

God's Love Hostel for Expatriate Students
Zayton

Important Questions About
Trinity and Oneness
And
The Incarnation

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(١) Trinity and Oneness and the Incarnation

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His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

Introduction

Lord Jesus Christ, glory be to Him, told His disciples, “and you shall be witnesses to Me.” (Acts 1: 8) This witness is based on two main pillars: first, bearing witness to the true doctrine, and second, bearing witness through Christian behavior. It is not possible to settle for one of them at the expense of the other since the true doctrine without Christian behavior turns us into an offence for people, according to what the Bible says, “For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’” (Romans 2: 24) However, God is able to raise up children to Himself from stones if we fail, act indolently or choose the broad way.

Similarly, Christian behavior without doctrine turns us into a mere hollow appearance with no essence, which is subject to doubts and odd thoughts about faith. The church sticks to the thought of her fathers who, along with martyrs and saints, handed in the true doctrine to us. Therefore, do not either shirk or hesitate to the attempts to search and know, remembering that the Holy Bible says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,” and “You search the Scriptures,” and that according to your capabilities and talents God will ask you for knowledge.

Besides, in our days which are bombarded with so many questions, what will be the case if your son, daughter, brother or sister asks you doctrine-related questions?

We need to declare that we worship One God, and to elucidate, inter alia, what it means that Christ is the Son of God, why He has incarnated and that we are not polytheists.

This brief is a humble attempt to answer questions which are essential to our Christian doctrine: Do we worship One God or three gods? How can God be limited, eat, drink and sleep? Why didn't God forgive Adam? Etc.,

To make full use of this brief, please read the question first and attempt to answer them. Then, after two or three days, start to read it entirely.

If you feel the importance of the questions, please understand and read them more than once. Then memorize them and discuss them with your siblings and friends in order to be all ready to answer anyone who might ask us about the reason for the hope we believe in.

May God confirm His people in the upright faith up until the last breath through the intercessions of our mother; the Virgin St. Mary and the prayers of our blessed father; his Holiness Pope Shenouda III.

Glory be to God in His church forever; Amen!

Question 1

Do we worship One God or three gods?

We worship One God in three Divine Persons\Hypostases.

But what is the meaning of a “Hypostasis”?

Hypostasis (and the plural “Hypostases”) is a Syriac word which means “an essential attribute.”

And what is the meaning of “an essential nature?”

There are two kinds of attributes:

1. **External Attributes:** Which become manifest in my dealings with people, like when I say that I am loving, fair, miser or generous. These attributes surface in my dealings, but do not influence my existence or essence.

2. **Essential Attributes:**

Like when I say, “I am (body, spirit and soul).”

The Body: The material part which eats, drinks and sleeps.

The Spirit: God’s breath that leads Man to pray and worship Him, and when Man dies, we say that his spirit ascended to heaven.

The Soul: The mind, perception and emotions.

Therefore, when I say, “I am a human being of a body, spirit and soul,”

Am I one person or three persons?!

I am one person, but have three essential attributes.

Without the body, the soul or the spirit, I do not exist.

Another Example:

We describe the sun as composed of a disc of which the ray is born, and from which heat proceeds.

So, is it one sun or three suns?

It is one sun, but it is composed of three essential attributes. (A disc of which the ray is born and from which heat proceeds.)

Similarly, with distinction, we worship One God in three Hypostasis¹ (essential attributes): The Son is naturally born of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and They are One God.

You may ask me not to liken God to something because “there is nothing whatever like unto Him”

It is true there is nothing whatever like unto God since He is unlimited. That is why ***in the examples we said, “with Distinction”*** because Man and the sun **cannot be** gods, and because **God is unlimited** and I cannot limit Him with my limited mind. However, I only wanted to explain that for you with an example comprehensible to the mind on how it is possible to have

one essence (Man or the sun) that at the very same time has three essential attributes.

١. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (John 28: 19)

Question 2

How can you say that “Christ is the Son of God?”
Does God beget? He “He begetteth not, nor is He begotten?”

This question reflects a physical material thought.

There are many kinds of sonship:

a. Physical Sonship:

When someone gets married and begets, so that we say that X is the son of Y¹¹.

b. Figurative Sonship:

It is similar to when we say, “The son of the Nile,”
“The son of Egypt²²,” “The son of the country” and
“The son of the road, i.e., Wayfarer in Arabic.”

