

Who Is Jesus Christ?

*But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
(Matthew 1:20-21)*

*Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."
(Luke 2:10-12)*

The nature of any observation that can be made is limited and boundaried by the mind of the one who is doing the observation. And here in lies the phenomena that is the source of all human suffering.

Whilst any one of us can conceive of something that is infinite, eternal, unchanging, and perfect, the fact of the matter is, is that our finite minds can never fully comprehend it simply because we are finite, temporal, mutable and imperfect. And so, we have our observations, perceptions and understandings of a *manifestation* of the origin. The origin is Being in Itself, the manifestation is what presents to the finite mind in a form in which it can be comprehend.

And when the distinctions of these two, of origin and manifestation, aren't clear then the manifestation, the limited finite experience, is taken to be the thing or Being in itself. This article will explore the distinction of origin and manifestation in more depth, specifically in relation to divine revelation as it unfolds and is perceived in the finite experience, and of how a confounding of the two is at the root of all human suffering.

But a starting point needs to be an acknowledgement of the origin. Whatever you wish to call it; Consciousness Itself, the Divine, the Logos, the Word, the Lord, the infinite and eternal Being. There are many names for this throughout history and across many different cultures, but the concept of the idea remains the same. So, in any place where the concept of this Divine is being examined, there needs to be an acknowledgement that the Origin is unchanging and cannot ever be comprehended as it truly exists and that therefore what

presents to a finite mind is a manifestation, the construct of which is limited by the mind that is observing and perceiving. All understanding and experience of what the truth of the Divine is then, is not the Divine Truth in Itself, but rather a sampling of a quality of it and will always have a flawed, finite aspect to it.

If we can accept this premise, then this opens to a further acceptance of the many different manifestations, experiences, and understandings of what, and who, and how the Divine presents itself to the realm of the finite experience. This realm being the world that forms and unfolds as space, time, person, and matter. We only need look at the written and oral history of humanity to see the multitude of variations that been experienced, either in the form of a physical manifestation of a divine being or of a perceived connection and communication with one.

So, if the form of the manifestation of Divine is according to and reflective of the finite mind that is receiving it, the questions that then follow are - What are the factors that give rise to the different experiences and manifestations? What are the variables in the inner states of the receiving mind which lead to this diversity in perception and understanding of what the Divine is?

Whilst it would be a very large task to examine the factors that give rise to the differences throughout history as a collective of nations and cultures, we can however look at the individual experience that we each ourselves have in the fluctuations of our thoughts and feelings, and of our own experienced distance and closeness with the Divine. If the Divine being as Love and Truth Itself is unchanging and thus always fully present at any moment, ready to be received by the finite mind, then what causes such states of human suffering like depression, anxiety, loneliness, abandonment, anger, grief and other such negative experiences?

Of course, one of the significant manifestations of a divine being in the history of humanity, is Jesus Christ, and the text that was then produced as an account of his life on earth. This text offers a series of stories and images of a Divine being engaging in and with the finite realm of space, time, person, and matter and thus in a form that a finite mind can digest and assimilate. The text therefore offers a manifestation of the processes that Divine Love and Truth encounter as it engages with the finite mind and the world that it lives in. It fulfills the function of providing a place in which we might focus our attention specifically on what and who the Divine is, and so have the experience of having a direct communion and relationship with it.

So, let's first start with Jesus Christ

Jesus himself many times over, tells us that he is sent forth from the Father and that no one can know the Father except through him. Now if the Father is the Divine Being that can never be known than Jesus Christ is the Father in a form that can be perceived by our finite mind. Note here though, that we are talking about what *presents* to the mind in the form of Jesus Christ, not the thing in itself. So, although we may acknowledge Jesus Christ as Divine because he is of the Father and one with Him, and likewise the text, it always needs to be remembered that the finite experience of this is *not* Divine.

The implications of this acknowledgment offer a completely new way of engaging and comprehending any form of Divine Truth that presents itself to the mind and specifically here, of understanding what and who Jesus Christ is and what and who the text is. If Jesus Christ is a finite presentation of the Divine Being, in terms of the finite mind receiving it, and the Text likewise is the same, and thus both are something which conveys the truth about the Divine, then the story of the life of Jesus Christ becomes a re-presentation of the story of Divine Truth as a finite mind receives and experiences it.

