not one word which links her to the promise made to David. Without question, she was in the promise to Abraham along with all of Israel and the Gentile world, as she was part of the 120 in the room when the day of Pentecost came.

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<sup>103</sup>Brown, p. 43.

<sup>104</sup>Moule, p. 11.

<sup>105</sup>Luke 1:45.

<sup>106</sup>Luke 1:32.

<sup>107</sup>Acts 1:14.

All of the promises were clearly fulfilled without the need for an actual blood line. Those Scriptures quoted to support the need for Mary to play a greater part than that of bringing Christ into the world have no valid foundation. Scriptures, such as there were for Joseph, were not needed in Mary's behalf.

To illustrate: some have said that the statement by the angel to Mary, that "the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David"<sup>108</sup> could not be fulfilled if she was not of David's line. It should be very obvious that Luke emphasized this by his previously cited caption, "Joseph, a descendant of David."<sup>109</sup> It would seem, at least to this writer, that if Mary's blood line was a problem to Luke--or any of his contemporaries--something would have been clearly stated on the matter. These writers, writing some twenty to sixty years after the cross event would be aware of the problem had what is here suggested not been accepted as a normal way of thinking.

If it had been a real problem to the church to emphasize Joseph as a descendant, and not Mary, it would seem that Luke or Matthew would have cleared up this detail as they did concerning the virgin birth. They took care to say Joseph had no husband's role. But yet they emphasized Joseph as the son of David. The problem does not lie in the minds of the people of that day, but in the minds of succeeding generations.

It must be kept in mind that all attempts to make Scriptures, such as Acts 2:30 and/or Romans 1:3, prove that there could not be a fulfillment of the promise, without an actual physical blood line finds no endorsement in the New Testament; for this, other sources must serve. Not that one should argue from silence; but when the opposite is stated explicitly, all other arguments should stop.

Should Luke's genealogy prove to be that of Mary's, it still would not prove that Mary had anything more to do with the whole event than Joseph, except to carry the Christ child through the gestation period.

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<sup>108</sup>Luke 1:32.

<sup>109</sup>Luke 1:27.

There were two prevailing ideas in the Hellenistic world of that day.

In the 4th Century B.C., Aristotle wrote the first known treatise on embryology in which he described development of the chick and other embryos. Many embryologists regard Aristotle as the 'Founder of Embryology.' He promoted, however, the incorrect idea that the embryo developed from a formless mass which resulted from the union of semen and menstrual blood.<sup>110</sup>

Along with this, another idea was present.

According to classical ideas about procreation the woman was thought to be relatively unimportant. Maybe the remains of this idea have continued to influence man's attitude toward women throughout the centuries. The man was seen as the active partner, providing the all-important 'seed.' The woman simply provided a place for it to grow.<sup>111</sup>

It may be that some light can be seen from the statement that the writer of the letter to the Hebrews made when he said, "One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor."<sup>112</sup> This statement may not give a clear idea of the Hebrew view concerning the part a man or woman plays in procreation, but the next few statements show that the concept of changing blood lines in a figurative way, because of the new covenant, was not foreign to their thinking.

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood . . . why was there still need for another priest to come--one like Melchizedek, not like Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: 'You are a priest forever, just like Melchizedek.'<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Keith L. Moore, The Developing Human--Clinically Oriented Embryology (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1973), p. 8.

<sup>111</sup>Clive Wood and Beryl Suitters, The Fight for Acceptance--a History of Contraception (Aylesbury: Medical and Technical Publishing Company, Ltd., 1970), p. 33.

<sup>112</sup>Quoting Psalms 110:4.

<sup>113</sup>Hebrews 7:11-17.

This same Psalm quoted here was what Jesus used to show His Kinship to David.<sup>114</sup> "Then Jesus said to them, 'How is it that they say the Christ is the Son of David? David himself declares in the Book of Psalms: 'The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"<sup>115</sup> "David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"<sup>116</sup> (See Moule's argument for κύριος.)<sup>117</sup>

### Jesus is Like Melchizedek, Without Mother

Just who this man Melchizedek is, is debatable, but some interesting things are said about him.

... First, his name means 'King of righteousness;' then also, 'King of Salem' means 'King of peace.' Without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.<sup>118</sup>

For the writer of the Hebrews, whoever he may have been, Melchizedek was important to his letter's son of God theme.

Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' And he says in another place, 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>Matthew 22:42-43; Mark 12:36-37; Luke 20:41-44.

<sup>115</sup>Psalm 110:1.

<sup>116</sup>Luke 20:41-44.

<sup>117</sup>Moule, pp. 35-46, (see p. 39).

<sup>118</sup>Hebrews 7:2b-3. Underlining mine.

<sup>119</sup>Hebrews 5:1-10.

The Hebrews writer ends chapter six with "He has become a high priest forever, just like Melchizedek."<sup>120</sup> Then proceeds to explain who Melchizedek was and, using him, likens this man to Jesus. The rest of chapter seven is given to this man and his likeness to Christ. Why this emphasis on Melchizedek? He was like Jesus.

In what ways was Melchizedek like Jesus?: a. He was a priest forever, he was perfect.<sup>121</sup> b. The swearing of the Abrahamic oath to one greater, he Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.<sup>122</sup> c. Melchizedek was without Father, Mother, or pedigree (ἄπατωρ, ἀμήτωρ, ἀγενεαλόγητος,); so Jesus was without father (Joseph), mother (Mary), or genealogy. Like the Son of God he, Melchizedek, and Jesus, remains a priest forever.<sup>123</sup> d. Tithe are for priests only, that is to Levi; but this man (Melchizedek) was greater than Levi, so Jesus is greater.<sup>124</sup> e. Levi died, Melchizedek is alive; so is Jesus alive.<sup>125</sup> f. Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek while he was still in Abraham's body. Melchizedek was not of Abraham as Levi was, so Jesus is outside of the Levitical priesthood and tribe, the tribe of Judah.<sup>126</sup>

As has been quoted above, Hebrews 7:11-17 also continues the theme of likening Jesus to Melchizedek, and the changing of the priesthood from Aaron to Jesus who is from Judah, not Levi, one then who "has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry, but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life."<sup>127</sup>

Now the point of all this is simply that the similarity of Jesus and Melchizedek also includes, as everyone believes, no father, Joseph, but also no Mother, Mary, and no generation from Adam, a virgin birth, a new creation.

Genesis 14:18-20. In Genesis, Melchizedek is seen as the King of Salem (Jerusalem). He met Abram when he came from defeating the Kings that had sacked Sodom.

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<sup>120</sup>Hebrews 6:20.

<sup>121</sup>Hebrews 5:10.

<sup>122</sup>Hebrews 6:13-20.

<sup>123</sup>Hebrews 7:3.

<sup>124</sup>Hebrews 7:4-7.

<sup>125</sup>Hebrews 7:8.

<sup>126</sup>Hebrews 7:9-10.

<sup>127</sup>Hebrews 7:16.

Melchizedek blessed Abram in the name of the God of Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth of the spoils. Nothing more is said here about Melchizedek. At this time Abram was childless. In chapter 15 God gives Abram the covenant.

The writer of the Hebrews refers to this incident in Abram's life by not only talking about Abram's childless state when he said, "Levi was still in the body of his ancestor." But the writer of the Hebrews also brings into play Psalm 110:1 which Jesus quoted in Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43; and is found in Acts 2:35 and Hebrews 1:13.

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' 'The son of David,' they replied. He said to them, 'How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord?' For he says, 'The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.' If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?'<sup>128</sup>

One could say that Jesus is saying "I am not David's son." This same Psalm was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost as referring to Jesus Christ. And again it is quoted by the writer of the Hebrews in chapter 1:13 as he was showing that the Scriptures teach that Jesus was above the angels. Yet in chapter two he shows Christ to be lower than the angels and sharing in humanity.<sup>129</sup> Thus Jesus was above the angels as the Eternal Divine Son of God and also below the angels as the Son of Man, and he was greater than Moses.<sup>130</sup>

In chapter five, again the author of the book of Hebrews returns to Psalm 110 and quotes verse four. This states that Jesus was "a priest forever just like Melchizedek."<sup>131</sup>

It should be noted that Abram was childless and Melchizedek was from outside the Abrahamic Covenant. In Hebrews chapter seven, the Genesis story is recounted with this emphasis that Genesis does not record a genealogy for Melchizedek, thus no father

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<sup>128</sup>Matthew 22:42-45.

<sup>129</sup>Hebrews 2:14-18.

<sup>130</sup>Hebrews 3:3.

<sup>131</sup>Hebrews 5:6.

or mother. Abraham gave tithes to this unknown one. He was greater than Abraham and greater than the Levitical priesthood. There was no beginning or no ending. The Psalm, which speaks of the Lord (Christ), not David, speaks also of the Christ's priesthood which is forever. The book of Hebrews speaks of an eternal endless being who steps into time. This man in time left time to enter "on our behalf"<sup>132</sup> as a priest forever.

