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# Southwest Journal

of Arts and Sciences

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Under the direction of its editorial board, all articles accepted into SJAS have passed through a double-blind peer reviewed process by scholars holding terminal degrees in that specific field. While each respective author's thoughts and statements remain his or her own and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or positions of the editorial board of SJAS or University of the Southwest, the peer-reviewed process ensures that such work has been assessed for quality.

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## A Journal Rises from the Scrub Brush at an Innovative School

*The Southwest Journal of Arts & Sciences* (SJAS) is the culmination of work among faculty at the College of Arts & Sciences at a private Christian university in the southeast corner of New Mexico. University of the Southwest (USW) of Hobbs, NM, became my home in 2012 after I had worked here part time for 10 years. The school really is a home to many of the professors, staff, administrators, and animals. I say animals because of the vast assortment of wildlife on campus. Prairie dogs, squirrels, and birds own the campus, though an occasional dog being walked by a student or coach would not be unusual. Some Hobbsans visit the university for the sole reason of enjoying the wildlife.

Founded in 1962 with a mission to educate young people in servant leadership, USW has three colleges: Arts & Sciences, Business, and Education. Like many of today's small colleges, USW has a significant portion of student-athletes who attend in person. The institution also features a rapidly growing online only student segment. Pre-covid, the on-campus students numbered about 350 and the online students about 600. In 2020, the pandemic caused many institutions to struggle financially, and included some closures among liberal arts colleges. As schools around the country struggled to adapt to the all-distance learning scenario, USW was already in a position to thrive. Like a small boat, the university was able to maneuver quickly as the conditions worsened. Thanks to its significant online only population, for example, the university was equipped to instruct all students in the online environment.

Even at the onset of the pandemic in spring 2020, USW was prepared to meet all students' learning needs through the Blackboard learning management system. With the university's adoption in 2019 of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, which offers a live video feed to students and enables them to break up into small groups, USW seamlessly transitioned to online learning for all students. If anything, covid-19 simply forced some changes to happen a little sooner. In 2020, USW added nine master's programs, several concentrations to its Doctor of Education (EdD), and an analytics emphasis to its Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). It is the only university in the state to offer an EdD and DBA.

The interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed SJAS welcomes studies or book reviews from educators or scholars with a terminal degree. The spring issue is our first. The issue has three studies from USW faculty Dr. Danny Kirkpatrick, Dr. Kevin Waldrop, and Dr. Yusheng Wu. Kirkpatrick and Wu are also journal team members. Another USW faculty member, Dr. Bill Sumruld, wrote a book review. Faculty from other institutions are encouraged to submit work via the journal website (see below). The journal's purpose is to foster and promote quality research in the liberal arts and sciences by aspiring and seasoned scholars alike. An entirely electronic journal, SJAS is published through Alexander Street once a year with one to two issues per volume.

Under the direction of its editorial board, all articles accepted into SJAS have passed through a double-blind peer reviewed process by scholars holding terminal degrees in that specific field. While each respective author's thoughts and statements remain his or her own and do not necessarily reflect the thoughts, opinions, or positions of the editorial board of SJAS or University of the Southwest, the peer-review process ensures that such work has been assessed for

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As an interdisciplinary journal, SJAS publishes quality research in the hard sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, etc.), social sciences (psychology, counseling, sociology, anthropology, history, etc.), and the humanities (religion, philosophy, literature, etc.). Prospective authors should focus on original research and theory development and may include both quantitative and qualitative inquiry. It is encouraged that interested authors submit inquiries to the respective managing editor prior to writing to ensure fittingness of the topic.

To submit an article to SJAS, or for more information, go to the following link: [journal.usw.edu](http://journal.usw.edu)

You may email me at [rtrout@usw.edu](mailto:rtrout@usw.edu) with any questions about the journal, the remarkable students attending USW, or the unforgettable wildlife of New Mexico.

Dr. Richard Trout

General Editor

*Southwest Journal of Arts & Sciences*

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# The Necessary Jesus: Necessity Related to Fulfillment and Christology in the Gospel of Luke

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## Abstract

Divine necessity in the Jesus story is a characteristic element of the Synoptic Gospels. The language of necessity, explicitly marked by use of the verb δεῖ, and the frequent references to the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures evidence this. The theme of necessity is more readily observable in Luke's presentation, especially as it pertains to Jesus' ministry activity. This article seeks to demonstrate that Luke uniquely uses the language of necessity in his presentation of Jesus as the fulfillment of Scripture and as the promised Messiah.

Keywords: necessity, fulfillment, Messiah, Christology

## Introduction

The theme of necessity is prominent in the Gospel of Luke. In the Gospel's prologue Luke establishes that his purpose involves compiling "a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us" (Luke 1:1).<sup>1</sup> The "things that have been accomplished" were observed by "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses" (v. 2) and certainly include the words and deeds of Jesus (Osborne, 2018, p. 31–32; cf Acts 1:1). For Luke, the life and ministry of Jesus, including His death, necessarily unfolds as the fulfillment of God's will. This is not to say that Luke presents Jesus as being under compulsion and therefore void of volitional capacity. In fact, Jesus is presented as the executor of divine necessity, the willing Son of God who will indeed fulfill His father's will.

Luke uses a variety of ways in revealing necessity as a theme in his Gospel. Phrases like "the will of God" and verbs such as πληρόω ("fulfill") are employed to indicate the certainty and necessity of God's plan (for derivatives of πληρόω and other fulfillment verbs and their frequency in Luke, see Hays, 2017, p. 192). One of the strongest indicators of necessity in the Gospel is the presence of the verb δεῖ ("it is necessary"). Luke clearly favors this verb more so than Matthew or Mark, making it a "typical vehicle" (Cosgrove, 1984, p. 174) in his Gospel. The verb appears eight times in Matthew, six times in Mark, and eighteen times in Luke. Luke's proclivity for using this verb and its contribution to the theme of necessity has been well attested in terms of the divine will and Jesus' adherence to it (see Bass, 2009 and Cosgrove, 1984), but, as will be argued below, Luke uniquely utilizes it as a means

of identifying Jesus as the Messiah by the actions of his life and ministry. Luke's presentation more intentionally reveals what Jesus does in life and death as necessary in order to fulfill Old Testament (OT) Scripture concerning God's redemptive plan and to reveal Jesus as the Christ.

## Necessity and Fulfillment

Robert Stein (1993) observes, "In no other Gospel, not even in Matthew, do we find so many references and allusions to how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures" (p. 37). Jesus' life and death as the fulfillment of OT Scripture is an identifiable element of each of the Synoptic Gospels. Luke, however, provides a somewhat unique presentation of fulfillment in the way that he sets his account of Jesus in salvation history and emphasizes the unity and coherence of God's revelation and redemptive plan.

## Salvation History

From the prologue, which reveals Luke's intention and methodology concerning his Gospel, it is clear Luke is interested in history. It is the "inbreaking of divine salvific activity into human history with the appearance of Jesus" (Fitzmyer, 1981, p. 179) and how it fits in God's unfolding redemptive plan that is of primary interest. This interest in setting Jesus' story in salvation history (see Schulz, 1963) is detectable in the birth narratives of both John the Baptist and Jesus and in Jesus' full awareness of and references to God's salvific plan in the Gospel.

## The birth narratives

The birth narratives in Luke are not filled with explicit

<sup>1</sup> Scripture citations and translations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

necessity vocabulary, but in order to fully appreciate Luke's use of explicit language concerning necessity in the remainder of the Gospel, it is helpful to understand how he presents the Jesus story. The OT ends with Israel in Jerusalem and the promises of a coming Messiah yet unfulfilled. Luke's Gospel begins with faithful Israelites in Jerusalem who are still awaiting the coming Messiah. It is this faithful remnant portrayed in the birth narratives and the prophetic pronouncements recorded here that highlight the continuity in God's revelation of His redemptive plan.

**The faithful remnant.** Unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke's Gospel begins with a picture of faithful Israelites continuing in their obedience to God's law. Much emphasis is placed on the obedience of the characters introduced in the birth narratives by Luke. Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, are described in 1:6 as being "righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord." The combination of ἐντολαῖς καὶ δικαιομασίαις ("commandments and statutes") appears often in the OT as God's will for the faithful (e.g. Gen. 26:5; Exod. 15:26; Deut. 4:40; 6:1–2; 1 Kings 8:61). Both John the Baptist (1:59) and Jesus (2:21) are circumcised on their eighth days in accordance to the commands of the OT (e.g. Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3).

In Luke 2:22–38 the purification of Mary and the consecration of Jesus in the Temple are recorded. Luke states that Mary's purification was "according to the Law" in v. 22, and Jesus' presentation took place because of what was "written in the Law of the Lord" in v. 23. The sacrifice offered was "according to the Law of the Lord" in v. 24, and all that Jesus' earthly parents were doing concerning Him was "according to the custom of the Law" in v. 27. At the beginning of the next section in 1:39, Luke sums up the previous one by stating that Mary and Joseph had acted "according to all of the law of the Lord." The word "all" emphasizes the scope of their obedience to the OT. They, like Zechariah and Elizabeth before them, are seen among the faithful remnant of Israel who continue to live in accordance to the Law and in expectation of the coming Messiah.

The roles of Simeon and Anna in the purification and consecration of Jesus (2:22–38) further portray the faithful remnant and the expectation of the coming Messiah. Luke describes Simeon as "righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel" (2:25). In v. 26 Luke reveals that Simeon was promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw "the Lord's Christ." This title demonstrates Simeon's expectancy with regards to the coming Messiah, and his words in response to seeing Jesus testify to his belief the promise made to him had been fulfilled (Nolland, 1989). Anna also is presented as a faithful Israelite who worships "with

fasting and prayer night and day" (v. 37). She is seen testifying about Jesus to "all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem" (v. 38).

Luke's presentation of these characters as being faithful to the Scripture and living in anticipation of the messianic age bridges the gap between the time of the OT and the coming of the Christ. These faithful Israelites are "an indication that the good news Jesus brings does not conflict with the faith of Israel in the OT" (Stein, 1993, p. 74) and are illustrative of how faith under the Mosaic Law should naturally and necessarily lead to faith in Jesus as the Messiah of God.

**Prophetic pronouncements.** The necessary movement of faith in affirming Jesus as Messiah is further evidenced in the birth narratives within the prophetic. The allusions to the OT presented in these pronouncements are clear concerning how the births of John the Baptist and Jesus fit into God's overall plan of redemption (Bock, 2012). The coherence of this salvation history is made plain in these pronouncements. The angel Gabriel, Mary, and Zechariah all witness to the fact that the coming of Jesus is rooted in the promises of God and is the work of God in fulfilling His promise of salvation and redemption to His people.

When Gabriel visits Mary, she is told that her child will be given the throne of David and that His kingdom will have no end. This promise refers to the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:1–17) and establishes that Jesus' kingdom is the final kingdom of God, a possible allusion to Isaiah 9:7 (Marshall, 1978). In Mary's Song, she affirms that God's promise to help Israel made to the "fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever" (1:55) is fulfilled with the coming of Jesus. The connection to the promises to Abraham emphasizes the continuing story of redemption contained in Luke's narrative (Green, 2010). Zechariah prophesies that with the coming of Jesus, God has accomplished that which He spoke through the prophets "of old" (1:70). The prophets prophesied of the events being fulfilled in the presence of Zechariah and the other faithful Israelites with the appearance of Jesus. These instances further illustrate Luke's intent of setting the Jesus story in the unfolding salvation plan of God, a story made necessary by God's word spoken through the prophets.

### ***Jesus' Awareness of God's Eternal Plan***

Another way in which Luke evidences his concern with salvation history is in the references made by Jesus to the unfolding plan of God. Two such references that demonstrate God's revelation in stages are Luke 16:16–17 and Luke 21:5–28. The former reference involves a clear division of revelatory time frames, while the latter involves Jesus' teaching on things which were still to take place, including the destruction of the Temple and the coming of

the Son of Man. Both instances demonstrate the unity, validity, and necessity of God's plan.

**Luke 16:16–17.** This passage occurs in a section of Luke in which Jesus is addressing the Pharisees as those who are “lovers of money” (16:14). In a corrective manner, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and announces definitively that the kingdom of God has arrived with Jesus' appearance on earth. Though many are making their way into the kingdom, the Pharisees are blind to the unfolding plan of God before their eyes. Jesus teaches in v. 16, “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached....” Jesus is clearly aware that He Himself has ushered in a new era of God's redemptive plan and that the Pharisees are missing it. Whether or not John is included in the previous era as the last of the OT prophets or the new one as the herald of God's kingdom come does not change the fact that Jesus recognizes the distinct phases of God's plan to bring about the salvation of human beings who recognize and accept the plan (Fitzmyer, 1985, p. 179).

Significant in this passage is v. 17 in which Jesus indicates that the arrival of God's kingdom does not render the previous phase, the Law and the Prophets, obsolete. In fact, just the opposite is true with regards to the certainty of what was contained in the Law and Prophets concerning the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom. Jesus states, “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.” With this statement, Jesus affirms that while the time of the Law and Prophets with respect to their compilation has concluded, they remain valid concerning their message (Marshall, 1978). Jesus uses hyperbolic language to describe the certainty with which all of the Law and the Prophets will be fulfilled. This fulfillment necessarily includes His life and death as will be discussed in greater detail below.

**Luke 21:5–38.** Within this section of Luke, Jesus demonstrates His full awareness of things that are yet to come concerning Israel and the plan of God. Jesus understood His arrival as ushering in a new era, and in this passage, he understands future events in salvation history. The language of necessity permeates this passage as Jesus makes reference to events that must come to pass prior to other events as well as to things which will occur in fulfillment of the Scripture.

The whole of Jesus' teaching here carries the tone of certainty, but Jesus specifically states that prior to the destruction of the Temple there are things that “must first take place” (v. 9). Jesus presents the destruction of Jerusalem as an event that must occur “to fulfill all that is written” (v. 22). The duration of the effects of these events is described as lasting “until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (v. 24). In the parable of the fig tree in v. 31, Jesus informs the disciples that they will know of the nearness of God's kingdom

“when you see these things taking place.” Commenting on the certainty of “these things,” Jesus provides an echo of Luke 16:17 in His statement that “heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (v. 33). Finally, speaking about the day the Son of Man comes again, Jesus assures, “...it will come...” (v. 35). It is clear that Jesus is fully aware of things that are yet to come in God's plan, and His words speak to the certainty and necessity of their coming to pass. Green (1997) rightly discerns Jesus' motive by stating Jesus' intention to ensure “that the disciples grasp fully how the past, present, and future of God's activity belong to one great mural of salvation” (p. 856).

### **Fulfillment in Luke**

Luke Timothy Johnson (1991) aptly states: “Luke does not align texts and events in the mechanical fashion favored by Matthew. His references are both more general and inclusive” (p. 15). This is not to say that fulfillment in Luke is more veiled than in Matthew, but that Luke uses more allusions than direct quotations and presents specific events more frequently as fulfilling the totality of OT Scripture over a particular prophet. In addition, Luke has his characters affirming the fulfillment of Scripture, whereas Matthew notes it as the narrator (Bock, 2012; see also Hays, 2017). This does not make Luke's emphasis on fulfillment necessarily greater than that of Matthew's, but it does color it somewhat differently by presenting the characters as realizing the fulfillment of events taking place in their midst. What is clear is that Luke gives much attention to the concept of fulfillment in his Gospel. Pao and Schnabel (2007) assess Luke's use of OT Scripture this way:

Luke repeatedly emphasizes in his Gospel that the OT Scriptures are “fulfilled” in Jesus....Scripture is the means to comprehend God's acts of salvation in the past, in the present, and in the future...and is also a means of demonstrating the fulfillment of God's promises given to the people of Israel in the person of Jesus and of underscoring the presence of God's salvation in the ministry of Jesus....Luke was clearly concerned to show through his OT quotations and allusions how the story of Jesus fitted into the history of God's dealings with his people in the Scriptures... (p. 253).

This assessment further evidences Luke's concern for salvation history. Luke presents the details of Jesus' life, ministry, and death as a necessary aspect of this salvation history, made so by the promises and prophecies in the OT that look forward to the coming of the Messiah. The basis for Luke's necessity theme is the fulfillment of OT Scripture.

### **Necessity and Christology**

All three Synoptics present Jesus as the Christ, the messiah



of God promised in the OT. Luke's presentation "goes to great length to set out Jesus' messianic and prophetic credentials" and reveals Jesus' work as fulfillment of OT promises (Bird, 2007, p. 69). From the outset of Luke's Gospel, the acts of Jesus are the acts of the Messiah (Strauss, 1995, p. 260). Unlike Matthew and Mark, however, Luke utilizes necessity language in presenting the life of Jesus as obedience to the Father's will and evidence of his messiahship. He also incorporates the language of necessity and fulfillment more frequently in presenting Jesus' death as a necessary part of God's redemptive plan.

### **The Necessity of Jesus' Life**

While Matthew and Mark both use the verb  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  in describing the necessity of Jesus' death, Luke contains two occurrences of the verb (2:49 and 4:43) with relation to his life. This makes the life and ministry of Jesus as a necessary aspect of God's redemptive plan explicit in the structure of Luke's narrative. The  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  of 2:49 sets the agenda for Jesus' life and ministry as the Father's will, evidenced among other things by the  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  of 19:5, while the  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  of 4:43 places the emphasis on the activity of Jesus' life and ministry as a necessary proof of his messianic identity.