١. “Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” (Genesis ٤: ١)

Does the Nile get married to a female Nile, for example, and beget a son?! It is a figurative sonship.

c. Sonship by Adoption:

Like when a child's father passes away, so someone adopts him, and he becomes his adopted son. Or when someone adopts another in faith or in a certain craft that he teaches him. Therefore, he becomes his son in faith³³ or in this craft. He can also be his son in confession.

d. Sonship by Nature:

This is when something is of the nature of the thing without being separated from it. When we say that the ray was born of the sun disc, **does this mean that** the disc got married to a female one and begot a ray? Or that after being born of the disc, the ray left him and went away? Or that there was a certain time

٢. ^٢ “Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who repays you according to what you have done to us.” (Psalm ١٣٧: ٨)

٣. ^٣ “That I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.” (Philemon ١: ١٠)

when the disc existed without having the ray born of it?

Similarly, with distinction, the Son is born of the Father by nature¹⁴, which means that He is born of the Father's nature before all ages and since the beginning of time without being separated from Him. Rather, He is one with the Father in essence²⁵.

Do the expressions “Father” and “Son” mean that the Father is older than the Son in age or former in existence?

In the same way we have proved that sonship by nature does not include marriage, it does not include a time lag as well.

For example,

When I light a match, do I say after five minutes, “Wow! I see fire!”?

1. ^ε “Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” (Matthew 1 ε: 33)

2. ^ο “For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.” (John ο: 18)

Or is this how it goes: at the very same moment I set fire, the ray which I see is born of it, and the heat I feel proceeds from it? The fire, the ray and the heat are one essence and have been formed together at the very same moment with no time lag between them.

Similarly, with distinction, the Father exists before all ages, and the Son is born of Him by nature (before all ages as well) without being separate from Him, and the Holy Spirit proceeds¹⁶ from Him (before all ages as well) and these three are One God²⁷.

Question 3

You say that God had appeared in the form of a child, can God be limited in the form of a child while He is the One who fills the entire universe? We say that God “appeared” and not that He “was limited.”

In the Old Testament, God³ ⁸appeared to Moses in the bush (a tree,) that was burning with fire, and He talked from it.

١. ^٦ “[T]he Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.” (John 15: 26)

٢. ^٧ “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” (1 John 5: 7)

٣. ^٨ “So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” (Exodus 3: 4)

Did God leave the heavens and the earth, enter the bush, become limited in it and told Moses, “Moses, Moses!”? **Or is God the One who fills all and able to appear in the bush and remain as He is unlimited and illimitable?!**

Besides, God appeared to Moses in the mountain (rocks) that was completely in smoke¹⁹, or as if the mountain was being utterly destroyed.

Did God enter the mountain, become limited and give Moses the commandments or He was filling everywhere and appeared to Moses in the mountain and remained as He is unlimited?!

It was God who appeared in the bush (a tree) and in the mountain (rocks) in the Old Testament without being limited, and everyone admits that. . .

We, Christians, say in the New Testament:

“great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh”²¹⁰

Cannot He who appeared in stones and trees without being limited appear in Man, who is in God’s image and according to His likeness³¹¹; the crown of the creation and the uppermost of all creatures without being limited as well?!

Example:

¹⁹ “Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain[a] quaked greatly.” (Exodus 19: 18)

¹¹⁰ . “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3: 16)

¹¹¹ “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1: 27)

When I watch a World Cup match on TV, do I take all the transmission there in my set that no one else watches it but me?! Or do I watch the match, so does he who lives next doors and he who lives in another city, and the transmission remains unlimited to a single set, but fills the space?!

Similarly, with distinction,

We have seen God in the flesh without being limited, and He remains filling the entire universe and unlimited to a certain place.

When I watch the match, do I see a part of the goal in my TV set, my neighbor sees the other part and he who lives in another city sees the ball, or does everyone watch the entire transmission, which remains in the entire space without being limited to a single TV ?!

Similarly, we have seen God full in the flesh, and He remains everywhere unlimited.

Question 4

Well, God who appeared in the bush and the mountain without being limited can appear in Man without being limited as well.

But, does God eat, drink, sleep, and, God forbids, go to the toilet. . . Is not this hard to accept?!

God's Divinity (God's Nature) is not material. He influences, sanctifies and purifies without being influenced.

