

The Single Personality of God: A Pitfall of the Oneness Theology

Vicente Quiñones-Aponte

Abstract

This research assesses the theological conception of a single personality of the Godhead, demonstrating that the doctrine of the Oneness of God fails to pass a biblical-theological challenge, resulting in incompatibility with the doctrine of the Final Judgment. The Oneness of God theology, specifically, fails in complying with the requirement of a second witness for the Final Judgment. God's Law requires at least two witnesses in any justice trial as per Deuteronomy 19:15. Since the Final Judgment applies to all humans, it requires two factual witnesses capable of testifying against all humanity, from the beginning to the end of this creation; they must be omniscient. Although God the Father is the first witness, the Oneness of God theological framework fails to provide a qualified second witness for the Final Judgment.

This research makes evident that the perception of some Oneness theologians of the functionality of the two natures in Jesus Christ is very similar to heretic Nestorianism. It concludes that the Trinitarian view of the Godhead is the only feasible theological perspective that is in harmony with tenets of the doctrine of the Final Judgment. A practical implication from this study is that if knowing God is crucial for salvation, under the Oneness of God perspective, salvation is in jeopardy.

Keywords: Oneness of God Theology, Single Personality of the Godhead, Final Judgment, Second Witness, Dual Nature of

Christ, Functionality of the Two Natures in Jesus Christ, Oneness of God Perspective and Salvation.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents an issue arising from the doctrine of the Oneness of God when confronted with the procedures of the Final Judgement. Since the Last Judgement is a doctrine affirmed by most Christianity and of firm theological support, it can be used to evaluate the feasibility and functionality of other doctrines in terms of compatibility. The research presented in this paper assesses the theological conception of a single personality of the Godhead, utilizing the doctrine of the Final Judgement to examine their compatibility. Before delving into the details of the subject at hand, a brief discussion of the teachings on the Oneness of God and the Final Judgment is presented.

General Background

The doctrine of the Oneness of God, sustained by churches of Oneness Pentecostalism (also known as the “Jesus Only” movement), is an actualized version of the former heretical movement of the fourth century, known as Modalistic Monarchianism (also referred to as Modalism or Oneness Christology). Although the Fathers of the Church pronounced this doctrine heretical,¹ it has gained popularity in some Pentecostal movements. There are about 20 Oneness Pentecostal church organizations. Just one of these, the United Pentecostal Churches International (UPCI), presently has more than 45,000 churches and missions and nearly 5.8 million constituents worldwide. This organization has a presence in about 238 nations and territories². The fact that the Oneness

¹ "Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III: Against Praxeas", The Tertullian Project, accessed June 16, 2025, <https://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-43.htm>.

² "About the UPCI," United Pentecostal Churches International, accessed June 16, 2025, <https://upci.org/about-the-upci/>.

of God doctrine might be heretical and is spreading rapidly underscores the urgency to address it. According to Edward D. Andrews, modalism undermines key aspects of biblical doctrines, such as the atonement, and is a harmful theological error.³

Statement of the Problem

Any truly orthodox-biblical doctrine cannot be in contradiction, incompatible, or an irreconcilable position with other doctrines of its kind. The theology of Oneness Pentecostalism ("Jesus Only" movement) denies the tri-unity of God, not recognizing the distinct persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the Oneness of God theological view, Jesus Christ is the one and only God, who sometimes manifests Himself as the Father or as the Holy Spirit; therefore, Godhead consists of only one person. The single person conception of the Godhead presents a severe problem for the legal execution of God's Final Judgment. The Final Judgment, a biblical, apostolic, and fundamental doctrine, includes some proceedings that require two or more witnesses, as per Deuteronomy 19:15. For the Oneness theology, there is only one person in the Godhead. If this is assumed to be true, it poses a problem that results from the requirement of more than one witness in the Final Judgment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to demonstrate that the doctrine of the Oneness of God fails to overcome a biblical-theological challenge as it becomes incompatible with an orthodox, well-

³ Edward D. Andrews, "Modalism Refuted: A Biblical and Historical Examination of the Heresy That Denies the Trinity," *Christian Publishing House Blog*, accessed June 16, 2025, <https://christianpublishinghouse.co/2025/04/17/modalism-refuted-a-biblical-and-historical-examination-of-the-heresy-that-denies-the-trinity/>.

accepted biblical doctrine, the doctrine of the Final Judgment. The topic of the doctrine of the Oneness of God and its implications for the scenario of the Final Judgment proceedings has not received much attention in the literature. This, plus the fact that the Oneness theology church movement is growing rapidly and spreading its inconsistent and false teachings, motivates this investigation.

The Scope, Delimitations, Limitations, Assumptions, and Research Questions

The scope of the study is limited to the current body of literature, biblical study resources, and the Bible, which serves as the ultimate source of truth. The doctrines of the Oneness of God and the Final Judgment, as well as any potential contradictions between them, are the only concepts subject to this research. To reinforce the concepts presented in the investigation, other doctrines that interact with these two are included. The doctrine of the dual nature of Christ is fundamental to this investigation and, due to its relevance, is widely discussed herein. Certain references to the theology of the trinity of God, the persons of God the Father and God the Son, Jesus Christ, are cited as proof.

This investigation uses two types of delimitations: 1) Data Delimitations and 2) Scope Delimitations. Data came from books and articles written by either Oneness or Trinitarian theologians. The Bible is the principal source of data used in the study. The focus of the proposed study is to evaluate the understanding of Oneness theology regarding God's nature, their position on Jesus Christ's dual nature, the relationship between God's Law and the Final Judgement, and the orthodox doctrines regarding the Godhead. The study focused on the implications of sustaining the single personality of the Godhead and its consequences for the development of the Final Judgment proceedings.

This research is limited by the lack of a clear and formal definition of Christ's dual nature within the Oneness of God theological framework. The proposed study assumes that the Bible, the Word of God, is the ultimate source of truth and is inerrant in the original documents. The doctrine of the Final Judgment, which is a biblical and apostolic doctrine upheld by most sectors of the church, is assumed to be a true and orthodox doctrine. The Chalcedon Creed, with its refinements up to the kenosis Christological view, is considered here the orthodox teaching.

The results of this investigation will answer the following questions: Who will be the second witness in the Final Judgment? Is the Oneness of God a theological conception consistent and compatible with the doctrine of the Final Judgment and its procedures?

LITERATURE AND FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES

The following are summaries of the various doctrines related to the subject of this investigation. The following subsections summarize the doctrines of the Oneness of God, the Unicity of God, the Final Judgment, and the Dual Nature of Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of the Oneness of God

The promoters of the doctrine of the Oneness of God sustain their view on two main prepositions: 1) there is only one indivisible God without distinction of persons in his eternal essence, and 2) Jesus Christ is his manifestation, human personification, or incarnation of that one God. They affirm that the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ (which is true as per the Bible)⁴ and that all the names and titles of the Godhead apply to Him. The Oneness of God theology, upheld by churches of Oneness Pentecostalism, is rooted in a heretic movement of the fourth century known as Modalistic

⁴ Col. 2:9.

Monarchianism (also known as Modalism⁵ or Oneness Christology). Monarchianism emerged during the 2nd century and is an extreme monotheistic view.⁶ It is a Christological view that affirmed the sole deity of God the Father, opposing the teaching of a separate, personal subsistence of Christ.⁷ Two forms of Monarchianism evolved from the original: Dynamic Monarchianism and Modalistic Monarchianism.⁸ Dynamic Monarchianism proposed that Christ was only a miraculously conceived man and not God, denying His divinity. Various theologians (Theodotus, Artemon, and Paul of Samosata) taught the Dynamic Monarchianism view late during the second century and early during the third century. The church rejected the Dynamic Monarchianism view and excommunicated or deposed its promoters.⁹

The first precursor of Modalistic Monarchianism was Noetus of Smyrna by the end of the second century.¹⁰ the local presbyters

⁵ *“Modalism, also called Sabellianism, is the unorthodox belief that God is one person who has revealed himself in three forms or modes in contrast to the Trinitarian doctrine where God is one being eternally existing in three persons. According to Modalism, during the incarnation, Jesus was simply God acting in one mode or role, and the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was God acting in a different mode. Thus, God does not exist as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the same time. Rather, He is one person and has merely manifested himself in these three modes at various times. Modalism thus denies the basic distinctiveness and coexistence of the three persons of the Trinity.”* Theopedia, s.v. “Modalism,” accessed July 10, 2025, <https://www.theopedia.com/modalism>.

⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Monarchianism,” July 10, 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Monarchianism>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, s.v. “Modalism,” The Episcopal Church, accessed July 10, 2025, <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/modalism/#:~:text=Modalism%2C%20or%20modalistic%20monarchianism%2C%20is%20a%20pre-Nicene%20teaching,Praxeas%2C%20Sabellius%2C%20and%20others.%20Modalism%20took%20several%20forms>.

excommunicated him.¹¹ Praxeas and Sabellius were the principal proponents of modalism in Rome. Near 206 AD, Praxeas teaches that the names "Father" and "Son" were only designations given to the same subject, the only God, for different historical moments. Tertullian confronted Praxeas in his written opposition "Against Praxeas" after which Praxeas recanted his modalistic view of the Godhead.¹² During the late second and early third centuries AD, Sabellius was one of the principal precursors of modalism. Plotinus, a Greek philosopher, influenced him.¹³ Sabellius believed and taught that God seems different or evolves at different chronological times in history. He erased all the distinctions between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, presented in the trinitarian view. Sabellius taught that God manifested Himself in modes, and that through history, He manifested first as the Creator, Father, later as the Savior, Son, and finally as the one who sanctifies and grants eternal life, Holy Spirit (Figure 1). The reason behind Sabellius' beliefs is that, according to him, it is not possible to sustain an eternal, personal communion between three distinct persons. Sabellius did not consider the sayings of Jesus: "...but with God all things are possible."¹⁴ Hippolytus of Rome and others admonished Sabellius in "Refutation of All Heresies."¹⁵ Later, Pope Callixtus excommunicated Sabellius.¹⁶

¹¹ Contributors to Wikimedia projects, "1911 Encyclopædia Britannica/Noetus - Wikisource, the free online library", Wikisource, the free library, accessed July 2, 2025, https://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=1911_Encyclopædia_Britannica/Noetus&oldid=4669731.

¹² Tertullian, 213, *Adversus Praxean*, The Tertullian Project, Roger Pearse (Compiler), accessed June 16, 2025, <https://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-43.htm>.

¹³ A. Hilary Armstrong, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Plotinus," January 1, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Plotinus>.

¹⁴ Matt. 19:26.

¹⁵ M. David Litwa, "BOOK 9." In *Refutation of All Heresies*, 620–95. Society of Biblical Literature, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt19rmc1p.15>.

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "St. Callixtus I," January 1, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Callixtus-I>.

For many centuries after Sabellius, there were no officially known exponents of the modalism view of the Godhead, besides Michael Servetus in 1531¹⁷ and John Miller in 1876.¹⁸ Servetus was persecuted, imprisoned, and put on trial for heresy by Protestant Calvinist authorities as a result of two of his publications (*De Trinitatis Erroribus* and *Dialogorum de Trinitate*).¹⁹ He was ultimately burned at the stake because the Inquisition was functioning at that time. John Miller contributes writings on Unitarian or Oneness theology and preaches and teaches on the subject.²⁰

A more energetic and dynamic movement that promotes Oneness theology began early in the twentieth century, driven by a controversy which eventually led to the division of the Assemblies of God. In 1913, during a camp meeting at Arroyo Seco, a suburb of Los Angeles, Robert E. McAlister preached a sermon in which he mentioned that during the first century, Christians were baptized only in the “Name of Jesus.”²¹ In a shy way, he suggested that this should be the correct invocation and not the traditional triune invocation presented in Matthew 28:19.²²

¹⁷ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Michael Servetus," October 23, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michael-Servetus>.

