

Essay 05 - The Christological Conclusion

Apostolic Witness and Creedal Pressure

A theological essay on the Adamic Man debate, the God/Man formulation, the Unitarian critique, the full Christological arc, and the church's need for spiritual readiness to be a Bride ready for the Groom.

Foreword

This document began as a critique of inherited Christological language, especially the way later creeds and councils framed Jesus as “God and man” through metaphysical categories that were not the native form of apostolic proclamation. Yet the argument has also grown beyond a simple rejection of creedal Christianity. The central question is not merely whether later councils used philosophical language, nor whether institutional religion has often confused loyalty to formulas with loyalty to Christ. The deeper question is whether Scripture itself presents a larger Christological movement—a whole arc—that cannot be reduced either to abstract metaphysics or to a merely Adamic, post-Bethlehem beginning.

The purpose of this essay is to encapsulate the five related Essays on the topic of Christology and form a concluding summary on the preparedness of the Bride the Church for the return of the Bride Groom. There are several tensions held together that bring this series to some finality. It affirms that Jesus is genuinely human: obedient, dependent on the Father, filled by the Spirit, suffering, tempted, crucified, and raised. It also argues that the apostolic witness reaches farther back and higher up than a simple Adamic model can contain. Hebrews, John, Paul, Peter, and Colossians present Christ in relation to divine speech, creation, prophetic inspiration, incarnation, atonement, resurrection, exaltation, heavenly priesthood, and Spirit-mediated life. When those witnesses are concatenated rather than isolated, the result is not a static metaphysical diagram but a living arc.

The essay also warns that even correct doctrine can become spiritually dangerous when it becomes institutional self-protection. Revelation's warnings to the seven churches show that a church can have reputation, structure, language, and confidence while still being blind, compromised, loveless, or lukewarm. Therefore the “so what” of this study is not simply that the full arc is a better explanation. The so what is that the Christ who was active in prophetic revelation, entered human obedience, suffered, died, rose, reigns, intercedes, and walks among the lampstands now calls the church to repentance, holiness, discernment, and readiness.

Summary

This essay argues that the debate over Jesus should not be flattened into only two choices: later creedal metaphysics on one side or a merely human Adamic Messiah on the other. The apostolic

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writings present a more demanding pattern. Jesus is truly human, but his humanity belongs inside a larger movement that begins with divine speech and Old Testament revelatory agency, enters the world through incarnation and obedient suffering, passes through death and resurrection, and continues in exalted priestly ministry.

The document first examines the conflict between the God/Man formulation and the Adamic Man reading. It then considers the boat scene in Matthew 14, the Peter factor, and Acts 2:22 as evidence for delegated divine authority. It critiques the rise of institutional narratives, pagan metaphysical vocabulary, and imperial enforcement. It then develops a whole-arc response to strict Unitarianism by drawing together Hebrews, Peter, John, Paul, and Colossians. Finally, it applies Revelation's warnings to the seven churches to argue that doctrinal claims must be tested by visible fruit, Spirit-life, repentance, and readiness.

The main thesis is that later creeds may preserve fragments of the truth, but they become dangerous if they replace the living apostolic arc with institutional compliance. Likewise, Unitarian readings may rightly stress Jesus' humanity, obedience, and Adamic role, but they become too narrow if they begin the Christological story only at Mary's womb. The full arc requires both Scripture and spiritual consequence: the Christ who is confessed must also be followed.

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THE CRITIQUE OF CHRISTOLOGICAL CREEDS AND INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVES

Date: June 21, 2026

Topic: The Adamic Man vs. The God-Man Debate, Pagan Metaphysics, and the Spiritual Readiness of the Modern Church

Part 1: The Core Conflict (God-Man vs. Adamic Man)

The debate over the nature of Jesus Christ centers on whether he was fully God and fully man (Orthodox/Trinitarian) or a perfect human like the original, unfallen Adamic man (Unitarian/Adamic).

Assertions That Jesus Was God Implication and not Direct Scriptural Reference

- **The Divine Titles:** Jesus claimed divine authority (e.g., "Before Abraham was, I am") and accepted homage from his disciples.
- **The Resurrection:** Proponents argue his physical resurrection validated his claims to divine authority.
- **Sinless Perfection:** Depicted as completely without sin—a trait unique to a divine nature.
- **The Cosmic Creator:** Early writings state the universe was created through him, asserting his pre-existence.

Assertions That Jesus Was JUST a Man (Like Adam)

- **Explicit Subordination:** Jesus stated his power came entirely from the Father ("the Father is greater than I").
- **Human Limitations:** The texts show Jesus experiencing regular human limitations (hunger, tiredness, sorrow, death).
- **Lack of Omniscience:** Scriptures show Jesus admitting to limitations in knowledge, such as not knowing the hour of his second coming.
- **The "Second Adam" Typology:** Paul's letters describe Jesus as the "Last Adam," implying he was a perfect, sinless human archetype meant to succeed where the first Adam failed.

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- **Strict Monotheism:** Critics argue Trinitarian views violate the absolute oneness of God; Jesus always prayed to God as a separate entity.
 - **Historical Evolution:** Skeptics argue that the idea of Jesus being God was a later theological development that evolved decades after his death.
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Part 2: Case Study — The Boat Scene and the "Peter Factor"

Textual Analysis of Matthew 14:32–33

A primary battleground for this debate occurs when Jesus calms the storm, and the disciples bow down (*proskuneo*).

