THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE THEOLOGIES
OF HANS URS VON BALTHASAR
AND RAYMOND E. BROWN

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ABSTRACT

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The issue at hand in this work is the knowledge Jesus Christ had of his own mission and identity during his life and ministry on earth. It is an extremely important issue, as one's theology is certainly influenced by how one answers the question of the degree of knowledge Jesus had of his own identity as the Word of God and of his mission on earth. Within this study, we will examine two views on this question: Hans Urs von Balthasar, within the realm of dogmatic theology, and Raymond E. Brown, within the scholarly world of modern biblical exegesis. Each of the first Two Chapters establishes the theological sources of each author, respectively, and moves on to a general discussion of their christological views. The Third Chapter is a critical comparison of the two scholars' views of Jesus' Knowledge of his mission and identity. A summary and this author's evaluations conclude.
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INTRODUCTION

"So Jesus cried out in the temple area as he was teaching and said, 'You know me and also know where I am from. Yet I did not come on my own, but the one who sent me, whom you do not know, is true. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me.'"1 So says Jesus to the crowd of listeners to differentiate his knowledge of himself and his mission from the type of knowledge possessed by his audience. What these words mean to modern theologians, however, can differ due to the point of view, the context and the purpose of each individual.

The dogmatic theologian might look at these words in the context of what the rest of Scripture had to say on the issue, what the tradition has said in relation to the issue, and what best fits into his/her overall conception of how God relates with humanity. On the other hand, the biblical exegete may examine these same words in the context of form criticism, historical criticism, literary criticism and didactic criticism of the text itself. It would be compared to the rest of Scripture, but with the primary purpose of determining who might have written it, when it was

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written, why it was written, to whom it was written, and what its sources were.

This study will attempt to examine two scholars' views on the subject of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, one a dogmatic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, the other a scholar of biblical exegesis and criticism, Raymond E. Brown. We will see how the two authors attack the problem, what conclusions they come to (if any), and how the two opinions compare and contrast.

Above, I refer to the knowledge of Jesus as a "problem." This deserves a word of explanation. In this author's view, the issue of what one believes Christ to have known (or not known) about who he was and what his mission was, will determine the person's entire worldview and theology. Given that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, if he was truly surprised when it occurred and did not foresee any ultimate victory or rectification of his

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2 Dogmatic theology seeks to present and explore all major doctrines in Christian thought. If we define "systematic theology" as a process of laying out a complex, complete and exhaustive method of theological inquiry, this title could also be used to describe the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar. If, on the other hand, "systematic theology" is defined more specifically as the defending and expounding upon scholastic and neo-scholastic theology, then the title would not apply to von Balthasar. However, since the former definition of "systematic theology" is a broader term than "dogmatic theology," and can include moral theology, fundamental theology and apologetics, I will opt for the term "dogmatic" to describe von Balthasar's work in order to be as accurate as possible.
situation, that says a lot about one's theology. If, on the other hand, one holds that Jesus, while in Mary's womb, knew what time of day he was going to participate in the resurrection and what it would be like, that says something very different about the implicit world view of the individual. In theological terms, the former has an extremely low christology while the latter, a very high christology. The entire question seems to stem from the enigma of an individual who is, through the hypostatic union, fully God and fully human, and to what extent (if at all) each author emphasizes one of those natures over the other. At the foundation of this thesis, then, is the question of how different authors deal with the reconciliation and relationship between these two natures within the one man, Jesus Christ. The working hypothesis of this thesis is that, although these two authors use the five sources of scholarly work (which we will develop later) very differently, their conclusions on the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity are very similar, and are both considered theologically moderately conservative. We are not trying to force these two authors different

3 The five sources to which I refer are Scripture, Patristics, Dogmatics, philosophical presuppositions and psychological aspects. They were chosen as five common sources upon which dogmatic theologians and biblical exegetes draw for their work. Granted, von Balthasar and Brown will use these sources differently and in different degrees. The important thing here, though, is to see how they treat the five sources I have chosen. Hence, in this context, when I refer to them as "theological sources," I am using that term in the broadest sense which would include dogmatic theology as well as biblical exegesis.
Callahan -- 4

scholarly worlds into one field. Instead, we are simply examining what happens when two different scholars address the same topic concerning Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity.

It is important for me to make note of the way in which I use the term "knowledge." I do not wish to enter in-depth into a philosophical discussion of the term "knowledge." It is not my purpose or my area of strength, so I shall leave it to others more qualified than myself. For the purposes of this study, I will define Jesus' "knowledge" of his mission and identity as his awareness of who he is and what he is called to be doing. 4 Obviously, the way in which I limit my definition of knowledge will certainly affect my conclusions concerning Jesus' awareness of his mission and identity. Not wanting to continue without an historical look at what some reputed thinkers have had to say on the issue of Jesus' knowledge, however, let us examine briefly the views of Thomas Aquinas, Karl Rahner, and Bernard Lonergan.

St. Thomas was chosen because of his influence on Catholic thought as a Doctor of the church and one of its greatest thinkers. Any examina-

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4 As well as the term "knowledge," the term "consciousness" is also used to describe the same phenomenon; namely what Jesus knew of his mission and identity. In the same manner as the former term, however, the latter is extremely complex in the different meanings various authors ascribe to it. For this reason, with the exception of the three brief examples of Aquinas, Lonergan, and Rahner, I will not enter any further into a philosophical discussion on the topic.
tion of a major theological question such as that of Jesus' knowledge needs to at least briefly look at St. Thomas' thought since, "he was the first one to completely formulate Christian belief on a rigorously consistent metaphysical basis; for this he has been credited with founding theology as a science." As a complement to and a natural development of St. Thomas' strong Aristotelian view, Karl Rahner was chosen because of his monumental task of following Joseph Maréchal's footsteps in combining Kantian *a priori* transcendental methodology with Thomistic epistemology (concerning God as the fundamental orientation of the human intellect). Rahner's influence in Catholic thought and especially on the documents of the Second Vatican Council made him another necessary person to examine when discussing Jesus' knowledge. Finally, Bernard Lonergan was chosen because of his major contributions to Christian theology in the areas of neo-Thomistic epistemology and theological methodology. This method is based "on an analysis of the way in which every human mind necessarily operates," and consists of eight steps in which the human mind assimilates, investigates, interprets and judges different knowable things. For these contributions to Catholic theology, these specific

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6 Ibid., p. 260.
theologians were chosen to be examined for how each views the knowledge of Jesus.

Following a look at these three major Catholic theologians’ views of Jesus’ knowledge in general, we will set forth the criteria we will use in this thesis as the basis for comparing Brown’s and von Balthasar’s views of Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity. These criteria will come from the International Theological Commission’s document entitled, “The Consciousness of Christ concerning Himself and his Mission.” The purpose of the examination of these three authors, some of Catholic theology’s greatest, is to introduce the reader to some very general information concerning Jesus’ knowledge. The examination of the International Theological Commission (I.T.C.) document which follows, serves the purpose of introducing some of the specific problems on the topic of Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity. It is these issues, in turn, that we will come back to in the third chapter in order to have a common set of criteria with which to compare von Balthasar and Brown.

First, let us briefly take a look at St. Thomas’ conception of the knowledge of Christ as seen in his *Summa Theologica*, from the section

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itled, "The Mystery of the Incarnation," Pars Tertia, Questions 9-12. Rather than launch into a full-blown discussion of St. Thomas' christology (which is obviously beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis), we will look at his basic conclusions concerning Jesus' knowledge.

On the topic of Question Nine, Christ's knowledge in general, St. Thomas posits that Christ's divine knowledge did not belong to his human soul (nature). He goes on to assert that the two lights of knowledge in Christ are in two different classes, therefore the greater does not dim the lesser, but instead, human knowledge is heightened in the Soul of Christ by the light of divine knowledge. This assertion is backed up by St. Thomas' position that while the Godhead is united in the manhood of Christ in person, it is not united in the manhood of Christ in essence or nature. In this way, St. Thomas asserts that there is no interference between Christ's infused and beatific knowledge, but the former is a means to beatific knowledge and is strengthened by it. Finally, in this Ninth question, St. Thomas contends that Jesus did acquire human knowledge through discovery but not through being taught.

Question Ten, which deals with Christ's beatific knowledge, holds that while Jesus did see the divine essence of God in the beatific vision, he could not comprehend it fully. St. Thomas asserts that God knew the essence of the Godhead better than Christ did. Also, Jesus did know all things in the Word, but only when "all things" is defined as "all that is," and
not when "all things" is defined as "all things that are and could be." With regard to Christ knowing infinite things, St. Thomas states that, "knowledge primarily and essentially regards being in act, and secondarily regards being in potentiality." In regard to the first, Jesus did know infinitely because there will never be an infinite number of actions. But, with regard to the latter, Christ did not know all things in potentiality. Finally, in comparing Christ's beatific vision with the angels and other Blessed, St. Thomas contends that since Christ is more closely joined to the Word, he sees the vision more perfectly than others.

In Question Eleven, dealing with Christ's infused (imprinted) knowledge, St. Thomas makes the case that Christ did have the knowledge of all things and that, through this divinely imprinted knowledge, Christ knew "whatever can be known by force of a man's active intellect," and "all things made known to man by Divine revelation." With this imprinted knowledge, asserts Thomas, Christ could know using phantasms, but did not need them, as he could also have knowledge through intelligible species, since his soul is the same nature as ours, but in a different state of more complete comprehension. As well, St. Thomas goes on to point out that since Jesus had a rational soul, he had comparative knowledge as

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far as its usefulness went, but not as far as it was used to gain knowledge from cause to effect (since his knowledge was perfect). Finally, Thomas asserts that Jesus did have habitual knowledge, since his soul was like other humans', but while he was below angels where death was concerned, his infused knowledge was greater than theirs.

The last question in this section, Question Twelve, deals with the acquired (empirical) knowledge of Jesus. St. Thomas holds that Jesus had to know all things via this empirical knowledge since everything in Jesus was perfect. Next, St. Thomas affirms that because of direct and indirect experience (vicarious), Christ knew all things via his experience; through what Christ did sense he could deduce all other sensible things, and therefore in this empirical knowledge, Christ did know all knowable things as far as human active intellect goes, but not their essences, which belongs to his infused knowledge. St. Thomas then contends that while Christ did not advance in beatific or infused knowledge (because it was perfect and came from an infinite power), he did acquire empiric knowledge step by step and thus did advance. It is important to follow that assertion with Thomas' contention that since Jesus was the Master, he taught and could not learn from humans because teaching and learning do not belong to the same nature. Thomas goes on to say that Jesus' questioning the doctors in the Temple was simply his way of teaching via questioning. Thomas agrees that Jesus learned from sensible things created by God, but not from other
people. Finally, Thomas asserts that while Jesus’ body was subject to heavenly bodies such as angels, his soul was not, therefore he could not have been taught by angels.

Karl Rahner’s view on the knowledge of Jesus in some ways is like St. Thomas, and in some important ways, is different. He asserts early on the difference between his work and the work of the exegete. He claims that, while the two different types of scholars must work to be compatible, the two fields are nevertheless different:

when we make a dogmatic statement about the knowledge and self-consciousness of Jesus, right away our only intention relative to the exegete is to arrive at a view compatible with his findings, and to do this as well as we possibly can -- but nothing more. For to do more is neither necessary nor possible.\(^{11}\)

In this way, he makes it clear that his purpose is to make dogmatic statements about Jesus’ knowledge and consciousness that are compatible with exegetical findings and the teaching of the magisterium.

Rahner points to Jesus’ professed ignorance on certain occasions and the fact that he was a product of the understanding of his age as two reasons that hold out in opposition to some traditional views of his consciousness which posit complete and perfect knowledge about all things.

Rahner goes on to posit four basic presuppositions before directly addressing the issue of Jesus' knowledge. The first is that...

knowledge has a multi-layered structure: this means that it is absolutely possible that in relation to these different dimensions of consciousness and knowledge something may be known and not known at the same time.\(^\text{12}\)

This distinction is necessary because of the insufficiency of the model of tabula rasa when applied to Jesus.

The second point is Rahner's concept of human consciousness, which he posits as "an infinite, multi-dimensional sphere."\(^\text{13}\) Within this sphere, there are different types of knowledge. In addition, even though Rahner asserts that the different types of knowledge should be thought of as different ways to know a reality and not necessarily ways of possessing objective knowledge. While he makes assertions concerning some of the basic differences in which something can be known, he does not wish to get caught up in a detailed discussion of the multiplicity of ways reality can exist in human knowledge:

it cannot be our job to draw up an empirico-psychological or transcendental scheme of these different ways in which something may be present in consciousness.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 199.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 200.

\(^{14}\) Idem.
The third presupposition follows directly, and affirms that there is, in human beings as spiritual entities, a form of unobjectified, unthematic knowledge about ourselves, which cannot be expressed but is known nonetheless. Finally, the fourth presupposition is that, in opposition to the Greek model, some degree of nescience in human beings is actually not a weakness, but instead makes possible our true humanity and true freedom, which would be diminished if we (or Jesus in this case) knew all things. Nescience is humanity's reason for desiring the transcendence from finite to infinite.

In direct response to the question of Jesus' knowledge, Rahner affirms the assertion that Jesus did in fact have a direct consciousness with God (a visio immediata), but questions the contention that the knowledge Jesus possessed should be called "beatific." He goes on to point out that while the extrinsic view posits the visio immediata as an addition to Jesus' being and not part of the hypostatic union, the intrinsic view sees the visio immediata as an internal element of the hypostatic union, and determined thereby. In this view of the hypostatic union, we find the heart of Rahner's view of the knowledge of Jesus.

For Rahner, the hypostatic union "implies the self-communication of the absolute Being of God...to the human nature of Christ which thereby
becomes a nature hypostatically supported by the Logos." Since human nature contains self-consciousness, and Jesus was human, Jesus had to have been self-conscious of his identity within his hypostasis. Finally, then, given the above assertions at the heart of Rahner’s christology, he contends that the hypostatic union must be understood in a different way:

only in such a subjective, unique union of the human consciousness of Jesus with the Logos -- which is of the most radical nearness, uniqueness and finality -- is the Hypostatic Union really present in its fullest being.16

To conclude, Rahner discusses how we should conceive this consciousness of Jesus which is in direct union with God. He posits that most view it as an object of Jesus’ mind’s eye, but he questions whether or not that can possibly be an accurate assumption of the consciousness of the historical Jesus of the New Testament who, "doubts, learns, is surprised, is deeply moved, ...who is overwhelmed by a deadly feeling of being forsaken by God?"17 This consciousness is in the form of the unobjectified consciousness that all humans have concerning who they are. So Jesus, is just like the rest of humanity, and possesses:

this inescapable, conscious and yet in a sense not-known state of being lit up to oneself, in which reality and one’s consciousness of reality

15 Ibid., p. 205.
16 Ibid., p. 207.
17 Idem.
are still unseparated from each other, (and which) may never be reflected upon.\textsuperscript{18}

This situation, contends Rahner, is not only in keeping with the teaching of the magisterium (that there is a \textit{visio immediata} between God and Jesus), but is also a position which exegetes can find compatible. In conclusion, on the topic of Jesus' consciousness, Rahner points to the importance of the hypostatic union (and within it, the \textit{visio immediata} which is intrinsic to that union), and contends that...

it is then legitimate to be of the positive opinion that such an interpretation can understand the vision of God as a basic condition of the created spiritual nature of Jesus, a basic condition which is so original and unobjective, unsystematic and fundamental, that it is perfectly reconcilable with a genuine, human experience; there is no reason why it should not be perfectly reconcilable with a historical development, understood as an objectifying systematization of this original, always given, direct presence of God, both in the encounter with the spiritual and religious environment and in the experience of one's own life.\textsuperscript{19}

Possibly the most concise and clear example of Bernard Lonergan's view on the knowledge Jesus had of his mission and identity comes in a chapter of his \textit{Collection} called "Christ As Subject: A Reply."\textsuperscript{20} It was

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 208-209.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 215.
\end{itemize}
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written as a correction and clarification in regard to what Fr. Angelo Perego had written about his christology.\footnote{Ibid., p. 153. The article to which Lonergan writes his reply is: Angelo Perego, "Una nouva opinione sull'unità psicologica di Cristo," Divinitas 2 (1958) 409-24.} In Lonergan’s eyes, this is a clarification that desperately needs to be made:

As the position imputed to me, both in the presentation and in the critical evaluation, is one that I fail to distinguish from heresy, I feel called upon to supplement Fr Perego’s animadversions and, at the same time, to correct his imputation.\footnote{Idem.}

The version of Christ’s knowledge (consciousness) found in this reply is also somewhat simplified since Lonergan is answering the charge that his notions in this area (of consciousness and subject) are incomprehensible. Before briefly explicating his revised contentions concerning the consciousness of Christ, it is important to note that his arguments are driven by a strong belief:

(he has a) conviction that the physical pain endured by Jesus Christ has a significant bearing on theological accounts of the consciousness of Christ.\footnote{Idem.}

To summarize Lonergan’s main points on the issue of Jesus’ knowledge, it is important to understand his assertion of the parallelism between Jesus’ person and his consciousness. For Lonergan, the relation-
ship starts with the contention that "a subject is a conscious person." In the man Jesus Christ, then, there is one person with two natures -- human and divine; and one subject with two consciousnesses -- human and divine.

Lonergan goes on to assert that these two entities, Jesus' person and consciousness, have parallel attributes. The distinctness of the two natures in the person of Jesus parallels the distinctness of the two consciousnesses in the subject of Jesus. The person of Jesus is not more important than the subject of Jesus, since, "as the person, so also the subject is a divine reality."25

For our purpose in this brief outline, Lonergan sums up the parallelism and relationship between the two consciousnesses concisely:

As there is a great difference between 'being God' and 'being a man,' so also there is a great difference between 'being conscious of oneself as God' and 'being conscious of oneself as man.' As the former difference is surmounted hypostatically by union in the person, so the latter difference is surmounted hypostatically by union in the subject.26

Finally, Lonergan discusses that while the ontological arguments behind the discussion of the two natures in the one person of Christ have Conciliar and Church authority, the psychological arguments behind the discussion

24 Ibid., p. 182.
25 Ibid., p. 183.
26 Idem.
of the two consciousnesses in the one subject of Christ are not as theologically evolved and thus do not carry the same authority.

Lonergan posits three points as to why the psychological discussion of the two consciousnesses in the subject of Christ should be included in the authoritative ontological discussions concerning the two natures in the person of Christ. The first point is that, since the psychological and ontological arguments are not mutually exclusive, if one can set aside their differences, logic would dictate that if the ontological arguments are true, then the parallel psychological arguments would be true as well. The second point is that contrary to many discussions on psychology and the subject of Christ (and his consciousness), Lonergan’s position is that the psychological theories of Christ’s consciousness should coincide and be reconciled with what the Church believes (the faith of the masses, "what everyone believes"). Only in this way can they be true to what the Apostles’ Creed asserts concerning the person and natures of Christ (and their parallel counterparts of the subject and consciousnesses of Christ). Finally, Lonergan appeals to tradition, and asserts that his account of Jesus’ consciousness as subject, "fits easily into the framework of Aristotelian and Thomist thought."28

27 Idem.

28 Idem.
Now, having discussed three important Catholic thinkers' views concerning some major aspects of the general knowledge of Jesus Christ, we will move on to the more specific issue of Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity. In this introduction, we want to introduce and explain the four major issues as found in the I.T.C.'s document on Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity. Later, in the third chapter, we will come back to the I.T.C.'s four propositions as we compare von Balthasar and Brown. The focus of this thesis, then, is a comparison of how each author would answer each of the four major considerations of the issue of Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity as established by this church body.

The I.T.C. explains its own hermeneutic on the issue of Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity. They stress that the reason they feel the need to comment on the issue is because the debate among those who do historical criticism about Jesus' consciousness of his mission and identity create controversies that are important to the understanding of the Christian faith and are not going away. The I.T.C. contends that Jesus must have had some degree of knowledge of his mission and identity, and

29 The fact that von Balthasar was a member of the I.T.C. from 1969 - 1985 does not detract from the document's value as an objective, comparative tool with which to compare and contrast von Balthasar's and Brown's views because of the many other theologians who comprised the I.T.C.. Thus, while von Balthasar certainly had an influence on the I.T.C.'s documents, it was diluted by other theologians.
because of the negative soteriological implications of a Christ in which there is no knowledge of his identity, they assert the importance of the issue: "It is clear, then, that the Church attaches maximum importance to the problem of the awareness (consciousness) and human knowledge of Jesus."  

According to the I.T.C., there are two sets of issues that come up when discussing the theological and pastoral implications of the knowledge of Jesus. The first concerns the exegesis of the biblical material which, as the Second Vatican Council pointed out, serves the purpose of trying to find out exactly what the NT writers' intentions were. This search for the original meaning of the different texts of Scripture are extremely important according to the I.T.C., asserting that the interpretation of Scripture needs to take into consideration the wealth of the unity of the entire Scripture itself as well as consider the tradition of the faith of the church. If this is done, then the I.T.C. agrees with Vatican II's assertion that "the study of Sacred Scripture should be "the soul of all theology"."  

The second problem centers on the I.T.C.'s assertion that the tradition of the church is historically bound to specific philosophical understandings and models of each epoch of Christian history. For this

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31 Ibid., p. 307; quoted from OT, 16; cf DV, 24.
reason, they assert that their treatment of the issue of Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity will not accept any one philosophical set of language to be definitive of the truth, but instead will try to see this issue in light of faith in Jesus. At the same time, however, the I.T.C. recognizes that the mystery itself cannot be put into any human conception of words anyway.

In keeping with their previous articulation of their positions, the I.T.C. asserts that they will examine the issue of Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity from what the faith has always believed about Jesus Christ. In addition, they contend that they are not attempting to give theological explanations of their conclusions, but instead that they are going to limit their study of the issue to "some statements of what Jesus was conscious of with regard to his own personal mission."\(^{32}\) They do this through a presentation of four propositions followed by their commentary. The commentaries themselves are in three stages: 1. apostolic preaching concerning Christ; 2. what a critical study of the synoptic Gospels will yield concerning the knowledge of Christ of his mission and identity; and 3. the more explicit testimony of John’s Gospel, which, the I.T.C. contends, does not contradict the other Gospels, but is just written from a different perspective.