When the ray of sunlight rises on the earth, it may enter polluted places. Can we say then, ***“Eww! The ray of sunlight stinks!?”***

Or will we after a while see warms coming out of the ray because it has been contaminated? Or is it the ray itself that

purifies, cleans and kills the germs without being influenced with anything whatsoever?!

How much more God's Divinity will not be influenced with eating, drinking or any of the physical deeds?

Rather, He will sanctify, purify and influence without getting influenced.

In the past, when they manufactured knives, spears and swords, the blacksmith used to bring pig iron and put it in fire until it burned with fire then strike it.

Do we strike iron or fire?

Certainly, both of them.

But which of them gets influenced: iron or fire?

Certainly, it is iron that gets influenced while fire does not get influenced by striking.

Similarly, God's Divinity was not influenced with pain, suffering, the nails or the spear.

This is because God's Divinity is not physical; He influences and sanctifies without getting influenced.

Question 5:

Does God die? We may accept that God suffers and gets tired, but is not that He dies such a difficult thing to accept? Whom were you worshipping when He was dead?

It seems like that he who asked this question did not understand the meaning of the Incarnation. **It means that God appeared in the form of a complete human being,** (and was not limited as we mentioned before.)

When a normal human being dies, his spirit is separated from his body. When Christ died with His Humanity (Which is to say that when the body He appeared in died,) His human spirit was separated from His human body. However, ***God is immortal with His Divinity.*** That is why we say, ***“Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal”***

Example:

There is a football match between two clubs, and one of them is defeated. So, one of its fans strikes the TV or breaks it. Which is broken then: the TV or the broadcast? Of course, it is the TV that is broken while the broadcast is not influenced.

Similarly, with distinction,

What died is the Humanity while God’s Divinity is immortal.

Another Example:

I have a pen with a cap, and put them in a container full of water. When I separate the cap from the pen, so that they are both separate, but each of them remains in the water, which fills the entire container.

Similarly, with distinction,

When the human spirit was separated from the human body, God’s Divinity was filling the spirit, the body and everywhere without being limited.

This echoes what we say in the holy mass, “His Divinity parted not from His Humanity for a single moment, nor a twinkling of an eye.”

The Humanity is the human nature: the spirit and the body. God’s Divinity fills the spirit that was separated from the body, fills the body itself and fills everywhere.

Question 6:

Does God pray? How does He pray, and to whom?

When God became manifested in the flesh (Without being limited, and His Humanity did not affect His Divinity), **He became like us in all things except sin only.** It is true that He ate, drank, slept, fasted for forty days, was peptized by John and prayed, but this did not affect His Divinity or authority.

Therefore, can we say that it is possible that He, with His Humanity, eats, drinks and sleeps, but it is not possible that He prays (with His Humanity as well)?

Example:

There was a king who wanted to discover in person what was taking place in his kingdom without being recognized by anyone. What shall he do?

He shall disguise himself like an ordinary citizen, walk in the streets and ask about the state of the people. On doing this, has he lost his authority or kingship?!

If he told the people, “I can help you with all that you need from the king,” so they felt it and told him about their needs, and he took a pen and paper and started to write:

“I write to plead to my master the King, and request. . .”

Does this mean that he is not the king, or that he has lost his authority or kingship?

Similarly, when God was manifested in the flesh and prayed as a human being, He did not lose His authority or kingship, but He remained God with the fullness of His Divinity.

Question 7:

There is a question that troubles me: Who is the one who appeared on the earth? Is it the Son, the Father, a part of God or what?!

God's Divinity (God's Essence) is an inseparable one that fills the entire universe that there is no certain place where the Father exists, another where the Son exists and a third where the Holy Spirit exists. Rather, God fills all and is indivisible.

Example:

When I say that I have a human nature, I am a human being (body, spirit and soul,) does the spirit exist in one part, the body in another and the soul in a third? Or **they are all one human essence: an indivisible human nature?!**

Similarly, with distinction,

God's Divinity is one indivisible essence that cannot be limited, and God appeared in the flesh (without being limited).

But, we would like to know who appeared in the flesh: the Son or the Father?

Consider this example:

When someone eats, who is the one who eats: the body, the spirit or the soul?

The one that does the process of eating is the material body. However, since it does not eat, can the spirit tell the body, "I am going to church to pray until you finish the process of eating, which I do not like?!"

Or can the soul tell the body, "I will hide in one of the toes until you finish eating?!"