¹⁸ John Miller, *Is God a Trinity?* 3rd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Privately printed, 1922), 12.

¹⁹ *Encyclopedia.com New Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Servetus, Michael," accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/servetus-michael>.

²⁰ John Miller, "The Omnipotent Individual," Unitarian Universalist Society of Black Hawk County Sermons, accessed June 17, 2025, <https://uusbhcc.wordpress.com/2008/06/01/the-omnipotent-individual-john-miller/>.

²¹ "Pentecostal Historical Timeline," Apostolic Archives International, Inc., accessed June 10, 2025, <https://www.apostolicarchives.com/historical-timeline.html>.

²² "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," NKJV.

A group of the meeting attendants accepted the proposal of baptizing using only the "Name of Jesus," and in a brief time, they were writing and preaching about the subject. The new movement, springing from the Assemblies of God, developed a basic theological framework in which the rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity was required to justify their model of baptizing using only the "Name of Jesus." Therefore, they embraced a unitarian view of the Godhead. After a debate with the promoters of the Oneness theology, the General Council of the Assemblies of God approved a Statement of Fundamental Truths affirming the Trinitarian view as orthodox.²³ After the defeat, the Oneness theologians or "Name of Jesus" adherents left the Assemblies of God and formed their denomination, The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. After a series of divisions, the United Pentecostal Church International emerged, which is the largest Oneness Pentecostal denomination in the United States.²⁴

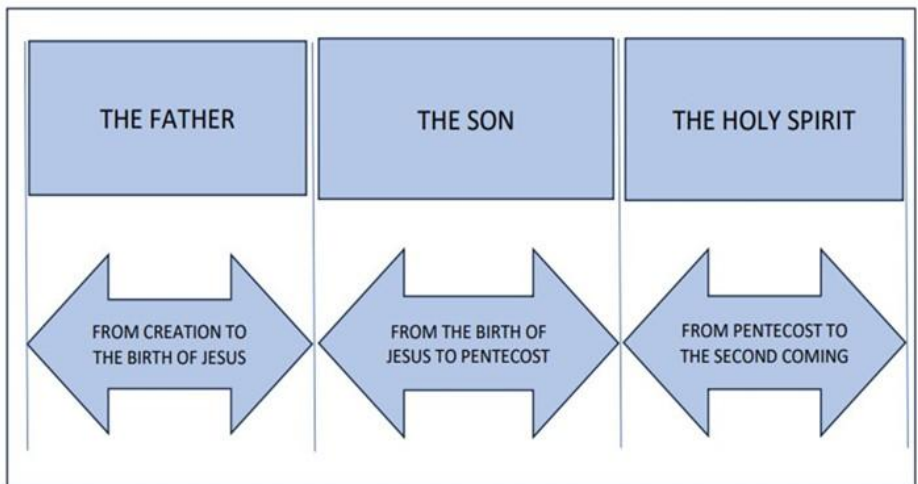


Figure 1. Modes of God's Manifestations According to Sabellius.

²³ "About: About-the-AG: History," Assemblies of God, History, accessed June 11, 2025, <https://ag.org/en/About/About-the-AG/History>.

²⁴ "About the UPCI," United Pentecostal Church International, accessed June 16, 2025, <https://upci.org/about-the-upci/>.

Within this new denomination, where there were no big internal conflicts, the promoters of the Oneness theology were restful and able to elaborate a formal theological structure. David K. Bernard is the most distinguished and notorious theologian and apologist of the Oneness of God movement. He has authored about 37 books with translations in 39 languages and a large circulation.²⁵ The Oneness movement adopted the Israelites' Old Testament *Shema*²⁶ found in Deuteronomy 6:4: "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!*" as the foundational biblical support of their theological structure. Bernard presents the Oneness doctrine, starting with two propositions: "(1) *there is one indivisible God with no distinction of persons; (2) Jesus Christ is all the fullness of the Godhead incarnate. All titles of the Deity can be applied to Him, and all aspects of the divine personality are manifest in Him.*" Other apologists of the Modalistic Monarchianism supported these propositions. The most significant difference between the doctrine of Sabellius and the doctrine of the Oneness theology presented by Bernard is that Sabellianism taught that the manifestations of God, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit occurred only one time in history, and in a chronological order: initially, the Father, then during the incarnation, the Son, and post-accession of Jesus, as the Holy Spirit. Bernard and the modern exponents of the Oneness theology propose that after the incarnation, Jesus is who plays the role of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to Bernard, the Godhead, or Jesus,²⁷ uses titles to perform roles in His dealings with humankind. On the other hand, Sabellius claimed that the Father was the only God who

²⁵ UPCI Wall of Honor, "David K. Bernard," accessed June 10, 2025, <https://www.upciwallofhonor.org/minister-bio/david-k-bernard?lid=4c219950-ccb1-4ddb-9e45-117db81ac6bc>.

²⁶ Jewish prayers that serve as a centerpiece of the morning and evening prayer services.

²⁷ David Bernard, *The Oneness of God* (Hazelwood, Mo.: Word Aflame Press, 1983), 15.

manifested in the distinct roles. The following diagram illustrates Sabellius' proposal (Figure 2).

As previously mentioned, according to the modern Oneness view, held by Bernard and the United Pentecostal Church International, God is only one and has only one personality, which is Jesus. The Father and the Holy Spirit do not have individual personalities; they are roles played by Jesus. This view is known as Simultaneous Modalism and is illustrated in Figure 3.

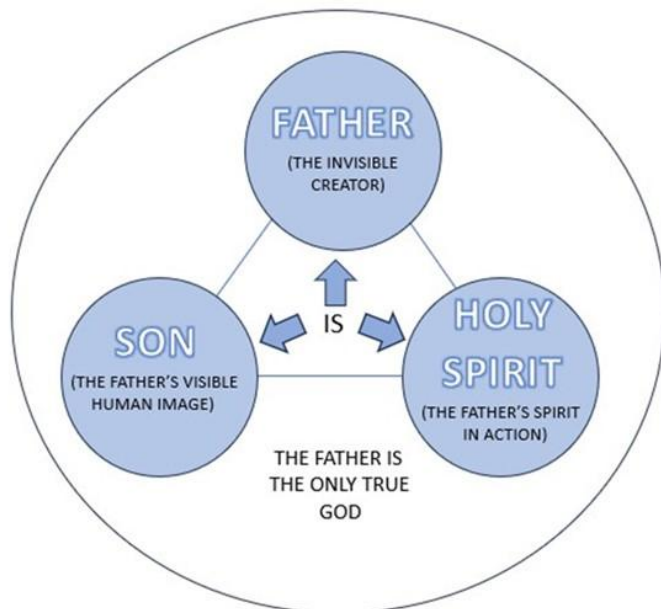


Figure 2. Sabellius' Definition of the Godhead.

To justify many Bible passages where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit manifest at the same time, the Oneness theologians developed the concept of simultaneous modalism. In simultaneous modalism, Jesus plays the roles of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit at the same time.

In the Trinity, the unity is rooted in the Shema, a Jewish declaration presented in Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The

LORD our God, the LORD is One." This unicity, or uniqueness, is constantly presented throughout the New Testament. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are shown to be distinct yet unified in essence and purpose.²⁸

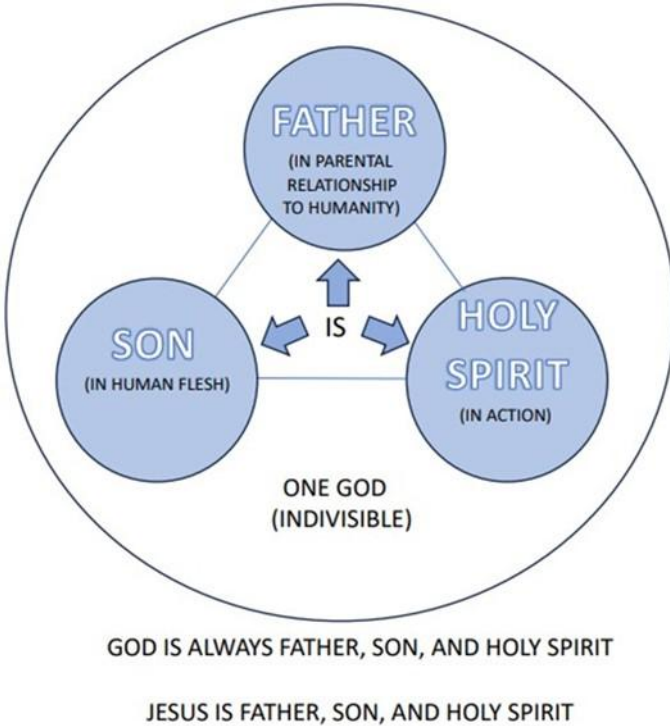


Figure 3. Modern Oneness View of the Godhead.

The Doctrine of the Final Judgment

The doctrine of the Final Judgment is a fundamental, biblical, and apostolic doctrine clearly and explicitly presented throughout the Bible. Hebrews 6:2 describes it as a

²⁸ "Topical Bible: Unity in the Trinity", Bible Hub, accessed July 5, 2025, https://biblehub.com/topical/u/unity_in_the_trinity.htm.

fundamental doctrine.²⁹ The Final Judgment is a biblical teaching presented in the letters of Peter and Paul, in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, in the book of Revelation of John, and in many other books of the Bible. The apostle Peter talks about it in his second letter.³⁰ Paul also taught about the Final Judgment in his letter to the Romans.³¹ Matthew and Luke talk about this judgment in their Gospels.³² And the apostle John describes it in the book of Revelation.³³ For instance, in the book of Acts, the Bible says:

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”³⁴

This verse clearly says that God has set apart one day in His agenda for the Final Judgment. Also, as the supreme judge, He has appointed a particular judge for the judgment of humankind during this last trial. Jesus Christ is the one appointed by God the Father to be the judge of the living and the dead.³⁵

Also, the book of Psalms says: *“...Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before The Lord. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.”* God will judge with truth and righteousness; He will not proceed in a twisted way. He will

²⁹ *“...of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”* NKJV.

³⁰ *“But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until **the day of judgment** and perdition of ungodly men.”* 2 Pet. 6:2 NKJV.

³¹ Rom. 2:16.

³² Matt.12:41-42; Luke 11:31-32; 10:14.

³³ Rev. 20:11-13.

³⁴ Acts 17:30-31.

³⁵ Acts 10:42.

proceed with justice even when dealing with His enemies; otherwise, He could not possess the title of “*God of Justice*.”³⁶

Chapter 20 of the Book of Revelation describes the Final Judgment:

*“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”*³⁷

The church has taught about the Doctrine of the Final Judgment since the earliest times of Christianity. According to Berkhof: “*It has been the official view of the Churches up to the present time.*”³⁸ During the Final Judgment procedures, this creation will end, and everything will move to eternity. This is the meaning of the first sentence of the above-quoted verse. Creation fled from the presence of God that is seated on His throne, as the verse said, “*Him who sat on it.*” Here, the verse refers to the Godhead (Father, Son, and Spirit). According to various Bible verses,³⁹ God the Son is seated at the right hand

³⁶ Isa. 30:18 NKJV.