### **The Father's Will**

Early in Luke's account of the life of Jesus it is apparent that Jesus will necessarily do the will of his Father. Luke alone records an incident when Jesus was twelve years old in 2:41–52. Having gone to Jerusalem for the Passover, Joseph and Mary depart under the assumption that Jesus is with the group in which they are travelling. When it is discovered that Jesus is missing, they return to Jerusalem and find him in the temple. In response to their question about why Jesus was doing what he was doing, Jesus asks his earthly parents, "Did you not know that I must ( $\delta\epsilon\iota$ ) be in my Father's house?" (v. 49). Even at twelve, Jesus understood the necessity of doing his Father's will, and the event itself "anticipates the necessity that will mark Jesus' ministry" (Lieu, 2012, p. 20; see also Bass, 2009).

Another instance where Jesus' activity is tied to the Father's will occurs in the narrative of Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus in 19:1–10. Jesus compels Zacchaeus to come down from the tree by stating, "today... it is necessary ( $\delta\epsilon\iota$ ) for me to stay in your house" (v. 5, translation mine). The reason behind Jesus' necessary stay at Zacchaeus' house does not appear until the purpose statement of 19:10. Here Jesus states, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Since Jesus is sent by God, this purpose statement reveals Jesus' actions as necessary in fulfilling God's mission for his life (see Bock, 1996).

### **Messianic Identity**

Luke 4:18–19, taken from Isaiah 61:1–2 and 58:6, is a crucial

passage for understanding Luke's use of necessity in presenting Jesus as the Messiah, as it is programmatic concerning the life and ministry of Jesus (see Green, 2010). Some (e.g., Fitzmyer, 1981) read Jesus' words as exclusively pointing to his prophetic activity and therefore void of messianic terms. Arguing for the prophetic nature of Jesus' self-revelation, Marshall (1978) states, "In Is. 61 the anointing is clearly that of a prophet (cf. 1 Ki. 19:16; CD 2:12; 6:1; 1QM 11:7), and in view of 4:23 the same motif should be seen here" (p. 183). While Jesus' prophetic activity is a clear emphasis as the context suggests, there is both internal and external evidence that indicates the messianic role of Jesus is also in view. The clear messianic tone of the birth narratives makes it unlikely that Jesus is presented in ch. 4 only in a prophetic sense. The use of the aorist  $\epsilon\chi\rho\iota\sigma\epsilon\nu$  ("anointed") in v. 18 is closely related to the messianic title  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  ("Christ" or "anointed one") (see Bird, 2007, p. 71). M. Strauss (1995) convincingly argues that the servant figure alluded to in Isaiah demonstrates both prophetic and messianic characteristics (pp. 244–249). Additionally, the Dead Sea Scrolls (11Q13 and 4Q521) contain messianic readings of Isaiah 61:1–2 (Pao and Schnabel, 2007, p. 290). Strauss (1995) concludes:

Jesus' self-revelation from Isa. 61.1–2 in no way represents a prophetic call out of step with the royal-messianic presentation of the birth narrative. Nor does it represent a 'shift' from a royal to a prophetic Christology. Rather, by reading Isaiah as a unity, Luke links the roles associated with both the servant and prophet-herald with the person of the Davidic king" (p. 249; see also Bird, 2007, and Byrne, 2003).

Jesus is beginning his public ministry in chapter 4 and reads from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue on the Sabbath. In v. 21 Jesus announces that he is the fulfillment of the one spoken of by the prophet. The content of Isaiah's prophecy reveals that Jesus has been sent "to proclaim good news to the poor" and "to proclaim liberty to the captives." The verbs  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega$  ("preach") and  $\kappa\eta\rho\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\sigma\omega$  ("proclaim"), which both appear in v. 18, become necessary actions for the "fulfillment of the Spirit-anointed mission Jesus announced" (Blythe, 2019, p. 55).

The necessity of these two actions in conjunction with Jesus' identity as the Messiah is clear in 4:43. After the synagogue episode in 4:16–30, Luke records ministry efforts by Jesus followed by Jesus' departure to a private place in v. 42. Jesus' solitude is interrupted by the arrival of a crowd of people in v. 43, and it is in this context that Jesus issues this purpose statement: "I must ( $\delta\epsilon\iota$ ) preach the good news of the kingdom of God..." The verb  $\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$  ("to preach") is the infinitive form of the verb used in v. 18, indicating that Jesus will continue to present himself as the Messiah through this ongoing proclamation of the Gospel. Luke's

summary statement in the following verse, that serves as his first reference to Jesus' fulfilling this role of the promised Messiah as preacher of the good news, contains the verb κηρύσσω. In vv. 43–44, Luke records Jesus' statement regarding what he must be doing and reveals him to be doing it with the same two verbs that appear consecutively in v. 18.

Jesus' preaching ministry as a necessary activity stimulated by Isaiah's prophecy and Jesus' own words again aid in identifying Jesus as the Messiah in Luke 7:18–23. John the Baptist is in prison, as Matthew's parallel passage indicates (see Stein, 1993), and sends two messengers to Jesus to see if Jesus is "the one who is to come", (v. 19 and again in v. 20). The disciples of John witness Jesus ministering and performing miracles (v. 21), and then are told by Jesus to "tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached (εὐαγγελίζονται) to them" (v. 22). It is the last activity in this list that appears to receive special emphasis by Luke in identifying Jesus as the Messiah (see Nolland, 1989; Marshall, 1978). The connection back to Luke 4:18 and Jesus' programmatic self-revelation is unmistakable. It is Jesus' activity of fulfilling messianic expectations, which included preaching the good news to the poor, that affirms his identity to John. (see Osborne, 2018, pp. 196–197, and Strauss, 1995, p. 259).

Another instance where Luke shows Jesus fulfilling his role of preaching and proclaiming the good news occurs at the beginning of chapter 8. Luke 8:1 says, "Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God." Here again Luke uses vocabulary that points to Jesus' identity as the Messiah via his ministerial actions (see Gadenz, 2018, 154). For the third time the verbs εὐαγγελίζω and κηρύσσω appear together to describe Jesus' preaching. The primary function of this passage is not the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah, but attentive readers and/or hearers of Luke's gospel would be reminded of this truth by these words due to Luke's use of necessity in conjunction with the messianic activity of preaching the good news (cf. Luke 20:1).

### The Necessity of Jesus' Death

The necessity of Jesus' death is apparent in all three Synoptics. However, there is a heavier emphasis in Luke which is identifiable by the more frequent use of δεῖ by comparison. Matthew uses δεῖ twice in reference to Jesus' death, Mark once, and Luke seven times. Luke establishes the necessity of Jesus' death in 9:22 and, as Bock (1994) rightly observes, the presence of δεῖ here "shows that Jesus is presenting a commission statement" (p. 847). The Father's confirmation of Jesus' teaching in the Transfiguration passage,

which includes 9:22, affirms this truth. This becomes important for Luke's presentation of Jesus as the Messiah, because, as Mallen (2008) states, "To most in the GraecoRoman world, whether Jewish or Gentile, Jesus' death by crucifixion would have disqualified him from any serious claims to be someone significant" (p. 174). However, since Luke has presented Jesus as necessarily obedient to the Father's will (2:49), and as the Messiah by way of his preaching the good news in fulfillment of messianic scriptural expectation (4:18–19, 43–44), the validity of Jesus' need to die becomes less questionable to Luke's readers (Bass, 2009). The necessity of Jesus' death becomes for Luke's audience another event that must be fulfilled in accordance with God's overarching plan.

The later uses of δεῖ by Luke in describing the necessity of Jesus' death further emphasize the event as being rooted in the redemptive plan of God. Of the four last uses of the verb, three are explicitly located in the context of fulfillment with regards to the OT Scripture, while the other is in the context of fulfillment pertaining to previous words spoken by Jesus. The first of these final usages occurs in Luke 22:37 and is the last reference to the necessity of Jesus' death in Luke's Gospel prior to Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus specifically refers to Isaiah 53:12 and how he must fulfill it by being "numbered with the transgressors." In addition Jesus concludes the verse with the statement, "For what is written about me has its fulfillment." The combination of δεῖ and this statement serves as another reminder that the events of Jesus' life are necessary events that fulfill the prophecies of the OT with respect to the Messiah.

The final three uses of δεῖ in Luke occur in chapter 24, after the death and resurrection of Jesus. The first occurrence in v. 7 is spoken by angels to the women at Jesus' tomb as a reminder of Jesus' prediction concerning his own death and resurrection. In Luke 24:26 Jesus appears to two unnamed disciples on the road to Emmaus and rebukes their slowness "to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (v. 25). Jesus then asks the question in v. 26, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" With this question, Jesus reveals the necessity of his death as a further messianic identifier (see Gadenz, 2018, p. 394). Jesus then follows this question with a mind-opening instructional session where "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (v. 28). The disciples' dim understanding of Jesus' pre-crucifixion statements concerning the necessity of his death now become clearer as Jesus firmly grounds the necessity of his earthly ministry in the teachings of the OT.

A more emphatic illustration of this post-resurrection enlightening of the disciples occurs in Luke 24:44–46. In v. 44 Jesus states, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still

with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Pao and Schnabel (2007) rightly conclude that “Luke’s references to the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms clearly express his conviction that the person and ministry of Jesus...are based on the Jewish Scriptures” (p. 251). Jesus then opens their minds that they may understand the Scriptures in v. 45, before again revealing his suffering and death as the necessary fulfillment of the OT witness about himself. As the OT prophesied of a Messiah who would proclaim good news to the poor, so too it prophesied of a Messiah who would suffer and die.

### Conclusion

Luke’s interest in salvation history is undeniable, and the unfolding of God’s plan is the driving force behind Luke’s understanding of necessity. The characters and their actions in the beginning of Luke’s Gospel transition naturally and necessarily from the time of the OT into the NT. Luke uses the theme of necessity to highlight that Jesus will accomplish God’s purposes and that the preaching ministry of Jesus is the fulfillment of messianic activity predicted in Scripture. In a similar manner, Luke emphasizes the necessity of Jesus’ death, frequently presenting Jesus as revealing his death as both necessary and the fulfillment of Scripture. Jesus alone is presented as the Messiah who fulfills the plan of God. Luke’s emphasis on necessity, which speaks to God’s providence in history, provides assurance to the contemporary church. As God has ordained the events of Jesus’ day which came to pass in perfect fulfillment of his plan, so too will the events ordained by God necessarily come to pass concerning the church and her future

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# An Analysis of Synergistic Theosis and Deification in Light of Monergistic Perspective

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## Abstract

There is more that separates Western Christianity from its Eastern counterpart beyond the historical rifts of the Filioque clause. Indeed, the very nature of salvation is perceived in radically different ways. While Western Christianity (largely) views salvation as remission of guilt from sin, Eastern Orthodoxy views salvation as “becoming god” or “deification.” Some (such as Tuomo Mannermaa) attempt to minimize (and even harmonize) these differences. This article argues that notions of theosis (as proposed by historic and modern theologians).

Keywords: theosis, deification, Eastern Orthodoxy, monergism, synergism

## Historic and Modern Tensions

While the insertion of the *Filioque* clause into the Nicene Creed led to a lasting schism between Western and Eastern Christianity in 1054 A.D., it is apparent that the inclusion of the phrase “and of the Son” to describe the procession of the Holy Spirit from God (as being “of the Son” as well as the Father) is by no means the only major difference between the two major, historic traditions of Christianity. Trinitarian issues aside, Eastern and Western Christianity distinguished themselves apart (historically speaking) in their views of iconography, celibacy, and even the date of Easter.<sup>1</sup> Yet while the issue of *theosis* (the Eastern concept of deification whereby one becomes *divine* in and through Jesus Christ) lacks historical precedent for the division of the parties, it remains a current and formidable factor in the split between Rome (the West) and Constantinople (the East).<sup>2</sup>

Since the 1970s, however, an ecumenical effort has been made to find common ground between *theosis* and the Luther view of justification.<sup>3</sup> Led by Finnish theologian Tuomo Mannermaa in what is called the Mannermaa School, efforts have been made to downplay any distinguishing elements between Martin Luther’s doctrine of justification and sanctification. Mannermaa writes: “Luther does not differentiate, as does subsequent Lutheranism, between the person and work of Christ. Christ himself, both his person and his work, is the righteousness of man before God.”<sup>4</sup> Mannermaa then goes on to state that this “righteousness” that a believer has is the “essence” of God. Because the believer shares in such righteousness and divine essence (in such attributes as wisdom, power, holiness, and joy to name a few), Mannermaa

states that Luther and the Eastern tradition are agreed in that the believer shares such an essence of God in their earthly lives, which Mannermaa claims is *theosis*.<sup>5</sup>

Despite these efforts, the schism between East and West continues, particularly concerning the issue of *theosis*. Moreover, as even Mannermaa observes, the schism (which he desires to bridge) extends beyond that of Roman Catholicism into the Protestant doctrine of justification and sanctification. The success of the Mannermaa School in showing the link between Luther and *theosis* is questionable, and the reasons for this are many. However, could one of the reasons for such division be in the traditional Protestant position of monergism versus the Eastern Orthodox’s position of synergism? This chapter seeks to address this very issue yet must first begin with a clear definition of *theosis* and how it is interpreted in Eastern thought.

### Defining the Term “Theosis”

The term “*theosis*” is itself a transliteration of the Greek word *θέωσις*. *θέωσις* (which does not appear in the Greek New Testament) was first coined in the fourth century by Gregory of Nazianzus, and the basic English equivalent provided by proponents is “deification,” (a term referring to a believer’s transformation into the likeness of God). While this may appear to be synonymous with the Protestant’s term of *sanctification*, the Orthodox tradition affirms that *theosis* is much more complex and comprehensive than the traditional notions of sanctification (though they are not mutually exclusive).<sup>7</sup>

One can see such contrast when the synonyms of “likeness of

God” are portrayed. The Orthodox tradition does not hesitate to say that *theosis* means that the believer becomes God (something the traditional/monergistic tradition does not affirm). This is found in the Early Church Father Athanasius, who famously said of Christ, “For He was made man so that we might be made God.”<sup>8</sup> Said another way, *theosis* is the ultimate result that one enjoys through faith in Christ, for through faith the individual shares in divine life and is thus deified.<sup>9</sup>

Deification (also called divinization), refers to an anthropological and economic change in the life of a believer by the grace of God and can be understood by this definition:

*Theosis* is our restoration as persons to integrity and wholeness by participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit, in a process which is initiated in this world through our life of ecclesial communion and moral striving and finds ultimate fulfilment in our union with the Father – all within the broad context of the divine economy.<sup>10</sup>

While this definition is complex, it simply refers to the transformation of a believer into divine humanity. As Boris Jakim states: “In the person of Christ, Divinity united itself not only with a particular man, Jesus, but with the entire human race; and that is why those redeemed by Christ can attain a glory similar to his.”<sup>11</sup> Deification involves a *kenosis* (or emptying and dying to oneself) of the corrupt human nature as well as a *theosis*, or progressive transformation, into being a divine human.<sup>12</sup> As one Orthodox pastor puts it, “Union with God is the goal of *theosis* and the content of salvation. It is attained as one learns how to die in the mystery of Christ in order to be raised up in newness of life.”<sup>13</sup>

#### The Theological Basis and Construction for *Theosis*

As one can see from the definitions ascribed to *theosis*, the goal of salvation (in the Orthodox view) is to attain union with God whereby the believer shares in God’s likeness. *Theosis*, or deification, then is the way in which the believer becomes united once again to God, begins to live in God, and shares in the likeness of the divine.<sup>14</sup>

To anticipate further discussion, the Orthodox tradition does not conceive of the human plight and need the same way that Protestants and Roman Catholics do. As Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen aptly states: “Eastern theology does not focus so much on guilt as on mortality as the main problem of humanity. . . [I]n the East, the concept of sin is viewed as something human beings do and choose for themselves rather than something ‘hereditary’ as a result of the

first human beings’ sin in the distant past.”<sup>15</sup>

This is significant to the Protestant and Orthodox dialogue. While sin is not necessarily downplayed in the Eastern tradition, it is not thought of in terms of corruption, guilt, breaking of the divine law, and other forensic imageries. Sin is seen as that which breaks the likeness that one is supposed to have in God, thereby requiring a restoration into the divine. While reconciliation of a relationship is not foreign to the Orthodox tradition, salvation is better understood as restoration of likeness originally lost at the Fall of humankind.

In the design of creation, humanity is said to have been made in the *imago Dei*. As Genesis 1:27 states: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” The root Hebrew word for “image” is *צֶלֶם*, which corresponds to *εἰκὼν* in the LXX and *imagine* in the Latin. In each of these languages, the English translation can be either “image” or “likeness.” Should there be any distinguishing between image and likeness? The Orthodox tradition believes there should be.

To say that humanity was created in the *imago* of God is to affirm the constitutional aspect of humanity. To say that humanity shared in the *likeness* of God is to say they shared communion with God freely and uninhibitedly.<sup>16</sup> They were created to participate in the life of God through a process (the Eastern Fathers did not believe the first human beings were perfect in this regard) of divine communion where they would ever be growing in glory, love, and cooperation with God.<sup>17</sup> This is seen well in the following quote from Origen:

“In the image of God created He him,” without any mention of the word “likeness,” conveys no other meaning than this, that man received the dignity of God’s image at his first creation; but that the perfection of his likeness has been reserved for the consummation,—namely, that he might acquire it for himself by the exercise of his own diligence in the imitation of God, the possibility of attaining to perfection being granted him at the beginning through the dignity of the divine image, and the perfect realization of the divine likeness being reached in the end by the fulfilment of the (necessary) works.<sup>18</sup>

The effect of the Fall of humankind through Adam was the loss of the likeness of God (though the image humankind retained). As Cyril of Jerusalem states: “At that time God said, *Let us make man after our image and after our likeness*. And the *image* he received,

but the *likeness* through his disobedience he obscured.”<sup>19</sup> The part of the *imago Dei* that was lost was godlikeness. Humankind was no longer like God. That is to say that the Eastern tradition differentiates between image and likeness in that as a result of sin humankind does not share in communion with the divine any longer (thus the *image* which one possesses though in a tainted way) because humanity does not share in the *likeness* (attributes) of God.