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\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 307.
The first proposition of the I.T.C. is:

_The life of Jesus testifies to his consciousness of a filial relationship with the Father. His behavior and his words, which are those of the perfect "servant", imply an authority that surpasses that of the ancient prophets and belongs to God alone. Jesus drew this incomparable authority from his unique relationship with God, whom he calls "my Father." He was conscious of being the only Son of God and in this sense of being God himself._\(^\text{33}\)

The apostolic teaching that Jesus was the Son of God is evident in the most ancient formulations of the earliest hymns and confessions (Rom 1:3; Phil 2:6). St. Paul asserted that he was teaching about Jesus, the Son of God (Gal 1:16; 2Cor 1:19). Also, the mission statements about Jesus being sent from God are important keys to this understanding. Jesus’ divine sonship of God is at the center of the apostolic preaching and "can be understood as an explanation, in the light of the Cross and Resurrection, of the relationship of Jesus with his own "Abba"._\(^\text{34}\)

The I.T.C. points out that the synoptic Gospels show us that Jesus did in fact call God, "Father". Not only that, but Jesus also called God, "Abba," which implied a very special relationship between him and God. In addition, when Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, the I.T.C. contends that there is a difference in the way he uses "my Father," and

\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 308.

\(^{34}\) Idem.
"your Father," (Lk 11:2). These aspects of the synoptics lead the I.T.C. to the following assertion:

before the mystery of Jesus was revealed to men, there was already in the consciousness of Jesus a personal perception of a most sure and profound relationship with the Father. From the fact that he called God "Father", it follows by implication that Jesus was aware of his own divine authority and mission.35

The I.T.C. goes on to claim that since Jesus knew he was the one who knew God perfectly, he also knew of his mission as the "bearer of God's definitive revelation to men."36 Because of this consciousness, contends the I.T.C., Jesus exercised his unique authority to act for God (especially in forgiving sin, binding the devil, and performing miracles).

In the Gospel of John, the explicit origin of the authority is given with Jesus' statements that "the Father is in me and I in the Father" (10:38), and "the Father and I are one" (10:30). In these claims, the I.T.C. asserts that Jesus was illustrating that his "I" and the "I" of Yahweh are the same. Finally, the I.T.C. concludes the commentary on this first proposition with this assertion:

even from a historical point of view we have every reason for stating that the earliest apostolic proclamation of Jesus as Son of God is based on the very consciousness that Jesus

35 Idem.
36 Idem.
himself had of being the Son and emissary of the Father.\textsuperscript{37}

The second I.T.C. proposition states that:

\begin{quote}
Jesus was aware of the purpose of his mission: to announce the Kingdom of God and make it present in his own Person, in his actions, and in his words, so that the world would become reconciled with God and renewed. He freely accepted the Father's will: to give his own life for the salvation of all mankind. He knew the Father had sent him to serve and to give his life "for many" (Mk 14:24).\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

The I.T.C. stresses the importance of the apostolic preaching of Jesus' divine sonship to the Christian concept of soteriology. Christ's whole mission through his incarnation, life, teaching, death and resurrection are all designed to allow us to be lifted up with him and share in his divine sonship:

Such a sharing in the divine sonship, which comes into being in faith and is especially expressed in the prayer of Christians to the Father, presupposes the consciousness Jesus himself had of his own Sonship.\textsuperscript{39}

In fact, the I.T.C. points out the importance of this consciousness to the whole of Christian thought: "the entire apostolic preaching is based on the conviction that Jesus knew he was the Son, the Father's emissary; and

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 309.

\textsuperscript{38} Idem.

\textsuperscript{39} Idem.
without such a consciousness christology and soteriology as well would lack foundation."

On the basis of the synoptic accounts of Jesus’ life, the I.T.C. claims that since Jesus’ consciousness of his unique relationship to God as his Son is the entire foundation for his mission, we can also argue the other direction (from mission to consciousness). To this end, the I.T.C. points out that the synoptic Gospels show Jesus as one who knows he has been sent to announce and bring about the Kingdom of God (Lk 14:43; Mt 15:24; Mk 1:38). Since Jesus knew he had been sent and knew what he had been sent for, then he must also have known that he was sent from the Father, which would presuppose a unique divine relationship. In other words, if there is one sent, then there had to be a sender.

As the I.T.C. illustrates, the Gospel of John’s "mission Christology" makes explicit this relationship between the one sent and the one who sends. In John, Jesus knows that he has come from the Father (5:43; 8:12; 16:28). This mission is not imposed on his from an outside source, but instead is intimately tied to his being and identity. Finally, this coming from God implies that he was always, until that time, with God (1:1).

In conclusion, the I.T.C. contends that John shows us that Jesus’ consciousness of his mission also involves his consciousness of his

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40 Idem.
preexistence. This relationship between the Father and son is (in Jesus' consciousness as well) always guided by the Holy Spirit. In this relationship, Jesus is guided by the Holy Spirit as he knowingly gives up any impediments to his fulfillment of his mission through obedience to the Father. Thus Jesus refuses to call upon legions of angels for help (Mt 26:53), chooses to grow in wisdom and grace as a human being (Lk 2:52), learns and obeys (Heb 5:8), faces temptations (Mt 4:1-11), and allows himself to suffer. According to the I.T.C.,

None of this is incompatible with the affirmations that Jesus "knows all" (Jn 16:30), that "the Father has shown him all his works" (Jn 5:20; 13:3; Mt 11:27), if these affirmations are taken to mean that Jesus receives from the Father all that enables him to accomplish his works of revelation and of universal redemption (Jn 3:11-32; 8:38-40; 15:15; 17:8).41

The third I.T.C. proposition concerning the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity is that:

To realize his salvific mission, Jesus wanted to unite men with the coming of the Kingdom and to gather them around himself. With this end before him, he did certain definite acts that, if taken altogether, can only be explained as a preparation for the Church, which will be definitively constituted at the time of the Easter and Pentecost events. It is therefore to be affirmed of necessity that Jesus willed the foundation of the Church.42

41 Ibid., p. 311.

42 Idem.
With these assertions in mind, the I.T.C. points out that the unity between the Church and Christ make them inseparable. This unity has the Holy Spirit as its unifying principle. According to apostolic teaching, beginning with Paul, the Church is in Christ, Christ is in us (and we are the Church) (1Th 1:1, 2:14; 2Th 1:1; Gal 1:22; Rom 8:10; 2Cor 13:5). This unity between Christ and Church is rooted in his giving of his life on the Cross. This Church, as the Body of Christ, is unified and takes its origin from his crucifixion and resurrection. "In the eyes of the apostolic preaching the Church is the very purpose of the work of salvation brought about by Christ in his life on earth."43

Next, the I.T.C. contends that in the synoptic Gospels, Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God has as its primary purpose the inclusion of all people to come into the Kingdom. This is seen in his relationship with his disciples, whom he called and to whom he was the shepherd. "The parables of Jesus and the images he uses in describing those he came to call as followers involve an "implicit ecclesiology"."44 The point is not that Jesus had the specific institutional structures of the Church in mind as much as it is that Jesus wanted to give his followers a structure which would remain until the full realization of the Kingdom. The disciples, with

43 Ibid., p. 312.

44 Idem.
Peter as their head, are the first community which share in the mission of Christ, but also his fate (Mt 10:25). The Church, then, receives the act of his supper, which is the center of the New Covenant (Lk 22:20) and kept the community unified in the breaking of bread (Lk 22:19):

Christ was conscious of his saving mission. This brought with it the foundation of his Church, that is, the calling together of all mankind into "God's family". In the last analysis the history of Christianity is founded on the intention and the will of Christ to found his Church.45

This is echoed by the I.T.C.'s comments on the Gospel of John, which sees the paschal mystery of Jesus as the foundation of the Church, based on Jesus' claim in Jn 12:32, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." In this way, John sees the unity of the believers and Jesus. Through Jesus' freely giving of his life for all humankind, he is drawing all people into unity with him.

The fourth and final proposition the I.T.C. puts forth concerning Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity is:

*The consciousness that Christ had of being the Father's emissary to save the world and to bring all mankind together in God's people involves, in a mysterious way, a love for all mankind so much so that we may all say: "The Son of God loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal 2:20).*46

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46 Ibid., p. 314.
The I.T.C. asserts that from the very beginning, apostolic preaching taught that Jesus came to save us from our sins, to redeem us, to give himself for us, to die for all people to be saved, and thusly died for each of us (1Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4; Rom 4:25, 5:8). And even more specifically, because he loved us, Christ died for each and every one of us, in an individual way (Eph 5:2, 5:25; Rom 14:15; 1Cor 8:11).

The synoptic witness shows us that this love of Jesus comes to us through all history: "The "preexistent" love of Jesus is the continuing element that characterizes the Son in all these "stages" -- preexistence, earthly life, glorified existence." We see the expression of this love in the life of Jesus, when he expresses his life on earth as one of service. This love of Jesus’ found its fullest expression in his willing death on a cross and his teaching of total self-abnegation. Jesus’ was a truly unique service, in that he serves as our model, but also that only he could give us the love of God in such an intimate way, since he was the Son of God. Jesus’ service was "a service of love that links God’s deepest love with the love, full of self-abnegation, of one’s neighbor (Mk 12:28-34)." This love of Jesus transcends the bounds of his own generation and becomes universal in scope.

48 Ibid., p. 315.
For the Gospel of John's input on this fourth proposition, the I.T.C. points to the self-gift of God in the giving of Jesus as seen in John 3:16. Also, the I.T.C. points to Jn 10:11, in which the shepherd cares so deeply for his sheep that he is willing to lay down his life for them. The I.T.C. points to the importance of this issue: "this mystery is at the heart of our Faith: the inclusion of all mankind within this eternal love with which God so loved the world that he gave his own Son."\(^{49}\)

The I.T.C.'s conclusion of the fourth proposition asserts that because Christians have experienced the love of Christ (and God through Christ), they have dedicated themselves to loving each other and those around them: the least of the brothers and sisters of Jesus.

The purpose of examining these four propositions of the I.T.C. concerning the knowledge Christ had of his mission and identity has been to set the stage for the rest of this thesis. Though we will not come back to these four points specifically until the comparison in the third chapter, it is still good to keep them in mind while going through the body of this thesis. In such a way we will have accomplished our task of setting forth comparative propositions, examining how both authors' utilize five basic scholarly sources and arrive at conclusions, and coming full-circle by returning to these four propositions in order to conduct our comparison of

\(^{49}\) Idem.
von Balthasar's and Brown's views of the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity.

There is one final issue I would like to cover before beginning the exploration and explication of the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar. It may appear to some that comparing a dogmatic theologian with a biblical scholar runs the risk of the proverbial "comparing apples to oranges". To that point I would respond by saying that it is not the two authors, nor the two diverse manners of using scholarly sources which I wish to compare, but their conclusions concerning Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity as guided by the International Theological Commission's document. In fact, both authors make certain their audience knows that they do not pretend to tread into the others' territory. Most importantly, however, is that we keep the focus on the knowledge of Jesus Christ in terms of his awareness of his mission and identity. About this, both von Balthasar and Brown have much to say. And even though their means are different, their end conclusions concerning the four propositions of the I.T.C. are extremely similar.

On another level, it could be argued that dogmatic theology and biblical exegesis are intertwined in such a way that they become interdependent in purpose. Both methods of study, though different in the way they are carried out, are similar in that they focus on the Person of Jesus Christ. On a practical level, it needs to be asserted that dogmatic theology
must in some way utilize the critical exegesis of the biblical material if it is to be valid. As well, Brown points out in his work that much of what he does is for the purpose of providing a strong biblical basis upon which dogmatic theologians can build. In this way, Brown’s and von Balthasar’s chosen fields of study are intimately intertwined. The way in which they use theological sources and their methods are very different, but ultimately they both use their different means to speak about the person of Jesus Christ and his knowledge. Therefore the basis for comparing Brown’s and von Balthasar’s christological views on Jesus’ knowledge lies in the similarity of their conclusions as they become clear when placed against the backdrop of the I.T.C.’s document on the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity.
CHAPTER 1
THE CHRISTOLOGY OF HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

Born in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1905, Hans Urs von Balthasar is one of the great dogmatic theologians of our age, according to the admiration of John Saward who expresses his feelings:

(my) gratitude -- first of all to Father Balthasar himself, for what he has done for the whole Church as her greatest theologian of this century, and for what he did for me, as for countless other individuals, by his spiritual counsel and great kindness.¹

Louis Roberts also posits von Balthasar’s importance in the modern era:

Although not as well known in the English-speaking world as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, or Hans Küng, Balthasar is one of the European theologians who has helped shape contemporary theology.²


After receiving his doctorate in German Literature in Zurich in 1928, von Balthasar entered the Society of Jesus on the 31st of October, 1929, was a novice at Feldkirch until 1931, and was ordained to the Priesthood on July 26, 1939. Between 1929 and 1940, he made contact and had theological dialogue with Erich Przywara, Henri de Lubac, Hugo and Karl Rahner, Karl Barth, and Adrienne von Speyr.

In 1950, von Balthasar left the Society of Jesus and was incardinated as a secular priest in the Swiss Diocese of Chur. For the next decade, he was active within the Community of St. John as a theological writer, publisher and speaker.

In 1969, von Balthasar was appointed by Pope Paul VI to the International Theological Commission. Three years later, in 1972, he helped to found the theological journal "Communio: International Catholic Review." In the next 15 years of his life, he was given many esteemed honors from the theological community. In 1984, Pope John Paul II presented him with the Pope Paul VI International Prize. In 1987, he was awarded the Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Prize in Salsburg because of his dedication to the work of Mozart. Finally, before his sudden death in June of 1988, von Balthasar was named as a Cardinal by Pope John Paul II.

By examining von Balthasar's work and theological sources, the stage will be set for an understanding of his christology, especially the knowledge
of Christ. Though most of the christology in this present work will come specifically from von Balthasar's development of a christology in Theo-Drama Volume III, it should briefly be placed into its context within von Balthasar's trilogy as a whole. Though the amount of his scholarly output is by any standard impressive, by listing the three parts of his Trilogy, we can begin to see the scholarly intent of his writings and work:

Part One: The Glory of the Lord (Aesthetics)
   Volume 1: Seeing the Form
   Volume 2: Studies in theological style: clerical
   Volume 3: Studies in theological style: lay
   Volume 4: The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity
   Volume 5: The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age
   Volume 6: Theology of the Old Covenant
   Volume 7: Theology of the New Covenant

Part Two: Theo-Drama (The Good): The Doctrine of the Human Person's openness to God's Historical Action (which is a transition from aesthetics to drama)
   Volume 1: Prolegomena
   Volume 2: Dramatis Personae: Man in God
   Volume 3: Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ
   Volume 4: The Action
   Volume 5: The Last Act

   Volume 1: Wahrheit der Welt
   Volume 2: Wahrheit Gottes

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3 However, it must be pointed out that the examination of how von Balthasar (and later, Brown) uses these five sources is not meant to explain his christological stance as such, but instead it is meant to simply give a more developed view of the characterization of von Balthasar's and Brown's work.
Volume 3: Der Geist der Wahrheit

Since this present work is comparing the conclusions of a dogmatic theologian and a biblical exegete, it would be helpful to briefly examine how von Balthasar differentiates his scholarly task versus that of the biblical exegete. We find a clear articulation of this view in the preface to his third volume of Theo-Drama. Although von Balthasar asserts that entering into some type of biblical exegesis is important to his theology, he makes his intent clear:

I am not an exegete; I do not aspire to enter into the increasingly subtle discussions conducted in exegetical circles -- discussions that are practically inaccessible to the layman.5

Von Balthasar does not simply dismiss exegesis as unimportant to dogmatic theology. Instead, because of dogmatic theology’s dependence on the Scripture, von Balthasar feels that exegesis does play a role, which is to further explain the biblical material which dogmatic theology discusses.

Von Balthasar goes on to contend that, even though he feels he must enter into the arena of biblical exegesis on some level, because it serves as one of the main sources of dogmatic theology:

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4 These titles are in German because they have not yet been translated into English.

It is not so important whether or not my attempts at exegesis are regarded as successful, for ultimately this survey proceeds a priori on the basis of the total deposit of New Testament Christology, which is normative as far as the Church is concerned.\(^6\)

Von Balthasar asserts that it is on this ground that conclusions about Jesus are drawn. On the topic of Jesus’ awareness of his mission and identity, von Balthasar posits his basic position along with a warning concerning a potential danger of overzealous exegesis: He contends that Jesus "must have realized the meaning and scope of his task,"\(^7\) but he goes on to assert that many exegetes assume a very weak and tiny connection between Jesus’ awareness of his mission and its fulfillment in Post-Easter events. If this connection breaks, von Balthasar contends, "we would once again find ourselves in a schizophrenic dichotomy between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith."\(^8\)

Although this is just a brief examination of von Balthasar’s general view concerning biblical exegesis, we will go into further detail in the Scripture section of his theological sources below. Along with Scripture, we will look at some other sources of his theology that should serve to further clarify not only his scholarly intent, but help us to characterize the

\(^6\) Idem.

\(^7\) Idem.

\(^8\) Ibid, p. 12.
nature of his work. It is important to point out, however, that the five theological sources chosen to establish the basic theological position of von Balthasar (and in the next chapter, Brown) are only five possible aspects, and do not claim to be exhaustive. The choice of the following five theological sources (which will also be used with Brown) does not tell us everything about the two authors, but instead gives us a common ground on which to see how each of them deals with five common theological sources. Choosing only five does imply limitations to the comprehensiveness of my examination of both authors, but it gives us a basis of comparison, which serves the purpose of this thesis.9

9 It may be argued that the five sources of theological work used here are adequate for von Balthasar but not for Brown, since he is an exegete. While this criticism is valid inasmuch as I do not use purely exegetical sources to discuss Brown’s work. However, my purpose here is to examine what I feel are five common theological sources necessary for my discussion of the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity. And while Brown claims to not be a theologian, he nevertheless makes assertions concerning Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity, which opens his work up to an examination of his theological sources. In this way, the fact that Brown does not have as much to say concerning some of these sources does not make the issues invalid, but instead it gives us insight into what aspects of the five sources listed are important (or not important) to him. Finally, since the basis of my comparison in the third chapter is each author’s conclusions on the knowledge Jesus had of his mission and identity, the specifics of how Brown critically examined the biblical material in order to arrive at his conclusions are not as important to this study as are the theological implications of the sources he uses (or does not use) and the conclusions themselves.
Von Balthasar's Use of Five Common Sources of Scholarly Work in Theological Fields

Before moving on to five specific sources of von Balthasar's theology, namely Scripture, Patristics, Dogmatics, philosophical presuppositions, and psychological aspects, it seems prudent to first briefly discuss some of his background to provide an adequate context in which to place the rest of his theology. Key to von Balthasar's approach to theology are tenets that to some seem anti-progressive:

Rather than "dehellenize" Western thought, Balthasar demands a basic return to this classical tradition. He insists upon a thoroughly grounded metaphysics, study of patristics, and solid exegesis of the literary text.

The Greco-Roman culture from which much of the Church Fathers' writings originated represents one of the keys to von Balthasar's thought. According to von Balthasar, this tradition does not yield itself to a reinterpretation, but instead calls for a total integration into contemporary

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10 NOTE: Although the book from which much of the following information comes is about von Balthasar's Aesthetics, the Louis Roberts' detailed examination of von Balthasar's background is useful regardless of which part of the Trilogy is being examined. It is important to note, however, that Roberts' work is not a comprehensive examination of von Balthasar's Theo-Drama.

theology, since it contains a vast amount of truth and insight into Christian theology.

Finally, before examining specific sources of von Balthasar's theology, Roberts asserts the importance of von Balthasar's scholarly context:

Balthasar's theological work is set in the context of his studies of German Idealism, classical literature, patristics, especially Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor, and the field of European literature and drama.12

Of these sources, perhaps his study of Patristics was the most important guide for how he pursued his theological queries. Guided by Henri de Lubac, von Balthasar began to see "a neglected source for innovative theological development,"13 within the writings of the Church Fathers.

Scripture

Since von Balthasar was a dogmatic theologian, Scripture was very important to him, but his interpretation of it served more as a starting point for his theology, whereas for Brown, as we will see, Scripture is more the subject matter itself. This is not to say that von Balthasar does not value Scripture. Quite the opposite, this implies that he not only values

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13 Ibid, p. 15.
Sacred Scripture, but in addition, Church Tradition, Patristics and the Saints and Mystics of the Church:

The sources of his theological thinking and speaking lie not only — as is quite common today — in sacred scripture, modern philosophy, modern theological movements, and the investigations of the human sciences, but above all in the great tradition of the church...the writings of the church fathers and the great saints and spiritual masters of the church are for him more than a presupposed background of his theology.\(^{14}\)

According to Medard Kehl, the above emphases of von Balthasar’s theology partially caused him to be labeled as a conservative theologian. The other reasons he received that label were his criticisms of Rahner and Küng, which appeared to some as anti-progressive. As Kehl points out, however, some of the positions von Balthasar assumed on the questions of women’s ordination, priestly celibacy, the religious life, etc. seemed indicative of the four major currents he had written out against, which, as summarized by Kehl are:

1. Christianity becoming too worldly.
2. Theological pluralism which diminishes the unity of the whole,
3. A fixation on historical / critical demythologization of the faith; and
4. The spread of an anti-Roman feeling which separates the mystery of the Church from

concrete Papacy.\textsuperscript{15}

In his \textit{Theo-Drama}, von Balthasar gives more clues for how Scripture fits into his theology. Before he begins to explicate the topic of freedom in Jesus Christ, von Balthasar asserts that we must first recall the importance of Scripture:

it is only from the Bible that we know of that interplay between absolute and finite freedom that is the precondition for all theological drama...furthermore, it is only from the New Testament that we learn of that perfect Epitome in whom finite freedom indwells absolute freedom.\textsuperscript{16}

This signifies a trend in von Balthasar to use Scripture as the definitive source for his theology. In other places, he asserts that valid christology must come from the Scripture:

\begin{quote}
The step from negative or inchoate Christology to a fully developed Christology can only be taken on the basis of an acceptance of the biblical testimony.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

In conclusion, von Balthasar has the highest regard and respect for Scripture as the definitive Word of God. The emphasis simply appears to be different from that of biblical exegetes since he uses other sources as well. This is the significant difference between his dogmatic theology's use

\textsuperscript{15} Paraphrased from Ibid., p. 4.


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, p. 42.
of Scripture and an exegetical use of Scripture, which primarily studies Scripture as the complete subject matter, with the preponderance of the emphasis therein, while von Balthasar emphasizes the Scripture, Patristics, church tradition, and the Saints in his theology.

Patristics

The study of Patristics is so integral to the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, it is a difficult task to isolate the specific influences this source had on his work. In the present work, much has already been said to indicate its influence, and as well, the remainder of this chapter will contain the same type of references. Briefly, however, it is necessary to explain the explicit influences this source had on von Balthasar's work.