- **The Adamic/Unitarian View:** Jesus was completely passive in this moment. The disciples' reaction was an involuntary reflex of shock and adrenaline. Furthermore, they shouted, "*Truly you are the Son of God*"—a first-century Jewish title for the Messiah (an exalted human king), not Yahweh Himself.
- **The Trinitarian View:** Within strict Jewish monotheism, allowing someone to bow before you without correcting them is an implicit claim to divinity. Because Jesus did not stop them (unlike angels or apostles who violently rejected such honors), his passivity functions as consent.

The "Peter Factor"

In the same account, Peter *also* steps out of the boat and walks on the water at Jesus' command (**Matthew 14:28–29**).

- If walking on water inherently proves divinity, then Peter would have to be a deity or a demi-god.
 - This proves that the miracle is a display of **delegated divine authority** given by God to human beings.
 - It mirrors the Old Testament prophets (like Moses or Elijah) who acted as conduits for God's power. As the Apostle Peter later summarized in **Acts 2:22**: "*Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did through him...*"
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Part 3: The Rise of "Narrativologists" and Pagan Metaphysics

The shift from local elders (**presbyters**) to powerful regional bosses (**bishops**) was driven by intense political maneuvering and the adoption of **Pagan Greek Metaphysics** rather than pure scripture.

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The Weaponization of Creedal Narratives

- **Enforcing Control:** To consolidate power, top-tier bishops standardized a single story to use as a legal loyalty test.
- **Imperial Enforcement:** In 380 AD, Emperor Theodosius I issued the *Edict of Thessalonica*, making Trinitarianism the state religion and branding unaligned thinkers as "foolish madmen" subject to imperial punishment. Might dictated what was legally considered "right."

The Infusion of Greek Philosophy

The vocabulary used to define the "God-man" was lifted straight out of pagan Greek philosophy (Platonism and Aristotelianism) to make Christianity respectable to educated Romans:

1. **Ousia (Substance/Essence):** A term used by Plato and Aristotle to describe underlying metaphysical reality. The creeds forced Jesus into the framework of being *Homoousios* (of the same substance) with the Father.
2. **The Divine Emanation Model:** In Neo-Platonism, the supreme God is too distant to touch matter, so He uses secondary divine layers (the *Logos*) to bridge the gap.
3. **Pagan Comfort with God-Men:** To a first-century Jew, a man being literally God was a horrifying blasphemy. To a Roman pagan, the concept of gods taking human form or fathering demi-gods (like Hercules) was completely normal and culturally attractive.

Note: Calling the original Adam a "prophet" to patch these arguments together mixes up distinct biblical roles. Adam had no congregation or prophecy; he was simply the original human prototype who failed a direct command.

Part 4: Deconstructing "Kenosis" (Laid-Down Divinity)

A common theological compromise suggests that a pre-existent divine Spirit "laid down his divinity" to become an Adamic man. However, strict Biblical Unitarianism rejects this for three reasons:

1. **No Literal Pre-existence:** Biblical Unitarians believe Jesus' life literally began in the womb of Mary, just like every other human. The "Word" (*Logos*) in John 1 is interpreted as God's *plan, purpose, or wisdom*—not a literal pre-existent person.
2. **Divinity Cannot Be Paused:** By definition, God is immortal, infinite, and unchangeable. If a being loses omniscience and dies, he has ceased to possess the essential traits of God. The "Prince and the Pauper" analogy breaks down because a human prince and a human pauper are the same species; a divine being and a human being are fundamentally different natures.
3. **The Holy Spirit as the Source:** God the Father directly generated Jesus' human life via the Holy Spirit. He was born with a 100% human spirit and body—free from the inherited fallen nature of the first Adam, making him a true, genuine human archetype.

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Part 4A: Who Are the Unitarians, and Why Do They Oppose the God/Man Jesus?

In this debate, “Unitarians” are Christians who insist that God is one person—the Father alone—and that Jesus is God’s uniquely begotten human Messiah rather than a second divine person who became man. This category includes older Socinian streams, later rationalist Unitarians, and modern “Biblical Unitarians” who argue that their view preserves Jewish monotheism, the genuine humanity of Jesus, and the plain distinction between God and His Son.

Their opposition to the God/Man formulation usually rests on several claims: first, that Scripture calls the Father “the only true God”; second, that Jesus prays to God, obeys God, receives authority from God, and is raised by God; third, that “Son of God” is read as a messianic title rather than an ontological statement of deity; and fourth, that later creedal language such as “same substance” is viewed as a post-biblical metaphysical overlay. In that framework, Jesus is not God entering humanity, but the last Adam—the fully obedient human image-bearer through whom God restores what Adam lost.

The key weakness in this approach may be that it begins the Christological arc too late. If the arc starts only at Mary’s womb, then Hebrews must be read almost entirely through appointment, exaltation, and messianic inheritance. But Hebrews appears to begin higher and earlier: the Son is associated with God’s final speech, radiance, exact representation, cosmic agency, sustaining power, purification, enthronement, and superiority to angels. The question, then, is whether Hebrews is merely describing a human Messiah after exaltation, or whether it is tracing a longer movement from pre-incarnate glory, through incarnation and suffering, into priestly enthronement.

