

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

By Lawrence Theodore Jeyachandran

1. God God is encountered by the Jewish people at Mount Sinai when He comes down to give the 10 commandments. The first followers of Jesus were strict monotheistic Jews – but in Jesus, they see the amazing combination of humanity and divinity. Ten days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, they encounter a third Person – the Holy Spirit – in an upper room who was promised by Jesus Christ before He was crucified. The Church comes to realise that the Oneness of God is constituted by the loving intimate relationship of Father and Son through the Holy Spirit (John 10:30; 17:20-23). Christians have come to reflect on this truth and realise that the Divine qualities of love, knowledge and freedom are possible only in the mystery of the Triune God.

2. Humanity Human beings – men and women – are made in the image of God. This does not mean that God resembles humans physically. As God is Spirit (John 4:24), the resemblance that humans bear to Him are with reference to their capacities for relationships through the use of intellect, emotion and will. They most closely resemble their Creator because of their capacity for moral choices in which they were created to live under His lordship.

3. Sin We humans have, however, chosen to rebel against our Creator by declaring autonomy from Him – by insisting on our own standard of good and evil. Thus, we are now enmeshed in a matrix of broken relationships – with God, with ourselves, with others, with nature; and we see nature rebelling against itself. The most physical symptom of this separation is death.

4. Salvation God has provided for our salvation in the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for our sins. Because He is human, He can totally identify with our temptations – but because He was sinless from birth, He can be an a sufficient sacrifice for

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our sins. But because of His Divinity, His sacrifice can atone for all of humanity. In the Person of Jesus Christ, two natures – Divinity and humanity – combine without confusion. This is like a 3-dimensioned cube coming into 2-dimensioned world where it would be seen as a square by other 2-dimensioned creatures.

It would still be 100% cube in 3 dimensions and 100% square in 2 dimensions because a square is the image of a cube! In the same way, Jesus becomes the perfect Human Being and in that He represents God to the full to other humans – Jesus does not and cannot take the form of any other of His creatures because only human beings are made in the image of God! – He is thus 100% God in His divine dimensions and 100% human in his human dimensions. Three days after His crucifixion, He rises from the dead and shows Himself to His disciples who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are transformed from cowards to martyrs! By faith in the life and work of Jesus Christ, God promises forgiveness of salvation and eternal life to all who believe. They are given the privilege of addressing God as Father, a relationship that is not deserved at all but is now freely available to all in Jesus Christ.

5. Consummation At the right time according to His wisdom, God will judge the world through Jesus Christ. God is infinitely holy and so, by His standards, no one can really be declared as just. It is only because of His grace that forgiveness is now available to all. In the final judgement (Rev. 20), all human beings will be judged by their own religious standards and will still be found wanting and therefore punished. Salvation is therefore given by God not on the basis of good works (which can never come up to the standards of an infinitely holy God), but through the grace of Jesus Christ. The Bible ends with a glorious scene where human beings who trust in Jesus Christ will stand redeemed with all their ethnic, linguistic and cultural distinctives. Along with them, the rest of creation will also be restored (Rev.21,22).