The attitude von Balthasar brought to the study of Patristics was one of admiration and faith: "(he) claimed that study of the Fathers divorced from an attitude of belief is meaningless."\(^1\) According to Louis Roberts, it is this attitude of faith and emphasis on his spiritual theology that caused von Balthasar to sometimes mistakenly be labeled as non-scholarly. While this criticism may in some ways be valid because of his somewhat subjective faith-stance, von Balthasar is candid about his desire to do theology from the position of belief and admits that while his works on

Patristics are scholarly, they are not completely objective. As evidence of this fact, Roberts uses words of von Balthasar himself as he described his work on Maximus the Confessor: "That which is given here is not a historically neutral, complete presentation of the life and work of this man."\(^{19}\)

Von Balthasar's study of Patristics was more in the same vein of Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou, which constituted the middle ground between "a purely historical study and a dedicated support for dogmatics."\(^{20}\) As opposed to those that would classify von Balthasar's Patristic work as non-scholarly, Roberts asserts that "A historical-critical study which asks about this contemporary relevance (of the Fathers for present-day theology) summarizes Balthasar's approach."\(^{21}\) Finally, within von Balthasar's emphasis on the inclusion of all things in Christ, Roberts sums up von Balthasar's view of Patristics: "The attempt to discover the relation of individual Fathers to Christ is the task of patristic scholarship as Balthasar sees it and practices it..."\(^{22}\)

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 33 (Quote from Kosmische Liturgie, p. 12).


\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 34.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 35.
Dogmatics

More difficult than discussing the specific influences of Patristics on von Balthasar’s work is to attempt to briefly expound on his view of dogmatics. This is mainly so because dogmatic theology is the nature of his work. His trilogy is a systemization of the whole Christian message, bringing together the different strands of tradition with the witness of Scripture. In this way, von Balthasar’s dogmatic theology goes beyond to more systematic (comprehensive) approach.23 The content of his dogmastic theology will be explicated within the section on his specific christology as it fits into his theology. However, we can at present briefly mention a couple of aspects concerning how von Balthasar views dogmatic theology and to what extent dogmatics are used.

Within von Balthasar’s dogmatic theology, the Bible (and especially the New Testament) provide the sources and the authoritative support. In addition, he examines how the Church Fathers and early Christian writers

23 Von Balthasar could also be considered a systematic theologian in one sense. In the sense of a systematic theology built on neo-scholastic principles, von Balthasar would not call himself a systematic theologian. However, in the sense that systematic theology is a general, comprehensive theological method built around basic precepts and fundamental theological principles, it could be used to describe von Balthasar’s work. (Source: Fr. Johann G. Roten, S.M., Director, International Marian Research Institute).
relate to the Christ of the New Testament. Von Balthasar then studies what all of the above means in the context of the present day.

As mentioned above, this process is not a re-examination of the early Christian writers. It is more of a total integration of how they envisioned Jesus and His teachings. Von Balthasar sees nothing wrong with the Greco-Roman setting in which the writings are packaged. He contends that theology should take advantage of any and all cultural contributions to Christianity, since Christianity supersedes all traditions, but is formulated in each according to context. For his dogmatic theology, it is first important how the early writers and Patristics saw Jesus in their context. When that is fully understood, it can be integrated into the contemporary period by the examination of what those truths mean within our own context. Thus, by looking at the world around us, we can begin to see more clearly what the Jesus of the Scripture and his influence on the early writings of Christians mean to us. The specifics of how we are all included in Jesus and what that means for salvation history follows in the christology section of this chapter.

Philosophical Presuppositions

As will be made clear in the next chapter, Hans Urs von Balthasar’s philosophical presuppositions are easier to identify and discuss than are Raymond Brown’s. Von Balthasar’s work is steeped in the works of
Patristics and other ancient authors. His philosophical presuppositions are much more explicit than Brown's, and are largely dependent on his own literary criticism, St. Thomas, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and psychological theorists (which we will go into in the next section).

Though it is not germane to our purpose to fully develop all of the philosophical presuppositions that guide von Balthasar's theology, there are a few that need to be explicated to provide the underpinnings upon which his theology evolves. Though, as Louis Roberts points out, von Balthasar would claim to belong to no specific philosophical school of thought: "this Swiss thinker is thoroughly classical, and his metaphysics springs from the Greeks."  

Balthasar takes *metaphysics* in its most comprehensive sense, not separated from sacred (mythical) knowledge. It includes the transcendental aspects of the one, true, good, and beautiful.

This sense of metaphysics is at the heart of his Trilogy. It also helps to explain how the three major parts are related. Roberts gives a concise summary:

In the aesthetics worldly beauty and divine glory share an analogous relation; in the "dramatics" limited worldly and unlimited divine freedom are discussed. The "theo-logic" considers the relation between the structure of divine

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24 Ibid., p. 28.

25 Idem.
and created truth and asks whether divine truth can be expressed within the structures and diverse forms of created truth.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition, in the first volume of his \textit{Theologic}, von Balthasar stresses the importance of philosophical underpinnings and states that, "without philosophy, no theology."\textsuperscript{27}

Finally, before moving on to a discussion of psychological sources, we shall summarize Balthasar's five reasons which "we may take as presuppositions influencing Balthasar's thought and his approach to the Fathers."\textsuperscript{28} In short, von Balthasar asserts that 1. he allows the "truth contained in myth and the study of history of religions to be revealed precisely as the \textit{wholly other} of biblical revelation;"\textsuperscript{29} 2. this view "respects...those who take seriously the call of Scripture for penance and conversion, for immediate hearing of the Word;"\textsuperscript{30} 3. it unites theological aesthetics and dramatics in its understanding of the "scriptural view of the decisive illumination of the glory of being in that event (the cross) wherein

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 29.

\textsuperscript{27} Idem. (Quoted from Balthasar, Hans Urs von. \textit{Theologic}, Vol. 1, Preface, p. 1. In addition, for an in-depth examination of von Balthasar's philosophical presuppositions, see his \textit{Wahrheit in Wehl}, 1948.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 30. (These five reasons, which are found in von Balthasar's \textit{Herrlichkeit}, vol. 3, pt. 1, Introduction, are summarized by Roberts on pages 29-30.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp. 29-30.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 30.
every form becomes formless;"  

4. it is Christian and Catholic, promising "gospel freedom without at the same time wholly discarding ecclesiastical and theological tradition;"  

and 5. it recognizes the "blindness of the modern world for the beauty and glory of reality (the reflected glory of God)."  

Psychology

As von Balthasar sees it, an examination of modern and classical psychologies is important insofar as they help to posit the importance of each individual person:

modern psychology is prepared to take the individual seriously with all his distinctive characteristics and peculiarities, and particularly in the disparity between his "I" and his social role.

The psychology discussed here is not a source of von Balthasar's theology per se. Instead, he works in-depth with this material, but he not really influenced by it in the creation of his theological work. The examinations listed below are in the anthropological context of "who am I?" type

31 Idem.

32 Idem.

33 Idem.

34 Balthasar, Hans Urs von.  

inquiries into different models of human reality. The three psychological theorists whom von Balthasar discusses are Sigmund Freud, C.G. Jung, and Alfred Adler. While being different, von Balthasar points out that they are all generally connected: "in all cases they see the "I" as resting upon and oriented toward a vital substratum that governs and sustains it."35 Thus by examining Freud, who posits "I" as the facade of the building, Jung, who "ultimately leads the individual...to acceptance,"36 and Adler, who pulls the "I" up from its uniqueness to establish it in its rightful place in society, von Balthasar traces important psychological thought as it relates to the individual person as it is limited and as it exists in relation to its society. Von Balthasar's study of these psychologists' ideas on the concept of the self will be apparent in the third chapter, in which von Balthasar will discuss the self-consciousness of Jesus.

Freud, according to von Balthasar, is described as one who created suffering in his life via his pessimistic view of the meaning and value of life, which he contended do not really exist. Von Balthasar goes on to discuss Freud's view that religion and analysis were diametrically opposed and that eventually the latter would overcome and destroy the former. In this context, Freud sought after the "I" of his patients, which at one time

35 Idem.

36 Idem.
were self-sufficient but at birth entered an unsure world. This "clash with the reality of the external world, in which the monad breaks out of its isolation,"\textsuperscript{37} formed the subject matter of Freud's psycho-sexual stages. Freud goes on to explain the "I" as expressed by eros (the general power of love), full of the libidinal energy of the monad, though "the conscious "I" is only a fragment of the former monad or totality."\textsuperscript{38} It is therefore this relationship between the "I" and the external world that is at the root of Freud's psychoanalytic theory and his analysis itself:

Freud described the goal of his analysis as "simply that of the higher harmony of the 'ego'" and its task as that of "mediating successfully between the demands of the instinctual life (the 'id') and those of the external world, that is, between inner and outer reality."\textsuperscript{39}

From Freud's concept of the limited "I" in relation to the outer world, von Balthasar moves to discuss the contributions of C.G. Jung on the topic. Even before entering what he terms the "labyrinthine work of C.G. Jung,"\textsuperscript{40} von Balthasar cautions that to keep from getting lost, we must only deal with the specific topic at hand, the "problem of "I" and the

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p. 508.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 509.


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 514.
"role". To this end, von Balthasar examines Jung's concepts of the "I", the persona, the process of individuation and the self, while leaving behind Jung's theories on the conscious-unconscious, the ego-shadow, the animus and archetypes.

Jung's psychology, as von Balthasar points out, "renounces recourse to anything lying outside the psyche," while at the same time, "he believes that he is bringing to life again the lost treasures of the mythico-religious world of symbols (which is indispensable for human civilization)." This occurs through psychic experience rather than metaphysical philosophy and church-related dogma and liturgy, which are all but dead. Psychotherapy in Jung's work, then, is geared toward healing individual's psyche in order to help them to establish themselves as healthy individuals. This is done by examining the whole person, and not just certain aspects.

For Jung, the "I" represents "a particular configuration of numerous collective elements of the stream of life...(which) emerges like an island in the ocean." The identity of this "I" "can only be defined by a process,

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41 Idem.
42 Ibid., p. 515.
43 Idem.
namely, the process of "individuation", the result of which...is the self."\(^{45}\)

In this framework, the idea of the persona "is the mode in which the ego presents itself in the collective."\(^{46}\) This view is translated into theological terms by Jung's assertion that "psychologically speaking, it is contradictory to speak of an "absolute" God, that is "cut loose" from relationship with the world."\(^{47}\) Christologically, this implies that, "through God's becoming man, Christ has become a historical archetype."\(^{48}\) For Jung, then, reaching the highest state of completeness is the "I"'s goal:

Christ (is)...the "highest symbol of the self", and "embodiment of the archetype of the self". Thus we should not "follow" him externally but, as his "mystical members", allow him to live in us. Christ must necessarily be history and myth (archetype) at one and the same time, so that he can be both a unique incarnation and an event taking place everywhere.\(^{49}\)

In conclusion, von Balthasar points out that Jung stresses the importance of striving for a balance between the self and the outer world, never

\(^{45}\) Idem.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 518.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 519.

\(^{48}\) Idem.

allowing the self to become too important, and always realizing that we are all part of something that is vastly bigger than ourselves.

The aspect of Alfred Adler's psychological theory von Balthasar discusses is "called "individual psychology" ...(which) means that each individual has his unique psychic constellation and is an "indivisible individuality"." 50 Within this theory, the individuality of each person is not compromised by using types, which only serve as general guidelines and could never fully encompass each person's individuality. Against the backdrop of two of Adler's underlying presuppositions:

man's initial situation, one of tension between individuality and community, and his free, goal-seeking behavior that leads to the building up of "character", 51

von Balthasar identifies Adler's basic insight, namely that "man...conceals from himself his deepest ambition, the blueprint of his understanding of life and corresponding law of action." 52

In this manner, von Balthasar describes Adler's concept that the individual is constantly striving for an ideal, as an individual and as a member of a larger community of other individuals. These ideals (mastering life, relationships, etc.) cannot be grasped, yet they are to be


51 Ibid., p. 525.

52 Ibid., p. 524.
striven for with zeal. Therefore the person can define their individuality as it exists in itself and as it exists as a part of a much larger whole. Socialization within the community of individuals is the goal of Adler's psychology. This is done via the individual's striving for unattainable ideals, which allows for development never to come to a conclusion, and consequently allows growth to always continue.

While von Balthasar ultimately rejects much of the psychological theories above, it is nonetheless important to see how he treated them, which allows us to understand more fully his anthropological backdrop upon which he posits the drama of Jesus Christ.

The Christology of Hans Urs von Balthasar:
The Drama of Universal Inclusion in Christ

Because of the christological importance of von Balthasar’s Theodrama, even though our examination of his christology will include other sources, firstly and most importantly we are concerned with the christology he develops within the Theodrama, Volume Three. It is in this work that von Balthasar lays out his view of Jesus in its fullest form: "here as

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nowhere else one can find the systematic elaboration of his Christology, Mariology, ecclesiology, anthropology and trinitarian doctrine."^54

After outlining von Balthasar’s christological arena in which all theological drama takes place, we will stop short of an in-depth discussion of the Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity. Instead, we will move on to a discussion of the christology of Raymond Brown. Then, in Chapter Three we will have the opportunity to examine Brown’s and von Balthasar’s views on the knowledge of Jesus side by side.

The christology von Balthasar establishes within his *Theo-Drama* Volume III begins with a strong assertion about the basis of the Church’s normative New Testament Christology:

> we draw conclusions about the being and consciousness of Jesus: our view is that he whom God commissioned to reconcile the world to him must have realized the meaning and scope of his task.\(^55\)

Key to the christological model being presented here is that all humans are included in the person of Christ. It is on this basis that von Balthasar builds an anthropological doctrine of man that "is only possible...within the context of an overall Christology".\(^56\) At the root of this assertion exists


\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 11.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 13.
von Balthasar's concept that all humanity and extra-human powers and authorities must define themselves in the context of Christ. Von Balthasar spends a good deal of time describing the nuanced meanings of what he means by "in Christ," but to begin the discussion, he gives this insight:

It is clear, however, that what is thus encompassed, even if it possesses freedom, is fundamentally determined by the encompassing reality; and since the latter too, both in its divine and its human aspect, is free, a dramatic element is already signaled in the relationship between them.\(^57\)

After giving this explanation in theoretical terms, von Balthasar explains it more clearly:

The encompassing reality, the concrete figure of Jesus of Nazareth, is himself man, whereas the human beings he encompasses are in part determined by his being and his destiny.\(^58\)

In other words, simply by existing, Jesus Christ as human and divine affects all of creation. For this reason, the "characters in theo-drama can only be defined on the basis of the action already under way."\(^59\) Therefore all humanity is in some way "determined" by the person of Jesus Christ because it is in and through him that God opens up the acting area in which the drama of interaction between God and humans can thus ensue.

\(^{57}\) Idem.  
\(^{58}\) Idem.  
\(^{59}\) Idem.
Von Balthasar's subtitle of "Persons In Christ" therefore is meant to designate that Jesus is the encompassing framework within which all humans act: "(it) is both the ground of their being...and also that which facilitates their acting thus or acting differently."\textsuperscript{60}

With any theological discussion including the word "determined," there must be some type of qualification to alleviate the initial knee-jerk negative reaction. The next section, \textit{Freedom in Christ}, will discuss in depth humanity's freedom in Christ, but for now it is important to note von Balthasar's distinction between human freedom (created) and divine freedom (absolute). In this christological framework, the first serious question to arise is that of compromised human freedom, if in fact, we are all thusly "determined." The key to the problem for von Balthasar manifests itself in a comparison of God's freedom and humanity's freedom. The interaction of these two types of freedom illustrates that even though God's perspective on the entire play (in the final judgment) will be that it is good, this perspective "by no means compels the free actor to act in one way and not in another."\textsuperscript{61} In other words, specific aspects of history did not have to occur the way in which they did for the entire play of action to

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{61} Idem.
eventually work out in a way that is pleasing to God. It is this freedom, however, that distinguishes the characters from the actions themselves.

To more fully understand the mode in which all humanity is included in Christ, we must look at von Balthasar's development of Jesus as the Alpha and the Omega, the Second Principle which informs and makes possible the first. For von Balthasar, this originates in St. Paul, who asserts that Adam is the first man while Jesus is the second man (Cf I Cor 15:45 and Gal 4:4). This assertion is based on the idea that "God's plan for the world is to unite all cosmic reality, in heaven and on earth, in Christ, who is the Head (Eph 1:10)." Within this plan, Jesus is both determined by the drama from below, since he is a human born into a human environment, and not determined by the drama since he alone is from above and existed before the drama began.

All creation was formed and brought into existence with Jesus in mind. In more explicit terms, von Balthasar describes how Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega:

Thus an initially puzzling reciprocal causality seems to operate in his concrete person: he is caused by the world and its history; and the world and its history are caused by him. Under the first aspect, he is the world's Omega; under the second, its Alpha. Thus, between these two

\[62\] Ibid., p. 15.
ends, which are identical in his person, the whole drama of the world is acted out.\(^{63}\)

Von Balthasar uses Jesus' dual concept of time to further illustrate the reciprocal causality at work within his person. On the one hand, as far as Jesus knew his identity as the only Son of God, his particular time is "measured by his acceptance of the Father's will concerning his particular, all-embracing mission."\(^{64}\) On the other hand, however, as far as Jesus authentically became man, he became subject to time: "not only to general human and historical time but also to that modality of time that is marked by universal sin."\(^{65}\) This distinction raises the question which points to the most difficult aspect of the divine-human identity of Jesus Christ: how could Jesus enter the modality of time marked by sin and still obey the will of God the Father?

To address this question, von Balthasar describes the central christological paradox of the mission of the divine-human person of Jesus Christ:

to combine the freedom of the "descent" with the unfreedom of the existence that results from it; the intuitive knowledge of the Father with the veiled nature of an exemplary "faith"; the unity of the divine and the human will in himself with the -- "economically" necessary --

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\(^{63}\) Idem.

\(^{64}\) Idem.

\(^{65}\) Idem.
clash between perfect obedience and instinctive horror in the face of the task of bearing sin. The dramatic essence and constitution that make Christ both Alpha and Omega infuse drama into every aspect of his being, his action and his conduct.66

Further, in discussing the dramatic aspect of the person of Jesus, von Balthasar asserts that the destiny of all individuals is intimately tied to the destiny of Jesus Christ, who constitutes the drama in which all humanity finds itself as players:

Every human being is unique in his endowments, but he only becomes the unique person he is through the free development of these endowments in the chance medium of the world that surrounds him.67

For von Balthasar, this medium of the world that constitutes our environment is the freedom we have which is dependent upon Jesus’ ultimate exercise of his freedom, which forms the basis in which our freedom takes root.68 Who and what we as human beings become, then, is in some ways dependent upon the divine context of the drama which Jesus makes possible.

66 Ibid., p. 16.

67 Idem.

68 This freedom in Christ is discussed in the following section, Freedom in Christ.
To answer the question concerning how this person Jesus can make such a difference for the world and the cosmos, von Balthasar goes on to describe the ultimate singularity of Jesus' destiny:

For in God's "idea", he is something no other man can be, God's ultimate (end-gültig, "finally valid") Yes to the world; he is the Word in whom God resolved to reveal himself, in an unsurpassable manner, to the world.69

This leads to a paradox within the person of Jesus Christ, namely that there are two senses of who Jesus was as the Word of God: one in which he is the man, Jesus of Nazareth, a mortal man who makes the Word of God known, and the other sense in which Jesus is the ultimate Word of God as the definitive Yes to relationship with the world and all of the cosmos.

Within this dramatic action, von Balthasar stresses the importance of Jesus' death and the fact that, as a man, Jesus had "no power over his destiny beyond death."70 This power only belongs to God, who utters the final Word on the matter. Hinting to what Jesus knew of himself and his mission on earth (and also what his powers and limitations were), von Balthasar asserts the importance of his death and resurrection in communicating the Word of God:

69 Idem.
70 Idem.
Now, insofar as the raising of Jesus from the dead to eternal, divine life is God’s last word on the meaning of life and death, this word extends beyond all the dimensions of his worldly existence; consequently, what Jesus was able to say and do as an earthly and mortal being was not the entirety of the Word of God -- which at the same time he knew and proclaimed himself to be.\(^{71}\)

This illustrates the paradox of Jesus as the Word of God and his words, utterances, etc., of which the latter are only one aspect of his totality as God’s Word, but this Word is only total since it came from finite, human action. Having briefly posited Jesus’ position within the drama, von Balthasar goes on to discuss what is to some an unsurmountable problem: how we as human beings can truly be free if in fact we are determined by the person of Jesus Christ. We must address this issue before moving to a discussion of Raymond E. Brown’s christology in the next Chapter.

**Freedom in Christ**

Von Balthasar attempts to reconcile the seeming disparity of the idea that human beings are most free when bound to the singular destiny of Jesus Christ. The enigma centers on the paradox of freedom which guarantees the possibility of any and every action and the restriction that all that happens takes place in Jesus Christ, thus in some ways is deter-

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 17.
mined by his existence. For von Balthasar, the answer to this enigma is found in being...

able to show that this "in Christ Jesus" gives us, a priori, the greatest opportunity and the widest possible framework for the interplay of both forms of freedom (absolute and created).\textsuperscript{72}

As a prerequisite to this discussion, von Balthasar points out that the assertion must first be made that only in the Bible can we see this interplay of theological drama and freedoms at work. Further, it is only in the New Testament that "we learn of that perfect Epitome in whom finite freedom indwells absolute freedom."\textsuperscript{73} Hence, as mentioned in the previous section, Scripture is the starting point and the source for von Balthasar's concept of freedom in Christ through the drama he began and thusly determines.

There are two questions von Balthasar posits to address the issue of ultimate freedom in Christ. The first question is whether the fact that the ultimate and concrete form of God's divine Will finds its manifestation in the Person of Jesus Christ takes away all human freedom and at the same time compromises God's infinity. Secondly, von Balthasar asks himself if it is fair that every person's use of their freedom is the basis for God's judgment pertaining to how they knowingly or unknowingly relate to the

\textsuperscript{72} Idem.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p. 18.
person of Jesus Christ. Ultimately the question at hand is this: in choosing Jesus Christ to be the definitive Word through which God interacts with human beings, did God's initiative to set up the drama in such a way simply squelch humanity's true use of their freedom? In other words, can human freedom be bound to the person of Jesus Christ and still be called "freedom"?

