**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***Fullness of Deity in Jesus the Christ***

 **Focus on Colossians 2:9**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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**Christ Defined in Colossians 2:9-11**

Evidence of Paul’s description of Jesus are as follows. . .

 **9** For **in Him**

all the **fullness of Deity** dwells in bodily form,

 **10** and **in Him**

**you** have been **made** **complete,**

and **He is the head** over all rule and authority;

 **11** and **in Him**

you were also circumcised

with a circumcision made without hands,

in the removal of the body of the flesh

by the circumcision of Christ;

**Jesus Fully God but Emptied Himself**

The question is how could Jesus, “of the Incarnation time”, be fully God and at the same time empty Himself of certain attributes? Part of the answer is. . . that whatever attributes He emptied himself, those were not attributes that made Him fully God.

Theologians can point to Philippians 2:7 regarding how God “emptied” Himself to become a man. The standard answer here is that God emptied Himself of the ability to be all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-present (Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence of God). Here are the most common verses to support this view:

**1.** Jesus did not know everything (Matthew 24:36).

Jesus said He did not know when the Second Coming was to take place.

**2.** Jesus was limited in His own power (John 5:19).

Jesus said He could not do anything without the Father.

**3.** Jesus’ body could not be in more than one place at one time when he became

flesh (John 1:14, 1 John 4:2).

Jesus was the physical embodiment of God on earth for thirty-three and one-half years, and, at the same time, not physically present in heaven.

**Now we go back to the observation that whatever Jesus emptied Himself did not diminish His “Full” God nature.**

 So, what made Jesus fully God in the Flesh? **In addition to love and His sinless nature (1 John 3:5)** . . . there are attributes of God’s nature that set Jesus apart as God, even though Jesus was in the flesh, that no other being possessed. We read in John and Matthew that **all things** had been handed to Jesus during the Incarnation time. What does “all things” mean? I see that “all things” pertains to being the fullness of God in the flesh. In other words. . . Jesus did and said things that distinguished Him as full Deity.

**John 13:3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,

**Matthew 11:27** "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

**We cannot list all of Jesus’ Godly attributes here that made Him fully God. Consider these:**

1. **Jesus fully God can be the Creator and Clarifier of the Law.**

In the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5) we see Jesus bring original intent to specific parts of the Law that the Jews misunderstood. Remember that Jesus makes these corrections right after He declares who will be in the kingdom of heaven (The Beatitudes) and declared that he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill the Law (Greek: pleroo – to make full complete). Therefore, Jesus does not rewrite the Law, He clarifies the Law. From a Jewish perspective. . .only God can do and say these things.

 There are seven corrections of understanding that Jesus makes “but I say to you”. Matthew 5:22,28,32,34,39,44 and the seventh (v.48) is a charge to be complete. Many English translations use the word “perfect” for the Greek “teleioo”. This is the same word used in 1 John 4:17, when Believers are described as God abiding in them in order to be made “complete” (perfected) in His love.

 Notice the same meaning (to make full, complete) in the two Greek words pleroo and teleioo. The Hebrew word for peace is “shalom” used in Isaiah 9:6 for Jesus’ prophetic title “Prince of Peace”. The principle meaning for the “shalom” is “completeness”. Therefore, to be in a perfect relationship with God there is complete peace. This is what the Cross accomplished for those who will humble themselves to God.

 To the Hebrews, the number 7 is the number representing Divine completion. There are numerous online articles on this fact.

<https://www.thetorah.com/article/seven-the-biblical-number>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Significance_of_numbers_in_Judaism>

**Jesus claims to be fully God by saying**. . . “*But I say to you*”. Only God can claim to be the judge (clarifier) of His Law and moral code and the Jews knew this. That is why they eventually killed Him.

**Therefore, God, as Jesus, is the One who determines and defines what is good. Jesus is the God of Creation and sets the moral standards for the creation and life.** All the teachings (parables) of Jesus were about moral standards of life in how to conduct relationships with God and neighbor. From giving the “woman at the well” eternal-life-water. . .to saying, *“It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."* (Matthew. 15:11) . . . Jesus is claiming to be God and determines the moral standard for life.

1. **Jesus as full Deity is the Judge of Moral Conduct.**

Since Jesus is not only the Creator of good and what is moral. . . He is also “**The” Judge** of creation and life from the beginning of time to the end. **Jesus during the incarnation was the judge and clarifier of His moral code**. We see this when Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple (Matthew 21:12) . . . and when Jesus judges the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23.

Jesus declared in the “Apocalypse” (revealing, uncovering) of John, that He is the Alpha and Omega. This title makes the declaration that Jesus, even in the Incarnation, was/is the judge with all rule and authority. This is fully God.

**Revelation 1:8** "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

**Revelation 22:13** "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

**Revelation 21:6** Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

**Isaiah 41:4** "Who has performed and accomplished it, Calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He. "

1. **The Words Jesus Spoke Judges -**

**Only the fullness of God can make eternal Judgement.**

It is true Jesus did not come the first time to judge the world for an eternal disposition. Jesus is the Judge at the Great White Thone judgement described in Revelation 20:11ff.

