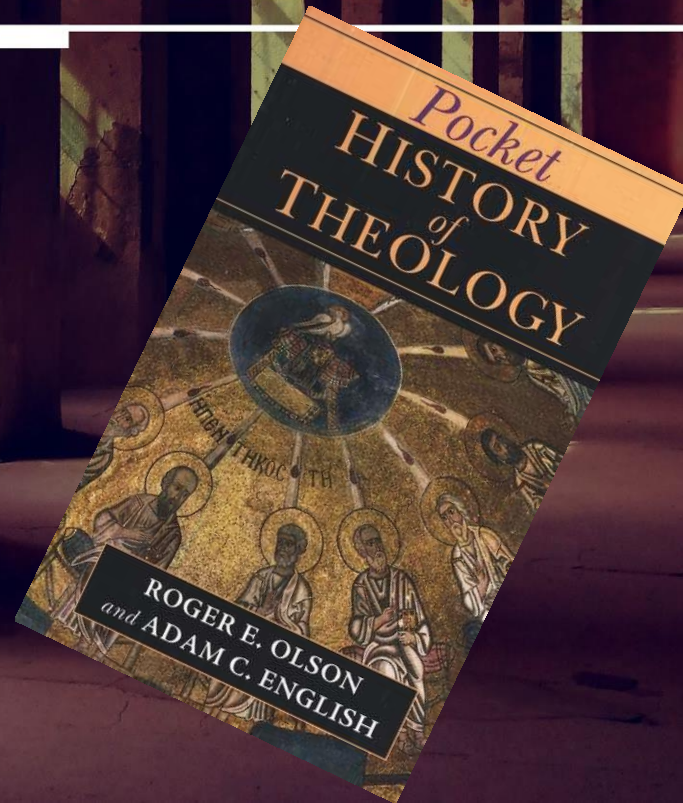


CHURCH HISTORY

2



Jesus was not God

Jewish “Christians” and Roman philosophers like Celsus

- **Christians claimed to be monotheists (believers in one God) together with Jews and most educated Romans.**
- **These Jewish “Christians” regarded Jesus as the Messiah, but rejected his divinity. (They also insisted on the necessity of following the OT Jewish laws and rites).**
- **To worship the man Jesus as God, or as a god, is idolatrous.**
- **Ebionites.**

Jewish “Christians” and Roman philosophers like Celsus

- **Roman monotheist philosophers like Celsus:**
- **In order for God to be a perfect being his nature has to be immutable (unchangeable).**
- **If God is to change it would either make him better or worse than he was before.**
- **If better, then God grows and is not perfect.**
- **If worse, then God diminishes and is not perfect.**

Jewish “Christians” and Roman philosophers like Celsus

- **Therefore,**

**“It cannot be the case that God came down to earth, since in doing so God would have undergone an alteration of his nature.”
(Celsus).**

- **So Jesus Christ was human, but he could not have been God.**

Jesus was not Human

Gnostic “Christians”

- An ideology that believed in a “special *spiritual* knowledge” that was greater than what the church leaders of the 2nd century were teaching.
- Gnosticism believes that matter, including the body, is the prison of the good soul/spirit of the human person.
- The soul/spirit is essentially divine, a “spark of God” dwelling in the tomb of the body.

Gnostic “Christians”

- **Salvation is found by gaining the spiritual knowledge/*gnosis* of the heavenly origins of our soul/spirit within us so that the soul/spirit can escape the body and return to heaven.**

Gnostic “Christians”

- **Some Gnostics believed that Christ became an immaterial spiritual messenger sent down from an unknown and unknowable God; not the God of the OT, who is a bad God for creating matter.**
- **Christ came to rescue us and bring home the stray sparks (soul/spirit) of his own being that had become trapped in material bodies.**

Gnostic “Christians”

- **These Gnostics taught that Jesus only appeared human, but was never physically human.**
- **Docetism - “to appear”/“to seem”.**
- **Jesus only seemed to be human but, as God, would not taint himself by actually becoming human.**

Gnostic “Christians”

