

Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's Christology of Jesus' Prayer and Two Contemporary Theological Questions

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SCOTT HAHN has identified Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's emphasis on the prayer of Jesus as among his "most unique and important contributions to Christology."¹ Hahn cites a line from Ratzinger that encapsulates the latter's Christology of Jesus' prayer: "[T]he whole of Christology—our speaking of Christ—is nothing other than the interpretation of his prayer: the entire person of Jesus is contained in his prayer."² This essay aims to examine Ratzinger's insight in light of the Christological definitions of Nicaea, Chalcedon, and Third Constantinople, as well as in light of St. Thomas's understanding of Jesus' prayer.³ The emergent portrait of Christ will then be brought to bear on two current Christological questions: whether and how Jesus possessed the beatific vision, and, related to this, whether the accounts of twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple and of the revelation at Jesus' baptism can be read as "vocational" experiences.⁴

¹ Scott W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 143. Msgr. Richard Malone has made a similar observation in "Eucharist: Sacrifice According to the Logos," *Antiphon* 13, no. 1 (2009): 65–83. Both Hahn and Malone briefly summarize Ratzinger's Christology of Jesus' prayer with an eye toward ecclesiology and liturgy.

² Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 20. This sentence is cited by Hahn, 143n21, and by Malone, 65.

³ *ST* I–II, q. 21.

⁴ The contributions toward these complex questions will be my own application of the implications of Ratzinger's understanding of Jesus. I do not presume to speak for him or to propose answers on his behalf.

Ratzinger's Christology of Jesus' Prayer

Ratzinger begins *Behold the Pierced One* with this thesis: "According to the testimony of Holy Scripture, the center of the life and person of Jesus is his constant communication with the Father."⁵ This communication was best expressed by the earliest disciples in three titles: Christ, Lord, and Son (of God); yet Son emerged as the most comprehensive title because it "both comprises and interprets everything else."⁶ Contrary to the assumptions of modern exegesis, the primitive Church focused on the title "Son" because it corresponds "precisely to the basic historical experience of those who had been eyewitnesses of Jesus' life."⁷

Calling Jesus the "Son", far from overlaying him with the mythical gold of dogma (a view that has been put forward ever since Reimarus), corresponds most strictly to the center of the historical figure of Jesus. For the entire gospel testimony is unanimous that Jesus' words and deeds flowed from his most intimate communion with the Father; that he continually went "into the hills" to pray in solitude after the burden of the day (e.g., Mk 1:35; 6:46; 14:35, 39). Luke, of all the Evangelists, lays stress on this feature.⁸

Ratzinger cites three of Luke's passages which demonstrate "that the essential events of Jesus' activity proceeded from the core of his personality and that this core was his dialogue with the Father."⁹ In addition to

⁵ *Behold the Pierced One*, 15. This book presents Ratzinger's most systematic account of the Christology of Jesus' prayer, though the idea figures in much of his writing on the person of Jesus, as will be seen below. Ratzinger also presents this insight in Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 82: "[Luke] shows us that all of Jesus' words and deeds issue from his inner oneness with the Father, from the dialogue between Father and Son."

All references to *Jesus of Nazareth* will be to this first volume of the trilogy, unless otherwise indicated.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 16. On the relationship of these three titles, see also *Jesus of Nazareth*, 299–302.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17. Cf. *Jesus of Nazareth*, 291: "They are privileged to see him as the one who . . . speaks face-to-face with the Father, person to person. They are privileged to see him in his utterly unique filial being—at the point from which all his words, his deeds, and his powers issue."

⁸ *Ibid.*, 17. That the gospels accurately present the "historical Jesus" is a recurring theme throughout *Jesus of Nazareth*. Benedict holds that Luke's attention to the Father-Son relationship expressed in Jesus' prayer is among the "specific aspects of the Lukan tradition" that "preserve essential features of the original figure of Jesus for us." *Jesus of Nazareth*, 182.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 19. Cf. *Jesus of Nazareth*, 182. The three passages are the calling of the Twelve (Luke 6:12–16), Peter's confession (9:18–22), and the Transfiguration (9:28–36). Ratzinger analyzes these same passages to illustrate a similar thesis in

these, Ratzinger considers three further passages from the other evangelists: Jesus' use of "Abba," the language of "Father" and "Son," and Jesus' awareness of his mission as coming from the Father.¹⁰ His conclusion is clear: Jesus' prayer reveals the most profound level of his being, which is united to the Father in an unprecedented way. In particular, Jesus' use of "Abba," a term which "goes beyond every mode of prayer then known" and "expresses a familiarity with God which would have appeared impossible and unseemly to the Jewish tradition," conveys "the new and unique manner of Jesus' relationship to God—a relationship which, on his own side, calls for the term 'Son' as the only possible one."¹¹

As quoted above, Ratzinger believes that Luke's presentation of the prayer of Jesus "suggests that the whole of Christology—our speaking of Christ—is nothing other than the interpretation of his prayer: the entire person of Jesus is contained in his prayer."¹² Following Luke's lead, Ratzinger adopts a "spiritual Christology" that interprets both the person of Christ as well as the conciliar decrees of Nicaea, Chalcedon, and Third Constantinople.¹³ Ratzinger's spiritual Christology does not eschew the body, nor does it resemble Gnostic dualism. It begins in prayer, in the inner dialogue of the Father and Son from all eternity: within the God who is *logos*—the creative original thought who is speech, meaning, and Word—there exists a *dia-logos* that is a "reciprocal exchange of word and love" between the divine Persons.¹⁴ For Ratzinger the foundation of the incarnation lies in this inner dialogue, which the Letter to the Hebrews identifies in its reinterpretation of Psalm 40:5–7: "Sacrifices and offerings

The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 80–82. This work first appeared in German in 1976; the said chapter of *Behold the Pierced One* was first given as a lecture in Rio de Janeiro in 1982. Ratzinger also analyzes these same passages in the first volume of *Jesus of Nazareth*, again referencing the same theme but in a broader context: 170–71 (the calling of the Twelve); 287–305 (Peter's confession); and 305–18 (the Transfiguration).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20–22.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 223–24, and *Jesus of Nazareth*, 344–45.

