

1. THE GOD-MAN'S SYMPHONY

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“Like a composer conducting a score he wrote himself, Jesus orchestrated all the events of His death.” (Tom Simcox) (¹)

Simcox proposes that Jesus was able to control all the events surrounding his death, as though *he himself was reading them from his very own predictions recorded in the Old Testament!*

Simcox would have us believe that whenever the boy Jesus, the teenager Jesus, the young adult Jesus, the man Jesus, read the Hebrew Bible it was like being his own composer and conductor reading from a score he himself had already written before ever being born as the “God-Man”.

Most trinitarians teach that God the Father planned the work of redemption, that Christ was the agreeable and submissive agent who volunteered to carry it out, and that “God the Spirit” was the enabler. But in all my years I have never heard nor seen any trinitarian make this astounding claim that Christ prophesied his own death and wrote it down in advance through the mouth of the prophets, and then orchestrated it all whilst here. It’s not orthodox trinitarian doctrine.

What **Simcox** suggests is problematic on any number of levels, not least of which is that he is writing to **Friends of Israel** in a mission to reach Jewish people for Christ. True, the Jewish rabbis taught the notional (or ideal) pre-existence of the Messiah, which is to say, they believed the Messiah existed in the mind — and thus in the plan of God — before time began. But, they never thought he was already personally existing with God before creation. (²)

For the rest of this article, I shall deal with the first major problem I see with **Simcox’s** theology as expressed in his devotional piece.

FIRST: THE BIBLE NOWHERE TELLS US JESUS CHRIST COMPOSED THE SACRED PAGES OF SCRIPTURE AS THOUGH THEY WERE HIS OWN DEvised AND PREPLANNED AUTOBIOGRAPHY

¹ The title of my article is **Tom Simcox’s** devotional piece that appeared in the March/April edition of **Israel My Glory** (published bi-monthly by **The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministries, Inc.**). **Tom Simcox** is Church Ministries training coordinator and Bible teacher for the **Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry**.

² For a complete treatment of this theme see my first article titled **JESUS’ PRE-EXISTENCE – Literal Or Ideal?** Under the first main sub-heading **God, Jesus & the Holy Spirit**.

Our Lord Jesus said: **If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words (John 5:46-47)?**

This statement by Jesus is the conclusion of a defence in which he appeals to three **independent** witnesses in support of his own testimony. It's addressed to those who were rejecting his Messianic credentials to the nation of Israel and it tells us a lot about our Lord's view of the Hebrew Bible and his own messianic mission.

In **verse 31** Jesus states that if he was the only one testifying about himself then, **"my witness is not true"**. Jesus tells the skeptics that **John the Baptist** had given his public witness to him, but they had rejected John's testimony that Jesus was their long-awaited and oft-promised Messiah.

Jesus then appeals to a second, but far **greater witness** than **John** — his Father in heaven. He says his words and works were being carried out through the authenticating power of God his Father; **"The very works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father has sent [commissioned and empowered] me ... but Him you do not believe"** (v.36f).

The third witness Jesus appeals to is **Moses** — **"for he wrote about me"**. Now here is the interesting thing. Our Lord distinguishes the writings of Moses (**"the Scriptures"** v.39) from the words which he himself was currently speaking. He is appealing to the prophetic testimony about himself in the writings of Moses.

Jesus tells those skeptics that **I do not accuse you to the Father**, but **Moses accuses you (v.45)!** *The whole point of Jesus' appeal to **Moses** is that Israel's great Law-giver was an independent witness!* Therefore, if **Moses** spoke the words which Jesus himself had personally inspired him to write down, then Jesus was being duplicitous — that scenario would make Moses nothing more than a ventriloquist's puppet mouthing Jesus' own dictated 'composition'!

No, no, no. Jesus is unambiguously saying that, if they understood His Father's purpose as expressed in the writings of Moses, then they had no other option but to believe what he was now telling them concerning himself.

But is **Simcox** correct when he alleges that the "God-Man" Jesus **orchestrated the events of his death**? Well, after those events in **Acts 2:22-24** the apostle Peter announced on the Day of Pentecost; **Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — Him, being delivered by**

the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death ...

Here we have a man, Jesus of Nazareth accredited by God and who was delivered up to death by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. The God — the definite article is there in the Greek text — is the sole Composer and Conductor in the great drama of the ages! Peter follows this thought further on in the next chapter;

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which [the] God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled ... (Acts 3: 17-18). He repeats this assertion again in v. 21 by saying that heaven is now the dwelling place of the risen and exalted Lord Messiah until the restoration of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Nothing could be plainer. It was Yahweh God Who was the Great Composer Who inspired His prophets to foretell what His Christ was to suffer. And it was God Who fulfilled it all — He is the Conductor ... Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

For truly against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predetermined to be done (Acts 4: 27-28).

