

	<p>The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter.</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>www.orderofstjames.info</p>	
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The Church of England – ‘something special’?

+Ian OSJ (UK)

(James 4 v16)

I have been told on more than several occasions by its clergy that as an organisation the CofE likes to consider itself as ‘something special’ and a cut above all other denominations and Christian communities.

So I decided to test out that premise by looking at their history. Not anyone else’s, just theirs. No one else is under scrutiny, just them.

Their ‘something special’ might not be something they wish to brag about so keenly as they have quickly forgotten the past on which they are built.

The CofE’s founding member was a serial killer and mass murderer who being a Roman Catholic at the time refused to submit himself to the power of the Roman Catholic church when they refused his requests to annul his marriage.

It was also very convenient as he was running out of money and the Roman Catholic community has great wealth which he could plunder.

It was also convenient as he could get rid of any of his enemies on the basis they had connections with the Roman Catholic church. Basically this meant anyone since England had up to that point been a Roman Catholic country.

Anyone who refused to make the pledge of allegiance to their new king and head of the new church could be charged with treason.

To get some idea of the effects of this action I did an online search and visited a number of web sites.

[430 Catholic Martyrs Murdered By Henry VIII \(1534-1544\) | Dave Armstrong \(patheos.com\)](#)

This listed some of the known victims, what they were charged with and how they died. I hope you click on the link and read the article fully to get some idea of the scale of the violence, threat and terror, used against those who suffered under Henry's regime. 'Something special' indeed.

There was nothing Christian about any of this and it was done in the name of the CofE and its new head.

To get a broader picture of events it is worth reading [Henry VIII's savage Reformation | HistoryExtra](#)

What Henry began, Elizabeth continued.

[The Shocking Violence of the Reformers | Tomorrow's World \(tomorrowsworld.org\)](#)

Extract: *The same treatment was given those who did not go along with the national church system, which was forced upon the English people. Besides the several hundred nobles and commoners who lost their lives through the personal and religious bigotry of Henry VIII, many hundreds of others lost their lives under the reign of his Protestant daughter, Elizabeth I.*

Those who refused to acknowledge the religious supremacy of the English monarch were dealt with as if they were guilty of high treason. "Before 1588, twelve hundred Catholics had already fallen victims to the persecution. In England alone, during the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign, one hundred and forty-two priests were hanged, drawn, and quartered, for their faith.

Ninety priests and religious [persons] died in prison, one hundred and five were banished for life, and sixty-two laymen of consideration suffered martyrdom" (Deharbe, Joseph, A History of Religion. London: Burns and Cates, 1880. p. 484).

And it was not just the monarchs who practiced intolerance in England, but the Protestant religious leaders as well. During the reign of young King Edward VI, Archbishop Cranmer persuaded him to sign the death warrant of two Anabaptists, one of them a woman. They were burned at the stake. In relating this, Schaff tells us: "The English Reformers were not behind those of the Continent in the matter of intolerance" (Schaff, p. 711).

After Calvinism was introduced into Scotland, those who professed the Catholic religion were subject to the death penalty, and many paid with their lives for their religious beliefs (Deharbe, p. 485).

Remember that these people were victims of Protestant persecution!

By appealing to financial or nationalistic motives, and by getting into and dominating the political power, the leading Protestant reformers were able to force their doctrines on the common people.

Before gaining political power, the reformers all insisted upon the inalienable right of every Christian to search the Bible for himself, and to judge its teachings independently (Deharbe, p. 620). But once they were in power, woe be to the Catholic, the Anabaptist, or to any other who continued to insist upon this "inalienable right"!

The Roman Catholic community continued to be repressed and suffer under CofE sponsored restriction and persecution.

Roman Catholics were not free of the restrictions of English law until fairly recently. As can be seen from this text extract legal restrictions were applied until as late as 2013.

To say that the CofE and its head acted slowly to put things on a better and more Christian footing is an understatement of continued state sponsored (because the CofE is the state church) intolerance and persecution.

Catholic emancipation or Catholic relief was a process in the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and later the combined United Kingdom in the late 18th century and early 19th century, that involved reducing and removing many of the restrictions on Roman Catholics introduced by the Act of Uniformity, the Test Acts and the penal laws. Requirements to abjure (renounce) the temporal and spiritual authority of the pope and transubstantiation placed major burdens on Roman Catholics.

The penal laws started to be dismantled from 1766. The most significant measure was the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829, which removed the most substantial restrictions on Roman Catholicism in the United Kingdom. The Act of Settlement 1701 and the Bill of Rights 1689 provisions on the monarchy still require the monarch of the United Kingdom to not be a Catholic.

The Bill of Rights asserts that "it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Papist Prince" and requires a new monarch to swear a coronation oath to maintain the Protestant religion.

The Act of Settlement (1701) went further, limiting the succession to the heirs of the body of Sophia of Hanover, provided that they do not "profess the Popish religion", "marry a Papist", "be reconciled to or ... hold Communion with the See or Church of Rome".