Or is the entire essence exists together, but the one who does the eating is the body without being separated from the rest of the essential attributes: the soul and the spirit?!

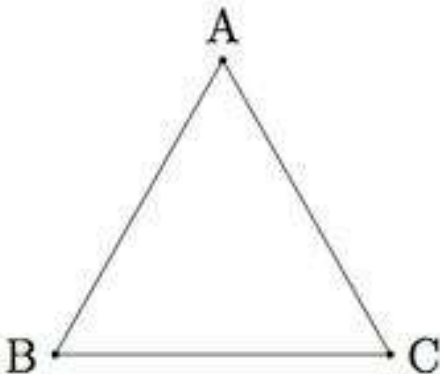
Similarly, with distinction,

God was manifested in the flesh, but the one who did the incarnation process is the Son without being separated from the other Persons: the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Question 8:

Does the nature of the Father differ from that of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit?

God's nature is one nature and one essence for the three Persons. When we have a gold triangle (Equilateral):



Vertex (A) is gold as for its nature (essence).

Vertex (B) is gold as for its nature (essence).

Vertex (c) is gold as for its nature (essence).

This is because the three vertices have one essence and nature in the same way the triangle has one essence which

gold. Although the triangle is composed of three vertices: A, b and C, it remains one triangle.

Similarly, the essence of the Father is that of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the three Hypostases are one God and not three gods.

Question 9:

Why do we say that the One God has three Hypostases and not four, five, nine, ninety nine or even more ones?

What we say about God's nature is mere announcements by God for people about His nature according to the capacity of their simple and limited mind as compared to God who is unlimited.

In this way, God declared for us about Himself in the Bible that He is three Hypostases (The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit).

In the same way we cannot say, "Why does Man consist of (spirit, body and soul) only?"

Or why does amoeba (a single-cell organism) consist of one cell only?

Or why does Man have two eyes only and not a single one or three ones?

Or why does the sun consist of a disc, ray and heat and not more than that, and these things are limited and created?

If we cannot say that about things, which are limited and created, how much more we cannot ask this question about God, whom we cannot limit with our human mind, but have faith and believe in his announcements for us in the Holy Bible about His nature and essence?!

Question 10:

Why are there some differences between the mentioned examples: the sun (disc, heat and ray) or Man (body, spirit and soul) and the symbols that the Hypostases stand for (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit)?

All these examples mentioned, with variation, are only for clarification because ¹¹²God cannot be fully described through or likened to limited things. However, we take some examples that bring the idea closer to our limited minds because if we made God identical with created things, He would no longer be considered as God, or these things would become gods.

¹¹² “we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.” (Acts 17: 29)

The Incarnation

+ What is the reason for the incarnation? What is Man's guilt to inherit sin? Why does Man still sin although he has received the new nature? Does Man inherit his father's sin in the same way he inherited Adam's?

These are many questions that our minds ask, and they need answers that are acceptable to the mind with support from God's holy word.

Let us start the story from the beginning:

God created the heavens and the earth,¹³ He created everything for the sake of Man,²¹⁴ whom was created on God's image and according to His likeness.³¹⁵ After God created Man on the earth, He saw that everything was very good⁴¹⁶. He gave him authority over all creation, put him in the garden, commanded him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and told him that once he eats of the tree, he shall die.⁵¹⁷ However, Adam ate!

When Adam ate of the tree, three dangerous things happened to him:

١. He violated God's commandment and insulted Him:

^{١٣} (Genesis 1: 1)

^{١٤} (Genesis 1: 28)

^{١٥} (Genesis ١: ٦)

^{١٦} (Genesis 1: 31)

^{١٧} (Genesis 7: 17)

Because He commanded him not to eat of the tree, but he ate.

- ١. (Genesis 1: 1)
- ٢. (Genesis 1: 28)
- ٣. (Genesis 1: 6)
- ٤. (Genesis 1: 31)
- ٥. (Genesis 7: 17)

٢. He became deserving of the sentence to death:

Because God told him, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

٣. His nature was corrupted by knowing good and evil:

Because after eating, his eyes were opened to sin and evil.

Therefore, it became a must the existence of someone, who:

- ١. is a mediator to reconcile Man with God¹⁸¹.
- ٢. spares Man the sentence to death¹⁹².
- ٣. renews his corrupted nature²⁰³.

“Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both.” (Job 9: 33)

¹⁹ “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3: 19)

^{٢٠} “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” (Genesis 3: 7)

First, who shall reconcile Man with God?

When Man sinned and violated God's commandment, there became animosity and a barrier between Man and God. The sin of violating the commandment was directed against God, who is unlimited. Therefore, it became an unlimited sin.

If a student committed a mistake against his friend, a mutual friend of both of them would be able to reconcile them. But if the same mistake was committed by the student against his teacher, another teacher who knows both of them would be needed to reconcile them. If the same mistake was repeated by the student against the headmaster, a governor or the president, the punishment would increase.

Sin along with its punishment and gravity are to be measured with the person against whom it is directed. Man's sin was directed against the commandment of God, who is unlimited; therefore, it became unlimited.

For reconciling Man with God, it was a must that one of them would go to the other. The great can go to the lesser, and this would be modesty on His part, but the lesser cannot transcend.

When we re-mention the story of the king, who wanted to know what was taking place in his kingdom, disguised as one of the ordinary civilians and started to walk in the city streets, asking about the state of the people, *did he lose his authority*

because he took the appearance of an ordinary civilian?

Did it underestimate him as a king or influence his status when he told the civilians that he would write to ask his master the king for their sake, or he can return to his palace, sit on the king's throne and use his authority at any time he wants?!

On the contrary, no ordinary citizen can wear the king's clothes, say that he is the king and, doing this, be honest or have the king's authority and power.

Thus God can take the form of a human being and be manifested in the flesh without having his ability and authority influenced. Rather, He does this out of His modesty.

And when He does any human actions (like eating, drinking, sleeping and praying,) this does not underestimate His being God (as we have previously explained).

Therefore, for the sake of reconciling Man with God, God took a body to reconcile Man because Man cannot become a god, but God can take the form of Man²¹¹.

²¹¹ “that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (1st Corinthians 2: 19)

And so, when God took a body and had everything that is Man's (except for sin),^{22 1}

(since He is the only sinless in the entire universe, and everyone witnesses for this)²³
He ate, drank, slept, prayed, fasted and was baptized, and all that does not influence His Divinity and ability.

• **How did God take a body and was sinless although Adam's sin was transferred to all human beings?**

When God took a body to look like Man, He did not take it in the normal way through marrying a human being and being born. Rather, He did in a miraculous way since the Holy Spirit²⁴³ came upon Virgin Mary and purified her womb of all sins.
Therefore, the body He took from her did not have Adam's sin.

Second, who shall spare Man the sentence to death?

²² “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.” (1 Peter 2: 22)

²³ “Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?” (John 8: 46)

²⁴ “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1: 35)

We have seen that God, who is unlimited, took a body and became in the form of Man (Without being limited or having His Divinity influenced with pain, suffering and death) in order to reconcile Man and restore the love relationship with him.

However, Man was still sentenced to death since when God gave Adam the commandment, He told him, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die,” but Adam ate and became worthy of death.

• **Did God forgive Adam or carry out the death sentence against him?**

God is fully fair, and He told Adam, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Therefore, on the one hand, it was impossible for fair God not to implement His sentences. But, on the other hand, His love of and mercy for Adam did not let Him leave Adam in his death.

Once upon a time, there was a just judge who had a dear friend. This friend was poor. One day, this friend broke one of the laws and stood to be tried before the judge. Should the judge forgive him because of being a friend of his, breaking the laws and so becomes unjust and not worthy of being a judge? At the same time, if he was forced to sentence his friend to pay a fine, which he knew that he would not be able to pay on account of his poverty, he would rather remain imprisoned. What should the judge do then?

He judged his friend justly, but what happened after that is that this judge, who is just and loving at the same time, and who sentenced his friend to imprisonment, after the hearing, took off the judge's robes, went, entered the cell for his friend, paid the debt in full instead of him, freed him from his imprisonment and took him with him to freedom.

Similarly, when Adam became in danger of the death sentence, God, who is totally just, sentenced him to what he deserves (death), but He did not abandon him. He descended and came to him, paid the debt in full on his behalf (died instead of him) and gave him freedom and life.

▪ But, how did Adam die although God spared him death?

After Adam ate of the tree and became in danger of the death sentence, **he experienced three types of death** (since Man is composed of body, spirit and soul):

١. ***Physical Death*** (the separation of the spirit from the body):

After Adam ate of the tree, God told him, “For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”²⁵¹

And this took place for real a period after he left

²⁵¹ “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3: 19)

the Garden of Eden when his spirit was separated from his body and his body turned into dust.

