



A MINISTRY SCHOOL OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF THE UPPER MIDWEST

# Fully God, Fully Man

**DN. JOHN CLARK**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.... The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known*

*John 1:1-5, 9-10, 14, 18*

*For by him [Jesus Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.... He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross*

*Colossians 1:16-20*

## **I. Joining the Apostles as They Begin (Again) at the Beginning**

### **a. Israel on the Potter's Wheel.**

“Israel teaches us, then, that divine revelation cuts against the grain of our naturalistic existence and calls into question the naturalistic patterns of human thought. If we are to know God in accordance with the way he has chosen through Israel to Christ—and now that he has actually take it, there is no other way—we must let the sword of divine truth that was thrust into Israel pierce our own heart also so that its secret contradiction of God may be laid bare. We must go to school with Israel and share with it the painful



transformation of its mind and soul which prepared it for the final mediation of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, if we ourselves are to break free from our assimilation to the patterns of this world and be transformed through the renewing of our mind in Christ, for only then will we be in a position to recognize, discern, and appreciate what God wills to make known to us"

~Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*.

b. The Church at the Baptismal Font.

The Word made flesh is the ultimate *hapax legomenon*—the singular, utterly unique *Logos* of God. Contrary to the naiveté of some this side of the Enlightenment, true knowledge is had by participating in mystery, not by deconstructing and domesticating mystery, nor by endlessly deliberating about mystery without committing oneself to it. The mystery who is Christ is known in faith and discipleship, or not at all.

Knowing Christ does not eliminate mystery. Rather, Christ is the **revelation** of a mystery that deepens the more he is truly known. In other words, Christ is the light of the world; but even as he illumines all things, he never surrenders his own inherent inscrutability. Accepting the mystery of Christ is the salvation of our reason, whereas to deny the mystery of Christ is to forfeit reason's redemption.

"Theology cannot establish on transcendental grounds the conditions of possibility of its object, neither to itself nor to its critics. To attempt to do so would be to adopt a perverse stance towards the object, one which would, indeed, be almost a willing rejection of that object and its claim. For that object—God incarnate, the Word made flesh—is not one more matter for the free play of intellectual judgment. Rather, the object is himself judge, wholly and originally; and perhaps *the* test of the authenticity of any theology will be whether it emerges from that judgment or prefers, instead, to establish an independent colony of the mind from which to make raids on the church's confession."

~John Webster, *Incarnation*.

## II. The Church's Confession: Jesus is God the Son and the Son of Man

"We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being [reality] with the Father. Through him all things were made.... By the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man." ~*Nicene Creed*.

### 48. Who Is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal Word and Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He took on human nature to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world, the only Mediator between God and fallen humanity. ~*To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism*.



#### 54. What happened at Jesus' conception In Mary's womb?

The eternal Son, whom God named Jesus, assumed a fully human nature from his mother, the Virgin Mary, at the moment of conception in her womb. ~*To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism*.

- a. The eternally begotten is maker of all things, yet made by none.

~Divine begetting and human procreating.

~Eternity (and eternal life) is not an infinite abstraction.

~The Word is never just God's personal utterance, but always divine person.

- b. God the Son is the Word to Israel, with Israel, and of Israel.

~Jesus is the true Son of Abraham and Adam—Fulfiller of Israel's vocation and Savior of the world.

~Jesus is twice begotten—eternally begotten of God his Father, and begotten in time of Mary his mother.

"A Babe on the breast of a Maiden he lies,  
Yet sits with the Father on high in the skies;  
Before him their faces the Seraphim hide,  
While Joseph stands waiting, unscared, by his side...  
O wonder of wonders, which none can unfold,  
The Ancient of Days is an hour or two old;  
The Maker of all things is made of the earth,  
Man is worshipped by angels, and God comes to birth."  
~H. R. Bramley, *The Great God of Heaven*.

### III. Putting It Together

~Jesus Christ has two natures, a perfect divine nature and a perfect human nature. His divinity is shared with and the same as—not merely similar to—God the Father and God the Spirit; and his humanity is shared with and the same as—not merely similar to—ours, though our Savior is surely no sinner.

~Jesus Christ's two natures concurrently exist and wholly retain their distinctive characteristics, which are evermore united in one person—the person of Jesus Christ.



~Our Lord Jesus Christ participates simultaneously and unreservedly in the being and life of both God and humanity. The dual citizen of heaven and earth, the divine self-exposition of both God and man, he does divine things humanly and human things divinely, with infinite significance and consequence.

~In the human face of Jesus we see the face of God; in the human voice of Jesus we hear the voice of God; and in the human acts of Jesus we behold the true revelation and enactment of God's character and will.

~Jesus Christ is even more than our incarnate God-Word, the substance and sum of our theology. He is the ultimate theologian—the only human who speaks and acts on behalf of God *as God*.