¹² *Ibid.*, 20. See note 2, above.

¹³ Ratzinger specifically states that he reads Third Constantinople in this light, and that the council itself had also formulated a spiritual Christology. See *Behold the Pierced One*, 9. His reading of Nicaea and Chalcedon are also spiritual, as will be demonstrated, even though he does not state this explicitly.

¹⁴ Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 183. For a summary of Ratzinger's understanding of God as *logos* and the relationship of the Father and Son within the Trinity, see David G. Bonagura, "Logos to Son in the Christology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI," *New Blackfriars* 93, no. 1046 (2012): 475–88.

thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God.'"¹⁵ Thus the incarnation is "an act of prayer" that the author of Hebrews recognizes "as an event within the Trinity, as a spiritual event."¹⁶ Through the obedience of the Son this prayer, this spiritual event, becomes flesh:

Obedience becomes incarnate. . . . The theology of the Word becomes the theology of the Incarnation. The Son's gift of himself to the Father emerges from the dialogue within the Godhead; it becomes the acceptance, and thus the gift, of that creation that finds its synthesis in man. This body, or more concretely the humanity of Jesus, is the product of obedience, the fruit of the loving response of the Son; it is, so to speak, prayer that has taken on a concrete form. In this sense, *Jesus' humanity is something wholly spiritual*, something that is "divine" because of its origin.¹⁷

Ratzinger's spiritual Christology reads the person of Christ and the consequent dogmas in light of the incarnation and the Trinity, with the former event serving as the manifestation of the latter reality. This approach seemingly prioritizes a "Christology from above," but Ratzinger is more subtle and *de rigueur* than his critics allow:¹⁸ the inner dialogue of the Trinity is

¹⁵ Hebrews 10:5–7 RSV. This passage serves as the *locus incarnationis* of Ratzinger's Christology, and it appears in a number of his works in the same fashion. For a summary, see Bonagura, "Logos to Son in the Christology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI," 483–84.

¹⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditations on the Triune God*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 66–67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 67; emphasis added.

¹⁸ See Robert A. Krieg, "Who Do You Say That I Am? Christology: What It Is & Why It Matters," *Commonweal* (March 22, 2002): 12–16. In the Foreword to the second volume of *Jesus of Nazareth* Benedict is probably not referring to Krieg in his rebuff of "a Catholic theologian" who labeled his first volume a Christology "from above," although the same charge is made. To the contrary, the pope insists that the volumes "set out to discover the real Jesus, on the basis of whom something like a 'Christology from below' would then become possible." *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), xv–xvi. Whether or not Ratzinger's more systematic essays can receive the same label is a different question. However, Ratzinger's analysis of Jesus' prayer is just one example that he is far more amiable to a Christology "from below" than Krieg allows. Ratzinger's works on exegetical hermeneutics, which span more than three decades, are exceedingly clear: he does not see Christology "from below" or the historical-critical method itself as "a threat to the Christian faith," as Krieg alleges (16). Rather, he objects to a historical-critical method that employs a hermeneutic in the Enlightenment tradition that is simultaneously alien and

revealed by the experience “from below” that the disciples had of Jesus’ prayer to the Father, which continues in his humanity the dialogue—the prayer—of the Father and Son for all eternity. In Jesus’ prayer the Christological labels “from above” and “from below” are reduced to irrelevant distinctions, since they “form an indivisible unity.”¹⁹

The clearest example of Ratzinger’s spiritual approach to the conciliar decrees—and of how Christology “from above” and “from below” “form an indivisible unity”—lies in his understanding of Nicaea and its definition of Christ as *homoousios* with the Father.

The core of the dogma defined in the councils of the early Church consists in the statement that Jesus is the true Son of God, of the same essence as the Father and, through the Incarnation, equally of the same essence as us. Ultimately this definition is nothing other than an interpretation of the life and death of Jesus, which was preordained from the Son’s primal conversation with the Father. That is why dogmatic and biblical Christology cannot be divorced from one another or opposed to one another . . . The dogma’s basic assertion, “the Son is of the same substance”, which summarizes the entire witness of the ancient councils, *simply puts the fact of Jesus’ prayer into the technical language of philosophical theology, nothing more.*²⁰

Jesus’ prayer is the extension of “the Son’s primal conversation with the Father” into history. The dogmas defining the nature of Christ explain and interpret this reality technically; they do not project alien concepts into Scripture.²¹ Ratzinger raises this point explicitly in light of both ancient and modern objections to Nicaea’s use of *homoousios*,²² which was employed to explain the precise nature of the Son’s relationship to the Father as was expressed in his prayer:

What does “of one substance” really mean? The answer is this: the term is used solely as a translation of the word “Son” into philosophical language. And why is it necessary to translate it? Well, whenever faith begins to reflect, the question arises as to what, in reality, the word

hostile to the Bible and to the Christian faith. See the Foreword to the first volume of *Jesus of Nazareth* as his most recent articulation of this principle.

¹⁹ *Behold the Pierced One*, 32.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 32–33; emphasis added.

²¹ *Introduction to Christianity*, 227: “These dogmas [of Nicaea and Chalcedon] were intended to express nothing else than this identity of service and being, in which the whole content of the prayer relationship ‘Abba-Son’ comes to light.”

²² For Ratzinger’s account of the history of this “piscatorie et non Aristotelice” debate, see *The God of Jesus Christ*, 85–91.