³⁷ Rev. 20:11-15 NKJV.

³⁸ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1996), 808.

³⁹ Rev. 3:21; 7:10; Heb. 8.1; 12:2; Dan. 7:9.

of God the Father. From the beginning of time until the present day, God has been collecting evidence in His books⁴⁰ for the day of the final trial, the Final Judgment. The books contain our doings. The "*Cognitio Causae* (Knowledge of the cause)," which is the opening section of the Final Judgment, will make use of this information.⁴¹ The book of Revelation describes this: "*And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.*"⁴²

The second part of the Final Judgment is the "*Sententiae Promulgatio* (the promulgation of the sentence)."⁴³ This is the announcement of the sentence for each person as described in Revelation 20:13 NKJV: "*And they were judged, each one according to his works.*" And the last part of the Final Judgment is the "*Sententiae Executio*" (execution of the sentence).⁴⁴ Revelation 20:15 describes the execution of the sentence: "*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*" The legal development of the proceedings of the Final Judgment needs two witnesses to comply with the requirements of Deuteronomy 19:15, and a discussion about these witnesses is included in the section "Who Would Be the Second Witness?" of this paper.

The Doctrine of the Dual Nature of Jesus Christ

One of the more controversial topics in Christology is the one that deals with the dual nature of Jesus Christ. As early as the first half of the second century, different opinions and theories emerged about how the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ interacted or are united within Him. Even with the later

⁴⁰ Rev. 20:12.

⁴¹ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 814-15.

⁴² Rev. 20:12 NKJV.

⁴³ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 815.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

refinements of the Chalcedonian Creed, which is the orthodox teaching about the dual nature of Christ, today some sectors of Christianity favor the one-nature view. The following section includes a summarized historical development of the doctrine of the dual nature of Jesus Christ, since this topic is particularly relevant to the central theme of this investigation.

Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Dual Nature of Jesus Christ

Christology is the branch of theology that has generated the more and most intense debates on theological subjects. However, within Christology, the doctrine of the Dual Nature of Jesus Christ is the leading topic concerning misconceptions and disagreements. What follows is a brief historical overview of the doctrine of the dual nature of Christ and the dominant doctrinal stance of the Church.

One of the earliest misconceptions about the dual nature of Jesus Christ was Ebionism, which denies the divinity of Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ This movement during early Christianity taught that Jesus was a simple human with nothing divine in Him. They believed that Jesus' birth was not virginal and that Joseph was the real father of Jesus. Ebionism taught that Jesus became the Messiah by complying with Moses' Law. In the Sacred Scriptures, many verses will testify about the divine nature of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ The verses included in the footnote indicate that Jesus possesses divinity, and there are many more verses in

⁴⁵ Millard J., Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh: A Contemporary Incarnational Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991), 42.

⁴⁶ “concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and **declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness**, by the resurrection from the dead.”, Rom. 1:3-4 NKJV; “For **in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**,” Col. 2:9 NKJV; “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and **given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**”, Phil. 2:9-11 NKJV.

the Bible that attest to this fact. Ebionism was confronted by various church fathers, including Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165),⁴⁷ Irenaeus (ca. 130-200),⁴⁸ Eusebius (ca. 260-340),⁴⁹ Epiphanius (ca. 315-403),⁵⁰ Jerome (ca. 340-420),⁵¹ and Hippolytus.⁵² The Clementines presented the final expression of Ebionism, where they proposed a distinction between Jesus and Christ. They believed that Christ, the Son of God, appeared in a sequence of incarnations in perfect men, which included Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and that he last was Jesus. They do not believe in the redemptive role of Jesus Christ.⁵³

Another extreme teaching about Jesus' nature, contrary to Ebionism, placed Him as only divine. This heretic view is known as Docetism, which denies the humanity of Jesus Christ. Docetism is believed to have its foundations in Gnosticism.⁵⁴ They affirm that Mary did not contribute anything, not genes or chromosomes, to Jesus, but that she was just a conduit through which the eternal came to the world.⁵⁵ Celsus and Marcion were some of the most notable proponents of Docetic

⁴⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 47.

⁴⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.26.

⁴⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.27.

⁵⁰ Epiphanius, *Pararion* ("Against Eighty Heresies"), 29-30.

⁵¹ Jerome, *Letters* 112.13.

⁵² Hippolytus, *Against All Heresies* 9.13.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ "Religious and philosophical movement popular in the Roman world in the 2nd-3rd century AD. The term, based on the Greek *gnōsis* ("secret knowledge"), was coined in the 17th century, when it was applied liberally to ancient Christian heretical sects, especially those described by their orthodox contemporaries as radically dualistic and world-denying, and those who sought salvation through esoteric revelation and mystical spirituality. *Encyclopedia Britannica* s.v. "Gnosticism summary," May 2, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/summary/gnosticism>.

⁵⁵ Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh* 46-47.

Gnosticism—both Tertullian⁵⁶ and Origen⁵⁷ reprobate Celsus and Marcion.

At this point, the Church acknowledges that it was necessary to clarify the fundamental definitions between the divine Christ and the divine Father, to be in a better position to resolve the issue of the Dual Nature of Christ. Then, the focus was shifted to the doctrine of the Trinity. While defining the relationship between the divine Christ and the divine Father, Dynamic and Modalistic Monarchianism⁵⁸ emerged as options for the definition of the relational and functional interaction within the Godhead. These Monarchianism forms, which emphasize the singularity and uniqueness of God, prepared the ground for the Arian heresy, which directly affected the topic of the nature of Christ.

As previously mentioned, Arianism found its roots in the unitarian view of the Godhead. The basic premise of Arianism was that God is unique because only He is self-existent and immutable. According to Arius, Jesus was a creature and therefore was not self-existing. Although for Arius, Jesus was much more superior than the other creatures. In some way, Arianism taught that Jesus was a sort of inferior god that did not possess the same nature as God the Father.⁵⁹ The Council of Nicaea (325) partially stopped the Arian controversy with their creed:

“I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from

⁵⁶ Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ* 1-5.

⁵⁷ Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.69-70.

⁵⁸ Described in section 2.1.

⁵⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica* s.v. "Arianism," June 22, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Arianism>.

*true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made...*⁶⁰

The Council of Constantinople (381) reaffirmed the Nicene pronouncement concerning the Son, putting the issue at rest for some time. However, in the present day, the Jehovah's Witness, with about 8.7 million members around the world, practices a form of Arianism. They deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, and in their creed, they said: "...we have learned from the Bible that Jesus is not Almighty God..."⁶¹

Since, with the response to Arianism and the formulation of creeds at Nicaea and Constantinople, the relational view between the divine Christ and the divine Father was well established, the Church was ready to return to the dilemma of the dual nature of Jesus Christ. At this point, the next heresy, Apollinarianism, emerged. Apollinarianism received its name from the Bishop of Laodicea, Apollinaris. This new proposal was not new. Apollinarianism was more likely a refined version of Docetism, or at best an updated version of Docetism, where they do not deny the entire humanity of Jesus Christ, but only His human mind. According to their beliefs, the divine Logos takes the place of Jesus Christ's human mind. Therefore, the Jesus presented by Apollinarianism was not completely human; he lacked the psychological part, the human mind. According to this view, Jesus could not have realized His redemptive work since He was not completely human. Various councils and synods condemned Apollinarianism; first at Rome in 377, at Alexandria in 378, at Antioch in 379, and at Constantinople in 381.

⁶⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica* s.v. "Nicene Creed," June 27, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nicene-Creed>.

⁶¹ "About Us - Frequently Asked Questions," JW.org, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, accessed June 23, 2025, <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/jehovah-witness-beliefs/>.

Nestorianism was the next controversy about the dual nature of Christ faced by the Church. This name was, unjustly, given after Nestorius because of political opposition and misinterpretation or distortion of Nestorius' proposal.⁶² The distorted proposal ended in a teaching that claimed that Jesus Christ was two distinct persons, a human and a divine. Even Nestorius did not agree with this proposal, but some others of the Antiochenes supported this view, developing a great controversy. In 433, a statement was prepared to which all participants agreed, clarifying Nestorius' proposal and rejecting Nestorianism.⁶³

Later, the extreme Antiochenes rejected the 433 agreements and required the declaration of Cyril as a heretic for his suggestion that Jesus Christ only had one nature. Cyril, who was the principal opponent of Nestorius, was not willing to continue with the dispute and restrained his followers. But after Cyril passed away, in 444, the argument flared up again. Dioscorus, Cyril's successor, employed a powerful, elderly monk named Eutyches. Eutyches' defense of the one-nature proposal by Cyril was not successful, resulting in his excommunication and the rejection of the one-nature doctrine.⁶⁴ Later, during a tainted council at Ephesus during which Flavian's two-nature view was rejected, Eutyches was reinstated to his position.⁶⁵

Later, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the two-nature of Christ view was reaffirmed as orthodox, reaffirming the Nicene Creed. In that council, Nestorianism and Eutychianism were both rejected. The Creed of Chalcedon reaffirms the Nicene Creed and adds detailed and more precise Christological elements.⁶⁶ These creeds reaffirm the divinity and humanity of

⁶² Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, 62-63.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ "We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in

Jesus Christ, defining the dual nature of Christ and the single personality of Him. Of special interest for this investigation is a portion of the Chalcedonian Creed:

“...to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one...”

This portion of the Chalcedonian Creed presents a clear and functional description of the dual nature of Jesus Christ. It indicates that the union of the two natures does not change either nature or their properties. Additionally, the creed emphasizes that the two natures coexist in one person; the natures do not separate into two distinct identities.

But Chalcedon was not the end of the dual nature controversy. The followers of Cyril continued to develop their one-nature proposal and eventually developed Monophysitism. Monophysitism declares that the divine and human natures in

Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.” James Richardson, Compiler, “Creed of Chalcedon,” In Free PDF Downloads of Christian Creeds and Confessions, Apostles Creed. July 6, 2014. <https://apostles-creed.org/documents-creeds-catechisms-confessions/>.

Jesus Christ are mixed, forming a third nature, which was like human nature but not exactly the same. The word monophysitism comes from the Greek "*mono*", one, and "*physis*", nature. Monophysitism split into two branches: the Julian, after Julian the bishop of Halicarnassus, and the Severian, after Severus of Pisidia, who was the patriarch of Antioch.⁶⁷

The Julian Monophysitism asserts that the body of Jesus Christ was divine and, as such, incorruptible and impassible. That Christ, by His free will, chooses to suffer death.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Severus' Monophysitism view was closer to Cyril's proposal, but with further developments. Severus proposed that in the incarnation, the divine and human qualities of Christ, attached now to one hypostasis, did not change in nature or essence. That all the attributes, divine and human, are now subsisting in one person, or hypostasis.⁶⁹ Today, Monophysitism still has followers and is the teaching sustained in some Christian groups.

The Monothelism controversy was a byproduct of Monophysitism. The Chalcedonian Creed was not clear or did not include a definition of Christ's volition. The writing of the creed was in such a way that it seems to support either the idea that Christ has only one will or the idea that He has two wills.⁷⁰ But some soteriological reasons preclude compromising the full humanity of Christ, since if Jesus Christ were not fully human, He would not have been qualified to be our savior. Therefore, the human nature of Jesus Christ would have one will, the human will, and the divine nature would have another will, the divine will.⁷¹ This was another factor in favor of Christ's dual

⁶⁷ Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, 67.

⁶⁸ *Encyclopedia Britannica* s.v. "Aphthartodocetism," April 17, 2014.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aphthartodocetism>.

