

# "SON of MAN"

Jn 3:1-21; Dan 7:13-14

## I. THE BLINDNESS OF THE NATURALIST

- A. Nicodemus' blindness—locked into a purely natural world (as is too often true of all of us ("men prefer darkness to light")—Jewish behavioral rules, sacrifices, etc. can lead to idolatry (commodifying God)
- B. Greco-Roman environment basically materialistic
  - 1. Atomists (pre-Socratics like Democritus) generally materialists
  - 2. Epicureans think pleasure ultimate good
  - 3. Stoics (e.g. Cicero & Seneca) basically pantheists
  - 4. Dramatic breakthrough—Socrates and (most especially) Plato
- C. Current Milieu (as diagnosed by Erwin Lutzer in *The Eclipse of God*)—God's "gravediggers" (Nietzsche's label) include
  - 1. Marx—economic determinism (c.f. *Hide Your Children*)
  - 2. Darwin—natural selection (c.f. *Darwin's Black Box*)
  - 3. Freud—pleasure principle (c.f. critical biography)
- D. Liberalism/Modernism generally eliminates vertical dimension in religion
  - 1. The Bible reduced to a purely human book ("higher criticism")
  - 2. Jesus reduced to a purely human being ("historical Jesus")
  - 3. Man reduced to a purely biological creature ("naked ape")
  - 4. Salvation reduced to social concern, philanthropy, niceness ("What Would Jesus Do?")

## II. THE VISION OF THE SUPERNATURALIST & THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION—G.K. Chesterton's "Enormous Exception"

- A. Jesus claims to move up-and-down, present in heaven and earth, seeking to lift our eyes—simultaneously God and man—both/and, not either/or
- B. Incarnation: "Son of Man"
  - 1. Amazing Love: eternally-begotten Son enfleshed by Spirit in Virgin Mary (Jn 3:16)
  - 2. Various ways to think about Incarnation
    - a. Analogies of higher condescending to lower
      - 1. If a man could enter into a dog
      - 2. General Zachary Taylor—"Old Rough and Ready" looked like enlisted men
      - 3. Calvin Coolidge, both in the White House and at the farm, hardly presidential much of the time
    - b. Creeds—Apostles & Nicene & Chalcedonian & Athanasian
    - c. Poetry—Christmas carols
- C. Orthodox tradition emphasizes the main mission: otherworldly, redemption from sin & eternal life
  - 1. Salvation rescues & prepares for heaven
  - 2. As with wind, God works His wonders

## III. THE ULTIMATE NEED: FAITH IN THE SON

- A. OT serpent on pole lifted up to save all who believed
- B. NT Christ suspended on Cross

# The “Enormous Exception”

Right in the middle of all these things stands up an enormous exception. It is quite unlike anything else. It is a thing final like the trump of doom, though it is also a piece of good news; or news that seems too good to be true. It is nothing less than the loud assertion that this mysterious maker of the world has visited his world in person. It declares that really and even recently, or right in the middle of historic times, there did walk into the world this original invisible being; about whom the thinkers make theories and the mythologists hand down myths; the Man Who Made the World. That such a higher personality exists behind all things had indeed always been implied by all the best thinkers, as well as by all the most beautiful legends. But nothing of this sort had ever been implied in any of them. It is simply false to say that the other sages and heroes had claimed to be that mysterious master and maker, of whom the world had dreamed and disputed. Not one of them had ever claimed to be anything of the sort. Not one of their sects or schools had ever claimed that they had claimed to be anything of the sort. The most that any religious prophet had said was that he was the true servant of such a being. The most that any visionary had ever said was that men might catch glimpses of the glory of that spiritual being; or much more often of lesser spiritual beings. The most that any primitive myth had ever suggested was that the Creator was present at the Creation. But that the Creator was present at scenes a little subsequent to the supper-parties of Horace, and talked with tax-collectors and government officials in the detailed daily life of the Roman Empire, and that this fact continued to be firmly asserted by the whole of that great civilisation for more than a thousand years—that is something utterly unlike anything else in nature. It is the one great startling statement that man has made since he spoke his first articulate word, instead of barking like a dog. Its unique character can be used as an argument against it as well as for it. It would be easy to concentrate on it as a case of isolated insanity; but it makes nothing but dust and nonsense of comparative religion.

—G.K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man* (p. 211). Kindle Edition.

# CREEDS' CHRISTOLOGY

## Apostles' Creed

I believe in **Jesus Christ**, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the **Holy Spirit** and born of the virgin Mary.

## Nicene Creed (325 A.D)

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

## Chalcedonian Creed (451 A.D.)

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

## Athanasian Creed

And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

.....  
So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved is must think thus of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of his Mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.