“Son” might mean as applied to Jesus. . . . The Council of Nicaea, in interpreting the word “Son” philosophically by means of the concept “of one substance”, is saying that “Son” is to be understood here, not in the sense of religious metaphor, but in the most real and concrete sense of the word. The central word of the New Testament, the word “Son”, is to be understood literally.²³

Nicaea is not just interpreting John’s gospel alone, but the entire tradition whereby Jesus converses with the Father, *Abba*, in prayer.²⁴ Ratzinger emphasizes that the “Messianic *Jubelruf* (joyful shout)” of Matthew 11:25–27 (cf. Lk 10:21–22) “actually already contains the entire Johannine theology of the Son” with its presentation of “Sonship . . . as mutual knowing and as oneness in willing.”²⁵ By combining the *Jubelruf* with John’s gospel, especially the concluding verse of its Prologue,²⁶ Ratzinger presents his *homoousios* interpretation, still with the same spiritual core, in more traditional theological terms:

This fundamental saying [of John 1:18]—it now becomes plain—is an explanation of what comes to light in Jesus’ prayer, in his filial dialogue. At the same time, it also becomes clear what “the Son” is and what this term means: perfect communion in knowledge, which is at the same time communion in being. Unity in knowing is possible only because it is unity in being.²⁷

²³ *Behold the Pierced One*, 36. Cf. *Jesus of Nazareth*, 320, 355.

²⁴ *Introduction to Christianity*, 223–28.

²⁵ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 343. This develops Ratzinger’s claim that the “Jesus of the Fourth Gospel and the Jesus of the Synoptics is one and the same: the true ‘historical’ Jesus.” *Jesus of Nazareth*, 111. Thomas P. Rausch disagrees with Ratzinger, insisting that the pope “conflates” the Synoptics with John because of his Johannine emphasis. See his *Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to His Theological Vision* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 92. Richard B. Hays finds Ratzinger’s correlation more intriguing, but he maintains that in the first volume of *Jesus of Nazareth* the “other New Testament texts are read selectively for corroborative testimony of this basically Johannine account.” See “Benedict and the Biblical Jesus,” *First Things* (August/September, 2007): 49–53. These observations of Rausch and Hays are made concerning *Jesus of Nazareth*, not Ratzinger’s entire Christological corpus, even though Rausch could have consulted these works in his book. Ratzinger’s emphasis on Luke—not John—as his source for understanding Jesus as the Son provides strong theological evidence of the legitimate correlation of the Synoptics with John, evidence that this present essay seeks to demonstrate. The historical evidence demanded by Rausch and Hays must wait for another essay.

²⁶ “No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.” John 1:18.

²⁷ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 340. Ratzinger’s reading of John and his relation to the Synoptics has a fair amount in common with that of Raymond Brown, although the

Ratzinger also reads the dogma of Chalcedon in light of Luke's account of Jesus' prayer:

Luke has raised the prayer of Jesus to the central Christological category from which he describes the mystery of the Son. What Chalcedon expressed by means of a formula drawn from the sphere of Greek ontology is affirmed by Luke in an utterly personal category based on the historical experience of the earthly Jesus; in substantial terms, this corresponds completely to the formula of Chalcedon.²⁸

As with Nicaea, Chalcedon's definition of Christ as one person in two natures without confusion or separation is simply "an 'ontologicalization', a reaching back to the being behind the 'phenomenal' character of the mere happening"²⁹ to describe the experience of his person.

But what is the character of Jesus' prayer and how does it pertain to Chalcedon's definition? For Ratzinger, as should be clear from his spiritual approach to Christology, prayer is dialogue, "a real exchange between God and man" whereby through the incarnation "we can share in the dialogue which God *is*."³⁰ Jesus' prayer is also a dialogue with God, but it "is different from the prayer of a creature: It is the dialogue of love within God himself—the dialogue that God *is*."³¹ "This 'praying' of Jesus is the Son conversing with the Father; Jesus' human consciousness and will, his human soul, is taken up into that exchange."³² When Jesus prays, the "Logos speaks in the I-form of the human will and mind of Jesus; it

latter is far less at peace with the "use of John to determine scientifically how Jesus spoke of himself in his lifetime." *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994), 80–89; quote at 88. Ratzinger states that the historical-critical attempt, considered by Brown in detail in his book, to explain the "prehistory" of the term "Son" in John's writings "makes no sense" (*Jesus of Nazareth*, 345). Whereas Brown equivocates by deeming it only "*likely* that Jesus spoke and thought of himself as 'the Son'" (89, emphasis added), Ratzinger has much more confidence in Jesus and the writers who describe him: "We have to reckon with the originality of Jesus. Only he is 'the Son'" (345).

²⁸ *The God of Jesus Christ*, 82.

²⁹ *Introduction to Christianity*, 226. In context this sentence is intended to describe John's gospel vis-à-vis the Synoptics, but it applies equally to the definition of Chalcedon and the other Christological councils vis-à-vis Jesus' prayer.

³⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 26; emphasis in original. Cf. *Jesus of Nazareth*, 130: "This is what prayer really is—being in silent inward communion with God."

³¹ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 344; emphasis in original.

³² *Ibid.*, 7. This sentence is quoted in Malone, "Eucharist: Sacrifice According to the Logos," 68–69.

has become his I, has become adopted into his I, because the human will is completely one with the will of the Logos.”³³

Because prayer is moved by the will, Ratzinger’s spiritual interpretation of Chalcedon depends on Third Constantinople’s definition of the personal union of the two natural wills of Christ,³⁴ and “[o]nly from this standpoint does the dogma of Chalcedon (451) yield its full meaning.”³⁵ Ratzinger insists that the divine and human natures in Christ are only assured of their full integrity when properly united in the one person, but at the time of Chalcedon the exact meaning of person had yet to be defined.³⁶ The dispute after Chalcedon that paved the way for monothelitism and for the sixth ecumenical council concerned the meaning of person, which is still disputed in a new context today. Ratzinger’s formulation of the three chief questions of the seventh century is also equally important for contemporary debates concerning the humanity of Christ:

If there is only one divine person in Jesus, embracing both natures, then what is the status of his human nature? If it subsists within the one divine person, can it be said to have any real, specific existence in itself? Must it not inevitably be absorbed by the divine, at least at its highest point, the will?³⁷

Third Constantinople states that Jesus has two distinct wills, human and divine. “The metaphysical two-ness of a human and a divine will is not abrogated, but in the realm of the *person*, in the realm of freedom, the fusion of both takes place, with the result that they become *one* will, not naturally, but personally.”³⁸ This formulation was shaped by Maximus the

³³ *Behold the Pierced One*, 39. This sentence is quoted in Malone, 69, in the same context.