**John 12:46-48** 46 "I have come as Light into the world,

so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

 47 "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them,

I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

 48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings,

has one who judges him; **the word I spoke** is what will judge him at the last day.

(See also John 3:17)

 So, what judges us now? God’s Word. The words Jesus spoke during the Incarnation. And Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to convict people of their sins (John 16:8).

1. **Jesus’ full Deity-Spirit limited? No.**

With this said. . . clarification needs to be made about the abilities of Jesus’ Spirit. And yes, just to be clear, Jesus’ Spirit is the Holy Spirit. Question. . . could Jesus’ Spirit be more than one place during His earthly ministry time? Before the Resurrection ministry, Jesus said. . .

"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I’m there in their midst" (Matthew 18:20).

 Hence, the “Spirit of Christ” was not limited during the Incarnation.

We read in Mark 14:26, “*Not my will but Yours*”, which is Jesus’ statement highlighting the “God act” in a limited body. And with this statement, Jesus is witnessing to us that in our own limited temporal bodies, we too can surrender ourselves to the Spirit of God pursuing His will for our lives. The physical body of Jesus was limited but not the Spirit. Jesus said, “I and the Father are One” (John 10:30). Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh (in body), and the Jewish leadership took great offense to His statements.

**John 10:33** The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because **You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."**

1. **Jesus’ full Deity is the only Being to Reconcile Fallen Humanity to God -**

**Jesus. . . in the fullness of God forgives (Forgiveness = Reconciliation)**

Prior to Paul’s statement in chapter 2 of Colossians concerning the fullness of God dwelling in Jesus. . . Paul had already defined the substance and mission of Jesus the Christ.

**Colossians 1:19** For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

20 and through Him to **reconcile** all things to Himself,

having **made peace** **through the blood of His cross;**

through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven

 These two verses point to the main central desires of God’s love and the Incarnation. (1) God desires to reconcile everyone to Him. All people broke the life-covenant with God, but God chose the act of the substitutionary spilling of blood on the Cross to make payment for people’s sin that started with Adam. (Romans 3:10). (2) This “God act” intentionally demonstrates God’s desire to create peace with God and our neighbor.

Only God could have ordained human events for almost two thousand years to make the Incarnation and its purpose come true. Consider these events and people God used to carry-out His redemptive plan.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), came to the City of Peace Jerusalem or Salem. . . where Abram paid tithes to King Melchizedek (Genesis 14 – about 1950 BC.). Salem/Shalem, like Shalom in Hebrew, means peace. This location is also called Mt. Moriah and where God instructed Abram to bring Isaac (Genesis 22). Remember that at Mt. Moriah is where God provided a ram in substitution for Isaac for the sacrifice. Eventually, the Temple (Solomon’s Temple 950 BC) was built on Mt. Moriah housing the Holy of Holies containing the Ark of the Covenant. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would sprinkle blood over the Mercy Seat which was the lid for the Ark of the Covenant. Unknown to the High Priest this simulated the blood Jesus would eventually spill on the Cross. All of this is orchestrated by God to bring peace to the world.

**John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (Isaiah 9:7)

**John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

During the three and one-half years of ministry, one of the things Jesus did that really chapped the religious leaders was to forgive sins. To the Jews, this was only an authority retained and exercised by God. So, the Jews are correct. Only God can forgive sin. And God incarnate, as Jesus, forgave sin.

**Matthew 9:2-6**

2 And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic,

"Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."

 3 And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes."

 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said,

"Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?

 5 "Which is easier, to say,

'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk '?

6 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

To be clear, Jesus did commission the disciples (after breathing His Holy Spirit into them) in John 19:20ff. This is a commissioning to all believers to “declare” to people who surrender to God by faith that their sins are forgiven by the authority of God. And if a person does not surrender to God, then it is declared to them that their sins are not forgiven. By blowing His Spirit into the Disciples, Jesus is demonstrating that He commissions all Spirit-Filled Believers, and there is not other kind (Romans 8:9), to tell/declare to all people they are forgiven (or not) of their sins. Obviously, after the Ascension of Jesus, there is not any record of the disciples going around saying by their authority (in their own name) sins are forgiven. In fact, Peter always says, “in the name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38, 3:6,16, 4:10). Peter never claims any authority to forgive sin.

**Luke 23:42-43 [Jesus, on His Cross, forgives the criminal beside Him]**

42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

 43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

**John 1:28-29 [ John the Baptist identifies Jesus]**

28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

**Mark 2:16-17 [Jesus came to heal sinners]**

16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

 17 And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

**It’s All a God Act**

No doubt, God placed Himself, as Jesus, in a human physical body that had limitations. The human body is fragile and can be extinguished by a number of natural events that occur routinely in a fallen world where the whole creation calls-out to be redeemed (Romans 8:19-22). In addition, the human body can be subjected to mistreatment, like the Romans did to Jesus in causing His temporal death on the Cross.

Scripture provides reasons for these limitations in Philippians 2:8. *God, incarnated as Jesus was in appearance as a man, . .* .[now the reason is stated]*. . . but He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* This act was completed to show God’s power that Jesus possessed. Only God can Incarnate himself to be a “limited-in-body-man” in order to be the suffering servant that intentionally goes to the Cross to pay the price for all humanity’s sins. That is a “God act”.

**AMEN**