A Roman Catholic heir can therefore only inherit the throne by changing religious allegiance. Ever since the Papacy recognised the Hanoverian dynasty in January 1766, none of the immediate royal heirs has been a Roman Catholic, and thereby disallowed by the Act. Many more distantly related potential Roman Catholic heirs are listed on the line of succession to the British throne. Section 2 of the Succession to the Crown Act 2013, and similar provisions in the law of other signatories to the Perth Agreement, allow marriage by such an heir to a Roman Catholic.

Source: [Catholic emancipation - Wikipedia](#)

The CofE still requires all of their clergy to give legally binding assent to the church's 39 articles. Many of these are anti-Roman Catholic in nature and are still required tenets of CofE belief and practice. So in essence the CofE remains staunchly anti-Roman Catholic and continue the work begun by Henry.

The intent of the 39 articles was to declare Henry/the monarch as the supreme head of the CofE, to replace Roman Catholic theology and practice with Protestant theology and practice, and to make disobedience an act of treason.

For a summary and history of the 39 article see [The 39 Articles of Religion](#)

This text is just intended as a historical snapshot but you can catch the drift. There is plenty of other stuff we can look at and I've not mentioned the CofE's historic participation in slavery and the arms industry. Another time perhaps.

One thing we can't currently ignore though is the CofE wanting to change biblical teaching. Strangely the very priests and bishops driving this forward have 'forgotten' their legal obligations to articles 20 and 21 of the 39 articles.

Yes we can honestly say there is great truth in the CofE claims of being 'something special', but not for the reasons they may want us to think.

Not that we can feel smug or self-righteous about any of this though. The truth is there aren't many of us that will come out spotless when under close scrutiny, or when it comes to the suffering and persecution we allowed because of our silence and inaction.

We all know there are no perfect churches

+David, OSJ

Yes, we do all know because there are no perfect people.

However, we should never use this as an excuse for giving up on the church or settling for mediocrity and dysfunction. Such a fatalistic attitude shows that we don't understand God's view of the church or appreciate the great cost Christ paid to make us His bride.

Although many churches today are having problems, the Lord hasn't left us to solve them on our own but has given us guidance in His Word. The best example in Scripture of a church rife with problems is the one at Corinth. The apostle Paul spent 18 months there establishing the church and giving them a firm foundation upon which to build; but after he left, problems erupted. Eventually they sent him a letter informing him of divisions, immorality, and other issues that had taken root in the church. The book of 1 Corinthians is Paul's response, and the answers he gives are still relevant to churches today.

If we tried to trace their problems back to one root cause, it would be an independent attitude. The result was a chaotic church that lacked unity and love because many were charting their own course and refusing to submit to one another.

They began to listen to false apostles and adopted all sorts of aberrant beliefs and practices.

In Chapter 12 of his letter, Paul addresses their independent spirit by describing the church the way God sees it - as one body with many parts that differ in form and purpose but work together for the proper functioning of the whole. In fact, we are the body of Christ here on earth, and He is our head.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He left His church to carry out His work. Many have likened us to His hands and feet as we follow His will for us both individually and corporately. And Christ as our head reveals His mind through His Word and His Spirit, who helps us interpret it.

The problem comes when we decide to follow our own agendas instead of listening to our head and living with each other as He directs. Philippians 2:3 tells us what kind of attitude we are to have: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

This was the attitude Christ displayed when He humbled Himself, came to earth as a servant, and died on the cross to save us (vv5-8). Yet the Corinthians lacked this attitude, as do many churches today, and the result was devastating.

First, they failed to recognise their unity in Christ and God's sovereign choices regarding spiritual gifts.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that Christ's body is one with many members, and each member is baptised by the Spirit into the body at the time of salvation (1Cor. 12:12-13).

Their connection was based on who they were in Christ, not in how they served Him. In fact, believers are not meant to function in the same way because each one has been created with a unique personality, physical attributes, and mental capabilities, and has been given a spiritual gift specifically chosen by the Spirit (vv. 4-11). In this way, God equips the church to accomplish the various ministries effectively.

Second, some of the Corinthians felt insignificant and unimportant. Instead of seeing the value of each spiritual gift, they began rating them according to whether it's noticed or not.

The same is true for those with less prominent gifts. Just because they aren't up front preaching doesn't make them less valuable or unneeded.

Third, others in the Corinthian church had an overinflated view of themselves and their spiritual gifts. They thought they didn't need others in the church, but Paul said, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'" (v.21).

Can you imagine what would happen if your body parts started to act independently of one another?

How could you walk if your leg and foot were each trying to go in opposite directions? The same dysfunction results when members of a church think too highly of themselves, act independently and discount the contributions of others.

Clearly an independent spirit wreaks havoc in a church.

When some members choose not to use their spiritual gifts whether through feelings of inadequacy or indifference, the church as a whole is robbed of what God placed them there to contribute.

The result is a partially paralysed body.

And in a similar way, the church is crippled when members don't value or submit to each other.

When all members focus on their common union with Christ, follow Him as their head, and use their individual gifts to serve one another with an attitude of humility and love, the church functions properly, believers are blessed, and God is glorified.