³⁴ Not mentioned by Ratzinger, but clearly part of the clarification of Chalcedon, is Second Constantinople’s decree that it is the divine Word who is hypostatically united to the human nature. DS 424–26.

³⁵ *Behold the Pierced One*, 37.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 37–38. For a parallel account that is broader in historical focus, more general in content, and gentler in tone, see *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two*, 157–61.

³⁷ *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two*, 159. These are questions asked most prominently by Roger Haight in his description of Jesus as a human being. For a summary of his position on this issue, see Roch Kereszty, *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology*, 3d ed. (New York: Alba House, 2011), 360n16.

³⁸ *Behold the Pierced One*, 39; emphasis in original. Ratzinger’s use of “fusion”—“Verschmelzung”—is problematic, as it does not accurately express the hypostatic union. Similarly, Ratzinger uses “will”—“Wille”—as in “faculty,” even though the human and divine faculties remain distinct; the two are brought into union by the “gnomic will” (*ibid.*, note 18), that is, by the personal act of willing, which is the

Confessor, who helped answer questions about the relation of Jesus' humanity to his person by examining his prayer on the Mount of Olives.³⁹ Ratzinger summarizes Maximus in a way that fuses the "from below" and "from above" approaches:

Jesus' unique relationship to God . . . is revealed to us in the sentence which remains the measure and model of all real prayer: "Not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mk 14:36). Jesus' human will assimilates itself to the will of the Son. In doing this, he receives the Son's identity, that is, the complete subordination of the I to the Thou, the self-giving and self-expropriation of the I to the Thou. This is the very essence of him who is pure relation and pure act. Wherever the I gives itself to the Thou, there is freedom because this involves the reception of the "form of God".

But we can also describe this process, and describe it better, from the other side: the Logos so humbles himself that he adopts a man's will as his own and addresses the Father with the I of this human being; he transfers his own I to this man and thus transforms human speech into the eternal Word, into his blessed "Yes, Father". By imparting his own I, his own identity, to this human being, he liberates him, redeems him, makes him God.⁴⁰

The will is exercised by a person, and prayer is a personal act. Through Maximus, Ratzinger argues that the prayer of the Son expresses the reality that "the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ which brings 'salvation' to man is not a juxtaposition but a mutual indwelling."⁴¹ By focusing

meaning Ratzinger intends. "Die metaphysische Zweiheit eines menschlichen und eines göttlichen Willens wird nicht aufgehoben, aber im personalen Raum, im Raum der Freiheit, vollzieht sich beider Verschmelzung, so daß sie nicht natural, aber personal *ein* Wille werden." *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten: Versuche zu einer spirituellen Christologie* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1984), 34; emphasis in original.

³⁹ For more on Maximus's understanding of person and freedom, see also John M. McDermott, S.J., "How Did Jesus Know He Was God? The Ontological Psychology of Mark 10:17–22," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2009): 272–97.

⁴⁰ *Behold the Pierced One*, 41. Cf. *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two*, 161: "Thus the prayer 'not my will, but yours' (Lk 22:42) is truly the Son's prayer to the Father, through which the natural human will is completely subsumed into the 'I' of the Son. Indeed, the Son's whole being is expressed in the 'not I, but you'—in the total self-abandonment of the 'I' to the 'you' of God the Father."

⁴¹ *Behold the Pierced One*, 38. Following note 38, above, "indwelling"—"Ineinander"—is intended in a Chalcedonian, not Monophysite, sense: Ratzinger is not saying that the two natures collapse into each other, but that they are harmonized through the personal union. "Denn nicht das Nebeneinander, sondern nur das wirkliche Ineinander, die Einheit von Gottsein und Menschsein in Christus bedeutet 'Heil' für den Menschen." *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten*, 34. Elsewhere, Ratzinger explains

on the person of Christ as the locus of freedom and action, the “dualism or parallelism of the two natures”⁴² disappears because the active willing of the person brings the two natures into harmony. The prayer of Jesus thus reaffirms the dogma of Chalcedon: Christ is one person, and it is the divine Son whose prayer personally unites his divine and human natures in his dialogue with the Father.

By way of summary, Ratzinger’s identification of Jesus’ prayer as the personal expression of the ontology of the early Christological dogmas can be viewed in light of the Patristic *admirabile commercium* and of the maxim “what is not assumed is not healed.” For Ratzinger, as mentioned above, Jesus’ prayer is “the Son conversing with the Father; Jesus’ human consciousness and will, his human soul, is taken up into that exchange.” In the incarnation God descends to speak definitively to human beings, who, through the incarnate Son’s prayer, his speech to the Father, are taken up into the deepest level of communion with God. Humanity’s relationship to God has been reconciled so that those who see Christ—whether in person or through prayer—already have seen the Father.⁴³ In the incarnation every aspect of human nature—consciousness, will, soul—is touched and therefore healed by God. In this sense even prayer, the most intimate expression of humanity’s being, can be said to be assumed and healed by the incarnation, for only through the divine mediator can humanity speak directly to God.