Unitarians commonly resist that longer arc by interpreting “pre-existence” as ideal or notional rather than personal. The “Word” is God’s plan, wisdom, promise, or self-expression; the Son exists in God’s purpose before he exists as a person. Likewise, Hebrews 1:2 is often handled by arguing that “ages” refers to the new redemptive order rather than the material universe, and that God “made the ages” through the Son in the sense of organizing the messianic age around him. This preserves their Adamic Christology, but it can under-read the cumulative force of Hebrews when Hebrews 1:2, 1:3, 1:10–12, 2:9–10, 5:7–10, and 10:5–10 are connected as one arc.

A stronger critique, therefore, is not merely that Unitarians deny “Jesus is God,” but that they often do not concatenate the whole Christological sequence: pre-incarnate agency or glory, incarnation into obedient humanity, suffering and priestly formation, death, resurrection, exaltation, and continuing heavenly ministry. Hebrews does not present Christ only as an Adamic man empowered by God; it also presents him as the Son through whom God’s final revelation and redemptive order are mediated. If that entire arc is kept together, the “last Adam” motif remains important, but it may not be sufficient by itself to explain the full scope of Hebrews’ Son-Christology.

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Peter's "Spirit of Christ" and the Old Testament Arc

Peter adds another important pressure point against a Christology that begins only at Bethlehem. In 1 Peter 1:10–11, the prophets are described as searching what “the Spirit of Christ” within them was indicating when it testified beforehand to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. Peter does not merely say that the prophets predicted Christ; he says that the Spirit active in them was the Spirit of Christ. This places Christ-related divine agency inside the Old Testament prophetic economy before the incarnation.

A Unitarian explanation normally argues that “Spirit of Christ” means the Holy Spirit speaking about the future Messiah, not the personal pre-existence of the Messiah himself. On that reading, the Spirit is called “of Christ” because Christ is the subject, goal, or later possessor of the Spirit after resurrection and exaltation. This explanation protects the Unitarian claim that Jesus began as a human person in Mary’s womb and that Old Testament prophecy was oriented toward him without requiring him to have been personally active before his birth.

The difficulty is that Peter’s wording naturally supports the broader arc rather than a merely anticipatory one. If the Spirit in the prophets is identified as the Spirit of Christ, then Christ is not only the later object of prophecy but is also bound to the divine source and agency behind prophecy. When this is placed beside Hebrews’ language about the Son as God’s final speech, the radiance of God’s glory, the exact representation of His being, the one through whom the ages were made, and the enthroned priestly Son, the New Testament pattern becomes harder to reduce to Adamic appointment alone.

This strengthens the “whole arc” argument: Old Testament prophetic inspiration, pre-incarnate Sonship or divine agency, incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, exaltation, and heavenly priesthood belong together. The Unitarian view can explain each text separately by appeal to agency, anticipation, or ideal pre-existence, but the cumulative pattern of Peter and Hebrews suggests a deeper plurality within God’s self-revelation: God speaks, the Spirit testifies, and that Spirit is named as the Spirit of Christ.

Scripture Chain for the Whole Christological Arc

The whole-arc reading is strongest when the texts are not isolated from one another. Hebrews 1:1–3 begins with God’s final speech in the Son, describes the Son as the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, says that God made the ages through him, and then moves to purification for sins and enthronement at the right hand of Majesty. This passage alone contains the arc in compressed form: revelation, divine identity, cosmic agency, atonement, and exaltation.

1 Peter 1:10–11 strengthens the same pattern by reaching backward into the Old Testament prophets. Peter says that the prophets were searching what person or time “the Spirit of Christ” within them was indicating when he testified beforehand to the sufferings of Christ and the

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glories to follow. The sequence is important: the Spirit of Christ is active in the prophets, the sufferings of Christ are foretold, and the later glories are anticipated. This does not let Christology begin merely with Mary's womb; it places Christ-related divine agency inside the prophetic life of Israel.

Philippians 2:5–11 adds the descent-and-ascent movement: Christ exists in the form of God, does not exploit equality with God, takes the form of a servant, is born in human likeness, humbles himself to death on a cross, and is then highly exalted so that every knee bows and every tongue confesses him as Lord. This text is often disputed, but as part of the larger pattern it fits the same whole arc: pre-incarnate glory, incarnation, obedient suffering, death, exaltation, and universal lordship.

John 1:1–18 also belongs in this chain. The Word is with God and is God, all things come into being through the Word, the Word becomes flesh, and the incarnate Word reveals the Father. A Unitarian reading commonly treats the Word as God's impersonal plan or wisdom, but John's movement from divine Word, to creation, to incarnation, to personal revelation parallels the same arc seen in Hebrews and Philippians.

Colossians 1:15–20 provides another compact summary. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, the one in whom and through whom all things were created, the one in whom all things hold together, the head of the body, the firstborn from the dead, and the reconciler of all things through the blood of his cross. The arc moves from creation to cosmic preservation, then to death, resurrection, ecclesial headship, and universal reconciliation.

1 Corinthians 10:4 adds a further Old Testament link by saying that Israel drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, "and the rock was Christ." However one explains Paul's typology, he is willing to locate Christ within Israel's wilderness story, not merely after the birth of Jesus. Together with Peter's "Spirit of Christ" in the prophets, this suggests that the apostolic writers saw Christ as present in the older covenant story in more than a merely predictive sense.

Hebrews 10:5–10 then shows the incarnation as obedient mission: "a body you prepared for me." The Son enters the world to do the will of God, replacing the old sacrificial order through the offering of his body once for all. This is crucial because the whole-arc argument does not deny the real humanity of Jesus; it insists that the real humanity belongs inside a larger divine mission that begins before incarnation and reaches its priestly fulfillment after resurrection.