⁶⁹ Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, 70.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

nature view. To avoid the objection that the two wills might be found in conflict, it was proposed that the “divine will” be the deliberative will. Therefore, the “human will” would submit to the “divine will,” and no conflicts would occur between the two.⁷²

Adoptionism was another attempt to define the incarnate state of Christ. The proposal here was that Christ in his humanity was an “adopted son,” contrary to Christ in his divinity, who is the Son of God by nature. They contend that the Son of Mary, whom the Logos took on, was solely the Son of God by adoption.⁷³ A Synod held at Frankfurt in 794 rejected Adoptionism and presented a decision: “*There are not two Christ, nor two Sons, but one Christ, one Son, both God and man, because God, the Son of God, assumed a human nature, not a [human] person.*”⁷⁴

The later Christological proposal, development, was Kenotic Christology. Kenotic Christology is the teaching that the Son of God, the *Logos*, decided to “set aside” his divine attributes in becoming incarnate as the man Jesus Christ. According to this Christological view, Jesus Christ functioned throughout his life on earth as a human and did not use his divine attributes. He functioned merely by faith in God the Father and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ A detailed description of Kenotic Christology is presented in the next section.

Contemporary Orthodox View of the Dual Nature of Christ

After Chalcedon, some minor refinements were made to the dual nature of Christ's view; however, during the nineteenth

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 76.

⁷⁴ Hincmar of Reims, *On the Deity as One and Not Three* 9, quoted in Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, 78.

⁷⁵ Roger E. Olson, “Kenotic Christology Explained and Defended,” *My Evangelical Arminian Theological Musings*, May 12, 2021, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2021/05/kenotic-christology-explained-and-defended/>.

century, the modern Kenotic Christology movement arose to explain or clarify some elements of the Chalcedonian Creed. Kenotic Christology did not start from nothing; it found its foundations in the Chalcedonian Creed. The biblical cornerstone of Kenotic Christology is Philippians 2:7, which says: “*but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*”⁷⁶

The term "emptied himself" appears in several other English translations. Other versions translate this phrase as “*he gave up his divine privileges*”⁷⁷, or “*poured out in emptiness*”⁷⁸. However, most of the translations use: “*emptied himself.*” The word Kenosis means: “*the giving up of divine glory by the eternal Son of God when he became incarnate.*”⁷⁹ There are many interpretations of the phrase “*emptied himself*” in Philippians 2:7. A sector suggests that the divinity in Jesus Christ was veiled (*skenosis*).⁸⁰ Others propose that Jesus Christ’s self-limitation was real but limited.⁸¹ Another group insists that the *Logos* retained all His divine attributes, but He voluntarily didn’t use them.⁸² Some say that He gave up certain attributes, and a more radical group suggests that He gave up all His divine attributes, retaining only His divine essence.⁸³ Another group says that the Kenosis took place only during the earthly life of Jesus Christ as a man.⁸⁴ The Chalcedonian Creed, with its later refinements, which include the Kenosis Christology, is still

⁷⁶ Verse from the English Standard Version.

⁷⁷ New Living Translation.

⁷⁸ International Standard Version.

⁷⁹ *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “kenosis,” accessed June 27, 2025, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english-spanish/kenosis>.

⁸⁰ Alva J. McClain, “Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8,” *Grace Journal* 8.2 (Spring, 1967): 3-13.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

being viewed as the orthodox posture concerning the dual nature and single personality of Jesus Christ.⁸⁵

To be fair, besides Bernard, other proponents of the Oneness of God doctrine comprehend the hypostatic union correctly and orthodoxly. For instance, Jason Dulle presented an excellent and clear synthesis of the historical development of Christ's dual nature. The following is part of his conclusions:

“The nature of God was not changed in the incarnation, but rather that God personally united to Himself a human existence-not by merely adding flesh to His existence, but by the two natures being brought together into a vital union to speak of Christ as being one person, yet still having two distinct natures.”⁸⁶

This quote attests that Dulle has the correct orthodox view of the hypostatic union in Jesus Christ.

THE CONFLICT OF A SINGLE PERSONALITY OF GOD IN THE FINAL JUDGEMENT PROCEDURES

Before going into the discussion, it is necessary to present the legal scenario and theological facts that are relevant to the investigation presented in this paper. It is important to emphasize the character of God's Law. The following sections present a synthesis of God's legislation, why God does not violate His law, and the character of His law. It should be clarified here that when referring to God's law, it is limited to the divine law.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, 86.

⁸⁶ Jason Dulle, *The Dual Nature of Christ*, *Institute of Biblical Studies*, accessed June 16, 2025, <https://onenesspentecostal.com/dualnature.htm>.

⁸⁷ The law of God revealed to humanity.

God, Do Not Violate His Law

An important principle to keep in mind is that God never breaks His Law. Psalm 89:34 said: *“My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.”* This truth is crucial for this investigation since, for the scenario under examination, and the premise of the Oneness theology, God would appear to be breaking His Law. Under the Oneness of God theological view, there would be only one qualified witness for the execution of the Final Judgment proceedings. This would result in a violation of the Law as per Deuteronomy 19:15. Theologically, God cannot break His law since His law reflects His character; breaking His law would be equivalent to denying His character. Biblical evidence for this argument is Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV: *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”*

Jesus explicitly says that He did not come to destroy or end the law. He indicated that He came to fulfill the law or comply with it. The fact that Jesus complied with the law and this compliment is granted to those who accept Jesus' lordship in their lives, does not imply that the law has ended. For instance, the law is still in force for those who do not affiliate with Jesus Christ's new covenant. They continue to be under the old covenant and, therefore, under the law. The apostle Paul taught about this:

“knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious

gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."⁸⁸

Paul clarifies that the law does not apply to those who are righteous (only under Christ's lordship can one be considered righteous), but it still applies to the unrighteous.

God's Legislation

The Bible teaches that God not only created all things but also established regulations (or legislation) for their functionality.⁸⁹ However, for the sake of this examination, God's legislation includes only His dealings with humans, the divine law. According to Thomas Aquinas, the eternal law originates from God's intellect; it is Divine Wisdom, and all other laws should derive from it.⁹⁰ Therefore, God's divine law is, in some way, a revelation of His eternal law to humanity. God planned His legislation in conjunction with a series of covenants and dispensations to provide humanity with an opportunity for salvation.⁹¹ Table 1 lists the eight covenants that God established during Old Testament times. In some way, God used the Old Testament times to develop His Legislation for humanity.

Covenants are composed of two types: conditional and unconditional. The conditional or bilateral covenant requires that both parties comply with their parts, in the Bible's instance, God and men.⁹² God promises to grant blessings to men if men fulfill the conditions prescribed in the covenant. If men fail to

⁸⁸ 1 Tim. 1:9-11 NKJV.

⁸⁹ Job 38:8-11; 31-33.

⁹⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1-2.93.1. s. c. 1.

⁹¹ "special permission, especially from the Church, to do something that is not usually allowed," *Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. "dispensation," accessed June 24, 2025, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dispensation>.

⁹² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Eight Covenants of The Bible Part 1, Ariel Ministries*, accessed June 25, 2025, <http://www.messianicassociation.org/ezine17-af.covenants.htm>.

comply with the conditions, punishment might result. The unconditional or unilateral covenant is an act of God's sovereignty, where He obligates Himself to comply with His promised blessings or judgments.⁹³ Of the eight covenants established by God, only two are conditional: The Edenic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. The other six covenants are unconditional, and God will comply with the requirements of both parties. With the fall of man,⁹⁴ things started to get complicated, requiring more complex legislation. More complex and diverse human activities required more detailed and extended legislation by God. With the Mosaic Covenant, which is a conditional covenant, God established many more complex laws that should rule every aspect of human life.⁹⁵ It can be argued that God made the Mosaic Covenant conditional to allow men the opportunity to try to comply by themselves, so that men cannot say later: "*I could have saved myself.*"

God started to establish His legislation in the Garden of Eden with His first covenant, the Edenic Covenant.⁹⁶ God established this covenant on the sixth day of creation, and it comprised a few simple conditions. The covenant conditions for man were to procreate, rule over all other creatures, and consume a vegetarian diet. This covenant only had one prohibition: "*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*"⁹⁷ The simple life of man required simple legislation. God gave men an opportunity or a trial so that men cannot say, "*I would have done it.*" In the case of the Mosaic Covenant: "*I would have lived a sinless life.*"

But knowing God that men would not comply with his part, He included provisions (even in the previous covenants)⁹⁸ to provide

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Gen. 3.

⁹⁵ Exod. 20-23; Deut.

⁹⁶ Gen. 1:28-30; 2:16-17.

⁹⁷ Gen. 2:17 NKJV.

⁹⁸ Especially in The Abrahamic Covenant and The Davidic Covenant.

a special person (a Messiah) who would comply with men's part of the Mosaic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant and the Land of Israel Covenant are covenants with a man and his descendants, the former, and a covenant with a nation, the latter. Both are unconditional; God will comply with all the requirements. The New Covenant is a covenant with humanity and is unconditional. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, already complied with the most difficult part, in the Cross of Calvary, and will complete the missing parts, establishing the Kingdom of God on earth, or the new creation.

A dispensation is a special permission or authority, granted during a limited time, to administrate a legal or religious system in which an exemption is given to comply with the constitutional laws and rules. However, by the end of the covenant, the conditions must be complied with. Throughout human history, God has utilized dispensations to facilitate the accomplishment of the commitments related to the conditional and unconditional covenants that He established. God also used these dispensations to offer men a chance to fulfill their part of the conditional agreements. Dispensations provided time to prepare the moral, legal, and social scenarios for the accomplishments of the conditions established in the covenants. According to many Bible teachers and theologians, the Bible includes seven dispensations (Table 2).

Since God is the legislator, He can change the rules and procedures required to comply with His Law, but His Law does not change. The covenants and dispensations are methods or schemes used by God to conduct his purposes toward humanity and His creation. But the Law must be complied with. The dispensations provide alternatives to comply with or to be exempt from complying with the legal obligations. A clear example is the dispensation of the Grace in which Jesus complied with all the Law requirements and provided an alternative to those who trust in Him. God gave those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord the opportunity to receive justification and redemption from the Cross in exchange for

their acceptance of Jesus' Lordship. Also, God has provided a time limit within which this opportunity is available. This is known as the grace period. People who acknowledge Jesus as their Lord are exempt from the Law's requirements since Jesus fulfilled them on their behalf. However, the Bible is clear, and the act of the Cross is not an open universal benefit. Those who do not accept Jesus' Lordship must comply with the Law by themselves.

Not complying with the Law has consequences. These include not being registered in the Book of Life, and therefore not being acquitted during the Final Judgement. Also, they will receive punishment in the Lake of Fire, the second death.⁹⁹ In summary, covenants and dispensations do not eliminate the legislation but provide alternatives for the fulfillment of the Laws.

The Inviolability of God's Law

Violating God's Law will always have its consequences. This means that if one violates God's Law, that person will receive the corresponding punishment. God the Father did not cancel the sentence received by Jesus Christ for our sins, not for His sins, since He was sinless. God's Law does not stop even in front of God's begotten Son, Christ.

God's attributes and character preclude Him from violating His law. God's holiness, justice, faithfulness, immutability, goodness, and other attributes forbid Him from violating His law. For instance, God's holiness means that He is unchangingly and infinitely perfect, and therefore He would not pass the limits or boundaries of perfection and enter the imperfection zone. Here, the perfection zone can be seen as the Law, while the imperfection zone is the unlaw or violation of the Law.