Finally, Ratzinger’s insistence that Jesus’ prayer brings about a personal harmony of the distinct divine and human natures shows that, contrary to the statements of some contemporary theologians,⁴⁴ the one ontological person of Christ defined by Chalcedon is in fact one psychological subject. As Ratzinger was quoted above, when Jesus prays the “Logos speaks in the I-form of the human will and mind of Jesus; it has become his I, has become adopted into his I, because the human will is completely

the practical manifestation of this harmony: “The ontological union of the two wills that remain independent within the unity of the person means, on the level of daily life, *communion* (κοινωνία) of the two wills. . . . To put it another way: Both of these wills are united in the assent of the human will of Christ to the divine will of the Logos. Thus on a practical level—‘existentially’—the two wills become one single will, and yet ontologically they remain two independent entities.” *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 81; emphasis in original.

⁴² *Behold the Pierced One*, 38.

⁴³ Cf. John 14:9.

⁴⁴ The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in its recent notifications concerning the work of Roger Haight and Jon Sobrino, includes the affirmation of two psychological subjects in Christ among the problematical elements, for the former theologian implicitly and the latter explicitly.

one with the will of the Logos." In Jesus' most intimate and profound cry of "Abba" in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36), the singular "I" of the Son prays to the Father through his human consciousness. In this act "human existence is not canceled, but comes to its highest possibility, which consists in transcending itself into the absolute and in integration of its own relativity into the absoluteness of divine love,"⁴⁵ a fact that confirms there is only one subject, one "I" in Christ.

Jesus' Prayer: Ratzinger and St. Thomas Aquinas Compared

St. Thomas organizes his treatise of the mystery of the incarnation (*ST* III, q. 1–59) in light of three chief considerations: the fittingness of the incarnation, the mode of union of the Word incarnate, and the consequences of this union. Jesus' prayer is examined as part of the consequences, under the further subheading of Christ's relation to his Father. Question 21, "Of Christ's Prayer," is not insignificant, yet it is not presented as a decisive interpretive key for understanding the person of Christ as it is for Ratzinger. The first article, "Whether it is fitting for Christ to pray?" contains the heart of St. Thomas's teaching on the subject.

Against those who assert it is unbecoming that Christ should pray, St. Thomas offers Luke 6:12 to the contrary.⁴⁶ Prayer, he continues, "is the unfolding of one's will to God, so that he may fulfill it."⁴⁷ This would not be necessary for Christ had he only the one, divine will, which "by itself effects whatever he wishes."⁴⁸ "But because in Christ the divine and human wills are distinct, and the human will is not sufficient in itself to perform what it wishes, except through divine power, hence it is fitting that Christ pray as a man having a human will."⁴⁹ St. Thomas's accent on prayer as a movement of the will to make a request fits with Ratzinger's account that sees prayer as the will to be in a communion of love with God; for St. Thomas the greatest request is to be in communion with God.⁵⁰ Yet St. Thomas sees prayer as the prerogative of Christ's humanity, and his human will "had a determinate mode because it was in a divine hypostasis, that is,

⁴⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," *Communio* 17, no. 3 (1990): 439–54; quote at 452.

⁴⁶ "In these days he went out into the hills to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God." *ST* III, q. 21, a. 1. This verse introduces the calling of the Twelve, considered by Ratzinger in several works in the same context, as discussed above.

⁴⁷ *ST* III, q. 21, a. 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ST* II–II, q. 83, a. 4: "Primo quidem modo soli Deo orationem porrigimus, quia omnes orationes nostrae ordinari debent ad gratiam et gloriam consequendam, quae solus Deus dat."

it was always moved according to the command of divine will.”⁵¹ For Ratzinger, Christ’s decision to pray is an act of his personal will by which his humanity is taken up into the eternal dialogue between Father and Son so that Christ’s prayer personally unites the divine and human natures.

St. Thomas continues that as both God and man, Christ “wished to offer prayers to the Father, not because he was weak, but for our instruction. First, so that he might show that he is from the Father. . . . Second, so that he might give us an example of praying.”⁵² In the third article, St. Thomas restates this same formulation, but he specifies exactly what it is about the Father that Christ wanted to show: “Christ wished to pray to his Father to give an example of praying, and to show that his Father is the source from whom he has proceeded eternally according to his divine nature, and from whom he possesses whatever is good according to his human nature.”⁵³ This second passage resembles Ratzinger’s understanding of the “Messianic *Jubelruf*” of Matthew 11:25–27:

God can be known only through God. No one other than God himself can know God. This act of knowing, in which God knows himself, is God’s giving of himself as Father and God’s receiving of himself and giving back of himself as Son, the exchange of eternal love, both the eternal gift and the eternal return of this gift.⁵⁴

Through the prayer of Jesus, the Son, who “has proceeded eternally according to his divine nature” in an “exchange of eternal love,” is made known to the world. Ratzinger agrees that Jesus’ prayer shows his ontology,⁵⁵ but he goes further: even though the incarnation occurred *propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem*, Jesus’ ontological structure demands that he also be in communion with God in prayer *propter se*. Since his personal will is that of the divine Son, it is necessary as part of Jesus’ very being to bring his full humanity—consciousness, will, soul—into his personal relationship with the Father.

The accents of St. Thomas and Ratzinger on the place of prayer in the life of Jesus differ only slightly, and it is important not to overemphasize these distinctions as evidence that their respective Christologies are

⁵¹ *ST* III, q. 18, a. 1, ad 4.

⁵² *ST* III, q. 21, a. 1, ad 1.

⁵³ *ST* III, q. 21, a. 3.