This has been, and no doubt should be, interpreted as the Eternal Son of God who steps out of eternity into time and back into eternity, thus having no generation, but eternally equal with the Father, begotten from eternity.

The book of Hebrews makes much about the humanity of Christ "just like us" etc. As one brings into play the dates of other writings, the book of Hebrews was no doubt written before the Matthew and Luke stories. Thus Mark, along with Paul, and the writer of the book of Hebrews say nothing about the virginal conception. But if one believes in the unity of the New Testament, one must interpret it as a whole.

If the virginal story was known at the time and needed not to be expounded upon as it was in a later generation when Luke and Matthew wrote, then the emphasis that the book of Hebrews places on Jesus, the perfect man, Abraham, Levi, and the unknown Melchizedek have not just a spiritual, eternal application, but also a temporal application to Jesus.

If the genealogies of Luke and Matthew, the virginal conception story were part of the tradition of the day, then the genealogy unknown for Melchizedek and the likeness to Christ was understood. It would be taken for granted that Jesus had an adoptive relationship, thus no father or mother.

The fact that Joseph was not the father, and according to Jewish thought Levi was in the body of Abraham and Jesus' Abrahamic genealogy was not really Jesus' genealogy but Joseph's, could mean that no one would know where Jesus came from. Thus

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<sup>132</sup>Hebrews 6:20.

not having a father nor, if the Jewish woman was thought to be only the recipient of Abraham, David, Joseph's seed, thus she had nothing but a womb to offer in the birth process, then Jesus would be also without a mother's genealogy. As a general rule, women were not in the genealogies, the exception being found with the women in Luke and Matthew's genealogies. But here it is made clear that Mary was different from the other women, Joseph was in line but was not the father. The question no doubt was asked: "Where did this 'Jesus' come from?" He has no beginning and no end. At this point in the history of Christology there was no threat from the Gnostics, this came at the end of the First and the beginning of the Second Century. Thus no need to emphasize the humanity of Christ or the virgin birth.

Now the next question to be asked is: If the Bible is the Word of God and is a unit, then what is God trying to say to us? This writer sees God saying, "Jesus was my new beginning for man. The flood did not stop sin in Adam's race. The law did not stop sin in Adam's race. Thus I will break in and reveal myself as a new humanity, a new first, another Adam. This will stop the sin. I will come as human but not of Adam. This is the mystery of Bethlehem, the miracle birth, the breakthrough from eternity to time. This is how Jesus will be without father or mother, and like Melchizedek having no beginning or ending, without genealogy. It is all there in my Word, the book I gave to you. Find it."

This may be a guess on the part of this writer, but so are the other interpretations just as much a guess. This view is using a different presupposition from those guessing that they know for sure that Jesus' flesh came from Mary. Thus, if they (those that use the "Flesh of Mary" view) are right, then the interpretations of Scriptures, like Hebrews 7:3, must also follow with the flesh of Mary view in mind.

If one were to admit that the flesh of Mary view was only a hypothesis and not provable, then proceed to interpret Hebrews 7:3 without the Flesh of Mary view in mind, where would one end up? Please note it says without father or mother. Remember



Jesus was known just as much as the son of Joseph as he was the son of Mary, maybe even more so in his days on earth. This no doubt is the reason the Ebonites believed Joseph to be the father of Jesus. It was in the second century that Mary began to play a prominent role. No mother? We all know that Mary was his mother. No father? We all know that this could be true, Joseph had nothing to do with it. No generation? But we have Matthew's and Luke's genealogy. The book of the Hebrews cannot be right, or is it?

It is the opinion of this writer that the book of Hebrews is right. According to the embryology of that day, the book of Hebrews is expressing a clear statement, that Jesus was without father or mother, just like Melchizedek.

This short survey of the New Testament reveals that there is no support for the "flesh of Mary" view in the New Testament. For such a view one must go outside of the New Testament to extra-biblical material.

### Chapter III

#### THE SOURCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS' HUMANITY IN CHURCH HISTORY

##### From the Apostolic Fathers to Chalcedon (451 A.D.)

##### A Historical Perspective

As the goal of chapter two was to show that the New Testament does not support the Theotokos Chalcedon statement, so the goals of this chapter are to show where the flesh of Mary view began and where it has led in the history of the church.

Dr. Justo L. Gonzalez pointed to the heart cry of the Protestant Reformation, Scripture alone, when he said:

Not only in their understanding of baptism, but also in their total theological outlook, one senses a distance between the Christianity of the New Testament--especially that of Paul--and that of the Apostolic Fathers. References to Paul and the other apostles are frequent; but in spite of this the new faith becomes more and more a new law, and the doctrine of God's gracious justification becomes a doctrine of grace that helps man to act justly.<sup>1</sup>

It was this shift from the New Testament to tradition which has been the cause of inner tension in the church in every generation, including this present one. No church, Protestant or any form of Catholic church, Eastern or Western, has escaped this tendency to shift. Nor does any church ever exist without the influence of the past to shape its future. A church just does not exist in a theological vacuum. Dr. J. N. D. Kelly, speaking of the early church, states that:

If Scripture was abundantly sufficient in principle, tradition was recognized as the surest clue to its interpretation, for in tradition the church retained, as a legacy from the apostles which was embedded in all the organs of her institutional life, an unerring grasp of the real purport and meaning

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<sup>1</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I, from the beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), p. 96.

of the revelation to which Scripture and tradition alike bore witness.<sup>2</sup>

This shift from Scripture to tradition, in the minds of the church fathers, was necessary in order to combat heresy. Heresy itself was also part of this shifting.

As we look at the early need for some form of authority it can be seen that this shifting was inevitable. There is an argument which has been presented, that it was not a shift from Scripture to tradition but it was tradition that produced Scripture. Thus it was a shift from tradition to Scriptures.<sup>3</sup> It is self-evident that, as far as the New Testament is concerned, the church existed before the written records of the Apostles, the New Testament. The internal evidence in the New Testament shows that the purpose of its writers was to instruct in proper doctrine or teaching. This can be seen in both the Apostle Paul and John. The New Testament writers were concerned that the teachings of Christ and the new Way should be preserved from inside as well as from outside false influences. Their writings were to preserve original Apostolic tradition, not change it.

### The Judaizers

The Judaizing tendency was without dispute a very natural outcome of the environment that gave birth to the church. No doubt it did not even occur to the first church even though told to them by the prophets and Jesus that it was a gospel for the whole world.

It is evident from the letter to the Galatians that the Apostle Paul was deeply concerned with the direction the churches were going when he penned these words:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--which is

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<sup>2</sup>J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (New York: Harper & Bro. Pub., 1958), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth L. Woodward, Newsweek, December 24, 1979 (New York, New York), pp. 48-49.

really no gospel at all . . . When I saw they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?' We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. . . . because by observing the law no one will be justified.<sup>4</sup>

### The Gnostics

As the church entered into the second century, its problem was not just protecting itself from Judaizing influence with its legalism, but protecting itself from gnosticism, of the intrusion of Docetism. The Gnostic claim to special revelation and knowledge caused the church to seek for and develop instruments of authority. Ignatius (a contemporary with Polycarp--a student of the Apostle John), while on his way to Rome to be tried, wrote to several churches. It seemed his main burden was that the churches not be divided but that they should follow the appointed leadership.

I exhort you that ye study to do all things in a divine concord: your bishop presiding in the place of God; your presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles; and you deacons most dear to me being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ; who was the Father before all ages and appeared in the end to us.<sup>5</sup>

Again Ignatius' writing to the Trallians exhorts:

I exhort you therefore, or rather not I, but the love of Jesus Christ; that ye use none but Christian nourishment; abstaining from pasture which is of another kind, I mean heresy. For they that are heretics confound together the doctrine of Jesus Christ, with their own poison: Whilst they seem worthy of belief: As men give a deadly potion mixed with sweet wine; which he who drinks of, does with the treacherous pleasure sweetly drink in his own death. Wherefore guard yourselves against such persons. And that you will do if you are not puffed up; but continue inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from your bishop and from the commands of the Apostles, He that is within the altar is pure; but he that is without, that is that does anything without the bishop, the presbyters, and deacons, is not pure in his conscience.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Bible, New International Version (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978), Galatians 1:6, 7; 2:14, 15.

<sup>5</sup>Ignatius to Magnesians, Ch. 2, 4-5.

<sup>6</sup>Trallians, Ch. 2:1-5.