Here one finds the importance of the incarnation. The goal of the incarnation was to restore what was lost at the Fall, namely the image and likeness of God so that humanity might be united with God once again. One now recalls what was said earlier by Athanasius, “For He was made man so that we might be made God.”<sup>20</sup> The first part of this dictum (“He was made man”) refers to the incarnation, and the second part (“so that we might be made God”) refers to *theosis*. Christ came so that humankind might have what was lost earlier, namely divinity.

Gregory of Nazianzus summarized the purpose of the incarnation well by saying, “While his inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and became One Person because the Higher Nature prevailed . . . in order that I too might be made God so far as He is made man.”<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere, Gregory states, “And how is He (Jesus) not God, if I may digress a little, by whom you too are made God?”<sup>22</sup> Again, the incarnation of God becoming man allows humankind to be made God. Still more, Gregory says:

[Jesus is the] Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary ineffably and stainlessly (for nothing can be stained where God is, and by which salvation comes), in His own Person at once entire Man and perfect God, for the sake of the entire sufferer, that He may bestow salvation on your whole being, having destroyed the whole condemnation of your sins: impassible in His Godhead, passible in that which He assumed; as much Man for your sake as you are made God for His.<sup>23</sup>

Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev observes the relation between the incarnation of Christ, the deification of believers, and the Apollinarian Controversy throughout Gregory’s theology. In Jesus, the divine and the human were one. God became man thereby becoming the God-man which allows man (a reference to humankind) to become God. By making such a claim, Gregory was able to refute the Apollinarian claim that God did not become fully human. If God did not become human (according to Gregory) then humans could not become God.<sup>24</sup> This can be seen well in Gregory’s Second Letter to Cleodnius which he writes against Apollinarius:

[T]hey who have purified their mind by the imitation of the mind which the Saviour took of us, and, as far as may be, have attained conformity with it, are said to have the mind of Christ; just as they might be testified to have the flesh of Christ who have trained their flesh, and in this respect have become of the same body and partakers of Christ. . . And so they declare that the Perfect Man is not He who was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin; but the mixture of God and Flesh. For what, say they, can be more perfect than this?<sup>25</sup>

As one can see, it was critical for God to be made human (contrary to Apollinarius) so that humankind might partake of Christ who was fully God and fully human. Through such partaking, the whole of one’s humanity might be renewed to share full humanity and full divinity in the triune God.

At this point, it becomes critical that one understands what the Eastern tradition means by “becoming god” or “deification.” Such talk of deification, divinization, and becoming God does not mean (in the Eastern Orthodox view) that the Christian becomes a literal “God.” The Eastern Orthodox tradition remains monotheistic. In some form or another, all the Cappadocian Fathers (not to mention Origen, Irenaeus, or Tertullian<sup>26</sup>) wrote against polytheism. It is not that *theosis* is to be equated with pluralism or even (strictly speaking) apotheosis.<sup>27</sup> Rather, it is that the believer enjoys a new life whereby he or she shares in the same qualities of God in the spiritual sense. As some proponents have put it, “Of course, Christian monotheism goes against any literal ‘god making’ of believers. Rather, the NT speaks of a transformation of mind, a metamorphosis of character, a redefinition of selfhood, and an imitation of God.”<sup>28</sup>

Again, the doctrine of the incarnation is critical to the doctrine of *theosis*. In the incarnation, humanity combined with divinity to make the God-man. Jesus did not cease to be God at the point of the incarnation, but just as importantly, Jesus did not cease to be human though He was divine. As one becomes divinized, he or she too does not cease to be human but (in a sense) actually becomes fully human.

Hilarion Alfeyev observes that for the Cappadocians (and all Fathers of Eastern Orthodoxy for that matter), Christian deification should be differentiated between the Platonic concept of “becoming god” as set forth through proponents such as Plotinus. Alfeyev observes that in the latter system, matter remains evil and is opposed

to the divine. In Eastern thought, sinful humanity is transfigured by the Spirit where humanity and divinity are combined.<sup>29</sup>

This is to say that in deification, one does not cease to be human, as would be the case in apotheosis. As one author states: “[T]he aim of the Christian is to become once again truly human, to become the human partners of God as we were originally created, and as human partners to share in the divine life.”<sup>30</sup> According to the 7<sup>th</sup> century Syrian monk John of Damascus, “[A believer] becomes deified by merely inclining himself towards God; becoming deified, in the way of participating in the divine glory and not in that of a change into the divine being.”<sup>31</sup> In this view, there is no change to the essence of human nature.

So, what takes place in *theosis*? What does it mean to become “divine” if one does not become an actual God? Again, when one understands that deification refers to communion into the Godhead, the practicalities of such are evident. Consider what Origen said on the subject of deification and communication into divinity:

Now He will be “all” in each individual in this way: when all which any rational understanding, cleansed from the dregs of every sort of vice, and with every cloud of wickedness completely swept away, can either feel, or understand, or think, will be wholly God; and when it will no longer behold or retain anything else than God, but when God will be the measure and standard of all its movements; and thus God will be “all.” . . . So then, when the end has been restored to the beginning, and the termination of things compared with their commencement, that condition of things will be re-established in which rational nature was placed, when it had no need to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; so that when all feeling of wickedness has been removed, and the individual has been purified and cleansed, He who alone is the one good God becomes to him “all,” and that not in the case of a few individuals, or of a considerable number, but He Himself is “all in all.” And when death shall no longer anywhere exist, nor the sting of death, nor any evil at all, then verily God will be “all in all.”<sup>32</sup>

Here one can see the complete immersion into the divine whereby the believer is cleansed from sin, restored to original nature from before the Fall, and becomes “wholly God.” Death,

which can have no part in the divine, will cease in the brokenness of humanity, and God will be “all (divine) in all (believers)”. In sum, “As Christians transformed by Christ we become not “who” God is but “what” he is, sharing in his divine plan for the reconciliation and glorification of humankind.”<sup>33</sup>

#### Eastern Orthodoxy Scriptural Support for *Theosis*

As one can see from the survey above, it was the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers who developed the doctrine of *theosis*. Notable proponents were Irenaeus (who is credited with founding the doctrine), the Cappadocian Fathers (of whom Gregory of Nazianzus is credited with coining the term *theosis*), Origen, Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, John of Damascus, and others. This does not mean, however, that the Eastern tradition claims this doctrine was merely invented by them. Rather, throughout Scripture, the Orthodox Church finds support for the doctrine of *theosis*, which must now be explored.

#### *Psalms 82*

One of the primary Scriptures used to support the doctrine of deification is Psalm 82:6 (Psalm 81:6 in the LXX) which states: “I say, “You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you.”<sup>34</sup> The Orthodox tradition observes the literary context of Psalm 82 beginning with verse 1: “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.” Commenting upon this passage from the Psalms, Justin Martyr said, “[L]et the interpretation of the Psalm be held just as you wish, yet thereby it is demonstrated that all men are deemed worthy of becoming “gods,” and of having power to become sons of the Highest.”<sup>34</sup> Again, this does not mean that one becomes a literal god as Irenaeus (in commenting on this text) affirms.<sup>35</sup> Rather, through the sin of Adam humankind lost the likeness of their Creator. What God allows as an act of grace is persons to be declared gods once again as weakness and corruption are shed and one takes on immortality through the incarnate Son of God.<sup>36</sup> That is to say that in Psalm 82, those who sit in the council of the Most High God are the Father, the Son, and those who receive adoption as children of God (i.e. the church). Those who receive such adoption are (according to Irenaeus) “gods” as mentioned in vs. 6.<sup>37</sup>

One may recall that this verse from the Psalms was quoted by Jesus in the New Testament. There the Gospel of John states (with context):

The Jews answered, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a

human being, are making yourself God.” Jesus answered, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’? If those to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’-- and the scripture cannot be annulled-- can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?” ~ John 10:33-36

According to the Eastern tradition, Jesus does not quote the psalm to prove His divinity but rather to prove there is a divine sonship He possesses that may be shared with all who believe.<sup>38</sup> The implication, then, is that Jesus affirmed what David wrote, namely that believers are gods because of the incarnation of Christ who was, Himself, the Son of God. As the Son of God, Jesus stands in the very council of God (per Ps. 82:1), and all who believe in and receive Him will become sons (and daughters) of God, and thus gods, who share in immortality and incorruption.<sup>39</sup>

Analyzing the exegesis of Justin Martyr on Psalm 82 and John 10, Carl Mosser states that Justin’s intent was to show how all believers have an opportunity to become gods and sons of the Most High. After tracing Justin’s line of thought, Mosser states:

[I]n the beginning humanity (in the persons of Adam and Eve) was created like God immortal and impassible and would have remained *in* this state if they had obeyed God’s commandments. They did not obey and therefore in judgement they fell from their immortal state to suffer death. This appears to be a traditional interpretation that the testimony source has expanded or adapted by indicating (apparently) that in Christ all humans have the opportunity to regain what was lost. Because of the Son of God, humans can be made sons of God and thereby restored to immortality, i.e. made “gods”.<sup>40</sup>

#### 2 Peter 1:4

A second, and foundational, verse used to support deification is 2 Peter 1:4: “Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants (often *partakers*) of the divine nature.”

The surrounding literary context supplied by the prior three verses explains (to the Orthodox) what this “divine nature” consists of, namely righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) in vs. 1, divine power

(δύναμις), glory (δόξα), and virtue (ἀρετή) in vs. 3 as it contrasts corruption and appeals to that which is eternal in vs. 4. The verses following vs. 4 go on to describe the virtues of living as one who partakes of such divine nature.<sup>41</sup>

While further examination of how one partakes of the divine nature is reserved for below, one must note that from this passage the Orthodox tradition states that through faith (1:1) and trust (1:11) one shares in divine qualities such as righteousness (3:13). Through such partaking, one receives forgiveness of sins (1:9), the breaking of sin’s power on their lives (1:3-4, 2:19-20), and the acquisition of moral virtue (1:8) which will progress in terms of moral change that leads to eternal life.<sup>42</sup>

With such mention of faith and trust as the means for partaking of the divine nature, one may question: “How is such faith and trust expressed? How does one partake of the divine nature practically speaking?” Cyril of Jerusalem testifies how faith should express itself as one partakes of the divine nature in the 2 Peter context:

Wherefore with full assurance let us partake as of the Body and Blood of Christ: for in the figure of Bread is given to thee His Body, and in the figure of Wine His Blood; that thou by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, mayest be made of the same body and the same blood with Him. For thus we come to bear Christ in us, because His Body and Blood are distributed through our members; thus it is that, according to the blessed Peter, *we become partakers of the divine nature*.<sup>43</sup>

That is to say that one partakes of the divine nature through faith, and such faith is expressed through the means of the Lord’s Supper. In the Eastern tradition, the Eucharist is the means through which one partakes of the transforming grace and identifies himself or herself in the community and fellowship of the church. Through the bread and wine, the Logos inhabits the believer’s soul and brings a divine transformation into his or her spiritual life. Through this act of infusion, divine properties transform the believer into the likeness (which again was lost through the Fall) so that they can be called gods through adoption as sons and daughters of God.<sup>44</sup>

Again, the incarnation is central to understanding how one partakes of the divine nature according to 2 Peter 1:4. Athanasius, quoting Antony, writes: “He took a human body for the salvation and well-being of man, that having shared in human birth He might make man partake in the divine and spiritual nature.”<sup>45</sup> The divine took on human flesh so that human flesh could partake of



divinity.<sup>46</sup> In the act of penetrating into humanity, humanity is able to penetrate into God, and thus be divinized human beings, who are not ontologically transformed but are nonetheless spiritually transformed into the image and likeness of God through means of faith expressed through the Eucharist.<sup>47</sup>

### *Genesis 1-3*

Much has been said already about the *imago Dei* found in Genesis 1; however, the Creation and Fall narratives serve as a wider supporting basis for the doctrine of deification. Again, it was God's intention for humanity to share in divinity (the image and likeness of God). As said above, the Eastern tradition did not believe that Adam and Eve experienced the fullness of divinity. For Adam and Eve (and their prospective descendants) they would move into maturity by progressively attaining (by obedience to God) to the likeness of God. Through such commands as to have dominion over creation and being hand-crafted by God Himself, Fathers such as Ephrem the Syrian believed that Adam and Eve were deified upon their creation and expected to progress in divinity unto immortal life. They would be considered a second god over creation, and while not perfect, Adam and Eve were perfectible as they ascended the hill toward God to eat of the Tree of Life.<sup>48</sup>

Interestingly, when Eve was tempted by the serpent who told her she would be like God, the Eastern tradition affirms that this was a very true statement (though it would only be actualized as one was obedient to God and not disobedient).<sup>49</sup> It was no sin (in this tradition) for Adam and Eve to aspire to be divine.<sup>50</sup> The sin was pride that attempted to acquire immortality and incorruptibility on one's own prerogative rather than through the means of grace. As such, the death sentence (says Irenaeus and others) was remedial rather than retributive, allowing the sin that indwelt the body to die.<sup>51</sup>

The incarnation, once again, is critical for the restoration of the image and likeness that was lost through disobedience. Irenaeus writes: "[W]hat we had lost in Adam – namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God – that we might recover in Christ Jesus."<sup>52</sup>

### *Pauline Epistles*

There are three texts found in the Pauline Epistles used to support the doctrine of *theosis* in Eastern Orthodoxy, namely Philippians 2:6-11, Galatians 2:15-21, and Romans 6:1-7:6. While the way these passages are constructed in this tradition warrants an entire book, the highlights will be provided here.

In the Philippians passage (a passage widely considered to be a

hymn of *kenosis* dating back to the Pauline or pre-Pauline times), the conclusions made by proponents is that in the incarnation, divinity is matched with human likeness and humility. In so doing, Christ succeeded in being that which Adam failed to be (namely divine and human). In such union where humans become divine, Paul teaches (in this tradition) that believers transform into a fully human, fully divine person as well. In this new life, Christians live in the Spirit and participate in the benefits and communicable attributes of God.<sup>53</sup>

Regarding Galatians 2:15-21 and Romans 6:1-7:6, proponents claim that Paul's understanding of justification by faith results in new life and resurrection. One participates in this activity, meaning that salvation is both juridical and participative.<sup>54</sup> Justification, then, is the restoration of right relations between God and other people. In other words, justification is not merely judicial but transformational. As Galatians 2:20 claims, one is crucified with Christ but continues living by faith in the Son of God.<sup>55</sup>

Likewise, in the Romans 6-7 passage, one is co-crucified with Christ and in so doing is participating with Christ. Such participation leads to a new life. In so doing, one becomes like God and experiences a process of *theosis* as they embody a new life in the Son of God who was both fully human and fully divine.<sup>56</sup>

### *Hermeneutical Approach*

A brief word must be given on the modern approach to biblical hermeneutics by the Orthodox party. Long have the Orthodox Christians been criticized that their doctrine of *theosis* is rooted more in the theology of the Early Church Fathers rather than Scripture. The Orthodox refute this claim by citing the texts used above. What is important to note, though, is the modern view of the role of Scripture and the role of the Early Church Fathers.

A growing trend in modern biblical interpretation by Orthodox scholars is to rely on "spiritual" interpretation. As one author puts it, "Even when the objection is raised that often these texts are taken out of context Orthodox exegetes are not overly concerned. Even nowadays, Eastern theologians feel much more comfortable with the idea of spiritual interpretation."<sup>57</sup> What is meant by "spiritual interpretation"? While admitting that the Orthodox tradition has produced little amounts of scholarship on hermeneutical method, one scholar claims that the general approach amongst modern Orthodox theologians is to cooperate synergistically with the Holy Spirit who illumines the minds of readers in the context of the local church to new, present day interpretations that may be different than that previously.<sup>58</sup> This tradition affirms that the Holy Spirit is not "captive" to the written word and may thus provide new ways to

understand divine things.<sup>59</sup>

The role of the church in interpretation, then, is highly regarded, and the interpretations made by the church are authoritative. One scholar claims that the church is the locus for interpretation and that personal interpretations are not authoritative unless approved by the church which all matters of interpretation must be submitted to.<sup>60</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that the Early Church Fathers are authoritative to the Eastern tradition. One scholar says, “Orthodox theology is based on the teaching and witness of the church fathers.”<sup>61</sup> Another authority in Eastern Orthodoxy says, “When we ponder on these eternal questions, we should not allow our minds to hang suspended in confusion between heaven and earth, or seek answers in our imagination. We should base our understanding on the Holy Scripture and Church tradition.”<sup>62</sup>

This is to say that while the monergistic party would question the biblical interpretation of the proponents of *theosis*, the Orthodox party would not be overly concerned about hermeneutics given that the Church (through the Fathers) has formulated a satisfactory doctrine they should adhere to.

#### The Efficient Cause of Deification

It is now time to consider how the Eastern tradition views the efficient cause, followed by the instrumental means of *theosis*. As with all analyses of each particular aspect of salvation, the efficient cause questions *who* effects a specific change in a given soteriological aspect, and the instrumental means questions *how* such a change occurs.

Analyzing who effects *theosis* in the Eastern tradition, one should not be surprised that it relates directly to the doctrines of creation and the incarnation of the Son of God. Before sin entered the world, Adam was made in the image of God and would ever grow into the likeness of the divine. The Fall meant that humankind preserved a tainted image of the divine and lost the likeness of the triune God. Apart from the incarnation, there would be no cause for deification or a means to attain to the likeness of God.