If we look at Jesus's life from this perspective then we see divine truth entering into the mind as a young child: vulnerable, ignorant, living purely from basic instincts at first without any awareness of what or who it is. As it matures it starts to engage with those things of the mind, who seem well established in their ideas of what the Divine is, i.e. with the personalities that are ruling the landscape of the mind. It begins to surprise them and challenge them. Some of the inhabitants of the land easily welcome and embrace this new form of truth, some just follow because it's what the crowd is doing. Some ignore it and continue on as usual, and others start to feel threatened by it and openly plot to persecute and kill it.

So, just as the people in the landscapes in the story are symbolic of the varied patterns of thinking and feeling that surround and engage with the Divine truth in our mind, so too is Jesus Christ Himself a symbol. The person of Jesus Christ in this sense is no more a real person any more than the other characters in the stories are. All of them are manifestations for they are images of the variations of our finite reception of what flows into our mind as we receive the Divine Life. Jesus Christ then can be viewed as a form of truth that is clearly Divine

and entering into the mind to engage with the multitudes – the multitudes of the thinking and feeling patterns and structures that are present in the landscape. He represents a form of truth that is acknowledged as being from and of the Father and as such it is able to teach, heal, save and redeem.

He is the Logos that is living. Jesus Christ's life's story is the same story of the text as a form of the truth of the Divine, as it enters our mind. Jesus Christ and the text that we call the Word, are one and the same. Each offers a different manifestation but presents the same origin.

They are a truth that presents from the Divine Itself in a form that we can comprehend and engage with.

One is in the form of a person moving through the world, one is the form of a text moving through the mind.

Both are the Divine in Origin. Both are a finite experience of the Divine as a manifestation, and so both offer the divine human, the *human* in this sense being what the Father can be known through. The idea of what is human then becomes not about shape, or flesh and bones but about what conveys and communicates the nature of the Divine.

So, what does the *human* then teach us about suffering and what causes it?

What is it that inflicts pressure on the manifestation of Divine truth in our life? What seeks to harm it? What leads us away from it? Or causes us to forget it?

In a very simply way what we can see illustrated in the story of Jesus Christ is that the personalities of thinking and feeling that turn and follow him, are the ones that are healed and nourished in the things of heaven.

And this connects back to the fundamental premise that we opened with regarding the distinctions between what is origin and what is manifestation. For as we consider these questions on human suffering, we first need to remind ourselves that the Divine is Origin and can never be known as it is in Itself, and that therefore all that we perceive and understand is a finite manifestation of it. To follow Jesus Christ then, that is, to follow that which presents the truth about the nature of the Divine, is to accept this principle and to let it lead us in how we engage with our life.

For if Jesus Christ and the text are manifestations of what presents to the finite mind's level of perception regarding Divine Truth, then everything else must be an aberration of this. That is, everything else must also be a manifestation of my reception of Divine Life, presenting to my mind to be perceived. Including the experience that 'I am real' and that 'I am a self' that lives in a world of time, space, person, and matter. And likewise, the experience that other people are real, living in this realm too.

If we forget this, this truth about the nature of the Divine and the distinction between what is origin versus manifestation, then we are led away from Jesus Christ, from the truth of the Divine, and we experience suffering. This is because we are operating from the belief that we are like the Origin that the sense of self is a fixed and unchanging thing. We believe the state as we experience it – the grief, the anger, the loneliness, the disconnect, the anxiety. We believe that it is 'me', that it is 'I'. We believe that we have a self that is fixed and permanent that belongs to us and therefore experience a loss when it shifts or feels challenged, or anger at its apparent removal. From *me*. Hence, we confound what is finite with what is infinite for only the infinite is unchanging, permanent and fixed. Only the infinite owns.

This disconnect from what is Divine is demonstrated from the disconnect of clarity in recognising the distinction between origin and manifestation. But it is also demonstrated in our attribution of finite qualities to the Divine which so often accompany these states. When the belief that 'I am real' is active and is what leads the state, instead of Jesus Christ leading, then the mind has difficulty comprehending any other way of thinking other than the way that *it* does. Thus, in states of suffering the Divine is often drawn down into finite qualities. The Divine becomes more of a benevolent Father in these instances with the power to take away things from us and likewise the power to restore a state of stability. It becomes a parent that judges and accommodates what it offers according to the behaviour of the child. This can then give rise to experiencing states of anger towards Him, or a sense of abandonment by Him and so a sense of helplessness, or a state of trying to bargain – 'If I do this then will you make this right again?', or a state of condemnation believing that we are being punished for something that we have or haven't done and so He is displeased with us.

