

Chapter 17

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

How has the church developed its understanding that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man yet one person?

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The church has historically believed that “Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.”¹ His deity is demonstrated by his own claims supported by his divine attributes and miraculous activities. His humanity is demonstrated by the virgin birth and his human attributes, activities, relationships, trials, and temptations. One peculiarity of his humanity was sinlessness, but this did not make him something other than human. Along with affirming the two natures of Jesus Christ, the church has also insisted that it was necessary for him to be fully God and fully man if he was to accomplish salvation for all of humanity.

In spite of this consistent and widespread belief, the church has had to face, and continues to face, numerous challenges to its view. At times some have denied the full deity of Christ. At other times, the full humanity of Jesus was denied. At still other times, some have viewed him as a kind of mixture of deity and humanity—a “divinehuman” Jesus Christ, so to speak. However, with each challenge, the church has responded with a defense of its historic belief.

When it comes to the person of Jesus Christ, the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, and Protestant churches share a common belief. Although each might have slightly different emphases, a remarkable agreement exists about Jesus Christ. Evangelicals share this common heritage. Thus, while tracing the development of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, this chapter will mark the unity of this belief and contrast it with the various erroneous views that have arisen over the course of the centuries.²

VIEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The New Testament gives many testimonies about the person of Jesus Christ, from those who knew him best, to his enemies, and even from Jesus himself. Both Matthew (1:18–25) and Luke (1:28–35) recount his virgin birth, or better, his virginal conception. Yet even before he was born as the human Jesus of Nazareth, he had existed—indeed, had always existed—as the Word of God (John 1:1). It was this eternal Word who became incarnate (John 1:14). The incarnation involved the divine Son of God leaving his prerogative of glory shared with the Father in heaven, humbling himself, and becoming a man among humans (Phil. 2:6–11). Thus, Jesus Christ was the God-man.

After the witness of the New Testament, the early church continued to bear testimony to this God-man. Ignatius affirmed that “God appeared in human form to bring the newness of eternal life”;³ thus, he encouraged unity in “Jesus Christ, who physically was a descendant of David, who is Son of man and Son of God.”⁴ As the *Letter to Diognetus* explained, the Creator did not send “some subordinate, or angel or ruler or one of those who manage earthly matters, or one of those entrusted with the administration of things in heaven, but the Designer and Creator of the universe himself, by whom he created the heavens ... [and] the earth.... He sent him as God; he sent him as a man to men.”⁵

Tragically, one of the earliest heresies the church faced was the denial of the full humanity of Jesus. Indeed, the apostle John warned against this erroneous view — the refusal to acknowledge “that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh” (1 John 4:1–3). Known as *Docetism*—from the Greek word for *seem* or *appear*—this view held that Jesus only seemed to be a man. The Docetists believed he was a spirit being, only appearing as a human being. Countering this heresy, Ignatius insisted that Jesus Christ was truly human because he experienced the true activities of human beings: “He really was born, who both ate and drank; who really was persecuted under Pontius Pilate; who really was crucified and died ... who, moreover, really was raised from the dead when his Father raised him up.... But if, as some atheists (that is, unbelievers) say, he suffered in appearance only ... why am I in chains? And why do I want to fight with wild beasts? If that is the case, I die for no reason.”⁶ Ignatius’s last point raised the question of why he, a follower of Jesus, was suffering—in reality!—if Jesus had not been human—in reality. But Jesus “is truly of the family of David with respect to human descent, and the Son of God with respect to the divine will and power.”⁷

Docetism became part and parcel of *Gnosticism*, a complex group of movements that focused on a secret *gnosis*, or knowledge, that was reserved for the elite members of its sects. Because Gnosticism drove a wedge between spiritual realities—which are inherently good—and physical realities—which are inherently evil—these movements could not accept the church’s contention that the Son of God took on human flesh. This would have meant that God, who is spiritual and thus good, had a body, which is physical and thus evil. To counter the church’s affirmation, several heretical gospels were circulated by the Gnostics. These included the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Judas*, and the *Gospel of Peter*. Church leaders rejected these writings, which were falsely attributed to apostles.⁸ The early church was united in its strong opposition to Gnosticism and its major tenet Docetism as expressed in these falsely named gospels.

Early Christian writers continually affirmed that Jesus Christ was both fully God and fully man, and that the incarnation did not diminish the deity of the Son of God nor make him a superman. Melito of Sardis described this mystery:

Though he [the Son of God] was incorporeal, he formed for himself a body like ours. He appeared as one of the sheep, yet he remained the Shepherd. He was esteemed a servant, yet he did not renounce being a Son. He was carried about in the womb of Mary, yet he was clothed in the nature of his Father. He walked on the earth, yet he filled heaven. He appeared as an infant, yet he did not discard his eternal nature. He was invested with a body, but it did not limit his divinity. He was esteemed poor, yet he was not divested of his riches. He needed nourishment because he was man, yet he did not cease to nourish the entire world because he is God. He put on the likeness of a servant, yet it did not impair the likeness of his Father. He was everything by his unchangeable nature. He was standing before Pilate, and at the same time he was sitting with his Father. He was nailed on a tree, yet he was the Lord of all things.⁹

While some critics found this kind of talk to be “not merely paradoxical, but also foolish,”¹⁰ Justin Martyr reaffirmed this view of Jesus: “He was the only begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten in a particular manner as the Word and Power by [God], and having afterwards become man through the Virgin.”¹¹ Thus, the early church affirmed that the Son of God had always existed, owing his eternal existence to the Father — thus, he was the only begotten of the Father. Having existed always, he became incarnate as a man through his birth by the Virgin Mary. Simply put, he was “truly man” and he was “truly God.”¹²

The early church insisted that this union of the divine and human was necessary to accomplish the salvation of humanity. Irenaeus countered *Ebionism*, another early heretical movement that denied the incarnation and insisted that Jesus was only a man in whom the presence and power of God worked mightily. Irenaeus wondered: “How can they be saved unless it was God who worked out their salvation upon earth? Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has [first] passed into man?”¹³ He added: “For no one can forgive sins but God alone; while the Lord forgave them and healed men, it is clear that he was himself the Word of God made the Son of man, receiving from the Father the power to forgive sins. He was man and he was God, in order that since as man he suffered for us, so as God he might have compassion on us, and forgive our sins.”¹⁴ On this basis, Novatian urged people to confess Christ to be God: “Whoever does not acknowledge him to be God would lose salvation, which he could not find elsewhere than in Christ God.”¹⁵

Proof of the deity of Jesus Christ consisted in many points. One was the fact that he is worshiped, an activity that is reserved for God alone.¹⁶ Included in this worship is honoring the Son through directing prayers to him, further evidence of Christ’s deity.¹⁷ For biblical support, Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus were marshaled.¹⁸ Jesus’ own testimony and miracles provided additional confirmation.¹⁹ The divine attributes— omnipotence,²⁰ omniscience,²¹ and omnipresence²² — belonging to the Son were also used to shore up support. Other reasons for considering Jesus Christ to be God included his claim to have come from heaven, his granting of immortality, his preexistence, his eternity, and his claim to be one with the Father. From this evidence about the Son, Novatian concluded: “He is God, but God in such a manner as to be the Son, not the Father.”²³ And Hippolytus noted, “He who is over all, the blessed God, has been born; and having been made man, he is still God forever.”²⁴

Tragically, other heresies in the early church denied the full deity of the Son, including the particularly widespread *Arianism*, named for its founder. Arius believed that God, being one and only one, could never share his being with anyone or anything else.²⁵ To do so would mean there are two gods, but by definition God is absolutely unique. Moreover, this eternal and unbegotten God created a Son; thus, the Son is a created being: “[God] begat an only-begotten Son before eternal times.... He made him exist at his own will, unalterable and unchangeable. He was a perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; he was a perfect offspring, but not as one of things begotten.... At the will of God, he was created before times and before ages, and gaining life and being from the Father.”²⁶ Furthermore, God created the entire universe and all that is in it through the Son. Therefore, “We consider that the Son has this prerogative [to be called ‘Son’] over others, and therefore is called Only-begotten, because he alone was brought into existence by God alone, and all other things were created by God through the Son.”²⁷ Despite granting the Son this uniqueness, Arius maintained that the Son is nonetheless a created being.