In the incarnation, the divine essence met humanity. That which was lost from the Fall is restored in the incarnation. In this sense, it is a very real thing that the efficient cause of deification is found in God’s gracious act of sending His begotten Son. This is seen well in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa: “He was like us in all things, in that He took upon Him manhood in its entirety with soul and body, so that our salvation was accomplished by means of both:—He, I say, appeared on earth . . . that we might receive the teaching concerning the transcendent nature of the Deity which is given to

us.”<sup>63</sup>

Here one recalls the famous dictum of Athanasius, “For He was made man that we might be made God; and He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and He endured the insolence of men that we might inherit immortality.”<sup>64</sup> According to Athanasius, divinity and humanity were manifested in the incarnation, allowing humanity to see the “idea” (ἐννοια – thought, knowledge, insight)<sup>65</sup> of the Father previously unseen by fallen humanity.

The efficient cause, at this point, becomes clear. God sent His Son into the world, manifested in human flesh, giving the opportunity (hence the continual references to “*might*” mentioned above) for individuals to partake of that divine nature, (2 Pet. 1:4). Without God becoming man, man (i.e. humanity) could not become God. God had to cause the incarnation in order to effect *theosis*. The divine initiative of the incarnation, which restores humanity to original creation, allows the union to take place between God and humankind which was previously lost in the Fall through the process of deification.<sup>66</sup>

Deification is the fulfilment of creation, not just the remedy of the Fall. God always desired for humanity to share in the divine life, yet humankind frustrated those plans through failing to live according to God’s will. This, as has been said, leads to a loss of the likeness of God. The consequence of such failure is that humans cease to be fully human because they fail to be divine. The incarnation, (brought about by divine initiative and sourced in His grace), brings the fullness of humanity and divinity together in the divine Logos. That which creation was designed for is fulfilled in the Son of God.<sup>67</sup>

This is not to say, however, that God is the only efficient cause of deification. Deification would not be *caused* apart from another agent, namely the human individual. God became human so that the *human could become god*. One can see how God takes the initiative in deification apart from which no human could ever become divine; however, the human must become divine through his or her own activity.

The Eastern tradition rejects any notion of the divinization of human nature being automatic or passive.<sup>68</sup> It does not occur without human cooperation or synergy. The actions necessary to acquire deification will be discussed in the instrumental means section below; however, throughout historic and modern Orthodox writings, humanity remains an essential partner in effecting deification. A historic example of this would be Athanasius, who said: “[T]hat the Word was made flesh in order to offer up this body for all, and

that we, partaking of His Spirit, might be deified, a gift which we could not otherwise have gained than by His clothing Himself in our created body.”<sup>69</sup> As one can see, in order that one “might be deified” one must “partake of His Spirit” to gain the gift of deification. A modern testament of this would be Vladimir Lossky, who says:

The descent (*katábasis*) of the divine person of Christ makes human persons capable of an ascent (*anábasis*) in the Holy Spirit. It was necessary that the voluntary humiliation, the redemptive *kenosis*, of the Son of God should take place, so that fallen men and women might accomplish their vocation of *theosis*, the deification of created beings by uncreated grace.<sup>70</sup>

As one can see, God is the initiator (even enabler) of deification; however, human beings must “accomplish their vocation of *theosis*, the deification of created beings by uncreated grace.” Divine grace is evident, but so is human cooperation. Both divine and human actions (or causes) effect deification.

The conjoining of human and divine activity is called, by proponents of *theosis*, synergism. As Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen states: “The idea of divine-human cooperation in salvation is not only accepted but is enthusiastically championed, although it is not understood as nullifying the role of grace.”<sup>71</sup> He goes on to say, “Eastern theologians do not shy away from speaking of divine-human *synergy*, the cooperation of the person with God. Men and women are saved by grace, but not without one’s total devotion and willingness to be transformed.”<sup>72</sup>

Humankind, then, is also an efficient cause, and together in a form of synergy God and the believer work together to bring about deification. As said above, this is not (in the Orthodox’s theology) an attempt to nullify grace but to show the involvement of the human will. Athanasius (while making a plea for the saints to “persevere in piety”) reminds his readers that human nature is not able to do this on its own and that humanity is insufficient to repay God for the gift of grace, which allows one to receive His benefits.<sup>73</sup> Yet while grace is evident, the human will must be equally evident. As one modern proponent put it:

What we have received by grace is necessary for our salvation, but not in such a way as to obviate the equal critical necessity of human response. . . Far from being incorporated into the Logos automatically or mechanically, then, believers must be vigilant over the conduct of their lives

by cooperating with this didactic grace of Christ if they hope to have a divinizing share in Him.<sup>74</sup>

Dumitru Staniloae (though not utilizing the term *efficient cause*) draws out this concept clearly. He states that a human being is the master of nature (the natural world including his or her own soul) in the sense that he or she has the ability to advance or corrupt the natural world. An individual may work for and maintain good nature, and doing so will help him or her grow spiritually, yet the opposite itself is true. An individual can work and devastate nature and thus does the same to his or her own soul. Through what Staniloae calls “work,” an individual (through acts of love, virtue, and asceticism) becomes “spiritual” with the assistance of God and can receive a nature like the “creator Spirit who is the origin of the rationality of nature.”<sup>75</sup>

Here one will be reminded of the Scriptural support the Orthodox uses to support their claim. In the humiliation of Christ (a reference to the taking on of human flesh from divine glory as mentioned in Philippians 2:6-11), one sees who God is, what He is like, and how to be like Him. One also sees what he or she should have been, and because of the *kenosis* the individual is able to participate in *theosis*.<sup>76</sup> The ultimate goal of this synergistic activity is to attain to the likeness of God and share in divine union. Through this synergy, this goal is realized. God bestows the fullness of the *imago Dei* (showing His side of activity as the efficient cause) through the believer’s willful cooperation (the other efficient cause) of living in light of God’s will.<sup>77</sup>

#### The Instrumental Means of Deification

Having established that the Orthodox willfully embrace divine-human cooperating agents as the cause of *theosis*, one must now examine what each member does specifically and how this leads to divinization. While this study has already shown much of the divine means of *theosis* (i.e. creation and incarnation), one must understand how God works in real time (as opposed to solely historical means) in order to bring about deification. That is to say, God works actively in the lives of individuals in the present time and not solely through historical events. These must now be explored.

#### *Divine Instrumental Means*

The divine instrumental means of bringing about *theosis* can be summarized by saying that God works in real-time in the life of an individual to raise awareness of and make application of the historic realities of the incarnation. That is to say, though the incarnation happened thousands of years ago, God is at work today (by the Holy Spirit) in appropriating these historic realities into the lives of an

individual.

How does God do this? Adam Cooper summarizes it well when he says:

The deification of the human person is directly proportionate to, and constituted by, the humanisation of the divine Word, who became incarnate historically in Christ. Deification takes place when the invisible God again takes on visible contours in the virtues, thereby becoming manifest in the world in an ongoing, escalating cycle of revelation. Love (*αγάπη*), which on the divine side is enacted in the form of *φιλανθρωπία*, constitutes the essential ingredient that makes this transformative, unifying, and revelatory process possible.<sup>78</sup>

This quote shows both the divine and human means through which deification occurs, but as one looks at the divine side of instrumentality, one may see that God's continual activity in time is to reveal the incarnate Son of God to people. He places before them Christ (the fully human and fully divine) in an effort to make them the same (fully human and fully divine).

The Orthodox tradition is very Trinitarian in this regard. God the Father sent the Son, the Son embodied the fullness of humanity and divinity, and the Spirit brings the individual into the fullness of this reality. God the Father has purposes for humanity, the Son embodies those purposes, and the Spirit enables believers to embody these purposes to the fullest (divine) extent.<sup>79</sup> In a Trinitarian way, each member is specifically responsible for deification (and thus worthy of praise in this tradition), yet it is the Spirit who is actively involved in realizing deification in the believer. Stressing the importance of synergism as involving not only the will of the human, proponents of this view affirm that it is the third member of the Trinity who leads individuals to faith in the incarnate Son, reproduces a new life and new desires in the believer, and brings conformity to the divine nature so that the human will does not struggle (nor get the credit) of deification.<sup>80</sup>

The precise activity of the Spirit in the present, now, becomes a central issue given the historic acts of the Father and the Son. First, the Spirit is that which evokes faith from the individual. While the Eastern Fathers did not argue the point of the Spirit's role in evoking faith through the proclamation of the Word as much as the Western tradition has, attempts of the Mannermaa school have sought to find consistency between Luther and *theosis*, leading some to affirm (with Luther) that the Spirit operates upon an individual to evoke

faith and trust in Christ. Such an evocation can only be by the Spirit, and it elicits the human activity of faith in Christ and initiation into the divine life. Moreover, the Spirit evokes faith through the administration of the Eucharist and baptism leading a person to partake of the divine nature.<sup>81</sup>

Here one reflects on the significance of progressive deification in Eastern Orthodoxy which was only briefly mentioned above. Even Adam and Eve, before their sin, did not experience deification to the fullest extent.<sup>82</sup> The idea was for them to progress into divinity, conforming more into the likeness of God. This idea, despite the Fall, never actually changed; it was merely thwarted. Through the incarnation, the ability for humankind to partake in the divine is restored, and they do so by cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

The activity of the Spirit involves purifying the mind and heart of the believer, enlightening him or her to divine realities, and increases the desires for righteous living (all in willful cooperation with the believer).<sup>83</sup> The Spirit is infused into the life of the believer upon baptism and indwells the believer through the course of his or her life to die to fleshly desires and live instead for spiritual things.<sup>84</sup> It is by these activities of the Holy Spirit that the individual attains to that which is lacking, namely full humanity and full deity. The Spirit's role is to assist the believer in bringing this fullness to a reality. Furthermore, as one would expect with progressive deification, the terms "infusion," "partaking," and "dispense" are often used.<sup>85</sup> Confer Gregory of Nyssa who said:

Since, then, that God-containing flesh partook for its substance and support of this particular nourishment also, and since the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, viz. that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminates Himself in every believer through that flesh, whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers, to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption. He gives these gifts by virtue of the benediction through which He transelements (*μεταστοιχειώσας*) the natural quality of these visible things to that immortal thing.<sup>86</sup>

This is an important factor to note, for it tells much about the nature of union with God. God does not perfect (in a completed

sense) the believer but makes him or her perfectible. Continual pursuit is needed if the individual is to receive the fullness of divinity. As long as one remains on this earth, he or she will be in continual pursuit of the divine, conforming to His likeness, in a way that will never be fully achieved in this lifetime.<sup>87</sup> Still, as one attains to the oneness of God, he or she never loses his or her personal identity or distinction as a creation of the Creator.<sup>88</sup>

#### *Human Instrumental Means*

As the Holy Spirit of God impresses historic realities upon individuals in the present time, one must now consider what role the human has in this cooperation, or (to quote 2 Peter 1:4) how one may be a “partaker of the divine nature.” As said above, it is important to keep two things in mind that the Orthodox tradition affirms: First, there is no claim to Pelagianism where one can attain to divinity on one’s own efforts; second, *theosis* will not occur passively but requires human synergy.

Andrew Louth observes from the writings of St. Maximus the Confessor that the human’s role in deification mirrors the incarnation of Christ. Through the incarnation, Christ emptied Himself in order to become human. In a similar way, the human must empty himself or herself (not of their own humanity but of their own carnal passions) in order to become god.<sup>89</sup> In so doing, one is emptying himself or herself of the things which are not like God which leads one to become truly human, in a state similar to their original creation. God cooperates with this ascetic struggle of the person and brings transfiguration of the believer into His likeness as room is made for divinization through self-emptying.<sup>90</sup> As one author put it, “What we empty ourselves of, however, are the distorted aspects of our fallen human nature so that we can attain to the true fullness of humanity in Christ.”<sup>91</sup> Yet how does one empty oneself of their fallen human nature? This same author explains, “Emptying ourselves of the distorted aspects of our fallen human nature is not a negative work of repression. It is brought about by responding in love to God’s gift of himself to us.”<sup>92</sup>

Gregory of Nazianzen makes this clear in his *Oration on the Holy Lights*:

[B]esides fleeing from evil, practice virtue, making Christ entirely, or at any rate to the greatest extent possible, to dwell within them, so that the power of evil cannot meet with any empty place to fill it again with himself. . . [L]et us purify ourselves, and receive the elementary initiation of the Word, that we may do ourselves the utmost good, making ourselves godlike, and

receiving the Word at His coming.<sup>93</sup>

In sum, one way in which the individual becomes divine is by receiving God’s love in place of sinful passions. Through self-denial of sin, an individual makes room for God’s love to be more fully experienced. As one experiences the fullness of divine love, it leads to good acts. Good character and good actions lead to divinity.

The good acts which are a means to *theosis* are many. One author mentions the following: prayer, asceticism, meditation, and humble service.<sup>94</sup> This list is not exhaustive. One author sums up the human’s work in *theosis* with this general principle: “God calls us to turn back from this dead end (of seeking to become divine in one’s own merits) and begin rebuilding the shattered links of interpersonal communion through Christ’s commandments of love for God and love for neighbor.”<sup>95</sup> In one’s free will (which the Orthodox claims one always has, despite the Fall), one may act in loving ways towards others through acts of charity as well as acts of love toward God (prayer, piety, worship, and the like) and in so doing becomes divine.

The instrumental means of the person is often carried out in the context of one’s church. By belonging to the church, one enters into new life through baptism, enjoys the presence of the worshipping community, and communes with God through the Eucharist.<sup>96</sup> Athanasius drew attention to this as he called his readers to cleanse themselves in action and thought as they approach the Lord’s table so that, as pure ones, they may partake of the Word (Logos) by partaking of the bread and drink.<sup>97</sup> Clearly, by partaking of the Lord’s Supper, one (in this theology) partakes of the divine, incarnate Word. While not denying that salvation is found in Christ, it must be partaken of through participation in Christ, which one author claims is done by baptism and communion.<sup>98</sup>

#### **Relationship between Deification and Justification**

Thus far it has been shown how the Eastern tradition defines, understands, and supports *theosis* in an effort to contrast this position against the monergistic position of justification. However, given that the traditional Protestant position has not formulated (and in many cases outright rejects) a doctrine of *theosis*,<sup>99</sup> one may question as to whether these two positions may be compared and contrasted. After all, the traditional doctrine of justification and the Eastern doctrine of deification are quite distinct in their conception.

However, the Western and Eastern traditions (while formulating the process differently) are aiming at a central issue, namely union with God through Christ. As said above, “Union with God is the goal of *theosis* and the content of salvation.”<sup>100</sup> The goal of the

incarnation according to the Orthodox tradition was to restore what humanity lost at the Fall, namely the image and likeness of God so that the creatures could be united with their Creator once again. The monergistic position, similarly, claims that the end result of justification is one's right standing and union with God through Jesus Christ.

Proponents of deification have been amongst the most vocal in comparing *theosis* to justification. The rationale is as follows: in the monergistic formulation of justification, one participates in the faithfulness and love of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Such an act effects a lifelong process of becoming like God as the believer lives a symbiotic (i.e. synergistic) life of fidelity and love in the Son of God.<sup>101</sup>

Consider the following quote by Paul R. Hinlicky:

The Lutheran doctrine of justification offers an Eastern answer to a Western question: Jesus Christ, in his person the divine Son of God, is our righteousness. He is the one who in obedience to his Father personally assumed the sin and death of humanity and triumphed over these enemies on behalf of helpless sinners, bestowing on them his own Spirit, so that, by the ecstasy of faith, they become liberated children of God in a renewed creation. While not asking the same question as in the West about divine righteousness, Orthodoxy's doctrine of *theosis* offers a genuinely *theological* anthropology, which strictly thinks of the human being as the unfinished creation of the triune God.<sup>102</sup>

This helpful insight reveals two things. First, *theosis* and justification are not the same thing. The forensic imagery of justification embedded in the Western tradition cannot be equated (despite noble efforts) with the Eastern tradition's notion of the Son of God becoming incarnate in order to deify believers. Second, however, though they are different formulations, the Eastern tradition claims they are addressing a shared interest, namely that through faith in Christ the believer enters a process of becoming like Christ. As Hinlicky stated, a believer is still an "unfinished creation of the triune God" and must grow into the likeness of the divine Son of God.

As said above, this does not mean that the Eastern and Western traditions believe sanctification and *theosis* are interchangeable terms referring to the same thing. The concepts remain quite distinct. However, the East claims that while asking different

questions, the end result is the same. Through faith in the Son of God, an individual enters into a lifelong process of transformation whereby he or she becomes like God and attains to union with God.

Confer Gregory of Nazianzen's comment:

For in truth He was in servitude to flesh and to birth and to the conditions of our life with a view to our liberation, and to that of all those whom He has saved, who were in bondage under sin. What greater destiny can befall man's humility than that he should be intermingled with God, and by this intermingling should be deified. . .?<sup>103</sup>

One can draw upon some inferences from this passage. In the Eastern tradition, the incarnate Son of God saved, delivered from the bondage of sin, and allowed an intermingling with God (which Gregory calls being "deified"). The Western tradition, likewise, believes that the Son of God became incarnate, delivered believers from their bondage to sin, and allowed union with God once again through the act of justification.

This has led, as said above, to a school of thought that attempts to bridge Luther theology with *theosis*. Led by Tuomo Mannermaa, this alternative interpretation of Martin Luther claims the following: 1. Luther's theology of salvation may be expressed not just as justification but as *theosis*. 2. For Luther, the believer participates in God through the indwelling of Christ in an authentic, internal, and spiritual reality. 3. Luther does not differentiate between forensic (declarative) justification and effective justification (the making of one righteous). 4. Justification makes the believer a "christ" in such a way where one grows in Christ likeness and engages in good works before one's neighbor.<sup>104</sup>

Whether the Mannermaa school of thought accurately reflects the theology of Luther, and whether justification and deification address the same issues has been debated and criticized,<sup>105</sup> one may at least make the point that there is an attempt to compare justification and deification, and though each of these aspects is distinct, it will be upon this basis that comparative analysis will be made.