One could say that this was the germinal form of the apostolic succession. It can be seen that this is an appeal to the authority of the church. As the church began to call for orthodoxy it again began to develop a form of legalism. Gonzalez states:

From the point of view of the history of Christian thought, the Didache is important above all as an expression of the moralism that very early took possession of some theological currents. At times, this seems to become a mere legalism. Thus, for example, the distinction between 'hypocrites' and Christians is based principally on their different days of fast or on the fact that Christians repeat the Lord's prayer three times a day.<sup>7</sup>

The desire to keep the church true to the traditions of the apostles and fathers gave rise to the New Testament Canon. It was Marcion who developed a canon of Scripture that forced the conscience of the church to develop the New Testament as we know it. Marcion's doctrine was an exaggerated Paulinism, a new emphasis upon grace. Yet the church reacted to some of his positions which were:

... clearly opposed to the Pauline message, such as his theory of two Gods, his negative view of the Old Testament, and his Docetism. His call for a new discovery of the unmerited grace of God was necessary and relevant in the midst of the legalism that threatened to sweep the church.<sup>8</sup>

This need within the church to preserve itself from destructive philosophical influences gave rise to the New Testament as an authority reaching back to the apostolic era. For the Orthodox Church the New Testament became accepted as the authority for faith and practice.

As the church fathers continued to fight the heresies, there arose a need for other anti-heretical documents. The "Rule of Faith" became one of such documents. Gonzalez gives this reason for the "Rule of Faith."

The New Testament, on the other hand, did expound that doctrine, but it did so in such an extensive and unsystematic way that it by itself was not enough for a quick and definitive recognition of unorthodox doctrine. . . . a summary of such a nature that it could serve to distinguish clearly between that faith and the various doctrines that modified or supplanted it. It was that need which gave rise to the idea of a rule of faith, and which at the same time increased the importance of the creeds as a proof

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<sup>7</sup>Gonzalez, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

of orthodoxy.<sup>9</sup>

The rule of faith was different in various parts of the Roman Empire.

This way of understanding the rule of faith as a fluctuating summary of the basic events of the history of salvation would explain why in various regions of the Empire the rule of faith was essentially the same, but at the same time reflected the influence and tendencies of each school, and even of each theologian. Thus, Irenaeus includes his doctrine of recapitulation in the 'rule of faith'; Tertullian, his doctrine of the new law; and Origen, the distinction between the various meanings of Scripture.<sup>10</sup>

It can be seen that the call for authority was needed; for if Gnosticism could have done so, it would have taken over the church and almost did.

Gnostic dualism had devastating consequences when applied to Christology. If matter, and above all this matter which forms our body, is not the product of the divine will, but rather of some other principle that is opposed to that will, it follows that matter and the human body cannot serve as a vehicle for the revelation of the supreme God. Therefore Christ, who came to make that God known to man, cannot have come in flesh. . . . Thus the Gnostics are led to the Christological doctrine that is known as Docetism.<sup>11</sup>

Probably the first Gnostic who attempted to reinterpret the Christian gospel was Cerinthus. . . . He distinguished between Jesus and Christ: Jesus was the man, son of Mary and Joseph, whereas Christ was the divine being that descended upon Jesus at his baptism. He was not a Docetist in the strict sense.<sup>12</sup>

This need for authority is the reason behind the anti-heretical documents, such as the New Testament canon, the rule of faith, the creeds and the emphasis on apostolic succession.

### The Philosophers

Gnosticism was not the only threat to the early church. As the church left the cradle of its beginnings in Palestine and spread into all the world under persecution, both Jewish at first and then Roman, it encountered more than Judaizing and Gnostic influences. As more and more Gentiles became converted as a result of Paul's missionary

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 132-133.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

activities, the church began to fight the influence of the Greek philosophies. With the apostolic age behind it, the church fought off the outside influences but found at the same time new converts to orthodoxy trying to answer the questions raised by pagan philosophers by the use of philosophy. These new converts were in many cases well versed or lettered in the philosophies before becoming Christians. They brought with them thought patterns foreign to the New Testament or apostolic Christianity. Such philosophies as Stoicism, Neo-Platonism and Eastern Dualism were used to explain the gospel to those who opposed them. The Alexandrian School was one such center of mixing Christianity and philosophy. Clement of Alexandria was one such person. "Platonic and Biblical, he is an original witness to that extraordinary encounter between Greek genius and that of the Orient, and between human speculation and divine revelation."<sup>13</sup>

Gonzalez, speaking concerning the student of Clement, Origen, states: "Origen starts, not from the doctrine of the Word, but from a God whose main characteristics are determined more by Platonism than by Scripture."<sup>14</sup> Origen of Alexandria (185-255 A.D.) is a good example of an attempt of an early church theologian to deal with the humanity of Christ and his sinlessness.

According to Origen Jesus was, as Ignatius taught, truly born of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit. He suffered, died, and was raised from the dead as a real human being, not as a Gnostic phantom Christ. But mixing this Platonic philosophy with his Christian faith, he postulated a world created by God the Father in order to punish the fallen spirit world. This hypothetical spiritual world was made up of rational free will beings that were eternal. Those of the spiritual world that fell were placed into this physical world in human bodies. Thus he taught the pre-existence of the soul. These sinful fallen were placed here to be reformed. Thus God the Father sent His eternal Son the Logos to earth, but He was incarnated not in a sinful pre-existent soul but

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<sup>13</sup>ibid., pp. 209-210.

<sup>14</sup>ibid., p. 232.

into one of the pre-existent sinless souls, thus making Jesus the human sinless son of God, the God-Man. Much of what Origen taught proved unacceptable to the Catholic Church and in an ecumenical council at Constantinople in 553 he was labelled a heretic.<sup>15</sup>

### The Hellenists

Over the early centuries Greek or Hellenistic influence penetrated the church, going to every part from tradition and worship practice to the very theology that was being formed. Hellenism was not just the philosophy but the culture of the day. At times when the unity of the church was threatened by these influences councils would meet in order to develop creeds. These creeds would spell out orthodoxy. As the understanding of the church developed concerning the doctrine of God, it was necessary to condemn some of the past who did not have as clear an understanding as those of that present. At each new council and creed, teachers and/or Bishops would be deposed or condemned, Origen was one such person. Many of them would yield to or sign allegiance to what possibly they did not believe, Cyril of Alexandria as an example. They would rationalize by using a different definition for the word that was being used in the creed.

### The Controversy

It can be seen by the following quotations that Christology was affected by the Arian controversy.

Arians taught that in Christ the Word had united Himself to a human body lacking a rational soul, Himself taking the place of one. As a result they had a straightforward, naturalistic conception of the unity in Christ, as comes to light in the creed ascribed to Eudoxius, successively bishop of Antioch and Constantinople.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Bro., 1953), pp. 150-151.

<sup>16</sup>Kelly, op. cit., pp. 281-282.



From Christology to saint worship the Hellenistic penetration was deep.

No less pagan, but certainly less detrimental to the divinity of Christ than Arianism--of rendering to the saints a type of worship similar to that which antiquity offered to demigods.

There is no doubt that the Arian controversy was to some extent the result of the penetration of the Hellenistic spirit within Christian theology. But one must ask whether the extreme form of that penetration is to be found in the Nicene party or in the Arians.<sup>17</sup>

### Legalizing of Christianity

Another development in the Roman Empire that caused the church and its doctrine to shift was the acceptance of the Christian faith by the Emperors. When Christianity became legalized, no longer did it have to defend itself from outside pressure. It needed to expand to take in all, and seemingly to please all.

#### (1) Imperial protection.

The imperial protections, which gave Christians the possibility of developing their theology to an extent that was previously impossible, also implied the possibility of imperial condemnation or favor to one theological position or another, and this in turn gave theological controversies a political dimension that they had not previously had. This is what happened in the Arian controversy.<sup>18</sup>

As the Christological controversy developed: "it was that Apollinaris' Christology, though opposed to that of Arius in affirming the immutability of the Word, was in agreement with the latter in its fundamental structure, and is therefore of the Logos-flesh type."<sup>19</sup>

(2) Extra theological considerations. This continual shift from New Testament or apostolic authority to the authority of the creeds and the church is now backed by the Roman Government. This writer is not saying that the New Testament is not being used in the battle for authority, but that it is very evident that what seemed to be

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<sup>17</sup>Gonzalez, op. cit., p. 297.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 356.

with the Apostle Paul a church with a doctrine of love and grace was becoming a church of law and works. Justification was through baptism and the Eucharist.

As has been mentioned earlier, along with this theological development came also such things into the life of the church as that of "rendering to the saints a type of worship similar to that which antiquity offered to demigods."<sup>20</sup> Included in this was the "cult of Mary" and can be seen later full blown in the eighth century in the "Iconoclastic Controversy." "The major dispute in the Greek or Byzantine wing of the Catholic Church after the seventh century was not over the nature of Christ, but over the use of images in Christian worship."<sup>21</sup> But the roots of this reach back to the second century. The Apocryphal book, "the Gospel of the Birth of Mary," shows a great degree of veneration of the Virgin Mary. "But the Virgin of the Lord, as she advanced in years increased also in perfections, and according to the saying of the Psalmist, her father and mother forsook her, but the Lord took care of her."<sup>22</sup> Another practice of the church, penitence, can be seen to have its roots back as far as the Shepherd of Hermas.<sup>23</sup> As we see Christology develop, we can also see the pagan customs and practices creeping into the creeds. If Greek and Pagan philosophy with pagan worship and practices are part of the creeds, then, if possible, these items should be open for study.