This questioning process of von Balthasar's is common to theology's dealing with the idea of predestination. Is there any use in humans' acting at all if in fact we are really so many puppets on so many strings? For the subject at hand, it is important to examine how von Balthasar answers this difficult problem. He examines the issue from three perspectives: God's, humanity's, and Christ's.

The issue of freedom from God's perspective centers on the following fact: "God's free will, with which he eternally affirms himself, can only be infinite in itself." Since humanity is not infinite while the divine free will is infinite, it must seem finite to finite creatures, even though its appearing finite is a matter of the creatures' perception and not constitutive of the reality of God itself. Thus, von Balthasar goes on, what are seen by humans as commandments are actually finite presentations of the infinite divine will as God interacts with humanity. Therefore, the divine

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74 Idem.
will must take on a finite manifestation for God's creatures to understand it in an intelligible way. Finally, von Balthasar concludes that God's infinite being imparts to the creation some infinite quality, allowing the creatures to strive after something (not fully understandable) beyond their present existence. "As such...it is the offer of grace -- the grace of selfhood in God -- and, at the same time it creates genuine space for the creature."75

From humanity's point of view, von Balthasar points out that in our finite being, we cannot know our freedom is finite, for it seems infinite to us. He discusses human death as the example which illustrates most fully from the human point of view how it is within God's freedom that humanity's freedom finds its fullest expression. Contending that death is an integral part of what it is to be human, and also what connects humanity with the rest of the universe, von Balthasar stresses the importance of body and soul:

To remove man from the cosmos and reduce him to a mere immortal soul, so that death only affects his body, is a solution that, while it evinces an awareness of man's transcendence, actually tears his being apart. Only the offer addressed to him by God, that is, to attain eternal life as a full human being within the sphere of God's freedom, can open up to his empty transcendence a sphere in which he can develop positive hopes of fulfillment; he can

75 Ibid., p. 19.
direct his divergent possibilities to converge
toward this sphere.\textsuperscript{76}

Hence, von Balthasar points out in this example concerning human death, that freedom from the human point of view does find its fullest manifestation within God’s freedom.

The main objection von Balthasar speaks to in discussing freedom from Christ’s point of view is one which holds that since God chose Jesus and Jesus died on the Cross, there is not anything left in the acting arena because the drama has been acted out already (between God and Jesus, with humanity watching). In response, von Balthasar stresses that the person of Jesus Christ does not, in fact, narrow the acting area between God and humanity, but instead expands it:

he (Jesus) simultaneously opens up the greatest possible intimacy and the greatest possible distance (in his dereliction on the Cross) between God and man; thus he does not decide the course of the play in advance but gives man (all people) an otherwise unheard-of freedom to decide for or against the God who has so committed himself.\textsuperscript{77}

Hence Christ, through establishing the full availability of the choice for or against God gave humanity more freedom than ever before. While von Balthasar holds that in this process, Christ does not specifically manipulate

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p. 20.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 21.
the three fundamental tensions of individual/community, body/spirit, and female/male, there is an extent to which we are determined by Jesus:

Christ, through his existence, does not leave everything in indifference -- an indifference dangerously heightened by him: he directs world history, which, left to itself is stagnant, and causes it to flow toward fulfillment.\(^\text{78}\)

This fulfillment, "toward the hoped-for and divinely willed conclusion,"\(^\text{79}\) is carried out through the Church, the saints, the sacraments and the Bible.

**Obedience to the Triune God**

Finally, for von Balthasar, in a discussion of human freedom and inclusion in Christ, it is important to address the way in which Christ lived to help point the way. Reverting to the classical view of the Trinity, von Balthasar stresses that Jesus did not envision himself as the center, but instead constantly stressed himself as the one sent from God the Father. As well, Jesus stressed the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the people in order that the works he (Christ) performed on earth could be understood more fully and that greater works would be accomplished through the Holy Spirit: "he must leave the stage that he has widened in order that, within the work he has accomplished, the "greater works" (Jn 14:12) may be done."\(^\text{80}\)

\(^{78}\) Ibid., p. 21.

\(^{79}\) Idem.

\(^{80}\) Idem.
In the person of Jesus Christ, then, God shows humanity what can be understood of the Trinity (Godhead) in human (finite) terms, and also the proper attitude of humanity: "namely, the attitude of service that goes to the lengths of self-forgetfulness so that God's "talents" may bear fruit in the world."\(^8^1\) In Jesus, then, not only is the universal drama of the relationship between God and humanity being widened and at the same time directed (by the existence of the person of Christ), but also, in the concrete person of Christ, there is the partial revelation of who and what God is in relationship to humanity and a practical guide with which humanity can more fully understand the manner of self-forgetfulness which is the proper attitude to manifest before God. In summing up his basic christological principles\(^8^2\), especially concerning the inclusion of all things in Christ while maintaining the highest possible manifestation of human freedom, von Balthasar writes:

In christological terms, the creature's obedient distance from his Creator and Master becomes transparent, revealing that "distance" within the Godhead, in the Spirit, between the Son and the Father. It is this profound, self-renouncing service that ushers the activity of absolute freedom.

\(^8^1\) Ibid., p. 22.

\(^8^2\) The basic christological principles of von Balthasur that are set forth within this paper are understandably not exhaustive. The tremendous volume and depth of his christological work is so overwhelming, it is only possible to give a brief outline here, since an exhaustive appraisal of his christology itself could be (and has been) the topic of many books.
freedom into the creaturely world... The fact that the drama is grounded in Christ is no hindrance to it: on the contrary, from every angle, it is what makes it possible. 83

Conclusion

Before moving on to the next chapter, we should first conclude with a few of von Balthasar's assertions, which seem to sum up his basic christology:

1. In the face of attempts to highlight one aspect or another of Jesus' life at the expense of other aspects, von Balthasar holds that Jesus is much bigger than any human attempt to channel him into a source to suit their own needs.

2. Jesus' sense of mission and claim of who he was were radical, universal and despite the efforts of some individuals, have found no peer.

3. Paul's view supports this radical christology, of which von Balthasar posits that "there can be no question of Jesus' words regarding himself in the Gospels being dependent on Paul." 84

4. Jesus' words and authoritative actions, which will outlive heaven and earth, are proof of the unique way in which he must have regarded himself for him to have such an impact on the world.


84 Ibid., p. 27.
5. What Jesus said and did was so revolutionary, it was the cause behind his death on the Cross, which in turn was the primary manifestation of how he drew all things unto himself.

6. Jesus was the Word of God, and "Every man's final destiny will be determined by his attitude to Jesus (Mk 8:38)."^85

7. While Jesus' "in person" earthly influence was stopped at the Cross, God, in the resurrection, transformed "this ruin into the great, perfect success of his mission."^86

8. Jesus' influence today cannot be manifested in a direct response to his call (as with the disciples), or in actual discipleship with him (historically). Instead, Jesus' influence today is manifest through his example of "allowing something to happen, in letting himself be plundered and shared out in the Passion and Eucharist."^87 It is this example, plus his call to us to allow ourselves to be pruned to bear more fruit (which is tranethical and thus accessible to us today), in which the contemporary force of Jesus' continuing influence can be felt.

9. Since this influence affects individuals at the personal, spiritual level, the statistical Church and its history cannot show adequately Jesus' influence on the world; thus the distinction between salvation history and world history.

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^85 Idem.

^86 Ibid., p. 28.

^87 Ibid., p. 29.
10. Since Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, he (as the second principle) embraces and includes the first principle of Adam, since the first principle was conceived with its fulfillment only possible in Christ, who is the ground of all being.

11. Jesus Christ established the acting area in which God and humanity could interact, for "it is only when "the Word becomes flesh" that a concrete area comes into being for the interaction of God and man."^{88} 

12. The initiative for the drama comes from God, "the involvement of God has always been there, right from the start, in Jesus Christ; this means that, on the theodramatic stage, man has also been shown the area in which his freedom can lead to his self-fulfillment in God."^{89} 

13. The resurrection for von Balthasar, "reveals who Jesus Christ in reality was, that he had a just claim to appear in the name and with the authority of his divine Father and that he was empowered to take the world's sin upon himself and expiate it."^{90} 

14. As far as human responsibility to respond to Jesus goes, "In the acting area Christ opens up as the fruit of his Resurrection, each individual is given a personal commission; he is entrusted both with something unique to do and with the freedom to do it."^{91}

^{88} Ibid., p. 41.

^{89} Ibid., p. 43.

^{90} Ibid., p. 51.

^{91} Idem.
15. This commission does not imply that humans are puppets following a line already traced for them, "but it does mean that absolute freedom has "prepared" a personal path for each one of us to follow freely, a path along which our freedom can realize itself."\(^{92}\)

16. Finally, the central theme of the theo-drama, as von Balthasar sees it, is "in implementing this (above) plan, God takes the first step in surpassing love and utterly free grace, by enabling man to act authentically in Christ's acting area and so respond to God's prior action."\(^{93}\)

\(^{92}\) Ibid., p. 52.

\(^{93}\) Idem.
CHAPTER 2
THE CHRISTOLOGY OF RAYMOND E. BROWN

Born in New York City on May 22, 1928, Raymond E. Brown attended St. Charles College in Catonsville, Maryland from 1945 to 1946. He received his BA (1948) and his MA (1949 in Philosophy) from the Catholic University of America. From 1949 to 1950, Brown attended the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, earning his S.T.B. Afterwards, he received his S.T.L. (1953) and his S.T.D. (1955) from St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore. Next, Brown earned his Ph.D. in Semitic Languages from Johns Hopkins University. Finally, he received his S.S.L. in 1963 from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Raymond E. Brown entered into the Society of St. Sulpice (S.S) and was ordained into the priesthood on May 23, 1953. He has done work with the Fellowship of American Scholars of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and with the Dead Sea Scrolls. From 1959 to 1971, Brown was a professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore. Then in 1971,

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Brown went to Union Theological Seminary as the Auburn Professor of Biblical Studies. He currently holds the post of the Auburn Distinguished Professor Emeritus in Biblical Studies at Union Theological Seminary.

Much of Brown's work has been ecumenical. He was the first Catholic to address the Faith and Order Conference of the World Council of Churches in Montreal, 1963. He was also the only American Catholic member of the joint Roman Catholic / World Council of Churches Committee on Apostolicity and Catholicity in 1967-1968. He was a member of the National Committee for Theological Discussions between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Churches of the U.S. from 1965 to 1974. In addition, he was also a consulter to the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity from 1963 to 1973. Finally, he was the only American member of the Roman Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1972-1978.

Brown has been a guest lecturer at many U.S. and foreign colleges and universities. A prolific author, he won the National Catholic Book Award and the Christopher Award (for Volume Two of his Gospel According to John, of the Anchor Bible Series, 1970), and also the National Catholic Book Award on two other occasions (for his Jerome Biblical Commentary (1968) and The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection (1973) ). Brown was a member of the editorial boards of the "Catholic Biblical Quarterly," the "Journal of Biblical Literature," and "New
Testament Studies." He also served as the Vice-President of the Catholic Biblical Association (1962-1963), and later its President (1971-1972). In addition to being a member of the American Theological Society, Brown was the President of the Society of Biblical Literature from 1967 to 1977. He was then the President of the Society of New Testament Studies from 1986 to 1987.

Brown has also been distinguished with several prestigious awards, including the Cardinal Spellman Award from the Catholic Theological Society of America in 1971. Among his 23 honorary doctorates are ones from:

-Edinburgh, Scotland
-Uppsala, Sweden
-DePaul, Chicago
-The Louvain, Belgium
-Boston College, Boston
-Glasgow, Scotland

Finally, making the crossover from theological and religious recognition, Brown has also made an impression on the world at large as "probably the premier Catholic Scripture Scholar in the U.S." --Time Magazine.

The vast amount of learning and scholarly experiences that have filled Brown's life illustrate vividly his ability and authority to speak critically about biblical exegetical matters, which for many years had been
all but closed to Catholic authors due to the condemnation of modernism in 1907.²

A brief examination of Brown's works illustrates his scholarly intent and how it is manifested. His studies are almost exclusively concerned with the New Testament, and historical studies of the context of NT Palestine. Though the most influential sphere of Brown's work has come in the areas of the commentaries on the Gospel of John and the infancy narratives, some of his works deal with the Blessed Mother, some with specific Gospels, some others with specific passages of Scripture. In addition, there are a substantial number of books and articles written about Jesus Christ, His office, His life and times, His Passion, Death and Resurrection, and His awareness of his own Identity and Mission. In this respect, it is apparent that he pursues a Gospel Christology based on his exegesis of the Scriptures.

Occasionally in his writing, Brown will make his theological and scholarly purpose clear. Critical biblical exegesis is very important to Brown, and he has made it his life's work. However, he sees it as part of the larger work of theology as a whole, and not simply an isolated field of study. When discussing the issue of the omniscience of Jesus, Brown

asserts that the solution cannot be found solely in the field of Scripture, but that modern biblical exegesis will help to inform the discussion:

Hopefully, this biblical evidence will not only serve as the raw material from which to formulate a solution but will also color and shape the solution.¹

Later in that same work we uncover Brown’s understanding of the role biblical exegesis plays in modern theology. Once again on the topic of Jesus’ knowledge, Brown contends that although dogmatic theologians were the major proponents in the modern discussion of the knowledge of Jesus, "Nevertheless, the discussion is going on, and for the exegete not to participate would be a neglect of duty."² Brown goes further to assert the reason it is necessary for biblical exegetes to carry on with their methods of critical scholarship:

the biblical evidence does not decide the theological problem or conclusively support one theory over another. Yet the theologians who are trying bravely to establish the possibility of new answers must have available to them competent critical surveys of the New Testament evidence in order to see how their theories can be best reconciled with the evidence.³


⁵ Ibid, p, 42.
Having posited Brown’s scholarly intent as seen in his writings, now we will move on to an examination of how he uses the five common sources of scholarly theological work we have established in order to better understand the characterization of his work. Once again we should note that the positing of these five sources is not supposed to be comprehensive or suggest that they are the only possible ones, but instead to give us a common understanding of how von Balthasar and Brown treat some of the major sources of Christian theology (in the broad sense).

**Brown’s Use of Five Common Sources of Scholarly Work in Theological Fields**

Just as with the description of von Balthasar’s sources, the five areas which will be discussed are Scripture, Patristics, Dogmatics, philosophical presuppositions, and psychological aspects. By examining to what extent and for what purpose Brown uses these five sources in his scholarly work, we will be able to better characterize his theology.

**Scripture**

This source of Brown’s work is the most obvious and most important. His idea of what Scripture is and how it is to be used becomes evident when we look at the fact that he is primarily a biblical exegete, studying the New Testament under the scholarly lens of historical criticism. For Brown, then, Scripture represents the subject matter from which
dogmatic theology eventually flows. It presents truths that, throughout
time, are translated and re-translated according to each historical period's
conceptual framework. Rather than using dogmatic statements and then
reading them back into the New Testament, Brown begins with the text
itself, and through the application of historical and literary critical
methods, he attempts to determine who said what and to whom. For
Brown, as a biblical exegete, the guiding questions to use when examining
Scripture are: to whom the specific passages were written, by whom they
were written, under what historical context they were written, and for what
purpose they were written. For it is only when we understand these
different aspects of the context of Scripture that we can understand the
meaning it had for the first and second century audiences. Likewise,
Brown asserts that not until we understand what it meant for them will we
understand what it means for us today. In this way, Brown tries to isolate
the truths in Scripture as they exist apart from the contexts in which they
arose. Thus with greater accuracy and understanding we can apply those
timeless truths to our own situations and our own lives.

Brown also contends that for us in the present age to fully under-
stand the biblical texts, we must understand first the particular problematic
and context of the individuals for whom the Scripture was written. In that
vein, the NT authors' purposes in writing for their audiences come into
play, since to understand what the passages mean to us today, we must first
understand what it meant for the early Christians in their context. When Brown comes to a text, therefore, he keeps in mind that "the same formula uttered at different times may have different meanings," and also that he must "take into account the limited perspective of the men who formulated them (as well as our own limited perspective in investigating the problem)."6 This stance of Brown's is in opposition to what he calls the fundamentalist perspective, which believes nothing can be added to the dogma which was given in Apostolic times, and that all "development of doctrine consists merely in drawing forth from the deposit of faith."7 According to Brown, however, this view does not take into account historical context, and is thus not as thorough. In fact, at the heart of the way in which Brown views the purpose and meaning of Scripture, he has this to say:

a new formulation (of a pre-stated truth) means at least a new precision that was not there before; and to that extent one's thought is different from, even if in continuity with, the thought of the past.8

Finally, let us look at a good piece of advice he gives for the reading of the Gospels. This advice, which he gives in the context of his discussion of the difficulty in discerning the knowledge of Jesus, states that "The

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6 Ibid, p. xi.

7 Idem.

8 Ibid, p. xii.
Gospels were written to tell us what we should know about Jesus, not what he knew of himself.9

**Patristics**

Here, unlike von Balthasar, this source in Brown's work is not nearly as explicit. Part of the reason for this is the nature of his work. While von Balthasar is working directly from Scripture, Tradition, Patristics and Church documents, Brown is working mainly from Scripture as seen through the different traditions within the New Testament. Therefore, Brown does not base his work on Patristics to the same extent as von Balthasar. It is important to note, however, that Brown does not discredit the Fathers for their particular views, even if he does not agree with some of them. Instead, he respectfully reminds himself and his readers to examine the particular time and contextual situation in which the early Church Fathers lived in order to understand their theological assertions:

> Therefore, to understand what was being affirmed at any past era it is not enough simply to recite the formulas of that era; one must know what those formulas meant to the men who uttered them, realizing that the same formula uttered at different times may have different meanings.10

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10 Brown, Raymond E. *Jesus, God and Man*. p. xi.
As was mentioned above in the "Scripture" section, he maintains that all critical biblical exegesis must take into account the particular situation and the limited perspective of the authors being read as well as our limited ability to read and understand the problem ourselves.

Brown does not dismiss Patristics, but he does not possess the sense of awe many have at the work of the Church Fathers. Instead, he assumes the Fathers had the most of the same basic content of the writings that we have today, and interpreted them to the best of their abilities, which were no greater or lesser than the abilities of careful exegetes today. This middle view allows Brown to honor Patristics with the proper respect, while understanding that they had no claim to the truth that was inherently greater than ours today, which is to be found in Scripture:

To judge how much truth those formulas (of the Fathers) contain one must take into account the limited perspective of the men who formulated them (as well as our own limited perspective in investigating the problem.\(^{11}\)

Dogmatics

From what we have stated thus far, it is obvious that Brown sees himself, not as a dogmatic theologian, but instead as one who prepares solid biblical understanding upon which dogmatic theologians can build. On the specific topic of the knowledge of Jesus, Brown contends that,

\(^{11}\) Idem.
"dogmatic theologians, not exegetes, had led the way in the modern
discussion of Jesus' human knowledge."\(^{12}\) One reason for this is because
while dogmatic theology has been encouraged for most of Catholic history,
critical biblical exegesis has only been allowed and "encouraged" by the
Holy See for a relatively short period of time.\(^ {13}\) What this means in real
terms is that Brown sees the importance of dogmatic theology, and makes
a distinction between exegesis and theology, since his work is not
technically even called "theology." In addition, Brown asserts the
importance of biblical exegesis as the tool with which dogmatic theology
can work to create biblically sound theological premises.

In conclusion, Brown does not discredit dogmatic theology, nor does
he claim biblical exegesis' superiority. Instead, what Brown does assert is
that his object of study is not dogmatics. More importantly, he goes on to
hold that dogmatic theology and biblical exegesis are interrelated in such

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 39.

\(^{13}\) Per our subject at hand, the knowledge of Jesus, Brown sums up the
brevity of the history of Catholic Biblical exegesis: "Exegetical studies by
Catholics of the problem of Jesus' knowledge have been relatively few; yet
it is just such study that would be of most help to the (dogmatic) theolo-
gians. One reason for the paucity of these studies is that truly critical New
Testament exegesis has, with some important exceptions, been a reality in
Catholic circles only in the past few years; and only critical exegesis would
see the limitations attributed to Jesus in the earliest layers of New
Testament tradition. Another reason, however, has been the repercussions
that such studies might bring upon their writers, for they leave the writers
open to the charge of denying the divinity of Jesus." Jesus, God and Man,
p. 41. See footnote #2.
a way as to make each necessary for the other’s existence and validity. On
the one hand, sound biblical exegesis makes the relationship between
dogmatic theology and Scripture by substantiating dogmatic theology’s
claims with biblical evidence. On the other hand, without dogmatic
theology to build upon its foundation, biblical exegesis would be a form of
empty criticism on ancient literature.

Philosophical Presuppositions

It is a more difficult task to isolate and discuss the philosophical
presuppositions of Raymond Brown than it was for von Balthasar. This is
so mainly because, since von Balthasar is a dogmatic theologian, his work,
at least in part, is based on the specific philosophical underpinnings of the
Church Fathers, Aristotle and others. There are, however, a few
philosophical presuppositions that can be gleaned from a close reading of
Brown’s work. His pledge to literary and historical criticism is his most
clear philosophical presupposition. This leads to his understanding of
Scripture, which is probably better designated as a theological presupposi-
tion.

For Brown, the Sacred Scripture in general, and the New Testament
in particular, contain the truths of God and information written for us to
understand God’s relationship with the world. The way Brown understands
the Bible is his strongest philosophical (theological) presupposition, or that
upon which his work is based. For Brown, the Bible is not to be understood as a book of literally true stories, but instead as a book containing God's truths that can come to us on many different levels. This understanding of the Bible can be traced back to Blondel, Loisy and Tyrrell among others, who strove to study the biblical literature in a scientifically responsible way.\textsuperscript{14}

Due to the nature of Brown's work, he does not explicitly hold to any specific philosophical presuppositions, other than those which assert that the study of history is a positive thing, critical scholarly biblical exegesis is not harmful to the Word of God (but instead, helpful for understanding it), and that scientific methods of study can and must be used in theological fields. In fact, when speaking of the knowledge Jesus had of himself, Brown asserts the need for his work to be objective biblical exegesis which is not tied to a specific philosophical viewpoint:

> Without attaching myself to the theology of any one author and without getting involved in the more abstract expressions of systematic theology, I think it is fair to say: By being who he was, Jesus knew who he was.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} See footnote # 2 for more information concerning the Modernist movement, of which Brown would be a descendent because of its emphasis on the critical study of Scripture.

\textsuperscript{15} Brown, Raymond E. \textit{Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible}, p. 101.
Thus beyond the philosophical presuppositions concerning his views on scholarly exegesis (and therefore Scripture itself), Brown consciously tries to avoid other philosophical and theological presuppositions for fear they would contain pre-made interpretations of the biblical material which he uses as the basis for his work.