#### Comparative Analysis of *Theosis* and Justification

Having relayed the views of the traditional monergistic perspective on justification, the views of *theosis* in Eastern Orthodoxy, and recognizing that these two traditions are addressing related issues, one is now in a position to compare and contrast these traditions particularly through the lens of monergism and synergism. Given that these traditions address their perspectives

very differently, the comparative analysis must also look at the core, underlying ideas and the methods used to arrive at their respective conclusions in order to do justice to each tradition.

### *Terminology and Foundational Issues*

While the monergistic community would share in its debt and appreciation for the Early Church Fathers, the notion of “becoming god” or *theosis* ceased to have a central role in Western theology since about the twelfth century, leading this doctrine to be considered suspicious (at best) and heresy (at worst) among Westerners.<sup>106</sup> Adolf von Harnack, a prominent historian of the West, repeatedly equated the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* with *apotheosis* (which has been vehemently denied by the Orthodox tradition) and claimed that the source for such doctrine was Greek mythology and Gnosticism. Many from the West have followed in Harnack’s example given that the idea of a human becoming god (while still holding to monotheism) seems irreconcilable.

While the language of “becoming god” and “divinization” is confusing at best to the Western theologian, this study will bypass terminology and look at the underlying ideas that make up this belief system. It is beyond question that the Early Church Fathers (as a whole) were monotheistic, and there is no standardized belief in any branch among the Eastern Orthodoxy for polytheism. Whatever “becoming god” means, the monergistic tradition must understand that the Orthodox position is not denying that there is only one God as has been shown above. Moreover, any analysis of Eastern Orthodoxy must affirm that this tradition does not believe that one becomes divine in terms of essence. Though somewhat confusing, the Orthodox tradition should not be criticized on these terms.

What requires further examination is the ultimate goal of theosis, which as has been said relates to the doctrine of justification. As mentioned above, “Union with God is the goal of *theosis* and the content of salvation.”<sup>107</sup> This is similar (though not the same) to the monergistic position of justification, namely how one can be united with God again. As said above, *theosis* is the way in which the believer becomes united once again to God, begins to live in God, and shares in the likeness of the divine.<sup>108</sup> The goal is to become like God. The goal of the incarnation (from the Orthodox perspective) is to restore humanity to the point of original creation. The ultimate aim of God in sending His Son was to allow humanity to become god-like once again, which was the point of creation. Thus, the two concepts may be compared and contrasted. However, the ultimate goal and the means required to attain to that goal, are in actuality

very different.

Terminology aside, the monergistic tradition views a very different goal or end regarding salvation and the incarnation. This is because these traditions have different views on the need of salvation and the incarnation. Both traditions affirm that sin has affected the *imago Dei*. Both traditions affirm that because of the Fall humanity does not share in the likeness of God. The difference, however, is in what Christ became incarnate for and what the goal of salvation is. Salvation, in the Eastern sense, is the ability to become fully divine and fully human through the fully divine and human Christ.

The monergistic position, on the other hand, views the goal and means of salvation very differently.<sup>109</sup> Sin, in this tradition, has left individuals guilty, depraved, and deserving of divine judgment. In the love and grace of God, the Son of God was sent to fulfill the Law through perfect submission to the Father, die upon the cross to atone for human sin, and ascend again, thereby defeating death. Through repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, one is justified before God. While numerous things occur in the fullness of salvation (including but not limited to redemption, adoption, and sanctification), the result is that believers are restored into a right relationship with God whereby they may grow in the likeness of Christ and spend eternity in heaven all for the glory of God.

Perhaps this is merely a difference on emphasis of doctrines. The Eastern tradition believes Christ became incarnate to restore a person to the original position of creation. The West views the purpose of the incarnation to redeem rebellious humanity from the judgment of God. Perhaps these differences are not that significant. However, further examination shows that the differences are quite significant.

As Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen states: “Eastern theology does not focus so much on guilt as on mortality as the main problem of humanity. . . [I]n the East, the concept of sin is viewed as something human beings do and choose for themselves rather than something ‘hereditary’ as a result of the first human beings’ sin in the distant past.”<sup>110</sup> He also says that throughout the history of Orthodoxy, there is almost a complete absence of the notion of justification by faith.<sup>111</sup> The full implications and critiques of this affirmation will be examined in the section below; however, the point to note here is that while both traditions affirm the incarnation and salvation, the goals of these are quite different. For the East, Christ became man so that man (i.e. humankind) could become fully divine and human. For the monergist, Christ became man so that humanity could be redeemed from their bondage to sin and be reconciled back

to God unto eternal life. These are two different issues and goals. For the East, the problem is that humanity cannot become divine on their own ability. For the West, the problem is that sin enslaves and leaves people guilty before God. The incarnation and the goal of salvation, while using similar language, have different purposes and meanings.

#### Theological Affirmations Examined and Questioned

##### *Incarnation or Atonement*

With this clarification in mind, one may now make the following necessary conclusion: in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the *kenosis* of Christ, not the cross of Christ, is what overcomes sin and its effects and restores an individual before God. That is to say the incarnation is that which makes an individual into the likeness of God and not the atonement.<sup>112</sup>

This is not to say that the Early Church Fathers (or the whole Eastern Orthodox tradition) denies or deemphasizes the atonement. Indeed, there are varieties of perspectives among the Church Fathers (and Orthodox theologians) regarding the nature of the atonement (whether it is Moral Influence, Ransom, Satisfaction, or some other). What is clear, however, is that despite the differences of perspectives regarding the nature of the atonement, it is the incarnation that brings an individual into the likeness of God (not the atonement itself). Consider Athanasius: [H]aving shared in human birth He might make man partake in the divine and spiritual nature."<sup>113</sup> Again Gregory of Nazianzus said, "While his (Jesus') inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and became One Person because the Higher Nature prevailed. . . in order that I too might be made God so far as He is made man."<sup>114</sup>

Irenaeus' view (much like the view of Justin Martyr) of the atonement emphasized the incarnation as that which restores humanity into a right relationship with God. For him, the cross delivered people from Satan's grasp and removed them from darkness, but it was the incarnation (by application of the Spirit) that bestowed immortality and communion with God. One may see this from the following:

Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, attaching man to God by His own incarnation,

and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, by means of communion with God.<sup>115</sup>

The atonement is not denied, for its emphasis is there. However, the cross was seemingly preparatory work to bring an individual new life, which can only be found in the incarnation. It is in sharing in the incarnation (not necessarily the atonement) that one is united back to God.

One church historian defines the Irenaean view of the atonement as that which breaks the chains of sin that hold a person captive, but it is the incarnation that links the person back to God, and as one experiences the incarnation they conform into the fullness of God.<sup>116</sup> Louis Berkhof, examining Irenaeus' view of the atonement, says that the Irenaean view believes that in Christ's incarnation Jesus reverses the course of humanity's sinfulness that began with Adam and allows persons to experience transformation into divinity.<sup>117</sup> Again, the atonement liberates persons, but it does not make them or reckon them to be divine. Through the example and influence of Christ, one (by faith) undergoes his or her own *kenosis* to become fully divine and human.

Origen, who held to a different view of the atonement than Irenaeus, likewise conjoined the atonement with the incarnation while also emphasizing that it was the incarnation that made one divine in nature. Origen states:

(Disciples) saw also that the power which had descended into human nature, and into the midst of human miseries, and which had assumed a human soul and body, contributed through faith, along with its divine elements, to the salvation of believers, when they see that from Him there began the union of the divine with the human nature, in order that the human, by communion with the divine, might rise to be divine, not in Jesus alone, but in all those who not only believe, but enter upon the life which Jesus taught, and which elevates to friendship with God and communion with Him every one who lives according to the precepts of Jesus.<sup>118</sup>

Louis Berkhof makes the following conclusion about Greek patristic theology through the primary example of John of Damascus:

(a) On the one hand salvation is contemplated as the direct result of the incarnation, as a new divine



revelation given to man, or as (along with Christ's death and resurrection communicating new life to mankind). (b) On the other hand it is viewed as a result of the fulfilment of certain objective conditions, such as that of a sacrifice to God, or of a satisfaction to the divine justice, or of a ransom paid to Satan.<sup>119</sup>

It is not only the Eastern Fathers that hold to this view but modern Orthodox theologians as well. One scholar says that *theosis* is the transformational process of becoming like the kenotic, crucified Christ who endured the cross in love and allows the ability for a co-crucifixion (synergistic activity) with Christ whereby one increases in holiness.<sup>120</sup>

The monergistic perspective, however, believes that the atonement provided the grounds for justification by which a person, through faith, may be restored into a right relationship with God. While the atonement would not have occurred without the incarnation, it is the cross of Christ and the resurrection of the divine-human Christ that permits a person to be one with God. These two traditions are in conflict. Does one claim to have more sufficient support?

With all the different views of the atonement within Eastern Orthodoxy both modern and historic (not to mention the variety of views within the monergistic tradition), it is best to examine not the different views of the atonement but the need for atonement as well as the need for the incarnation.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen states that in Eastern thought, the Fall of Adam did not bring inherent guilt upon humanity but instead brings about physical death and obscures and distorts the image of God. What the cross did was not satisfy any legal requirements of God (even saying that salvation is not liberation from sin) but to vanquish death and allow a person to become like his or her God again.<sup>121</sup> He also states that the death of Christ is not God's retribution toward sin but pedagogy for humans that would persuade (though not force) them to repent from sin and love God more.<sup>122</sup>

The Orthodox tradition has several problems to deal with when holding to such a position. First, the actual need for the cross is not evident within their theology. While there are affirmations of what the cross does, it does not explain why the cross was necessary. The monergistic tradition makes clear that the cross was necessary to satisfy the law for atonement. It was essential to punish sin and permit one to stand before God as just.<sup>123</sup> One recalls the numerous mentions of law-court from the monergists. Whether one would automatically agree or disagree with the monergists on this ground

does not negate the fact they adequately provide rationale for the need of the cross.

The Orthodox tradition provides rationale for the incarnation but not for the crucifixion. If one is able to be restored to the point of creation because of the incarnation, if one can become like God because of the incarnation, if *theosis* is possible through human *kenosis* that models the Christ-*kenosis*, then why did Jesus have to die upon the cross? There are many views of the atonement throughout Eastern Orthodoxy, many of which have valid merits. Whether it was a penal-substitution view, whether it was a moral influence view, whether it was a ransom to the devil view, these are all doctrines on the atonement that can explain what Christ did on the cross; however, what is not clear is why that was necessary if one becomes divine by emptying themselves much like Christ emptied Himself through the incarnation.<sup>124</sup> If modern Orthodox followers follow the Athanasian principle that the incarnation provides an example for individuals to imitate in order to become divine, as some scholars claim,<sup>125</sup> then the crucifixion and atonement does not have a clear place. Yes, the cross is affirmed (historically and presently) to be required for human salvation.<sup>126</sup> However, the need for Jesus to die upon the cross when the incarnation already occurred is not clear. Because the problem with humanity was not guilt or inherited corruption. What humanity needed was God to unite humanity and divinity together, which He did in the person of Jesus. It would seem that this is all that would truly be necessary because there are no legal demands to meet and no justice to be satisfied because, as has been said above, "[I]n the history of Orthodox theology there is almost a total absence of any mention of the idea of justification by faith."<sup>127</sup>

Athanasius is one example of an Early Church Father who claimed that the atonement (not just the incarnation) was necessary for humankind's redemption because in the cross the corruption of humankind was undone and death was destroyed for all who partake of Him.<sup>128</sup> However, if the atonement was the means by which sin and death were destroyed and one could be unified to God, why do the Church Fathers (and modern proponents) claim along with the monergists that faith in Christ through His work on the cross is that which saves? What would the need be for a developed doctrine of *theosis* if sin and its effects are overcome by Christ on the cross? The atonement is never denied, yet its relevance is unclear given the Orthodox's doctrines on *theosis* and the incarnation.

This is not mere conjecture but actually affirmed in Eastern Orthodox circles. Consider the astonishing claim of Nonna Verna Harrison, a proponent of *theosis*:

God did not need the cross in order to forgive sins. It has always been his will to welcome back those who have turned from him through sin when they turn toward him again in repentance. He does not desire his creatures to be separated from him; it is we who cause the separation. Scripture shows that he forgave Israel again and again prior to the incarnation of Christ. . . . Forgiveness by itself did nothing to change the cosmic consequences of sin, namely, ontological separation from the divine source of life, the moral instability of the human heart as well as physical instability, and death as ultimate destruction.<sup>129</sup>

The monergistic tradition, through exegesis of the *dikaïos* root, at least provides a rationale not only for the incarnation but the atonement as well.<sup>130</sup> Whether all within the Orthodox camp would agree with Harrison's quote above, it at least raises the point that the cross is not central to the formation of a doctrine of *theosis*. The monergistic party, however, appears to have the better claim for the necessity of the atonement.<sup>131</sup>

A second (and thus related) problem with this view relates to Kärkkäinen's analysis of Eastern Orthodoxy that the fundamental problem with humanity is not guilt but mortality.<sup>132</sup> The purpose of the incarnation was to give immortality to the now mortal because of their sin. Sin was that which destroyed humanity's likeness to God, and the incarnation restores this. The question then becomes, why is there so much mention of guilt and justice in Scriptures, primarily in the Pauline epistles? Because the majority of modern Orthodox scholars do not view the effects of sin in this way, they are also silent for the most part on what righteousness and unrighteousness are and the relation of the Law and justice of God to the cross of Jesus Christ. The monergistic tradition has a superior view on this point given their claim that humanity's plight is their guilt before God, not a lack of immortality.

A third problem with salvation via the incarnation and not the cross (primarily speaking) is the imitation of *kenosis*. As has been shown, one must undergo individual *kenosis* in order to have *theosis*. One must become like Christ, the divine, in order to be divine. As one author put it, [O]ur response involves a *κένωσις*, a self-emptying that mirrors the *κένωσις* through which the Word of God assumed humanity.<sup>133</sup> This same author goes on to say that the *kenosis* that the individual is supposed to mirror is the self-emptying of passions that go contrary to sinful nature.<sup>134</sup> The question then

becomes: how does this type of *kenosis* mirror the *kenosis* of Christ? How can one equate the Son of God leaving the glories of heaven to assume human flesh with the denial of carnal desires on this earth? This does not even deal with the facts that Scripture nowhere calls people to *kenosis* but throughout calls people to repentance, nor does it deal with the fact that Paul's command in Philippians 2 to have the same attitude of Christ where the *Kenotic Hymn* is found is addressed to the converted and not the unconverted. The monergistic camp has more logical grounds for which to base their doctrine of unity with God.

#### *Process or State*

As also said above, the Orthodox tradition believes *theosis* is a lifelong process which will never be achieved in this lifetime. Not even Adam and Eve were perfected in godlikeness before the Fall but were expected to grow into the fullness of the divine. Through certain acts (charity, baptism, Eucharist, asceticism, and others mentioned above) one increases in the likeness of God.

As mentioned elsewhere of justification, the monergistic perspective gives a convincing argument that one is in a state of righteousness before God through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>135</sup> That is to say, Jesus Christ allows persons to be reckoned fully righteous by imputation and not progressively infused with righteousness (or deity). It would be tempting to analyze the Orthodox on these grounds, but as this tradition formulates their doctrine of unity to God in other ways, a different form of analysis is necessary.

If the goal of the incarnation was to restore humanity to their pre-fallen state, one must wonder if Christ actually succeeded in this goal as the Orthodox tradition puts it. One here may now recall the continual use of such words as "possibility" and "opportunity" that is found throughout Orthodox writings when it comes to this issue. Confer Carl Mosser's quote mentioned above, "[I]n Christ all humans have the *opportunity* to regain what was lost. Because of the Son of God, humans *can* be made sons of God and thereby restored to immortality, i.e. made 'gods'."<sup>136</sup> Again, the wording of Athanasius is important, "For He was made man so that we *might* be made God."<sup>137</sup> The incarnation did not restore humanity to their pre-fallen state. The incarnation, moreover, does not actually unite humanity and divinity (as it applies to humans). It merely provided a means to do this, and the means itself will never be attained in this lifetime.<sup>138</sup> If the goal was to restore humanity to their pre-fallen state by unifying divinity to humanity, this goal is not realized (in this lifetime at least). What it does provide is an opportunity to grow partially into the likeness of divinity (which means that the individual is in a strange position of being partially human,

and only partially because all persons do not become fully divine until *theosis* is achieved in eternity, and at the same time they are not fully divine). This does not mirror the incarnation at all. In the incarnation, divinity met humanity in actuality. It did not provide the possibility or means to do this. Such a view would be adoptionistic, which is rejected by both the Western and Eastern traditions. The point being made is that the Orthodox wants to equate salvation with the incarnation, yet the two do not mirror one another. In the incarnation, humanity and divinity actually met together in their totality. *Theosis*, on the other hand, is the ability to start a process of becoming fully human and fully divine (though not in essence as was the case in the incarnation of Christ) which will never be attained in this lifetime anyway. If this is their claim, one must question whether Jesus actually succeeded in this regard.