Summary Table: How the Scriptures Support the Full Arc

Stage of the Arc	Key Scriptures	What the Text Contributes	Pressure on the Unitarian Reading
Old Testament prophetic agency	1 Peter 1:10–11	The Spirit active in the prophets is identified as the Spirit of Christ,	Christ is not only the later topic of prophecy; he is

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		testifying beforehand to Christ's sufferings and glories.	linked to the divine source of prophetic revelation.
Pre-incarnate divine speech and agency	Hebrews 1:1–3; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:15–17	The Son or Word is connected with God's final speech, creation, sustaining power, and the revelation of God's glory.	A merely Adamic starting point struggles to explain cosmic agency and divine-revelatory identity.
Incarnation and obedient mission	John 1:14; Philippians 2:6–8; Hebrews 10:5–10	The Word becomes flesh; Christ takes the form of a servant; the Son enters the world in a prepared body to do God's will.	The humanity of Jesus is real, but it appears as incarnation and mission rather than mere biological beginning.
Suffering and priestly formation	1 Peter 1:11; Hebrews 2:9–10; Hebrews 5:7–10	The sufferings of Christ are foretold, and Hebrews presents suffering as the pathway through which the Son is perfected as priest.	The “last Adam” category is important, but Hebrews gives the suffering Son a priestly and heavenly role that exceeds Adamic restoration alone.
Death and once-for-all offering	Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 10:10; Colossians 1:20	Christ obeys unto death, offers his body once for all, and reconciles through the blood of the cross.	The death is not merely martyrdom or human obedience; it functions as the decisive sacrificial act in God's redemptive order.
Resurrection, exaltation, and enthronement	Hebrews 1:3–4; Philippians 2:9–11; Colossians 1:18	Christ is seated at God's right hand, exalted above every name, and made firstborn from the dead.	Exaltation alone cannot carry the entire Christology, because the texts connect exaltation to prior glory, incarnation, and divine agency.
Continuing heavenly ministry	Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 8:1–2; Romans 8:9–11	The risen Christ intercedes, ministers as heavenly priest, and is known by believers through the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.	The arc continues beyond resurrection into heavenly priesthood and Spirit-mediated union with Christ.

Essay Summary: Why the Whole Arc Matters

The Unitarian case is strongest when it emphasizes the real humanity of Jesus, his obedience to the Father, his dependence on the Spirit, and his role as the last Adam. Those emphases should

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not be dismissed. The New Testament does present Jesus as the obedient man, the suffering servant, the faithful Son, and the representative human through whom God restores humanity. But the weakness of the Unitarian argument is that it often treats those truths as though they exhaust the New Testament witness.

The broader apostolic pattern is larger. Peter reaches back into the prophets and identifies the prophetic Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. Hebrews begins with the Son as God's final revelation, the radiance of divine glory, the agent through whom the ages were made, and the one who sustains all things before moving to purification, enthronement, priesthood, and intercession. John speaks of the Word who was with God, was God, created all things, and became flesh. Paul speaks of Christ in the form of God, descending into servanthood and death, then being exalted to universal confession as Lord. Colossians speaks of Christ as image, creator, sustainer, head, firstborn from the dead, and reconciler.

For that reason, the issue is not whether Jesus is human. The whole-arc reading fully affirms his humanity. The issue is whether his humanity is the whole story or the incarnational center of a larger movement that begins in divine glory and Old Testament revelatory agency, enters real human obedience and suffering, passes through death and resurrection, and culminates in heavenly priesthood and universal lordship. If the texts are concatenated rather than separated, the Adamic reading remains an important piece of the puzzle, but it is not large enough to contain the full New Testament presentation of Christ.

Published Material Worth Consulting

There are published and semi-scholarly materials on both sides. Unitarian-oriented resources include Anthony Buzzard's work on the pre-existence debate, older Unitarian lectures on Hebrews 1, and modern Biblical Unitarian discussions of "notional pre-existence," Wisdom Christology, and Adam Christology in Hebrews. Opposing responses include articles that argue Hebrews 1 presents the Son as creator, sustainer, divine heir, and the recipient of Old Testament Yahweh texts. Useful search targets include Anthony Buzzard on pre-existence, J. S. Hyndman on Hebrews 1, BiblicalUnitarian.com articles on Hebrews, and Trinitarian responses such as David Wilber's "The Divine Son in Hebrews 1."

Recognized scholars who support aspects of this whole-arc reading include Richard Bauckham, who argues that New Testament writers include Jesus within the unique divine identity of the God of Israel; Larry Hurtado, who argues for an early and intense pattern of devotion to Jesus within Jewish monotheism; and N. T. Wright, who reads Jesus' vocation, death, resurrection, and exaltation as the climactic embodiment of Israel's God returning to redeem His people. Older patristic theologians such as Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria also defend the arc from the eternal Word/Son to incarnation, suffering, resurrection, and glorification, though their later creedal vocabulary should be distinguished from the first-century exegetical argument being made here.

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Research note: The Unitarian answer to “why not the whole arc?” is usually methodological: they believe the whole arc must be governed by strict personal monotheism, the human beginning of Jesus in Luke and Matthew, and the messianic use of “Son.” The counterargument is that Hebrews may be deliberately expanding the reader’s frame beyond messianic appointment into pre-incarnate Sonship, creation, and heavenly priesthood. That makes Hebrews a critical test case: either it is the strongest Unitarian example of exalted human agency, or it is one of the New Testament’s clearest witnesses to a Christology that begins before Bethlehem and continues through incarnation into enthronement.