٢. ***Spiritual Death*** (the separation of the spirit from God):

Before the fall, Adam had an intimate familiarity and true friendship with God, and the spirit, which is a breath from God, always longs to live with Him. However, after the fall, Man was spiritually separated from God, and sin became a barrier between him and God,^{26 2} **so he died spiritually**. Besides, the spirit would remain far away from God in an unbearable hell even after the physical death.

٣. ***Moral Death*** (Man's loss of his dignity and first image):

When in the Garden of Eden, Man had an authority over the entire creation^{1 27} that was all respecting him. He had the image of God, and the earth was bringing forth its fruits.

But when Man fell, the creation started to rebel against him, animals started to devour one

٢٦ Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." (Isaiah ٥٩: ١ - ٢)

٢٧ "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis ١: ٢٨)

another and Man, and the earth as well did no longer give forth its fruits²⁸².

This is similar to someone who was the manager of a large company and had authority and was respected, but after committing a grave mistake, he became a simple employee. This was a psychological destruction and death for him.

▪ **How Did God pay the price of Adam's sin and rescue him from death?**

As it has become patent for us, God with His Divinity does not die.

But, when He took a human body and came to the earth, He died with His human body from which His human spirit was separated, but His Divinity remained filling the spirit, the body and everywhere.

Besides, it has become clear that God alone is able to free Man from the cell of death (since He is the only one who can get into and out of the cell of death without being caught by death because He is righteous and does not deserve death³²⁹).

Consequently, God took a body and died instead of Man and raised him from:

1. Physical Death:

²⁸² "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you." (Genesis 3: 17- 18)

³²⁹ "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3: 18)

Since God took a body like Man (except for sin, which is the reason for death) and died willingly in spite of not deserving death.

Therefore, after His death with the body, He could rise with His body, so Man has acquired the resurrection of the body.

١. ***Spiritual Death:***

Man was separated from God through sin, which became a barrier between him and God. Therefore, God came, took the form of a human being **and lived on the earth like us without sinning**³⁰¹, and He is the only one who did not commit sin. When He died with the body as a human being, He went with His human spirit to hell and saved the spirits,^{31 2} granting them life with Him forever.

Doing this, He has saved Man from spiritual death whether in his life on earth or after his physical death since his spirit shall be in Paradise³²³ after leaving the body.

٢. ***Psychological Death:***

٣٠ "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John ٨: ٤٦)

٣١ "by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison." (١ Peter ٣: ١٩)

٣٢ "but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
(٢ Timothy ١: ١٠)

When Man lost the image of God and his dignity in front of the creation, God came in the image of a human being who had authority over nature.

God has returned this authority to Man, and told him, “I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy,”³³¹ and “No longer do I call you servants. . . but I have called you friends.”³⁴² Besides, we can see this dignity and respect of Man in the lives of saints and their friendship with animals and authority over nature.

Third, who shall renew Man’s nature, which knew evil and was corrupted, granting him a new life?

After Man was created on God’s image in righteousness and holiness, and after he lived with Eve in the Garden of Eden, everything changed after he disobeyed God’s commandment to know evil and have his human nature contaminated with this knowledge.

▪ **Should God eliminate Man’s corrupted nature or forgive him, leaving him in his corruption forever?**

God’s love for Man is unlimited, but His holy nature does not accept sin.

A great Man had a beloved son, who went to school every day. He used to advise him not to eat street food since it is contaminated and can cause him food poisoning that leads to

³³¹ “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke 10: 19)

³⁴² “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends.” (John 15: 15)

death. One day, the son went home to his father very sick, had a fever and began to vomit. He asked him, “Did you eat street food, son?” The son answered, “One of my friends offered me, and I ate.”

Should the father beat his son (to death), blaming him, “Why did you eat though I had warned not to?!”

Or should he say, “Do not be afraid, son; I have forgiven you,” and leave him in his illness that will lead to his death?

Rather, certainly, he would quickly take him to hospital and give him a medicine that would kill the microbe in his guts and grant him a new life.

Similarly, God did not leave Man in the corruption of his nature until he dies with sin, neither did He punish him with eliminating his nature. Instead, He came and took the human nature to renew it and take all our sins in His body.¹³⁵ Therefore, we have received the new nature³⁶² and have been renewed.