And so, the Divine becomes finite, and the finite becomes Divine-like.

For if my sense of self is something real and important then the Divine becomes something that is like me too. And so, He becomes an ordinary man and my trust in the ability of Him to carry me and help me, starts to break down. That is, the text becomes an ordinary text, and the trust in its ability to carry us through the difficult experience, starts to break down.

But this is the way of spiritual life. This is the process. We move in and out of identification with what we experience as 'me' and what we experience as 'others' and the world of time and space in general. We move in and out of the truth that is the Text. We move in and out of acknowledging that the Divine is the origin and that all else is a finite manifestation of this. This is the process.

The purpose of a manifestation of the Divine being though, and the truth that it presents, is to slowly dispel the ways of perceiving that cause us suffering. To save us from our 'self'; to undo our constructed sense of self and to offer a new way of having relationship with what a self is. When we are released from the belief that the appearances are real then they become *real appearances* and when this is what leads us, it transforms our life into seeing everything as it relates to Divine Life. Becoming spiritual conscious then is about perceiving that what manifests before the mind is an appearance that can inform and assist in its education of what the Divine is and isn't. The sense of self becomes a useful boundary of mind that serves the function of allowing us to have a relationship with what is Divine as it engages with the text and manifestations of the Divine life that present to its awareness.

Our life transforms into a memorable relation, just as real as what is related to us in the Text or in our dreams. For then everything, *everything* that we perceive, feel, think and understand is an opportunity to remember how it relates to the Origin and to be drawn up out of a life of ignorant suffering and into one of new meaning.

Let everyone take heed lest he believe that the Divine Life with anyone, even indeed with the evil and in hell, is changed; for, as said above, the life itself is not changed or varied, but by it an appearance of the receptive form is presented, through which and from which it passes; nearly in the same manner as everyone appears in a mirror according to his own quality, by light, which still remains in its own state, and only produces the form to the sight.

This light proceeding from the Lord is life itself, which not only enlightens the understanding, as the sun of the world does the eye, but also vivifies it according to reception; and when this light is received in the life, it is called "the light of life" in the same: "Jesus said, I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"

(Apocalypse Explained 349 {6,10})

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world."

They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

(John 1:1-10)

Full passage of AE 349

And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that liveth unto the ages of the ages, signifies the humiliation and acknowledgment from the heart of all who are in truths from good, that the Lord alone lives, and that from Him alone is eternal life. This is evident from the signification of "four and twenty elders," as being all who are in truths from good (of which above, n. 270; from the signification of falling down and worshiping, as being humiliation and acknowledgment from the heart that every good and truth that has life in itself is from the Lord (of which see above, n. 290-291); and from the signification of "Him that liveth," as being, when said of the Lord, that He alone

lives, and that from Him is eternal life (of which also above, n. [82](#), [84](#), [186](#), [289](#), [291](#)).

[2] Since it is at this day believed in the world that the life that each one has was given and implanted, and is thus one's own, and does not flow in continuously, I desire to say something respecting it. The opinion that life is in man in such a way as to be his own is merely an appearance that springs from the perpetual presence of the Lord, and from His Divine love, in that He wills to be conjoined to man, to be in him, and to impart to him His life, for such is the Divine love; and because this is perpetual and continuous man supposes that life is in him as his own; yet it is known that there is not a good or a truth in man, but that they come from above, thus that they flow in. It is the same with love and faith; for everything of man's love is from good, and everything of his faith is from truth; for what a man loves is good to him, and what he believes is truth to him. This makes clear in the first place that no good and no truth, so neither love nor faith, is in man, but that they flow in from the Lord. Life itself is in good and truth, and nowhere else. The receptacle of the good of love with man is the will, and the receptacle of the truth of faith with him is the understanding; and to will good does not belong to man, nor to believe truth. These are the two faculties in which is the whole life of man; outside of these there is no life. This also makes clear that the life of these faculties, and accordingly the life of the whole man, is not in man but flows in. It is also by influx that evil and falsity, or the will and love of evil and the understanding and faith of falsity, are with man; but this influx is from hell. For man is kept in the freedom of choosing, that is, of receiving good and truth from the Lord or of receiving evil and falsity from hell, and man is kept in this for the sake of reformation, for he is kept between heaven and hell, and thence in spiritual equilibrium, which is freedom. Neither is this freedom itself in the man, but it is together with the life that flows in. (On Man's Freedom and its origin, see in the work on [Heaven and Hell 293, 537, 540-541, 546, 589-596, 597-603](#); and in [The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem 141-147](#).)