God's justice means that He is unchangingly, infinitely right,

⁹⁹ Rev. 20:15.

and perfect in all His doings.¹⁰⁰ If this is true, He would not violate His law since He cannot do wrong. The faithfulness of God means He is unchangingly, infinitely true, and a promise keeper.¹⁰¹ God's immutability means that He never changes¹⁰² and will continue to be good forever, implying that He will continue the right path, without violating His commandments. The goodness of God means that He is unchangingly, infinitely kind, and full of goodwill.¹⁰³ Goodwill governs God; He will not go in the other direction to do evil.

In summary, God's attributes affirm that God cannot violate His Law and that if someone violates God's Law, that person will receive their retribution. Even God's sovereignty cannot bypass His established Law because of His character and attributes. His sovereignty would allow Him to find ways to comply with His regulations and Laws but not bypass His legislation. This is why God didn't grant Jesus (the humanity of Jesus) His petition when He asked about the possibility of not suffering on the cross.¹⁰⁴ Of course, this is not the main reason, which was the salvation of our souls, but this was the only way out for God to comply with the covenant of grace; this was the way that Jesus used to fulfill the Law, not to eliminate it.

¹⁰⁰ *"He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He."*, Deut. 32:4 NKJV.

¹⁰¹ Deut. 7:9; and 1 Tim. 2:13.

¹⁰² Mal. 3:6.

¹⁰³ Ps. 34:8.

¹⁰⁴ *"He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* Matt. 26:39 NKJV.

Table 1. God's Covenants, Covenant Types, and Fulfillment.

COVENANT	TYPE OF COVENANT	FULFILLMENT OF COVENANT
The Edenic Covenant,¹⁰⁵	Conditional	Fulfilled Started by Christ at the Cross and through His Resurrection (Matthew 5:17). Fulfillment Completed at New Creation.
The Adamic Covenant,¹⁰⁶	Unconditional	Fulfilled Started by Christ at the Cross. Fulfillment Completed at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.
The Noahic Covenant,¹⁰⁷	Unconditional	Fulfilled as a Promise of God. God Will Keep His Promise forever.
The Abrahamic Covenant,¹⁰⁸	Unconditional	Fulfilled by Christ in the Incarnation and His Redemptive Work.
The Mosaic Covenant,¹⁰⁹	Conditional	Fulfilled Started by Christ at the Cross and through His Resurrection (Matthew 5:17). Fulfillment Completed in the Second Coming.
The Davidic Covenant,¹¹⁰	Unconditional	Fulfilled Started by Christ at the Cross and through His Resurrection (Matthew 5:17). Fulfillment Completed in the Millennial Kingdom
The Land of Israel Covenant,¹¹¹	Unconditional	Fulfilled by Christ in the Millennial Kingdom
The New Covenant,¹¹²	Unconditional	Fulfilled Started by Christ at the Cross and through His Resurrection (Matthew 5:17). Fulfillment Completed in the New Creation.

¹⁰⁵ Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15-17.

¹⁰⁶ Gen. 3:14-19.

¹⁰⁷ Gen. 8:2-9:17.

¹⁰⁸ Gen. 12:1-3, etc.

¹⁰⁹ Exod. 20-23; Deut.

¹¹⁰ 2 Sam. 7:4-17.

¹¹¹ Deut. 30:1-10.

¹¹² Jer. 31:31-37, etc.

Table 2. Dispensations, Purpose, and Covenant Related

DISPENSATION	RELATED TO THE COVENANTS	PURPOSE OF DISPENSATION
The Dispensation of Innocence,¹¹³	The Edenic Covenant	God required men to obey Him and to keep their innocent state and communion with God.
The Dispensation of Conscience,¹¹⁴	The Adamic Covenant	God allowed humankind to use their conscience and do good, but men failed in their responsibility to choose to do right.
The Dispensation of Human Government,¹¹⁵	The Noahic Covenant	God required men to scatter and multiply. They refused to scatter and decided to build the Tower of Babel.
The Dispensation of Promise,¹¹⁶	The Abrahamic Covenant	Activating and testing the faith of Abraham, the father of the faith, which eventually led to the faith in Jesus Christ.
The Dispensation of Law,¹¹⁷	The Mosaic Covenant	Establishing the legal framework for the Final Judgment, allowing man the opportunity to comply with the law, and for Jesus' eventual fulfillment of the law.
The Dispensation of Grace,¹¹⁸	The Davidic Covenant and The New Covenant	To comply with God's promise to King David and to fulfill God's promise to Abraham of blessing humanity.
The Millennial Kingdom,	The Land of Israel Covenant	To comply with God's promise to Abraham about the promised land to his descendants.

¹¹³ Gen. 1:26-2:8.

¹¹⁴ Gen. 2:9-3:19.

¹¹⁵ Gen. 4:7-11; 5:1-32; 6:1-4.

¹¹⁶ Gen. 6:5-22; 9:8-17.

¹¹⁷ Exod. 20:1-17.

¹¹⁸ Acts 2; Eph. 3.

The Permanence of God's Law

Delivered during Israel's time in the wilderness, the divine Law given to Israel through Moses may appear not to be eternal when viewed from a human perspective, yet it was already in God's mind in eternity (the eternal law) since He is a just God, and justice is a component of His nature. This must be true since the Law given to Israel is a reflex of God's holy character, His eternal law. Therefore, one thing is the application of the Law for a limited time and to some specific people, and another thing is the permanency of the Law as part of God's moral character. Jesus said: "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*"¹¹⁹ Jesus is saying that the Law, which is part of His Words, shall not pass away, and makes emphasis by saying "*by no means,*" which implies impossibility. However, some people insist that Christ abolished the Law. Some extreme opposition to the Law comes from antinomianism¹²⁰ sectors. They claim the abolishment of the Law using some Bible passages, out of context. Table 3 presents some of the most popular verses used by them to suggest that the Law has ended, and a response to their claim. These verses (Table 3) are misinterpreted by decontextualization and used to claim the end of the Law of God.

Jesus Christ taught about the permanency of the Law, saying: "*For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*"¹²¹ Jesus Christ is placing a limit on the application of the Law (the divine law) given to Moses. This limit is the end of this present world, which occurs during the Final Judgment as described in Revelation 20:11-12 NKJV:

¹¹⁹ Mark 13:31 NKJV.

¹²⁰ "*One who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation*", Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "antinomian," accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/antinomian>.

¹²¹ Matt. 5:18 NKJV.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”

The bible's teaching is that God's eternal law is permanent. It is impossible to refute this clear teaching of Jesus Christ using verses that have been improperly and out of context interpreted. If one uses the incorrect interpretation of the verses presented in Table 3, that person is saying that Jesus presented false teaching in Matthew 5:18 and Mark 13:31.

The Immutability of God's Law

Theologically, the Law of God is unchanging, according to the premise of God's Immutability. Berkhof asserts: *“The Immutability of God is a necessary concomitant of His aseity.”*¹²² The aseity of God is God's attribute that declares the existence of God as a self-sustained being. His immutability is an obligated-concurrent attribute of His self-sustainability. If He does not change, His Law does not change. The Bible includes various verses that attest to the immutability of the Law of God. In chapter four (4) and verse two (2) of the book of Deuteronomy, the Bible says: *“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”*¹²³ God does not allow for changing or removing parts of the commandments.

¹²² Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 62.

¹²³ NKJV.

Table 3. Bible Verses Used by Antinomianism to Claim the End of the Law and Responses in Defence of the Permanency of the Law.

BIBLE VERSE	RESPONSES TO THE ANTINOMIANISM ARGUMENT
Ephesians 2:15	The context is about the ending of the enmity between Jews and Gentiles. Jesus abolished the enmity caused by the Law, not the Law. This is what the passage says.
Colossians 2:14	Talking about the cancellation of our debt for the violation of God’s Law. Not that the Law ended as a standard for living in holiness.
Hebrews 7:18	Talking about ceremonial law and the new priesthood, not about moral law.
Hebrews 8:13	Do not say that the Law will end, but that will put the Law in the believer’s mind. The covenant changed, but not the law.
Hebrews 10:1	Talking about ceremonial law.
Hebrews 12:27	Talking about the kingdom, not about the law.

Many more Bible verses talk about the immutability of God's Law. For instance, Isaiah 40:8 NKJV says: *“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”* And Psalm 119:89 NKJV: *“Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.”* No one should attempt to change, add, or subtract from the written Law of God, as mentioned in the Book of Revelation: *“and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*¹²⁴ As a result, according to biblical doctrine, neither God nor anyone else would be able to amend God's Law.

¹²⁴ Rev. 22:19 NKJV.

Who Would Be the Second Witness?

According to the Law of Moises, pronouncing a person guilty of sin is not possible based on the testimony of just one witness: *“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”*¹²⁵ God is going to use His established Law to judge humanity,¹²⁶ and to do this without violating His Law, He needs two witnesses. God, the Father, will be the first witness, but another witness is required. This additional witness must comply with some requirements. The second witness cannot be a false witness¹²⁷. If the Bible declares that all men are liars,¹²⁸ and if God has only one personality (according to the Oneness theological view), who would be the second witness? The sections that follow provide an answer to this question.

The Need for a Second Witness

As previously mentioned, God's justice program requires at least two witnesses to comply with the Law as provided in Deuteronomy: *“Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”*¹²⁹ And in Numbers: *“Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty.”*¹³⁰ Here, in both verses, the Bible refers to cases of the death penalty. But other issues or arguments also required more than one witness: *“One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity*

¹²⁵ Deut. 19:15 NKJV.

¹²⁶ Rom. 2:12-24.

¹²⁷ Exod. 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20.

¹²⁸ Rom. 3:10-12.

¹²⁹ Deut. 17:6 NKJV.

¹³⁰ Num. 35:30 NKJV.

*or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.*¹³¹

Jesus quoted the requirement of the two witnesses: *“It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.”*¹³² The apostle Paul practiced this Law requirement even when dealing with church matters. According to 2 Corinthians 13:1 NKJV, he said: *“This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established.”*

Many aspects of Moses’ Law are transcendental even in the Covenant of Grace. Here is the apostle Paul, the paladin of the Doctrine of the Grace of God, applying an element of the Law to the church. Some sectors of Christianity believe that the Law has ended. But Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”*¹³³ Jesus did not come to eradicate, but to comply with the Law of God to gain the justification for us, and to bring the Law to its complete fulfillment. This includes the application of the Law to all the creatures and creation and providing, through His Cross, salvation, and restoration for all the creation of God. It is clear from the previously cited verses that more than one witness is required in God’s legal procedures, including those of the Final Judgment.

The Character of the Second Witness

The Bible describes the character of the second witness who will participate in the Final Judgment proceedings. Revelations 19:11 contains this description: *“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”* The second witness must be faithful. Someone faithful is

¹³¹ Deut. 19:15 NKJV.

¹³² John 8:17 NKJV.

¹³³ Matt. 5:17 NKJV.

trustworthy, dependable, trusting, or loyal. Aside from Jesus Christ, Moses was the only person in the Bible found trustworthy in God's house.¹³⁴ But this was only when he was a servant of God, and not throughout his entire life. The second witness must be true, genuine, and honest. He must be righteous, honest, and of integrity. The second witness must be impartial: "*For there is no partiality with God.*"¹³⁵ He must be someone who would represent God in all senses. The second witness cannot be a false witness. 1 Kings 21 describes how Jezebel arranged for two men to bear false witness against Naboth, claiming that he had blasphemed God and the king, to kill him: "*and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, 'You have blasphemed God and the king.' Then take him out, and stone him, that he may die.*"¹³⁶ God will not allow a false witness in the Final Judgment. The second witness must be someone with a character approved by God.