Consider what Dumitru Staniloae affirms on this subject. Staniloae claims that God places before individuals an attraction to what they could become and partake of (i.e. deification). This attraction is appealing, claims Staniloae, because humans have in themselves an inward motion to strain after perfection, which does not reside in themselves. God, not wishing to violate the human will, allows humans to “make themselves worthy to share through his free effort to advance toward [the perfect goal of deification].”<sup>139</sup> Several things are noteworthy here. First, humanity has in themselves a desire to be like God and become perfect. This does not reside well with any notion of depravity and sin, which is so well articulated by the monergistic community. Staniloae claims that despite the Fall there is still a desire to become perfect in God, which seems at odds with Psalm 53:2-3. Second, Staniloae claims that God places before individuals an attraction and appeal. Though Staniloae claims that this motion comes from God, it is nevertheless the work and act of an individual’s free will. Again, without a notion of regeneration or clear explanation of how the sinful nature does not prevail over an unredeemed soul, this conclusion of Staniloae’s is unclear. Finally, and relevant to the aforementioned points, it is up to the individual to progress into this state. Staniloae says that the world has an anthropocentric character, for the world was created for humans and it is up to the individuals to fulfil the meaning of creation.<sup>140</sup> The world is thus at the service and mercy of being restored by the individual human, and it will be revitalized through the “achieving” work of an individual in communion with God “as we humanize or perfect ourselves.”<sup>141</sup> This notion is troubling to the monergistic party because of such notions of achieving and perfecting oneself before God to restore a creation centered on the human.

Moreover, as Kärkkäinen observes through Orthodox

theologians, the Orthodox tradition (and thus proponents of deification) believes that individuals can fall away from God because of a lack of pursuit in *theosis*.<sup>142</sup> This can hardly be called “good news” or “gospel” given that nothing is actually secured in the believer, nor does it actually resemble the reality of the incarnation. This view also does not parallel the incarnation either given that Christ could not become less than fully God and fully man or forfeit His true nature. All this is to say that the incarnation as the parallel to salvation as proposed by the deification view does not uphold.

The monergistic tradition has made thorough exegetical and systematic arguments that support a standing or state in righteousness before God.<sup>143</sup> This is to the tradition’s favor, for it shows logic and consistency in their claims. It appears that what the proponents of *theosis* try to achieve through a high view of the incarnation is inconsistent.

#### *Imago Dei and the Will of the Human*

Because humans are not *changed* by God but are instead *changing* to be like God in a progressive, synergistic way, the issue (which has been a source of tension between the West and East) over the state of the human soul and the will of the human comes to a head. As has been said, the Eastern tradition denies any notion of Pelagianism or Semi-Pelagianism, yet unquestionably does not place the same emphasis on the depravation of the human soul that Augustine and latter Western theologians did as even their own proponents admit.<sup>144</sup>

As already mentioned, the East believes that in the Fall humanity lost the likeness of God but retained the image of God. What does this tainted image within the human do? There are two views that find their way into Orthodox theology. The first of these (which does not appear to be as common nor in line with the Early Church Fathers) is that the image of God (though tainted by sin) is still good and able to do good that conforms the individual into the likeness of God. Consider the following:

Today what needs to be emphasized in Christian proclamation is the underlying idea that as humans we indeed are made in the image of God. This means that at the core of our being we are related to God and can have access to God. It also means we are intrinsically capable of goodness, that however sinful we are we can learn, if only little by little, to love and do good.<sup>145</sup>

This claim (which again is not indicative of the whole of Eastern Orthodoxy) shows a strand of belief that the remains of the *imago Dei* enables (not Christians but) all “humans” to have the ability to be “related to God and can have access to God . . . to love and do good” and that this is in “the core of our being.” This same author goes on to say that preachers today need to proclaim that humans (because of the divine image within them) can attain to God-likeness by love, virtue, fostering community, and the turning away from evil.<sup>146</sup> This view is Pelagian because it assumes that despite the Fall humanity (because they retain the image of God) is able to do good in the core of their being and become like God. It is not even Semi-Pelagian because this author gives no mention to any form of divine assistance or encouragement. The assumption lies in the fact that because humanity has the *imago Dei* residing within them, they are able to become like God through acts of piety, much like Pelagius claimed (as was shown in chapter 4). This is a non-tenable claim that would not be supported even by the Orthodox camp.

The second, and more prevalent and historic view of the *imago Dei*, is that the human will (though still retaining the image of God) is not able on self-motivated effort to become like God. There is debate as to whether the Fall itself has obscured the *imago Dei* for all people in some sort of hereditary way, yet what is agreed upon is that divine grace is needed to activate the human will to cooperate with divine initiative to effect *theosis*.

This is to say that the image of God still residing within the individual is that which cooperates with God to effect *theosis*. As one scholar (commenting upon John of Damascus) puts it, “The Fall destroyed the likeness in us. But because we tainted the image, we still have the basis for regaining it.”<sup>147</sup> God does not violate the human will because to do so would be to violate the *imago Dei* still residing within them and render any human willing as flawed and void.<sup>148</sup>

What happens, then, to effect *theosis* is that God (by grace) sets before the person Jesus Christ, in the fullness of deity and humanity, and places an appeal for the person to conform into the likeness of the incarnate Son of God. There is continual affirmation that Jesus Christ was set before sinful humanity as fully God and fully human so as to set forth a pattern, example, and image by which the human should participate with.<sup>149</sup> This is to say, Jesus came in the likeness of God, and as individuals see what Jesus was like one may begin to model that likeness through human will. He was an image by which one should imitate, and as said before the Holy Spirit presents in present day the historic realities of the incarnate God before a

prospective convert. The image of God in the human then may desire to conform after the image of God in Christ through *theosis*. As Maximus the Confessor claimed, one moves his or her free will toward God by imitating the incarnate Christ, and God reciprocates with His own will to effect *theosis*.<sup>150</sup>

Several critiques are necessary, and this relates to the important factor that God (in Eastern theology) does not overcome human will (as the monergist tradition claims) but rather allows the corrupted *imago Dei* to will after God. First, what is one to do with the numerous passages of Scripture the monergists point out about the bondage of the human will?<sup>151</sup> What is needed is more than an example. If Christ came to be an example by which humans are to imitate, then that would be condemning, not liberating, given the sinfulness of humankind. If Christ came to portray what the fullness of divinity and humanity is like (which the monergist could easily affirm), then to claim that one must imitate that would only bring further guilt. If present humanity has a tainted image of God, and Adam and Eve had a non-tainted image of God yet did not pattern their lives after the likeness of God, how can anyone begin to pursue such Christ-likeness? There is a faulty assumption that the human will desires to be like God, yet the monergist points to verses such as Romans 3:11-12: “There is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, there is not even one.” The Orthodox tradition assumes much with the tainted image of God in humans, and further explanation on their part is required to undo the claims of the monergists.

Second, and in relation to a point made above, if one’s inherited divine image and human will can model Jesus and enable a person to become like God, why was the atonement necessary? If virtue and piety is what is lacking in a person’s life (not guilt before God), and if this lack can be overcome by imitation of Jesus by partaking of the divine nature, then what was the purpose of Jesus’ death on the cross?<sup>152</sup> It would appear that what is necessary for sin to be undone is an appeal to the will of an individual to be like God as set forth in the pattern of Jesus Christ through the incarnation. The ultimate need for atonement (while not denied) seems superfluous. In relation, if the carnality of a human may be overcome (albeit synergistically) by God through such things as baptism, Eucharist, acts of charity and piety, etc., then Martin Luther’s claim (admittedly against the Roman Catholics and not Eastern Orthodox) that such acts “could be done by any wicked person” remains valid.<sup>153</sup> Even people who have never heard of Christ could hypothetically do acts of self-emptying and humbling (*kenosis*), charity, and the like.

Finally, because the Orthodox tradition denies what the monergist tradition affirms in the doctrine of regeneration (namely that the Holy Spirit must transform an individual's will in order to believe in Jesus Christ and be forgiven of sin) by claiming that the *imago Dei* provides that which is necessary to cooperate with the incarnate God, proponents of such a view come very close to Semi-Pelagianism. While different from Pelagians in that humanity is sufficient in themselves because of the *imago Dei* to attain divinity, the Semi-Pelagians believed that some sort of divine assistance is necessary in order to become like God, but this falls short of fully overcoming the depraved will (as is affirmed by the doctrines of prevenient grace and regeneration). Many within the Eastern tradition come very close to Semi-Pelagianism with their claims. Consider the following:

[T]he Holy Spirit in his work represents the place of motive in Christianity; we do not affirm that his work is irresistible. Man is his own master under Christianity as without. We have no wish to dispute the *dictum* of a past generation that "God governs mind by motive and not by force." What we wish to affirm and maintain is simply the Scriptural position that Christianity is the religion of motive, a fact of which the presence of the Holy Spirit is the unmistakable sign, and to which his work bears perpetual testimony.<sup>154</sup>

This startling claim (found more often than not in modern/progressive Orthodoxy rather than historic Orthodoxy) contends that the human is his or her own master because God does not force His will over people but appeals to motive from within. With no change in the human nature, this amounts to Semi-Pelagianism. Still, even in historic analysis, there are affirmations that it is the human's free choice to either conform or not to conform to the likeness of the incarnate God and that such is based within one's individual freedom of choice and not the ordination of God.<sup>155</sup>

One author, exploring Athanasius, who affirms that Christ came to be a model and image bearer by which individuals are to imitate, claims that Athanasius was not Pelagian in any way because he affirms the importance of grace and that nothing should be to one's own credit or glory.<sup>156</sup> Yet Semi-Pelagians such as John Cassian did not deny the involvement of God or even the grace of God in human cooperation. Rather, what he denied was what humanity ultimately needed, which fell short of overcoming sin in an individual's life. Another author claims that this view is not Pelagian in any way because the Orthodox tradition affirms synergy that has its

ontological basis in Christ.<sup>157</sup> Yet even Cassian affirmed synergism in Christ.

The 8<sup>th</sup> century Russian bishop Theophanes reportedly claimed, "[B]eing assisted by grace, man accomplishes the work of his salvation," which is endorsed by modern proponents of *theosis* as well.<sup>158</sup> Though grace is affirmed, modern (and even historic) proponents model similarities of Semi-Pelagianism because humanity still "accomplishes the work of his salvation" albeit with the assistance of grace. While there is more emphasis in the Eastern Orthodox tradition than in Semi-Pelagianism that the Holy Spirit empowers and strengthens individuals toward deification, the matter of sin and the human will remains a legitimate factor for which the monergistic position appears to hold the better claim.

#### A Critique on the Efficient Cause and Instrumental Means in *Theosis*

##### *Efficient Cause*

While the monergistic camp claims God is the cause of union with Him, the Orthodox camp claims the human and God are the causes of unification and deification as shown above. A critique of how that work occurs will be done below in the instrumental means section; however, there are many considerations and worthy criticisms when affirming such.

Here one must state again the definition of *theosis*:

*Theosis* is our restoration as persons to integrity and wholeness by participation in Christ through the Holy Spirit, in a process which is initiated in this world through our life of ecclesial communion and moral striving and finds ultimate fulfillment in our union with the Father – all within the broad context of the divine economy.<sup>159</sup>

Said another way, *theosis* is that which makes a person share in the likeness of God lost through the Fall. Though not completed in this lifetime, through the work of God and the work of the human, the result is that an individual will be perfected into the likeness of Christ.

However, while this tradition attributes salvation all to grace, it retains synergism in the efficient cause. One must question if all is truly of grace if human synergistic activity is required in order to produce a given outcome.

One proponent of *theosis* claims that accusations of merit are not fair because grace is present. He states: "It is not a question of merit(s), but of cooperation, of a synergy of the two wills, divine and human."<sup>160</sup> Despite the fact this same scholar affirms that

humans accomplish the work of their own salvation in the next two sentences after this statement, the fact that grace is affirmed does not negate the question of merit. Work must be performed by the individual, which (as has been shown above) is enthusiastically supported by this tradition. Work directly relates to merit and requires certain wages and necessary outcomes. While grace would enable such work, by affirming synergism (which again means *working* together) the advocates of *theosis* must affirm some type of merit-based system despite their claims to the contrary. If one works, there is merit albeit with divine cooperation and assistance.

This is not a matter of semantics. The Orthodox use the notion of “work” and “workers” throughout their writings (both historic and modern), yet what is more is that it is imbedded in their theology. One must do certain things (which will be explored in the instrumental means) in order to attain unity with God. One must cooperate (work together) with God (said in the quote above to be “moral striving”) to find union with the Father. This study has shown throughout that there is a biblical contrast between works and grace and a parallel between works and merit and reward.

Since *theosis* is the goal of salvation and the goal of creation, it is not unfair to claim this view holds to salvation by works, albeit grace-assisted works. Yet grace-assisted works are still works. This is seen further by the claim that humankind can frustrate God’s will and work (in an indirect way of claiming that the human will is superior to the divine will) when he or she caves in to the desires of their carnal will.<sup>161</sup> As mentioned above, a person may forfeit or fall away from the divine for lack of conforming to God’s will.<sup>162</sup> When the human work stops, so does the deification (and thus salvation).

This is made clear by the following modern theologian expounding upon the historic theology of Athanasius: “Athanasius clearly believes and teaches that the grace of divinization must be *acquired* by an intentional human *effort* at reproducing the life and virtues of God Himself through discipleship and *imitation*.”<sup>163</sup> Grace is present, but it must be acquired through intentional human effort as one imitates the example of Christ. This same author, again analyzing the theology of Athanasius, goes on to say, “Whereas the essential Son possesses these virtues from the Father *kathousian*, the Father’s adopted sons must strive to acquire them by cooperating with God’s operations through the exercise of the will,” which is acquired through observing the commandments of God.<sup>164</sup> This work of “acquiring” highlights the works that must be done, and if one must acquire divinization, it is questionable how it can be of grace.

Consider Vladimir Lossky’s admission to the same. He states:

“If God has given us in the Church all the objective conditions (to be deified), all the means that we need for the attainment of this end, we, on our side, must produce the necessary subjective conditions: for it is in this synergy, in this co-operation of man with God, that union is fulfilled.”<sup>165</sup> Lossky does not shy away from using such words as “synergy” and “co-operation” which again mean to “work together.” In the church, one must “produce” conditions. This notion of attainment and works is clearly opposed to the monergistic notion of grace. Work must be done in order to acquire or attain this end, and this work must be produced by the individual through synergy. This, however, opposed the notion of salvation by grace alone.

This opens up the doorway for several criticisms. First, the monergistic tradition appears to have the more biblically and logically sound claim when it comes to salvation being by grace and not by works. Second, the Orthodox tradition struggles to differentiate between salvation being by grace and salvation being by grace-assisted works. Third, the monergistic camp affirms that because salvation is by grace alone and not by works there is no room for boasting per Ephesians 2:8-9. While the Orthodox tradition would claim there is no room for human boasting, the implications would appear otherwise given that some cooperate all the way into deification while others do not. Because their view of deification is progressive and not stative, and because some would be further along in the process than others, there would appear to be grounds for boasting. This would be different from the monergistic understanding of progressive sanctification because in the monergistic tradition salvation has already been accomplished. In the deification sense, salvation is still progressing, being worked for, being attained cooperatively through divine and human works. It would make sense there is room for boasting by works that are attaining a particular salvation outcome, yet such cannot be said of the monergistic tradition that claims that salvation has already been accomplished by the work of God and is becoming evident through sanctification.

#### *Instrumental Means*

As mentioned above, the instrumental means by which a person becomes divine in Eastern Orthodoxy is synergistic. The divine work that effects deification is the Holy Spirit’s activity of bringing historic realities into the present by revealing the example and likeness of God in Jesus Christ. In so doing, the Spirit evokes, or beckons out, faith from a person not in a coercive way but with regards to an appeal. What is more, the Spirit gives strength to an individual to carry out his or her own works necessary for deification, which will be mentioned below.

The human's actions of instrumental means was shown to be *kenosis* (or self-emptying of worldly pursuits and passions) as well as such things as prayer, asceticism, meditation, and humble service.<sup>166</sup> Said another way, an individual responds negatively through asceticism and self-denial of worldly lusts and positively through acts of charity, prayer, and devotion (manifested by such things as baptism and the Eucharist).

Because the Eastern Orthodox tradition does not deal with the issues of justification, guilt, and imputed righteousness along with the supporting biblical texts monergists provide, the Orthodox camp opens itself up for criticisms from the opposition on their view of instrumentality. Said another way, the textual support of instrumentality from the monergistic party needs to be more adequately addressed than it is by the Eastern Orthodox. How should one understand all the forensic terminology in Galatians and Romans? How does the Orthodox respond to the Protestant's attempts to distinguish between justification and sanctification? Without a developed doctrine of the regeneration of the depraved human will by the Holy Spirit, how does the Orthodox respond to this issue? These issues are largely ignored by the Orthodox tradition, making them open for criticisms in this regard.

Nevertheless, working within their own tradition, there are some concerns about their notion of how one becomes divine. The first critique of the instrumental means deals with the understanding of the nature of faith. The human is expected to work together with God. The *work* that an individual is to do is ultimately faith (expressed through such actions as charity, Eucharist, baptism, etc.). As one author put it, "[F]aith itself functions as the source of deification."<sup>167</sup> Likewise, the act of *kenosis* of carnality and cooperation with divine will leads to a renewed nature that is like God.<sup>168</sup> One is expected to do the work of partaking in the divine nature and acquiring moral virtue, which progresses these individuals into eternal life.<sup>169</sup>

What is worthy of criticism is that these statements are (as they affirm) *works*. One author puts it this way:

(Theosis) is the fruit given to the labor of those who work to fulfill the commands of Christ, summed up in the command to follow Christ to his Cross and into his death, in order to put to death one's attachment to earthly things and to root out the weeds of enmity that blossom from our egoism and our love of the world (Gal 5:21 ff.).<sup>170</sup>

*Theosis* is said to be the "fruit" given for work. The work to

be done is to follow Christ and put to death sin. Another author states that grace is necessary for salvation but is not sufficient itself without the human cooperating (working together) with Christ in mortifying flesh through asceticism.<sup>171</sup>

The problem with this approach is twofold. First, faith contrasts works in Scripture. While faith is an activity of an individual, it is not a contributing work. Second, "works" would be that which contributes to one's own salvation. It is that which is done in order to acquire a certain end. Without the work, one would not receive what is due. This is why works are often compared to wages in Scripture. In order to receive deification in this tradition, one must work. This is far different from the one who receives and out of that works. One is a necessary condition, and the other is a response.