The Great Composer and Conductor of all these events is identified as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob **and** the God of our fathers (Acts 3:13). One thing is for sure, **our Lord Jesus is never ever the God of our fathers** — yet alone called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob!

Read it for yourself. It's always Israel's One Adonai Yahweh, Who is the God who raised Jesus from the dead and Who is sovereignly working out His own predetermined purpose through His servant Jesus (Acts 3:13-15)! *Not a word about the man Jesus playing out his own symphonic composition!*

Peter believed the same thing right up to the end of his life; He (i.e. Christ) indeed was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake (1 Pet 1: 20). Note: Jesus **was destined** before the foundation of the world. That verb **was destined** is in the passive mood the scholars call the Divine Passive, which simply means that God was the Subject, the Active One, Who was sovereignly moving the events along. It was all the Father's symphony! (³)

³ Προγινώσκω / *proginōskō* The primary meaning is to know beforehand, hence to choose or elect beforehand, that is, to predestine.

MORE APOSTOLIC CONFIRMATION

In his benediction to the Romans **Paul** prays to the God (the Greek reads to Him or to the One) Who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Messiah according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic Scriptures is made known to the nations, according to the commandment of the eternal God — to the only wise God, be the glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen (Rom 16:25-27). (⁴)

The one and only wise God is the composer and fulfiller of all that's been accomplished through Jesus Christ in accordance with His previously hidden plan as outlined in the holy Scriptures. Paul reiterates it a few verses later;

Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in [the] God who created all things ... This was *in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord* ...(Eph. 3: 8-11).

Again, nothing could be more straightforward. The eternal Creator from the beginning of His creation predetermined all the events surrounding the still predicted future coming of Messiah Jesus. He (singular personal pronoun) is the God Who carried out the dream hidden in His heart for the Messiah Jesus to be the agent of our redemption . This secret (mystery) kept hidden in the Father's own heart is now manifested for the world to see.

The Book of Hebrews also attests to the fact that; Long ago the God Who spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us in His Son (1:1-2). It is evident that the Son of God did **not** speak through the OT prophets, or by any other means. We hear the Son's voice uniquely and only in these last days. *Christ himself said nothing in the OT times!*

There is not a word about Jesus orchestrating his own life and death in any of these texts! Jesus was the obedient Son, the submissive Servant, the faithful Witness, the ideal human being, always looking to obey His Father's revealed will and plan. His response to His Father's pre-planned destiny was one of obediently aligning his steps in agreement with His Father's eternal purpose.

⁴ Here the proclamation of Jesus Christ is the Subjective Genitive which is best translated as Jesus' own preaching, — that is, what Jesus himself preached and believed. The idea is not so much that Paul is preaching about Jesus but his content is what Jesus himself had been teaching! Paul is preaching the same Gospel Jesus proclaimed.

YAHWEH GOD CREATED JESUS IN MARY TO FULFILL HIS ETERNAL PLAN!

OT Scripture specifically affirms Yahweh's election of His Servant - Messiah long before he came into being. For example in **Isaiah 49:1-13:- Yahweh has called me from the womb; From the matrix of my mother He has made mention of my name ... Thus says Yahweh Who formed me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him ...**

Israel's restoration, and by extension the salvation of **the Gentiles ... to the ends of the earth (vs.6)** were all planned by the LORD Yahweh God Himself, Who throughout Scripture is God the Father. And note how God says of Yeshua the Messiah ... **"Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My elect, whom My Soul loves; I have laid My Spirit upon him ..."** (Is. 42: 1ff and Cf Matt 3:17; 17:5).

So, the NT calls Jesus **the elect one, chosen by God and precious** having been **foreordained before the foundation of the world (1 Pet 2:4; 1:20)**. Without labouring the point, throughout his whole earthly walk, our Lord's redemptive mission was carried out by the express design and will of His heavenly Father Who created him in the womb of Mary his Mother at and for that moment in time.

At the conclusion of the story in the **Book of Revelation, chapter five**, we see the One Who sits on the Throne, the Almighty God, presenting the sealed scroll containing the story of creation's salvation to one described as **the Lamb who had been slain** — but who has now been raised and glorified to the Father's right hand. He is the only one in all the Universe worthy to receive that scroll and break its seals. That scroll contains the story of the plan of God finally brought to completion for the world through the obedient agency Lamb of God.

Jesus himself would be aghast to think anybody would attribute the events of his life and especially his death and resurrection to his own control and Divine powers! He knew His Father had composed the symphony of redemption and that His God had sovereignly conducted the whole plan as outlined in the prophetic Scriptures.

In God's eternal purpose, Christ was crucified for our salvation before the world began: **And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (the Beast) whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).**

Jesus the Messiah is designated **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**. Though still way into the future, it's put in God's prophetic past tense. Theologians call this prolepsis because God's future is so certain it's already considered completed.

CHRISTIANS ARE ALSO SAID TO HAVE BEEN IN GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN!

The foreknowledge by which God predestined Jesus is the exact same foreknowledge that chose us in Messiah! Christians are **the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father** just as our Lord Messiah **indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world (Cf 1 Peter 1: 2 and 1:20)!! (⁵)**

Oh what a glorious privilege is ours in Christ Jesus to become participants in God's predestined purpose of the ages! How significant is the bride of Christ.

The only difference between our Christian calling and the calling of our Lord Jesus Christ is that God specifically prophesied the details of his death long before his birth — whereas the Church's is a corporate calling with many individual stories. We do not know exactly how our individual lives will pan out —how we will die, but Jesus did.

CONCLUSION: BIG PROBLEMS!

The notion that Jesus himself composed his own story creates a number of serious difficulties for **Tom Simcox**.

Firstly, given his trinitarian belief, one wonders what he makes of the statement that **the prophetic word / Scriptures never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke / wrote as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21)?**

Trinitarian belief maintains that the Holy Spirit is the third Person in the Trinity, with His own unique role. And here is a clear statement that the prophets of Israel spoke as they were inspired and motivated by the Holy Spirit — not by Jesus Christ! (⁶)

This one statement by **the apostle Peter** should be enough to prove that Jesus did not write his own music score for the Scriptures are said to have originated by the **Holy Spirit**. Is **Simcox** aware that it is a fundamental trinitarian position that the Persons of the Trinity and ***their respective roles must not be confused?*** (⁷)

The second big problem is that if **Simcox** is right, then Jesus is lifted right up out of our human experience. He really is not one of us, for none of us has the advantage of being a "God-Man" calling the shots! You and I must walk by faith in God's promises, and not by sight, but If Jesus was simply following his own pre-recorded symphonic score, then he was walking by his own foresight and not by faith.

⁵ The words **foreknowledge** and **foreordained** are exactly the same Greek word **προγινώσκω** *proginōskō*.

⁶ The capital 'H' for **Holy Spirit** is the translator's preference, but not mandated. The capital 'S' for **Spirit** is fine because it's God's own Spirit doing the carrying and inspiring.

⁷ The Athanasian Creed articulates this by stating **"we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance"**. Trinitarianism holds that while the three persons share the same divine essence, **each person has a unique role and character within the Godhead.**

A “God-Man” theology cancels Jesus the Messiah right out of our own human experience, whereas the Bible calls him the Forerunner, the Pioneer or Trailblazer, of our faith. Jesus walked by the same trust which you and I must.

We determine the truth of a doctrine by its fruit, its practical implications. Daily we must choose to live by what the word of God says about us in Christ. Every day we must affirm who we are in union with Christ and what God says He has done for us, what He has given us, and what He promises to finally do for us.

We are called to walk in the same faith Jesus lived by, and who unreservedly trusted His Father’s promises, predictions, purposes and eternal plan.

We are called to walk in the same knowledge as our Lord Jesus did, knowing that God’s Word is **a lamp for our feet and a light for our way (Ps 119:105)**.

By faith — in spite of the many contrary appearances — we rejoice that all things are working together for good because we love God and are **the called according to His purpose (Rom 8: 28)**.

By faith we sing in the midst of sufferings and trials knowing, as Jesus did, that God the Father has laid up for us an inheritance that is unblemished, unfading and incorruptible, and that one day we shall enter the glory of the coming new age (**1 Pet 1: 3ff; Rom 8: 22ff**).

By faith we know the secret of His will hidden for long ages past but now revealed, that, **in the administration of the fullness of the times He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth (Eph 1: 9f)**.

God the Father is the Composer of His own symphony! We await the *crescendo*!

Against all the odds, against all contrary appearances, against all the winds and the waves whistling around our ears, against all which our natural senses bombard us with, we are in the boat with Jesus and he is our Lord Messiah commanding the elements. Like those disciples when the great calm took effect, we fall in awe before him to confess, ***“Truly this is the God-Man’s Symphony!”***

Wait a minute! Hold on! NO! Such incongruity! Rather do we confess as those who knew him, saw him, touched him, ***“Truly, you are the Son of God” (Matt 14: 33)*** — which is to say, This is God’s anointed King of Israel (and of the world) who every day of his life walked by faith and took up his cross to follow His Father’s will. This is the Son whom God has highly exalted to His own right hand — and we are seated with him in the heavenly places according to God’s predestined plan awaiting the grand *crescendo*! **To the only wise God, be the glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.**