The Qualifications of the Second Witness

The second witness cannot be anybody. God, the Father, or the invisible as referred to by the Oneness of God theology promoters, is the first witness, and the second witness must be someone trustworthy and loyal. The second witness must be guiltless. Jesus asked a group of people who were ready to judge and execute a woman for the sin of adultery if they were without sin, or sinless.¹³⁷ Therefore, the second witness must be sinless. In the context of the Mosaic law, the witnesses had to initiate the execution of the guilty party in addition to testifying against the defendant. They must be the first to throw a stone. This is why those challenged by Jesus could not throw the first stone; they all were sinners.

¹³⁴ Heb. 3:5.

¹³⁵ Rom. 2:11 NKJV.

¹³⁶ 1 Kings 21:10 NKJV.

¹³⁷ John 8:7.

Being a good person does not suffice to qualify as the second witness. The earlier sentences present character qualifications for the witness, but factual qualifications are also essential in every legal trial, and the Final Judgment is not an exception. The most relevant part of this is the knowledge of the witness about the case facts. Four types of witnesses participate in a court trial. These are 1) expert witness, 2) eyewitness, 3) character witness, and 4) fact witness. Of these four types of witnesses, the eyewitness is the most crucial to the development and closure of most trials. In the Final Judgment, all humanity, every person who has existed or will ever exist, will be subject to judgment; therefore, the second witness must be capable of testifying regarding the deeds of every single person in this group. No human can do this. Even Jesus Christ, if he could act only in His human nature, could not know everything about everybody. According to the orthodox teaching about the hypostatic union of the two natures (the divine nature and the human nature) residing in the person of Jesus Christ, human nature was a hundred percent human and was not omniscient. Only a person who possesses the attribute of omniscience can know everything about everybody and testify against them. Therefore, only God can be the second witness. However, since He is the first witness, God (the Father) counting Him again will be counting Him twice. The second witness must possess the attribute of omniscience. No humans or angels have this attribute. Therefore, this scenario requires another omniscient person to be the second witness. This is not possible in the theological framework of the Oneness of God. According to the Oneness theology, Jesus is the only person in the Godhead; the Father and the Holy Spirit are roles played by Jesus.

Discussion

To start the discussion, it is convenient to recapitulate. The Final Judgment, like other judicial proceedings, requires witnesses. In the case of the Final Judgment, two or more

witnesses are required according to the Law of God.¹³⁸ Since God is omniscient and complies with all the character and factual qualification requirements, He certainly can be a witness against every human that has existed during the history of humanity. But, according to the Oneness of God theology, there is only one person in the Godhead. If Jesus plays the role of the Father (assuming the Oneness theology view), he is the first witness; however, the Final Judgment proceedings need a second witness to be located outside of Godhead. But that second witness must meet the character and other qualifications requirements described in sections “*The Character of the Second Witness*” and “*The Qualifications of the Second Witness*.”

Although some people have suggested that God, in His sovereignty, can eliminate His Law, this is not a theologically and biblically supported argument. God must abide by His own rules and laws because of His essence and character, which are comprised of attributes like justice, righteousness, truthfulness, and others. The justice of God is fundamental and supports even God’s existence. As expressed in Psalm 89:14,¹³⁹ justice is the foundation of God’s throne, implying that if God stops executing His justice, His throne will collapse. God’s Law, given to Moses or the divine law, establishes the requirement of more than one witness for any judicial proceedings.¹⁴⁰

The Oneness of God theology encounters an enormous pitfall in its claim that Jesus Christ is the only one who has personality in the Godhead. Bernard presents an *immature* defense of the Oneness of God theological view when confronted by the second witness's objection. His entire argument is presented here, since the topic of the second witness's objection to the Oneness of God theology is the primary subject of this paper. Bernard’s

¹³⁸ Deut. 19:15.

¹³⁹ “*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne...*” NKJV.

¹⁴⁰ Deut. 19:15.

argument¹⁴¹ follows in segments, to respond in an organized and clear manner: “*Jesus said, “I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me” (John 8:16-18).*”¹⁴² The initial verses present a flaw in the theological assumption of the Oneness of God. If the Father is just a role that Jesus plays on various occasions and only Jesus has personality, then Jesus is lying here? No!!, Jesus Christ never lies. Jesus continues quoting the Law that requires the testimony of more than one man to judge someone.¹⁴³ Then, Jesus continues emphasizing that He and the Father who sent Him bear witness of Him. But a role cannot bear witness! I mean, Jesus and the Father are the same person playing distinct roles, as per the Oneness of God theology. Therefore, if the Oneness of God theology is correct, there is only one witness. A continuation of Bernard’s quote follows, where he, in a very skillful manner, attempts to explain this dilemma:

*“Just before these verses, Jesus had said, “I am the light of the world” (verse 12). This was an assertion of His Messianic role (Isaiah 9:2; 49:6). The Pharisees replied, “Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true” (John 8:13). In response to their accusation, Jesus explained that He was not the only witness but that there were two witnesses to the fact that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. These two witnesses were the Father (the divine Spirit) and the man Jesus. In other words, both God the Father and the man Jesus could testify that the Father was manifested in flesh, in Jesus. Jesus was both God and man; both the eternal God and the mortal man could verify this truth.”*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, 114.

¹⁴² Verses quoted by Bernard are from the King James Version.

¹⁴³ Deut. 19:15.

¹⁴⁴ Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, 114.

Bernard continued indicating that Jesus was pointing to His Messianic role, His role as the Son of God. Bernard claims that Jesus and the Father are the two witnesses, but this still does not count as two persons, since the Father is a role, not a person; or if viewed from the simultaneous modalism perspective, it is the same person, Jesus, playing two roles simultaneously. Bernard explains this, saying that in the Messianic role, Jesus is manifesting His human nature. Apparently, Bernard is confusing or considering synonyms' roles and nature.¹⁴⁵ The following is a rewording, in a descriptive mode, of the previous quote from Bernard: "Jesus is speaking while playing the human role, indicating that He, in human nature, and the Father, Him in his divine nature, are the two witnesses." But this encounters another Christological problem, the hypostatic union refers to nature and not to person. Additionally, according to the hypostatic union, the orthodox theological teaching of Christ's twofold nature, Christ's two natures are absolutely, entirely, and indivisibly entwined inside one person.¹⁴⁶ The Heidelberg Catechism says about this:

"...one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the

¹⁴⁵ A quote from Bernard's book says: "*They cannot understand the dual nature of Christ and cannot correctly distinguish His two roles.*", Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, 46.

¹⁴⁶ Richard W., Gimpel, "The Oneness Theology of the United Pentecostal Church International as Articulated by David K. Bernard" (Master Thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina, August 2016), 56.

*Lord Jesus Christ,...*¹⁴⁷

The Heidelberg Catechism makes it abundantly plain that there is only one person and that the two natures are inseparable: “...but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one...” Natures manifest concurrently in only one person. Speaking from Bernard’s Oneness of God theological point of view, if Jesus is in the Father’s role, the Divine Spirit or divine nature manifests, and if He is in the Son of God role, the flesh, or the human nature manifests. But the second witness must be a person, not a nature! The orthodox definition of the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ indicates that in the union of God and men, in Jesus Christ, there is only one person and not two.¹⁴⁸

Bernard agrees that Jesus has two natures and is only one person: “We should not think of two persons in the Godhead or of two Gods, but we should think of the divine Spirit and authentic human flesh,”¹⁴⁹ but fails to explain the interrelation between the two natures and the person. This assertion sounds close to the concept presented in Nestorianism. Nestorianism confesses Christ’s dual nature but fails to explain how His two natures functioned together. Figure 4 is a graphical representation of what is perceived from Bernard’s proposal for the relation or functionality between the two natures and the person of Jesus Christ.

¹⁴⁷ R. Scott Clark, “Heidelberg 48: Two Natures Inconfusedly, Indivisibly, United In One Person”, *The HeidelBlog*, The Heidelberg Reformation Association, <https://heidelblog.net/2014/12/two-natures-inconfusedly-indivisibly-united-in-one-person/>, December 11, 2014.

¹⁴⁸ “In 553 the Second Council of Constantinople further defined Christ as a unique, single person, a hypostasis, and one member of the Trinity.” Murtoff, J., *Encyclopedia Britannica* s.v. “two natures of Christ,” June 18, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/two-natures-of-Christ>.

¹⁴⁹ David Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, 62.

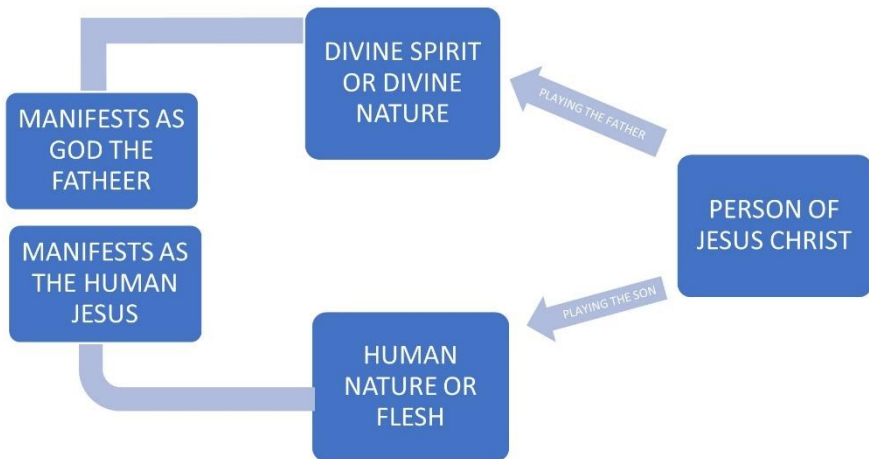


Figure 4. Perception of Bernard's Proposed Interrelation or Functionality of the Two Natures and the Person of Christ.

As presented in the graph (Figure 4), Bernard seems to suggest that Jesus manifests as the Father through the Divine Spirit (here it is assumed that Bernard means “His divine nature”) and manifests as the Son of God using the human flesh, the Son of Mary (here it is assumed that Bernard means “His human nature”). But one problem with this assertion is that Bernard is suggesting a sort of “sequential modalism,” where, first, Jesus manifests as the Divine Spirit, followed by the Divine Spirit manifesting as God the Father. A similar sequence is suggested for the manifestation of Christ’s humanity. Bernard seems to be unclear when referring to the “Divine Spirit.” Is he referring to the Holy Spirit? Furthermore, what Bernard affirms is in contradiction with the orthodox teaching about the relation and interaction between the two natures residing in the person of Jesus Christ. The *communicatio idiomatum*¹⁵⁰ teaches that Jesus Christ is one unified whole, not two separate parts. The hypostatic union is metaphysical or supernatural. The two

¹⁵⁰ “states that the attributes of both the divine and the human natures are each attributed/ascribed to the single person of Jesus.” Matt Slick, “Communicatio Idiomatum,” *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry*, November 25, 2008, <https://carm.org/doctrine-and-theology/communicatio-idiomatum/>.

natures manifest throughout a single person, Jesus Christ. The following graph attempts to describe the hypostatic union and the functionality between the two natures and the person of Jesus Christ (Figure 5). The correct relation between the two natures and the single person is that the attributes of the two natures manifest through the person, as presented in Figure 5. A “nature” does not manifest, as described in Figure 4, but possesses traits that a person manifests (Figure 5). The following quote from Dulle’s article warns us about not exceeding some limits when dealing with the functionality of the dual nature and the person of Jesus Christ:

“The box of limitation which surrounds the exact truth of the union cautions us that we must not deny either the fullness of His deity or the fullness of His humanity; and that we are careful to not explain the unity of His two natures in such a fashion that it makes Jesus into two separate persons in one body, one unified person that compromises either nature or one person who is some third substance that is neither God nor man. Jesus, although both fully God and fully man, is nevertheless one unified person.”¹⁵¹

Some of the limits proposed in this warning are exactly what Bernard is surpassing. For instance, from the above quote “...be careful to not explain the unity of His two natures in such a fashion that it makes Jesus into two separate persons in one body...” This seems exactly what Bernard is trying to do when suggesting that the Divine Spirit, in mode of the Father, is one witness, and the man Christ, in mode of the Son of God, is the other witness.