This idea meant for Arius that there was a time when the Son did not exist: “The Son, being begotten apart from time by the Father, and being created and founded before ages, did not exist before his generation.” Accordingly, the Son “is not eternal or co-eternal or co-unoriginate with the Father.”²⁸ Another implication for Arius was that the Son has a different nature than the Father; that is, the Son is *heteroousios*—of a different substance—not *homoousios*—of the same substance—as the Father.²⁹

Arius developed “biblical” support for his position. As “the firstborn of all creation,” the Son is a created being (Col. 1:15). Moreover, when Jesus prayed to the Father that the disciples “may know you, the only true God,” he admitted that there is only one God, and Jesus is not he (John 17:3). Furthermore, Jesus himself affirmed, “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). Finally, Jesus admits to an imperfection—he lacks omniscience, not knowing the time of his own return — thus indicating that he is not God (Mark 13:32). As for titles such as “God” and “Son of God,” when they are applied by the biblical writers to the Son, they are simply terms of respect and do not indicate that he is divine.³⁰ Proverbs 8:22–31 was cited because several of its expressions —“the Lord created me” and “before the age he established me”—were understood by Arius to refer to the Son. Arius considered this to be a strong case for his view of the Son of God.

The church became alarmed at Arius’s teachings, but it was actually the state that intervened to deal with the situation.³¹ When the emperor Constantine became aware of this theological argument, he feared division within the Roman Empire over which he ruled and so convened a meeting to investigate the matter. The Council of Nicea, held in 325, became the first ecumenical, or general, council because it gathered together representatives from churches throughout the empire to decide a theological issue. Three parties were present at the council: a small pro-Arian party, a small anti-Arian party, and a large undecided party. A creed favorable to Arianism was immediately rejected by the council. Eusebius of Caesarea put forth a baptismal creed recited in his church, and this may have been a basis for the Creed of Nicea that eventually was produced.³²

The Creed of Nicea (325)

We believe ... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and dead.*

Not only did the Council of Nicea affirm the full deity of the Son; it also condemned specific Arian beliefs as heretical.³³ Only two of the more than three hundred theologians attending the council joined Arius in refusing to sign the creed. Arius was banished with the warning to cease and desist from teaching his heretical views. The church would press on with a firmly established belief in the full deity of the Son of God.

In 328 Arius himself avoided further censure by offering a creed that carefully avoided the controversial doctrines about Christ. This eventually led to his reinstatement by the emperor. Also, the change in emperors resulted in the flourishing of the Arian faith.³⁴ Indeed, Jerome later complained, “The whole world groaned and marveled to find itself Arian.”³⁵ As Arianism dominated, Athanasius championed the Nicene faith and found himself exiled five times for his defense of it. He insisted that if salvation is the forgiveness of sins and the imparting of divine life into sinful people, then the Son had to be fully God in order to become human to save.³⁶ This conviction led him to denounce the Arian view of Christ as creature: “If the Word were a creature, how could he have power to undo God’s judgment and to forgive sin, since ... this is God’s prerogative only?”³⁷ Moreover, Athanasius insisted against the Arians that the Son is eternal.³⁸ Furthermore, he twisted an Arian argument to prove that, just as parents give birth to children in their image, so also the Son shares the same nature as the Father.³⁹ Thus, “the Son is different in kind and

different in essence from created things. Instead, he is proper to the Father's essence and is one in nature with him."⁴⁰ Finally, while affirming that the Son is of the same nature as the Father, Athanasius also insisted that the two are distinct from each other. In saying this, he avoided the heresy of *modalism*, or *Sabellianism*, which believed that "Father" and "Son" are merely different names for the one God who revealed himself at different times by those names. As a consequence, this heresy did not hold that the two are distinct persons.⁴¹ Athanasius avoided this error by emphasizing that the unity of nature between Father and Son did not make them the same.⁴² In these ways, Athanasius did much to champion the Nicene faith and developed the early church's theology of the identity of the divine nature and the distinction between the Father and Son.

But it was the moderate majority of the church, which had been represented by the undecided party at the council itself, which eventually reacted to the excesses of Arianism and embraced Athanasius's theology.⁴³ This view ultimately gave way to full support for the Nicene faith through the encouragement of the emperors Gratian and Theodosius I. At the second ecumenical, or general, council of the church—the Council of Constantinople, in 381 — the Creed of Nicea was modified slightly as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The Nicene Creed, as it is called, expressed complete belief in the full deity of the Son. Thus, the Nicene faith was reaffirmed and Arianism was defeated.

The Nicene Creed (381)

We believe ... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all the ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sat down on the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge living and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end.*

While settling the issue of the deity of the Son, the church soon had to face another one. This issue concerned the relationship between the divine nature of Jesus Christ — now firmly established — and his human nature. As we have seen, the early church had taken a strong stand against Docetism and Ebionism, heresies that denied the humanity of Jesus Christ. But while affirming both his deity and his humanity, the church had not yet addressed how those two natures could exist in one person.

While joining in the fight against Arianism, Apollinarius expressed an unusual idea about the incarnate Son. He referred to Christ as the "flesh-bearing God"⁴⁴ and encouraged "a single worship of the Word and the flesh that he assumed."⁴⁵ That is, in taking on human nature, the Word became united with a body only.⁴⁶ His focus on the assumption of flesh revealed Apollinarius's restricted view of the human nature of Christ: It consisted of only a human body but not a human soul. Indeed, his soul was replaced with the divine Word.⁴⁷ In other words, Jesus was not an ordinary human being. And Apollinarius admitted as much, citing Philippians 2:7–8 as support.⁴⁸

The church's reaction to Apollinarius's view was swift and focused on several key points. Gregory of Nazianzus charged it with bordering on Docetism with an understanding of Christ's flesh "as a phantom rather than a reality."⁴⁹ Thus, the humanity assumed by the Word — according to Apollinarianism—was not true human nature. Indeed, if Christ lacked an essential component of human nature—a soul that included the mind and the will—it was incorrect to call him human at all.⁵⁰ The church also denied the premise on which Apollinarianism was founded. It was not impossible for two distinct natures—divine and human—to unite together in one person. Instead, the church affirmed the reality of the unity of God and perfect, complete man in the one person Jesus Christ.⁵¹ Most importantly, the church objected that the Apollinarian God-man failed to accomplish the salvation of humanity. Gregory of Nazianzus set forth this important principle: "If anyone has put his trust in him [Christ] as a man without a human mind, he has really lost his mind, and is completely unworthy of salvation. For that which he [Christ] has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his deity is also saved."⁵² In other words, if Christ took on only part of human nature in his incarnation, he could only save that part. But the entirety of human nature fell in Adam; thus, salvation of the entire person is necessary. This leads to a need for the Savior to be fully human.⁵³ By holding forth a Savior who is only partially human—lacking a human soul, with its mind and will—Apollinarianism offered a salvation that was also partial.

The church would not stand for such a view. In several synods and ultimately at the Council of Constantinople in 381, Apollinarianism was condemned as a heresy. As we will see, the Creed of Chalcedon, written in 451, expressly denied the Apollinarian error. The Savior was a true and complete human being, with body, soul, mind, and will.

Others besides Apollinarius did not see the God-man this way. Another controversy broke out involving Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius was asked to comment on the traditional title for the Virgin Mary — *theotokos*. Literally translated, the word is "God bearer," reflecting the belief that the one who was conceived in the womb and born of Mary was fully divine.⁵⁴ Uncomfortable with affirming *theotokos* without also affirming that Mary was *anthropotokos*—"man-bearing"—or, better still, *christotokos*—"Christ-bearing"—Nestorius found himself in trouble. On the one hand, to deny Mary as *theotokos* would fly in the face of a traditional church belief. On the other hand, Nestorius could not allow that God had a mother, that God was conceived and nurtured in a womb for nine months, that God was born, or that God suffered and died.

Nestorius's reluctance to unreservedly affirm Mary as *theotokos* drew the concerned attention of the church. In particular, Cyril of Alexandria attacked him, pinning on Nestorius a heretical view that he vigorously denied holding.⁵⁵ Two principal tenets of Nestorianism were eventually condemned. The first was the view that Jesus Christ is composed of two distinct and independent persons who work in conjunction with each other.⁵⁶ The second was that a true union of divine and human would have involved God in change and suffering, which is impossible. It also would have made it impossible for Jesus Christ as man to experience true human existence. Cyril responded to this Nestorian position by affirming that in the incarnation, while retaining their respective characteristics,⁵⁷ "the two natures being brought together in a true union, there is of both one Christ and one Son."⁵⁸ Thus, for Cyril, the eternal Son of God personally united with a human nature—body and soul—conceived by the Virgin Mary:⁵⁹ "The holy fathers ... ventured to call the holy virgin the Mother of God [*theotokos*: God bearer], not as if the nature of the Word or his divinity had its beginning from the holy virgin, but because of her was born that holy body with a rational soul, to which the Word being personally united is said to be born according to the flesh."⁶⁰ The church followed Cyril, who brought twelve charges of heresy against Nestorius.⁶¹ These accusations secured his official condemnation at the third ecumenical council of the church, the Council of Ephesus. As we will see, the Creed of Chalcedon, written in 451, expressly denounced the Nestorian error. Jesus Christ is truly the God-man, consisting of a divine nature and a human nature united in one person.⁶²