Though the Orthodox tradition would deny salvation by works, the party both uses the term *works* and makes works necessary in order to arrive at ultimate salvation. One receives (as was shown above) the "fruit" or rewards of their actions of piety and asceticism. If one performs such actions, then one will acquire greater divinity than others. If one becomes lax in conforming into the likeness of God, he or she will be less divine than others and potentially forfeit salvation.

While the Orthodox wishes to affirm synergism as a means to advocate for the involvement of the human will (and thus affirm that salvation is not passive), they make the mistake by thinking that if salvation is monergistic than an individual is passive. However, in the monergistic perspective concerning justification, humankind is active in the act of salvation. There are active instrumental means of which the monergistic party affirms that justification is active. One actively exercises faith (belief, trust, and dependence) upon Christ. This is not passive. One's justification leads one to do good works, but this is done as a response and not as a contribution, which this view of synergism ultimately holds to.

As one does exegetical survey, one finds that charity, asceticism, baptism, and the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) were acts done by people who had already entered into a saving relationship with God through faith. They were not done as acts that would save but rather as a response of the saved.

One must also question whether the instrumental means of deification affirmed by the Orthodox have any grounds of Scriptural support. Consider Timothy Ware's claim:

Because Orthodox are convinced that the body is sanctified and transfigured together with the soul, they have an immense reverence for the relics of

the saints. Like Roman Catholics, they believe that the grace of God present in the saints' bodies during life remains active in their relics when they have died, and that God uses these relics as a channel of divine power and an instrument of healing.<sup>172</sup>

The New Testament knows nothing about transfiguration of the soul through dead saints' bones. In fact, many of the apostles (who later became saints) were still alive at the close of the New Testament. If their bones were not there to transfigure and sanctify the body and soul through means of reverence, one must wonder how the saints of old were deified. If they were deified in some other way other than the adoration of saints' bones, then one must question the biblical basis or actual relevance of this instrumental means.

The monergistic tradition provided sufficient biblical support for their view of justification by grace through the means of faith. Their claim of salvation not being by works upholds better than the parallel claim made by the Eastern Orthodox. They provided a comprehensive, biblical, and systematic survey utilizing historic doctrines of the Fall, guilt, atonement, and justification, which is more cohesive than that which is provided by the Orthodox party. As such, one may find favor in the monergistic party over the Orthodox party on this issue.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Harry Rosenberg, "The West in Crisis" in *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, Tim Dowley, ed., (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), pp. 240-241.

<sup>2</sup> Here, the methodology will be primarily in showing how modern Eastern Orthodoxy utilizes the theology of the Early Church Fathers rather than trying to construct a theology of the Early Church Fathers themselves.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that this ecumenical effort has engaged the works of Martin Luther himself (hence *Luther* studies) and not *Lutheran* studies (that is those holding to the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches).

<sup>4</sup> Tuomo Mannermaa, "Theosis As a Subject of Finnish Luther Research" in *Pro Ecclesia* 4 no 1 Wint. 1995, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Mannermaa, "Theosis As a Subject of Finnish Luther Research," pp. 46-47. See also Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One With God* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), p. 37. By essence, the whole of Eastern Orthodoxy rejects that one shares in the divine essence like Osiander claimed (or is found in *apotheosis*).

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov, "Introduction" in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov, eds., (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Gösta Hallonsten, "Theosis in Recent Research: A Renewal of Interest and a Need for Clarity" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 282.

<sup>8</sup> Athanasius, *Incarnation of the Word in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), §54, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Linman, "Martin Luther: "Little Christs for the World"; Faith and Sacraments as Means to *Theosis*", in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, p. 192.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2009), p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Boris Jakim, "Sergius Bulgakov: Russian *Theosis*" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, p. 250.

<sup>12</sup> Jakim, "Sergius Bulgakov," pp. 250-251.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Paul Wesche, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*" in *Theology Today*, 56 no 1 Ap 1999, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, p. 18. Kärkkäinen, it should be noted, is actually not Eastern Orthodox but rather Finnish Pentecostal. However, Kärkkäinen claims that regarding the issue of deification, the two parties are distinct by terminology only. He writes a thorough review of the similarities between both parties claiming that his Pentecostal background is comparative to the Eastern Orthodox notion of *theosis*. As such, given that Kärkkäinen upholds the Eastern doctrine of deification, he will be used as a proponent of this perspective though he is not strictly Eastern Orthodox. See Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, pp. 108-115.

<sup>16</sup> Gösta Hallonsten, "Theosis in Recent Research: A Renewal of Interest and a Need for Clarity," p. 285.

<sup>17</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>18</sup> Origen, *De Principiis*, III.VI.I in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 344, (parenthesis original).

<sup>19</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, "Lecture XIV.10" in *The Catechetical Lectures in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 96, italics original. Norman Russell interprets Cyril differently, saying that he did not distinguish between likeness and image, and that they were one in the same thing both lost through sin and restored in Christ in Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis*, p. 79. Given the quote above it is difficult to see Russell's interpretation; nevertheless, on essentials, Russell agrees that the likeness was lost and needs restoration in and through Christ in a process known as *theosis* in Cyril's view.

<sup>20</sup> Athanasius, *Incarnation of the Word*, §54, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, "XXIX The Third Theological Oration: On the Son" XIX in *Orations in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 208. Ellipsis original.



- <sup>22</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration on the Holy Lights" XVII, in *Orations*, p. 358.
- <sup>23</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration on Holy Baptism" XLV, in *Orations*, p. 377.
- <sup>24</sup> Hilarión Alfeyev, "The Deification of Man in Eastern Patristic Tradition (with Special Reference to Gregory Nazianzen, Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas)" in *Colloquium* 36 no 2 2004, p. 111-112.
- <sup>25</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, "Against Apollinarius; The Second Letter to Cledonius" in *Letters of Saint Gregory Nazianzen*, pp. 443-444.
- <sup>26</sup> Tertullian, though regarded primarily as a Western Church Father, is still utilized by the Eastern Orthodox tradition specifically in the area of *theosis*.
- <sup>27</sup> Clement of Alexandria actually affirmed *apotheosis* in conjunction with *theosis*; however, he (and any others who would use this term) did not mean it in terms of becoming a divine God like Yahweh Himself. *Apotheosis* that would be rejected by the Orthodox tradition would be like the *apotheosis* in Greek Mythology, Egyptian Pharaohs, Mormonism, etc.
- <sup>28</sup> Finlan and Kharlamov, "Introduction," p. 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Alfeyev, "The Deification of Man in Eastern Patristic Tradition" in *Colloquium*, p. 113.
- <sup>30</sup> Andrew Louth, "The Place of *Theosis* in Orthodox Theology" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, p. 39.
- <sup>31</sup> John of Damascus, "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith" ch. XII, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 9, p. 31. See also George D. Dragas, "Exchange or Communication of Properties and Deification: *Antidosis* or *Communicatio Idiomatum* and *Theosis*" in *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 43 no 1-4 1998, pp. 390-391 and Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 30.
- <sup>32</sup> Origen, *De Principiis*, III.VI.III in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 345.
- <sup>33</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 36.
- <sup>34</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, ch. CXXIV, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 262.
- <sup>35</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, ch. VI.I *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, pp. 418-419.
- <sup>36</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book IV, ch. XXXVIII.IV *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 522.
- <sup>37</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, ch. VI.I *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 419.
- <sup>38</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 57.
- <sup>39</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 57-58.
- <sup>40</sup> Carl Mosser, "The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification" in *Journal of Theological Studies*, ns 56 no 1 Ap. 2005, p. 38. Italics original.
- <sup>41</sup> James Starr, "Does 2 Peter 1:4 Speak of Deification?" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, p. 82.
- <sup>42</sup> Starr, "Does 2 Peter 1:4 Speak of Deification?" p. 83.
- <sup>43</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, "Lecture XXII: On the Body and Blood of Christ" in *Catechetical Lectures in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 151. Italics original.
- <sup>44</sup> Elena Vishnevskaya, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, pp. 138-139.
- <sup>45</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Antony*, 74, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 215.
- <sup>46</sup> To anticipate further debate, clear exegesis from the Fathers on 2 Peter 1:4 (and Psalm 82) is not supplied to the extent that many would like, something that even proponents admit. See Mosser, "The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification," pp. 31-33.
- <sup>47</sup> Vishnevskaya, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor," pp. 138-141. There are other means through which one becomes divine in the Eastern tradition which will be expressed below.
- <sup>48</sup> Thomas Buchan, "Paradise As the Landscape of Salvation" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, pp. 148-150.
- <sup>49</sup> Michael J. Christensen, "The Problem, Promise, and Process of *Theosis*" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, p. 24.
- <sup>50</sup> Nonna Verna Harrison, "Theosis as Salvation: An Orthodox Perspective" in *Pro Ecclesia* Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 432.
- <sup>51</sup> Jeffrey Finch, "Irenaeus on the Christological Basis of Human Divinization" in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, p. 88.
- <sup>52</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III. XVIII.I, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 446.
- <sup>53</sup> Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), pp. 32-39.
- <sup>54</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, pp. 44-45.
- <sup>55</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, pp. 52-55, 72.
- <sup>56</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, pp. 83-90.
- <sup>57</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 19.
- <sup>58</sup> John Breck, "Orthodox Principles on Interpretation" in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, pp. 86-93.
- <sup>59</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 113.
- <sup>60</sup> Breck, "Orthodox Principles on Interpretation," p. 88.

- <sup>61</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 24.
- <sup>62</sup> Artemiĭ Vladimirov, "Eternal Questions: On Heaven and Hell" in *Road to Emmaus* 6 no 1 Wint. 2005, p. 5.
- <sup>63</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Dogmatic Treatises*, II.§1, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, p. 101.
- <sup>64</sup> Athanasius, *Incarnation of the Word*, §54, in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 65.
- <sup>65</sup> BDAG, s.v. ἔνωσις.
- <sup>66</sup> Louth, "The Place of *Theosis* in Orthodox Theology" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, p. 34.
- <sup>67</sup> Louth, "The Place of *Theosis* in Orthodox Theology" in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, pp. 34-35.
- <sup>68</sup> See Jeffrey Finch, "Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer" in *Theosis*, p. 110 who proves this point with Athanasius.
- <sup>69</sup> Athanasius, *De Decretis/Defence of the Nicene Definition*, III.14 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 159.
- <sup>70</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 97-98, quoted from Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 30.
- <sup>71</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 30.
- <sup>72</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 31.
- <sup>73</sup> Athanasius, *Festal Letters*, V.3, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 518.
- <sup>74</sup> Finch, "Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer" in *Theosis*, pp. 112-113.
- <sup>75</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. 2 (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005), p. 6, and see also pp. 4-7.
- <sup>76</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, p. 37.
- <sup>77</sup> Vishnevskaya, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor", p. 136.
- <sup>78</sup> Adam G. Cooper, "Maximus the Confessor on the Structural Dynamics of Revelation" in *Vigiliae Christianae* vol. 55, no. 2, 2001, p. 162.
- <sup>79</sup> Stephen Finlan, "The Comedy of Divinization in Soloviev" in *Theosis*, pp. 172-173.
- <sup>80</sup> Kenneth L. Bakken, "Holy Spirit and Theosis: Toward a Lutheran Theology of Healing" in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 14, 1994, p. 413.
- <sup>81</sup> Linman, "Martin Luther: "Little Christs for the World"; Faith and Sacraments as Means to *Theosis*," p. 196.
- <sup>82</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, pp. 20-21.
- <sup>83</sup> Alfeyev, "The Deification of Man in Eastern Patristic Tradition (with Special Reference to Gregory Nazianzen, Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas)", p. 118.
- <sup>84</sup> Wesche, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*", p. 36.
- <sup>85</sup> Wesche, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*", p. 37.
- <sup>86</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*, ch. XXXVII, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, p. 506.
- <sup>87</sup> Christensen, *The Problem, Promise, and Process of Theosis*, pp. 25-27.
- <sup>88</sup> Christensen, *The Problem, Promise, and Process of Theosis*, p. 27.
- <sup>89</sup> Louth, *The Place of Theosis In Orthodox Theology*, p. 38.
- <sup>90</sup> Louth, *The Place of Theosis In Orthodox Theology*, pp. 38-40.
- <sup>91</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 40.
- <sup>92</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 41.
- <sup>93</sup> Gregory of Nazianzen, "Oration on the Holy Lights" X, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 354.
- <sup>94</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 31.
- <sup>95</sup> Harrison, "Theosis as Salvation," p. 432.
- <sup>96</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 41.
- <sup>97</sup> Athanasius, "Letter V" in *Letters of Athanasius*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 519.
- <sup>98</sup> Kallistos Ware, *How Are We Saved? The Understanding of Salvation in the Orthodox Tradition*, (Minneapolis: Light & Life Publishing, 1996), p. 54.
- <sup>99</sup> This is, of course, assuming that the Mannermaa school (mentioned above) has been unsuccessful in convincing the Protestant community that Luther held to a doctrine of deification.
- <sup>100</sup> Wesche, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*" p. 29.
- <sup>101</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, p. 90.
- <sup>102</sup> Paul R. Hinlicky, "Theological Anthropology: Toward Integrating *Theosis* and Justification By Faith" in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 34.1, Winter 1997, p. 38.
- <sup>103</sup> Gregory of Nazianzen, "The Fourth Theological Oration" in *Select Orations*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 310.
- <sup>104</sup> Kärkkäinen, "Deification View" in *Justification: Five Views*, pp. 221-222, 228.
- <sup>105</sup> See Michael S. Horton, "Traditional Reformed Response" in *Justification: Five Views* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), pp. 244-249 and Javier A. Garcia, "A Critique on Mannermaa on Luther and Galatians" in *Lutheran Quarterly*, ns 27 no 1 Spr 2013, pp. 33-55.

- <sup>106</sup> Louth, *The Place of Theosis In Orthodox Theology*, p. 33.
- <sup>107</sup> Wesche, “Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*,” p. 29.
- <sup>108</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, p. 1.
- <sup>109</sup> For more on this matter, see Daniel Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism?: Is Salvation Cooperative or the Work of God Alone?* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2018), pp. 172-197.
- <sup>110</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, p. 18.
- <sup>111</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, p. 6.
- <sup>112</sup> The incarnation and atonement should never be separated (and the monergistic tradition makes no attempt to do this), for without the incarnation the atonement would not be possible and without the atonement the incarnation would not be necessary. The point being made here is that the Eastern tradition seems to attribute to the incarnation the functions of the atonement. As will be shown below, this tradition believes that the divine *kenosis* leads to an individual’s deification, not the atonement.
- <sup>113</sup> Athanasius, *Life of Anthony*, 74, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 215.
- <sup>114</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, “XXIX The Third Theological Oration: On the Son” XIX in *Orations in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 208. Ellipsis original.
- <sup>115</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V.1 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 527.
- <sup>116</sup> Robert R. Williams, *A Guide to the Teaching of the Early Church Fathers*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 83-84.
- <sup>117</sup> Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), p. 165.
- <sup>118</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, III.XXVIII, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 475 See also Williams, *A Guide to the Teaching of the Early Church Fathers*, pp. 106-107.
- <sup>119</sup> Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, p. 167.
- <sup>120</sup> Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, p. 161.
- <sup>121</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, pp. 21-23.
- <sup>122</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 23.
- <sup>123</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism*, 181-183.
- <sup>124</sup> Louth, *The Place of Theosis In Orthodox Theology*, p. 38.
- <sup>125</sup> Finch, “Irenaeus on the Christological Basis of Human Divinization” in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, p. 110.
- <sup>126</sup> Finch, “Irenaeus on the Christological Basis of Human Divinization” in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, p. 116.
- <sup>127</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 6.
- <sup>128</sup> Athanasius, *Incarnation of the Word* § 8 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, p. 40. See also Finch, “Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer” in *Theosis*, pp. 116-117.
- <sup>129</sup> Harrison, “Theosis as Salvation: An Orthodox Perspective,” p. 438.
- <sup>130</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism?*, 172-175.
- <sup>131</sup> Here one must be reminded of what was said on the previous chapter on the monergistic perspective of justification. This tradition is composed of both Reformed and non-Reformed individuals. That is to say that even those who find other aspects of salvation to be synergistic, there is a general consensus that the specific aspect of justification is monergistic. Examples of this (as were shown in the previous chapter) include Roger Olson and Jacob Arminius.
- <sup>132</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 18.
- <sup>133</sup> Louth, *The Place of Theosis In Orthodox Theology*, p. 38.
- <sup>134</sup> Louth, *The Place of Theosis In Orthodox Theology*, pp. 38-39.
- <sup>135</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism?*, 177-179.
- <sup>136</sup> Mosser, “The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification”, p. 38. Emphasis added.
- <sup>137</sup> Athanasius, *Incarnation of the Word*, p. 65, emphasis added.
- <sup>138</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 31.
- <sup>139</sup> Staniloae, *The Experience of God*, p. 9.
- <sup>140</sup> Staniloae, *The Experience of God*, p. 20.
- <sup>141</sup> Staniloae, *The Experience of God*, p. 20.
- <sup>142</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 111.
- <sup>143</sup> For an overview, see Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism?*, 177-179, 192.
- <sup>144</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, p. 18.
- <sup>145</sup> Harrison, “Theosis as Salvation: An Orthodox Perspective,” p. 432.
- <sup>146</sup> Harrison, “Theosis as Salvation: An Orthodox Perspective,” p. 432-433.
- <sup>147</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 78.
- <sup>148</sup> Vishnevskaya, “Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor,” pp. 141-142.
- <sup>149</sup> See Finch, “Irenaeus on the Christological Basis of Human Divinization,” p. 111.
- <sup>150</sup> Vishnevskaya, “Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor,” pp. 136-137.
- <sup>151</sup> See Kirkpatrick, *Monergism or Synergism?*, 89-95.