#### The Humanity of Jesus in the Apostolic Fathers

I Clement. The first Epistle of Clement is thought to have been written somewhere between 75 and 110 A.D. There is only one section that may have some possible reference to our subject, but it does not refer to Mary or David, but to Jacob, and the promise to Abraham.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>21</sup>Latourette, p. 292.

<sup>22</sup>The Gospel of the Birth of Mary, Ch. 5:1.

<sup>23</sup>Gonzalez, p. 88.

'From him<sup>24</sup> comes the Lord Jesus according to the flesh' . . . Seeing that God promised that 'thy seed (σπέρμα) shall be as the stars of heaven' . . . we who by His will have been called in Christ Jesus are not made righteous by ourselves . . . but through faith (πίστεως) (1 Clement xxxii:1-4).

Here Clement seems to echo the theme of Paul, as noted in the first chapter, that we somehow are σπέρμα by πίστεως or seed of Abraham (Jacob) by faith.

Barnabas. It is believed that the Epistle of Barnabas was written sometime around the end of the first or the beginning of the second century. As one interprets Barnabas it should be kept in mind that "'The Epistle of Barnabas' has been characterized as illustrative of the allegorical school of interpretation."<sup>25</sup>

In chapter xii:10-11 Barnabas makes a statement about Joshua (Jesus) and reflects Jesus' relationship to David:

10. See again Jesus, not as son of man, but as Son of God, but manifested in a type in the flesh. Since therefore they are going to say that the Christ is David's son, David himself prophesies, fearing and understanding the error of the sinners, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool.' 11. And again Isaiah speaks thus, 'The Lord said to Christ my Lord, whose right hand I held, that the nations should obey before him, and I will shatter the strength of kings.' See how 'David calls him Lord' and does not say Son (Barnabas xii:10-11).

Whatever is Barnabas' point, he at least says that some are saying that "Christ is David's Son," but Barnabas is saying that the Christ is not, but is the Son of God. The one thing that can be drawn for sure from this statement is that some people in His day were emphasizing Jesus as, no doubt, the son of David in the flesh. A guess would be not that they were saying that he was the son of David by adoption through Joseph, but somehow through Mary.

Ignatius. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, wrote several epistles while he was on his way to Rome to be martyred. He was martyred 108 A.D. This would place his writings

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<sup>24</sup>The footnotes on page 61 of Loeb says that the 'from him' in xxxii,2 means from Jacob.

<sup>25</sup>William H. Vermillion, Interpretation of Scripture and the Early Church (a paper presented to the NT 775 Greek Seminar, W.E.S., November 4, 1982), p. 1.

in the latter part of the first decade of the second century. As it has already been pointed out, Ignatius was concerned with an appealing to authority in order to protect the church from heretics. The need to distinguish who were really part of the "Catholic" church was made necessary by the problems which were developing as a result of the teaching of the Docetists who denied that Christ had a physical body.

The zeal that Ignatius exhibited presented Christ as one having a physical body, but not in the same way as the New Testament expressed it. One can find in Ignatius a shifting away from the New Testament in order to accommodate his theology to the problems he was facing. He seemed to have a need to bring Mary into the theological picture by adding to what had already been written, thus protecting the church from the bodiless Christ of the Gnostics.

It is most likely that Ignatius has written our first preserved record of this shift. Whether or not he wrote from existing traditions or theologized through a series of his own logic, thus developing his own hypothesis, at least he was trying to find a way to refute the Docetists. No matter what his source was, what he said is clear: Jesus was of Mary.

In Ignatius' Epistle to the Ephesians, vii:2, he brings Mary into the picture in a way not found in the New Testament. He states that:

There is one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and yet not born who is God in man true life in death, both of Mary and of God, first possible and then impossible, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here he points out that Jesus is both the Son of God from eternity as well as the son of man with a physical body. But the shift from the New Testament is that this physical body is of Mary. There is here no mention of the creative act of God as was the case with Luke: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God."<sup>26</sup>

Chapter x of the letter to the Trallians follows with this statement against the Docetists. "But if, as some affirm who are without God--that is, unbelievers--his suffering was only a semblance(but it is they who are merely a semblance), why am I a prisoner, and why do I even long to fight with the beast? In that case I am dying in vain. Then indeed am I lying concerning the Lord."

Ignatius in writing to the Smyrnaeans shows again his interest in the family of David and couples it with the virgin theme:

I have observed that you are established in immovable faith, . . . being fully persuaded as touching our Lord, that He is in truth of the family of David according to the flesh, God's son by the will and power of God, truly born of a virgin (Smyrnaeans, i:1).

Again he uses ἐκ γένους Δαυεὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, and ties it to ἐκ παρθένου, referring to Mary. As he uses γένους and παρθένου, he is speaking in a literal sense because of the "truly" ἀληθῶς which was in contrast to the "semblance" of the Docetists.

There is one time in which Ignatius speaks of the ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυεὶδ. This is in a passage in which he uses figurative language but in this passage there is a ring of the literal applied to "of the seed of David." If this is interpreted in the light of his other epistles it would, in his mind, be coupled to the Mary theme.

I desire the 'bread of God,' which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was 'of the seed of David' and for drink I desire His blood (Rom. vii:3).

Even though the seed of David is sandwiched between symbolic language, he would no doubt equate ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυεὶδ with ἐκ γένους Δαυεὶδ in a literal Maryan sense.

The point that is being made is that the shift from the New Testament concept of Jesus from David by Joseph, to the concept of Jesus from David by Mary can be clearly seen in Ignatius.

This shift was to accommodate second-century theology to the needs of the time. As twentieth-century evangelicals, we need to work back to the first century to truly live by the cry of the reformation, as Luther suggested, "Scripture alone." It is

time for the creeds to be judged by the Word of God and not the Word of God by the creeds.

### The Humanity of Jesus in the Apocryphal New Testament

These quotations from the Apocrypha will show how the theological climate of the latter part of the second century reflects a rapid change in Maryology or the cult of Mary.

The Gospel of the Birth of Mary, chapter one, begins thus: "The blessed and ever glorious Virgin Mary, sprung from the royal race and family of David." Where did this idea come from? There is no statement like this in the New Testament. The New Testament points to Joseph's genealogy, not Mary's.

The Protevangelion has this to say about the Mary-David theme:

2. And the high priest said call together to me seven undefiled virgins of the tribe of David . . . 4. Then the high priest knew Mary, that she was of the tribe of David; and he called her and the true purple fell to her lot to spin and she went away to her own house (ix:24).

Here Mary is clearly tied to the tribe of David. This should be enough to show the fast shift away from the New Testament view of Jesus as the son of David, son of Joseph by adoption, to a Jesus that was the son of David, son of Mary through the flesh. If the New Testament is to be appealed to for a genealogical relationship, it would have to be the reference to Mary as a relative to Elizabeth.<sup>27</sup>

As one reads through the Apocryphal New Testament it is clear that the magical and fanciful Gnostic thoughts are beginning to penetrate the church. It is from this body of writings that we discover Mary's father's name, Joachim (which does not fit the Matthan's Jacob and Lukan's Heli, in their genealogies), and her mother's name Anna.<sup>28</sup> Here the angel appeared to Anna and said "Fear not, neither think that which you see is a spirit. For I am that angel who hath offerred up your prayers and alms before

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<sup>27</sup>Luke 1:36.

<sup>28</sup>The Gospel of the Birth of Mary, Ch. 1:2.

God, and am now sent to you, that I may inform you, that a daughter will be born unto you, who shall be called Mary, and shall be blessed above all women."<sup>29</sup>

One need not labor at this point, but from the point of view of the historical critic, considering the late date of these writings, it is very obvious that the purpose of the author is to copy the New Testament accounts of the birth of Jesus and prepares the way for a full blown Maryology.

A Docetic tendency can be seen in the Protevangelion as it explains how Mary is shown to be a perpetual virgin. Unlike some of the popular views of the perpetual virginity, that is that Joseph had no intercourse with Mary. The account recorded in the Protevangelion: An Historical Account of the Birth of Christ, and the Perpetual Virgin Mary, His Mother, by James the Lesser, Cousin of the Lord Jesus, Chief Apostle and First Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem, Chapter xiii and xiv, shows us a different story. Listen to what it says.