- **Other Gnostics taught a dualist Christology.**
- **“Christ” entered the human Jesus at his baptism and then left the human Jesus just before he died.**
- **“Christ” used Jesus’ vocal cords to teach, but never actually became human.**
- **So Jesus Christ was God, but he could not have been human.**

**God truly became Human in
Jesus**



IRENÆUS OF LYONS

Irenaeus of Lyons

d. 203

Bishop

- ✠ Native of Smyrna
- ✠ Consulted by Rome relative to status of Montanism
- ✠ While in Rome, his bishop was martyred; when he returned to Lyons, he was consecrated
- ✠ Opponent of Gnosticism
- ✠ Author of *Refutation and Overthrow of the Knowledge Falsely So-Called (Adversus Hæreses)*
- ✠ Advocate of tradition, Scripture, and episcopacy
- ✠ Taught doctrine of *anakephalaiosis*, recapitulation

“We ought not to seek the truth among others which it is easy to obtain from the Church; since the apostles, like a rich man depositing his money in a bank, delivered into her hands in the fullest measure the whole truth: so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life.”

Adv. Hær. III.4

Irenaeus

- **Lived in a time of intense persecution by the Roman Empire.**
- **Christians were being accused of things like atheism, anarchy, and cannibalism.**
- **Killed in Lyons, France, during a massacre of Christians.**
- **Lived in a time when Gnosticism was spreading rampantly throughout the churches.**
- **Perceived that Christians were in need of education and theological training.**

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- **Christ's incarnation (the human flesh and blood existence of the Word) is an act of "recapitulation."**
- **Recapitulation meaning "re-heading" / "providing a new head".**
- **In this understanding "head" does not mean what is on top of your body, but means the "source" or "origin" of something - such as the "head" of a river.**

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- **Christ provides humanity with a new head/beginning. (Eph. 1:9-10, 20-23).**
- **The incarnation was redemptive and not merely a step towards the cross.**
- **The incarnation is key to salvation.**
- **The incarnation is transformative – it begins (heads) the process of reversing the corruption of sin that resulted in death and alienation from God.**

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- **The physical incarnation of the Word Jesus works to transform humanity.**
- **The human race is “born again” in the incarnation.**
- **It receives a new head/source/origin/ ground of being that is unfallen, pure, healthy, victorious and immortal.**
- **In Christ humanity is “fully alive” both physically and spiritually.**

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- In the incarnation the Word took on the physical source of humanity – the body of Adam – and lived the reverse of Adam's life course.**
- Christ is the second Adam (head/source) of the human race. (See Romans 5).**

“God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man/Adam, that he might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man and therefore His works are true.” (*Against Heresies* 1:11).

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- In order to reverse the Fall and renew the fallen human race, the Word had to live *through* humanity.
- Therefore, the Word took “the very same formation” as Adam – not just the *appearance* of one like it.
- Adam was, in some mysterious way, reborn of Mary as the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- This then rules out Gnosticism.
- If the Word did not *truly* become human (flesh and blood) he would not have saved humanity.
- For Irenaeus and the early Christians being human meant a physical body.
- Christ didn't come to save a spirit-self trapped inside our body, he came to save human beings, which means bodies.
- Therefore, the incarnation was necessary.

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- **Where Adam failed when tempted by Satan in the garden Jesus won the victory in the desert when tempted by Satan.**
- **The cross and resurrection were the culmination of Christ's work of recapitulation (re-heading) won in the desert.**

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- Those who willingly participate in Christ's new humanity by choosing Christ as their head instead of Adam, through repentance, faith and sacraments, receive the transformation of becoming "fully alive" humans made possible by the incarnation of the Son of God.**

Irenaeus' Theology of Redemption

- They enter a new humanity, race, people, nation, with the hope of sharing in God's own immortal divine nature.**
- Therefore, redemption is a process of restoring all of creation rather than of escaping creation, as it was for the Gnostics.**



The glory of God is a human being fully alive; and to be alive consists in beholding God.

~ Irenaeus of Lyons

- The *Shekinah* “glory” (divine presence) of God was in the “tabernacle” of Christ Jesus who was a fully alive human.
- In Christ Jesus we become “fully alive” humans and, therefore, the dwelling place of God’s *Shekinah* “glory” (divine presence).