And that is my prayer for you and for your church.

God Guard Thee and All Who Serve.

+David.

Can you trust everything you read?

A quotation from [The Last Supper in the Bible: A Study Guide \(learnreligions.com\)](http://learnreligions.com)

In the book of Exodus, the blood of the Passover lamb was painted on the Israelite's door frames, causing the plague of the firstborn to pass over their houses, sparing the firstborn sons from death.

At the Last Supper Jesus revealed that he was about to become the Passover Lamb of God.

By offering the cup of his own blood, Jesus shocked his disciples: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28, ESV).

The disciples had only known of animal blood being offered in sacrifice for sin. This concept of Jesus' blood introduced a whole new understanding.

No longer would the blood of animals cover sin, but the blood of their Messiah. The blood of animals sealed the old covenant between God and his people.

The blood of Jesus would seal the new covenant.

Continued.

It would open the door to spiritual freedom. His followers would exchange slavery to sin and death for eternal life in God's Kingdom.

It all seems very plausible but does it match up to what is actually written in the Gospels? We assume so much but sometimes we need to stop and check.

I am looking for evidence from Holy Scripture itself, in particular the Gospels, so let's see if there is genuine evidence or whether the writers of this text are making a number of assumptions that are not qualified.

Matthew 26:17-30;	Mark 14:12-25;	Luke 22:7-20;
²⁶ While they were eating,	²² While they were eating,	¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸ For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."
Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."	Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."	¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, " This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me. "
²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.	²³ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.	²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."	²⁵ "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."	
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I've not made reference to John's version of the Last Supper which focuses on Jesus washing the feet of the disciples rather than bread and wine.

So the elements of the three synoptic Gospel are broadly agreed in the parallel texts, and there is no reason why they shouldn't find agreement as Mathew and Luke used Mark as one of their primary sources.

The elements are:-

- 1. Take this (bread) and divide it among you. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God."**

- 2. Take this (wine) and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."**

- 3. "This is my body given for you; (do this in remembrance of me).**

- 4. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.**

Luke's version places the Passover discourse earlier than Mark and Matthew and gives a little more detail but we can reasonably assume they are complimentary.

Mostly agreed is the text and wording regarding the handling of the bread although Luke adds the extra phrase, 'in remembrance of me'.

In Luke the passing of the cup and breaking of bread occurs twice, not once as in Mark and Matthew.

Perhaps there were two different sources for the events surrounding the Last Supper and Luke recorded both different versions 'just in case'.

Perhaps also, one version refers to the celebration of the Passover and the other the Last supper and perhaps the recorded events have become slightly confused.

We may never know but does it matter when it comes to Eucharistic practises?

Probably not, although theologians will find plenty to build different theories on and make a short lived name for themselves. There is sufficient evidence though to support the reliability of the sacrament of Holy Communion and not throw that into doubt or question.

The main issue is probably the text **'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'**

Is it the incontrovertible evidence that supports the notion of atonement theory or is it indicating perhaps another line of thought?

The issue could reasonably be resolved if we could define what Jesus meant when He used the term, 'the covenant'.

Unfortunately, that is not so easy.

Whilst atonement theory is one that provides an easy answer to this question, it only focuses on the death and resurrection of Jesus but it ignores His teaching and the ministry He exercised during His life. That can't be ignored or written off as incidental or irrelevant.

Supposing instead it says something like, 'the culmination of my life and impending death is a sign of the commitment I have given to human kind (exemplified by my life, teaching and ministry) to bring them into a full relationship with God and I will still continue to do whatever it takes and regardless of personal costs'.

This act is not so much a version of the Passover covenant but perhaps similar in principle to the covenant God made with humankind after the flood* and whose covenant sign is the rainbow.

For those who believe**, the resurrection then becomes the incontrovertible evidence that sins may be forgiven and that relationship with God can be fully restored through faith and is evidenced in fact in Jesus' resurrection.

Simply put 'faith', has been justified because God has made it possible.

To be clear, and this has been covered in previous newsletters, the sacrificial system which demands blood sacrifice has already been declared as redundant and ineffectual, even as way back as the Psalms.

The forgiveness of sins is no longer dependent on the spilling of blood but on the realisation of guilt, an acceptance of responsibility and a desire for reconciliation with God whatever it costs or demands.

This I believe is more realistically 'the Covenant' that Jesus spoke of. It is focussed on 'love' not 'law'.

And it therefore has nothing to do with atonement theory.

I would also like to throw in another thought into the mix that the words "***This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,***" may be a later revision, the original version being a closer reflection of the common words of the communion service, 'this is my body which was broken for you' and 'this is my blood which was shed for you'***. These words seem to work far better together.

The reason I draw your attention to this is that the language doesn't seem consistent within the texts, almost as if someone else had said or added those words. It's not the plain speaking that Jesus used either side of this possible and later insertion.

It may seem a small point but it matters. It is one of the tools that experts use to see if a text is consistent, but I am no expert and it remains more of 'a gut feeling'.