Having addressed Apollinarianism and Nestorianism, the early church still had one more major heresy to counter. Named after the simple monk Eutychus, Eutychianism combined the two natures of Jesus Christ into one different nature after the incarnation. This view is an example of *monophysitism*, or the belief that Jesus Christ possessed only one nature.⁶³ Of particular concern was Eutychus's belief that before the incarnation, both the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ existed. But after the union of these natures in the incarnation, Jesus Christ possessed only one nature. And somehow this one nature made him different from all other human beings, because Christ was not of the same nature as the rest of humanity.⁶⁴

Once again, the church responded quickly to this challenge to orthodoxy. Two concerns were voiced: First, Eutychianism denied that the incarnate Christ had two distinct natures. According to one interpretation of his view, the divine nature so absorbed the human nature of Christ that essentially the one nature was divine. On another interpretation, the one nature was a fusion or hybrid of the divine and human natures, a "divinehuman" nature, so to speak. In either case, the church objected, insisting that after the incarnation Jesus Christ had two complete natures that maintained their respective properties—the divine nature with its attributes of deity, and the human nature with its attributes of humanity.⁶⁵ The second concern was Eutychus's denial that the human nature of Jesus was the same as that of all human beings.⁶⁶ This cut across the church's belief in Jesus' full humanity. Flavian offered this formula for understanding the incarnation: "We affirm that Christ is of two natures after the incarnation, affirming one Christ, as Son, one Lord, in one subsistence and one person."⁶⁷ This "two nature ... one person" affirmation became the standard way of expressing the reality of the God-man.⁶⁸

The fourth ecumenical council, the Council of Chalcedon, was convened in 451 and composed a new statement of faith, the Chalcedonian Creed. It embraced the "two nature ... one person" formula, which became the standard way of expressing the *hypostatic union*, the union of the divine and human natures in the one person Jesus Christ. Against *Eutychianism* it clearly underscored that Jesus Christ is to be "recognized in two natures, without confusion and without change. The distinction of the natures was in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature were preserved." Also, as we have mentioned, the Creed explicitly denied three earlier heresies with specific wording against their major tenets: Against *Arianism* and its denial of the full deity of the Son, it specifically affirmed that Jesus Christ is "complete in divinity" and "consubstantial—of the same nature—as the Father." Against *Apollinarianism* and its denial of the full humanity of the Word, it expressly affirmed belief in "our Lord Jesus Christ, who is complete in humanity, truly man, having a rational soul and body." Against *Nestorianism* and its view that two distinct and independent persons worked in conjunction with each other in Jesus Christ, it explicitly stated that the "one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten" is to be "recognized in two natures, without division and without separation. They come together in one person and one existence, not as parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ."

The Chalcedonian Creed (451)

Following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in divinity and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a rational soul and body; of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten [born], for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the virgin, the God-bearer [*theotokos*]; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence [hypostasis], not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ.*

The settlement reached at Chalcedon established the church's Christology to a large degree. Certainly the church in the Western part of the empire fully embraced the Chalcedonian formula.⁶⁹ But some from the church in the East reacted negatively to it. This development was due in part to the expression "two natures" sounding very much like Nestorianism. Thus, following the Council of Chalcedon, monophysitism resurfaced and challenged the creed's affirmation of two natures. Monophysitism was officially condemned by the church at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553.⁷⁰ Not until the modern period would any serious heresy arise to challenge this orthodox Christology.

VIEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The medieval period witnessed little in terms of new developments in Christology. Rather, the church repeated and reinforced its traditional belief as that had been set down at the councils of Nicea, Constantinople (I, II, and III), Ephesus, and Chalcedon. Anselm reasoned about the nature of Jesus Christ as he considered the issue of *Why God Became Man*. Starting from a view of sin as robbing God of his honor, and holding that humanity cannot give an adequate satisfaction to God to restore his honor, Anselm concluded that the only one who can save humanity is one who is both God and man: “No one can pay [this satisfaction] except God, and no one ought to pay except a man: it is necessary that a God-man should pay it.”⁷¹ Anselm noted that this reality could not be a divine nature becoming a human nature, nor a human nature becoming a divine nature, nor these two natures merely joining together. Rather, it required one who was both fully divine and fully human: “Given ... that it is necessary for a God-man to be found in whom the wholeness of both natures is kept intact, it is no less necessary for these two natures to combine, as wholes, in one person, in the same way as the body and the rational soul coalesce into one human being. For otherwise it cannot come about that one and the same person may be perfect God and perfect man.”⁷² Thus, reasoning from his doctrine of salvation, Anselm affirmed the traditional belief in the God-man.

Interacting with the various creeds and citing the architects of the historic position of the church, Thomas Aquinas also echoed the traditional belief. He affirmed that after the incarnation, the person of Jesus Christ was composed of two natures.⁷³ He further rehearsed the two historic heresies of Eutychianism and Nestorianism⁷⁴ and centered the historic church’s Christology between these two positions.⁷⁵ Aquinas also summarized the church’s view on the *communication of properties*. This issue centered on whether it is proper to speak of the human experiences of Christ while referring to him as God, and whether it is proper to speak of the divine experiences of Christ while referring to him as man. Some in the church insisted that care must be taken to refer to the man when speaking of Christ’s human experiences—in his human nature, Jesus was weak and tired, hungry and thirsty, tempted and subject to death—and to refer to God when speaking of Christ’s divine experiences—in his divine nature, he was all-powerful, eternal, and unchangeable. But this was not the church’s view, because “words which are said of Christ either in his divine or human nature may be said either of God or of man.... And hence of the man may be said what belongs to the divine nature, as of a hypostasis [person] of the divine nature; and of God may be said what belongs to the human nature, as of a hypostasis [person] of human nature.”⁷⁶ Aquinas did not affirm that the divine nature of Jesus Christ somehow became human, so that it was weak and tired, hungry and thirsty, temptable and mortal. Nor did he affirm that the human nature somehow became divine, so that it was all-powerful, eternal, and unchangeable. Rather, he meant that while the two natures maintained their respective properties, the church is still right in saying, for example, “they ... crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8), and calling Mary *theotokos*, the “God bearer.” The divine nature did not die, and Mary only contributed the human nature of Jesus. Nevertheless, what is said of either nature may be said of either God or man, because both “God” and “man” refer to the one person of Jesus Christ.⁷⁷ Thus, Aquinas reaffirmed the church’s historic view of Jesus Christ.

VIEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE REFORMATION AND POST-REFORMATION

The story was similar during the period of the Reformation, though controversy did flare up between Martin Luther and Huldrych Zwingli. Arguing against each other's view of the Lord's Supper, each charged the other with heresy about Jesus Christ.

At issue was the presence of Christ during the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Luther held that Christ is present everywhere, taking this to demonstrate "at least in one way how God could bring it about that Christ is in heaven and his body in the Lord's Supper at the same time."⁷⁸ But how could the human body of Christ be everywhere present? A key point for Luther was that in the incarnation, "since the divinity and humanity are one person in Christ, the Scriptures ascribe to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to humanity, and vice versa."⁷⁹ This meant that Jesus Christ, including his human nature—which in and of itself is localized in one space and not present in every space—is ubiquitous, or everywhere present, in virtue of its union with the divine nature.⁸⁰ Thus, Luther held to the communication of properties in a strict sense. Specifically, the human body of Christ had picked up the divine property of being omnipresent, receiving this characteristic from its union with his divine nature.

For holding this belief, Luther was charged by his opponents with the ancient heresy of Eutychianism.⁸¹ Zwingli accused Luther of mingling the two natures into one essence.⁸² Calvin also complained that Luther's view destroyed the human body of Christ and eliminated the difference between his divine and human nature.⁸³ Of course, Luther rejected this charge, clarifying: "We do not say that divinity is humanity, or that the divine nature is the human nature, which would be confusing the natures into one essence. Rather, we merge the two distinct natures into one single person, and say: 'God is man and man is God.'"⁸⁴

Huldrych Zwingli took a very different position than Luther on the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. He denied that the Lord was physically present in the elements. "According to its proper essence, the body of Christ is truly and naturally seated at the right hand of the Father. It cannot therefore be present in this way in the Supper."⁸⁵ Zwingli strengthened this point by focusing on the promise of Christ in John 17:11 and its fulfillment in his ascension: "It is the human nature [of Jesus] which leaves the world.... [A]s regards a natural, essential and localized presence the humanity is not here, for it has left the world."⁸⁶ From this line of reasoning, Zwingli concluded that the physical body of Christ cannot be present in the Eucharistic elements. Thus, he stood at odds with Luther.

For his apparent separation between the human nature and divine nature of Christ, Zwingli was charged by his opponents with the ancient heresy of Nestorianism.⁸⁷ Little came of this exchange of accusations, and neither Luther nor Zwingli was ever formally charged with heretical Christology. But their sensitivity and responses to the charges demonstrated their profound respect for the early church's creeds as neither wanted to be at odds with these historic confessions about the God-man.