⁵⁴ *The God of Jesus Christ*, 90–91. Cf. note 25, above.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 82: “Those who do not know the solitude of Jesus take him to be this or that; but the profession of faith translates into human language what Jesus really is, since it sees what truly ‘drives’ him, namely his solitary speaking with the Father.”

incompatible or that Ratzinger spurns St. Thomas.⁵⁶ These differences lie not primarily in the details, even if the question of prayer as proceeding from the human or personal will is not insignificant, but in the general approach: Ratzinger's "spiritual Christology" unites Trinitarian and incarnational prayer in a unique synthesis, although the essay form of much of his work inhibits a full development.⁵⁷ How exactly his approach to Christology is a product of the influences of St. Bonaventure and Romano Guardini still needs to be explored.⁵⁸ But it can be reasonably concluded that Ratzinger's Christology of Jesus' prayer develops the thought of St. Thomas on this matter by placing prayer at the center of Christ's ontology both *in se* and *pro nobis*.

The Prayer of Jesus and the Beatific Vision

Whether the earthly Jesus possessed the beatific vision from the first moment of his conception according to the manner St. Thomas described is a matter of contention in the current theological literature.⁵⁹ In John

⁵⁶ Ratzinger's recollection of his intellectual interests and disinterests during his seminary days, as presented in his memoirs, should not be misconstrued as a rejection of St. Thomas's theology, philosophy, or even methodology as a mature theologian. His recollection is found in *Milestones: Memoirs 1927–1977*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 44. Aidan Nichols concurs: "Ratzinger has expressed himself on the subject of Thomas with a good deal more warmth than formal ceremony requires." *The Thought of Benedict XVI*, 2d ed. (London: Burns & Oates, 2007), 42.

⁵⁷ Many contemporary Christological textbooks treat Jesus' prayer in far fewer pages than St. Thomas requires.

⁵⁸ Both Tracey Rowland, *Benedict XVI: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark International, 2010) and Thomas P. Rausch, *Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to his Theological Vision* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009) treat the general influence that Bonaventure and Guardini had on Ratzinger's thought, but neither looks in detail at specific Christological questions. Guardini's *The Lord* says very little about Jesus' prayer. In an introduction to this text, Ratzinger states that Guardini's book influenced him with its "spiritual interpretation of Scripture." He also learned from Guardini that strictly historical exegesis is limited in what it can say about Jesus, and that the essence of Christianity lies in the encounter with a person, Jesus Christ. See Ratzinger, introduction to *The Lord*, by Romano Guardini (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 2002), xi–xiv.

⁵⁹ There are three recent presentations that take different approaches and draw different conclusions. For a rejection of the traditional understanding of the beatific vision, see Thomas G. Weinandy, "Jesus' Filial Vision of the Father," *Pro Ecclesia* 13, no. 2 (2004): 189–201; for a defense of the traditional understanding that references Weinandy's article, see Edward T. Oakes, S.J., *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy: A Catholic and Evangelical Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 210–21; for a more nuanced view that revises the

McDermott's definition, "the beatific vision assures perfect unmediated knowledge of divinity and in God a knowledge of all deeds, thoughts, and sayings, past, present, and future, as well as of whatever lies in a creature's potency."⁶⁰ But the question remains: "How then is human knowledge coordinated with the comprehensive knowledge which Jesus, the ultimate subject of knowing, enjoys as God?"⁶¹ Ratzinger does not discuss this issue; however, without pretending that this is Ratzinger's own thought on the matter, this inquiry will explore how Ratzinger's Christology of Jesus' prayer can contribute to this ongoing debate.

Ratzinger's account of Jesus' prayer affirms that Jesus, in a manner consistent with Scripture's promise of what awaits humanity after death,⁶² sees the face of God: Jesus "lives before the face of God, not just as a friend, but as a Son; he lives in the most intimate unity with the Father."⁶³ More particular to the problem is how Jesus is conscious of this intimacy, and whence his extraordinary teaching and knowledge of his sonship derive. "Jesus' teaching is not the product of human learning, of whatever kind. It originates from immediate contact with the Father, from 'face-to-face' dialogue—from *the vision of the one who rests close to the Father's heart*. It is the Son's word."⁶⁴ Furthermore, "*it belongs to his nature that he sees God*, that he stands face-to-face with him, in permanent interior discourse—in a relation of Sonship."⁶⁵

That Jesus "sees" the face of God, and that this vision "belongs to his nature," seem to affirm that in his humanity Christ possessed the beatific vision as traditionally understood. But for Ratzinger this seeing is not a passive reception but an active engagement—it is a "dialogue," "discourse"—of Jesus with the Father. The incarnate Son, the eternal Word of the Father, remains in constant dialogue with the Father throughout his earthly life as the historical extension of their "permanent interior discourse" that constitutes their divine unity. Further, if "the face of God" is understood within its Old Testament context as *pānīm*, then "to see the face of God" is not synony-

theoretical difficulties of the traditional understanding, see John M. McDermott, S.J., "How Did Jesus Know He Was God?"

⁶⁰ McDermott, "How Did Jesus Know He Was God?" 283. Ratzinger calls the beatific vision "an immediacy between God and man which knows of no setting asunder." *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 2d ed., trans. Michael Waldstein, ed. Aidan Nichols, O.P. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 234.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 283–84.

⁶² 1 Cor 13:12; 1 John 3:2.

⁶³ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 6.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 95; emphasis added.

mous with receiving knowledge passively; rather it means knowing God in the sense of having a personal encounter with him.⁶⁶

In this perspective Jesus is conscious of his divine sonship, not through the beatific vision as a grace given to his human soul, but through prayer, through his constant personal dialogue with the Father, which is manifested through his human consciousness and in his human will.⁶⁷ Therefore, the personal union of the divine and human natures of Christ that is expressed in prayer is the center of Christ's vision of the Father.⁶⁸ Since the Son remains in constant dialogue with the Father even as he enters history, then Jesus must have known himself in relation to the Father even at the first moment of the incarnation. How is this possible? If, following Maximus the Confessor, and with him Ratzinger, the personal union is the center of Jesus' relationship to the Father, then "Jesus' personal knowledge of himself in relation to the Father transcends his human intellect's explicit, thematic awareness."⁶⁹ McDermott explains the confluence of personal and natural knowledge with the help of Maximus:

If the person is recognized as the source of conscious freedom vis-à-vis God and others in reality's sacramental structure, Christ enjoys the immediate vision in his earthly life insofar as he knows his Father in the intimate relationship constituting his person. That intense consciousness is gradually explicated through his human intellect as he grows in experience. This allows for real ignorance in Christ's human intellect.⁷⁰

Ratzinger's explanation of Jesus' growth in wisdom in *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives* seems to support this conclusion:

On the one hand, the answer of the twelve-year-old made it clear that he knew the Father—God—intimately. Only he knows God, not merely through the testimony of men, but he recognizes him in himself. Jesus stands before the Father as the Son, on familiar terms. He

⁶⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 17–24. "The Hebrew term *pānīm* recognizes God as person, a being concerned about us, who hears and sees us, speaks to us, and can love us and be angry with us—as the God who is above all and yet still has a face" (20).

