



Pastors usurping the Role and Title of God



Who is God?

The cross highlights, in the most graphic possible manner, the humanity of Jesus.

It cannot be overstated that Jesus was not half God and half man.

Jesus was fully God and fully man, and though we have no problem speaking of the God qualities of Jesus, I am convinced that we struggle to wrap our minds around the humanity of our Lord.

He was not even some superhuman species that was somehow immune to all the human ills like splinters, sore muscles, fatigue, skin rash, swimmers' ear, and sunburn.

In fact, Isaiah would say of the Suffering Servant, "Like a root out of parched ground; he has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him"

Isaiah 53:2 NIV:

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He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

Jesus was not some new and improved breed of man.

He took on flesh like ours, and he suffered in the same ways as we do.

It was essential that Christ take on human flesh to redeem all that had been lost.

Anything less would fail to accomplish God's purpose of redemption. God's Creation the issue of Christ's humanity is understood most fully only as it is traced back to the account of creation's beginning in the garden.

In **Genesis 1 and 2**, we are allowed a limited glimpse into the birth of God's good world.

The Creator spoke, and light dispelled darkness for the very first time.

But this was just the beginning of our Maker's masterpiece.

He established time with the division of day and night and then separated the water from the land followed by the planting of the largest garden ever.

Soon the vegetation sprouted forth fruit and the earth sprung to life.

On the fifth day, as the Creator spoke and the vegetation was well established, the ocean waters began to churn with every imaginable fish and creature of the deep as overhead, newly created birds winged their way across the heavens.

Then, as in a growing crescendo, the great beasts and livestock of the field began to run and roam, and as God looked on what he saw, he declared that it was good.

This was not some fairy tale or ethereal fantasy land.

This world was a real, physical world that could be experienced with all the human senses.

This world was not restricted to the boundaries of earth alone but must be understood to include the heavens and the earth -

Genesis 1:1 NIV:



The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

This beautiful world, in which the spiritual and earthly lived in harmony, was the place God had designed where the human drama would unfold.

It is noteworthy that this created realm, which fully satisfies what the Creator himself had envisioned, is not called heaven. When God originally shaped the space in which he intended humanity to inhabit forever, it is our very own physical world where the birds fly high, the sea creatures swim deep, the animals run free, and the stars shine bright.

For a time, it was paradise in every sense of the word, but the utopia was threatened by the very man entrusted to guard it.

Dark days lay on the horizon.

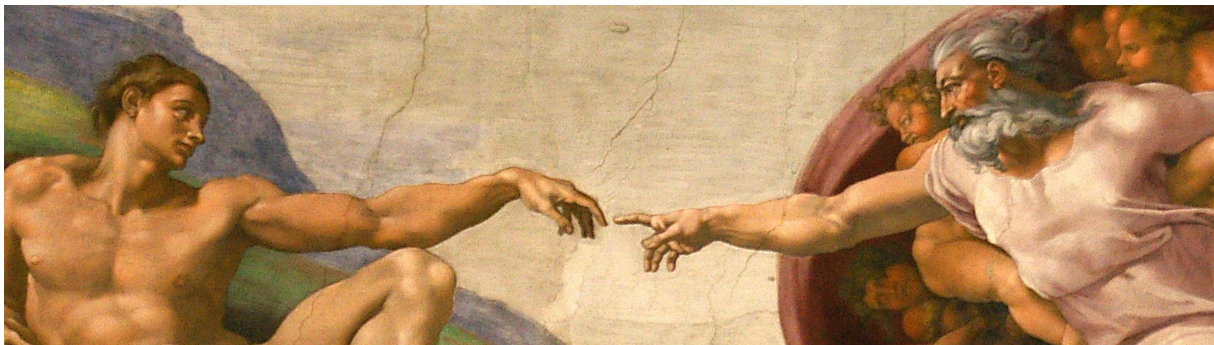
Adam was made in the Creator's image in order that he might work with, along-side, and on behalf of his God.

Adam's value and role in the creational agenda is almost always underestimated, but to do so diminishes our comprehension of the necessity of Christ's human nature.