Psychology

While the study of psychological theorists is very important and very evident in the work of von Balthasar, Raymond Brown’s scholarly work does not seem to be explicitly informed by any specific school of psychology or theorist. Nor does he seem to even deal with psychology in any of the works which were examined in my research. Raymond Brown’s work, however, is of a different type; one which does not necessarily weigh current psychological sources, unless to speak generally about the psychology of the times in which the biblical material was written. In this area alone, Brown examines the basic psychology of different cultures of the different communities of the writers of the New Testament. Since the focus of his work is primarily on analyses of the Scripture and not on dogmatic formulations, if Brown does utilize the theories of psychology, it is not evident or explicit in the works used for this study.

16 Which is not to say that Brown has never written about psychological theories. I just did not come across any such information in my limited research.
The Christology of Raymond Brown: An Examination of his Gospel Christology Classification System

Having briefly discussed some of Brown’s sources for his scholarly work, the next task is to focus on his christological stance. Toward that end, we will examine some questions that will yield an overall view of Brown’s christology. It should be noted here that Brown’s christology is not easy to discern since he does not work in a dogmatic theological manner. For this reason, this section will not be as explicit as the parallel chapter on von Balthasar, but will nevertheless attempt to explain to some extent what Brown’s basic christological views are.\(^{17}\)

A foundational key for understanding Raymond Brown’s christology is found in a published version of an address given to the National Convention of the College Theology Society on June 1, 1974.\(^{18}\) In his discussion of modern scholarship on Gospel Christology, Brown describes the gamut of different theological viewpoints concerning the person of

\(^{17}\) We will go into more of an in-depth examination of Brown’s christological views in the third chapter’s section dealing with his assertions concerning the knowledge Jesus had of his mission and identity. This section was intended to briefly discuss some of the basics of his christological thought as seen in his Gospel Christology Classification System. Because this system was developed by Brown, it shows us what he thinks of the different possible views concerning Jesus Christ, therefore providing with the basics we needed for this chapter.

Jesus Christ. Though purposely vague in asserting his own position, it is possible to define certain points of Brown's christology by paying special attention to his words.

Although strongly based in biblical exegesis, Brown asserts his belief about the heart of theology early in the paper: "Christology was, is, and, I suspect, always will be the single most important question in Christian theology."19 To illustrate the importance of Jesus to Christianity, Brown goes on to point out that, although there are three religions based in the biblical texts, Judaic and Islamic identity are not based on one person, while Christianity's identity is founded upon the person of Jesus Christ. As well, Brown posits that the Gospel Christology he considers is only one aspect of christology, and does not represent the entire field of study. As a further distinction, he contends that his evaluation of Gospel Christology is not just Jesus as the Christ, but in addition, it includes a broader sense of any way Jesus is portrayed in the Gospel accounts (ie. the various titles of Jesus).

Brown posits the purpose of his paper as the examination of how Jesus evaluated himself as compared to how the New Testament (especially the Gospels) evaluates him. Toward that end, in the rest of the paper, he presents a survey of modern christological views as they address the

19 Ibid., p. 35.
question of Jesus' self-evaluation versus the evaluation presented in the New Testament. Two important distinctions he makes before moving into his survey concern the definitions he uses to categorize the basic christological views. He admits that the categories are general, "such a categorization oversimplifies and does at least minor injustice," 20 but stresses the importance of the comparison, since "misunderstandings over christology are a very divisive force in Christianity today." 21

The first clarification concerns the definition of "scholarly" versus "non-scholarly" christological views, which are used to describe positions that are held by reputable scholars who publish their findings (scholarly), and positions that are held by individuals whose writings are not to be counted within the scholarly publications, etc. Secondly, he defines conservative versus liberal positions of christology as a function of the continuity between Jesus' self-evaluation and the New Testament's evaluation(s):

A conservative christological view, for me, is one that posits a real relationship between the christology of Jesus' ministry (or self-evaluation) and the christology of the NT writings -- a relationship that may run the gamut from identity to varying degrees of continuity. A liberal christological view is one that denies any real relationship or continuity between the

20 Ibid., p. 36.

21 Idem.
evaluation of Jesus during his ministry and the way he was later preached by the Church.  

Based on the above distinctions, the five opinions he surveys are, from left to right, 1. non-scholarly liberalism, 2. scholarly liberalism, 3. Bultmannian existentialism, 4. scholarly conservatism, and 5. non-scholarly conservatism. The brief explanation of each description that follows helps us to understand more fully the way in which Brown understands christology.

Starting from the right extreme, Brown’s discussion of non-scholarly conservatism centers on the assertion that it is outside scholarly thought, it leaves room for absolutely no development from Jesus’ ministry to the New Testament’s proclamation, and it posits a total identity between the self-evaluation of Jesus (the way he sees himself) and Gospel Christology (the way he is presented in the Gospels). According to Brown, however, it does not account for the differences (diversity) in Scriptural texts. Since it is in some ways a reaction to biblical criticism, Protestants have been dealing with it longer than have Catholics. This is so because, as Brown points out, biblical criticism has only been allowed (encouraged) in Catholic circles for a relatively short period of time.

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22 Ibid., p. 37.

23 Brown attributes this change in Catholic theology to the writing of the papal encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu (1943) and The Historical Truth of the Gospels (1964) of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. For more information on Modernism and its plight, see footnote # 2 above.
field of approved study in Catholic circles has created "a defensiveness among Catholics who persist in holding onto a simplistic approach to the Gospels." This confusion is not made any better since priests trained before the 1960’s were taught very differently about biblical criticism than were priests after 1964:

people often hear contradictory things about the Gospels from the pulpit, with the accompanying warning that the opposing view is, respectively, either "out of date" or "dangerously novel."

Brown points out that part of the solution can be found in the way college students are now being educated about biblical criticism -- with respect for more strict views, but also with the knowledge to dialogue with family, friends, and priests concerning the newly approved view of the Church (concerning critical biblical exegesis).

From one extreme to the other, Brown next discusses the non-scholarly liberal view of christology, which is also outside modern scholarship. This view is likely to be held, contends Brown, by rebounding non-scholarly conservatives who study the Scripture for themselves, find that their position is lacking, and swing too far in the opposite direction, to the other extreme of the pendulum:

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25 Idem.
If, through study, an extreme conservative comes to realize that the Gospels are not literal accounts of the ministry of Jesus and that there has been development, the reaction is often to ask not "How much development?" but "How do I know that any of it is true?"\textsuperscript{26}

Unfortunately, this reaction will often lead to the opinion that Jesus was an ordinary man and that there is no continuity at all between Jesus' self-evaluation and the New Testament's proclamation of who he was.

This view is considered non-scholarly by Brown because it simply dismisses the New Testament Christology as unimportant. The importance of Jesus is transformed into an overemphasis on one aspect of his existence, as a great moral teacher, who taught only love. Brown points out that while love is certainly an integral part of Jesus' teaching, it is also a part of many other religions. The emphasis should be on the basis for love, and not simply love in and of itself:

Christians remain those who base their love on a confession about Jesus...Every NT proclamation of the Gospel involves an evaluation of Jesus, his person and his ministry.\textsuperscript{27}

Next, Brown moves to a discussion of scholarly liberalism, which differs from the non-scholarly version on a few important notes. It does not simply dismiss New Testament Christology, instead, it sees New

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 42.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 43.
Testament Christology as incorrect and posits that actually there is no real continuity between Jesus' self-evaluation and the New Testament's evaluation of Jesus:

For liberals, the christology of the NT is a creation, nay, a *creation ex nihilo*; and scholarly liberals have sought to trace this creative process by a careful methodology.\(^{28}\)

Though they dismiss the New Testament Christology as a creation, Brown does insist that their methodology is a major asset and a contribution to theology that now is used in some form or other in most scholarly biblical criticism. From this group of authors comes the birth of historical and linguistic criticism of the New Testament Scripture, which is widely used today. The discoveries of ancient texts (Dead Sea Scrolls, etc.), more stringent critical analysis of the New Testament texts, the study of ancient languages and civilizations, plus the study of comparative religions create the foundation on which the scholarly liberals base their methodology.

Brown is quick to distinguish what he sees as the positive contributions of scholarly liberalism from the subjective conclusions drawn therein: "the liberals' methodological plotting of the development of christology is one thing; their value-judgments on that development is another thing."\(^{29}\)

Scholarly liberalism further asserts that the New Testament Christology of

\(^{28}\) Ibid., p. 43.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 44.
Jesus as the Christ was created to keep his memory and teachings alive. Ultimately, then, scholarly liberalism commends the creation of New Testament Christology for keeping the memory of Jesus alive, but has a major qualification:

such a christological crutch was necessary to keep the memory of Jesus operative, in the judgment of the liberal scholars the crutch could now be discarded. Twentieth-century scholarship could detect the real Jesus and hold onto him without the christological trappings.\(^\text{30}\)

Before moving on to the next viewpoint, Brown asserts that while this subjective opinion of scholarly liberalism ultimately dismissed New Testament Christology as a creation, he wanted to make an important clarification:

Scholarly methodology enables one to recognize the development but does not settle the question of whether such a development was a falsification or a deeper perception.\(^\text{31}\)

Moving further to the right, Brown discusses the impact and implications of Bultmannian existentialism, which arose in reaction to scholarly liberalism and World War I. Brown asserts that while scholarly liberalism stressed the importance of Jesus' teachings concerning how to live, "the tragic war created a need for a more traditional Christianity

\(^{30}\) Ibid., p. 45.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., p. 44.
based on God’s salvation of man in Jesus." The emphasis now shifted from the acts of humans to the act of God in Jesus Christ.

Rudolf Bultmann offered strong resistance to the scholarly liberal viewpoint, affirming their use of methodology while categorically rejecting the conclusion that New Testament Christology was simply a creation. For Bultmann, "there is a functional equivalence between the Church’s christological proclamation and Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of heaven." This contention is based on the assumption that it is God’s action which represents humanity’s only hope for escaping futile, meaningless existence. Bultmann stressed what "God has done for man, rather than on what man can do for himself." Jesus came to present God’s offer of the kingdom of heaven. The Church that came after Jesus offered him as the Way to the kingdom of heaven:

Thus, while the christology of the NT may not stand in demonstrable continuity with the christology of Jesus’ ministry, the challenge offered by its christology stands in continuity with the challenge offered by Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of heaven.

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32 Ibid., p. 45.
33 Idem.
34 Ibid., p. 46.
35 Idem.
The importance, according to Bultmann, is not necessarily to what extent Jesus used Messianic titles for himself, but instead that "the Church did give a christological evaluation when it demanded that men accept Jesus as Messiah and Lord."\(^{36}\)

Finally, Brown enters a brief discussion of moderate conservatism, in which he places most modern scholarship. This view, to the right of Bultmannian existentialism, is a scholarly view which asserts that "there is a discernible continuity between the evaluation of Jesus during the ministry and the evaluation of him in the NT writings."\(^{37}\) Coupled with this assertion of discernible continuity are the affirmations of development and scholarly methodology which the scholarly liberals offered.

Within this category, Brown distinguishes between those who view this discernible continuity in an explicit versus an implicit manner; the former "evaluating Jesus in terms of the titles known to the Jews from the OT or intertestamental writings,"\(^{38}\) the latter asserting that...

Jesus did not express his self-understanding in terms of titles or accept titles attributed to him by others. Rather he conveyed what he was by speaking with unique authority and acting with unique power.\(^{39}\)

\(^{36}\) Idem.

\(^{37}\) Idem.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 47.

\(^{39}\) Idem.
While the explicit belief asserts that Jesus used and accepted low christological titles for himself (Son of Man, Messiah, Prophet, Servant of God), most in that category would not conversely assert that Jesus used the high christological titles for himself (God, Son of God). The implicit christological side of this category, however,\(^\text{40}\) contends that Jesus probably did not use or accept titles for himself but was not without visible signs of his authority:

> By his deeds and words he proclaimed that the eschatological reign of God was making itself present in such a way that a response to his ministry was a response to God.\(^\text{41}\)

Brown then asserts his belief that contemporary scholarship will most likely swing back and forth to and from explicit and implicit christology. Before closing, Brown makes it clear that simply because theologians in the implicit christological category do not accept that Jesus used and accepted titles for himself, it does not infer in any way that these same theologians are playing down the importance of Jesus:

> the ultimate tribute to what and who Jesus was may have been that every term or title in the theological language of his people had to be


\(^{41}\) Brown, Raymond E. ""Who Do Men Say That I Am?"" -- Modern Scholarship on Gospel Christology," p. 47.
reshaped by his followers to do justice to him, including the title "God" itself.\(^{42}\)

Brown ends the article by asserting that Jesus' question concerning who men said he was will never be fully answered until Jesus comes again.

Before moving from general thoughts on christology to the more specific topic of the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity, it is important to look at an example in which Raymond Brown draws a conclusion from his biblical exegesis. This example deals directly with the knowledge of Jesus and can serve as a transition from generalities to the specific topic of this thesis. When talking about the arguments surrounding the use of the title "Messiah" for Jesus, Brown contends goes to the heart of the issue:

the question is not whether Jesus knew he was the Messiah; Jesus intuitively knew who he was, and the question is whether "Messiah," as that title was understood in his lifetime, satisfactorily described who he was.\(^{43}\)

Here we have Brown's assertion that Jesus intuitively knew who he was. This quote gives us an idea where Brown places himself on the christological scale, namely moderate conservatism. Because Brown's writings are mainly of a biblical exegetical type, excerpts like the one above are extremely valuable, yielding insight into his conclusions, which usually are

\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 48.

\(^{43}\) Idem.
implicit within his exegesis, if discernible at all. For this reason, the next chapter’s examination of Brown’s christological exegesis as seen in *Jesus God and Man* will be complemented by his conclusions found in *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*.

Having examined the background christological viewpoints of both von Balthasar and Brown, we can now move into a specific discussion of the knowledge of Jesus Christ as it pertains to his mission and identity. The stage has been set, and now we will examine the two authors together in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3
TWO VIEWS OF JESUS CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF
HIS MISSION AND IDENTITY

In this, the final and most important chapter of this work, we will attempt to lay out in a clear, concise manner, two views of the knowledge of Christ concerning his mission and identity. Having previously established some of the basic theological tenets of both von Balthasar and Brown, it is now time to move ahead as the subject matter becomes at once more metaphysical and speculative, and at the same time more basic for the foundation of the Christian faith in the person of Jesus Christ.

Toward that end, we will examine von Balthasar’s ideas on the matter, followed by Brown’s thorough exegesis of the biblical texts concerning Christ’s knowledge. Finally, we will conclude by discovering how truly similar their positions are, through a critical comparison of their conclusions concerning Jesus’ knowledge of his mission and identity. Though other texts may be utilized, the primary texts in which these authors put forth their thoughts on the knowledge of Jesus will compose most of the subject matter of this examination. Once again, before
examining both authors’ views and then identifying similarities and differences, it is important for me to point out that the study in this thesis is limited by the works I chose to examine. When a few works are chosen from authors who have written vast amounts, it necessarily means that some works will be left out. This is not done on purpose, but at the same time, in a way it is. In other words, for a thesis of this scope, it would have been impractical (if not impossible) to read everything von Balthasar and Brown have ever written, or even to narrow down their writings to those that deal with christological themes. Because of this, I have chosen a few works of each, especially what I believe to be their major christological works concerning the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity. As has been pointed out before, Brown’s *Jesus, God and Man* and von Balthasar’s *Theo-Drama* Vol. III are what I believe to be the most direct works dealing with the topic of this thesis.

This does not mean, however, that they do not discuss the knowledge of Jesus in other places. It simply means that, within the scope of this work, I have chosen what I have chosen. This explanation is here to make it clear that I understand the limitations choosing certain works and not others involves. Had this thesis been much more specific and not spent so much time explaining the background sources of both authors’ works (which I firmly believe were necessary), I would have most definitely examined works such as Brown’s *Birth of the Messiah* and von Balthasar’s
Maximus the Confessor, in which there is a wealth of information concerning methodology and christology. There are other works that have been left out as well, but with the understanding that I limited my conclusions because of the necessary specificity of my sources, let us move on.

There is one final point which must be briefly mentioned, and that is the difference made by the two authors' intentions. I do not wish to go into great detail here, but it needs to be pointed out nonetheless. The main difference in the intentions of the two authors here is their focus (which once again is in some way dependent upon which text(s) I chose to examine). Raymond Brown writes Jesus, God and Man to address a very specific question, namely the debate concerning the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity. This will become even more clear as we examine his treatment of the specific issue in this chapter. On the other hand, Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote his Theo-Drama, Volume III as one section of a much larger systematic effort, in which he discusses all major tenets of Christian theology in an orderly and systematic manner. Thus, while it is quite easy to find Brown's conclusions in Jesus, God and Man, von Balthasar's conclusions do not lend themselves to such easy identification. As well, while von Balthasar does not do much with some topics (such as biblical exegesis) in Theo-Drama, Vol. III, he does discuss them in other places, either in his massive work as outlined in the very beginning of
Chapter One or in some of the other books and articles he has also written. The point here is simply to keep in mind that von Balthasar and Brown are writing from two different perspectives and are also addressing two different levels of specific questions. Whereas Brown tries to include most aspects of his answer in *Jesus, God and Man*, von Balthasar had no such intention (to answer a specific question), hence his "answer" is scattered throughout many other places.

**View One: Hans Urs von Balthasar**

Using the concept of Jesus’ mission as his guiding christological criterion, Hans Urs von Balthasar calls this area of his work his christology of consciousness. Crucial to an understanding of von Balthasar’s christology is the assertion of total identity between the person and mission of Jesus Christ. Thus, through an understanding of Jesus’ mission, his person becomes more clear as well.

Jesus had a strong sense of mission, asserts von Balthasar, which "was eschatological and universal."1 Jesus took on and completed this mission while working within his limits and existence as a human being. This gave him a totally unique mission and identity as the One sent from God the Father. Von Balthasar points out that the New Testament most often looks at Jesus’ function rather than his nature, thus examining the

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work of his mission leads one to the question of his person, of who he is. In fact, the two are so closely related, it is difficult to distinguish between Jesus’ identity and his mission.

Von Balthasar's desire to answer the question of christology 'from below' leads him to look in depth at Jesus' mission according to the New Testament. Before moving on to his examination of the New Testament texts, it is important to mention what von Balthasar means when he discusses christology 'from below':

We are not asking, for instance, about the contents of Christ's knowledge, let alone the kind of personality he had, but about the conditions that made it possible for what empirically took place in him.²

In von Balthasar's thought, Jesus' mission is one with his person, and the two are thusly fused together.

In the New Testament, Jesus' mission as the Son of God differentiates him qualitatively from all other prophets and people who had missions. The important fact that Jesus is the One sent implies that God is the One who sends. This comes through in Paul's assertion in Romans 8:3-4 & 32 in which the sending of Jesus establishes his life as a mission, which "supersedes the entire Old Testament order, precisely because he is God's "own Son", together with whom God has given us "all things" (Rom

² Ibid., p. 150.
Von Balthasar lists examples from Hebrews to illustrate Jesus' preeminence and superiority over others who were sent before him due to his Sonship and unique relationship to God the Father. This superiority takes the form of the qualitative difference in divine inspiration: "the prophet's mission with its allotted measure of divine inspiration has given way to a divine mission that knows no measure."

While this mission christology finds its strongest roots in the Gospel of John, von Balthasar points out that it is certainly evident as well in the synoptics, primarily in the form of Jesus' claim that if individuals receive him, they were also receiving the One who sent him (Mt 10:40, Lk 9:48, Lk 10:16, Mk 9:37, and Jn 13:16, 20). In addition, von Balthasar contends that the New Testament notions of sending and coming are closely related, both finding their point of departure in God. It is especially in the Gospel of John that this coming of Jesus is equivalent to the sending from God the Father, hence Jesus' mission.

Jesus' mission is both soteriological and trinitarian: "the intimate relationship between the One sent and the One who sends him takes the form of obedience within the Father's act of self-surrender." This obedience is Jesus' ultimate manifestation of his mission as the One sent

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3 Ibid., p. 151.
4 Idem.
5 Ibid., p. 153.
to open a window of salvation for the whole world. This relationship between Jesus and God is analogous to our relationship to the triune God as well: God sent Jesus out with the intent that Jesus would return to him; just as we, as Jesus’ followers, are sent out to return to God as well. Before going into further metaphysical detail about what Jesus’ mission (and his consciousness thereof) entailed, von Balthasar points out that the Gospel of John’s christology of mission is in the other Gospels as well. The unique aspect of this mission which some scholarship has denied coming from the mouth of Jesus must have been alive in Jesus’ awareness. For the problem with asserting that this unique mission was created by the evangelists brings up the question of "how can we envisage this faith coming into existence if Jesus did not have such a self-consciousness?"  

In his quest to explain the concept of mission as the central and guiding aspect to his christology of consciousness, von Balthasar discusses Jesus’ sense of mission as one in which he took place in the processes of being and becoming. In an important point, he establishes how he differentiates Jesus’ sense of his own mission from other individuals who have been called to a particular mission as well:

In speaking of a "sense of mission" -- whether we realize it or not -- we imply a distinction between the one who is aware of his mission and the one who sends him. Someone may

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6 Ibid., p. 154.
have an unshakable inner conviction that he must do or propose something, but he cannot say that he has a mission. No one can give himself a mission. On the other hand, where a person is entrusted with a substantial mission that summons him to put his very existence at its disposal, the person thus sent...can, as a result, become (to a degree) identified with the mission.\(^7\)

God can give someone a sense of mission at any point in their lifetime (ie. Abraham, Jacob, and Simon-Peter). Using John the Baptist as an example of this, von Balthasar asserts that it did not matter who he was before God called him and gave him a mission; it is the calling forth which is important. For God, then, Abram was always intended to be Abraham; Jacob, Israel; Simon, Peter.

In the same way, Jesus received his mission from the One who sent him. When God gave Jesus his mission, along with that he was giving him his being, or person. It is through Jesus' mission that the unity of being and becoming manifests itself:

Now a mission can only be carried out within a time span, and, particularly in the case of Jesus' mission, the final phase, the "hour", has the greatest significance for its execution. Consequently, Jesus' existence-in-mission manifests a paradoxical unity of being (and a being that has always been) and becoming.\(^8\)

\(^7\) Ibid., p. 154.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 157.
This mission, being identical with the person of Jesus, could only find fulfillment on the Cross. This being and becoming of Jesus implies a certain amount of development in his person. In fact, for von Balthasar, the union of divine and human in Jesus underwent a process of development in order for Jesus to be perfectly (and completely) human. The interplay of Jesus being God (part of the Triune God) and also becoming through a relationship with God the Father, expresses a single being, both human and divine: "The dramatic dimension that is part of the definition of the person of Jesus does not belong exclusively to the worldly side of his being; its ultimate presuppositions lie in the divine life itself."