Part 4B: The Seven Churches, Creedal Forcing Functions, and Institutional Blindness

The warnings to the seven churches in Revelation 2–3 show that institutional religion can be doctrinally active, publicly reputable, and socially confident while still being spiritually endangered. Ephesus could test false apostles and yet lose first love. Pergamum could hold Christ’s name and yet tolerate corrupt teaching. Thyatira could have works, love, service, and endurance while permitting a seductive system of compromise. Sardis could have a name for being alive while being dead. Laodicea could be wealthy, confident, and self-assured while blind, poor, and naked. These warnings expose institutional blindness: a church can possess structure, reputation, language, and authority while failing to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This matters for the Christological debate because the earliest apostolic witness did not begin as a philosophical creed enforced by imperial machinery. It began as proclamation, testimony, worship, obedience, baptism, martyrdom, and Spirit-filled witness. The apostles announced the crucified and risen Christ through Israel’s Scriptures, not through later metaphysical vocabulary as the controlling frame. The whole arc—Old Testament prophetic agency, pre-incarnate divine speech, incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, exaltation, heavenly priesthood, and Spirit-mediated life—must be read before later councils are allowed to harden the mystery into an institutional test of loyalty.

There are documented streams that opposed or resisted the councils, though they did not all share the same theology. Arians, Homoiousians, Homoeans, later Socinians, and modern Biblical Unitarians all objected in different ways to Nicene or post-Nicene formulations. Some opposed the word *homoousios* because it seemed extra-biblical, speculative, or too close to philosophical substance-language. Others objected that imperial councils turned theological debate into coercive boundary enforcement. However, not every anti-council position preserves the full arc. Some reject the councils only by collapsing Christ into a created heavenly being or a merely human Messiah. The stronger critique is therefore not simply “anti-Nicene,” but “apostolic whole-arc”: it asks whether the councils defended a biblical truth in a philosophical and coercive form, or whether they replaced the living apostolic arc with a metaphysical formula that later institutions could police while neglecting holiness, repentance, and Spirit-life.

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Paul's statement in Romans 1:20 is important here: the invisible things of God are understood through what has been made. That principle challenges overly abstract metaphysical systems. God reveals invisible realities through visible creation, embodied obedience, historical acts, prophetic speech, crucifixion, resurrection, and transformed life. The apostolic method moves from what God has done and made visible to what must be confessed about the invisible God. A purely metaphysical approach can reverse that order by starting with abstract categories and then forcing the biblical story to fit them. The visible life of Jesus, the visible fruit of the Spirit, and the visible warnings to the churches must therefore judge the institution's claims to possess invisible truth.

So What? Creedal Enforcement, the Full Arc, and Spiritual Consequence

Council or Creedal Move	What It Forced or Defined	Whole-Arc Concern	Spiritual "So What?"
Nicaea, 325	Declared the Son <i>homoousios</i> with the Father and made anti-Arian language a boundary marker.	It defended the Son's divine status, but did so through substance-language that is not the apostolic narrative form.	The danger is that confessing the right formula can replace following the living Son in obedience, suffering, holiness, and Spirit-life.
Constantinople, 381	Expanded and stabilized Nicene Trinitarian confession and aligned orthodoxy with imperial enforcement.	The Spirit was formally included, but the institutional process could still silence the living warning: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says."	A church can become officially orthodox while becoming deaf to the Spirit, like Sardis with a name for being alive while dead.
Ephesus, 431	Protected the unity of Christ's person and affirmed Mary as <i>Theotokos</i> in order to defend the one incarnate Christ.	The concern is whether the focus shifts from the obedient mission of the Son to institutional battles over approved titles.	When title-policing replaces transformation, believers may think correct labels equal readiness for the Bridegroom.
Chalcedon, 451	Defined Christ as one person in two natures, fully God and fully man, without confusion, change, division, or separation.	This can preserve both deity and humanity, but it can also freeze the arc into a static metaphysical diagram rather than a lived path of descent, obedience, suffering, death,	The danger is permissive orthodoxy: people may confess "God and man" while tolerating Laodicean wealth, Thyatiran compromise,

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		resurrection, and priestly reign.	or Pergamene accommodation.
Post-council institutional religion	Used creeds as loyalty tests for belonging, office, and legitimacy.	The apostolic arc becomes secondary to institutional compliance.	The result can be blindness: a church assumes it sees because it owns the approved formula, while Christ says it needs eye salve to see.

The strong “so what” is this: if the creeds merely protect the full arc, they may serve as guardrails; but if they replace the full arc, they become a false center. The New Testament does not call the church merely to repeat a metaphysical formula; it calls the church to hear the Son, walk by the Spirit, overcome compromise, repent of dead reputation, reject lukewarm self-sufficiency, and become a spotless bride. A creed cannot substitute for the living Christ. A council cannot substitute for obedience. A formula cannot substitute for the Spirit’s present voice.

Therefore, the critique of the councils should not collapse into a denial of the whole arc. The better critique is sharper: the councils may have preserved fragments of the arc while also creating an institutional perch from which later churches could claim to be the “old truth” while functioning like a new system of control. The test is visible fruit. Paul’s logic in Romans 1:20 cuts against both pagan abstraction and empty orthodoxy: invisible reality is known through visible manifestation. If an institution claims invisible truth but visibly produces complacency, coercion, permissive sin, spiritual deafness, and dependence on inherited formulas, then Revelation’s warnings apply directly.