[3] Those also who are in hell live by the influx of life from the Lord, for good and truth in like manner flow into them; but the good they turn into evil, and the truth into falsity; and this takes place because they have inverted their interior recipient forms by a life of evil, and all influx is varied according to the forms. It is the same as when man's thought and will act upon members distorted from birth, or upon injured organs of sensation; and as when the light of heaven flows into objects that vary in their colors, and as when the heat of heaven flows into the same, which vary in their odors according to their interior receptive forms. But it should be known that the life itself is not

changed and varied, but the life produces an appearance of the recipient form by which and from which the life is transmitted; much as by the same light different persons appear in a mirror each such as he is.

[4] Moreover, all the senses of man, namely, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, are none of them in man, but are excited and produced from influx; in man there are only the organic recipient forms, in these there is no sense until what is adapted thereto from without flows in. The like is true of the internal organs of sensation which belong to thought and affection and receive influx from the spiritual world, as of the external organs of sensation which receive influx from the natural world. That there is one only fountain of life, and that all life is therefrom and flows in continually, is well known in heaven, and is never called in question by any angel in the higher heavens, for these perceive the influx itself. That all lives are streams, as it were, from the only and perennial fountain of life, has been testified to me also from much experience, and seen in the spiritual world with those who believed that they lived from themselves, and were not willing to believe that they lived from the Lord. When influx into the thought was in some part withheld from these, they lay as if deprived of life, but as soon as the influx reached them, they as it were revived from death; and then the same confessed that the life in them is not theirs, but continually flows into them, and that men, spirits, and angels are only forms receptive of life.

[5] That this is so the wise there conclude from this: that nothing can exist and subsist from itself but only from what is prior to itself, so neither can what is prior exist and subsist from itself but only in successive order from a First; and thus life itself, regarded in itself, is only from Him who alone is Life in Himself. From this, moreover, they know, and from a spiritual idea they also perceive, that every thing, that it may be anything, must be in connection with a First, and that it is, according as it is in this connection.

From this it is clear how foolishly those think who derive the origin of life from nature, and believe that man learns to think by an influx of interior nature and its order, and not from God, who is the very Esse of life, and from whom is all the order of both worlds, the spiritual as well as the natural, in accordance with which life flows in, life eternal with those who can be disposed to receive life according to Divine order, but the opposite life, which is called spiritual death, with those who cannot be so disposed, thus who live contrary to Divine order. The Divine good that proceeds from the Lord is that from which order comes, and the Divine truths are the laws of order (as may be seen in [The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem 279](#)).

[6] Everyone should guard against the belief that the Divine life with anyone, even with the evil and in hell, is changed; for, as was said above, the life itself is not changed or varied, but the life produces an appearance of the recipient form, through which and from which the life is transmitted; much as everyone appears in a mirror such as he is through the light, the light remaining unchanged, and simply presenting the form to the sight; and just as the same life presents itself to be perceived according to the form of the bodily organ, thus after one manner in the eye, after another manner in the hearing, and otherwise in the smell, taste, and touch. The belief that life is varied and changed is from an appearance, which is a fallacy like the fallacy from the appearance that influx is physical, when yet influx is spiritual. (But on this subject see further in [Heaven and Hell 9](#); to which may be added what is cited from Arcana Coelestia, respecting the influx of life, in [Doctrine of the New Jerusalem 277, 278](#); and on the Influx of Life with animals, in [Arcana Coelestia 5850, 6211](#); and in [Heaven and Hell 39, 108, 110, 435, 567](#); likewise in [Last Judgment 25](#).)