Adam was intended to rule over all of creation on all the earth.

The Beginning of Humanity.

The biblical language makes this clear when we're told that God blessed them and instructed them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (**Genesis 1:28 NIV**).



This passage highlights the nature and the scope of Adam's intended purpose.

Adam was a real, physical man who God endowed with authority to rule over the physical realm but not in the garden only.

Oftentimes we mistakenly understand Adam's reach and responsibility to be limited and restricted to Eden, but this is simply not the case.

Adam's jurisdiction was to extend to the far reaches of the globe until one day, **21 Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, LORD"** (Numbers 14:21 NIV).

Tragically, instead of faithfully fulfilling his God-given role, Adam led an insidious revolt against the Maker because Adam had bought into the lie that he knew better than God.

As the intended ruler and king over all creation, Adam represented all that he had dominion over throughout every generation even until now.

When Adam was driven from God's presence and the curse of

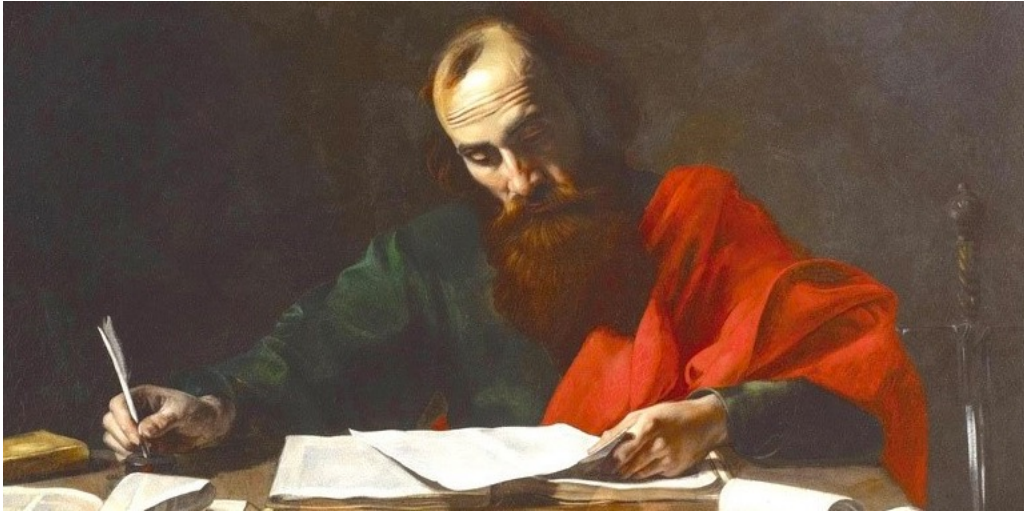
Adam fell, the consequences came to us as well.

You see, the charge to keep and cultivate the garden was not Adam's alone.

It was ours as well by virtue of our relationship to Adam.

If Adam had obeyed God, the blessings of his obedience would have flowed to his descendants but so, too, does the curse for his disobedience.

As Paul reminds the Romans:



Romans 8:20 NIV

20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope meaning that every part of creation has now been plagued by original sin, and now-

Romans 8:22 NIV:

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

It is not merely the souls of man that need rescue and redemption, it is all of creation.



The Humanity of Christ Now let's get back to the subject of Christ's humanity.

The problem, as we have explored, is that all of creation, which includes the entirety of the physical world, stands in need of deliverance from sin's curse.

In order for paradise lost to be regained, there is a need for the human race to pick up the garden mandate and obey God perfectly where Adam sinned.

But there is a problem.

All of humanity is deeply infected with Adam's sin, and "there is none righteous" (**Romans 3:10**) who are capable of such a task

Romans 3:10 NIV:

10 As it is written:

"There is no one righteous, not even one;

The only person capable of perfectly keeping the law is the Lawgiver himself, but a potential deliverer must come from the seed of Adam.

This seems to be an impasse in redemptive history.

But God had a solution!

God himself would take on the flesh of humanity in order to succeed where Adam failed.