The eschatological aspect of Jesus’ destiny lies in the fact that his mission was universal but could only be fulfilled by going beyond that which is mortal, thus the chasm between the two natures is seen in the human development of his "self". To illustrate this point, von Balthasar goes to Gregory of Nyssa, who asserts that Jesus’ human nature was one thing that became another through a process:

human nature could "progress toward perfection", specifically as a result of the great change from the first state (the humiliation) to the second (the exaltation): "It is possible to say with all truth that he who was raised from human estate and exalted to the level of God,

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9 Ibid., p. 159.
who was one thing and thus became another,  
became Christ and Lord (Acts 2:36).\textsuperscript{10}

Through this process, as seen specifically in Jesus’ statements concerning himself as the Son of Man, von Balthasar points out that “we must bear in mind that the earthly Jesus was aware of his eschatological and universal mission.”\textsuperscript{11} Jesus’ identification with the Son of Man shows that the eschatological dimension of his mission was assumed into his self-consciousness unlike any other human being. Von Balthasar illustrates this point by stating that the big difference in self-consciousness of mission could be seen in understanding that, unlike John the Baptist, Jesus’ consciousness of mission was always in him, with no conceivable starting point, whereas John was called at a particular point in time.

This leads von Balthasar to one of his strong assertions pertaining to the consciousness of Jesus concerning his identity and mission. He contends that while Jesus’ fully exalted state (status exaltationis) is not directly accessible to him as a human being on the earth,

\begin{quote}
this will not prevent him from having an unshakable awareness, from before all time, of his mission. Nor is he only aware of part of it, the part that is to be implemented during his earthly life: he is aware of its totality, even if, as we shall show, an essential aspect of its implemen-
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 160; quoted from: Gregory of Nyssa, \textit{C. Eunom} VI (PG 45, 736B).
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 160.
\end{flushright}
tation is his ignorance of the "hour" of its decisive phase.\textsuperscript{12}

Important to this formula, however, is the strong assertion that, about the specific hour, Jesus needed not to know for his perfect, salvific obedience to be genuine. It was not necessary because Jesus had received his mission from his Father and had faith that it would be fulfilled. At the same time, Jesus realized that it was not up to him to maintain the union between his exalted state and his human state.

This cycle which Jesus shows us is key to understanding the theodrama as a whole. Jesus is in between these two states, bearing the brunt of all evil and experiencing the hell of God-forsakenness, and thusly is exalted and given a name above all other names: "In this way, in this collapse and rebirth, he maintains his identity; and so, as the matrix of all possible dramas, he embodies the absolute drama in his own person, in his personal mission."\textsuperscript{13} Through Jesus, we can imitate his personal mission and thusly participate in the drama he began.

Having thus fully explicated how the concept of mission guides his christology of consciousness, von Balthasar moves into a direct and explicit explanation of Jesus' own consciousness of his mission (and, therefore, person):

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 161.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 162.
The "Christology of consciousness" simultaneously addresses the work (soteriology) and the person of Christ. In his mission, Christ knows that he is unique; he knows that he is fit for this task and dedicated to it. Once more, therefore, we find that the identification of the person satisfies the theodramatic requirement.\textsuperscript{14}

Concerning Jesus' consciousness of his mission, von Balthasar points out that if we accept Paul's claim that the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus are at the center of his mission, we must conclude that this mission is part of Jesus' self-consciousness. Von Balthasar asserts that Jesus did, in fact, know why he was giving up his life in total self-sacrifice: "it is impossible to suppose that God could use this death to reconcile the world to himself if the one who died it was unaware of its significance."\textsuperscript{15} Moreover, this consciousness did not come through a study of the Suffering Servant passages in Isaiah, since Jesus surpassed all titles and attempts at explanation found in the Old Testament.

More than anyone else, Jesus was driven by the Spirit and empowered therewith. This presence of the Spirit in Jesus' life manifested itself in his ability to forgive sin and his ability to bind the devil, both of which belonged exclusively to the Triune God. To finish this section on von Balthasar before moving to a discussion of Raymond E. Brown's assertions

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 163.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 164.
concerning Jesus’ consciousness of mission and identity, we will look at what von Balthasar calls the four aspects of Jesus’ consciousness which are interconnected in an intimate way, "This structure of Jesus’ consciousness of mission is inviolable: it cannot be fragmented."\(^{16}\)

(a) How to get nearer to a concept of mission-consciousness that is absolute, that is, coinciding with the person; (b) how it is possible to reconcile the historical shape of this consciousness with the fact that it existed from before all time; (c) its presuppositions in the "economic" Trinity; (d) mission as the measure of Jesus’ knowledge and freedom.\(^{17}\)

The first aspect von Balthasar discusses, the quest for an absolute consciousness of mission, is tempered with a gentle warning: "It is both ridiculous and irreverent to ask what it must have been like to be God incarnate."\(^{18}\) In other words, the absolute identity of consciousness and mission can only be followed to a certain point and we cannot know exactly where the two come together in the incarnate Word of God. In addition to that, there is no explicit way to understand the existential and formal identity of person and mission.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 165.

\(^{17}\) Idem.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 165; quoted from E.L. Mascall (no citation as to location).
Von Balthasar reiterates that if the mission Jesus had was, in fact, universal and from God (as Paul and John assert), then he had to have been aware of what it was all about:

This means that, in the individual human consciousness of Jesus, there is something that in principle always goes beyond the purely human horizon of consciousness. A more-than-human mission -- to reconcile the whole world with God -- cannot be a secondary and accidental development of a human consciousness, however much room we must leave for a growing clarity of mission-consciousness.19

As well, von Balthasar points out that Jesus' consciousness of mission (and thus person) justifies both aspects of being and becoming: "Jesus' fundamental intuition concerning his identity...: "I am the one who must accomplish this task." "I am the one through whom the kingdom of God must and will come."20

With direct reference to an absolute consciousness of mission, von Balthasar explains how this mission consciousness is intuitive and limiting in the life of Jesus:

Jesus is aware of an element of the divine in his innermost, indivisible self-consciousness; it is intuitive insofar as it is inseparable from the intuition of his mission-consciousness, but it is defined and limited by this same mission consciousness. It is of this, and of this alone, that

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19 Ibid., p. 166.

20 Idem.
he has a *visio immediata*, and we have no reason to suggest that this *visio* of the divine is supplemented by another...over and above his mission.\(^{21}\)

The paradox arising from this complete identity between person and mission is that, unlike the Law (of the Old Testament) which was imparted from without, Jesus’ mission is identical with his "I" (self) and this makes him different from anything in the Old Testament. Since his mission is himself, it has always been in his consciousness as mission (a sending of God).

According to von Balthasar, there are two important aspects of calling Jesus’ mission a sending from God: one is the importance of the inherent relationship between the One sent and the One who sends (interrelated, but not identical); and the other is the mission’s future, which is now in human hands, thus it is subject to human frailties and limitations as well as human free will. In this relationship, God the Father is behind the mission, but does not compel Jesus, which is the purpose of his mission. Asserting that "it is as if the Father’s freedom points to the mission’s necessity and as if the Son’s freedom is oriented to the latter," von Balthasar shows that the mission itself is a revelation of "a decision freely made in concert by the whole Trinity."\(^{22}\) Because of Jesus’ existence as

\(^{21}\) Idem.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 168.
part of the Triune God, he knows that he is the One sent and conversely understands that he is sent by the Father.

The relationship between Jesus and God the Father is important, and von Balthasar points to prayer as an important aspect of Jesus' awareness: "the more the Son unites himself with the Ground from which his person and mission simultaneously spring forth, the better he understands both his mission and himself."\(^{23}\) This uniting takes place through prayer, which von Balthasar asserts is part of "the activity of mission, (...Lk 22:32; Jn 11:41)" and that "mission is also the subject matter of prayer (Jn 17)."\(^{24}\)

Following from this, von Balthasar establishes the relationship between prayer and faith in the person of Jesus. Prayer and faith are both necessary because of the nature of Jesus' awareness of mission and person, which is...

\[
\text{all the more evident in the fact that the mission is not open to his gaze in its entirety; it is to be implemented step by step according to the Father's instructions (in the Holy Spirit).}^{25}
\]

Since Jesus always has been and will be his mission, his faith is qualitatively different from ours. This concept of faith is one of the most difficult to

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 169.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 170.

\(^{25}\) Idem.
reconcile with the discussion of his awareness of mission and person. Von Balthasar discusses the definition of faith that may be applied to Jesus in relation to his mission-consciousness as follows:

Insofar as he does not know (and does not wish to know) the paths God sets before him for the fulfillment of his mission, but has the certainty that the Father will bring it to its conclusion, we can apply to him the definition of faith found in the Letter to the Hebrews: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction...of things not seen" (Heb 11:1).\textsuperscript{26}

This, however, does not pretend to infer that Jesus is a non-actor, allowing God to do all of the work of completion of mission. Instead, since he is conscious of his mission, he realizes that he has to throw himself into it and actively follow it to its completion.

Von Balthasar's final estimation concerning Jesus' absolute mission consciousness emphasizes that Jesus' awareness was centered on actively carrying out this mission that God the Father had given him, not introspectively musing about who he was:

The task given him by the Father, that is, that of expressing God's Fatherhood through his entire being, through his life and death in and for the world, totally occupies his self-consciousness and fills it to the very brim. He sees himself so totally as "coming from the Father" to men, as "making known" the Father, as the "Word from the Father", that there is neither

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 171.
room nor time for any detached reflection of the "Who am I?" kind.27

The second aspect of Jesus' consciousness von Balthasar discusses is that of reconciling his God-consciousness which always existed with the fact that as a human, Jesus was an historical being. Von Balthasar sees the issue as being one of how the child Jesus could ever have not known exactly who he was if his self-consciousness and mission-consciousness were identical. A strong tradition, championed by St. Thomas, contended that ignorance in Jesus (even the child Jesus) was not really ignorance, but a conscious decision to withhold information. Von Balthasar's answer to this comes in the form of Mariology, in which he contends that self-consciousness cannot form on its own and that Mary was the "other" (the "Thou") for Jesus, which gives her a unique relationship with him.

Mary would not have explicitly known all of her child's mission, but her virginal conception and birth would have given her at least a basis for some amount of understanding. This does not imply that Jesus' consciousness of mission or self came from without: "the Child's inner initiation, under the guidance of his eternal Father, shall take place in harmony with his external, historical initiation in the world of men."28 In so doing, Mary hands on the religious tradition of her day to her son: "(which is) sufficient

27 Ibid., p. 172.

28 Ibid., p. 176.
to awaken the sense of mission latent in the Child’s person,\textsuperscript{29} which, in turn, becomes his external initiation as he continues to have contact with the world around him. Von Balthasar strongly asserts that the physical and spiritual roles of Mary were crucial to Jesus’ development: "Without this spiritual handing-on, which takes place simultaneously with the bodily gift of mother’s milk and motherly care, God’s Word would not have really become flesh."\textsuperscript{30}

As a key example of Jesus’ historical knowledge, von Balthasar points to Jesus’ temptations, in which he responds by calling on words from the Scriptures, words which all Israelites would have known. It is important to see that historical time acts as a catalyst when it makes contact with Jesus’ mission, which has always existed, even before all time:

as it (Jesus’ mission) unfolds through historical time, it enters increasingly into history. It awaits God’s signal for its fulfillment not only from within: it also awaits it from without, because the mission will be fulfilled essentially in a fulfillment of history; the Father’s will is encountered in history no less than in interior inspiration.\textsuperscript{31}

This sign from God to begin its fulfillment probably manifested itself in the person and work of John the Baptist. Historical knowledge, therefore, is

\textsuperscript{29} Idem.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 177.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 178.
essential for Jesus' carrying out of his mission. For history provides the necessary ingredient to allow Jesus to understand more fully his mission:

Jesus undergoes an historical learning process with regard to his fellow men and their tradition, but essentially this is paralleled by an inward learning whereby he is *initiated more and more deeply* into the meaning and scope of his mission ...things now become explicit that were hitherto only obscurely and indirectly felt or left entirely to the Father's guidance.³²

In other words, Jesus understands more the more he lives and experiences life and God, and in the process, he turns intuitive knowledge into explicit concepts as he continues to understand more and more about his person and mission.

As we have seen, von Balthasar holds that Jesus was always implicitly aware of his destiny, though specifics were left to the Father alone. In this relationship, Jesus' readiness to complete his mission eventually shows itself in his need to obediently accept the Father's will concerning his passion, suffering and death:

The all-embracing ambience of his consciousness remains his readiness to respond to whatever concerns the Father (even to the extent of losing all tangible contact with him, all experience of his will to forgive), his readiness to pay all that is necessary so that he may proclaim this forgiveness to men.³³

³² Ibid., p. 179-180.

³³ Ibid., p. 182.
This mission of Jesus' saturates his whole existence and is manifested in poverty, chastity and obedience, all three of which illuminate the others, and were designed from the very beginning in the existence of the Triune God: "together they effect his perfect readiness to undertake the task, a task proposed by the Father in the Spirit and taken up in total freedom by the Son." This mission is not completely available at any one given time to Jesus, but mediated through the Spirit: "a mission that is not given once for all but is revealed and can be realized in a new and surprising way by the Holy Spirit at every moment."

The third aspect of Jesus' consciousness that von Balthasar discusses is its relationship to the Triune God. In short, God the Father gives Jesus the Son the mission through the Holy Spirit. Jesus accepts the mission in total freedom, committing himself to total obedience to God the Father's will. Highlighting Jesus' obedience, von Balthasar points out that in the incarnation, the Spirit is active (conceiving the Son to be born of the Virgin Mary) while the Son is passive, which shows that his obedience to God the Father starts at the incarnation itself. Positing himself between St. Thomas' assertion that "the hypostatic union precedes the Son's endowment with habitual grace, since this is an effect of the sending of the

34 Ibid., pp. 182-183.

35 Ibid., p. 182.
Spirit (S. Th. III, 7, 13),” and Walter Kasper’s view of the incarnation in which the Spirit’s role overshadows the Son’s, von Balthasar points out that the Spirit does play a crucial role in the incarnation, but that Jesus already had to have been obedient to entrust himself to the Spirit’s activity in the incarnation.

Thus the obedient Son had a soteriological purpose and the Spirit made his obedience possible by communicating the Father’s will to the Son. The Spirit’s role in this process is twofold:

he is breathed forth from the one love of Father and Son as the expression of their united freedom...but, at the same time, he is the objective witness to their difference-in-unity or unity-in-difference.37

In the first aspect, the Spirit shows us the freedom of the Son and God the Father by illustrating that the identity of Jesus’ mission-consciousness and his "I"-consciousness are manifestations of an obedience that was born from the Triune God’s decision from before all time that would make possible the salvation of the world. The second aspect of the Spirit has the "function of presenting the obedient Son with the Father’s will in the form of a rule that is unconditional and, in the case of the Son’s suffering, even appears rigid and pitiless."38 The Spirit is, in this sense, the enforcer of

36 Ibid., p. 185.
37 Ibid., p. 187.
38 Ibid., p. 188.
the supratemporal decision of the Triune God, not allowing the plan to fail.

The final aspect von Balthasar examines concerns Jesus’ mission as the factor that measures his knowledge and freedom. Under this topic heading, von Balthasar sets forth his christology of consciousness as it relates to the Church Fathers’ and Scholastics’ fully developed doctrine of Jesus’ omniscience. In this doctrine, the omniscience of Jesus was stressed to the detriment of some of his more "human" characteristics. Jesus’ obedience was overlooked, due to the fact that it required a lack of direct consciousness of God and complete, explicit knowledge.

Von Balthasar points out that Hermann Schell\textsuperscript{39} was the first to treat the topic of mission christology in explicit form. Schell explained Jesus’ knowledge as something that grew and developed. In addition, Schell contends that it is actually more perfectly human not to have all knowledge complete in the womb. It is the work of Schell that brings von Balthasar to the assertion that Jesus’ mission on earth is the measure of his knowledge. This entire concept opposes the view that Jesus had some sort of beatific immediate vision of God while on the earth.

Following in the footsteps of Schell, von Balthasar stresses the need to place the "triune God’s free decision and purpose prior to the Incarna-

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 193; Schell, Hermann, \textit{Kath. Dogmatik} III / I, 104-50.
tion, in such a way that the extension of Jesus’ mission and self-consciousness (that is, knowledge) coincide in it.\textsuperscript{40} If this assertion is made, then without difficulty we can make this assertion:

\begin{quote}
Jesus knew of his identity as the Son of God right from the start...while acknowledging that the awareness of this identity only came to him through his mission, communicated by the Spirit.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

This would mean, in turn, that there was no need for an uninterrupted, direct beatific vision. Jesus had a mission that by its very nature included some knowledge of his relationship to God: "it (his mission) is so universal...that the consciousness of this mission must include his knowledge of Sonship.\textsuperscript{42}

Concerning Jesus' work in the world, sometimes he is given complete knowledge of an entire situation while sometimes, for the sake of his obedience, he knows very little:

\begin{quote}
With respect to the extent or the limits of Jesus' knowledge concerning God's salvific work in the world, if we take his mission as the point of reference, it will allow every possible variation, as the particular situation demands.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 195.

\textsuperscript{41} Idem.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 196.

\textsuperscript{43} Idem.
Next, von Balthasar speaks about Jesus' freedom, centering on the question of whether Jesus was just carrying out what he had to do (as an outsider), or could he have used his free will in any way he chose? To begin to answer this question, he goes on to posit that the Triune God's unanimous plan for salvation and Jesus' earthly decisions cannot be viewed in a before / after scenario. Instead the relationship between the two can be likened to the phenomenon of inspiration.

Von Balthasar looks at natural inspiration and supernatural inspiration as he searches for the best analogy. In the natural realm, he suggests that an artist is most free when he or she is possessed by an idea that then in turn controls him or her. On the supernatural side of inspiration, he contends that in a prophet, Isaiah for instance, "sublime inspiration awakens in the person a deeper freedom than that involved in arbitrary choice." When someone like this is supernaturally inspired, he is able to more fully possess himself, thus fulfilling his mission, which was always within him in the heart of his personal freedom.

In similar fashion, Jesus is not following the orders of some alien "other", but instead he is laying claim to a mission that has always been his, because he has been inspired by the Holy Spirit (which is the Spirit of the Triune God, and thus his own). This mission, then, was always Jesus', but

\[^{44}\text{Ibid., p. 198.}\]
it did not pre-exist as such: "he must fashion it out of himself in utter freedom and responsibility; indeed, in a sense, he even has to invent it."\textsuperscript{45}

In this relationship between finite and infinite freedom, von Balthasar asserts that finite freedom only finds fulfillment in infinite freedom, and this is done through obedience to the mission that is constitutive of your "self". This freedom manifests itself in Jesus' relationship to God the Father:

Thus the incarnate Son, in his freedom (which is now a human freedom too), does not embrace his own will as God but primarily the Father's will, to which he has always consented. It is precisely in embracing his Father's will that Jesus discovers his own, most profound identity as the eternal Son.\textsuperscript{46}

Jesus' opportunity to use his free will manifests itself as well in his ability to be tempted, which is possible because of the lack of a beatific vision and the presence of his Father's commission, indirectly given to him through the Holy Spirit. This temptation forces him to use his freedom to implement his mission in detail. Through his reaction to temptation, he is the perfect example for how we all should face temptation:

His merit is that he himself anticipates nothing; thus no particular success can obscure the mission's universality. In this way, Jesus is the perfect example not only of the fundamental

\textsuperscript{45} Idem.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 200.
Christian virtue of patience but also, equally, of faith and hope.  

We end our discussion of von Balthasar with three respects he lists in which the "Christology of consciousness... taking "mission" as our guide, provides the basis for the development of a theodramatic theory." Firstly, Jesus is the perfect character in the theo-drama through his identity of person and mission: "thus...he is not only the main character but the model for all other actors and the one who gives them their own identity as characters." Secondly, "it is the identity of character and mission that really makes the world drama into a theo-drama." This identity is only possible for Jesus who has (and is) his universal mission, which in turn draws forth the Spirit's mission. Finally, in establishing that von Balthasar's christology of consciousness (with mission as its guide) is the basis for the theodramatic theory, he points out that it refers back to the earlier assertion concerning Christ's mission and person: (Jesus) is the "last Adam", the one who gives meaning to the entire play; as such he embodies mankind's whole dramatic situation in its relationship to itself and to God. Not only, through his personal destiny (in Cross and Resurrection), does he become what he is and has

47 Idem.
48 Ibid., p. 201.
49 Idem.
50 Idem.
always been; it is through the whole world drama that he actually becomes the Omega that -- precisely because he is the Alpha -- he always is. Only when the last enemy, death, is vanquished, when he has fulfilled his mission in the world in every last detail, can he lay at the Father's feet the kingdom he has thus won back, so that the Father may be all in all (I Cor 15: 24ff).

**View Two: Raymond E. Brown**

For an adequate picture of Raymond E. Brown's view on the consciousness of Jesus of his mission and identity, a close examination is needed of his *Jesus God and Man* as well as his *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*. A close look at these texts will serve to give insight into the biblical christology of Brown, and how, within that context, he understands the knowledge Jesus had of his mission and identity.

Brown begins his discussion of the knowledge of Jesus with the oppositions which arose to the Council of Nicea's (325 A.D.) assertion that Jesus was 'divine and the Council of Chalcedon's (451 A.D.) definition of Jesus' full humanity in all things save sin. In the struggle to maintain both truths in their fullest sense, Brown asserts that modern biblical criticism plays a crucial role: "the belief that Jesus is God and man involves a whole

51 Ibid., pp. 201-202.


complex of understanding, a complex in which the biblical evidence has a very important formative role."\textsuperscript{54}

Toward understanding Jesus' divinity, Brown sets out to discuss the contribution of the biblical evidence to the end of understanding historical consciousness: "(which is) the awareness that there is a constant interplay between human knowledge and the times and conditions in which that knowledge is gained."\textsuperscript{55} This consciousness stands in opposition to the type of fundamentalism that believes all dogma was in the apostolic deposit of faith and was simply drawn forth from it by later individuals. This historical consciousness also allows us in the modern day to understand that the problematic of situation and context was different in the New Testament times than that of Nicea, of Chalcedon, and today.