[7] These things have been said to make known that there is one only life, and that whatever things live, live from that life. It shall now be shown that the Lord is that Life itself, or that He alone lives, since this is what is signified by "Him that liveth unto the ages of the ages." That there is one only Divine, and that is not to be divided into three persons according to the faith of Athanasius, can be seen from what has been several times said above, and especially from what will be said particularly on this subject at the end of this work. And as the Lord's Divine, which is the one only Divine, took on a Human, and made that also Divine, therefore both of these are the Life from which all live. That this is so may be known from the words of the Lord Himself, in the following passages. In John:

As the Father raiseth the dead and maketh them live, so also the Son maketh whom He will to live. As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself ([John 5:21, 26](#)).

"Father" here means the Lord's Divine Itself, which took on the Human, for this Divine was in Him from conception, and because He was conceived from this, He called it, and no other, "Father." The "Son" means the Lord's Divine Human; that this, in like manner, is life itself, the Lord teaches in express words, saying, "as the Father maketh to live, the Son also maketh whom He will to live;" and "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." "To have life in Himself" is to be Life itself; the others are not life, but they have life from that Life.

[8] In the same:

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father but through Me ([John 14:6](#)).

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," was said of the Lord's Human; for He also says, "no one comes unto the Father but through Me," His "Father" being the Divine in Him, which was His own Divine. This makes clear that the Lord also, in respect to His Human, is Life, consequently that His Human also in like manner is Divine.

[9] In the same:

Jesus said, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he die yet shall he live. Everyone that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever ([John 11:25-26](#)).

This, too, the Lord said of His Human; and as He is Life Itself, and all have life from Him, and those who believe in Him have life eternal, therefore He says that He is "the Resurrection and the Life," and "he that believeth in Me shall not die forever;" "to believe in the Lord" signifies to be conjoined to Him in love and faith, and "not to die" signifies not to die spiritually, that is, not to be damned, for the life of the damned is called "death."

[10] In the same:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us ([John 1:1, 4, 14](#)).

It is known that "the Word" means the Lord; His Human is evidently the Word, for it is said, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us;" and that His Human was equally Divine with the Divine Itself that took on the Human is evident from this, that a distinction is made between them, and that each is called God, for it is said, "the Word was with God, and God was the Word," and "in Him was life." That all live from Him is meant by "the life was the light of men;" "the light of men" is the life of their thought and understanding; for the Divine Proceeding, which is specially meant by "the Word," appears in heaven as the light which enables angels not only to see, but also to think and understand, and according to its reception to be wise (See [Heaven and Hell 126-140](#)). This light proceeding from the Lord is life itself, which not only enlightens the understanding, as the sun of the world does the eye, but also vivifies it

according to reception; and when this light is received in the life, it is called "the light of life" in the same:

Jesus said, I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life ([John 8:12](#)).

[11] He is also called "the bread of life" in the same:

The bread of God is he that cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the Bread of life ([John 6:33, 35, 47-48, 51](#)).

"The Bread of God" and "the Bread of life" is that from which all have life. Since the life that is called intelligence and wisdom is from the Lord, it follows also that life in general is from Him; for the particular things of life, which make its perfection and which are insinuated into man according to reception, all belong to the general life. This life is perfected to the extent that the evils into which man is born are removed from it.

[12] That those who are conjoined to the Lord by means of love and faith receive eternal life, that is, the life of heaven, which is salvation, is evident from the following passages. In John:

I am the Vine, and ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me ye cannot do anything. If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth, and as a branch he withereth ([John 15:5-6](#)).

In the same:

Everyone who believeth in Me hath eternal life ([John 3:14-16](#)).

In the same:

He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the anger of God abideth on him ([John 3:36](#)).

In the same:

Whoever believeth on the Son hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day ([John 6:40, 47-48, 54](#)).

In the same:

The sheep follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall not perish forever ([John 10:27-28](#)).

And in the same:

Search the Scriptures, they bear witness of Me: but ye will not come unto Me, that ye may have life ([John 5:39-40](#)).

"To believe in God" and "to believe the things that are from God" are mentioned in the Word; and "to believe in God" is the faith that saves, but "to believe the things that are from God" is an historical faith, which without the former does not save, and therefore is not true faith; for "to believe in God" is to know, to will, and to do; but "to believe the things that are from God" is to know, and this is possible without willing and doing. Those who are truly Christians know, will, and do; but those who are not truly Christians only know; but the latter are called by the Lord "foolish," and the former "prudent" ([Matthew 7:24, 26](#)).