The full arc must therefore become a summons, not merely an explanation. If Christ is the pre-incarnate agent of divine revelation, the incarnate obedient Son, the suffering priest, the crucified offering, the risen Lord, the heavenly intercessor, and the one who speaks to the churches, then the church has no permission to hide behind inherited creeds while tolerating the very sins Christ rebukes. The arc demands holiness because the same Christ who was active in the prophets now walks among the lampstands.

Part 5: The Spiritual Consequence & Crisis of Readiness

If you surveyed a modern megachurch of 5,000 members, the vast majority would reflexively echo the inherited "God-man" tradition, but virtually none would understand its origins in pagan metaphysics or imperial coercion. This presents a critical crisis regarding the church's fitness for a returning Christ.

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The Spiritual Fallout of Creedal Religion over Paul's Living Christ:

- **Swapping Life for Intellectual Assent:** It reduces faith to a mental contract. Believers assume they are secure simply because they mentally agree to a complex formula. As Paul warned, *"the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"* (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- **Severing the Connection to the Head:** A hierarchy of "narrativologists" inserts itself between the believer and Christ. People rely on corporate, stadium-sized church branding rather than hearing directly from the indwelling Spirit.
- **Operating in the Fallen Adamic Nature:** When institutions rely on marketing, psychology, numbers, and political might to protect their narratives, they adopt the traits of the first Adam (control, pride, fear) rather than manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.
- **The "I Never Knew You" Reality:** Six of the seven churches in Revelation were warned of spiritual blindness, passive complacency, or losing their lampstands. A bride cannot be ready for a husband she does not personally know. Relying on an inherited, corporate hand-me-down doctrine leaves the church completely unready to meet the returning Christ as a spotless, transformed new creation.

Part 6: Capstone — The Legal Victory

The full Christological arc is not merely an explanation of who Jesus is; it is the legal and redemptive pathway by which God defeats sin and death and opens the Good News to fallen humanity. If Jesus is the Second Adam, then he must stand where the first Adam failed, but without inheriting the enslaving condition of Adam's fall. The virgin birth is therefore not ornamental. It is necessary to establish a new Adamic beginning: a true human life generated by God through the Holy Spirit, not by the ordinary line of fallen Adamic descent. Jesus is genuinely man, yet he is not born under the same bondage to sin and death that holds Adam's race captive.

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As the Second Adam, Jesus also had to be sinless. His sinlessness was not merely moral beauty; it was a legal and sacrificial necessity. The Lamb of God had to be without blemish. Only an unblemished life could stand in the place of the guilty, bear sin without being personally subject to sin, and become the once-for-all offering that the old sacrificial system could only foreshadow. Where Adam disobeyed, Jesus obeyed. Where Adam opened the door to sin and death, Jesus closed that legal claim by fulfilling righteousness in the flesh.

This is why the killing of Jesus is central to the victory. Jesus was not lawfully conquered by death. He was the righteous one condemned by corrupt powers, betrayed by religious blindness, and executed though no sin was found in him. Death had lawful claim over sinners, but it had no rightful claim over the sinless Son. In killing the innocent one, the old order overreached. The cross became the place where sin exposed itself, where the debt of sin was paid in full, and where death's claim was broken because it seized one it had no legal right to hold.

The resurrection is therefore not an isolated miracle at the end of the story. It is the verdict of God over the whole case. God vindicated the obedient Second Adam, declared death's hold invalid, and raised Jesus as the firstborn from the dead. In him, the wages of sin are answered, the debt is satisfied, the old Adamic chain is broken, and the possibility of new creation is opened. The Good News is not merely that Jesus died, but that through his obedient life, unjust death, and victorious resurrection, lost man under sin and death may repent, receive grace by faith, be made new, and abide in the life of the new man.

Romans 2:4 gives the spiritual posture of this victory: the goodness of God leads to repentance. The cross does not reveal a God eager to excuse sin casually; it reveals a God whose goodness pays the true cost of sin in order to bring sinners out of bondage and into transformed life. Grace is not permission to remain under the old man. Grace is the opened door into the new man, where faith enters what Christ has won and the believer abides by the Spirit in the life of the risen Lord.

Legal and Redemptive Conditions Fulfilled in Christ

Condition to Be Met	Key Scriptures	Why It Had to Be Met	Victory Produced
Virgin-born Second Adam	Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 15:45–49; Romans 5:12–19	Jesus had to be truly human while beginning a new Adamic line not enslaved under the	A new human head appears who can represent humanity without sharing Adam's defeat.

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		inherited bondage of sin and death.	
Sinless obedience	Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21	The redeemer had to obey where Adam failed and remain unstained by the sin he came to bear.	Jesus fulfills righteousness in the flesh and becomes qualified to stand for the guilty.
Lamb without blemish	John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Hebrews 9:14	The sacrifice for sin had to be unblemished, not merely symbolically but actually and morally.	Christ becomes the once-for-all offering able to cleanse, ransom, and reconcile.
Bearing sin and becoming sin	Isaiah 53:5–6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:10–14	The debt and wages of sin had to be answered, not ignored. The righteous one bore what belonged to the guilty.	The debt is paid in full, and grace can be received by faith without denying justice.
Illegal condemnation of the righteous one	Luke 23:4; Acts 2:23–24; Acts 3:14–15; 1 Peter 3:18	Death had lawful claim over sinners, but no rightful claim over the sinless one. In condemning him, the old order exposed its injustice.	The chains of sin and death are broken because death seized one it had no legal right to hold.
Resurrection vindication	Acts 2:24; Romans 4:25; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:18	God had to vindicate the righteous Son and overturn death's unlawful hold.	Jesus becomes firstborn from the dead, holder of the keys of death, and living Lord of the new creation.
Good News opened to the lost	Romans 2:4; Romans 6:4–11; Ephesians 2:4–10; 2 Corinthians 5:17	The victory must become available to those trapped under the old Adam through repentance, grace, faith, and union with Christ.	The old man is crucified, the new man lives, and believers may abide in transformed resurrection life.