▪ **We have received a new nature, so why do we sin again?**

When we received the new nature through the incarnation, the redemption and the resurrection, accepted it through baptism and declared that through faith, our nature was renewed and we were justified³⁷³ from the original sin.

³⁵ “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (1 Corinthians 2: 12)

³⁶ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (1 Corinthians 2: 13)

³⁷ “who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” (Romans 4: 25)

However, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil still exists, so does my freedom to eat of it and the Serpent (Satan) which tempts me to eat of it. Sin exists in the world, Satan still tempts me to sin and I am still free to sin or not. **Therefore, the possibility of falling into sin or not is still there.**

- **Why should I inherit Adam's sin that I did not commit?**

We inherited Adam's sin³⁸⁴ because we are his seed in the same way one gets a genetic disease and passes it to his seed. Similarly, you did not do anything to inherit Adam's sin, but you are only one of his sinner seed. Therefore, you inherited sin.

The same applies to the redemption and the incarnation; you do not do anything but for knowing that God came and died for you, believing that you have been saved from all sins¹³⁹, being baptized and declaring your faith, so you receive salvation for free⁴⁰².

³⁸⁴ “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.” (Romans 5: 12)

³⁹ “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10: 10)

⁴⁰ “Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.” (Romans 5: 18)

- **Is sin inherited? Did I inherit the sin of my father, grandfather, etc.?**

There is a difference between Adam's sin, which is knowing evil after his nature knew no evil at all, and the sins of killing or stealing, which are personal ones.

For example, if someone gets a genetic disease, he passes it to his seed. But, if someone has a headache or the flu, he does not beget a child who has headache or the flu. Adam's sin caused human nature to know sin after being a divine nature that knew neither evil nor sin (We are not asked about this sin, but are saved from it through baptism.) Meanwhile, sins like killing and stealing are personal ones about which everyone will be asked (if he does not repent and is not renewed with receiving the Eucharist.)

- **Has salvation become for all people? When people sin against God's commandments, will God come again to save them?**

All people who accept salvation receive it, and after they do, they have to do works that suit this precious salvation and new nature.

When they fall into sin again, God does not come once more to be crucified, because the sacrifice of the cross is an unlimited one which extends till the end of time and through which

God⁴¹¹ forgives all people starting from Adam and up to the end of life on the earth.

▪ **Should Man be baptized again to accept salvation?**

He is not baptized again because baptism⁴²² is like and a declaration of our death and resurrection with Christ, and He was crucified and risen once only⁴³³. But when we sin, we repent, (repentance is considered as a second baptism) confess our sins and receive the Eucharist from the extended sacrifice of the cross, which exists on the altar: Christ's body and blood. Therefore, we receive the forgiveness of our sins.

▪ **Why was God alone able to save Man and not an angel or a prophet?**

When Man sinned and ate of the tree, the following took place:

١. **He insulted God when he disobeyed the commandment:**

God is the one who can take the form of Man and reconcile him while Man cannot become a god.

٢. **He deserved the sentence to death according to the commandment:**

^{٤١١} "For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." (Romans ٥: ١٧)

^{٤٢٢} "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians ٣: ٢٧)

^{٤٣٣} "For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God." (Romans ٦: ١٠)

It is God alone who does not deserve death since He is righteous. Besides, He is the one who can die and rise from the dead.

۳. **His nature was corrupted by knowing sin:**

It is God alone who can renew the corrupted nature because He alone is the Creator.

Therefore, the savior cannot be:

۱. **An angel:**

Because he is limited and cannot become a god.

۲. **A prophet:**

Because he inherited Adam's nature which was contaminated by sin, so he became worthy of death. Besides, he is unlimited and cannot become a god.

• **Why did God create the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Why did He give me the commandment?**

If God created Adam and put him in the Garden without giving him another choice, but rather locked him inside, would this be called paradise?

If a father prepared for his son a luxurious palace provided with all kinds of amenities, put him inside of it, and did one thing only: locked him from outside and stopped him from going out, would this be called a "palace" or a "prison?"

In order for us to have the freedom of choice whether to live with God or leave Him, God put this tree in order for

us to declare it by choice that we want to live with Him willingly and not forcibly.

When we declare during the period of our test (our life on earth) that we want to live with Him willingly, we will live with Him forever in eternal joy with no need for the existence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

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