So it was with John Calvin, whose Christology was fully traditional, echoing Anselm's thought in *Why God Became Man*⁸⁸ and relying on the Chalcedonian formula.⁸⁹ He also affirmed the communication of properties,⁹⁰ without allowing this to result in the errors of Nestorianism and Eutychianism, both of which he condemned.⁹¹

Those who followed Luther, Calvin, and the other Reformers continued to embrace and defend this traditional view of Jesus Christ. The Lutheran *Formula of Concord* opened with a statement affirming the historic creeds of the church and recognizing them as the standard against which all heresies receive their condemnation.⁹² Similarly, on the Reformed side, the major Calvinist confessions continued to uphold the church's historic Christology.⁹³ However, Lutheran and Reformed theologies disagreed about the communication of properties: "The Reformed theologians ... deny that, by the hypostatic union, the properties of the divine nature have been truly and really imparted to the human nature of Christ ... so that the human nature of our Savior is truly omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient."⁹⁴ According to the Lutheran position, however: "The majesty of the omnipresence of the Word was communicated to the human nature of Christ in the first moment of the personal union, in consequence of which, along with the divine nature, it [the human nature] is now omnipresent, in the state of exaltation, in a true, real, substantial and effective presence."⁹⁵ Besides this one peculiarity, both Lutheran and Reformed theologians in the post-Reformation period embraced and defended the church's historic position on Jesus Christ, the God-man.

VIEWS OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE MODERN PERIOD

The Lutheran communication of properties provoked a reaction in some modern theologians: The incarnation was not about what the church had historically imagined it was, but about the *kenosis*, or self-emptying, of the divine when the Son of God became a man. A chief proponent of this view was Gottfried Thomasius (1802–1875), who explained the incarnation “as the self-limitation of the Son of God.”⁹⁶ He reasoned that the Son could not have maintained his full divinity during the incarnation.⁹⁷ Although a Lutheran theologian, Thomasius rejected the Lutheran explanation of the communication of properties.⁹⁸ In his mind, the only way for a true incarnation to take place was if the Son “gave himself over into the form of human limitation,”⁹⁹ which involved a divine self-emptying.¹⁰⁰ Biblical support for this was found in Philippians 2:6–8, particularly the expression “he emptied himself” (v. 7).¹⁰¹ Thomasius thus defined *kenosis*: “It is the exchange of the one form of existence for the other; Christ emptied himself of the one and assumed the other. It is thus an act of free self-denial, which has as its two moments the renunciation of the divine condition of glory, due him as God, and the assumption of the humanly limited and conditioned pattern of life.”¹⁰²

Thomasius specified the divestiture of the divine attributes of the Son of God. He did not give up his immanent divine attributes (which characterize God as he is in himself and as the three members of the Godhead are in relation to each other): “absolute power, truth, holiness and love ... which as such are inseparable from the essence of God, and no more does he, as the incarnate one, withhold their use.”¹⁰³ But he did divest himself of his relative divine attributes (which characterize God as he is in relation to the world): omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.¹⁰⁴ Thus, in the incarnation, the Son did not—indeed, could not—empty himself of his immanent divine attributes, for he would have ceased to be God. Rather, he emptied himself of the relative divine attributes, not just giving up the use of his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, but not even possessing them during his incarnation.¹⁰⁵

Following his state of humiliation, the Son of God experienced exaltation, “a condition of unlimited freedom and absolute powerfulness of life; as the exalted one he must now be in full possession of the divine glory of which he divested himself.... [W]e say that the glorified Christ is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.”¹⁰⁶ This kenotic Christology originated by Thomasius attracted some followers, but most Christians considered it to be at odds with the Chalcedonian understanding of the incarnation. It would be revived and rendered more sophisticated by some later theologians, though it has never been considered to be in accordance with orthodox Christology.

Beyond this kenotic model, the modern period witnessed the undoing of the church’s historic consensus on Christology. Friedrich Schleiermacher reinterpreted religion in terms of a feeling of absolute dependence on the world’s spirit, which he called God. In keeping with his theological realignment, Schleiermacher presented Jesus as the ideal in whom this God-consciousness reached its apex: “His particular spiritual content cannot ... be explained by the content of the human environment to which he belonged, but only by the universal source of spiritual life in virtue of a creative divine act in which, as an absolute maximum, the conception of man as the subject of the God-consciousness comes to completion.”¹⁰⁷ In keeping with this ideal, Schleiermacher revised the sinlessness of Christ as the gradual yet complete submission of his self-consciousness to his God-consciousness: “No impression was taken up merely sensuously into the innermost consciousness and elaborated apart from God-consciousness into an element of life, nor did any action ... ever proceed solely from the sense-nature and not from God-consciousness.”¹⁰⁸ For Schleiermacher, “The Redeemer, then, is like all men in virtue of the identity of human nature, but distinguished from them all the constant potency of his God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in him.”¹⁰⁹ More specifically, “to ascribe to Christ an absolutely powerful God-consciousness, and to attribute to him an existence of God in him, are exactly the same thing.”¹¹⁰ In other words, Christ fully experienced absolute dependence on God-consciousness, and this reality was what rendered him unique yet similar to all human beings in pursuit of such consciousness.

Schleiermacher’s reformulated Christology influenced many theologians, who further revised the doctrine, even though the quest for the historical Jesus by liberal Protestants actually began some decades earlier.¹¹¹ Hermann Samuel Reimarus drove a wedge between what the real Jesus of Nazareth was about and what his disciples dreamed and finally wrote that he was about.¹¹² Following in Schleiermacher’s footsteps, David Friedrich Strauss revised the Bible as myth and then, having dismissed the portrait of Jesus painted by the New Testament authors, reinterpreted Christ along the theological lines of Schleiermacher’s ideal man.¹¹³ Martin Kähler erected a dichotomy between the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ of Scripture, maintaining: “We do not possess any sources for a ‘life of Jesus’ that a historian can accept as reliable and adequate.”¹¹⁴ Accordingly, “the risen Lord is not the historical Jesus *behind* the Gospels, but the Christ of the apostolic preaching, of the *whole* New Testament.... Therefore, we speak of the historic Christ of the Bible.”¹¹⁵ In the view of Albert Schweitzer, Jesus was steeped in the eschatological doctrine of his time. Fueled by this great expectation, Jesus died by attempting to bring in the kingdom of God violently, yet his hopes for this eschatological event were dashed to pieces:

In the knowledge that he is the coming Son of Man, Jesus lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution that is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and he throws himself upon it. Then it does turn; and it crushes him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, he has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great man, who was strong enough to think of himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to his purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is his victory and his reign.¹¹⁶

Rudolph Bultmann erected a dichotomy between the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the “kerygmatic” Christ of faith, asserting that the former was relatively unimportant, and the latter was what really mattered for the church. According to Bultmann, “I do indeed think that we can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, [and] are moreover fragmentary and often legendary.”¹¹⁷ The “kerygmatic” Christ of faith—the one who was preached by the first disciples—is the product of the early Christian community and is covered with mythology. This encrustation demands that the church engage in *de-mythologizing*,¹¹⁸ or removing the mythological elements so as to recover the deeper, existential meaning of the New Testament portrait of Jesus.¹¹⁹

Rebuffing demythologization, N. T. Wright sought to construct a portrait of Jesus by locating him within first-century Palestinian culture. He averred: “Jesus belonged thoroughly within the complex and multifarious Judaism of his day.... Thus his praxis, his stories and his symbols all pointed to his belief and claim that Israel’s god was fulfilling his promises and purposes in and through what he himself was doing.... He was, and remains, ‘Jesus the Jew.’”¹²⁰ As for the goals of this Jesus, Wright offered: “He aimed, then, to reconstitute Israel around himself, as the true returned-from-exile people; to achieve the victory of Israel’s god over the evil that had enslaved his people; and, somehow, to bring about the greatest hope of all, the victorious return of YHWH to Zion.”¹²¹ Intentionally focusing on these aims, Jesus engaged in his itinerant prophetic ministry, discipled the Twelve and some others, and proclaimed the kingdom of God. Beyond these, however, Jesus had a specific vocation, an obvious calling for any would-be first-century Jewish Messiah: to “go to Jerusalem, fight the battle against the forces of evil, and get yourself enthroned as the rightful king. Jesus, in fact, adopted precisely this strategy. But ... he had in mind a different battle, a different throne.”¹²²

With this vocation in mind, Jesus went to Jerusalem to die, and he initiated this climactic event by instituting two symbols: the cleansing of the temple and the institution of the Lord’s Supper: “The first symbol said: the present system is corrupt and recalcitrant. It is ripe for judgment. But Jesus is the Messiah, the one through whom YHWH, the God of all the world, will save Israel and thereby the world. And the second symbol said: this is how the true exodus will come about. This is how evil will be defeated. This is how sins will be forgiven.”¹²³ According to Wright, Jesus certainly calculated that his words and actions would incense the Jewish leaders and eventually end in his execution by the Romans. But Jesus was primarily motivated by “the unshakable belief ... that if he went this route, if he fought this battle, the long night of Israel’s exile would be over at last, and the new day for Israel and the world really would dawn once and for all.”¹²⁴ Thus, Wright situated Jesus solidly in his first-century Palestinian Jewish world to understand his teachings, his miracles, his kingdom stories, and his sufferings and death in that context.