I may be completely wrong in my thinking of course and happy to accept that.

**** Proponents of atonement theory use these words as evidence of their theories but in context they can equally be understood as simple statement of fact – Jesus knew what was going to happen and this figurative speech was to remind the perhaps disbelieving followers that this wasn't a game. His kind of commitment and love had real consequences and there was no opt out. It was a reality that had to be faced as awful and disturbing as it was.*

So let's go back to the original question, does the text from the website I quoted stand up to testing and scriptural accuracy?

Here is the original source text (*blue coloured text*) with a tick box preceding each component statement. Test and consider each statement, and perhaps give each a tick for correct and accurate or a cross if not.

You will be able to see by your marking just how scripturally accurate the text source is when analysed, but keep in mind you are searching for any **scripturally based evidence** indicated or found within the text itself.

Does it exist as it is or do you need to search beyond it to other sources?

Are the words used Jesus's own words or someone else's interpretation?

Is that interpretation factually/scripturally based or just 'personal' opinion?

To what extent do we assume other people's opinions are 'fact'?

☐ In the book of Exodus, the blood of the Passover lamb was painted on the Israelite's door frames, causing the plague of the firstborn to pass over their houses, sparing the firstborn sons from death. Evidence?

☐ At the Last Supper Jesus revealed that he was about to become the Passover Lamb of God. Evidence?

☐ By offering the cup of his **own** blood, Jesus shocked his disciples: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28, ESV). Evidence?

☐ The disciples had only known of animal blood being offered in sacrifice for sin. This concept of Jesus' blood introduced a whole new understanding. Evidence?

☐ No longer would the blood of animals cover sin, but the blood of their Messiah. The blood of animals sealed the old covenant between God and his people. Evidence?

☐ The blood of Jesus would seal the new covenant. Evidence?

☐ It would open the door to spiritual freedom. His followers would exchange slavery to sin and death for eternal life in God's Kingdom. Evidence?

Simply, the message is test everything for scriptural accuracy and don't assume everything you read is factually or scripturally correct.

***Genesis 9**

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹² And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come. ¹³ I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth. ¹⁷ So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

****Please note the use of the word ‘many’ in the source text from Mark’s Gospel: – just who are the ‘many’?**

Those who accepted Christ?

+Ian OSJ (UK)

Do you remember the time when you were promised a special Christmas or Birthday present, thinking to yourself, "I just can't wait" But you had to wait and wait... and wait - until eventually the day came when you could rip off the paper and there it was. Wow! Was it really worth waiting for?

Yes, maybe, O dear! Where's the receipt?

For a few weeks we've been looking into the Bible to find out what happened before and after Jesus was born in Bethlehem. We remember that Mary trusted God, even though the news that she was going to have a baby who is God's Son must have really freaked her out. Joseph was told about the names that the baby would have. Jesus, God, Saviour and Emmanuel, God is with us.

Luke also tells us about what happened soon after Jesus was born. In particular there were two older, more mature people around. When Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple to be presented to God, a man called Simeon and a woman called Anna, were there too - and they both clearly loved God very much. Luke says that Simeon was righteous and devout. That doesn't mean necessarily that he was sinless, but it does mean that he loved God and he wanted to spend his life serving God. When we think about some of the more mature members of our Church family maybe we realise that they have been Christians since they were very small and have been worshipping and serving God faithfully for 50,60,70, years or more. They are such good examples to others. We must thank God for them and each other. - and encourage others younger than us to listen to appreciate the wisdom of older people.

Anyway, Luke records that Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel and that the Holy Spirit was upon him.

The consolation of Israel, what on earth is the consolation of Israel? It's about God bringing comfort, and that involves something much more important than just being comfortable. It's about being forgiven, rescued and reconciled with God.

Remember that for thousands of years God had been promising that He would do something amazing for all people, through Abraham's family. King David had been promised that somebody from his family would be called the Messiah. Simeon was waiting for the Messiah, the Christ, to arrive. God made a clear promise to Simeon that before he died, he would get to meet Jesus the anointed One, God's Messiah - v26 -

So, Simeon had been waiting and waiting and waiting. Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, a few miles away.

Shortly after the birth of Jesus Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. They arrived in the courts around the outside of the huge temple and were there to present Jesus to the Lord. By a superb example of divine engineering by the Holy Spirit, Simeon had been prompted to visit the temple on the same day and time that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were there. It does not take much thought to imagine the love and tenderness with which Simeon took Jesus into his arms and said something like this - "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, now dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation". In other words, as he looked at Baby Jesus, who may have been asleep, he said. "Father God, my wait is over. I've seen your salvation. I've seen your rescuer. You can let me die now.

That "present" was worth waiting for, wasn't it? Can you imagine? Simeon at that point was holding in his arms, God's own son.

At that moment he was looking into the eyes of God's promised King. No wonder Simeon was now at peace and was happy to leave this life. Simeon also had some words from God, for Mary and Joseph. He said, "Look, Jesus is going to cause people to rise and to fall. People who are proud of their own goodness will stumble on Jesus and fall - people who are humble enough to realise that they need rescuing from their sin will be brought back into a relationship with God through Jesus and – Mary, your own heart is going to be broken".