Joseph finds a Hebrew midwife and explains to her that Mary was not his wife, but that she conceived by the Holy Ghost.<sup>30</sup> The midwife went to the scene and observed the birth of Jesus. "But the light gradually decreased, until the infant appeared and sucked the breast of his mother Mary."<sup>31</sup> Then the midwife met Salome. She tells Salome what had happened but Salome doubted. "Then Salome went in, and the midwife said, Mary, shew thyself, for a great controversy is risen concerning thee. And Salome received satisfaction. But her hand was withered, and she groaned bitterly."<sup>32</sup>

The point made here is that Mary remained a virgin physically even during and after the birth of Jesus. That is, Jesus became "Plastic Man" for a moment and as Plastic Man passes through key holes and under doors, so Jesus passed through Mary's hymen and was magically born. There was nothing magical about the miracle conception

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Protevangelion, Ch. xiv:6.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., Ch. xiv:13.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Ch. xiv:18.

of Jesus in Luke. There is nothing magical about a creative act of God.

The whole body of Apocryphal literature reflects this same Gnostic tendency. It is this tendency that can be seen working its way into the church and its creeds. This did not happen without controversy.

### Christology--the Flesh of Mary--the Controversy

The Christological controversy, which developed between the several schools of Christian thought in the early centuries of the church, reveal the problems that developed from the "flesh of Mary" view of the incarnation.

The Eastern Church was made up of two basic schools represented by Alexandria and Antioch. The Western Church was represented by Rome and Carthage. The Eastern Church had greater controversy within itself than the Western Church. Gonzalez shows some of the differences that had developed in Eastern Christology.

Apollinaris shows two principal interests in formulating his Christology: the integrity of the person of Jesus Christ--as against the Antiochenes--and the immutability of the Word of God--as against the Arians. . . . God the Word is not one person, and the man Jesus another person, but the same who subsisted as Son before He was made one with flesh by Mary, so constituting Himself a perfect, and holy, and sinless man, and using that economical position for the renewal of mankind and the salvation of all the world. . . . his interest in safeguarding the immutability of the Word can be seen in the following quotation: 'God, having been incarnated in the flesh of man, retains also His proper energy pure, possessing a mind unsubjected by the natural and fleshly affections, and holding the flesh and the fleshly motions divinely and sinlessly, and not only unmastered by the power of death, but even destroying death.'<sup>33</sup>

It can be seen that here Apollinaris makes use of the flesh of Mary for the salvation of mankind. It seems to this writer, and should become more evident to the reader later, that as long as Alexandrian theology can interpret their Christology from the Logos-flesh or Word-flesh standpoint, the "flesh of Mary" idea seems to hold. This concept has its roots in Clement and Origen. It was no problem for them to think of

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<sup>33</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 356-357.



Jesus as a body or shell from Mary but animated by the Word. This continued in Apollinaris. Jesus the man had a body and mind but the human spirit was replaced by that of God. "The frankly acknowledged presupposition of this argument is that the divine Word was substituted for the normal human psychology."<sup>34</sup>

But the time came when his doctrines began to be propagated and gave origin to a schismatic group, and then some of the most distinguished bishops, convinced as they were of the errors of his Christology, found themselves obliged to attack Apollinaris in his old age.<sup>35</sup>

Soteriology--the flesh of Mary. Because this thesis' purpose is to explore the "flesh of Mary" concept, much must be left out. It is taken for granted that the reader is already versed in church history. Mere mention of concepts and/or persons is expected to bring to mind ideas, and church historical happenings. It is in the Christological controversy, that the focus on soteriology raises the question: Why final orthodoxy makes Jesus of the "substance of Mary," "His body was received from her body. . . ." <sup>36</sup>

#### Eastern schools.

The conflict broke out when Nestorius declared himself against the title 'Bearer of God' (Θεοτόκος), as applied to Mary. By that time, this title was rather common among most Christians; and Alexandrine theologians, who had been used to it since the time of Bishop Alexander (313-328), saw it as a necessary consequence of the 'communicatio idiomatum.' . . . But Nestorius saw in the title Bearer of God as applied to Mary a confusion of the divine and the human in Jesus Christ. According to him, one may call Mary Bearer of Christ, but not Bearer of God.<sup>37</sup>

(1) Alexandrian. Athanasius, an Alexandrian, had strong soteriological interest when he presented his case. He felt that only God can save, thus the Divine Word indwelt man.

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<sup>34</sup>Kelly, p. 292.

<sup>35</sup>Gonzalez, p. 359.

<sup>36</sup>Henry Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 70.

<sup>37</sup>Gonzalez, p. 364.

While encompassed in a human body, He continued to exercise sovereignty over the universe. . . . To describe what happened in His becoming man, Athanasius says that He took flesh or a body, or that He fashioned a body for Himself in the Virgin's womb. In this body He dwells as in a temple . . . making use of it as His instrument . . . it is not another's body, but His very own--if it were another's His redemptive purpose could not have been accomplished. . . .<sup>38</sup>

At this point it seems that this part of Athanasius' thought comes very close to this writer's position, "not another's body, but His very own." From this next quotation it can be seen that Athanasius still has the "flesh of Mary" concept in mind and for good reason. Thus it is here that this writer deviates from Athanasius.

Athanasius has therefore no use for Christologies of the Word-man type. How can they be called Christian, he inquires, who say that the Word entered into a holy man, just as He entered into the prophets, and not that He became man, taking His body from Mary.<sup>39</sup>

Along with the Arians, Athanasius' view of Christ was of the Word-flesh concept.

It is clear from this brief account of Athanasius's basic argument that he shares with the Arians not their view of the Logos, but their view of the constitution of Jesus' person. He argues explicitly that it is wrong to perceive the incarnation as the Logos' indwelling of a whole human being. That, he thinks, would make the incarnation a case of mere inspiration. No, in the incarnation what happened was that the Logos took to himself--made his own--'flesh' or 'body' or what we might call 'the human condition' and so became the self or subject in Jesus. Naturally enough, therefore, Athanasius does not mention a human soul--a conscious human selfhood--in Jesus. For practical purposes, he regards Jesus, as the Arians did, as Logos plus body or flesh (though he nowhere openly denies that Jesus had a human soul).

The result of this is that when Athanasius has to deal with the question of Jesus' ignorance, his account of the matter inevitably seems strained. Unlike physical suffering, for example, or hunger, ignorance was not ordinarily attributed to the physical frame of a human being. Consequently, Athanasius had to account for Jesus' ignorance by suggesting that for purposes of the incarnation the Logos restrained himself and did not exhibit his omniscience; he acted 'as if' he were a human being. This in turn, however, seems--at least to the modern reader--to call into question the full reality of Jesus' humanity. Athanasius was certainly not in the ordinary sense a Docetist. He did not question the reality of the flesh which the Logos took. Even so, his position suggests that Jesus was less than a complete human being.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Kelly, pp. 284-285.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>40</sup>Richard A. Norris, Jr., The Christological Controversy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 20-21.

Moving to Cyril, also of Alexandria, it will be seen that he too had a Christology based on a Word-flesh formula.

The clue to Cyril's own teaching is the realization that he was an Alexandrian, nurtured in the school of Athanasius and Didymus the Blind. With this background the Christological problem did not present itself to him as that of explaining the union of two separate natures. An exponent of the 'Word-flesh' scheme, he thought rather in terms of two phases or stages in the existence of the Logos, one prior to and the other after the incarnation . . . thus the clearest, most succinct epitome of Cyril's doctrine is the famous formula . . . 'one nature, and that incarnate, of the divine Word' . . . as Cyril himself put the matter, 'after the union one nature is understood, the enfleshed nature of Word'.<sup>41</sup>

(1a) Communicatio idiomatum. The communicatio idiomatum was to the Eastern Church a very important concept and much concern was shown that one should think rightly about the subject. Several views can be seen which will show the depth of the problem. It must be kept in mind that the Alexandrian view of Christ was a Word-flesh view. The Antiochene view became a Word-man view.

(1b) Assumed. In their soteriological interest, the word assumed flesh and thus saved it. The underlying presupposition is that the flesh taken from Mary to form the man Jesus (the key word here is assumed) needed to be saved or redeemed.

It seems that Athanasius takes for granted that there was in Jesus no human rational soul, and the Word took the place of that soul. . . . Although Athanasius does not seem to have become aware of this, this interpretation of the person of Jesus Christ does not agree with his own soteriological principles, for--as the Cappadocians would later point out--the Word took human nature in order to free it from sin, and as the soul is also involved in sin, the Word must also have taken it in order to save it.<sup>42</sup>

It can be seen that Athanasius believed that Jesus was flesh from Mary but was not a complete person. That is why Athanasius believed that:

In Christ, the flesh becomes an instrument of the Word, and the union between these two is such that that which is properly said of one of the terms of that union can also be transferred to the other term. This is the typical Alexandrine doctrine that is usually called 'communication of properties'--communicatio idiomatum.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Kelly, pp. 318-319.

<sup>42</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 308-309.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 309.