Other theologians reworked classical Christology in accordance with other criteria. In his *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, Walter Rauschenbusch applied higher critical methods to discover the “revolutionary” Jesus.¹²⁵ Marcus Borg revised Christ as a Spirit-filled, wise countercultural reformer.¹²⁶ John Dominic Crossan presented Jesus as a “peasant Jewish Cynic.”¹²⁷ In summary, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed many attempts to reimagine Jesus as historic Christology was being overturned.

Further attacks against traditional Christology were launched. John Hick, in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, insisted that to affirm “that the historical Jesus of Nazareth was also God is as devoid of meaning as to say that this circle drawn with a pencil on paper is also a square.”¹²⁸ The obvious charge was that the incarnation is incoherent; to affirm that Jesus Christ is God is to be logically inconsistent. This must be the case because the incarnation claims, for example, that the divine attributes of immutability and omnipotence, and the human attributes of mutability and limitation of power, exist together in one being. Hick and the others argued that because the human and divine attributes are mutually exclusive, they could never exist together in the person of Jesus Christ. To affirm such a thing is absurd and incoherent.

The Problem of Mutually Exclusive Attributes, according to *The Myth of God Incarnate*

The person of Jesus Christ is

as to his humanity

finite

caused to exist

dependent

mutable

spatial (local)

temporal (has a beginning)

limited in knowledge

limited in power, strength

as to his deity

infinite

uncaused existence

independent

immutable

nonspatial (omnipresent)

nontemporal (eternal)

omniscient

omnipotent

Evangelicals did not allow this charge of incoherence and inconsistency to go unanswered. In his *The Logic of God Incarnate*, Thomas Morris offered “the two-minds view of Christ”¹²⁹ in his incarnation, as an attempt to deal with one aspect of the apparent inconsistency: With regard to knowledge, how can Christ be limited in knowledge while at the same time be omniscient? Specifically, Morris’s theory proposed “two distinct ranges of consciousness” in the person of Jesus Christ: “There is first what we can call the eternal mind of God the Son with its distinctively divine consciousness, whatever that might be, encompassing the full scope of omniscience. And in addition there is a distinctly earthly consciousness that came into existence and grew and developed ... [and that] was thoroughly human, Jewish, and first-century Palestinian in nature.”¹³⁰ Morris proposed that “the divine mind of God the Son contained, but was not contained by, his earthly mind, or range of consciousness. That is to say, there was what can be called an asymmetrical accessing relationship between the two minds.” Accordingly, “the divine mind had full and direct access to the earthly, human experience resulting from the incarnation, but the earthly consciousness did not have such full and direct access to the content of the overarching omniscience proper to the Logos [the Son of God], but only such access, on occasion, as the divine mind allowed it to have.”¹³¹ This model allowed for intellectual growth of Jesus in his humanity (e.g., Jesus “grew in wisdom”; Luke 2:52). It also accounted for the “unusual” insights into people and situations that distinguished Jesus from other human beings (e.g., Matt. 9:4; John 1:45–51; 6:64; 16:19). Furthermore, the model provided an explanation for such a phenomenon as Jesus not being aware of the time of his own return (Mark 13:32). Thus, Morris affirmed, along the lines of historic Christology, that Jesus Christ was fully human, but not merely human; he was also fully divine. In the incarnation there is one person Jesus Christ with two natures, human and divine, and hence two ranges of consciousness. And Morris’s model provided a way to understand the incarnation such that the charge of incoherence fails.

Still, evangelical responses did not stem the tide of attacks against historic Christology; two assaults were particularly virulent. The first came from the Jesus Seminar, which studied the sayings of Jesus. It attempted to apply certain criteria to the Gospels, including the noncanonical *Gospel of Thomas* (see below), in order to discern what Jesus certainly said or what he may have said, and then to distinguish that from what Jesus probably did not say or certainly did not say.¹³² Applying the criteria,¹³³ the seminar reached a surprising conclusion: “Eighty-two percent of the words ascribed to Jesus in the gospels were not actually spoken by him, according to the Jesus Seminar.”¹³⁴ Evangelical responses to the Jesus Seminar decried its theologically liberal bias, its criteria for assessing the sayings of Jesus, and its alleged scientific methodology.

The second thematic variation was the return of Gnostic Christologies, a development that gained impetus by means of a trendy fascination with early Gnostic documents such as the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Judas*. As noted previously, the early church strongly denounced such Gospels because they were steeped in Docetism. In an important work entitled *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Walter Bauer challenged the notion that early Christianity was divided into an “orthodox” group and various “heretical groups,” the latter holding to unbiblical views of Jesus. According to Bauer, it was possible that “certain manifestations of Christian life that the authors of the church renounce as ‘heresies’ originally had not been such at all, but, at least here and there, were the only form of the new religion—that is, for those regions they were simply ‘Christianity.’ The possibility also exists that their adherents constituted the majority, and that they looked down with hatred and scorn on the orthodox, who for them were the false believers.”¹³⁵ If Bauer’s thesis was correct, then these Gnostic gospels and their Gnostic Christologies were not heretical; indeed, they should play an important role in the modern church’s conviction about Christ.

Accordingly, in the latest development, some saw these Gospels as credible witnesses to Jesus of Nazareth that must be incorporated with the canonical Gospels into the church’s Christology.¹³⁶ As Stephen Patterson asserted with regard to the *Gospel of Thomas*, “As an independent reading of the Jesus tradition, it provides us with a crucial and indispensable tool for gaining critical distance on the synoptic [Gospels] tradition, which has so long dominated the Jesus discussion.”¹³⁷ But evangelicals disputed this notion. Norm Perrin demonstrated that the *Gospel of Thomas* was a late second-century document written in Coptic, not a first-century Gospel about Jesus written in Greek. Perrin concluded: “We can no longer hold to our romantic vision of *Thomas* as a naïve, artless compiler of Jesus sayings. More importantly, we can no longer envisage the collection as an early and therefore reliable witness of the Jesus tradition.”¹³⁸ Although on a more sophisticated level, modern evangelicals followed Christians in the early church in dismissing these Gnostic Christologies as false.

In addition to defending the church’s traditional formulation, evangelicals made significant contributions to advancing the doctrine of Christ. Some of these constructive works included Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*;¹³⁹ Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant*;¹⁴⁰ Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son*;¹⁴¹ Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler, eds., *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective*;¹⁴² Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*;¹⁴³ Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*;¹⁴⁴ and Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place*.¹⁴⁵ Through these and other similar efforts, evangelicals continue to express and defend the church’s historical doctrine of Jesus Christ.

1. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 2000), 529.

2. My thanks to Tyler Wittman for his help on this chapter.

3. Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 19, in Holmes, 150; ANF, 1:57.

4. *Ibid.*, 20, in Holmes, 151; ANF, 1:58. Ignatius even concluded one of his letters: “I bid you farewell always in our God Jesus Christ.” Ignatius, *Letter to Polycarp*, 8, in Holmes, 201; ANF, 1:96.

5. *Letter to Diognetus*, 7, in Holmes, 543–45; ANF, 1:27.

6. Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians*, 9–10, in Holmes, 165; ANF, 1:69–70.

7. Ignatius, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 1, in Holmes, 185; ANF, 1:86.

8. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.12.2, in *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Christian Frederick Cruse (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 231–32.

9. Melito of Sardis, *From the Discourse on the Cross*, in ANF, 8:756. The text has been rendered clearer. Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.16.6, in ANF, 1:443.

10. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, 48, in ANF, 1:219.

11. *Ibid.*, 105, in ANF, 1:251.

12. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.6.7, in ANF, 1:469.

13. *Ibid.*, 4.33.7, in ANF, 1:507.

14. *Ibid.*, 5.17.3, in ANF, 1:545. The text has been rendered clearer.

15. Novatian, *Treatise Concerning the Trinity*, 12, in ANF, 5:621.

16. Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 13, in ANF, 1:166–67; *Second Apology*, 13, in ANF, 1:193.