If Jesus is the only one in the Godhead who has personality and the Father is Jesus playing one of His multiple roles, there is only one witness. Considering the Father, as the other

¹⁵¹ Dulle, *The Dual Nature of Christ*.

witnesses, is like considering Jesus twice, since the Father is Jesus playing a role.

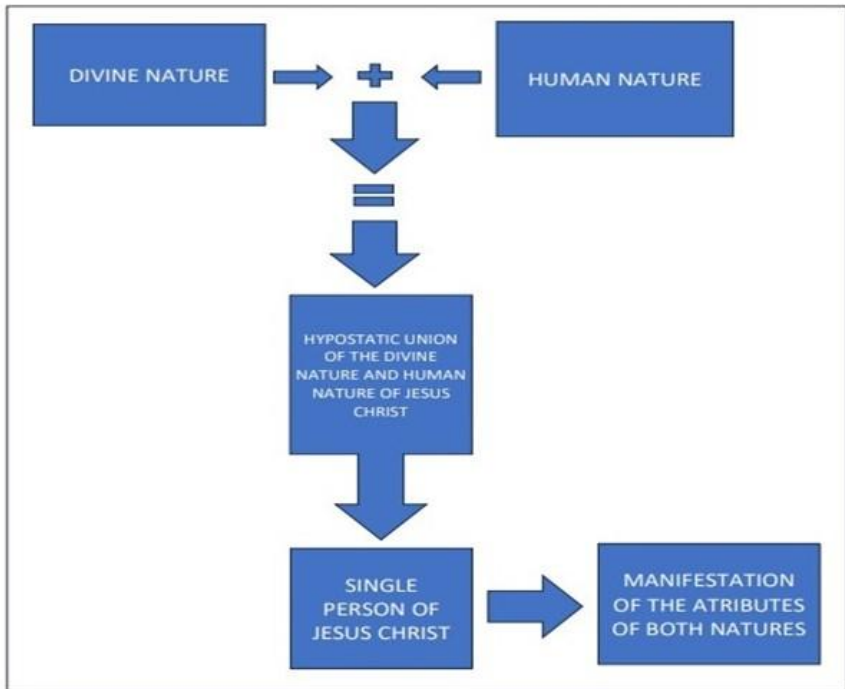


Figure 5. Diagram Showing the Relations of the Two Natures of Christ United by the Hypostatic Union in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Bernard continued his argument with an attack on the Trinity view that does not add anything to his explanation of the second witness:

“No distinction of persons in the Godhead was necessary. Indeed, if someone holds that the two witnesses were distinct persons in a trinity, he would need to explain why Jesus did not say there were three witnesses. After all, the law required two witnesses but asked for three if possible (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).”

In simple words, Bernard is saying that if the Trinity is real, Jesus should have also included the Holy Spirit as a third witness. A response to this is that the law requires two or more witnesses, but explicitly does not require more than two witnesses if they are available. Moreover, Bernard does not consider soteriological reasons for the exclusion of the Holy Spirit as a third judging witness.

One soteriological reason is that the Holy Spirit, during the present dispensation (dispensation of grace), is playing the role of a defendant advocate or counselor (paraclete¹⁵²) to humankind. This function is for both believers and non-believers. He will help believers to keep the faith and will attempt to convince the non-believers of their sins. Therefore, the Holy Spirit cannot be a judging witness since this would represent a conflict of interest.

In the last part of the quote from Bernard's theology book, he destroys his arguments by reemphasizing that Jesus and the Father are the same person. Let us consider it here:

“When Jesus referred to His Father, the Pharisees questioned Jesus about the Father, no doubt wondering when the Father had witnessed to them. Instead of saying the Father was another person in the Godhead, Jesus proceeded to identify Himself with the Father—the “I am” of the Old Testament (John 8:19-27). The two witnesses were the Spirit of God and the man Christ, and both testified that Jesus was God in the flesh.”

¹⁵² Middle English Paraclit, Paraclyte, borrowed from Late Latin Paraclētus, Paraclitus "advocate, comforter," borrowed from Greek paráklētos "advocate, helper, comforter," an epithet of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John (as John 14:26), derivative of paráklētos, adjective, "called to one's aid," verbal adjective of parakaleîn "to call in, send for, summon, exhort, comfort, console," *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "Paraclete," accessed July 12, 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Paraclete>.

Bernard's statement is not clear, but what he is trying to say is that the Spirit of God is the divine nature of Jesus, and the man Christ is the human nature of Jesus. If this is the case, these are natures and not persons. To be a witness, one must be a person, a nature¹⁵³ cannot testify. Bernard is confusing personality with nature, or he is negating or contradicting his first proposition: "*there is one indivisible God with no distinction of persons.*" While separating the Divine Spirit and the man Christ, Bernard is dividing Christ to create two witnesses, but as previously mentioned, the *communicatio idiomatum* teaches that Jesus Christ is just one, not two in parts.

Another problem that Bernard's proposal encounters is that, for purposes of the Final Judgement proceedings, even if Bernard's attempts to divide the divine and human parts of Christ where possible, only the Divine Spirit or divine nature would have the factual qualifications to be a witness. The human nature or the man Christ, as referred to by Bernard, is not omniscient and cannot testify against all humanity from the beginning to the end of the world. Therefore, only the trinitarian view, where God the Son is another person in the Godhead, can reconcile this dilemma, with God the Son as the second witness, and God the Father as the first witness. Both are omniscient and can testify against every human that has ever existed.

Another requirement for the office of the second witness in the Final Judgment proceedings is that he must participate in the execution of the offender. According to Rushdoony, "*In biblical law, the witness not only must give true and accurate testimony but must participate in the execution of the offender if it is a capital offense.*"¹⁵⁴ This is why Jesus challenged those who were accusing the woman found in adultery to throw the first

¹⁵³ "The fundamental dispositions and traits of humans", Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "human nature," accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/human%20nature>.

¹⁵⁴ Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1973), 7.

stone.¹⁵⁵ This indicates that the second witness must be someone guiltless and able not only to give faithful statements but to participate in the execution of the transgressor, throwing the first stone. No other human, besides Jesus Christ, qualifies for the role of witness in the Final Judgment procedures. In the letter to the Romans, Paul speaks about the character of men, saying: "...*There is none righteous, no, not one...*"¹⁵⁶ Concerning being sinless, Adam before the fall might have qualified as a second witness, but not after the fall. However, even Adam, during his time as innocent (sinless), lacked the attribute of omniscience and could not be the second witness. He cannot testify to what he does not know.

For the Oneness theologians, one way out of this dilemma could be claiming that Jesus abolished the divine law. If Jesus abolished the divine law, God does not have to comply with the requirement of the second witness prescribed in Deuteronomy 19:15. In the section "*The Permanence of God's Law*", it is demonstrated that the Law is eternal since it resembles God's character and attributes. However, Christ limited the application of the divine law to humankind to the end of the present world. Since the Final Judgment occurs at the end of this existence and before the beginning of the new creation,¹⁵⁷ the law will govern the Final Judgment processes. And the Law requires a second witness for every judicial process.

Furthermore, God's Law is permanent and inviolable. In the section "*The Inviolability of God's Law*," it is demonstrated that God's established Law is unbreakable and that He will not break it. Jesus Christ said clearly, "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*"¹⁵⁸ God has established an inviolable legislation that even God, with His sovereignty, cannot violate

¹⁵⁵ John 8:3-7.

¹⁵⁶ Rom. 3:10 NKJV.

¹⁵⁷ Rev. 20-21.

¹⁵⁸ Matt. 5:17 NIV.

without paying the penalty. This explains why Jesus Christ suffered on the cross even though being God. He took our sins upon Himself, and He suffered the penalty in our place. Based on the definition of some attributes of God, He cannot violate His Law, and no one can violate God's Law without retribution. But someone might argue that God's law has changed. In the section "*The Immutability of God's Law*," this paper goes into detail about the immutability of God's law. Berkhof says, "*The Immutability of God is a necessary concomitant of His aseity*"¹⁵⁹ and God's self-sustainability, implicitly, declares His immutability. If God does not change, in any sense, He would not change His established law. Various verses of the Bible declare the immutability of God's law.¹⁶⁰ It follows that God's law is unchangeable, at least during the existence of this creation. The previous discussion establishes that if the law is inviolable, permanent, and immutable, Deuteronomy 19:15 applies to the Final Judgment proceedings and, therefore, forces the requirement of a second witness.

The question now is, who can qualify to be the second witness? The section "Who Would Be the Second Witness?" demonstrates the need for a second witness and that this witness must possess a specific character and comply with certain qualifications. According to the section "The Character of the Second Witness," the second witness must be faithful, trustworthy, dependable, trusting, and loyal. Moses was the only individual in the Bible found trustworthy in God's house, aside from Jesus Christ. But this was only when he was living as God's servant.¹⁶¹ The second witness must be true, genuine, honest, righteous, integer, guiltless, and impartial. He cannot be a false witness. The second witness must be sinless, able to make judgments, and morally capable of throwing the first stone. The second witness must possess factual qualifications. This imposes on the second witness the requirement of being

¹⁵⁹ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*.

¹⁶⁰ Deut. 4:2; Isa. 40:8; Ps. 119:89; Rev. 22:19.

¹⁶¹ Heb. 3:5.

able to testify to the deeds of every human who lived from the beginning to the conclusion of the present creation. Therefore, no human, even Jesus Christ, acting only in His human nature, can know everything about everybody. (This is supposing that Jesus Christ could function as a human apart from His divine nature, which is not true according to the hypostatic union.) Christ's human nature was one hundred percent human and was not omniscient. Only a witness possessing the attribute of omniscience can be capable of knowing everything about everybody. Therefore, only God can be the second witness. But the first witness is God the Father, who, according to the Oneness theology, is Jesus playing a role, and therefore, counting Jesus in His messianic role is counting Him twice.

Bernard's proposal suggests that Jesus the man, the human flesh, is the second witness. This might be possible in the case presented by Bernard, John 8:16-18, although it is contrary to the orthodox view of the dual nature of Christ; however, it is not possible in the case of the Final Judgment, where an omniscient second witness is a requisite. The Oneness of God theology does not provide a theological and biblical explanation of the execution of the Final Judgement proceedings without a second witness. On the other hand, trinitarian theology explains and provides a theological and biblical answer to this dilemma. In the trinitarian theology, both God the Father and God the Son possess the attribute of omniscience; the first witness is God the Father, and the second witness is God the Son, Jesus Christ. The divine nature of Jesus Christ allows Him to be omniscient and therefore to qualify for the office of second witness.