Brown also discusses the contribution made by the biblical evidence in a discussion of the humanity of Jesus. Brown's assertion points out that this section that primarily occupies our purpose: "Nowhere does the problem about the reality and fullness of Jesus' humanity appear more clearly than in the question of how much knowledge Jesus possessed."\textsuperscript{56} This is the case because, for the most part, theologians (and most Christians in general) are not willing to admit the possibility of ignorance

\textsuperscript{54} Brown, Raymond E., \textit{Jesus God and Man}, p. x.

\textsuperscript{55} Idem.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. xiii.
in Jesus and thus read omniscience back into the New Testament texts. Although this reasoning has been (and is currently being) challenged, Brown places his position as one of bringing the truth of the biblical evidence to the discussion:

Without attempting to solve this problem -- which goes far beyond the field of Scripture -- I have gathered the biblical evidence and discussed it in terms of modern critical exegesis, so that all may see the a posteriori situation. Hopefully, this biblical evidence will not only serve as the raw material from which to formulate a solution but will also color and shape the solution.57

Before moving into Brown’s discussion of how much knowledge Jesus possessed, it is first important to examine his assertions concerning the New Testament, and whether or not it maintains that Jesus was God. Brown points out from the very beginning that he takes for granted the truth that Jesus was in fact man and God, thus he places his trust in the Council of Nicea’s claim that Jesus was true God from true God. For Brown, the point of discussing the New Testament’s messianic titles is not to question the validity of that truth, but instead, "there still remains the question, to what extent and in what manner of understanding and statement this truth is contained in the New Testament."58

57 Idem.
58 Ibid., p. 1.
Because of the great amount of variety represented in the New Testament texts, Brown confines himself to only those instances in which the word "God" is used to describe Jesus. In doing so, he wishes to examine three types of texts concerning Jesus' divinity:

(I) texts that seem to imply that the title "God" was not used for Jesus; (II) texts where, by reason of textual variants or syntax, the use of "God" for Jesus is dubious; (III) texts where Jesus is clearly called God.

The key point to Brown's examination of texts which seem to imply that the term "God" was not used to describe Jesus is that, by and large, in the New Testament, "God" is usually reserved for God the Father and usually there is a clear distinction between God the Father and Jesus the Son. The main reason for this was the ancient Hebrews' inability to understand how God could possibly be anything other than singular. As an example, Brown cites Mk 10:18, in which Jesus replies to one who has called him "good teacher" by pointing out that only the one God is good. Another pertinent example which posits a distinction between God and Jesus is in Mk 15:34 and Mt 27:46, in which Jesus cries out to God, asking why he had been forsaken. To this point, Brown asserts that Jesus was calling out to something other than himself.

59 The term "God" here refers to the Greek "theos".

60 Brown, Raymond E. Jesus, God and Man, pp. 5-6.
Finally, Brown brings our attention to Jesus’ statements that God was greater than himself (Jn 14:28), that he did not know the hour (Mk 13:32), and perhaps most clear is Phil 2:5-11:

...Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.\(^\text{61}\)

In this passage of Scripture, there is a clear distinction and even a subordination of Jesus to God the Father.

Next, Brown discusses some texts in which the use of the term "God" to describe Jesus is unclear. The main issue in these texts, asserts Brown, comes in the form of two different problems. First, there are obscurities caused by textual variants, which have unclear interpretations because of the nature of the Greek language in which they are written, and because of different manuscripts of the same texts. The second reason for the lack of clarity in some New Testament texts which speak of Jesus is due to problems in syntax. This, once again, can be caused because of differing

\(^{61}\) Philippians 2:5-11, NAB.
translations of the Greek text, especially when it is unclear to whom certain grammatical cases and cases refer. In a few examples (Col 2:2, 2Th 1:12, Tit 2:13, 1 Jn 5:20 and others), Brown shows how, in sentences which discuss God and Jesus, the Greek is unclear to whom certain attributes belong (ie, whether or not the text is referring to two different entities or one entity -- Jesus who is God).

Finally, as Brown leads up to his discussion of the knowledge of Jesus, he points out a few texts in which the New Testament clearly calls Jesus "God". While discussing these examples, Brown wants to point out that nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus call himself God, nor is Jesus clearly called God in the Synoptic Gospels. According to Brown, there are only three texts in which there is no doubt: First, there is Heb 1:8-9, in which Psalm 45 is quoted, calling Jesus "O God" while referring to God the Father as "Your God". The other two examples Brown cites come from the Gospel of John. The first is Jn 1:1, in which Jesus is the Word, which was with God and was God. The second, and for Brown "the clearest example in the New Testament of the use of "God" for Jesus," is Jn 20:28, in which Thomas calls Jesus "My Lord and my God."

To this evidence, Brown replies that even though the earliest followers of Jesus Christ may not have explicitly called him "God", "at the

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62 Brown, Raymond E. Jesus, God and Man, p. 28.
beginning of the second century Ignatius freely speaks of Jesus as God."\(^{63}\)

As for the development of the term "God" from the earlier Gospels to John, and then to Ignatius, Brown contends that:

the most plausible explanation is that in the earliest stage of Christianity the Old Testament heritage dominated the use of "God"; hence "God" was a title too narrow to be applied to Jesus. It referred strictly to the Father of Jesus, to the God to whom he prayed. Gradually (in the 50's and 60's?), in the development of Christian thought, "God" was understood to be a broader term. It was seen that God had revealed so much of Himself in Jesus that "God" had to be able to include both Father and Son.\(^{64}\)

Opening his discussion on the knowledge of Jesus, Brown points out the inherent difficulties in talking about the limitations of Jesus, and what he perceives his role in the discussion to be:

It is hard to participate in such a discussion without seeming insufferably arrogant and without offending against the respect, nay adoration, that the figure of Jesus Christ calls forth. Nevertheless, the discussion is going on, and for the exegete not to participate would be a neglect of duty.\(^{65}\)

Brown's discussion of the knowledge possessed by Jesus is broken down into his knowledge of ordinary things in life, his general knowledge of

\(^{63}\) Ibid., p. 31.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., pp. 33-34.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 39.
religion, his knowledge of the future and finally, his knowledge of himself and his mission.

Brown, as an exegete, points out that he would start the discussion with Heb 4:15, which identifies Jesus as one who has all of the human characteristics we do, except for sin. However, as Brown is quick to remind us, it has not been an exegetical discussion until relatively recently. Discussing openly the concept of ignorance in Jesus lies in direct opposition to the fact that:

the modern discussion that theologians have taken up was already oriented by the medieval theory that Jesus possessed different types of extraordinary knowledge that prevented limitation.\(^6\)

Although Protestant authors have done most of the exegetical work on the knowledge of Jesus, Brown asserts the necessity for Catholic exegetes to jump into the field, which was previously somewhat dangerous for fear of repercussions from the hierarchy because it was viewed as compromising Jesus’ divinity.

Before delving into Jesus’ knowledge of ordinary affairs, Brown posits three reasons why Catholic exegetical work is necessary on the question of Jesus’ knowledge: The first is that it is their theological responsibility, since theologians who are addressing the issue of Jesus’

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 40.
knowledge "must have available to them competent critical surveys of the New Testament evidence in order to see how their theories can be best reconciled with this evidence."\textsuperscript{67} The second reason Brown sets forth is that the Catholic public is receiving different types of unsubstantiated statements concerning Jesus' knowledge that need to be laid against the measuring stick of biblical exegesis. The third and final reason Catholic exegetical work is necessary is that, "many problems in the history of New Testament thought can be solved only if we know to what extent Jesus' own knowledge of these problems was limited."\textsuperscript{68} For Brown, it is essential to examine whether or not the biblical evidence allows Jesus to have ignorance, development of thought, or complete clarity about the things around him.

There are two types of biblical evidence Brown uses, the first are what he considers to be the actual words of Jesus (\textit{ipsissima verba}). The second type are segments that are most likely not the actual words of Jesus, but are important because, "the statements attributed to Jesus tell us about the evangelists' attitude toward his knowledge."\textsuperscript{69}

Brown's discussion of Jesus' knowledge of the ordinary consists of two different types of scriptural references:

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 42.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p. 43.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., p. 44.
texts...that seem to indicate that Jesus shared normal human ignorance about the affairs of life...(and) other texts that attribute to him extraordinary and even superhuman knowledge about such affairs.\textsuperscript{70}

For Brown, the best example of Jesus' ignorance is when, in Mk 5:30-33, he is touched by the woman with a hemorrhage and turns to ask who it was that touched him. Two other important examples are found in the Gospel of Luke (2:46 & 2:52), in which Jesus is asking questions of the teachers in the Temple and is said to be growing in wisdom. While these events are historically unverifiable, for Brown, they still hold importance:

> it is clear that the evangelist did not think it strange that Jesus should ask questions or grow in knowledge... (which) is an important consideration precisely because Luke's infancy narrative presents Jesus as God's Son from the first moment of his conception.\textsuperscript{71}

In later Gospels, especially the Book of John, Brown suggests that Jesus was not shown as one who had to grow in ordinary knowledge, and thus is portrayed as having superhuman knowledge of ordinary things. Jesus' asking Philip how to feed the crowd in order to test him (Jn 6:5-6), and Jesus' knowledge of which of his disciples would believe him, not believe him, and betray him (Jn 6:64; 6:71; 13:11; 10:48), are for Brown two examples of "the Johannine tendency to picture Jesus without any

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., p. 45.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 46.
element of human weakness or dependence."\(^{72}\) In addition to these examples which show Jesus having extraordinary knowledge, Brown lists references to Jesus' ability to know what others are thinking (Mk 2:6-8; Jn 2:24, 6:19 & 30), and to know what is happening in places other than where he is (Jn 1:48-49 -- Jesus told Nathaneal what he had been doing; Mk 11:2, Mk 14:13-14, Lk 22:10 -- Jesus tells his disciples what they will find when they go to prepare the Passover feast). As Brown points out, however, even if these events are historical in nature,

we should still be careful about any theological assumption that would trace such knowledge to the hypostatic union or to the beatific vision...the Old Testament attributes this type of knowledge to many prophets.\(^{73}\)

The most important things these examples show us is that, even in the Gospel tradition, there are a variety of ways in which the authors understood the knowledge of Jesus on ordinary matters.

Next, Brown discusses the knowledge Jesus had of religious matters, which unlike knowledge of ordinary matters, is thought by most dogmatic theologians to be incapable of any form of ignorance. Brown asserts that one of the difficulties in determining Jesus' knowledge of the Scriptures is whether or not the texts we have now are the actual words of Jesus

\(^{72}\) Ibid., p. 47.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., p. 49.
(ipsissima verba) or are actually references added by the Gospel writers to create a more easily understandable context to which their fellow Jews could relate.

In support of the thesis that Jesus' humanity allowed some degree of ignorance, Brown gives examples of Jesus' mistaken citing of certain Old Testament passages (ie. in Mk 2:26, Jesus says that the high priest when David ate the Temple bread was Abiathar when it was actually Ahimelech), examples of Jesus' citations in which he ascribed to the mistaken religious concepts of his time (ie. in Mk 12:36, Jesus attributes the writings of the Psalms to David, with which contemporary scholarship disagrees), and examples of Jesus using an unacceptable hermeneutic (ie. in Mk 12:36, Jesus refers to Ps 110 as foretelling the Messiah when, "few modern scholars...would think that there was an expectation of "the Messiah" when Ps 110 was composed."74).

Finally, before discussing Jesus' knowledge of the future, Brown illustrates that Jesus' understanding of some of the religious concepts of his day, such as demonology, the afterlife and the apocalypse, are inadequate according to contemporary scholarship. In conclusion, Brown asserts that this seemingly lack of knowledge on some general religious concepts does not apply to his understanding of himself and his mission:

74 Ibid., p. 53.
Jesus seems to draw on the imperfect religious concepts of his time without indication of superior knowledge and without substantially correcting the concepts... (but) we must emphasize that there is an important religious area where the teaching attributed to Jesus was unique, outdistancing the ideas of his time -- the area of his own mission and the proclamation of the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{75}

Brown’s discussion of Jesus’ knowledge of the future is the last step in our journey to discover his ideas concerning Jesus’ knowledge of his identity and mission. For an examination of what Jesus knew of the future leads logically into a discussion of what he understood his role and mission in life to be. And, as von Balthasar has shown us, if we begin to understand Jesus’ concept of mission, we will also uncover what Jesus knew of his own identity since the two are inseparable. To that end, let us briefly examine Brown’s biblical evidence concerning Jesus’ knowledge of the future before laying out his view of Jesus’ knowledge of mission and identity.

Brown points out in the beginning of this discussion that since Jesus was considered by some to be a prophet, and since in that historical period the fore-knowledge of the prophet was though to be their most important aspect, the assertion that Jesus was a prophet is strong evidence that they believed that he knew the future. On the other hand, since all of the

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 59.
Gospels were written after the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, Brown ponders the prophecies attributed to Jesus: "how much represents the *ipsissima verba* and how much represents clarification by the evangelist in light of the subsequent event?"76 Another question that needs to be posed concerns the difference between knowledge of the future and intuition toward the way things are going to go: "Genuine detailed foreknowledge is superhuman; unshakable conviction is not necessarily beyond human powers."77 Before moving to our goal, we shall first examine the two most important categories Brown looks at in the context of Jesus' foreknowledge: 1. of his own passion, crucifixion and resurrection, and 2. of the Parousia.

Although Jesus' foreknowledge of his passion, death and resurrection are present in all of the Gospels, Brown points to the potential problem that the disciples seemed to be surprised when Jesus died and was resurrected: "One may attribute this failure to the slowness of the disciples, but one may also wonder if the original predictions were as exact as they have now come to us."78 Concerning the genuineness of the three Synoptic reports of Jesus' foretelling of his passion, death and resurrection (ie. Mk 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34), Brown points out some of the problems

76 Ibid., p. 60.
77 Idem.
78 Ibid., p. 61.
suggest they were not the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus: 1. as was mentioned before, the non-understanding of the disciples, 2. the fact that they are not found in the "Q" tradition, and 3. it may be that the sayings were taken in part from Daniel 7.

Another issue of Jesus' foreknowledge Brown raises is his admonition to the Scribes and Pharisees to destroy the Temple that he would raise again in three days (Jn 2:19). The problem with that being proof of foreknowledge is that the verb Jesus uses is not "to raise", but "to rebuild," thus the way we have it here may simply be John's way of explaining words Jesus said which made no sense to him.

Under this category as well, Brown mentions Jesus' recalling of the sign of Jonah in Matthew as a direct reference to his resurrection. Further examination, however, shows that since this reference to Jonah was also made in Lk 11:29-30, 32 without the reference to being in the belly of the whale for three days and nights, the Matthean saying probably added that last clause. This is further supported by the fact that the other Synoptic portrayal of this scene emphasizes the sign of Jonah as one of repentance, not a future reference to Jesus' resurrection.

Finally, Brown discusses the biblical evidence concerning Jesus' foreknowledge of Judas' betrayal, which even if they are original, their intent can be interpreted in different ways:
one may still wonder whether this prediction represents supernatural foreknowledge or only a penetrating insight into Judas' character and into the direction in which events were leading (especially if the prediction was made when the treason had already been committed).  

Brown's general summary of the foreknowledge Jesus had of his passion, death, and resurrection asserts that while the words cannot be scientifically traced to Jesus, we must keep in mind "the general agreement of the Gospel tradition that Jesus was convinced beforehand that, while his life would be taken from him, God would ultimately vindicate him."  

Brown points out that some contemporary theologians argue that Jesus' knowledge developed psychologically throughout the course of his life. While that is an attractive premise, Brown contends that it is neither supported nor negated by the Scripture itself. The main problem with the assertion of development is that, even if we can isolate the genuine statements of Jesus, we do not know in what order the sayings actually took place, thus it is virtually impossible to know which way to trace the development.  

Brown's discussion of Jesus' foreknowledge of the Parousia represents a very different set of factors to consider since it has not taken place yet. First, Brown turns his discussion to the anticipation in the New

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79 Ibid., p. 65.

80 Idem.
Testament writings that the Parousia would be immediate. Brown asserts that the narrative in Mt 10:23 and Mk 6:7, in which Jesus tells his disciples that they will not be finished preaching in all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes, is an example of Jesus' belief that the Parousia may occur during his ministry. Other Scriptural references seem to place the Parousia immediately after Jesus' death; (Jn 14:3; Mk 14:25, 62; Lk 23:42-43) through his assurance that he will come back to take his disciples with him, and his assertion that they would see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of God, coming with the clouds. The importance to our discussion of Jesus' knowledge of mission and identity comes in Brown's insightful assertion: "all of this (that the Parousia immediately followed Jesus' death) would fit in with a theory that Jesus did not know precisely what form his victory over death would take."81

Another possibility Brown puts forth is that there may have been an anticipation that there would be an interval between the death of Jesus and the Parousia. Brown classifies these numerous texts into three categories: 1. an expectation of the Parousia within the lifetime of Jesus' followers, 2. an expectation of the Parousia following apocalyptic signs, and 3. an expectation of the Parousia which is unknown. In support of the first category, Brown lists the texts in which Jesus assures some that they will

81 Ibid., p. 72.
not die before they see the Son of Man coming into his kingdom or the kingdom of God come with power (Mt 16:28, Mk 9:1). When the death of the apostolic generation was underway, these sayings had to be reinterpreted to portray a time further into the future.

Brown suggests Jesus’ eschatological speeches (Mk 13, Mt 24-25, Lk 21) as support for the second expectation, that of the Parousia following the apocalypse, which was most likely "from the Palestinian church, using the language of the Jewish apocalypse and seeking to console itself when the master did not return."^82

In support of the third category, an unknown time of Parousia, Brown cites Mk 13:32, in which Jesus tells his disciples that not even he knows when the hour will be, but only the Father. Because this saying is in the Gospel and it runs in opposition to what the Church believed about the possibility of ignorance in Jesus, Brown asserts that "most authors would accept the saying as authentic."^83

Brown ends his discussion of the foreknowledge of Jesus concerning the Parousia with the question of how we can reconcile so many different views and come to the real view of Jesus. It is here that Brown’s own view becomes obvious concerning Jesus’ knowledge: "with all of these allowanc-

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^82 Ibid., p. 75.

^83 Ibid., p. 76.
es, one finds it difficult to believe that Jesus’ own position was clear.\textsuperscript{84} In addition, when discussing the variety of answers to the question of when the Parousia would occur, Brown offers a conclusion: "such confusion could scarcely have arisen if Jesus both knew about the indefinite delay of the Parousia and expressed himself clearly on the subject."\textsuperscript{85} Finally, as an introduction to the issue of Jesus’ knowledge of self and mission, Brown questions whether theologically it really matters if Jesus was in fact ignorant of the exact time of the Parousia:

That God would make Jesus victorious and would eventually establish His own reign was a basic conviction of Jesus’ life and mission. Because there is evidence, nay even a statement, that Jesus did not know when the ultimate victory would take place, many Catholic theologians would propose that such knowledge was not an essential of Jesus’ mission. Could theologians then also admit that Jesus was not protected from the confused views of his era about the time of the Parousia? An exegete cannot solve such a question; he can only point out the undeniable confusion in the statements attributed to Jesus.\textsuperscript{86}

Raymond Brown begins his discussion of Jesus’ knowledge of self and mission with the precaution that this is the most theologically sensitive area: "an area with theological repercussions for the understanding of the

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 77.

\textsuperscript{85} Idem.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 78-79.
hypostatic union and an area where the Church has shown herself consistently opposed to a minimalist solution.\textsuperscript{87} To deal with this delicate topic, he chooses a plan which involves the examination of two titles used to describe Jesus. These two titles taken together answer the question of what knowledge Jesus had of who he was and what his mission entailed: ""Messiah,"" that might be a key to Jesus' knowledge of his salvific mission to men, and...""Son of God,"" that might be a key to Jesus' knowledge of his relationship to Yahweh.\textsuperscript{88}

First, then, Brown addresses the question of Jesus' knowledge of his mission as the Messiah. He points out the necessary distinction between what the biblical evidence illustrates to be the early Christian beliefs about Jesus' Messiahship and his own understanding. Brown asserts that even though the early Christians obviously accepted the Messiahship of Jesus, "there are conflicting indications as to what facet of Jesus' career brought men to confess him as Messiah."\textsuperscript{89} In addition, while one popular way to examine the variety of New Testament christologies is to place them in order of increasing complexity, Brown contends that there is really no way to prove that there was any real development as opposed to the theory that the divergent concepts arose at the same time.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 79.

\textsuperscript{88} Idem.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 80.
Although development cannot be traced with scientifically verifiable proof, Brown lists two examples from the Book of Acts which are thought to be the oldest and most primitive New Testament christologies. The first example is Acts 3:20-21, in which Jesus becomes the Messiah when he returns in the Parousia. This is thought to be the oldest New Testament christology because of its congruence with Jewish theology: "The earthly ministry of Jesus was only a preparation for his coming as the Messiah expected in Jewish thought, i.e., a Messiah coming to earth in power and glory." The other example is from Acts 2:36, which portrays a Jesus who becomes Messiah through the action of his rising to the right hand of God the Father. For Brown, the christology of the Gospels sees Jesus as the Messiah during his ministry on earth, with the most prominent example being the confession of Peter.

This diversity evident in the New Testament proclamations concerning Jesus causes some to conclude that Jesus must have not made his mission clear to his followers: "(this) standard explanation, however, has been that his lucid claims were not understood because of the obtuseness or hardness of heart of his hearers." This assertion can only be validat-

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90 Idem.