Several years later, Mary would realise what that meant when she watched her own Son Jesus die on the cross. Jesus was born for a divine purpose. He came to die on that cross to pay the price for our sin.

Then there was Anna – let's not forget Anna - the mature woman who was also in the temple courts that day. God through the Holy Spirit must have been prompting her as well, because she came up to Mary and Joseph at that very moment and I can imagine her thanking God for Jesus and telling everyone around who this was. Look here. She gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

"Everyone come, come and meet the Messiah". It must've been so amazing in the temple courts that day. We weren't there of course, but we can still be thankful to God for Jesus above everything else.

Compared to toys when we were young or the warm clothes, walking sticks and gift tokens that we may have been given for Christmas this year, the gift of Jesus "outshines" them all. Jesus is our Saviour, Master, Comforter and Friend and able to make all of Humanity disciples of our living God.

Jesus -the greatest gift humankind could ever have. No-one needs to wait.

-oOo-

Matthew 27 v 50-54:

+Ian OSJ (UK)

⁵⁰ *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.*

⁵¹ ***Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom;*** *and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

⁵⁴ *So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"*

The veil of the Temple: so many possible interpretations and so theologically contentious.

A few examples in short:

1. a recording of fact with no interpretation – it is what it is
2. a sign that the Old Covenant is ended
3. a sign that all is now made plain to view and the priesthood is no longer required – access for all who believe – no more secrets

4. a sign that Christ has died and God is rending His vestments in pain and grief
5. a sign that all of creation is flux at the death of God's chosen
6. the Jewish requirements of the Law are now ended
7. there is now no division between Jew and Gentile as all now have access
8. God had judged Israel and has departed from them
9. there is no longer the need for the Temple veil (or the Temple or possibly even the priesthood) as God has revealed Himself fully in Jesus.

There are plenty of other possible interpretations depending on whether you are looking 'outwards' or 'inwards' (i.e. from man or from God's perspective).

Here is one extract from a web site on the very subject that is of interest. It is the summary of the full article which is worth reading.

Why was the Temple veil rent in Matthew 27:51?

*Contrary to popular belief, it was **not** because the Dispensation of Law ended and the Dispensation of Grace began. Also, it was **not** because the middle wall between Jew and Gentile was abolished.*

continued

These are true with respect to the Apostle Paul's ministry, which is over a year away.

The veil was torn because it was a sign of God judging Israel, His absence from the Most Holy Place now evident. No glory or presence of God is visible in Herod's Temple because this is the way Israel has chosen it to be!

Through later Divine revelation unveiled in Hebrews—information not known at the cross—we learn the veil symbolized Christ's flesh.

With the shedding of His sinless blood, the New Covenant can be confirmed and the Old Covenant can pass away.

[Why was the Temple's veil rent when Christ died? | For What Saith the Scriptures?](#)

Strange how St Paul becomes mixed up in all of this yet again.

My belief is that when Christ ascended into Heaven, all teaching and wisdom had been revealed, and that nothing should be added or taken away from what Christ taught. Finished. Ended. Perfectly complete. Anything else is superfluous and not required, possibly even falling into error.

Simply explained, any new teaching post Christ probably falls into Gnosis, hidden teaching only revealed to those who are 'truly in touch with God'.

It's almost as if Paul is saying 'Jesus taught you this, but I can reveal this to you because God has given me special inside information that even the apostles knew nothing about.....'

Whether this is to give him a credibility and place in the Christian community who knows – for me the jury is still out on this one but I can't deny that some of his teaching, but not all, seems 'authentic'.

That and atonement theory has resurfaced.....

Let's go back to the text and look at what is actually being stated.

1. Jesus gives up His Spirit and dies
2. the Temple veil was torn in two – no reason is given how or why this happened
3. there was an earthquake/ground tremors which may or may not have lasted a number of days – again no reason given
4. rocks were split and the ground opened up revealing many of the dead
5. around Jesus resurrection 'many' of the saints were resurrected from their graves and they were seen in the Holy city
6. the Centurion and his fellow men guarding (the tomb) of Jesus witnessed all of this and were very afraid

7. in their opinion and given what they had seen they were able to say that Jesus was the Son of God.

We may rightly wonder what all these signs are trying to tell us but the danger is our opinions, and that is all they are, may be perceived as 'fact' and become established as 'the truth'. And once they become 'the truth' then all other opinions and ideas become heresy, even the truth itself.

And there is the danger that you:-

1. make the facts fit 'the truth' rather than 'the truth' fit the facts, and
2. are selective when it comes to actual evidence. A good scientific theory works with all of the known facts, not just a convenient few. The facts give evidence to the truth and you can't dismiss facts that don't work in your favour.

So with these thoughts in mind, what do we make of the article summary?