Because of this he felt it proper to worship the man Jesus, even though worship belongs to God.

(1c) Θεοτόκος. Along with the concept of assumption of human flesh from Mary and the communicatio idiomatum was the concept of Θεοτόκος. This too can be seen to be typically Alexandrine.

In consequence, Athanasius affirms that Mary is Mother or Bearer of God (Θεοτόκος). This doctrine is also typically Alexandrine, and in the fifth century would be the catchword of bitter controversies. Athanasius believes that this title is to be given to Mary as a clear consequence of the indivisible union between divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ, and of the resulting communicatio idiomatum. To deny that Mary is the Mother of God would be tantamount to denying that God was born of Mary, and this in turn would be a denial of the incarnation of the Word.<sup>44</sup>

From this it can be seen why Nestorius would be condemned when he spoke out against the idea of Θεοτόκος. This controversy was over a flesh that was from Mary, part of her physical body.

The debate may be said to have begun when Nestorius, an Antiochene monk and disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia, became bishop of Constantinople in 428. A rash and dogmatic man, Nestorius quickly got himself in trouble with Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria. Not only did he foolishly permit himself to countenance accusations brought against Cyril by monks from Egypt, he preached, toward the end of his first year in office, a sermon attacking the view that the Virgin Mary is properly called theotokos, 'mother of God,' and suggesting that she be styled instead theodochos, 'recipient of God.' The underlying issue in this sermon was christological. In effect the question was whether it is proper to say that the divine Logos was born of a human mother--whether, in short, the Logos is the ultimate subject of the human attributes of Jesus. Nestorius's answer was no. It was, in his view, the human being Jesus who was in the proper sense born of Mary, just as it was the human being Jesus who suffered, died, and was raised. Nestorius's sermon was therefore an open challenge to the Christology of the Alexandrian tradition. It laid out the doctrine that Jesus is a human being who is intimately and completely indwelt by the Logos.<sup>45</sup>

(2) Antiochene. These ideas had many different thought patterns. Diodore was opposed to Alexandrian Christology. His Antiochene belief with a true communicatio idiomatum led him to propose a Christology:

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>45</sup>Norris, p. 26.

... in which he affirmed that the Word had been united to a man, not only to human flesh--a position that would eventually be generally accepted; but it also led him to establish an extreme distinction between the Word and the 'assumed man,' so that there could not be any communicatio idiomatum between them.<sup>46</sup>

Theodore "understood this 'person,' however, as that which results from the union of the two natures, and not as the Second Person of the Trinity, to which is joined the impersonal nature of the 'assumed man.'"<sup>47</sup>

For Theodore, the 'man assumed' by the Word continues to be the proper subject of human attributes, and these are not transferable to the Word except with the safeguard that this is possible only 'by relationship' and not directly. The true communicatio idiomatum goes only in one direction: the attributes of the Word are extended to the man; but not vice versa.<sup>48</sup>

One of the three Cappadocian Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa, in opposition to Apollinaris' Alexandrine concept:

... defends the integrity of the human nature of Christ. On the other hand, although the distinction between the human and divine natures does not disappear in the incarnation, the union is such that there is a communicatio idiomatum, that is, the communication of the properties of one nature to the other. This is why Gregory affirms, as was already customary in his time, that Mary is 'mother of God,' and not simply 'mother of the man Jesus.' There is, however, a certain idealistic and Docetic tendency in the affirmation--which will later become general--that Mary continued being a virgin even after the birth of Jesus, 'for that birth did not destroy the virginity.'<sup>49</sup>

Apollinaris was opposed by the Cappadocians on soteriological grounds. They refuted his Christology because they felt that it denied Jesus' human integrity endangering the Christian doctrine of Salvation.<sup>50</sup> But both Alexandrine and Antiochene views were careful to make Jesus' flesh and/or nature come from Mary's.

The Cappadocians felt that the participation of God in man and man in God was lost by Apollinaris.

If anyone has put his trust in Him as a Man without a human mind, he is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For that which

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<sup>46</sup>Gonzalez, p. 350.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 329-330.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole.<sup>51</sup>

From the foregoing, it can be seen that both the Alexandrian and the Cappadocian thoughts, which were Eastern, placed salvation in the assumption of a fallen body from Mary. Antiochenes wanted to save the whole man and the Alexandrines only a half man. But in the assumption of either view it is admitted that the man or flesh received from Mary needed to be healed or saved.

Briefly, we may characterize the Antiochene doctrine as a 'Logos-man' Christology, in contrast to the 'Logos-flesh' Christology of the Alexandrines. In other words, while the Alexandrines, especially those of the fourth century, were satisfied to affirm the union of the Word with human flesh, the Antiochenes found it necessary to postulate the union of the Word with a complete man. On the other hand, while the Antiochenes were willing to cede a point in reference to the unity of the person of Jesus Christ, the Alexandrines insisted on preserving and emphasizing this unity, even at the expense of the Savior's human nature. . . . Origen himself, although he felt it necessary to condemn Docetism, states that the bodily constitution of Jesus was different from that of other human beings.<sup>52</sup>

Using these Eastern thoughts, "Salvation by assumption," we can see why there would be problems resulting from the Chalcedon compromise.

### The Chalcedon Compromise

#### The Eastern Church

For the Cappadocians the important thing was that in Christ God truly assumed humanity, and not that his humanity remained identical to ours or as free as ours. Therefore, Apollinaris' doctrine was not acceptable to the Cappadocians. And for this reason, also, they were able to describe the union of the divine and the human in Christ in such terms that the human seemed to lose itself in the divine, without thereby destroying the soteriological significance of the incarnation as they understood that significance.<sup>53</sup>

This doctrine of the 'hypostatic union' of the divine and the human in Christ is the foundation of the *communicatio idiomatum*. As the Word is the 'hypostasis' or principle of subsistence of the Savior's humanity, it is to him--i.e., to the Word--that everything which is said of that humanity

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

must be referred. Mary is Mother of God, not because the divinity of Christ began to exist in her--which would be absurd--but because she is the mother of a humanity that subsists only by its union to the Word, and of which one must therefore say that all its predicates are to be applied to that Word. Therefore, it is necessary to affirm, not only that God was born of a virgin, but also that God walked in Galilee, and that he suffered, and that he died.<sup>54</sup>

It should be noted this "Flesh of Mary" notion is not just a "new creation" in Mary's womb, but Mary's real flesh and blood, from her body. Thus the need for saving and calling her the mother of God because the flesh from her is God walking in Galilee.

### The Western Church

This Christological struggle continued between the two schools in the East until Leo of Rome and the Western Church got involved. But it was Cyril of Alexandria that, in his battle for Θεοτόκος, in the end unified at least one idea for the church, both East and West. That idea was that Jesus was of the "flesh of Mary," Θεοτόκος.

The "flesh of Mary" concept was important to the Eastern Church in both schools as an instrument of salvation, the body "assumed." It was this body, half or whole, that was from Mary which, because of Adam's sin, needed to be assumed by the Word in order to save it from sin. This part of the concept can be seen today in Orton Wiley's statement: "This one personality is the pre-existent Logos, or the divine Son, who assumed to Himself human nature, and in this assumption both personalized and redeemed it."<sup>55</sup>

Thus it can be seen that a tension between two soteriological concepts would be locked together in Chalcedon until the twentieth century.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 376-377.

<sup>55</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. II (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1952), p. 178.

Cyril of Alexandria moved one step further in the shift from the New Testament when he reached beyond the Rule of Faith and the Creed for authority to the Church Fathers.

Cyril of Alexandria provides an instructive example of this new attitude in practice. Writing to the Egyptian monks in defense of the Blessed Virgin's claim to be called Mother of God, he counselled them to follow in the steps of the holy fathers, since it was they who . . . had taught Christians to believe aright.<sup>56</sup>

It was Cyril that helped the fifth century mark:

. . . a further step in the process by which the Church of the humble and crucified Lord become involved in struggles for prestige and power which were no less bitter than those that took place in the Byzantine court. All the great Christian sees--Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople--were struggling against their rivals in an attempt to gain preponderance, and each of them in turn allowed these political interests to influence its theological decisions.<sup>57</sup>

Through the centuries, the Alexandrine had collected great wealth, which could now be employed in the struggle against Nestorius. With these resources Cyril obtained the support of some high authorities who were more interested in gold than in theology.

This next quotation should sum up much of what has been said. It is taken from a footnote in Gonzalez.

In view of the seeming incapability of the bishops to come to an agreement by themselves, the Emperor decided to intervene in the dispute. His legate Aristolaus traveled to Antioch and Alexandria and, after long and complicated negotiations, a compromise was achieved. Cyril did not withdraw his anathemas, but he did reinterpret them in such a fashion that many thought that he had in fact retracted. Furthermore, he agreed to sign a formula based on a credal statement that had been proposed at Ephesus by the council led by John of Antioch. On the other hand, the patriarch of Antioch agreed to confirm the condemnation and deposition of Nestorius.<sup>58</sup>

This footnote states: "Begotten of the virgin Mary according to his humanity, for us and for our salvation; . . . we confess that the holy Virgin is Mother of God (θεοτόκος), the temple from her."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Kelly, p. 48.