Romans 5:19 NIV:

Paul says that **19** For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The only person able to save us and restore creation to its previous glory is the God-man, Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 15:45**).

1 Corinthians 15:45 NIV:

45 So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”[a]; the last Adam, a life-giving

No passage more graphically portrays this continuing Adamic struggle more than Matthew 4, which recounts for us the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness.

Jesus does not merely find himself in the wilderness, he is “led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (**Matthew 4:1 NIV**).

Adam was charged with “keeping” (**Genesis 2:15 NIV**) the garden, which implies the need to guard and protect it from the one who would seek to destroy and loot it.

Though Adam failed, Jesus stepped resolutely into the wilderness to do battle with the same serpent who had ransacked the garden and carried the human race into exile.

Make no mistake. This one who would battle the serpent in the wilderness was not a ghost or phantom.

It was the man, Jesus Christ.

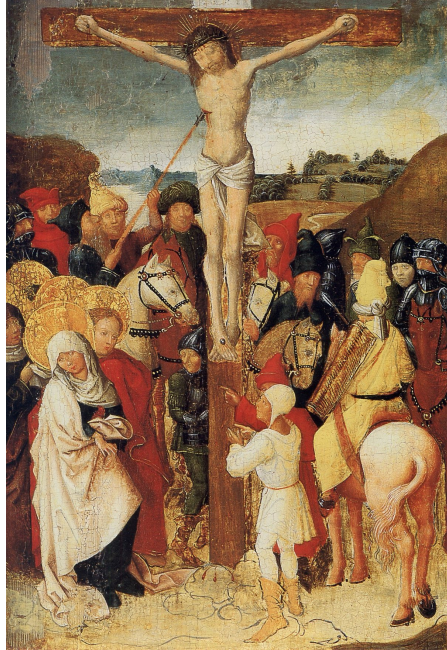
Why Does This Matter?



By entering the human arena, Jesus took up a war in the flesh. His life would be lived as a man with all of the struggles and temptations that are common to man (1 Corinthians 10:13), and no divine privileges would be taken.

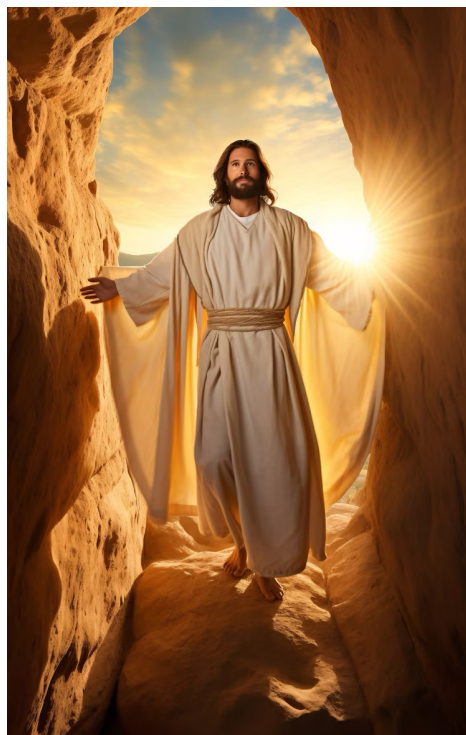
1 Corinthians 10:13 NIV:

13 No temptation[a] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[b] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[c] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.



He bled real blood and suffered as a man though he could have cut short his torture with merely a glance toward heaven.

Then following his death, he vacated the grave and met with the applause of the angels as the debt for Adam's race had been satisfied and hope was born.



This salvation was the work of a man, but not a mere man.

Only a sinless sacrifice born of Adam's seed could reverse the curse which our father introduced into paradise.

May our hope be renewed today by the reality that Jesus clothed himself with humanity in order that we might be clothed with his glory as we live out our days in the renewed, physical world where we were designed to live from the beginning of time.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH



“Church” is the translation of the **Greek term *ekklesia***, and is used in the New Testament to identify the community of believers in Jesus Christ.

It literally means “assembly,” “congregation,” or “meeting.”

