

**Vicarious Sacrifice: Peter Uses Nathan's Prophecy of the Davidic Covenant to David to Introduce Jesus as the Christ, 2 Sam 7:12, 16; the Procession of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:33; The Nicene Creed of 325, Augustine's Doctrine of Procession, & the Controversy over the Addition to the Creed of the *Filioque* Clause: "and the Son"**

- (3) Again, I want to drive home the supreme concept of biblical prophecy:

**Biblical prophecy is not a look into the future and predicting what will occur, but rather a look back from the future and reporting what does occur.**

- (4) In effect, biblical prophecy contains the unstated idiom, "I am telling you the truth."
- (5) Peter is pointing out that Nathan informed David of the future immutable fact that his bloodline would produce the Messiah who would reign permanently on his throne.
- (6) In order for the Messiah to rule forever while also being David's offspring, then this Person must first die and then be resurrected.
- (7) Messiah would be (1) born in David's line, (2) die physically, (3) be resurrected, and (4) rule forever.
- (8) Nathan verbalized the Davidic Covenant in the context of prophecy while Jesus fulfilled the first three points during the Incarnation.
- (9) At the Second Advent, Jesus will fulfill the fourth point when He sets up His millennial kingdom and rule on David's throne from Jerusalem.
- (10) Peter elaborates on Psalm 16:10 where David prophesies that the soul of Jesus would not be abandoned in the Paradise compartment of Hades nor would His flesh suffer decay.
- (11) Peter now certifies the fulfillment of this portion of Nathan and David's prophecies:

**Acts 2:32 - "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses."**

- (1) David's prophecy looked into the future to observe the events of the crucifixion, the trip to Paradise, and the subsequent resurrection which he reported in Psalm 16.
- (2) Peter confirms the fulfillment of the prophecy's report of the resurrection by testifying that he and his fellow apostles are and will continue to be witnesses.
- (3) Whereas prophecy confirms the occurrence of a future event, testifying confirms its historical fulfillment.
- (4) Prophecy looks into the future, testifying looks into the past. Veracity is confirmed by two sets of witnesses: (1) David and Nathan as prophets and (2) Peter and the apostles as observers.

**Acts 2:33 - "Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."**

- (1) All three Members of the Trinity are referenced in this verse. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father and Jesus receives the promise of the Holy Spirit Who fills the souls of believers in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.
- (2) In this verse we see the interaction of the Godhead with regard to the unique doctrine of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

- (3) All three cooperate in the advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost however this doctrine has been the source of great controversy in the history of the church.
- (4) In A.D. 325, a statement of faith was proclaimed by bishops assembled in Nicaea by Emperor Constantine. The document that emerged from this council is known as the Nicene Creed.
- (5) The original verbiage in the Nicene Creed, written in Latin, asserted that the Holy Spirit proceeded only from God the Father:

*Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: Qui ex Patre procedit: "(We believe in) the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father."*

- (6) Later, Augustine<sup>1</sup> argued that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son. The following bit of history gives some insight into the origin of what became a major controversy in the early centuries of the church:

Least openly controversial in form among Augustine's major works, but ultimately the source of more ecclesiastical conflict than anything else that he wrote, was his treatise on the Trinity, the most profound study of this central enigma of Christian faith which the Latin West had yet produced. Augustine had an imperfect knowledge of the great clashes of the previous decades in the East about the Trinity, knowing nothing, for instance, of the Council of Constantinople of 381 or the creed which it created. (Augustine) was inspired to develop a defence of the doctrine of three equal persons in one substance [essence], which in its subtlety and daring both shaped the Western Church's thinking and helped to alienate Eastern Christians from the West. (p. 310)

Since the first formula of Nicaea in 325, the relationship of Son to Father had been described like that of physical son to parent: 'begotten' of the Father. The Spirit was not 'begotten' of the Father, and the word which had come to be chosen to define the Spirit's relationship to the Father was 'proceeding.' Augustine did not want to challenge that, since 'proceeding' has a good biblical basis in a pronouncement of Jesus on the Spirit in John 15.26.<sup>2</sup> But like anyone discussing the Trinity, he was faced with the way in which the language of 'proceeding' emphasized the lack of congruence between the Persons of the Trinity. Father and Son relate to each other in a different way from their joint relationship to the Spirit. (pp. 310-11)

Augustine decided that it would be wise to preserve the Spirit's equality by asserting that the Son participated in the Spirit's 'proceeding' from the Father. Had it not been the resurrected Jesus Christ, Son of God, who had said to the disciples, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20.22)? Through this double procession from Father and Son, the Spirit represented to humanity 'that mutual charity by which the Father and Son love one another.' Those who read Augustine later would nevertheless notice that the Nicene Creed of Constantinople of 381 said only that the Spirit 'proceeds from the Father.' Should this not be extended ... to say that the Spirit 'proceeds from the Father and the Son'?

<sup>1</sup> "St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430). Early Christian church father. By sermons, pastoral letters, and books, came to exercise enormous influence throughout Christian world. Works include *De Trinitate* (400–416; [15 volumes])" (*Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, s.v. "Augustine.")

<sup>2</sup> "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds (ἐκπορεύομαι [*ekporeúomai*]: "to go forth") from the father, He will testify about Me" (NASB).

Although there were respected Greek theologians who had used similar language to Augustine about double procession, the question came to split the imperial Church: ... while the West eventually agreed that this alteration should be made to the Creed, the alteration became a matter of high offence in the East.<sup>3</sup>

- (7) Augustine's double procession was later added to the Nicene Creed by the inclusion of one Latin word which is translated "and the Son," thus including Jesus as participating with the Father in sending the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.
- (8) That one word addition looks like this in the Latin so that the sentence now reads as follows:

*Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: Qui ex Patre Filioque procedit:*  
 "(We believe in) the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son."

- (9) The Eastern Church sternly disagreed with this addition and it created a permanent separation between the Eastern and Western churches:

From the 4th century onward these two halves drifted apart politically. The earliest Christian literature was in Greek, and Christianity, even in Rome, was long predominantly Greek. The Greek tradition ceased to predominate in the 5th century, when the majority of Christians in Egypt and Syria ... broke with the rest of the church over the decrees of the ecumenical councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

The chief of these differences was the Western belief that the Holy Spirit ... proceeds from the Son as well as the Father, rather than, as the Greeks hold, from the Father alone. Greeks took offense when Western Christians inserted words to that effect (the *Filioque* clause) in the Nicene Creed.<sup>4</sup>

- (10) The doctrine of procession is widely accepted as orthodox in the Protestant churches of the West and although not directly stated by Peter in Acts 2:33, it is strongly implied.
- (11) There is no universal ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and there would not be until Christ is glorified:

**John 7:38** - "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

**v. 39** - But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

<sup>3</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 310–11.

<sup>4</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (2010), 4:336.