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Final Capstone: The Arc Becomes Victory

The concluding purpose of the whole arc is victory. Christ is not only the pre-incarnate agent of divine revelation, nor only the incarnate obedient man, nor only the suffering priest, nor only the crucified Lamb. He is all of these in one victorious movement. The virgin birth establishes the new Adamic beginning. The sinless life establishes the unblemished Lamb. The obedience establishes righteousness where Adam failed. The unjust death exposes and exhausts the old order. The bearing of sin pays the debt. The resurrection breaks death's legal claim. The exalted priesthood opens continuing access. The Spirit now forms a new people who no longer live as slaves of sin and death but as a Bride being made ready.

Therefore, the essay must end where the gospel ends: not in metaphysical speculation, not in institutional compliance, and not in a reduced Adamic model, but in the goodness of God revealed in Christ's victory. The visible manifestation of that victory is a transformed people. The true test of the doctrine is whether it leads to repentance, faith, new creation, holiness, and abiding life. The Christ who walked among the prophets, entered the womb, obeyed in the flesh, died without legal guilt, rose beyond death's reach, and now walks among the lampstands still says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Reference to By Design Chapter 9, Table 10B: Saved by Faith, Obedient by Faith

Chapter 9, Table 10B of the By Design Bible Study provides the practical reference point for the final movement of this essay: the believer is saved by faith and then called to live obedient by faith. The transition is not from grace into self-effort, but from the law of sin and death into the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The born-again life is therefore not merely forgiven status; it is a new class of life in which the redeemed man may walk in the Spirit, resist the lust of the flesh, renew the mind, and choose obedience because Christ has broken the old dominion.

Table 10B supports this essay's capstone by gathering scriptures that call the believer beyond excuse-based Christianity into victorious participation in Christ's obedience. Its logic is simple: the same faith that receives the finished work of Christ also becomes the faith by which the believer walks, submits, resists, overcomes, and abides. Grace is the doorway into the new man; obedience by faith is the evidence that the new man is learning to live under the Spirit's law rather than returning to the old slavery.

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By Design Table 10B Theme	Representative Scriptures	How It Integrates with Part 6
Transfer from the law of sin and death	Romans 8:2–4; Romans 6:12; Romans 6:23	The Second Adam’s victory frees the believer from sin’s dominion and makes obedience possible under the law of the Spirit of life.
Saved by faith into new creation	2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:4–10	Faith receives the finished work of Christ, and the redeemed man becomes a new creature created for good works.
Obedient by faith in the Spirit	Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:13; James 4:7	The believer is not left to self-effort but is called to walk in the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, submit to God, and resist the devil.
Instruction to sin not	1 John 2:1; 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 12:1	The call to “sin not” becomes the practical witness that grace has transferred the believer into a new obedient life.
Warning against willful return to sin	Hebrews 10:26; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 John 3:4	Part 6’s victory is not permissive; it warns that the believer must not return to lawlessness after receiving the knowledge of truth.
Joyous abiding and perseverance	Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 1 John 3:20	The new man abides in God with confidence, relying on Christ’s strength and God’s grace rather than condemnation or excuse.

In this sense, Table 10B explains what Jesus meant when he said that the truth will set you free. The truth is not merely correct doctrine about the arc; it is the revealed victory of Christ that frees the believer from the law of sin and death and brings the redeemed man into the law of the Spirit of life. By the Lamb’s blood shed, the debt of sin is paid, the old man is judged, and the new man is made righteous before God and with God. The freedom Christ gives is therefore freedom from slavery to sin and freedom unto abiding life: saved by faith, made new by grace, and empowered to walk obediently in the life Christ has opened.

In this way, Table 10B becomes the operational witness to the capstone. Christ’s victory does not merely cancel the debt of the old man; it opens the lived pathway of the new man. The believer is saved by faith into Christ’s finished work and then learns obedience by faith

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under the law of the Spirit of life. This is why the final issue is not whether sinless obedience is achieved by human strain, but whether the redeemed man will believe the Gospel deeply enough to walk in the Spirit, refuse the old master, and abide in the liberty Christ has won.

This is why abiding in God is not passive belief but visible witness. The redeemed man abides in the victory of Christ by walking in the same pattern of humble obedience that Jesus revealed: receiving grace, resisting sin, living by the Spirit, and bearing the fruit of a life made new. “Sin not” is therefore not legalistic self-salvation; it is the joyous evidence that the old chain has been broken and that the life of the risen Christ is now being manifested in the believer. The redeemed life is a celebration of obedience, not a burden beneath condemnation. It is the glad freedom of sons and daughters who no longer serve sin as master, but who abide in God now and will rejoice in Him in the life to come.

