

The Incarnation of the Word of God in Christ¹

The topic of the incarnation of the Word of God Almighty into human nature in order to renew it, is a theme beyond the capacity of human beings. If my attempts at persuasion fail, this does not mean there is a defect in the essence of my case, but rather a limited understanding of the details.

In response to those serious and interested individuals who are confused about this matter, I will try to lay out this matter for those searching for the truth, even though I am no expert in this regard.

Skeptics accuse us that we insult God and lower his dignity when we say that his Word became a human being in the womb of a virgin, grew up on milk and baby food until he became a man; and he was tired and hungry and thirsty, and was whipped and crucified, which does not comply with his divinity.

God forbid that we would ascribe to him that which would lessen his dignity! No, rather we praise and thank Him for his indescribable mercy. Just as death came upon mankind through the disobedience of one person, it was appropriate that humans be brought back to life through the obedience of a person, too. And just as sin, which is the cause of our unhappiness, came of a woman, it was appointed that the one who grants us righteousness and salvation would be born of woman. Therefore, it was also appropriate that the devil who seduced humans and defeated them by their eating from the tree, was defeated before humans through the pain endured by a person on the tree.

But to answer the allegations of skeptics, I should establish proof of the truth of this mental construct first. What I mean is the demonstration of the necessity for the coming down of the Divine Essence, or showing the possibility of its descending. Then we must of course go into details.

¹ Summarized and condensed from Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*. This is an English translation of an article from "The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ," 2nd edition, published in Arabic. Copyright ©2016 Al Kalima. This article is covered by the following Creative Commons License: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). The full license can be found here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>

Haven't you seen how precious the human race is, and how it was overcome with total devastation...so was it right for God's plan for man to come to nothing? No, therefore we say that if this salvation were brought about at the hands of a created human without sin, that is, one not having the substance of evil, someone not of any human lineage, but created just as Adam was - peace be upon him – in order to prepare him to do this work. It could be said then that if any created being were able to save another man from eternal death, then people would have to be slaves to such a creature? This means that people who were commanded to worship God sincerely would become slaves of a being created by God.

So have we fallen into a captivity that even God can not liberate us from, apart from taking it upon himself and redeeming us from all this pain through the blood of his Beloved? Yes, have become captive of our sins, and in the grip of Satan, but God for our sakes came to defeat him, since we are unable to do so ourselves. He did this out of his exceedingly great love for us.

Is God unable to bring this about by simply commanding it? Is he unable to bring it about through another way? Had he been able to, then how can we justify his wisdom, when we say that he chose to suffer things that do not befit His Majesty? If it were the case that he is able to save humans through a different means, then why would he do those things we have mentioned and incur all that effort, as a demonstration of love?

First, if God really wills this, then God's will must be a sufficient reason for us, even if we fail to understand, because God's will is not incompatible with logic at all. The Divine Being is unaffected by pain. But we say that Jesus Christ is truly a human being, and at the same time he is the eternal Word of God; one person in two natures, and two natures in one person. So when we talk about suffering, we do not refer to the glorious Divine Being which is unaffected by pain; but to the weakness of the human nature that he became incarnate in. The Word of God becoming man is not a reduction of the Deity, but the elevation of humanity.

Is God unable to save sinners by any means apart from the death of Jesus Christ? If he was able to do so by another means, but he did not wish to do so, how can we believe in his wisdom and justice? God did not cause an innocent to die instead of a guilty person. In other words he did not force him to undergo death, and indeed did not cause him to be killed against his

will. Rather Jesus – his peace be upon us – underwent death to save people out of his own free will. It is clear that Adam, if he had not sinned, would not have been doomed to die; because of his disobedience humanity was doomed to death. God did not force the Lord Christ to die; but he suffered death voluntarily. He himself says: «I tell you that God the merciful Father loves me because I sacrifice my life in order to receive it again. No one snatches my life away from me, but I sacrifice it of my own free will and when I wish to do so, and God my eternal Father has commanded me to do so, and gave me the right to sacrifice it and the right to receive it back again.» (The Gospel, John 10: 17-18)

So is God not able to save people in another way, and if this is the case, why did he choose to go about it this way? No doubt we agree that man was created for happiness in this life and the afterlife, and no created being can ever gain this happiness, unless he or she is freed from sin and guilt. There is no avoiding the fact that in order for humans to obtain happiness they must have their sins forgiven.

So let us discover the means by which God atones for the sins of human beings, first considering what sin is, and how it can be atoned for.

First, the biggest sin is not giving God his rights, which is to submit to his commands in full obedience. Whoever does not pay this debt to God is a sinner. Moreover, he remains guilty as long as he does not pay back what he has stolen of God's rights. Therefore, each sinner must pay back that honor to God, which he has robbed him of.

We know that it is not fitting of God's justice to forgive sin without punishment of the offender in order to restore his honor, ie, forgiving on the basis of mercy alone. Furthermore this would mean that God does not differentiate between the guilty and not guilty. And God forbid that he wrong his servants!