At first glance the article summary appears to be authoritative, well researched and to come from a respected source. It makes a number of assumptions and makes some bold statements about what the biblical reference means and how it should be interpreted and understood. It states what is 'the truth' and what is not 'the truth'. It is 'quite believable' and leaves you with the feeling that you can be quite confident when it comes to not needing to challenge it.

But is it justified in making these claims?

Does it need challenging?

Based on the evidence/fact, and as well intended as it may be, there is nothing in the original scriptural source text to substantively back up their claims.

Making links with other biblical texts may present a more valid claim but it then becomes a question of valid content, valid context and valid authority. Biblical links have to make sense and have purpose otherwise they are just a waste of time.

Even 'inspired by the Holy Spirit' needs to make sense and have purpose, it can't just be 'random'. Our God is not a God of irrationality or chaos.

And as regarding authority, the words of Jesus carry more reliability and authority than those of the apostles, and the words of the apostles carry more authority than Paul.

It would be somewhat ridiculous to find yourself in a position where you end up saying things like 'Jesus says but Paul says instead'

Paul may have words that inspire and even amplify Jesus teaching, but new and novel teaching/interpretation is not part of the deal. Neither is trying to claim special or secret or previously withheld knowledge – God gave us everything we need to know in the teachings and life of Jesus, not Paul, not anyone else.

Even my beloved Thomas A' Kempis.

A basic truth: we are called 'Christian' because we give primacy to the words and teachings of Christ rather than anyone else. We should remember that. We are not Paulites or anyone else. We are simply Christian****.

So where does all this take us in respect of Christian interpretative text?

Firstly, biblically supportive evidence matters when it comes to properly understanding text. If an idea, interpretation or concept is not supported biblically then dead in the water.

'The truth' should be based on all the evidence and be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Being selective about what we believe to be the truth is not good enough. Making the biblical facts fit and ignoring the ones that don't is just as unacceptable.

Secondly, any associated biblical text links need to be relevant. While all have worth, there is a hierarchy regarding source authority. The words of Christ carry absolute authority, others less so but nevertheless still potentially very valuable and relevant.

Thirdly, our interpretations of the facts are just that. They are not 'absolute' but best guesses. Our minds should always be open to the possibility of our getting things wrong or potential misunderstandings.

Fourthly, everything should be tested and never assumed to be correct, true even if very plausible or trustworthy.

The risks of teaching error are great and we need to take full spiritual responsibility for what comes out of our mouths or is put on paper.

Lastly, our words must be consistent with the teachings and life of Christ. Their authenticity must be beyond reproach.

We need to be so careful with what we teach in the Name of Christ. We can so easily make the will of God fit our will with all conviction and plausibility.

As priests our job is to serve Christ only, not serve our own will or the disobedient will of society.

I do not deny that there are a lot of pressures on us to conform to other wills but we should be firm in our resolve. Who can offer more or match what Christ has already given us?

Not Paul.

Not anyone else.

Christ is all in the end.

Maybe we wouldn't be in the crazy situation we find ourselves at the moment where some are denying the authenticity of God's Holy Word and preaching in Christ's Name that which is clearly not of God.

-oOo-

**** Even Paul tried to twist this to his own advantage. See 1 Corinthians 3 as an example. Yes, others are involved in the sharing of the Gospel but see the careful use of words and their implications when Paul states:-

¹⁰ *According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a **wise master builder** **I have laid the foundation**, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.*

¹¹ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus.*

Just exactly what is Paul claiming here?

To me it is claiming not just equality with the apostles, but superiority. Paul claims to be the 'wise master builder' and others build on his work. Also implicit is any cockup is their fault, not Paul's. So much for team work.

'(I am) the master builder and have laid the foundation.....'

It's a damning self-admission. This is not about 'Christ' but 'Paul'.

So what of Paul? What is his authority? Even his conversion was considered suspect by many members of the early and emergent church with good reason.

In terms of the Gospels, Paul was never one of the followers or disciples, never knew Jesus first hand, was never selected by Jesus to be an apostle and never knew him personally. If Jesus had wanted Paul as an apostle or disciple, He would have made sure that happened in His ministry.

In fact Paul was one of the first persecutors of members of the early church, never submitted himself to the authority of the Jerusalem church or the apostles and remained a thorn in their sides as he consistently undermined them. He is little more than an opportunist latecomer wanting to make a name for himself and get the credit for heading this break away sect of believers. Paul also taught things that were never taught by Jesus.

All in all, for me Paul has a question mark against him and whilst I can appreciate some of the wonderful things he wrote, I am still personally left with doubts. Paul for me remains 'problematic' and I would love to be proved wrong about Paul and have all my doubts about him resolved. Personally, he has the benefit of doubt at the moment but only just.

But who am I and what do I know? I have no claim to any importance or special wisdom or discerning insight, even as a priest. I am nothing in the big scheme of things, a mere grain of sand on a vast ocean floor in a world of many such ocean floors, and my opinion counts for nothing.

My feeling is that Paul's words still need to be rigorously tested and fully authenticated in the light of Christ and not just taken on face value, and we really need to get to grips with what he actually said rather than

1. what people told us he said and
2. what we think he said.