Index of Scriptures Used

The following index identifies the major Scripture passages used in the essay and points to the section where each passage contributes to the argument. This is not a full concordance; it is a guide to the most significant textual supports.

Additional capstone scriptures: Luke 1:35, Romans 5:12–19, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22, John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:18–19, Isaiah 53:5–6, Acts 3:14–15, Romans 4:25, Romans 6:4–11, Ephesians 2:4–10, and 2 Corinthians 5:17 are used in Part 6 to show the legal and redemptive victory of the Second Adam.

By Design Chapter 9/Table 10B reference: Romans 8:2–4, Romans 6:12, Galatians 5:16, Romans 8:13, James 4:7, 1 John 2:1, 1 Peter 2:11, Hebrews 12:1, Hebrews 10:26, Philippians 4:13, and 2 Corinthians 12:9 are used in Part 6 to connect salvation by faith with obedient living by faith under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

Scripture	Where Used	Contribution to the Argument
Matthew 14:28–33	Part 2: The Boat Scene and the “Peter Factor”	Shows Jesus exercising authority over the storm while Peter also walks on water by command, raising the question of delegated divine authority versus direct deity claims.
Acts 2:22	Part 2: The “Peter Factor”	Supports the argument that Jesus was accredited by God through miracles, wonders, and signs that God did through him.

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John 1:1–18	Part 4A: Scripture Chain for the Whole Christological Arc	Connects the Word with God, creation, incarnation, and revelation of the Father, contributing to the pre-incarnate and incarnational stages of the arc.
John 14:28	Part 1: Assertions That Jesus Was Just a Man	Represents the subordination texts used by Adamic or Unitarian readings to emphasize the distinction between Jesus and the Father.
Romans 1:20	Part 4B: Creedal Forcing Functions and Institutional Blindness	Provides Paul's principle that invisible realities are understood through visible manifestation, challenging overly abstract metaphysical systems.
Romans 8:9–11	Part 4A: Summary Table; Continuing Heavenly Ministry	Connects the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, resurrection life, and believers' participation in Christ.
1 Corinthians 10:4	Part 4A: Scripture Chain for the Whole Christological Arc	Places Christ within Israel's wilderness story through Paul's identification of the spiritual rock as Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:45–49	Part 1: Assertions That Jesus Was Just a Man	Supports the Adamic Man reading by presenting Christ as the last Adam and representative human head.
2 Corinthians 3:6	Part 5: Spiritual Fallout of Creedal Religion	Contrasts dead letter with Spirit-given life, supporting the critique of mere intellectual assent.
Philippians 2:5–11	Part 4A: Scripture Chain; Summary Table	Shows the descent-and-ascent pattern: form of God, servanthood, death, exaltation, and universal confession of Christ as Lord.
Colossians 1:15–20	Part 4A: Scripture Chain; Summary Table	Links Christ to image, creation, cosmic sustaining, resurrection headship, and reconciliation through the cross.
Hebrews 1:1–4	Part 4A: Unitarian Weakness; Scripture Chain; Summary Table	Provides the central whole-arc compression: final speech in the Son, radiance of glory, exact representation, making the ages, purification, and enthronement.
Hebrews 1:10–12	Part 4A: Unitarian Weakness	Strengthens the argument that Hebrews applies Old Testament divine-language patterns to the Son.
Hebrews 2:9–10	Part 4A: Summary Table	Shows suffering as part of the Son's path into glory and priestly perfection.

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Hebrews 5:7–10	Part 4A: Unitarian Weakness; Summary Table	Shows obedient suffering and priestly formation, expanding the arc beyond simple exalted humanity.
Hebrews 7:25	Part 4A: Summary Table	Shows the continuing heavenly intercession of Christ after resurrection and exaltation.
Hebrews 8:1–2	Part 4A: Summary Table	Identifies Christ as heavenly minister and high priest seated at the right hand of Majesty.
Hebrews 10:5–10	Part 4A: Scripture Chain; Summary Table	Frames incarnation as obedient mission: a prepared body, doing God’s will, and once-for-all offering.
1 Peter 1:10–11	Part 4A: Peter’s “Spirit of Christ”; Scripture Chain; Summary Table	Identifies the prophetic Spirit in the Old Testament as the Spirit of Christ, supporting the pre-incarnate or Old Testament revelatory dimension of the arc.
Revelation 2–3	Part 4B and Part 5	Supplies the warnings to the seven churches, exposing institutional blindness, compromise, dead reputation, and lukewarm confidence.

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Closing Prayer: Let Your Will Be Done Through the Redeemed

Our Father in heaven, holy is Your name.

Let Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth
through the lives of those You have redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Humble us beneath Your hand, cleanse us from pride,
and teach us to walk as new men and women in Christ,
not by the old law of sin and death, but by the law of the Spirit of life.

Give us this day the bread of obedience, the strength to abide,
and the grace to rejoice in Your goodness that leads to repentance.

Forgive us where we have trusted formulas more than fellowship,
institutions more than Your Spirit,
and excuses more than the victory of Christ.

As You forgive us, make us merciful, humble, and quick to forgive others.

Lead us not back into the old slavery, but deliver us from the evil one,
from deception, from complacency, and from every form of lawlessness
that would stain the Bride.

Let the truth set us free indeed: free from sin and death, free to obey by faith,
free to abide in Christ, and free to bear visible witness to Your righteousness
in this life and the life to come.

For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.

Let the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering in a people made
ready, holy, joyful, obedient, and alive unto God.

Amen.

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Notes: