

We Believe!

GOD THE SON

“Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin.

He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of man from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion.

He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and every present Lord.”

Article 2B

The Humanity of Jesus Christ

(see pages 41-43 in your workbook)

1. Jesus of Nazareth was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born to the virgin Mary. He came in a real human body.
2. The Eternal Son of God, Jesus, coming into the world is called “the incarnation.”
3. The fact that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, yet had a real human body means that He can identify with humans in every way, but yet did not have the stain of sin.

Belief in the virgin birth of Jesus is NOT an optional or unimportant issue. It is essential to Christianity, for without the virgin birth Jesus was not only a man, but He was just that—merely a man.

JESUS CHRIST HAD A HUMAN BODY

He was not a ghost, or a supernatural appearance that seemed to be a man. He had a real human body (Luke 24:39).

It was a real human body that was nailed to the cross, that suffered, bled, and died in the place of humans.

JESUS CHRIST HAD A REAL HUMAN SOUL

Without a human soul Jesus could not have “increased in wisdom” (Luke 2:52).

Without a human soul Jesus could not have been sorrowful (Mark 14:34).

Yet His soul was different from that of ordinary people in that His soul was not tainted by sin (Hebrews 2:16).

In His humanity He fulfilled all of the righteous requirements of the law of God.

The Divinity of Jesus

(see p. 40)

“As there can be no religion without the existence of God;
so there can be no Christian creed in which the doctrine of
Christ’s deity is not a fundamental article.”

(Manual of Theology by J.L. Dagg, p. 191)

THE NAMES OF GOD ARE ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

“Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.” (Romans 9:5)

“My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28)

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” (Hebrews 1:8).

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ARE ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

Eternity— “But you, Bethlehem Ephratah...out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6)

Omniscience— “Lord, you know all things.” (John 21:17).

Omnipotence— “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.”
(John 5:21).

Another point: if Jesus is not God then He allowed Himself to be executed under false pretences. If He were not God then He would be a deceiver and a liar. He also would be guilty of perjury.

“The Jews sought all the more to kill Him because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” (John 5:18).

“I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!

“Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”

(Matthew 26:63-64)

We could say much more, but these samples are given to provide sufficient evidence that Jesus is God.

To refuse to recognize Him as God is to have a belief system that is something other than Christianity.

The Unity of the Two Natures of the Son of God

His two natures are seen as simultaneously existing.
Note statements like:

“The Son of Man [humanity] is Lord [deity] also of the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:28)

“They would not have crucified [humanity/body] the Lord of Glory [deity].” (1 Corinthians 2:8)

The two natures of Jesus:

1. They are never mixed or confused. They remain distinct. He is not half man and half God! He is fully human and fully God.
2. The union will never be dissolved. (Revelation 7:17)

The Death of the Son of God

Personal Accountability

“The soul who sins shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:20)

A Principle and a Picture

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”
(Leviticus 17:11)

The Provision Arrives—The Atonement

“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” (1John 2:2)

The Atonement's Accomplishments

1. Expiation—He bore our sins and wiped our slate clean—1 Peter 2:24
2. Propitiation—He satisfied the just wrath of God that must punish our sin.—1 John 4:10
3. Reconciliation—Our sin is gone, His wrath is satisfied, so we are no longer enemies.—2 Corinthians 5:18-19
4. Redemption—He bought our freedom.—Mark 10:45

A difference of understanding on the atonement

General Atonement—The aim of God was to make salvation possible for every person, but without God specifically applying it to anyone.

Strong Point: This view seems to take seriously passages of Scripture that appear to speak of Christ dying for the world.

Weak Point: In the Scripture the effects of the atonement are described, NOT as providing the possibility of salvation, but as the certainty of salvation (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:16 etc.). Did Christ die for those who are already in hell?

Particular Atonement—Jesus’ death on the cross was an atoning sacrifice only for those who will believe, that is, those whom the Scripture refers to as “the elect.”

Strong Point: This view takes seriously the verses of Scripture describing the death of Christ as for those who are His sheep (John 10). It takes the atonement as effective; not just offered.

Weak Point: May cause us to think that God does not want all people to come to Him.

Is There a Solution?

The pure general atonement view does not take seriously enough the depravity of humanity. It makes it sound as if people want to choose God, but they haven't had a chance yet. Salvation becomes a human work, with God merely providing the opportunity. This view is not Scripturally defensible.

From its beginning, Southern Baptists have held to some form of particular atonement. That view has changed somewhat since around 1960 or so. We should study our history and our roots, and perhaps consider the wisdom of our founders.

Here is how I think I would explain it at this point in my understanding:

Jesus' atoning work on the Cross removes for all people the legal obstacles to salvation. However, due to each person's depravity he or she will not choose to trust in Jesus and love Him. His atonement is *sufficient* for all, but most will reject it.

Jesus' atoning work is *efficient/effective* for those whom God has targeted—His elect. His work on the Cross will not fail, because God also influences the hearts of these people without violating their free will, and they will gladly choose to believe upon Jesus for eternal life. God will not fail!!

Conclusion:

Everyone who will be lost will be so because that is what they want. Humans love sin and hate God and His ways. They are exercising their FREE choice to do what they want to do. No one will be shut out of a relationship with God who wants one through Jesus!

Somehow, by God's gracious work, those whom God chooses, and those who choose God will be one and the same people.

Application:

1. We must preach and proclaim: “Whosoever will, let him come and drink of the waters of life freely.” We do not know exactly how, when, and with whom God will use the gospel to call that person to Himself.
2. We must be confident that God’s plan will not fail.
3. We must not label and marginalize Christians based upon his or her understanding of how the atonement works, as long as it is biblically plausible. Universalism is out. Pure Arminianism is out. However, we can joyfully fellowship with each other under the mandate to proclaim the gospel. Remember! The difference of opinion is not regarding how people are saved; but why they will believe the Gospel.

Don't be angry with people who are predestined to be a little bit general in their understanding of the atonement.

Don't be angry with people who have chosen by their own free will to be strict in their view on particular atonement.

Be a person who learns and grows; not a person who seeks to stir up strife among brothers. Be mature!

The Resurrection of the Son of God

“The resurrection of Jesus is the proof of Christ’s victory over sin and death” (p. 46).

“The great fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead is the central fact of the evidence of Christianity.”

—John Broadus

Jesus’ resurrection was literal and physical:

“Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” (Luke 24:39)

The Ascension of the Son of God

“While they watched, he was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).

“Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

“Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior...” (Acts 5:31).

Jesus is truly the resurrected Savior and Lord.

The evidence of this fact is the existence of the church and the power on the church, by the Person of the Holy Spirit.

The church's mission going forward is evidence that Jesus is reigning, and has poured out the Holy Spirit on His people. A church that does not pursue the Great Commission to all nations rejects the plan of the exalted Savior, Jesus Christ. His Spirit was not poured out on the church to help us to sit more comfortably in our seats or be unengaged at home.

The Return of the Son of God

His return will also be literal and physical:

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11).

Application of this Presentation:

1. Accurately knowing the Bible's teaching about Jesus is the only way to know Him truly.
2. Right doctrine leads to real love for Jesus Christ and truer worship of Jesus Christ.
3. Right doctrine about Jesus causes us to serve Him in love; rather than out of obligation.
4. Right doctrine helps us to resist cults and sects that might seek to infiltrate our lives or our church, leading us away from the precious truth of the real Jesus.
5. It is worth every effort to know all the Bible teaches us about Jesus. There is no higher knowledge in the world!