These are two very different things. Only when we do this will we get to the actual truth about Paul. Rigorously tested, fully authenticated, all questions answered, no doubts remaining. Just the same as any one else.

Invasive prayer language.

As you know, I am not a great fan of atonement theory and I have made reference to the fact although it remains 'theory' it has become a significant part of main stream theology and the language and phraseology of atonement theory has infiltrated our daily prayer perhaps without our realisation.

In an attempt to show you how significant this has been I would like to draw your attention to my much beloved but small St Benedict's Prayer Book where I found the following references in morning and evening prayer over a period of two weeks.

Pg. 32. May the suffering and death of your Son remind us of the greatness of your wisdom.

Pg 52. By the power of your Son's blood you take away our sins and redeem us from death.

Pg. 74. your Son accepted death for our salvation.

Each of these phrases/statements fail to express the fullness of the Gospel and focus on a single aspect of the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus was much more than his death.

And as for 'the power of your Son's blood' that is bordering on superstitious nonsense. We are saved by faith and faith alone. How do I know? Because the bible tells me so.

My point is simply this, we need to be vigilant and be aware of the invasive nature of theological thinking we perhaps do not support or find unacceptable.

And it isn't just atonement theory we should be worried about.

At a recent Anglican service in the local area the Lord's Prayer was said in feminine first person along with a number of other prayers by the visiting female bishop. It seems that God apparently is no longer 'male'.

When questioned about this change of gender in the Lord's Prayer, the reason given was 'it's Celtic prayer'.

So that makes it ok then?

No one was asked whether this was acceptable. It was just assumed it would be ok. Only one person attending the well-attended service made a complaint.

The fact it was the female diocesan bishop who was leading the service may have had something to do with this reluctance to act.

Even our collective prayers seem to have become a visible and even more present political and ideological battle ground these days. Where is faith in all of this?

Maybe it is time to kick off then when prayers don't make the grade.

-oOo-

Extracts: The Pros and Cons of 7 Christian Atonement Theories

Eric Sentell

'In Christianity, "atonement" refers to the necessity of reconciling sinful humans to a Holy God. Christians believe their atonement occurs through the death and resurrection of the sinless Jesus Christ.'

'There are seven major "atonement theories" in the history of Christianity.'

Atonement Theory	Pros	Cons
<i>"Moral influence theory"</i>	<i>Pros: Moral influence theory emphasizes Jesus' teaching and not just his death.</i>	<i>Cons: The Resurrection isn't strictly necessary under this theory. Jesus' example doesn't change if he never returns from the grave.</i>
<i>"Ransom theory"</i>	<i>Pros: This theory makes Jesus' example, teaching, sacrifice, and resurrection equally important. It builds on "moral influence" theory by positing a cosmic event — a transaction between God and Satan — that emphasizes the resurrection's necessity and power.</i>	<i>Cons: Satan seems to hold power over God in this view. Even if we leave Satan out of it and say God paid a ransom to free humans from sin and death, we still have a God beholden to something outside of Himself.</i>
<i>"Christ's Victory" (Christus Vicor)</i>	<i>Pros: The Christus Victor theory makes sense of Jesus' death and resurrection. It portrays Jesus as a nonviolent warrior, simultaneously a moral example and a cosmic redeemer.</i>	<i>Cons: But ... why torture and death on the Cross? Couldn't Jesus have defeated Satan, sin, and death by living into his 80s, dying in his sleep, and resurrecting three days later?</i>

<i>"Satisfaction theory"</i>	<i>Pros: Like Christus Victor, the "satisfaction" theory makes sense of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It answers the question, "Why, God?"</i>	<i>Cons: Would a "just" God really accept Jesus' torture and execution in our place? The theory contradicts itself — if God is so "just," then God wouldn't accept such an unfair substitution.</i>
<i>"Penal substitutionary atonement theory,"</i>	<i>Pros: It explains away the logical contradiction of a just God embracing an unjust scheme.</i>	<i>Cons: PSA depicts God as a sadist. That's one of several problems with it.</i>
<i>"Moral Governor theory"</i>	<i>Pros: Moral governor theory is a nicer, kinder version of PSA.</i>	<i>Cons: God is still beholden to sin. He can't just declare sin dealt with. And he's still a sadist for letting Jesus be tortured and executed to deal with sin.</i>
<i>"Scapegoat theory"</i>	<i>Pros: Finally, we have an atonement theory that doesn't depend on God being party to horrific violence to bring forth life and salvation. Nor are God's hands tied by Satan, sin, or death.</i>	<i>Cons: Sadly, we have plenty of examples of post-Jesus scapegoats. Jesus' death and resurrection didn't change much, if we judge by whether he was the "final" scapegoat.</i>

'What if these theories start from the wrong premise? What if God is not all-powerful in the sense of doing anything He wants?'

'I believe God can do all that can be done — but some things simply can't be done, even by God.' (God has to obey His own rules and governances - Ed.)