<sup>57</sup>Gonzalez, p. 363.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 367-368.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 368.



This condemnation of Nestorius was a victory for Cyril.

"The Antiochenes became generally aware that the denial of the communicatio idiomatum was in fact a denial of the incarnation itself, and therefore of the saving work of Jesus Christ."<sup>60</sup> Thus soteriology in the east was salvation by assumption.

Western theologians did not start from the same soteriological presuppositions.

They:

. . . started from the ancient formula of Tertullian, as generalized by Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine. As the West was beginning to conceive the saving work of Christ in what would later be its characteristic form, that is, as the payment of a debt that man owed God, it was necessary to affirm that the Savior was such that that work could be performed. This required the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, but it did not demand any particular understanding of that union.<sup>61</sup>

This could be called salvation by payment, but was this payment by one that was sinless? It was under the able leadership of Leo I, Bishop of Rome, that the East and West came together. Leo's long letter, his Tome, sent to Flavian, spelled out the Western view "that in Christ Jesus there was neither manhood without true Godhead nor the Godhead without true manhood, that in Christ two full and complete natures came together in one person, 'without detracting from the properties of either nature and substance.'"<sup>62</sup>

Leo asked for a council which was called by the Emperor in Chalcedon in 451. About six hundred bishops were present. Leo's Tome was approved and the following creed adopted:

Following the holy fathers we all, with one voice, define that there is to be confessed one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of rational soul and body, of the same substance [homoousion] with the Father according to the Godhead, and of the same substance [homoousion] with us according to the manhood, like to us in all respects, without sin, begotten of the Father before all time according to the Godhead, in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [Theotokos] according to the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten,

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 385.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 386.

<sup>62</sup>Latourette, p. 171.

in two natures, inconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparately, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the peculiarity of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person [prosopon] and one substance [hypostasis], not parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten, divine word [Theon Logon], the Lord Jesus Christ; as from the beginning the prophets declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ has taught us, and the creed of the holy fathers has transmitted to us.<sup>63</sup>

Later, John of Damascus would complete the uniting of Eastern and Western thought. From this we see present Christological thought:

He (Jesus) became hypostatically united to the rationally and intellectually animated flesh which He had from the holy Virgin and which its existence is in Him. He did not transform the nature of His divinity into the substance of His flesh, nor the substance of His flesh into the nature of His divinity, and neither did He effect one compound nature out of His divine nature and the human nature which He had assumed.

The natures were united to each other without change and without alteration. The divine nature did not give up its proper simplicity, and the human nature was certainly not changed into the nature of the divinity, nor did it become non-existent.<sup>64</sup>

So it is today we still have the tension between the static and the dynamic in our own Christological statement because of the Chalcedon Compromise, the "assumption" and "substitutional" in the "redemptive" theme.

#### A Question

At the so-called third ecumenical council held at Ephesus (431 A.D.) Nestorius was condemned. Because John of Antioch was late on arriving at Ephesus, Cyril opened the assembly and had Nestorius excommunicated, and deposed. Nestorius was abandoned by all parties and died in exile (440 A.D.).

Although Nestorius rejected theotokos (Mother of God) in favor of Christotokos (Mother of Christ) he had a "flesh of Mary" view of the Christ which came from Mary. His condemnation was not just for his rejection of theotokos but for his two-person

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-172.

<sup>64</sup>Hugh I. Kerr, Reading in Christian Thought, John of Damascus. Underlining mine.

view of Christ. Gonzales asks the question:

Was Nestorius really a heretic? In other words, was his doctrine such that it denied some of the fundamental principles of the Christian faith? Or was he condemned rather for his lack of tact and Cyril's ambition and political ability? Did those who condemned him understand his doctrine correctly? Or did they condemn rather a caricature of his thought? These are questions on which scholars are not in agreement. . . . Many Protestants have seen in Nestorius a forerunner of Protestantism, on no other grounds than his rejection of the title 'Mother of God.'<sup>65</sup>

The journey the "flesh of Mary" took from Ignatius to Chalcedon seemed to be done without questioning the basic presuppositions of Maryology. In the late fourth century, we find Augustine writing on the subject of "David according to the flesh" and this to him was by Mary. Yet as to the New Testament genealogies, Augustine believed them to be Joseph's.

If Augustine accepted the Maryology of the day as he seemed to, with her short genealogy found in The Gospel of the Birth of Mary in the Apocryphal New Testament, he was then going to extra-biblical writings for his doctrine and for faith and practice, in the area of his theology.

This writer contends that the Bible is the Word of God, a unit, and contains all that is needed. God has a message for us between its pages from Genesis to Revelation. The New Testament does not support the "flesh of Mary" view of the incarnation.

Without going into the long discussion of Augustine, let us just take a "short" quotation from Augustine to close Chapter III.

30. Enough has now been said to show that the question, why the generations are reckoned through Joseph and not through Mary, ought not to perplex us; for as she was a mother without carnal desire, so was he a father without any carnal intercourse. Let then the generations ascend and descend through him. And let us not exclude him from being a father, because he had none of this carnal desire. Let his greater purity only confirm rather his relationship of father, lest the holy Mary herself reproach us. For she would not put her own name before her husband; but said, 'Thy father

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<sup>65</sup>Gonzalez, pp. 368-369.

and I have sought Thee sorrowing.' Let not then these perverse murmurers do that which the chaste spouse of Joseph did not. Let us reckon then through Joseph, because as he is in chastity a husband, so is he in chastity a father. And let us put the man before the woman, according to the order of nature and the law of God. For if we should cast him aside and leave her, he would say, and say with reason, 'Why have you excluded me? Why do not the generations ascend and descend through me?' Shall we say to him, 'Because thou didst not beget Him by the operation of thy flesh?' Surely he will answer, 'And is it by the operation of the flesh that the Virgin bare Him?'<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Philip Schaff, Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), Vol. vi, p. 256.

## Chapter IV

### CONCLUSION

#### Theological Implication

J. K. S. Reid was quoted by W. T. Purkiser in God, Man and Salvation as saying, concerning Jesus:

An account that would plausibly break the entail of sin would have to be much more clever than to leave him connected on even one side of his parentage with the human race and thus so far involved in corrupt human nature.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis has presented an approach to the problem suggested by Reid's statement, that is that Jesus was not connected on either side of his parentage. For the Scriptures state, "Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men,"<sup>2</sup> Why then is there, as some would say, an exception for Jesus, if Jesus is found to be in Adam? How can this predetermined order of succession be broken? The Scripture declares Him to be "without sin."<sup>3</sup> Then why did He not receive this result of sin along with all of Adam's race? No amount of theological juggling can possibly change the fact. Adam's sin and its effect, according to Scripture, has by some means been transmitted by an unalterable inheritance from Adam to this present day. The several modes of sin's transmission which have been suggested state that all have sinned, whether it is the genetic mode, finding its genesis in Gregor Mendel's theory,<sup>4</sup> the federal theory

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<sup>1</sup>W. T. Purkiser et al., God, Man and Salvation (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1977), p. 355.

<sup>2</sup>Bible, New International Version (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978), Romans 5:18.

<sup>3</sup>Hebrews 4:15. Also 7:26-27; 9:14.

or mode and its exponent Dr. Charles Hodge<sup>5</sup> or the racial theory<sup>6</sup> which is the position of this paper. They all leave man out of relationship with God.

The racial theory is unlike the genetic or federal headship theories. It states the "is" out of relationship with God. It does not explain "how," like through birth or because Adam was the head of the race, but just the fact stated by Scripture "in Adam all died."

To illustrate what is meant by the racial theory one can take a look at the "federal headship" suggested by Dr. Wynkoop. After quoting Wesley she goes on to say:

It is this analogy that Paul uses to link all men with Adam (anthropos). As head of the race he represents all men, and what he did can be said to be what all men do. In Adam, men are born into a race which is 'alienated from the life of God.' The centering of devotion is not on God but, in pride, on self and the things of 'the world.' Everything that 'in Adam' stands for is the 'old man,' the false and destructive orientation of the self outside of Christ. This is the 'kingdom of the world,' the reign of sin and death, the locus and dominion of sin. This situation defines sin. It is not a mere 'principle' but an existential fact in the experience of the race and in each man in the race.<sup>7</sup>

After going on to quote Wesley again, she states that:

In total contrast to this is the headship of Christ, the Second, or last Adam, the 'new man.' Christ is the true Head, the Firstborn of all creatures, whose authority had been usurped by the 'old man.' At this point the profound significance of the Incarnation is revealed. Christ, as the true Corporate Person (in relation to mankind), takes on himself the whole heritage and sin of the race of mankind. No one else can do this. He is the Lord of the Kingdom of God. In Him is the reversal of all that the old man has done. By His death and resurrection He established His headship and ends the alienation of the race from God. He is God with us, Emmanuel. In Christ, the true Head of the Church, men become one with the new Corporate Personality. In each believer is incarnated the total life of the new race;

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<sup>4</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. II (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press, 1952), p. 118.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 114. Also Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, A Theology of Love (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), p. 160.