So, the matter has come to this point: without expiation, that is without any voluntary repayment of debt, it is not possible for God to overlook guilt without punishment. Also, the expiation must be commensurate with sin committed, but what can we pay that is of equal weight to our sin before God? Is it sincere repentance, self-denial, forgiving and showing compassion to others when possible, or obedience to God Almighty? No, the fact is that we owe God all these things, and their performance does not compensate for the violation of His law. How, then do we receive salvation?

If we are aware that we sin when we oppose - on purpose - the commands of God, even in the most trivial things, it is clear to us that we can not atone for our sins unless it is with something more precious than that spoken by the commandment not to commit sin.

There is no doubt that God is merciful, but we are speaking here about that supreme mercy that makes people happy in the afterlife. We have learned that happiness and bliss must not be granted to anyone whose sins are not fully forgiven; and that this forgiveness should not occur, except due to payment of the debt caused by sin, in proportion to the gravity of sin.

But how can people be saved, then? How is it that God, rich with mercy beyond human comprehension, not in a position to have mercy? And how are people saved at the hands of the Lord Christ, his peace be upon us?

It is easy to prove that man was not created to be subject to death; because for a human to be forced to experience death apart from having committed sin is contrary to God's wisdom and justice. And it follows that, if a person never sins they will not be doomed to death. Therefore, if a human did not commit sin, he would have physically moved to a state of immortality. And afterwards, at his resurrection, it must occur in his body, which lived in this world. Because man is the most precious creation of God, God had to complete the work he started in human nature. But this can only come about through complete atonement for sin, which cannot be achieved by any sinner, just as it is impossible for this to occur unless the price paid to God for human sin is greater than the whole universe. Therefore, no one but God can bring about this atonement.

But at the same time only a human can do so, otherwise the one making atonement would be non-human, so it was necessary that the Word of God become human in order to do so. Here, we must investigate how it was possible for the Word of God to become a human being.

It is not possible for the Divine Being (divinity) to be equal to human nature (humanity), so that humanity would not become divinity or divinity humanity; just as we may not mix them so as to produce a third kind which is not fully God and fully man. Because, if we assume the possibility of turning one of them into the other, resulting in the existence of God only, without humanity, or a person only without God...so in order for God to

carry out this task for people, it was necessary to have the same being existing as fully God and fully human, in order to bring about this atonement. Because one cannot do this, indeed should not do this, unless he is truly subsistent in the being of God and in human nature.

Either God grants this humanity to his Word from Adam, or he can create a new person. But if God created a new person, not of the same nature as Adam, this man would not belong to the human family, and would be unable to make atonement on their behalf.

God could create a human in four ways: either by a man and a woman; or without a man and a woman; or a man without a woman; or a woman without a man, which had not been done before. Suffice it to say that the incarnate Word of God must be born of a virgin. It is entirely fitting that sin be dealt with and that salvation come from a woman, just as human sin and condemnation began from a woman. Just as a virgin brought all evil upon the human race, it was appropriate for a virgin to cause every good. Since God created woman from a man alone, it is also appropriate that this man (i.e. the Lord Christ), should come from a woman, born of woman without a man.

This man should not have had to undergo death, since he was without sin, because he is God's Word. But is it right for this man to die knowing that he is all-powerful, in that he is the Word of God? He is able, if he wishes, to sacrifice his life and take it back again. Hence, he is able to avoid death if he wants, and to die, and take it back again. If he wishes to allow someone to kill him, he may be killed; and if he does not want to allow this, they would be unable to kill him.

Now is the time for us to investigate the gift this man gave to God through his incarnation. Because it was not permissible for him to give himself to God, or anything else, for God owns everything, and all creatures are his property. Therefore, this gift must be understood as follows: he emptied himself, or that which he had, for the sake of God, not as something owned by God to whom he owed a debt. Let's see if this came about by him emptying himself or sacrificing his life, or surrendering to death in order to restore God's honor. God Almighty did not ask him to do so as a debt; because, due to his sinlessness, he was not required to die. This man is able to give himself to God through surrendering to death in order to restore God's honor. Therefore, whoever wants to atone for the sin of man should be

able to die when he wants, and should not be one who deserves death because of sin.

There are also many other reasons justifying the necessity of him joining humankind and becoming like them, but without committing sin. This was what he was ordained to in order to redeem mankind, and to restore it through his teaching from death and destruction to the path of life and eternal happiness, completely keeping to the way of holiness; thus he was a model humans in never deviating from the holiness due to God, because of the personal sacrifice he made.

Thus, we see how the mercy of God is compatible with his holiness, for it is higher and greater than anyone can imagine. For what mercy can be greater than the words of God spoken to the sinner condemned to eternal punishment: "Take my Heir, and offer him a sacrifice in your place;" or the words of the Lord Christ: "Take me and redeem your souls." This is a voice that calls us and guides us to believe in the Gospel.
Amen.