'But the Resurrection! That's where God's Will emerges and declares Jesus to be God incarnate, the Victor over death and sin, the ultimate authority on how to live, and our reconciliation.'

'The Resurrection, not the Cross, should be our focus and our hope.'

Full article is available on [The Pros and Cons of 7 Christian Atonement Theories | by Eric Sentell | Backyard Church | Medium](#) It is well worth reading as it explains what each of the seven atonement theories are in simple terms. Remember that many of these theories are taught as if they are scriptural truths by many main stream churches whereas in fact they are just what they say they are - just theories.

Why does all this matter? As we approach Easter we need to be very clear as a church and as priests what we teach about who Jesus is, why He came to us, what He says about God and our relationship with Him, why He was crucified and what was achieved by His life and death and subsequent resurrection.

There is no room for theory. Our words have to be biblically founded and presented in simple and understandable terms so that listeners can grasp the full enormity of the events and person we speak of, no 'deep theology' or complex technical words. There is no room for anything other than the simple truth, absolute, unquestionable and unchallengeable.

As a church, do we still know what the truth is?

And if we say we do, are we still teaching it?

Comment:

'Unfortunately, atonement theory has held captive our vision of Jesus, making our view very limited and punitive. The commonly accepted atonement theory led to some serious misunderstandings of Jesus' role and Christ's eternal purpose, reaffirmed our narrow notion of retributive justice, and legitimated a notion of "good and necessary violence."

In my opinion, this interpretation has kept us from a deep and truly transformative understanding of both Jesus and Christ.

Salvation (under Substitutionary Atonement Theory - Ed) became a one-time transactional affair between Jesus and his Father, instead of an ongoing transformational lesson for the human soul and for all of history.

I believe that Jesus' death on the cross is a revelation of the infinite and participatory love of God, not some bloody payment required by God's offended justice to rectify the problem of sin. Such a story line is way too small and problem-oriented.'

Extract: [Substitutionary Atonement — Center for Action and Contemplation \(cac.org\)](http://cac.org)

Also [10 Problems with the Penal Substitution View of the Atonement - Greg Boyd - ReKnew](#) makes for interesting additional reading

So why did Jesus come to us if atonement theory isn't the answer?

The long and short of any answer to this question is it depends on your own personal needs as to what answer you require or give, and that of course may change with time and circumstances. Like a single diamond with many different facets, all of which catch the light in different ways at different times.

Joel Beeke and William Boekestein share 31 reasons why Jesus Christ came to earth.

See if any of these or combination of them can give you an answer that 'feels heart right' as well as 'head right'.

1. To Do the Will of the Father

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." John 6:38

"Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" Hebrews 10:7

2. To Save Sinners

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost." 1 Timothy 1:15

"for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Hebrews 9:26

3. To Bring Light to a Dark World

"I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." John 12:46

"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin." John 15:22

4. To Be Made Like His People

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." Hebrews 2:14-17

5. To Bear Witness to the Truth

"Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." John 18:37

6. To Destroy the Devil and His Works

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil..." Hebrews 2:14

“Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

7. To Give Eternal Life

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” John 6:51

8. To Receive Worship

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.” Matthew 2:1-2, 11

9. To Bring Great Joy

“And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” Luke 2:10

10. To Demonstrate True Humility

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

11. To Preach the Gospel

“‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour...but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”’” Luke 4:18-19, 42; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2

12. To Bring Judgment

“Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.” John 9:39-41

13. To Give His Life a Ransom for Many

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

“...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” Titus 2:13-14

14. To Fulfil the Law and Prophets

“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” Matthew 5:17

15. To Reveal God's Love for Sinners

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

16. To Call Sinners to Repentance

“And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mark 2:17

17. To Die

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honour him. “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.” John 12:24-27

18. To Seek and Save the Lost

“And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:5, 9-10

19. To Serve

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

20. To Bring Peace

“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”
Ephesians 2:14-18

21. To Bring a Sword

““Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34

22. To Bind Up Broken Hearts

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.”
Isaiah 61:1-3

23. To Give Us the Spirit of Adoption

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”” Galatians 4:6

24. To Make Us Partakers of the Divine Nature

“...by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.” 2 Peter 1:4

25. To Reign as King

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” Isaiah 9:6-7

26. To Restore Human Nature to Holiness

“And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.” Luke 1:35

27. To Be a Merciful and Faithful High Priest

“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” Hebrews 2:17-18

28. To Be the Second and Greater Adam

“Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” Romans 5:14-15

29. To Satisfy Our Deepest Thirst

“Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”” John 4:13-14

30. To Be Loved by God’s Children

“Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.” John 8:42

31. To Reveal God’s Glory

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

Source: [31 Reasons Why Christ Came \(with Bible Verses\) | Anchored in Christ \(kevinhalloran.net\)](https://www.kevinhalloran.net/31-reasons-why-christ-came-with-bible-verses/)

I certainly applaud this piece of work and it is actually both informed and useful. Let me commend it to you.

Does it answer all our questions about why Jesus came amongst us? Maybe not but it’s a step in the right direction.