⁶⁷ As mentioned above, Jesus' prayer is "the Son conversing with the Father; Jesus' human consciousness and will, his human soul, is taken up into that exchange." *Jesus of Nazareth*, 7.

⁶⁸ This conclusion agrees with McDermott: "Our explanation locates Christ's immediate vision in the personal union, not in his human intellect." "How Did Jesus Know He Was God?" 294n78.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

lives in his presence. He sees him. . . . This is what the twelve-year-old's answer makes clear: he is with the Father, he sees everything and everyone in the light of the Father.

And yet it is also true that his wisdom grows. As a human being, he does not live in some abstract omniscience, but he is rooted in a concrete history, a place and a time, in the different phases of human life, and this is what gives concrete shape to his knowledge. So it emerges clearly here that he thought and learned in human fashion.⁷¹

Thus Jesus could know himself in light of the Father on a personal level while he assimilates this reality with his human intellect over time through his active dialogue with the Father, although it is not possible to determine exactly when or how long this discernment occurred.

Finally, this focus on prayer as the primary means of Jesus' growth in self-knowledge has the advantage of involving both the human and divine natures in their personal union. It is the eternal Son who speaks to God in prayer, but he does so in and through his human consciousness by "elevating his (human) mind to God" through a deliberate act of his person. In sum, understanding the beatific vision, not as the passive reception of Christ's human soul but as the active dialogue between Father and Son in prayer, accounts for Jesus' consciousness of his divine sonship, in a manner that respects both his continuous union with the Trinity and his genuine human growth (Lk 2:52); in doing so it includes the "whole Christ" in his relationship to his Father.⁷²

Jesus' "Calling" as Messiah

Ratzinger notes that a "broad current of liberal scholarship has interpreted Jesus' Baptism as a vocational experience. After having led a perfectly normal life . . . at the moment of his Baptism he is said to have had an earth-shattering experience. It was then, we are told, that he became aware of his special relationship to God and his religious mission."⁷³ Roch Kereszty generally holds this position: in the temple at age twelve Jesus experiences "a breakthrough in his self-awareness, a clearer discovery of his own identity," though he may have had some idea of his divine status before this event; and nearly two decades later "it is

⁷¹ *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (New York: Image Books, 2012), 127; emphasis in original.

⁷² Throughout his Christology of Jesus' prayer Ratzinger underscores the presence of the Church in the dialogue between Father and Son, an element of his thought that exceeds the scope of this inquiry. For examples, see *The God of Jesus Christ*, 80–82, and *Behold the Pierced One*, 25–32.

⁷³ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 23–24.

revealed to Jesus at his baptism exactly what kind of Messiah he is being called to be.”⁷⁴ But Kereszty's position is nuanced: these revelations are not external manifestations of a hitherto unknown God; they are part of Jesus' growing human consciousness and self-knowledge that occurred throughout his life.⁷⁵ For Kereszty the revelations in the temple and in the Jordan are part of “the Father's constant revealing, guiding, and inspiring activity” to Jesus, who is aware in his human consciousness of his divine personhood and of the Father's mission for him.⁷⁶

As with the beatific vision, Ratzinger's Christology of Jesus' prayer contributes to the debate over whether Jesus experienced these two events as specific callings that clarified for him his identity and mission. But unlike the beatific vision debate, Ratzinger weighs in on this question: he states that the biblical “texts give us no window into Jesus' inner life—Jesus stands above our psychologizing.”⁷⁷ Further, he identifies the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism as the same as that of the Transfiguration,⁷⁸ which he deems “a prayer event” because “it displays visibly what happens when Jesus talks with his Father.”⁷⁹ By extension the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism is also a prayer event, a fact indicated specifically in Luke 3:21; it also serves one of the twofold purposes of Jesus' prayer as identified by Ratzinger and St. Thomas: to show that he is of God.⁸⁰ Thus, for Ratzinger, the evangelists include these events as identifications for the reader of Jesus' status as the divine Son.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Roch Kereszty, *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology*, 3d ed. (New York: Alba House, 2011), 94, 102.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 365–71, 394–97. Kereszty insists that “Christ had to be aware of his being the Son from the very beginning of his life. If he had discovered his real identity at a later point in life . . . then Christ could not have been the same psychological subject or person before and after that discovery” (370–71).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 396. In this regard Kereszty's understanding of Jesus' self-awareness, which he attributes to Lonergan, resembles that of Weinandy in “Jesus' Filial Vision of the Father.”

⁷⁷ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 24.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 22–23.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 310. Cf. *The God of Jesus Christ*, 81, and *Behold the Pierced One*, 20.

⁸⁰ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 24: in the Jordan, Jesus “stands before us as the ‘beloved Son.’”