A similar term was used in the Old Testament referring to experiences such as “the day of the assembly,” “the Lord’s congregation,” or “meeting before the Lord.”

Thus, when Jesus declares: “I will build my church” (**Mt 16:18**), it did not come as something unfamiliar to the common listener.

Matthew 16:18 NIV:

18 And I tell you that you are Peter,^[a] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^[b] will not overcome it.

Shortly after, in the New Testament, the word is confined strictly to refer to the congregation of believers in Jesus Christ.

It is worth mentioning that in the New Testament, no synagogue, temple, chapel, tabernacle, building or any other meeting place was ever called a “church.”

The term always referred to the Christian assembly and, in the New Testament, it was used for both the local community of believers and the overall collection of Christians.

The first sense for which the word “church” is used, what we call “local,” is defined by its geographical setting.

The churches in the New Testament were identified by the name of a city, never by the name of a country or region.

For example, one would speak of “the churches of Galatia” in plural because Galatia was a region with many cities, and therefore, many local churches.

When talking about Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, etc., the singular form is used and the name of the city identifies the church.

For example, the church in Corinth or the church in Ephesus; each one of these churches was comprised of the Christian residents of the same city.

The second sense, called “universal,” refers to the collection of believers in Jesus Christ from all times and places.

This church consists of both Jews and Gentiles.

The first meeting of the universal church will occur during the rapture: “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the archangel’s voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord” (1Th 4:16-17).

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NIV:

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.



This will be an unprecedented event

All that we have believed and loved, seeing only from a distance, will be a tangible reality.

Until then, we rely on the local expression in order to experience communion.

This is our immediate family in the faith.

The local church differs only in size from the universal, but not in essence.

The nature of the local church and God's commitment to it are the same as those of the universal church.

Who builds the church?



Jesus declared that building or edifying the church is something He would do personally.

He said: “I will build my church” (**Mt 16:18**), but that does not mean that He will not also use others for the task.

Matthew 16:18 NIV:

18 And I tell you that you are Peter,^[a] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^[b] will not overcome it.

One of the most well-known metaphors used to refer to the church is the “body of Christ.”

Jesus Christ states that He is the head, and that all believers form His body.

The emphasis of the metaphor is on the union of Christ and the church and between the believers themselves some thing indispensable to the understanding of how the church functions under the authority of Jesus Christ.

According to Paul, every believer has a function in the church, just as the different parts of a body have a specific function.

The idea of a group of clergy taking responsibility for all Christian ministry while a mass of laypeople simply receive the benefits is totally foreign to Scripture.

Bishops, elders, pastors, deacons, and new believers are simply members of the body of Christ with distinct responsibilities and roles, according to the maturity and gifts of each one.

A believer that behaves like **Diotrephes in 3 John** (who takes ownership of the local church, believing himself to be the maximum authority) usurps the place of Christ.

3 John 1:9 (NIV)

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us. **10** So when I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

What is the role of the local church?

Therefore, the ministerial responsibility of the local church falls upon the members as a whole.

As the members identify their gifts and take on the responsibility of administering them under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the church increases its capacity to bless and to fulfill its mission on earth.

Some have identified the condition of the modern church as the “80/20 syndrome”: a small percentage of the members (20 percent) take on the responsibility of ministerial work, while the other 80 percent are mere spectators.

Others have pointed out that with each passing day, the church is more and more like a football game where, from the stands, a crowd observes a small number of players who offer a great show.

Those that put forth an effort on the field urgently need rest, whereas the spectators desperately need to exercise.

This image illustrates the reality of the church.

The crowd of believers that fills our temples and chapels each Sunday must discover how useful and necessary they are in the divine plan of evangelization and the building of the body of Christ.

What was the church like in the New Testament?



The church that we see in the New Testament is dynamic.

Never a prisoner of buildings, we see the church meeting in the temple, in a synagogue, in the street, beside the sea, in public places, and often in homes.

Acts describes a community of faith in constant movement:
“Everyday they devoted them- selves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house.

They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2:46-47).

