

THE PIVOTAL POINT IN WORLD HISTORY

PHIL 2:1-11

“He did not lose what He was, but began to be what He was not.

He did not cease to possess His own nature but received what was ours.”

—St Hillary of Poitiers

I. WORDS SUGGESTING TWO SUBSTANCES BECOMING ONE: Transfusion; Transubstantiation; Conception; Contagion; Infusion; Inspiration; Incarnation

II. PARADOXICAL TRUTHS

- A. Janus—Roman God of war and peace
- B. Childbirth pain and pleasure
- C. Exams’ stress & satisfaction
- D. Hegelian dialectic’s partial truth
- E. Trinity Mystery: Three persons in One nature; both Transcendent and Immanent
- F. Incarnation Mystery: Two natures in One person; “fully God and fully man”

III. CRITICAL CHRISTIAN DOGMA: INCARNATION—THE MIRACLE OF MIRACLES

IV. REVEALING EVENTS in JESUS’ LIFE—oscillating evidence re human & divine

- A. Annunciation, conception, virgin birth (“the Spirit of the LORD shall come upon you,” thus “conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary”)
- B. Temple discussions when 12—“Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house“ (Lk 2:41-52)
- C. Baptism—cleansing, repentance; John the Baptist says “behold the Lamb” and reluctantly baptizes
- D. Temptations in the wilderness, beginning public ministry
- E. Public ministry: teaching (“unlike scribes”) and miracles (demonstrating deity)
- F. Crucifixion—“Ecce Homo” said Pilate (Jn 19:5); on the Cross He truly died, yet centurion says “surely this man was the Son of God”
- G. Resurrection—empty tomb & shroud, yet interacted with disciples as man
- H. Ascension—rising into sky; spiritual body, visible but ethereal

V. ILLUMINATING STATEMENTS of JESUS

- A. Indicating his humanity
 - 1. John 6:38—“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will ...”
 - 2. John 14:28—“the Father is greater than I”
- B. Asserting His Divinity
 - 1. John 8:58— “before Abraham was, I Am”
 - 2. John 10:30— “I and the Father are one”

VI. CLEAR CLAIMS OF the APOSTLES

- A. Peter—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”(Mt 16:16-17)
- B. John—Jn 1:1-5, 14; I Jn 1:1-4
- C. Paul—Ro 1:3-4; Col 1:12-17

VII. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- A. Earliest options: Docetists & Ebionites
- B. Rival schools: Antioch & Alexandria
- C. Critical conflict: Arius & Athanasius
- D. Creeds’ consensus: Nicene & Chalcedonian
- E. Liberalism (Schleiermacher) vs. Chalcedonian Orthodoxy (John Henry Newman)
- F. Current turmoil within denominations, seminaries, congregations frequently Christological