17. Origen, *Against Celsus*, 5.4, in ANF, 4:544. As Origen explained: “We worship with all our power the one God, and his only Son, the Word and the Image of God, by prayers and supplications; and we offer our petitions to the God of the universe through his only begotten Son. To the Son we first present them, and beseech [plead with] him, as ‘the propitiation for our sins,’ and our High Priest, to offer our desires, and sacrifices, and prayers, to the Most High. Our faith, therefore, is directed to God through his Son, who strengthens it in us.... We honor the Father when we admire his Son.” *Ibid.*, 8.13, in ANF, 4:644.

18. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 76, in ANF, 1:237.

19. Origen, *Against Celsus*, 8.9; 8.12, in ANF, 4:642–44.

20. Origen, *First Principles*, 1.2.10, 12, in ANF, 4:250–51.
21. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 1.27, in ANF, 10:313.
22. Origen argued that the Son was never confined to any one place: “This Son of God, in respect of the Word being God, which was in the beginning with God, no one will logically suppose to be contained in any place.... It is distinctly shown that the divinity of the Son of God was not shut up in some place.... We are not to suppose that all the majesty of his divinity was confined within the limits of his slender body, so that all the ‘Word’ of God ... was either torn away from the Father, or restrained and confined within the narrowness of his bodily person, and is not to be considered to have operated anywhere else.” Origen, *First Principles*, 4.1.28–30, in ANF, 4:377. The text has been rendered clearer. Biblical evidence cited by Origen included Matt. 18:20 and 28:20. Origen, *Against Celsus*, 2.9, in ANF, 4:434.
23. Novatian, *Treatise on the Trinity*, 15, in ANF, 5:624–25.
24. Hippolytus, *Against the Heresy of One Noetus*, 6, in ANF, 5:225. The text has been rendered clearer.
25. “We acknowledge one God, the only unbegotten, the only eternal, the only one without beginning, the only true, the only one who has immortality, the only wise, the only good, the only sovereign.” Arius, *Letter to Alexander*, in *NPNF*², 4: 458. The text has been rendered clearer.
26. *Ibid.* The text has been rendered clearer.
27. Athanasius, *Defense of the Nicene Council*, 3.7, in *NPNF*², 4:154. The text has been rendered clearer.
28. Arius, *Letter to Alexander*, in *NPNF*², 4:458. The text has been rendered clearer.
29. Arius believed that if the Father and the Son shared the same essence, and the Son received that nature from the Father, it would mean that God is “compounded and divisible and alterable and material.” But by definition, God is not like that. *Ibid.*
30. Thus, Athanasius complained about the Arians calling Christ the “Son of God”: “What is this but to deny that he is very Son, and only in name to call him Son at all? Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 1.5.15, in *NPNF*², 4:315.
31. Prior to the Council of Nicea, early in 325, a synod met in Antioch and set forth the belief that Christ was divine and anathematized the view of Arius. The statement of belief described Christ as “not made but properly an offspring, but begotten in an ineffable, indescribable manner.” Indeed, he “exists eternally and did not at one time not exist.” The section of condemnation was directed against “those who say or think or preach that the Son of God is a creature or has come into being or has been made and is not truly begotten, or that there was a then [time] when he did not exist.” Creed of Antioch, 9, 13, in Pelikan, 1:200–201.
- * Creed of Nicea, in Schaff, 2:60; Bettenson, 27–28. The Creed of Nicea was crafted to express the full deity of Christ in contrast with the Arian belief. The affirmations that Christ was “begotten of the Father,” “only-begotten,” and “begotten not made” were intended to distinguish the existence of the Son from that of all creatures: They all had been made, but the Son is not a created being. In a completely unique way, the Father had begotten the Son, and begotten him alone. As Eusebius of Caesarea later explained: “[We allowed the expression] ‘begotten, not made,’ since the Council alleged that ‘made’ was an appellative common to the other creatures which came into existence through the Son, to whom the Son had no likeness. Therefore ... he was not a work resembling the things which through him came into existence, but was of an essence which is too high for the level of any work.” Eusebius of Caesarea, *Letter 6*, in *NPNF*², 4:75. It should be noted that Athanasius appended this letter to his *Defense of the Nicene Council* (written about 350). Similarly, the statements that the Son is “of the substance of the Father” and “of one substance with the Father” were intended to set off the Son from all creatures and to affirm that he shares the same nature as the Father. Again, Eusebius explained: “‘One in essence with the Father’ suggests that the Son of God bears no resemblance to the originated creatures, but that to his Father alone who begat him is he in every way assimilated, and that he is not of any other existence and essence, but from the Father.” Eusebius of Caesarea, *Letter 7*, *NPNF*², 4:75–76. Furthermore, being *homoousios*—of the same essence—with the Father means that the Son is fully God. As Athanasius later commented: “They [the council participants] meant that the Son was from the Father, and not merely like, but the same in likeness ... since the generation of the Son from the Father is not according to the nature of men, and not only like, but also inseparable from the essence of the Father, and he and the Father are one.” Athanasius, *Defense of the Nicene Council*, 5.20, in *NPNF*², 4:163–64. Indeed, the council affirmed that the Son is “God of God, light from light, true God of true God.”
- * Nicene Creed, in Schaff, 2:58–59; Bettenson, 28–29.
- * Creed of Chalcedon, in Schaff, 2:62–63; Bettenson, 56.
32. According to Bettenson, this was the case. Bettenson, 27. But Kelly takes issue with this view. Kelly, 229.
33. Using the words and expressions of Arianism, the council anathematized, or condemned, the following: “And those who say, ‘There was [a time] when he did not exist,’ and ‘Before he was begotten he did not exist,’ and that ‘He came into existence from nothingness,’ or those who allege that the Son of God is ‘of another substance or essence’ or ‘created’ or ‘changeable’ or ‘alterable,’ these [people] the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.” Creed of Nicea, in Bettenson, 28. The text has been rendered clearer.
34. Although Constantine was firmly on the side of the Nicene faith, one of his sons, Constantius, was firmly on the side of Arianism while his other son, Constans, followed in his father’s footsteps. Thus, when Constantine died in 337 and the empire was divided into East and West, Constantius encouraged Arianism in the Eastern part of the empire while Constans reinforced the Nicene faith in the western part. After the death of Constans in 350, Constantius took over the entire empire. As a result, the Arian faith flourished.
35. Jerome, *Dialogue against Luciferianos*, 19, in Kelly, 238. The bans against Arianism were lifted and an extreme view of the Son’s subordination to the Father reigned. Shockingly, it was argued that “it is the Catholic doctrine that there are two persons of the Father and the Son, and that the Father is greater and that the Son is subordinated to the Father.” Second Creed of Sirmium, in Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Synod*, 11, in Kelly, 285–86. Also, the Nicene affirmation that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father was outlawed. Indeed, some Arians insisted that the Son is *anomoios* — unlike — the Father because he is unbegotten, while the Son is begotten.
36. Athanasius, *Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia*, 3.51, in *NPNF*², 4:477.
37. Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 2.67, in *NPNF*², 4:385. The text has been rendered clearer.
38. For Athanasius, the Scriptures prohibit “in every light the Arian heresy, and signify the eternity of the Word, and that he is not foreign but proper to the Father’s essence. For when has anyone ever seen a light without radiance? Or who dares to say that the expression can be different from the substance? Or has not a man himself lost his mind who even entertains the thought that God was ever without his Word and Wisdom?” Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 2.32, in *NPNF*², 4:365. The text has been rendered clearer.
39. Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 1.26, in *NPNF*², 4:322.
40. *Ibid.*, 1.58, in *NPNF*², 4:340. The text has been rendered clearer. Indeed, Athanasius affirmed that “the divinity of the Father is identical with the divinity of the Son” and, conversely, that “the divinity of the Son is the divinity of the Father.” Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 1.61; 3.41, in *NPNF*², 4:341, 416. The text has been rendered clearer.
41. For an extended discussion of this, see chap. 11 on the Trinity.
42. Athanasius, *Four Discourses against the Arians*, 3.4, in *NPNF*², 4:395.
43. At first they accepted a compromise view focusing on the word *homoiousios* in place of the key Nicene word *homoousios* (note the change of one letter). Although not ready to agree that the Son was *homoousios* — of the same essence as the Father—they did affirm that the Son was *homoiousios*—of a similar essence as the Father. As Cyril of Jerusalem stated of the Son, “In all things the Son is like him who begat him.” Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, 11.18, in *NPNF*², 7:69.
44. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letter 102*, in *NPNF*², 7:444.
45. Apollinarius, *Detailed Confession of Faith*, 28. Hans Lietzmann, *Appollinaris von Laodicea und Seine Schule: Texte und Untersuchungen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1904), 177, cited in Pelikan, 1:239.
46. Apollinarius’s biblical basis was a woodenly literal understanding of John 1:14. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letter 101*, in *NPNF*², 7: 442. Gregory complained that Apollinarius had misinterpreted the verse. “They who reason in this way do not know that this expression is a synecdoche, a part of speech that describes the whole by referring to a part of it.” The text has been rendered clearer. In other words, “flesh” in John 1:14 did indeed refer to the physical body assumed by Jesus Christ, but it stood for the whole of human nature—soul, mind, will and body— not just part of it, that Christ took on.
47. Apollinarius, *Fragment 107*, in Lietzmann, *Appollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule*, 232; cf. Kelly, 291–92.
48. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letter 102*, in *NPNF*², 7:444.
49. *Ibid.*
50. “But if he [Christ] has a soul, and yet is without a [human] mind, how is he man, for man is not a mindless animal? ... But, says [Apollinarius], the deity took the place of the human mind. How does this relate to me? For deity joined to flesh alone is not man.” Gregory of Nazianzus, *Letter 101*, in *NPNF*², 7: 440. The text has been rendered clearer.
51. As Gregory affirmed: “We do not sever the humanity from the deity, but we lay down as a sure doctrine the unity and identity of the person. From of old he was not man but God, and the only Son before all ages, unmingled with body or anything physical. However, in these last days he has also assumed manhood [human nature] for our salvation: possible [able to suffer] in his flesh, but impassible in his deity; limited as to space in the body, but omnipresent in the Spirit. At one and the same time he is earthly and heavenly, tangible and intangible, comprehensible and incomprehensible. The purpose was that by one and the same person, who was perfect man and also God, the entire humanity fallen through sin might be recreated.” *Ibid.*, in *NPNF*², 7:439. The text has been rendered clearer.
52. *Ibid.*, in *NPNF*², 7:440. The text has been rendered clearer.
53. *Ibid.*
54. It is important to note the historical context in which this title of Mary was affirmed. As originally intended, *theotokos*, or “God bearer,” expressed a truth about Jesus Christ himself and had little to do with Mary. Only later, when the idea of *theotokos* became “Mother of God,” was the title used to express something about Mary, singling her out for a high status in the