<sup>152</sup> See Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 18 who says that (in Eastern Orthodoxy) humanity's fundamental problem is not guilt before God but mortality caused by evil desires.

<sup>153</sup> Martin Luther, *On Christian Liberty* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), p. 5.

<sup>154</sup> William Jewett Tucker, "Progressive Orthodoxy, Pt. 5: The Work of the Holy Spirit" in *Andover Review*, 4 no 21 S 1885, p. 258.

<sup>155</sup> See a study of this on Maximus the Confessor in Vishnevskaia, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor," p. 142.

<sup>156</sup> Finch, "Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer," pp. 110-112. This is not to say that Athanasius himself was a Semi-Pelagian but that modern interpretations of him are close to it.

<sup>157</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 27.

<sup>158</sup> See Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 32 who endorses this quote and theology claiming that it is reflective of the Eastern Orthodox view of synergism in contrast to Pelagianism.

<sup>159</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 21.

<sup>160</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 32.

<sup>161</sup> Vishnevskaia, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor," p. 141.

<sup>162</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 111.

<sup>163</sup> Finch, "Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer" in *Theosis*, p. 110, emphasis added.

<sup>164</sup> Finch, "Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer" in *Theosis*, p. 111.

<sup>165</sup> Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, n.d.), p. 196.

<sup>166</sup> Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, p. 31.

<sup>167</sup> Linman, "Martin Luther: "Little Christs for the World"; Faith and Sacraments as Means to *Theosis*," p. 189.

<sup>168</sup> Vishnevskaia, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor," p. 142.

<sup>169</sup> Starr, "Does 2 Peter 1:4 Speak of Deification?," p. 83.

<sup>170</sup> Wesche, "Eastern Orthodox Spirituality: Union with God in *Theosis*," p. 32.

<sup>171</sup> Finch, "Athanasius on the Deifying Work of the Redeemer" in *Theosis*, pp. 112-113. Finch claims this is a "must" showing the essentialness of synergism for salvation.

<sup>172</sup> Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 239.

# A Review of *Jesus, Day by Day*, by Sharon Kaselonis.

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This excellent devotional book is available from Multnomah and is available in either hard-cover (ISBN 978-0-7352-9168-3) or as an e-book (978-0-7352-9168-0). In either case it is well worth having.

Sharon Kaselonis starts her devotional book, *Jesus, Day by Day*, with a bit of autobiography. In it she reveals the origins of the devotional. She briefly explains how she first came to Christ and became a student of the Bible and then how, in 2001, her introduction to the *One Year Chronological Bible* began to revolutionize her study. But, she writes, what really transformed her relationship with God's Word was the realization that it is not just stories or principles but a single narrative focused on the single truth of Christ. Because of this, her one year, through the Bible, devotional aims at focusing the reader on the identity and work of Jesus. She believes this requires a journey which must include both the Old Testament and the New. She combines the theological training she received in Bible College with the analytic skills she learned in Law School in this devotional based on nearly two decades of intense Bible study.

The daily devotionals include at the top of each page suggested Bible passages which aim at helping the reader travel through the Bible in one year. Still at the top of the page, she then includes a short focus verse to present the main idea of the day's devotion. Below that she unpacks the meaning of the focus verse, including references to other scriptures that help support and explain the main point of the devotional. This is a very sound approach. The old dictum in Bible study is that the best interpretation of Scripture is more Scripture and Sharon Kaselonis follows this wise approach. Unlike some devotionals, *Jesus, Day by Day*, includes reference notes which will allow the reader to dig a little deeper into the references Ms. Kaselonis has used.

All in all, this is a very well structured and effective devotional work which belongs in just about every believer's personal library. I am pleased to recommend it to anyone who asks.

# The Study on Genetic Patterns of Eye Color and Wing Presence in *Drosophila Melanogaster*

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## Abstract

The traditional genetic patterns of eye color and wing presence in *Drosophila melanogaster* were studied using the commercial strains and  $\chi^2$  statistical test. In monohybrids of these two traits, the segregation of male flies followed 3:1 ratio, but that of female flies didn't. In the dihybrids of them, the segregations of male, female and overall results did not fit 9:3:3:1 ratio. The same situations occurred in another dihybrid of four different eye colors. Meiotic drive elements and environmental factors may play the role in the variations.

Keywords: *Drosophila melanogaster*,  $\chi^2$  test, monohybrid, dihybrid, eye color, wing

## Introduction

Fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*, is commonly used as a model organism because it has significant properties such as short life cycle, abundance in genetic variations, relative inexpensiveness, small body size, etc. In consideration of inheritance patterns (Klug et al. 2010; Spencer & Kristian 2013) and the supply of various strains in *Drosophila melanogaster* (Carolina 2018), the objective of the study was to investigate the classical, genetic patterns of gene segregation and interaction in two traits, eye color and wing presence, using the commercial strains.

## Methods

The mutant strains, apterous (wingless, aa on chromosome 2), brown eyes (bb, on chromosome 2), and scarlet eyes (ss, on chromosome 3) were purchased from Carolina Biological Supply Company in 2018.

For the gene segregation in the first dihybrid cross, brown eye, winged strain (bbAA) was mated by red eye, wingless strain. The expected ratio in  $F_2$  was 9 red eye and winged (B\_A\_) : 3 red eye and wingless (B\_aa) : 3 brown eye and winged (bbA\_) : 1 brown eye and wingless (bbaa).

For the gene interaction in the second dihybrid cross, brown eye strain (bbSS) was crossed by scarlet eye strain (BBss). It was uncertain for the expected ratio in  $F_2$ , red eye (B\_S\_) : scarlet eye (B\_ss) : brown eye (bbS\_) : white (bbss).

The mating maps were given as follows.

## Mendelian traits: eye color and wing

P generation	bbAA (brown, winged) ♀	×
	BBaa (red, wingless) ♂	
		↓
F <sub>1</sub> generation	BbAa (red, winged) ♀	×
	BbAa (red, winged) ♂	↓

## F<sub>2</sub> generation containing progeny genotypes

Gamete genotype	BA	Ba	bA	ba
BA	BBAA	BBAa	BbAA	BbAa
Ba	BBAa	BBaa	BbAa	Bbaa
bA	BbAA	BbAa	bbAA	bbAa
ba	BaAa	Bbaa	bbAa	bbaa

Expected ratio: 9 red eye and winged (B\_A\_) : 3 red eye and wingless (B\_aa) : 3 brown eye and winged (bbA\_) : 1 brown eye and wingless (bbaa)

## Gene interactions: eye colors

P generation	bbSS (brown) ♀	×
	BBss (scarlet) ♂	
		↓
F <sub>1</sub> generation	BbSs (red) ♀	×
	BbSs (red) ♂	↓

F<sub>2</sub> generation containing progeny genotypes

Gamete genotype	BS	Bs	bS	bs
BS	BBSS	BBSs	BbSS	BbSs
Bs	BBSs	BBss	BbSs	Bbss
bS	BbSS	BbSs	bbSS	bbSs
bs	BbSs	Bbss	bbSs	bbss

Expected ratio: ? red eye (B\_S\_) : ? scarlet eye (B\_ss) : ? brown eye (bbS\_) : ? white (bbss)

In order to cross the flies, FlyNap (an anesthesia agent, Carolina) was soaked on the end of a wand. The wand was then inserted into the vial in a manner which allowed none of the flies to escape. The flies were monitored to determine when the FlyNap should be removed from the vial once fully anesthetized. The process of anesthetizing the flies took around 2-5 minutes. Caution is taken to avoid overexposure to FlyNap which is lethal to the flies in excessive dosage.

After the flies were fully anesthetized, the cap of the vial was removed and placed under a dissecting microscope to identify sexual features. Once the sex of each fly was identified, five males and five females were placed into a vial containing culture media. A total of twenty males and twenty females were selected in four separate vials. The vials were laid on the side to ensure the flies did not get stuck to the culture medium. After the flies recuperated from the FlyNap, the vials were placed upright.

In four days, the parent flies from the previous generation were removed from the vials. The larvae were developed into mature flies within 14-20 days. In F<sub>2</sub> generation, mature flies were scored under a dissecting microscope according to their traits.

The flies were maintained in sponge capped plastic vials containing roughly one inch of culture media and yeast cells. The whole culturing process took place at room temperature.

The  $\chi^2$  statistical test was chosen to detect the fitness of the segregation ratios (Klug et al., 2010). In monohybrids all the scoring datum were generated by adding the number of flies with one trait regardless of other traits in dihybrids. For example, the number of red eye flies (412) in the monohybrid was obtained from the addition of the numbers of red eye, winged and red eye, and wingless flies (290 and 122) in the dihybrid.

**Results**

The phenotypes of fruit flies from different generations in two dihybrids were shown in the following figure.

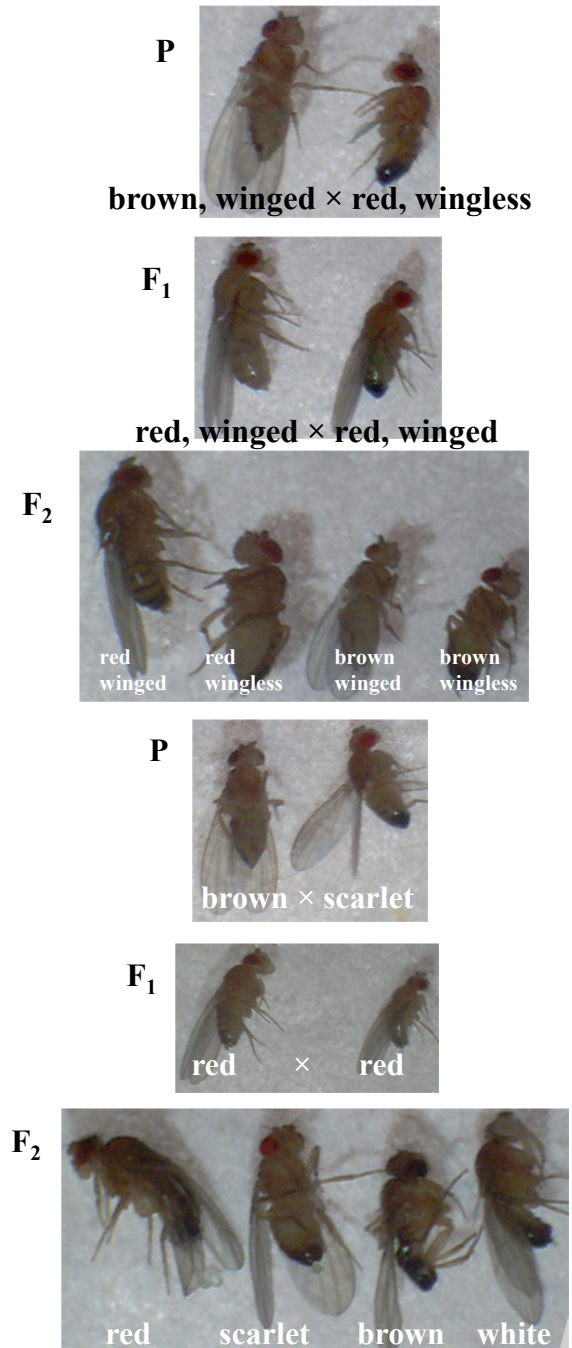


Figure A display of the phenotypes of fruit flies from different generations in two dihybrids

Based on the data in the monohybrid crosses of fruit flies, the  $\chi^2$  test was performed on the male, female and the total number of flies in terms of two traits.

Table 1 Monohybrid  $\chi^2$  tests for 3:1 ratio in fruit flies

Sex	Male			Female			Male + Female		
Phenotype	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$
Red eye	412	414.8	0.02	617	570.0	3.88	1029	984.8	1.99
Brown eye	141	138.2	0.05	143	190.0	11.63	284	328.2	5.97
Total	553	553	0.07	760	760	15.50	1313	1313	7.95
Wing	429	414.8	0.49	610	570.0	2.81	1039	984.8	2.99
Wingless	124	138.2	1.47	150	190.0	8.42	274	328.2	8.97
Total	553	553	1.96	760	760	11.23	1313	1313	11.95

For monohybrid crosses (Table 1), a total of 1,313 flies were scored. Of these flies, 553 were male and 760 were female. Regarding red eye versus brown eye, and wing versus wingless in the male,  $\chi^2$  test results showed that probabilities were greater than 5% because all  $\chi^2$  values were smaller than  $\chi^2_{0.05,1} = 3.84$ . It indicated that the segregations of the genes controlling eye color and presence of wing followed first Mendelian genetic law. However, with respect to female and overall,  $\chi^2$  test results showed that probabilities were smaller than 5% because all  $\chi^2$  values were greater than  $\chi^2_{0.05} = 3.84$ . It illustrated that these individual genes didn't comply with the law.

In reference to dihybrids, the  $\chi^2$  tests were conducted on the male, female and the total number of flies in relation to two set of traits.

Table 2 Dihybrid (brown  $\times$  apterous)  $\chi^2$  tests for 9:3:3:1 ratio in fruit flies

Sex	Male			Female			Male + Female		
Phenotype	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$
Red eye, winged (B_A_)	290	311.1	4.03	469	427.5	4.03	759	738.6	0.57
Red eye, wingless (B_aa)	122	103.7	0.21	148	142.5	0.21	270	246.2	2.30
Brown, winged (bbA_)	139	103.7	0.02	141	142.5	0.02	280	246.2	4.64
Brown, wingless (bbaa)	2	34.6	43.58	2	47.5	43.58	4	82.1	74.26
Total	553	553	47.84	760	760	47.84	1313	1313	81.77

As shown in Table 2, in the dihybrid to observe two-gene segregation, a total of 1,313 flies were counted. Of these, there were 553 male and 760 female flies. All  $\chi^2$  test results indicated that probabilities were smaller than 5% because all  $\chi^2$  values were greater than  $\chi^2_{0.05,3} = 7.82$ . It meant that the segregations of the genes controlling eye color and presence of wing didn't obey the second Mendelian genetic law. The number of brown and wingless flies was too far from the expected number.

Table 3 Dihybrid (brown  $\times$  scarlet)  $\chi^2$  tests for 9:3:3:1 ratio in fruit flies

Sex	Male			Female			Male + Female		
Phenotype	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$	Obs (O)	Exp (E)	$\chi^2$
Red eye (B_S_)	480	421.4	8.17	531	455.6	12.47	1011	876.9	20.49
Scarlet eye (B_ss)	143	140.4	0.05	169	151.9	1.93	312	292.3	1.33
Brown (bbS_)	111	140.4	6.17	96	151.9	20.56	207	292.3	24.90
White (bbss)	15	46.8	21.62	14	50.6	26.50	29	97.5	48.07
Total	749	749	36.01	810	810	61.45	1559	1559	94.79



In Table 3, the dihybrid was made to observe two-gene interaction. A total of 1,559 flies were recorded. Of these, there were 749 male and 810 female flies. All  $\chi^2$  test results indicated that probabilities were smaller than 5% because all  $\chi^2$  values were greater than  $\chi^2_{0.05,3} = 7.82$ . It meant that the segregations of the genes controlling eye colors didn't conform to second Mendelian genetic law. The number of three phenotypes was too far from expected numbers. Other ratios were tested and didn't fit either (the data not shown). The classical gene interaction was not observed in the cross.

### Discussion

From the above results, we can see that only segregation in male flies followed first Mendelian genetic law in terms of the monohybrids. Others didn't. All the segregations of flies didn't obey the second Mendelian genetic law in the dihybrids. The possible reasons were given below.

In many organisms, genetic factors, called Meiotic Drive Elements (MDs), have found ways to break Mendel's laws of heredity (Grognet et al., 2014). MDs skew the expected 1:1 ratio in their favor and are thus overrepresented in the progeny after meiosis. They have been observed in metazoans, plants and fungi (Pennisi, 2003). They may play a critical role in population behavior, leading to sex ratio distortion and thus decreasing population size. Additionally, fitness can also be altered by MD factors if they are genetically linked to alleles that confer deleterious traits (Saupe, 2012).

Investigation of "Segregation Distorter" in *Drosophila* (Larracuente and Presgraves, 2012; Sandler et al. 1951), has showed that MDs are composed of at least two linked genes: the distorter that acts as a toxin by disrupting the formation of gametes, and the responder that acts as an antitoxin that protects from the deleterious distorter effects. Anderson J. et al. (2009) characterized patterns of polymorphism and divergence in the protein-coding regions of 33 genes across of *Drosophila melanogaster*. Along the *D. melanogaster* lineage, several loci exhibited patterns consistent with the maintenance of protein variation.

The major gene effects and segregation at a major locus are usually masked by a large number of environmental effects, genetic  $\times$  environmental interactions, as well as polygenic effects (Zeng, 2000).

In the future, it is significant to conduct the continual study to investigate the factors that cause the deviation of classical genetic ratios in these fruit fly strains.

### Conclusion

In monohybrids of the eye color and wing presence, the segregation of male flies followed 3:1 ratio, but that of female flies did not. In the dihybrids of the fruit flies, the segregations of male, female, and overall results did not fit the 9:3:3:1 ratio. The same situations occurred in another dihybrid of four different eye colors.

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