Acts 2:46-47 NIV:

46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

It appears that the meetings were daily, and definitely not monotonous.

Worship, fraternal communion, prayer, working in mutual edification, giving testimony of Christ, and taking care of the needs of the poor were not part of special programs, but rather everyday activities.

Those that observed the believers’ way of life called them people of “the Way”—surely due to their constant action, their defined doctrine, and because they could always be seen going from one place to another.

What is the future of the church?



The future of the Lord's church is a glorious one.

The church will not only be victorious in heaven, but here on earth as well.

By taking another look at **Matthew 16:18**, we see that it refers to the church when it says “and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”

Matthew 16:8 NIV:

8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?”



Jesus's statement here does not present a small and fearful group of timid believers.

On the contrary, it shows a vigorous and bold church, capable of coming out victorious in any circumstance, including death.

When Jesus presents the church as triumphant, even against the gates of Hades, we should see Satan and all his demons defeated by the work of the cross, and representing no threat for the future of the church.



Those that form part of the church belong to the winning team and should speak and act as such.

The future of the church was established on the mission statement in **Matthew 28:19 NIV:**

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The verse does not invite us to make disciples “in” the nations but “of,” the nations.

The church must disciple the nations.

As it advances, it teaches the nations how to live.

The church carries out the work of discipleship just by existing in the world.

Of course, this places an enormous weight of responsibility on the shoulders of every believer, as it assumes that their lives are to be an example and inspiration to humanity.

In Ephesians 5:26-27, Paul declares that Jesus gave Himself up for the church, “to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word.

Ephesians 5:26-27 NIV:

26 to make her holy, cleansing^[a] her by the washing with water through the word,

27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless.”

Our God has not failed in any of His endeavors, nor will He fail in this one.

The church was designed to be holy and blameless.

With this goal Christ gave Himself up, and with this goal His workers are to carry out their work.

There is no reason to believe that we will not achieve this goal.

We can affirm that the future of the church will be glorious.

What does God say about the present church?



When we say that the future of the church is glorious, we affirm that the same is true in the present.

Today, the church is exactly what God stated: the house of God, the pillar and foundation of the truth, God’s temple, His body, a chosen people, a holy priesthood and, regardless of the circumstances that it faces, it will continue being everything that God said it is.

In Ephesians 3:10, Paul explains what is currently happening with the church,

Ephesians 3:10 NIV:

10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

We cannot fully understand the greatness of the church.

For centuries, God kept hidden this marvelous mystery.

That which was revealed to Paul and others is so extraordinary that even the angels watch what is taking place attentively.

The love of the Lord for His church leaves everyone speechless. God desired to bring Jews and Gentiles together into one people: the church.

This is not easy for those who expect everyone to unite under the Jews in order to come to God.

Jesus Christ came to earth and gave up His life to save us.

This must be admirable to the angels, who saw a good portion of their own fall with no possibility for redemption.

Since the Old Testament, the angels have shown curiosity towards this reality, but only recently, and through the church, has God instructed everyone and His wisdom has been fully expressed.

This scene seems to describe the angels that watch the expression of divine love towards the church from a celestial balcony and, in admiration, are able to understand the wisdom of God like never before.

This knowledge should leave us breathless, with tears of thankfulness and a profound sensation of admiration and humility as we see ourselves as a privileged part of the divine plan.

Glory to God in the church today and for all of eternity!

The impetus of this bible study, is to reach anyone, that has been told by a Pastor, Church leader, or anyone else, that they're going straight to hell, because they did this or that in the past.

Or those, that have been unwelcome in God's temple for whatever reason and you believe that God doesn't love or care for you.

Friends, Jesus died to give all of us life, through the remission of sins.

And ANYONE, that accepts Christ as Lord & Savior, will have eternal life with Christ Jesus PERIOD.

There's not a pastor on the face of this earth that can send anyone to hell or to heaven.

John 3:16 New International Version

**16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**



Friends, Please remember, You can't buy your way into heaven OR out of hell.

Rev. Jesus Del Rio, Ed