<sup>6</sup>John W. Larson, "What Is the Difference Between the Carnal Nature and the Human Nature?" Unpublished 1977 MRE research paper in the W.E.S. Library, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup>Wynkoop, op. cit., p. 161. Underlining mine.

and Christ, the Head, incorporates into himself, as the New Man, every believer. This is the Kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup>

Here is a good example of putting sinful man alongside of sinless man. What a contrast. This writer agrees with Dr. Wynkoop that "In Adam, men are born into a race which is 'alienated from the life of God.'" He also believes that "the headship of Christ, the Second or last Adam, the 'new man' is the true head of a new race of man." Note if there are two human races, one of the first Adam, and one of the Second Adam, then sin is racial and from the first Adam's race. This writer is a realist. He has a hard time at one moment looking at the real concrete facts of a real person and at the next moment ignoring them.

Unlike those that do not believe in miracles and spiritualize many of the concrete statements of Scripture, or as the Docetists that have a dualism that lends itself to explain away the real body of Christ, this writer faces a Christ that was believed by his disciples to be touchable, seeable, feelable, and hearable, a man that was God in real flesh, and this man was born of a virgin and has to be accounted for in history. Many have spoken to the subject but have failed to somehow separate him, "the real man," a "new man," a "new being," a "new humanity," as he has been called, from the "real men" of the "real human" race which stems from Adam, whoever this Adam was and whatever way one might interpret the first two chapters of Genesis. Sitting here with pen in hand, moving it across the page, makes this man real, touchable, seeable, feelable, and hearable, and part of that beginning wherever it was and no matter how long ago it was. If somehow this "real man," the writer, and the real Jesus are part of Adam's race then as Dr. Wynkoop has suggested "as head of the race he (Adam) represents all men and what he did can be said to be what all men do." How could Jesus possibly miss this consequence of sin? The answer is, the second Adam is not part of the first race.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Thus God had a more clever way, as Reid said "than to leave him connected on even one side of his parentage with the human race and thus so far involved in corrupt human nature."

What then was God's method to accomplish the task? Sin as racial seems to be the way God solved the problem. Had God not started all over again, the genetic mode would not work; the federal headship would be better because sin would not be considered as a substance. But racial is better; it solves the substance problem of sin making it relational and gives us a sinless Christ who never had a broken relationship with His Father.

In the "New Creation" view Jesus is as human as Adam was human, but as a "New Creation" he was not of "dust." This "New Creation" does not imply what substance was used by the Holy Spirit when Mary was overshadowed. But it is clear that the Scriptures do not imply that the substance was from Mary, as the church later is explicit concerning the "flesh of Mary."

In this racial view, Adam's sin causes his race to be born alienated from God. But the new human, Christ, by his death and resurrection, makes it possible for a sinful race to be adopted into a new family, the family of God.

In this racial view, the sin that is transmitted is not some kind of a substance but a negative relationship. Adam having sinned separated his race from God, he must now find *h*'s own way. Lost in his own efforts to manage without God, he finds himself self-centered and unwilling to accept help from a gracious God. Thus he seeks in his own legalism and works, which at times he may think are good by standards of self-justification, and at other times when he is somewhat sober he may see his self-righteousness as filthy rags, but is too proud to ask for unmerited help. Adam's race finding itself in this same condition does not even need a devil to be devilish. The race becomes, along with the devil and his fallen angels, fallen spirits full of unkindness and evil ends, in an orbit of its own.



But in this darkness one's own little world has a light. The second Adam has arrived on the scene, the light that is the light for everyone coming into the world. This new man that knew no sin made it possible for the members of this world's Kingdom to transfer allegiances to the new world's Kingdom and be subject to the King of Kings and the Lord of lords. This adoption into the family of this new Adam's Race can be and must be done now, in this world. The complete transfer will take place as Paul has suggested when this "perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality." Then the saying that is written will come true, "death has been swallowed up in victory." And again Paul says:

And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.<sup>9</sup>

This is that "Blessed Hope" that the sons of God are looking for. Ho! What a "Hope." This writer believes that this should be the "true world view" rather than the present historic view. Because:

1. It is free from internal self-contradiction; it is consistent. (Christ is sinless, not just an exception).
2. Its various parts harmonize; they are coherent. (The ideas of First Adam and Second Adam have a meaningful base). The Second Adam is not just an extension of the First Adam.
3. It illuminates and explains an event more thoroughly than any other basic assumption; it is applicable. (There is no reason to believe that God had to do a half job in the miracle birth of Jesus; it was a complete miracle).
4. It is applicable to all possible experience; it is adequate.<sup>10</sup>

This view does no injustice to any sound biblical view of Christ. It fits eschatology perfectly. We shall be like him, the second Adam, not the first Adam. He is our pattern.

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<sup>9</sup>1 Corinthians 15:54.

<sup>10</sup>Bob E. Patterson, Carl F. H. Henry (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), p. 62.

Jesus' life was a normal human existence. But his followers and others saw something different enough to say, "Who is this?"<sup>11</sup> This makes it possible to clarify some of the fanciful ideas presented about our first parents, Adam and Eve. Jesus shows all signs of finiteness, which is part of our present existence and infirmities. But they are not a sad issue of sin. They are the result of being created beings of time and this material world. Thus, if we are able to compare his humanness and our humanness, we can rectify some of the false ideas connected with the catch-all terms of weakness and infirmness, which have been defined as the sad issue of sin.

Theological juggling is here not necessary if one would reach back into the first century and leave the flesh of Mary view behind. Jesus would be a new creation in the womb of Mary. That is the "how," but only a limited "how," for the Scriptures do not tell "how" God created Jesus, but neither does it tell "how God created the κόσμος." The prevailing ideas in Hellenistic<sup>12</sup> and Jewish<sup>13</sup> thought seemed to allow for a new creation, because "the man was seen as the active partner, providing the all-important 'seed.' The woman simply provided a place for it to grow."<sup>14</sup> Thus with no input from either father or mother, the virgin birth finds a real purpose and a creation is necessary.

This kind of "how" would let one state clearly that:

1. In Adam all died.<sup>15</sup> Jesus was not in Adam, therefore He did not die in Adam, but had to lay down His life for the sins of the world as a perfect sacrifice.
2. Sin is racial, not genetic, or just from Adam being the federal head. It was the first Adam's race that died; the second Adam's race is a new race born of the

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<sup>11</sup>Mark 4:41a.

<sup>12</sup>Larson, pp. 32-33.

<sup>13</sup>Hebrews 7:10.

<sup>14</sup>Clivewood and Beryl Suitters, The Fight for Acceptance--A History of Contraception (Aylesbury: Medical and Technical Publishing Company, Ltd., 1970), p. 33.

<sup>15</sup>I Corinthians 15:22.

Spirit. Adam's race was born of the flesh, but Jesus' race is born of the Spirit.

3. Sin is not a substance, but as Dr. Wynkoop suggests, sin is a negative relationship. Adam's race was alienated from the life of God.<sup>16</sup>

4. The new race is "not born of the flesh, but of the Spirit"; this is a new relationship. "Holiness consists of this unobstructed personal communion and deep, personal fellowship with God."<sup>17</sup>

5. Carnality, the sin nature, is not a substance, but a negative love, self love.

6. Human infirmities and weaknesses would need to be redefined as finiteness and not just the result of sin, needing the atonement. At the present, infirmities and weakness are used as catch-all terms for anything one might "guess" to be the result of sin, or the fall.

If Wesleyans would do what has been suggested, this writer believes that a heavy load would be lifted off our theological-explanation agenda.

### Finally

This thesis states that the New Testament not only does not support Chalcedon's Theotokos but suggests that theotokos is "alive and well" in this century among protestants. Chapters have not been written here on this, but from time to time mention has been made in such a way as to show its presence with us. Such as quotations from: Dr. Nichalson, Menno Simons, Bishop Pearson, the Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles of Faith, Harold Lindsell, H. Orton Wiley, D. D. Whedon's Commentary, Dr. Kessel, J. K. S. Reid, and finally no doubt your own struggle with this thesis is a good indication that theotokos is still with us.

With this we conclude that the New Testament does not support the theotokos statement in the Chalcedon Creed, or any present view which includes "Mary's flesh" as the source of Jesus' humanity.

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<sup>16</sup>Wynkoop, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

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