church. Thus, evangelicals can and should affirm that Mary is theotokos, in the historical sense that the one whom she conceived and gave birth to — Jesus Christ — was fully God.

55. I underscore the fact that Nestorius himself denied the beliefs for which Cyril of Alexandria and the church condemned him. Partly due to poor communication on the part of Nestorius, who was intent on stirring up controversy, and partly due to church politics, he became associated with a position that was clearly not his own.

56. Cyril expressed this idea as he distanced the church from the alleged Nestorian view: “We do not divide the God from the man, nor separate him into parts, as though the two natures were mutually united in him [Jesus Christ] only through a sharing of dignity and authority ... neither do we give separately to the Word of God the name Christ and the same name separately to a different one born of a woman; but we know only one Christ, the Word from God the Father with his own flesh.” Cyril of Alexandria, *The Third Letter of Cyril to Nestorius* (or *The Epistle of Cyril to Nestorius with the 12 Anathemas*), in *NPNF*², 14:202. Thus, Nestorius’s idea of God and man working in conjunction was strongly denounced by the church.

57. “Although he assumed flesh and blood, he remained what he was, God in essence and in truth. Neither do we say that his flesh was changed into the nature of divinity, nor that the ineffable nature of the Word of God was laid aside for the nature of flesh [human nature]; for he is unchanged and absolutely unchangeable, being the same always.” Ibid.

58. Cyril of Alexandria, *The Fourth Letter of Cyril to Nestorius* (or *The Epistle of Cyril to Nestorius*), in *NPNF*², 14:198.

59. “He who had an existence before all ages and was born [generated] of the Father, is said to have been born according to the flesh of a woman, not as though his divine nature received its beginning of existence in the holy virgin, for it did not need a second generation after that of the Father.... For us and for our salvation, he personally united to himself a human body, and came forth of a woman. He is in this way said to be born after the flesh.” Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Cyril of Alexandria, *The Twelve Anathemas of Cyril against Nestorius*, in *NPNF*², 14:206–18.

62. John of Antioch offered a statement on Christology in a letter to Cyril of Alexandria. Known as the *Symbol of Unity*, this formula did much to unite the church and pave the way for a settlement on the doctrine of Christ: “We confess ... our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect man composed of a rational soul and a body, begotten before the ages from his Father in respect of his divinity, but likewise in these last days for us and our salvation [he was born] from the virgin Mary in respect of his manhood [humanity]. He is consubstantial [of the same nature] with the Father in respect of his divinity and at the same time consubstantial [of the same nature] with us in respect of his manhood. For a union of two natures has been accomplished. Hence we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. In virtue of this conception of a union without confusion we confess the holy Virgin as *theotokos* because the divine Word became flesh and was made man and from the very conception united to himself the temple taken from her.” John of Antioch, *Letter 38 to Cyril of Alexandria*, Kelly, 328–29.

63. The term *monophysitism* is a combination of two words. *Mono* signifies “one” and *physis* signifies “nature.” Thus, the term is used to affirm that after the incarnation, Jesus Christ had only one nature. Actually, interpreting Eutychus is quite difficult, because he offered confusing and seemingly different answers to questions posed to him about his view of Christ.

64. “I admit that I have never said that he is consubstantial [of the same nature] with us.... I admit that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union one nature.” *The Admissions of Eutychus*, in Bettenson, 53.

65. Flavian, *Letter 26: A Second Letter to Leo*, in *NPNF*², 12:36–38.

66. As Flavian explained: “Though he calls it human, he [Eutychus] refuses to say it was consubstantial with us or with her who bore him, according to the flesh.” Ibid., in *NPNF*², 12:37.

67. Synod of Constantinople (November 8, 448), in Kelly, 331.

68. The chief opponent of Eutychianism was Leo, the bishop of Rome. In his *Tome*, Leo argued against this heresy and presented a summary of the church’s belief about the two natures of Jesus Christ. First, the two natures — divine and human — that exist in Jesus Christ are complete natures, and they maintain their respective characteristics in the union. Second, it was the eternal Word, the Son of God, who came to be the God-man, and he did not experience any loss of his divine powers in the incarnation. Third, as to his humanity, Jesus Christ is consubstantial — of the very same nature — with human beings, yet without sin. Fourth, the unity is a real one in which each nature — divine and human — “performs its proper functions in cooperation with the other. The Word performs that which pertains to the Word; the flesh performs that which pertains to the flesh.... The Word does not cease to be on an equality with the Father’s glory, so the flesh does not desert the nature of our race.” Leo the Great, *Letter 28*, 3–4, *Letter to Flavian*, in *NPNF*², 12:40–41; Bettenson, 54–56. The text has been rendered clearer. Despite Leo’s efforts to contradict and banish Eutychianism, another church council was convened at Ephesus in 449. Known as the “robber synod,” it refused to confirm Leo’s *Tome*. Instead, it approved Eutychus and his heretical view!

69. This can be seen in the Athanasian Creed, which echoed the Chalcedonian Creed. Athanasian Creed, 29–36, in Schaff, 2:68–69. Dating the Athanasian Creed is very difficult. It certainly was not written by Athanasius, so it does not belong to the fourth century. I place it here following the Chalcedonian Creed because it seems to reflect the Christology of that document.

70. One of the anathemas stated: “If anyone affirms that a union was made of the divine and human natures, or speaks about the one nature of God the Word made flesh, but does not understand these things according to what the church fathers have taught — namely, that from the divine and human natures a personal union was made, and that one Christ was formed— but from these expressions tries to introduce one nature or substance made of the divinity and humanity of Christ: let him be anathema. In affirming that the only-begotten God the Word was personally united to humanity, we do not mean that there was a confusion made of each of the natures into the other, but rather that each nature remained what it was, and in this way we understand that the Word was united to humanity. So there is only one Christ, both God and man, consubstantial with the Father in respect to his divinity, and also consubstantial with us in respect to our humanity. Both those who divide or split up the mystery of the divine dispensation of Christ, and those who introduce into that mystery some confusion, are equally rejected and anathematized by the church of God.” Second Council of Constantinople, *Anathema 8*. An important modification of monophysitism was a position called *monothelism*, a term that is a combination of two words. *Mono* signifies “one” and *thelema* signifies “will.” The basic idea of this view was that while Jesus Christ possessed two natures, he only had one will. Thus, it formally agreed with the Chalcedonian Creed about the two natures. However, monothelism balked at the idea of two wills as leading to a division in the unity of the person of Christ. Rather, it maintained that there was one will or— as some put it — one natural principle of operation in Jesus Christ. At one point, even the bishop of Rome, Pope Honorius, fell prey to this view. Officially, the Third Council of Constantinople (680–81) denounced monothelism and applied the Chalcedonian Creed to the two wills and the two principles of operation in Jesus Christ. Each nature willed and worked that which is proper to itself— miracles by the divine nature, sufferings by the human nature—the two willing and working together in unity. The settlement obtained at the Third Council of Constantinople effectively put a halt to monophysitism and monothelism.

71. Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, 2.6, in *Anselm*, 320.

72. Ibid., 2.7, in *Anselm*, 321.

73. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. 3, q. 2, art. 4.

74. Ibid., pt. 3, q. 2, art. 6.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., pt. 3, q. 16, art. 4.

77. Grudem supplies two excellent examples that serve to clarify Aquinas’s point on the communication of properties. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 562.

78. Martin Luther, *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, LW, 37:207. As we will see, Zwingli agreed that the right hand of God is everywhere present, but he believed this to be true of Christ according to his deity, not according to his humanity. LW, 37:213n77. For a more complete presentation of Luther’s view, see chap. 29.

79. Ibid., LW, 37:210.

80. “Wherever Christ is according to his divinity, he is there as a natural, divine person and he is also naturally and personally there.... But if he is present naturally and personally wherever he is, then he must be man there, too, since he is not two separate persons but a single person. Wherever this person is, it is the single, indivisible person, and if you can say, ‘Here is God,’ then you must also say, ‘Christ the man is present too.’” Ibid., LW, 37:218.

81. See the earlier discussion of Eutychianism.

82. Huldrych Zwingli, *Christian Answer*, in *Corpus Reformatum*, 92, 933–34. Luther responded to this charge in *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, LW, 37:212.

83. Calvin compared Luther’s error with “that insane notion of Servetus (which all godly men rightly find abhorrent), that his [Christ’s] body was swallowed up by his divinity. I do not say that they think so. But if to fill all things in an invisible manner is numbered among the gifts of the glorified body, it is plain that the substance of the body is wiped out, and that no difference between deity and human nature is left. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.17.29, LCC, 2:1398–99.

84. *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, LW, 37:212.

85. Huldrych Zwingli, *An Exposition of the Faith*, in G. W. Bromiley, ed., *Zwingli and Bullinger*, LCC, 24:256.

86. Ibid., 24:257.

87. Luther explained his accusation: “We ... raise a hue and cry against them [Zwingli and his sympathizers] for separating the person of Christ as though there were two persons. If Zwingli’s [biblical interpretation] stands, then Christ will have to be two persons, one a divine and the other a human person, since Zwingli applies all the texts concerning the passion only to the human nature and completely excludes them from the divine nature. But if the works are divided and separated, the person will also have to be separated, since all the doing and suffering are not ascribed to natures but to persons. It is the person who does and suffers everything, the one thing according to this nature and the other thing according to the other nature.... Therefore, we regard our Lord Christ as God and man in one person, ‘neither confusing the natures nor dividing the person.’” *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, LW, 37:212–13. With his ending quote, Luther appealed to the Chalcedonian formula.

88. Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.12.1–3, LCC, 1:464–67.

89. Ibid., 2.14.1, LCC, 1:482–83.

90. Ibid., 2.14.1–2, LCC, 1:482–84.

91. Ibid., 2.14.4, LCC, 1:486–87.

92. *Formula of Concord*, Epitome 2, in Schaff, 3:94–95.

93. *Belgic Confession*, 18–19, in Schaff, 3:402–4.

94. Ibid.

95. John Andrew Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum* (Leipzig, 1715), 3.185, in Schmid, 331.

96. Gottfried Thomasius, *Christ’s Person and Work*, 40, in *God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology*, ed. Claude Welch (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), 46.

97. “The divine then, so to speak, surpasses the human as a broader circle does a smaller one; in its knowledge, life and action the divine extends infinitely far over and above the human,

as the extra-temporal, or the temporal, as that which is perfect in itself which becomes, as the all-permeating and all-determining over the conditioned, over that which is bound to the limits and laws of earthly existence." Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 46–47.

98. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 47.
99. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 47–48.
100. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 48.
101. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 51–53.
102. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 53.
103. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 67–68.
104. Ibid., 43, in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 70.
105. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 70–71.
106. Ibid., in Welch, *God and Incarnation*, 75–76.
107. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 381.
108. Ibid., 383.
109. Ibid., 385.
110. Ibid., 387.
111. Some scholars roughly group the quest for the historical Jesus into three phases. The first quest, beginning with Hermann Samuel Reimarus and ending with Albert Schweitzer, sought to dehistoricize Jesus, distancing him greatly from his first-century Palestinian world. As N. T. Wright noted, "The 'Quest' began as an explicitly anti-theological, anti-Christian, anti-dogmatic movement. Its initial agenda was not to find a Jesus upon whom Christian faith might be based, but to show that the faith of the church (as it was then conceived) could not in fact be based on the real Jesus of Nazareth." N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 17. The second or "new quest" began with Schweitzer and ended with Rudolph Bultmann. It focused on Jesus as an eschatological prophet whose message—at its core, a radical call to commitment, once its cultural accoutrements were stripped away — could be twisted and shaped to accommodate many viewpoints (e.g., the call to discipleship of the early church; the call to authenticity of existentialism). The "third quest," beginning with Ernst Käsemann and extending into the third millennium, treats seriously the historical context of Jesus. It seeks to construct a Christology that locates him in his first-century Palestinian culture and views his claims to messiahship as both historically relevant for the Judaism of his day and transcending the mistaken political notions often attached to the messianic vision of that contemporary Judaism.
112. Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Fragments*, 1.30–33, in *Reimarus: Fragments*, ed. Charles H. Talbert, trans. Ralph S. Fraser, Lives of Jesus Series (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 126–34. The fragment — entitled "On the Intentions of Jesus and His Disciples" — here referenced was published in 1778 by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing as part of his *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (seven fragments published between 1774 and 1778).
113. David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (Philadelphia: Augsburg Fortress, 1972); idem, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's The Life of Jesus*, trans. Leander E. Keck (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). As one Strauss scholar put it: "Strauss' *Life of Jesus* was the most intellectually reasoned attack which has ever been mounted against Christianity. There have been other assaults more radical and bitter, others expressed in more vituperative language ... but no one since Strauss has so acutely concentrated on the crucial cardinal issues that must be dealt with. Strauss confronted theology with an either/or: either show that the Christian faith is historically and intellectually credible, or admit that it is based on myth and delusion. That was the alternative. Nothing less was and is at stake than the whole historical and intellectual basis of Christianity. If Strauss cannot be convincingly answered, then it would appear that Christianity must slowly but surely collapse." Horton Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology*, Monograph Supplement to the *Scottish Journal of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), 281–82.
114. Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ*, trans. Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 48.
115. Ibid., 65.
116. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, trans. W. Montgomery (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910), 368–69.
117. Rudolph Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (New York: Scribner, 1958), 8.
118. Rudolph Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner, 1958), 18.
119. Karl Barth, for one, attempted to reverse this direction. He constructed a Christology using the biblical materials and decried all attempts to dismiss the New Testament witness to Christ. CD, IV/1, 163. E.g., he borrowed the parable of the prodigal son to express the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus. CD, IV/1–2.
120. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 472–73. Wright's use of the expression "Jesus the Jew" was a deliberate reference to the title of Geza Vermes's book *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973).
121. Ibid., 473–74.
122. Ibid., 474, 539.
123. Ibid., 609–10.
124. Ibid., 610.
125. Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907; repr., New York and Evanston, Ill.: Harper & Row, 1964).
126. Marcus Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).
127. John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991).
128. John Hick, "Jesus and the World Religions," in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, ed. John Hick (London: SCM, 1977), 178.
129. Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986), 102.
130. Ibid., 102–3.
131. Ibid., 103.
132. One such criterion was that of dissimilarity: "If we are to identify the voice of Jesus that made his the precipitator of the Christian tradition, we have to look for sayings and stories that distinguish his voice from other ordinary speakers and even sages of his time." Applying this notion, the Jesus Seminar made this assumption: "Jesus' characteristic talk was distinctive — it can usually be distinguished from common lore. Otherwise it is futile to search for the authentic words of Jesus." This criterion was applied to the content of the sayings of Jesus, and again the Jesus Seminar developed a test for authenticity: "Jesus' parables and sayings cut against the social and religious grain ... [and] surprise and shock: they characteristically call for a reversal of roles or frustrate ordinary, everyday expectations." Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Polebridge/Macmillan, 1993), 30–31.
133. Ibid., 36–37.
134. Ibid., 5.
135. Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1934); Eng. trans., *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Robert Kraft, trans. Gerhard Krodel, Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), xxii.
136. For an example, see Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1979/1989); idem, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003).
137. Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus*, Foundations and Facets Reference Series (Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge, 1993), 241.
138. Norm Perrin, "Thomas: The Fifth Gospel?" *JETS* 49, no. 1 (March 2006), 80.
139. Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh: A Contemporary Incarnational Christology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).
140. Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005).
141. Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).
142. Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler, eds., *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective* (Nashville: Broadman Academic, 2007).
143. Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007).
144. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).
145. Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007).