⁸¹ On this point Ratzinger agrees with a few contemporary exegetes. Joseph Fitzmyer sees the heavenly voice as instructive for the reader and deems the vocational perspective an “over-simplification.” *A Christological Catechism: New Testament Answers* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 38–43. Raymond Brown agrees: see *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*, 84–85. In the same vein, Luke Timothy Johnson, examining Luke's account, also reads the theophany at the baptism in union with that of the Transfiguration, with prayer as the key: “[T]he reader is provided access to an empowerment and declaration that takes

But if the earlier interpretation of Ratzinger's work is correct—that Jesus prays not only *propter nos* but also *propter se*—then Kereszty's argument that Jesus' experiences in the temple and in the Jordan are vocational is plausible *prima facie*, provided they are viewed as insights into the interpersonal dialogue between the Father and the incarnate Son. The interpretation of "liberal scholarship" mentioned by Ratzinger that sees his baptismal theophany as an external announcement from a distant God to a passive Jesus must be discarded if Jesus is continually engaged in an interior dialogue with the Father. This follows from the earlier definition of Jesus' prayer as the Son conversing with the Father so that his human consciousness and will are taken up into this exchange. The heavenly voice that addresses Jesus in the second person in the accounts of Mark (1:11) and Luke (3:22), therefore, manifests the inner dialogue between Father and Son for all to hear.⁸² In this view, the events at the temple and at Jesus' baptism provide precious insights into the interior life of Jesus in his relation to the Father.

The difficulty of maintaining Kereszty's argument, however, also becomes evident in light of understanding Jesus' prayer as both *propter nos* and *propter se*. That the sacred writers would provide an insight into the dialogue between Father and Son is done, as discussed above, *propter nos*: the experiences of Jesus in the temple and in the Jordan, setting aside their *propter se* implications momentarily, are related for our benefit, not for that of Jesus. The same can be said of Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 and of his prayer on the Mount of Olives: these most intimate exchanges are Christological *in se*, and, by virtue of that fact, they are recorded *pro nobis*.⁸³ This perspective echoes that of St. Thomas, Ratzinger, and the contemporary exegetes cited above.

But based upon Ratzinger's understanding of Jesus' prayer as also *propter se*, and recalling that it is the eternal Son, the Logos who "speaks in the I-form of the human will and mind of Jesus,"⁸⁴ the dialogue between Father

place between God and Jesus in the communication that is prayer." *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 71.

⁸² In Matthew's account, the voice speaks in the third person, suggesting that the voice is addressing bystanders in addition to Jesus; this fact further diminishes the vocational theory.

⁸³ In the temple before his final Passover, Jesus himself states that the heavenly voice heard by the crowd "has come for your sake, not for mine." John 12:27–30; quotation at 30. The union of Christology *in se* and *pro nobis* points to another emphasis of Ratzinger that lies beyond the present scope: the union of Christology and soteriology. See *Behold the Pierced One*, 14, 32, and *Introduction to Christianity*, 230–31.

⁸⁴ *Behold the Pierced One*, 39. See note 33, above.

and Son is one conducted in the intimacy of their personal relationship, beyond the purview of even those who watched him pray. Ratzinger underscores this point in commenting on the “deliberate contradiction” in Luke’s account of Peter’s confession: “Now it happened that as he was praying alone the disciples were with him” (9:18). Luke, according to Ratzinger, is writing not as an historian, but as a theologian: the deliberate contradiction of Jesus’ solitude while among his disciples illustrates that what “drives” Jesus is “his solitary speaking with the Father.”⁸⁵ The disciples are here involved in Jesus’ act of prayer yet not privileged with regard to its full content. This is the more plausible manner to interpret the evangelists’ accounts of Jesus’ experiences in the temple and in the Jordan: the witnesses recognize that they are involved in these intimate moments between the Father and the Son, but the full depth of Jesus’ “solitary speaking with the Father” lies beyond their grasp. If Jesus was aware of his divine sonship from the beginning of his life, as was argued concerning the beatific vision and as affirmed by Kereszty, and if he continuously grew in this awareness as he aged, then it is impossible to ascertain what exactly Jesus learned about himself from his experience in the temple and from the theophany at his baptism. Kereszty’s interpretation of Jesus’ “running away” to the temple and his reply to his parents in Luke 2:49, as mentioned above, as evidence of a “breakthrough in his self-awareness” that “overpowers him to the point of abandoning everything else, even his parents,”⁸⁶ attempts to read Jesus’ filial consciousness, a reality that ultimately lies beyond our grasp.⁸⁷

Conclusion

“He who has seen me has seen the Father.”⁸⁸ Like the apostles atop Mount Tabor, to see Jesus at prayer is to see him in his full splendor as the Son of God. The Transfiguration “displays visibly what happens when Jesus

⁸⁵ *The God of Jesus Christ*, 82. See note 55, above.

⁸⁶ *Jesus Christ: Fundamentals of Christology*, 94. Ratzinger sees neither a breakthrough nor an overpowered Jesus in his reading of this event in *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, 123–27. Rather, Jesus’ stay in the temple is “the actual expression of his filial obedience” (124), and his exchange with the temple doctors, as quoted above, “made it clear that he knew the Father—God—intimately. Only he *knows* God, not merely through the testimony of men, but he recognizes him in himself” (127).

⁸⁷ Fitzmyer agrees: “Only Luke among New Testament writers interprets Jesus’ baptism as his anointing with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38). To extrapolate from such a later theological interpretation to the consciousness of Jesus of Nazareth is highly problematic.” *A Christological Catechism: New Testament Answers*, 42.

⁸⁸ John 14:9.

talks with his Father: the profound interpenetration of his being with God, which becomes pure light. In his oneness with the Father, Jesus is himself 'light from light.'"⁸⁹ By identifying prayer as the most intimate expression of Christ's ontological structure, Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI has breathed new life into biblical Christology while simultaneously linking it to dogmatic Christology and soteriology in a real way. The new insights attained as we bring Jesus' prayer to the foreground will help illuminate old perspectives and create new avenues in the ongoing attempt to answer the question of Jesus' identity in every age. **N-V**

⁸⁹ *Jesus of Nazareth*, 310.