Bernard fails in his attempt to reconcile the Oneness theology with the fact that the Final Judgment proceedings require a second witness. Only Jesus Christ, God the Son, can be the second witness in the Final Judgment scenario. The doctrine of the Oneness of God is flawed and incompatible with another well-established theological doctrine.

CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates that the Oneness of God theology is not sustainable when confronted with the proceedings of the Final Judgment, specifically with the requirement of a second witness. Requiring two witnesses for the Final Judgment is necessary since Deuteronomy 19:15 applies due to the inviolability and permanence of God's Law. The Final Judgment requires two factual witnesses who can testify against all humanity, from the beginning to the end of this creation. These witnesses must know the doings of all these people and, therefore, must be omniscient. No human can have that knowledge; therefore, the second witness must be God, omniscient. The Oneness theology fails to reconcile this dilemma, since it insists that God has only one personality. This is a serious pitfall of the Oneness of God theological view. The Final Judgment proceedings require a second omniscient witness, besides God the Father, and the Oneness of God theology provides only one person in the Godhead. If Jesus is playing the role of the Father, as per the teaching of the Oneness theology, and playing the role of the Son, still, only one person is playing two roles. Therefore, there is only one witness. The trinitarian view of the Godhead provides for the participation of two witnesses, God the Father and God the Son, in the proceedings of the Final Judgment.

Bernard failed in his attempt to reconcile the Oneness of God theology with the procedures related to God's judgments. The second witness requirement for the Final Judgment is one of the major problems that Bernard and the Oneness Theology promoters' proposal are facing. He attempts to explain that in John 8:13, the two witnesses are Jesus in His role as Son of God, and Jesus in His role as the Father. But this still does not count as a two since, according to the Oneness theology, Jesus is the only person in the Godhead, and the Father is a role, not a person. Bernard tried to explain this, saying that Jesus, while

playing the human role (His human nature),¹⁶² and the Father (His divine nature)¹⁶³ are the two witnesses. This is in contradiction with the teaching of the hypostatic union, which refers to two natures and not two persons. According to the hypostatic union, the two natures of Christ are absolutely, completely, and indivisibly intertwined within one person. Bernard's concept of the functionality of the two natures in Jesus Christ sounds close to the concept presented in Nestorianism. Nestorianism confessed Christ's dual nature, but the functionality of the two natures is heretical.

Only Jesus Christ, God the Son, can be the second witness in the Final Judgment scenario. Conciliating the Oneness of God theology with another proven biblical, apostolic, and theological doctrine was not possible; therefore, this doctrine is defective theology. The following are the more relevant facts that support the need for a second witness during the Final Judgment proceedings and the resulting objection to the Oneness of God theological view:

- God established His legislation to manifest and establish His justice.
- Violating the Law of God will always have consequences.
- The Law of God is permanent.
- The Law of God is Immutable.
- Deuteronomy 19:15 states the need for a second witness for legal procedures, which includes the Final Judgment.
- The second witness must be faithful, trustworthy, dependable, and loyal.
- The second witness must be true, genuine, honest, and impartial.
- The second witness must be someone guiltless and sinless, capable of throwing the first stone.

¹⁶² This is what is perceived that Bernard is trying to say.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

- The second witness must be omniscient to testify against all the humans that have ever existed; only God is omniscient.
- The dual nature of Christ is the union of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ. This union does not alter either of the two natures. The two natures manifest in one person, the person of Jesus Christ.
- Bernard is confusing personality with nature and contradicting his first proposition: “*there is one indivisible God with no distinction of persons,*” while separating the Divine Spirit and the man Christ.
- Bernard violates the concept of *communicatio idiomatum* (Jesus Christ is inseparable, just one) when he attempts to divide Christ to produce two witnesses.
- Assuming that it would be possible to divide Christ, as Bernard attempts, only the Divine Spirit would have the factual qualifications to be the second witness, since the human nature or the man Christ is not omniscient and cannot testify against all humanity from the beginning to the end of the world.
- Bernard’s concept of the functionality of the two natures in Jesus Christ sounds close to Nestorianism, where Christ’s dual nature is confessed, but the functionality of the two natures is heretical.
- The Oneness theological view is a defective theological structure where its principal proposal, the single personality of God, cannot overcome the challenge presented by the Final Judgement scenario, which requires a second witness.

It should be concluded that the Trinitarian view of the Godhead is the only feasible theological perspective that is in harmony with tenets of the doctrine of the Final Judgment and surely harmonizes with most of the orthodox theological systems. The Oneness of God theological perspective fails to pass the challenge presented by the requirements of a second witness for the Final Judgment procedures. It will not be surprising if the

Oneness of God theological structure does not pass other challenges presented by other well-established theological doctrines, such as the doctrine of incarnation, soteriology, the doctrine of the atonement, and others.

One practical implication from this study is that if knowing God is crucial for salvation, under the Oneness of God perspective, salvation might be in jeopardy. Jesus' teachings clearly point to the need to know God for salvation. He says, "*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*"¹⁶⁴ He also says, "*And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*"¹⁶⁵ If the doctrine of the Oneness of God does not present a correct notion of God, salvation might be in jeopardy under their theological view.

Sources

"About: About-the-AG: History." Assemblies of God, History. Accessed June 11, 2025. <https://ag.org/en/About/About-the-AG/History>.

"About the UPCI - upci.org." United Pentecostal Churches International. Accessed June 16, 2025. <https://upci.org/about-the-upci/>.

"About Us - Frequently Asked Questions - JW.org." Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Accessed June 23, 2025. <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/jehovah-witness-beliefs/>.

"An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church/Modalism". The Episcopal Church. Accessed July 10, 2025. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/modalism/#:~:text=Modalism,%20or%20modalistic%20monarchianism,%20is%20a%20pre-Nicene%20teaching,Praxeas,%20Sabellius,%20and%20others.%20Modalism%20took%20several%20forms>.

Andrews, Edwards D. "Modalism Refuted: A Biblical and Historical Examination of the Heresy That Denies the Trinity - Christian Publishing House Blog". Christian Publishing House Blog. Accessed June 16, 2025. <https://christianpublishinghouse.co/2025/04/17/modalism-refuted-a-biblical-and-historical-examination-of-the-heresy-that-denies-the-trinity/>.

¹⁶⁴ John 17:3 NKJV.

¹⁶⁵ Matt. 7:23 NKJV.

- "Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. III: Against Praxeas". The Tertullian Project. Accessed June 7, 2025. <https://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-43.htm>.
- Apostolic Archives International. "Pentecostal Historical Timeline." Accessed June 10, 2025. <https://www.apostolicarchives.com/historical-timeline.html>.
- Armstrong, A. Hilary. "Plotinus." Encyclopedia Britannica. January 1, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Plotinus>.
- Beilby, James, and Paul R. Eddy, Eds. *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1996.
- Bernard, David K. *Essentials of Oneness Theology*. Hazelwood, Missouri: Word Aflame Press, 1985.
- _____. *The Oneness of God*. Hazelwood, Mo.: Word Aflame Press, 1983.
- Bible Hub/Unity in the Trinity. Accessed July 5, 2025. https://biblehub.com/topical/u/unity_in_the_trinity.htm.
- Bray, Gerald. *The Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Cambridge Dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.
- Clark, R. Scott. "Heidelberg 48: Two Natures Inconfusedly, Indivisibly, United in One Person." The Heidelberg Blog, The Heidelberg Reformation Association. December 11, 2014. <https://heidelbergblog.net/2014/12/two-natures-inconfusedly-indivisibly-united-in-one-person/>.
- Contributors to Wikimedia projects. "1911 Encyclopædia Britannica/Noetus - Wikisource, the free online library." Wikisource, the free library. Accessed July 2, 2025. https://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=1911_Encyclopædia_Britannica/Noetus&oldid=4669731.
- Davidson, Ivor J. Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God. *Ars Disputandi*. 7:1. May 2014: p. 32-37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15665399.2007.10819944>.
- Dulle, Jason. "The Dual Nature of Christ." Institute of Biblical Studies. Accessed June 16, 2025. <https://onenesspentecostal.com/dualnature.htm>.
- Encyclopedia Britannica Online. <https://www.britannica.com/>.
- Encyclopedia.com New Catholic Encyclopedia. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/servetus-michael>.
- Epiphanius, Pararion ("Against Eighty Heresies"), 29-30.
- Erickson, Millard J. *The Word Became Flesh: A Contemporary Incarnational Christology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991.
- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. "Part 1: The Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, and Abrahamic Covenants." The Eight Covenants of The Bible. Accessed June 25, 2025. <http://www.messianicassociation.org/ezine17-af.covenants.htm>.

- Gimpel, Richard W. "The Oneness Theology of the United Pentecostal Church International as Articulated by David K. Bernard." Master's Thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina, 2016.
- "History." Assemblies of God. Accessed June 17, 2025. History, <https://ag.org/About/About-the-AG/History>.
- Letham, Robert. *The Work of Christ*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- Litwa, M. David, Translator. "BOOK 9." In *Refutation of All Heresies*, 620–95. Society of Biblical Literature. 2016. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt19rmc1p>.
- McClain, Alva J. "Doctrine of the Kenosis in Philippians 2:5-8." *Grace Journal* 8.2: Spring, 1967: p. 3-13.
- Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com>.
- Miller, John. *Is God a Trinity?* Princeton, N.J.: Privately Printed, 1922.
- Miller, John. "The Omnipotent Individual." Unitarian Universalist Society of Black Hawk County Sermons. Accessed June 17, 2025. <https://uusbhc.wordpress.com/2008/06/01/the-omnipotent-individual-john-miller/>.
- Norris, Richard A., Jr., Tran. and Ed. *The Christological Controversy*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- Olson, Roger E. "Kenotic Christology Explained and Defended." My Evangelical Armenian Theological Musings. Updated May 12, 2021, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2021/05/kenotic-christology-explained-and-defended/>.
- "Oneness-Jesus-only." Got Questions. Got Questions Ministries, January 4, 2022. <https://www.gotquestions.org/oneness-Jesus-only.html>.
- Quiñones-Aponte, Vicente. "The Conflict of a Single Person in the Godhead Conception with the Final Judgment Procedures: A Theological Challenge." Master's Thesis, Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary, Newburgh, Indiana, 2025.
- Richardson, James. "Creed of Chalcedon 451." In *Free PDF Downloads of Christian Creeds and Confessions*, Apostles Creed. July 6, 2014. <https://apostles-creed.org/documents-creeds-catechisms-confessions/>.
- Rushdoony, Rousas J. *The Institutes of Biblical Law*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1973.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *The Justice and Goodness of God: A Biblical Case for the Final Judgment*. Crossway, 2024.
- Slick, Matt. "Communicatio Idiomatum," Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry. November 25, 2008. <https://carm.org/doctrine-and-theology/communicatio-idiomatum/>.
- Tertullian. 213. *Adversus Praxean*. The Tertullian Project. Roger Pearse (Compiler). Accessed June 16, 2023. <https://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-43.htm>.
- Theopedia. <https://www.theopedia.com>.
- "The Chalcedonian Creed." Apostles-Creed.Org, Compiled and Formatted by James Richardson. March 24, 2016. <https://apostles-creed.org/documents-creeds-catechisms-confessions/>.

UPCI Wall of Honor. "David K. Bernard." Accessed June 10, 2025.

<https://www.upciwallofhonor.org/minister-bio/david-k-bernard?lid=4c219950-ccb1-4ddb-9e45-117db81ac6bc>.