

## Class Six: Union Cross as Restoration

1. What is our problem? We are separated from God
2. What did Christ do on the cross? Christ joined us with God
3. How did that address our problem? We are made whole

### A: Recapitulation or Second Adam

Irenaeus of Lyon: born 130 AD, Smyrna; bishop of Gaul<sup>ii</sup>

- Wrote and spoke against heresies of Gnosticism (they claimed secret knowledge from Jesus while Irenaeus defended the wisdom passed through the apostles to the bishops)<sup>iii</sup>
- Gnostics did not believe in the full humanity of Christ – Irenaeus said we could not be fully redeemed if Christ were not fully human<sup>iv</sup>
- When Adam disobeyed, we became heirs of disobedience, sin, struggle, pain, and death<sup>v</sup>
- When Christ became incarnate – fully human, fully God – he opened the door for the full restoration of humanity<sup>vi</sup>
- When Christ died on the cross, his obedience overcame Adam’s disobedience, which allowed us to be children of the spirit/life/wholeness instead of children of the flesh/death/sin<sup>vii</sup>
- “[B]ecause of his measureless love, [Christ] became what we are in order to enable us to become what he is.” -Irenaeus<sup>viii</sup>

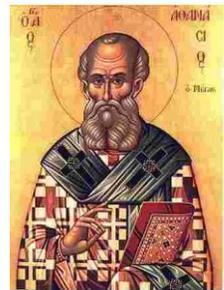


“...for as all die in Adam, so all will be made  
alive in Christ” (1 Cor 15:22)

### B: Theosis or Deification

Athanasius of Alexandria: born 296 AD; bishop of Alexandria

- The standard atonement theology for Orthodox Christians<sup>x</sup>
- Theosis = “becoming by grace what God is by nature” - Athanasius<sup>xi</sup>
- We were created to share in the life/nature of the trinity<sup>xii</sup>
- Not suggesting that we become God, but that we partake in the divine nature<sup>xiii</sup>



- May be influenced by Plato: everything has an essence – on the cross, Christ changed our essence<sup>xiv</sup>
- “[B]y becoming human Christ restores the divine image in us; by dying he frees us from sin” - Athanasius<sup>xv</sup>
- Our spiritual task is to seek communion with Christ to be conformed to him<sup>xvi</sup>
- Some Orthodox theologians suggest that we can commune more deeply with God through Christ than Adam and Eve could because Christ unified human and divine nature within himself<sup>xvii</sup>
- In prayer and meditation, we walk Jesus’ life with him: following his teaching, dying to ourselves on the cross, and being raised with him<sup>xviii</sup>
- Similar theology in the West would use the language of “adoption”<sup>xix</sup>

“[Jesus’] divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>Thus he has given us ... his precious and very great promises, so that through them you ... may become participants of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)

#### Overview: Theologies of the Cross

Moltmann:  
God Suffers  
with Us

Abelard:  
Model of Love

Sacrifice of  
Purification

Lamb of God:  
Sin Offering &  
Conquering Lamb

Anselm/Calvin/Origen  
Substitutionary  
Atonement: Penal,  
Satisfaction, Ransom

Augustine/Aulén:  
Christus Victor

Girard:  
Scapegoating

Irenaeus:  
Recapitulation

Athanasius:  
Theosis

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- <sup>i</sup> “Saint Irenaeus” – see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint\\_Irenaeus.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Irenaeus.jpg)
- <sup>ii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irenaeus>
- <sup>iii</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism>
- <sup>iv</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irenaeus>
- <sup>v</sup> A. E. Cundall, “Adam (Person),” in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. Merrill C. Tenney and Moises Silva (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zonderan, 2009), 62.
- <sup>vi</sup> Hans Boersma, “Eschatological Justice and the Cross,” *Theology Today* 60 (2003): 195.
- <sup>vii</sup> Cundall, 62-63.
- <sup>viii</sup> William C. Placher. “How does Jesus Save?,” *Christian Century* 126, no. 11 (June 2, 2009), <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2009-06/how-does-jesus-save>.
- <sup>ix</sup> Icon of Athanasius of Alexandria. See [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ikone\\_Athanasius\\_von\\_Alexandria.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ikone_Athanasius_von_Alexandria.jpg)
- <sup>x</sup> <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Theosis>
- <sup>xi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xiv</sup> William C. Placher, “How Does Jesus Make a Difference?” in *Essentials of Christian theology*, ed. William Placher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 188.
- <sup>xv</sup> Leann Van Dyk, “How Does Jesus Make a Difference?” in *Essentials of Christian theology*, ed. William Placher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 207.
- <sup>xvi</sup> <https://orthodoxwiki.org/Theosis>
- <sup>xvii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xviii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State\\_\(theology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_(theology))
- <sup>xix</sup> William C. Placher, “How Does Jesus Make a Difference?” in *Essentials of Christian theology*, ed. William Placher (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 188-189.