91 Ibid., p. 82.
ed by examining the biblical evidence concerning Jesus' own knowledge of his mission as the Messiah.

Unfortunately, as von Balthasar has pointed out as well, when we turn to the New Testament, we find little direct evidence concerning Jesus' own knowledge of his mission as Messiah. Brown asserts that even the infancy narratives do not tell us what Jesus understood concerning his mission, though they tell us (from the omniscient third person) what his mission was. Next, Brown addresses the claim that Jesus recognized that he was the Messiah at his baptism, which, according to Brown, "faces two formidable objections from modern biblical science."92

The first objection is directed at the assertion that Jesus accepted the Jewish understanding of Messiah as an acceptable title for his mission. The biblical evidence to support this objection begins with the oldest recorded telling of Peter's confession, in which Jesus ordered Peter to be silent and turned the conversation into one of suffering. Also, when Jesus is asked if he is the Messiah, his answer in Matthew (26:64) is the dubious "you have said so," and in Luke (22:67), he responds by speaking about the Son of Man and not the Messiah.93 Brown shows that the only time in

92 Idem.

93 However, as Brown points out, in Mark (14:62) Jesus' answer is the affirmative, "I am." In this case, though, Brown asserts that biblical scholarship shows "that the vague answer is older than the clear affirmative." See Ibid., Footnote 67, p. 83.
the Gospels that Jesus clearly accepts the title Messiah (his conversation with the Samaritan woman Jn 4:25-26) contains the qualification that it is not the typical Jewish understanding of the politically powerful Messiah, but a Samaritan understanding of Messiah, which is not so nationalistic. Brown's point in giving these examples is not to claim that Jesus completely refused the title "Messiah," but instead to illustrate that Jesus might have understood the title in a different way:

an intelligent case can be made out for the thesis that Jesus never really accepted Messiah as a correct or adequate designation for his role, even though he would not categorically refuse the title.94

The second objection directly deals with the ambiguity of Jesus' baptism itself. To this point, Brown argues that even in Mark, which is the only Gospel account in which the voice and vision are directed to Jesus, there is no reported reaction from Jesus, which thus makes it impossible to speculate what Jesus might have understood from the incident. Another strong point that Brown makes is that, in actuality, the baptismal scene in all of the Gospels does not have the purpose of telling Jesus who he is and what his mission is, but instead to tell the audience who the author believes Jesus to be. Before discussing Jesus' knowledge of his identity, Brown concludes his discussion of Jesus' mission-knowledge: "it is dubious

94 Ibid., p. 84.
whether we should speak in any strict sense of "messianic" knowledge on Jesus' part since he may never have really identified his role as that of the Messiah."95

Brown begins his discussion of Jesus' knowledge of identity by asserting that the question should not be directed at whether Jesus knew he was God, but whether Jesus knew he was the Son of God. This distinction is necessary because it is only in the latter books of the New Testament that Jesus is called God, because the Jewish concept of God as One took time to develop into a more broad understanding.96 Thus, on the question of Jesus' knowledge of being God, Brown is clear: "when we ask whether during his ministry Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, knew that he was God, we are asking whether he identified himself and the Father -- and, of course, he did not."97 From the biblical evidence, then, Brown discusses Jesus' knowledge of his divinity as the Son of God and not God the Father.

Even in limiting himself to a discussion of Jesus' knowledge of himself as the Son of God, Brown contends that he has not rid the discussion of all ambiguity, since the term Son of God "often...does not

95 Ibid., p. 86.

96 See pages 122-123 of this thesis for an explanation of God's singularity in the Jewish tradition.

97 Ibid., p. 87.
mean real divine filiation but only a special relationship to God.\footnote{Idem.} For this reason, Brown focuses on the very specific issue of Jesus’ knowledge of himself as the unique Son of God, different from any other human being. Brown is quick to assert that this is not an easy distinction to make since many times when Jesus is speaking about God the Father, he uses "my" and "your" quite often, connoting no unique Sonship. Jesus’ use of "Abba" for God is unique, even though he offers his followers an opportunity to take part in this relationship through the Our Father and his references to "your Father in heaven." Brown asserts that, while Jesus’ understanding of his relationship to God could be unique in that he is the first to claim God as Father, it is also prudent to examine the biblical evidence in which Jesus speaks of himself as Son if we are to more fully understand Jesus’ knowledge of his identity.

Brown suggests three possibilities in which Jesus might have understood himself as the unique Son of God, the first found in Mt 11:27 and Lk 10:22: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him." Although, as Brown points out, the definite article for Son is in the parabolar sense, which indicates a generic situation, this could be an example of Jesus’ knowledge of his unique identity as the Son
of God. The second passage is Mk 13:32, in which Jesus tells his disciples that no one except the Father knows the hour, not even the Son. The third is the parable of the Vinedressers (Mk 12:6; Lk 20:13; Mt 21:37), in which Jesus may be equating himself with the "uniquely beloved" Son in the parable.

Before positing his idea of what a better approach to the issue of the knowledge of Jesus might be, Brown explains three important points concerning Jesus’ knowledge of himself as the Son of God. The first point, which leads to the latter two, is Brown’s contention that purely scientific attempts at biblical exegesis run the risk of missing the forest for the trees:

One could argue for a convergence of probabilities that Jesus did claim to be God’s unique Son. It is when we stand before such a question that we realize the frustrating limitations imposed on research by the nature of the material we work with -- material magnificently illuminated by post-resurrectional faith, but for that very reason far from ideal for scientific study.99

This difficulty causes Brown to forego two entire bodies of biblical evidence which otherwise could provide the answer to the question of Jesus’ knowledge. The first body of evidence he had to overlook was the Gospel of John’s assertion of Jesus’ overtly clear claim to this unique Sonship with God. Brown states that while he believes the Gospel of John

99 Ibid., pp. 91-92.
to contain some historically true events, he "also recognizes that this material has been rethought in the light of late first-century theology," and that "the Gospel of John was written to prove that Jesus is the Son of God (20:31)." Therefore, he believes that the historical words of Jesus run the risk of being too integrated with the author's theological purpose, thus: "the use of Jn to determine scientifically how much Jesus knew of himself during his lifetime is far more difficult than the use of the other Gospels." 

The second body of biblical evidence that Brown dismisses contains the infancy narratives which claim that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, which if historically true would verify Jesus' unique identity as the Son of God, since God begot him. Brown points out that if this really happened, Mary would have told Jesus, thus he would have that knowledge of his divine origin. Instead, however, Brown asserts that much of contemporary scholarship dismisses the infancy narratives as non-historical because they appear to be traceable to ancient Jewish stories and because of inconsistencies apparent in the ministry of Jesus, such as the anticipation the appearance of the star was to have created, yet in Jesus' ministry it seems as though no one remembers. 

100 Ibid., p. 92.

101 Idem.

102 See Ibid., footnote 86, p. 93.
Brown next puts forth his idea of what may be a better approach to this entire issue. To this end, he makes two distinctions which he believes can serve to better clarify the issue of Jesus' knowledge. The first distinction he makes is theological, and concerns the difference between the concept of consciousness and that of knowledge. Brown contends that when the question of Jesus' knowledge of his identity is asked, theologians by and large describe this as Jesus' self-consciousness. As Brown points out, however, "consciousness is not always the same as express knowledge." And while he makes it clear that he does not wish to dive into all of the psychological aspects of the issue, he does want to make a necessary clarification:

consciousness is often an intuitive awareness and thus is distinct from an ability to express by formulating concepts and words, which is generally what people mean when they speak of knowledge. In human experience, especially in artistic matters or in one's own awareness of oneself, there may be a lag between consciousness and express knowledge -- one may be vividly conscious of something long before one finds a reasonably adequate way to express that consciousness.\(^\text{104}\)

\(^{103}\) Ibid., p. 93.

\(^{104}\) Ibid., p. 94.
This is probably the most clear key to Brown biblical christology concerning what he believes Jesus to have known about his own identity and mission.

For Brown, this distinction between consciousness and awareness (knowledge) can explain an important aspect of Jesus’ understanding of his mission:

in the Gospels there is insufficient evidence that Jesus claimed the title (of Messiah) or that he fully accepted it when it was offered to him. But this would not necessarily imply that he had no consciousness of a salvific mission to men...it could simply mean that he found Messiahship, as the term was understood in his time, an inadequate way to give expression to the mission of which he was conscious.\(^{105}\)

In addition, Brown asserts that Jesus, while on earth, may have never fully understood who he was and what his mission was: "this does not necessarily mean that he was not conscious of the reality behind the relationship we call Son ship."\(^{106}\) Brown goes even further to suggest that, if theology can agree that Jesus’ intellect was actually human and thus was activated by human experiences, then it is clear that:

it would have taken Jesus time to formulate concepts, and he might have found some of the concepts of his day inadequate to express what he wanted to say...One would then be able to

\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 94.

\(^{106}\) Ibid., p. 95.
say that his *knowledge* was limited, but such limitation would not at all exclude an intuitive *consciousness* of a unique relationship to God and of a unique mission to men.\(^{107}\)

If this is the case, then once again we can compare Brown's conclusion with von Balthasar's emphasis that Jesus' mission was at the center of who he was, constitutive of his identity. Mission as the central element of the person of Jesus comes through in Brown when he states that, "the struggle of (Jesus') life could have been one of finding the concepts and the words to express that relationship and that mission."\(^{108}\) Thus turning his inspiration / consciousness into understandable expressions was at the center of Jesus' life as seen by both authors' christologies.

Finally, Brown suggests his second distinction to give more clarity to the issue of Jesus' knowledge. This time, however, the distinction is exegetical. Brown suggests that, since there is so much confusion when we begin with the question of Jesus' understanding of his identity and mission through examining titles and such, perhaps we need to address the issue from a different angle. This angle is simply to begin with what are considered to be the most ancient and reliable texts, and see what Jesus has to say concerning his relationship to God and his mission. In other words, begin from the bottom instead of from the top. What this process

\(^{107}\) Idem.

\(^{108}\) Idem.
leads to, contends Brown, is an historically irreducible portrayal of Jesus: "he claimed to be the unique agent in the process of establishing God's kingship over men...He proclaimed that in his preaching and through his deeds God's kingship over men was making itself felt."\textsuperscript{109}

In his presentation of the Kingdom of God, Jesus was completely unique, not only in the way he presented it, but also in the way he acted it out through miracles, breaking the Sabbath, binding the devil, and forgiving sin. Brown holds that in his role of bringing about God's kingdom, Jesus had no equal. This gives us good insight into what Jesus understood his mission to be and his authoritative identity to present the mission in such a way: "the certainty with which Jesus spoke and acted implies a consciousness of a unique relationship to God."\textsuperscript{110}

It is his presentation of the Kingdom of God that eventually gets him killed, but it is important to point out this assertion of Brown's: "in considering this very important evidence for Jesus' consciousness of himself, we should emphasize that there is no indication in the Gospels of a development of Jesus' basic conviction."\textsuperscript{111} And even though Brown concedes that Jesus may have not known in detail how the Kingdom was

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., pp. 96-97.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., p. 97.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 98.
to be established, Jesus' own mission was clear and, like von Balthasar, constitutive of his identity:

there is not the slightest evidence that his own role in the kingdom had to be revealed to him. So far as Scripture is concerned, the awareness or consciousness that God's rule over men would be established through him could have sprung from his innermost being, for the first moment he speaks, he has this consciousness.\footnote{\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., pp. 98-99.}

In closing, Brown once again points out that the biblical evidence he has explained is supposed to help theologians be informed when they speak about this, one of the most delicate topics in christology, the knowledge of Jesus of his mission and identity. He goes on to suggest that some theologians who cannot posit ignorance in Jesus will simply explain away the biblical evidence as an example of an all-knowing Jesus simply conforming to the times so as not to appear out of place. When that objection is answered through an emphasis on Jesus' humanity and need for ignorance to be truly human, the objection will come, Brown admits, that there is only a divine person in Christ and that cannot know any imperfection. Brown answers that, however, by citing Cyril of Alexandria, who admitted that Christ had one Person with two Natures, but also embraced the fact that "for love of us he (Jesus) has not refused to descend to such
a low position as to bear all that belongs to our nature, INCLUDED IN WHICH IS IGNORANCE."

In the final estimation of Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity, Jesus had to be fully human and fully divine to be able to relate to us while still having the capacity to show us what God is like. For Brown, then, the question of Jesus' knowledge is at the center of all christology, theology and Christianity as we know it:

A Jesus who walked through the world knowing exactly what the morrow would bring, knowing with certainty that three days after his death his Father would raise him up, is a Jesus who can arouse our admiration, but still a Jesus far from us... On the other hand, a Jesus for whom the future was as much a mystery, a dread, and a hope as it is for us and yet, at the same time, a Jesus who would say, "Not my will but yours" -- this is a Jesus who could effectively teach us how to live, for this is a Jesus who would have gone through life's real trials."

Here, once again, we see echoes of von Balthasar's discussion of Jesus' obedience to God the Father, his freedom to choose, his example of complete faith in God, and his total humanity.

Our final task before concluding this thesis is to briefly examine, in more subjective terms, Raymond Brown's understanding of Jesus'...

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113 Ibid., p. 102. Quoted from Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75, 369, (Capitalization is Brown's).

114 Ibid., pp. 104-105.
knowledge of his mission and his identity, as seen in his recent publication, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*. The reason for this brief summary is to present Brown's ideas in perhaps a more readable and direct fashion.

Only seven of the 101 questions in this work are germane to our purposes here, #70 - #76. Because we have gone into such detail already describing Brown's assertions concerning this topic, only brief answers which add something to the discussion or short summaries will be offered here. When asked about whether or not Jesus knew he was God, Brown answers in like manner as we have already established: he contends that the question should be rephrased because of the ancient Jewish understanding of the singularity of God; that the Gospel of John is not as helpful as the others because it served a more explanatory role in hindsight; that there is no evidence that Jesus discovered his identity (it was always with him); that the simple answer to that question is "yes," Jesus did know who he was, but his use of authority concerning the Kingdom of God is the main clue.

When asked about the possibility for Jesus' knowledge to develop (#71), Brown asserts that Jesus, like all of us, knew who he was from the very first moment he could think, but that he could not find an explicit manner in which to convert his consciousness into immediate awareness.
As well, Brown contends that Jesus could know his identity and still grow in knowledge, but there is another equally important point:

No one knows the mysterious depth of the incarnation and its effects on Jesus internally...the Gospels were written to tell us what we should know of Jesus, not what he knew of himself.\(^{115}\)

Next, Brown is asked to give his thoughts on the premise that if Jesus was God, and God is all-knowing, then Jesus had to be all-knowing. To this question, Brown asserts that the claim that the above stated premise is built upon is not correct, since in Jesus there were both types of knowledge, divine and human, but the divine knowledge did not manifest itself (in fact, could not manifest itself) in Jesus' human nature. He is also quick to point out that he does not wish to go any further into systematic theology, but that he thinks "it is fair to say: By being who he was, Jesus knew who he was."\(^{116}\)

When pushed to answer whether or not Jesus had any more knowledge than any other human being (\(^73\)), Brown retreats a bit and asserts that Jesus, through "his immediate knowledge of his identity, his knowing who he was, ... had the profoundest and most intimate knowledge

\(^{115}\) Brown, Raymond E., *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*, p. 100.

\(^{116}\) Ibid., p. 101.
of God's will."\textsuperscript{117} This, in turn, gave Jesus his authority when he spoke about and, through actions, brought about the Kingdom of God.

Next, Brown answers a question concerning what type of factual and practical knowledge Jesus possessed (#74). On this point, Brown sees no biblical evidence that Jesus had factual knowledge of earthly things beyond what he would have learned from his parents and his environment.

Finally, Brown is asked if Jesus knew he was going to die (#75) and if he would rise from the dead (#76). He responds to these queries by asserting the difference between detailed foreknowledge and strong beliefs that some things were going to occur. Because of the turbulence Jesus was causing, he could have probably known from human logic that he would die a prophet's death. In the same way, the biblical evidence assures us that, while certainties may not have been clear, Jesus did have a strong belief that he would ultimately be vindicated. Brown asserts that the question depends upon what one thinks about the possibility of ignorance in Jesus. In his response, we find the position of Brown on the issue of Jesus' knowledge elucidated concisely:

Thus one may argue that both biblically and theologically the position of limited knowledge seems defensible. It is worth emphasizing that to deny the full humanity of Jesus is just as serious as to deny the full divinity, and one may argue that it is truly human to be limited and

\textsuperscript{117} Idem.
time-conditioned in our knowledge. Thus we may have in Jesus the strange combination of absolute surety about what God wants of us if God's kingdom is to come, and a limited human way of phrasing that message.¹¹⁸

A Critical Comparison

Now we turn to the heart and focus of our topic, and compare the two views of von Balthasar and Brown as they would address certain common issues and problems of the issue of Jesus' knowledge of his mission and identity. As laid out in the Introduction of this thesis, we will be using criteria from the International Theological Commission's document, "The Consciousness of Christ concerning Himself and His Mission," written in 1985. Once again, however, before we begin it is important for me to point out the limitations of the following conclusions based on the specifications of my research. In other words, by limiting myself primarily to von Balthasar's Theo-Drama, Vol. III, and Brown's Jesus, God and Man and 101 Responses, I have left out other works which may have been very helpful and poignant, but chose not to study for the sake of practicality.

Having pointed out the limitations of my conclusions, let us now move through the issues laid out by the I.T.C. and compare and contrast the views of Brown and von Balthasar. In the Introduction to this thesis,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 105.
we went into great detail on the commentaries that the I.T.C. had on each of their four propositions. Rather than redo work that was already done, here we are simply going to lay out each proposition as it appears in the I.T.C. document and follow it with a comparison of Brown’s and von Balthasar’s conclusions concerning each. In addition, I should point out that in this section, we are not attempting to make new assertions or bring in new material, but instead to tie together (and re-package in an understandable, concise way) the positions of the two authors which we have already established. For this reason, we will not go into tremendous detail, but instead give the basic conclusion of each author and direct the reader back to the sections in this chapter which will give more detailed explanations.

The first proposition of the I.T.C. we will examine is:

*The life of Jesus testifies to his consciousness of a filial relationship with the Father. His behavior and his words, which are those of the perfect "servant", imply an authority that surpasses that of the ancient prophets and belongs to God alone. Jesus drew this incomparable authority from his unique relationship with God, whom he calls "my Father". He was conscious of being the only Son of God and in this sense of being God himself.*

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The most basic assertion this proposition makes is that Jesus knew he was the Son of God in a unique way. In other words, Jesus was aware of his identity.

On this topic, von Balthasar asserts that mission and person are identical in Jesus and they cannot be separated. Jesus' mission, which surpassed that of all those who came before (and after) him, sets the stage for his understanding of his identity as the One Sent from the Father. Jesus' awareness of this identity developed as he grew in wisdom through his contact with Mary and through his relationship with the Father. His contact with Mary was what enabled his self-consciousness to develop as it did, since Mary acted as the "Thou" in Jesus' life which helped him grow in self-consciousness by her hands-on guidance in the religious tradition of their day and her physical nurturing of Jesus as he grew up. Von Balthasar asserts that Mary knew because of her virgin conception and birth (at least to some degree) that Jesus was in a very special relationship to God. Thus much of what Jesus knew historically came through the influence of Mary and others.

His awareness of his unique identity and relationship with the Father grew through prayer and faith: "the more the Son unites himself with the Ground from which his person and mission simultaneously spring
forth, the better he understands both his mission and himself.\footnote{Balthasar, Hans Urs von. \textit{Theo-Drama}, Volume III, p. 169.} To this proposition, then, von Balthasar would assert that Jesus was aware of his identity as part of the Triune God, at least on some level of his conscious, even though it only became available into expressible concepts as he grew.

To this first proposition, Raymond Brown would assert that even though most will not accept the possibility of ignorance in Jesus, the biblical evidence shows obvious instances in which Jesus was ignorant of certain things (ie. "the hour", who touched his garment, and obvious limitations in his citation of the OT). In addition, Brown points out that the NT does call Jesus "God", but usually reserves that title ("theos") for the specific entity of God the Father. Brown asserts that Jesus did understand his unique relationship to God in some ways, but that he did distinguish between himself and God. It is important to point out here that Brown does admit that the Gospel of John and the infancy narratives do in fact answer the question of Jesus' awareness of his identity very clearly, but that these sources are not as reliable as the earlier sources. The Gospel of John is not as reliable, contends Brown, because it was written to convince people that Jesus was the Son of God and contained a lot of theological interpretation of the events of Jesus' life. The infancy narratives are not as reliable because of the logical inconsistencies that if
they were true, Mary would have simply told Jesus who he was and people would have been expecting him because of the star, etc.

For Brown, Jesus' awareness of his divinity in the NT is not available through studying Jesus as God, but instead Jesus as the Son of God. Along this line, Brown does assert that Jesus’ use of "Abba" is unique and does show Jesus’ sonship to God as being unique and foundational. A distinction Brown makes enables us to see his position more clearly. He discusses a lag between Jesus intuitive awareness (consciousness) of identity and his express knowledge which is conveyable. He asserts that Jesus could have been conscious of the fact that he was the Son of God without being able to express it in conceptual language.

It is at this point that Brown's christology comes together with that of von Balthasar's. Earlier, we discussed von Balthasar's understanding of inspiration as that which God gives through the Holy Spirit, but which we cannot perceive or convey in an explicit manner. In the same way, we now see Brown explaining the difference between consciousness and knowledge in a model that is very similar to von Balthasar's inspiration model\(^{121}\), except for the important difference that they use different terms and understand the reality from two different viewpoints. Ironically, both authors use the example of an artist to explain how inspiration / consciousness-

\(^{121}\) See pp. 126-128 of this thesis.
ness can be within an individual without that individual being able to explicitly express its contents. The difference comes with the fact that, for von Balthasar, this inspiration is what enables Jesus to more fully grasp himself and exercise his true freedom in answering "yes" to the plan that from before all time the Triune God ordained. This inspiration gives Jesus his mission, even though at any one point in time he is not completely aware of it in its entirety. In similar fashion, Brown posits Jesus to be conscious of his mission and his identity, but unable to fully express this information. This, then, is the main issue to which von Balthasar and Brown come with such a similar mode of understanding, their positions are justifiably reckoned to be congruent.

The second proposition of the I.T.C. we will examine is:

*Jesus was aware of the purpose of his mission: to announce the Kingdom of God and make it present in his own Person, in his actions, and in his words, so that the world would become reconciled with God and renewed. He freely accepted the Father's will: to give his own life for the salvation of all mankind. He knew the Father had sent him to serve and to give his life "for many" (Mk 14:24).*

The basic assertion here is that Jesus had knowledge of what his mission was: to establish God's Kingdom through his life and obedience to God.

122 Ibid., p. 309.
As mentioned above, von Balthasar ties the identity of Jesus' knowledge of his mission and person so closely together that they are not distinguishable. This makes it hard to pick comments specific to Jesus' knowledge of his mission of this the I.T.C. document refers. Basically, von Balthasar would assert that Jesus did know what his mission was, and that this knowledge came in the form of an awareness of being sent. In this way, since Jesus knew he was sent and knew that there must be a sender, Jesus knew not only his mission, but also his identity. For von Balthasar, mission is the guiding concept of his christology of consciousness. Jesus' mission was not given to him from outside, but it was always his and part of him. Jesus was implicitly aware of his eschatological and universal mission. Von Balthasar contends that it is impossible that Jesus did not know. The details of the mission were left up to God through Jesus' total obedience to God's will in the context of his total freedom which was most free in God.

In this way, Jesus has complete freedom whether or not to execute his mission, but since it is himself and is gently reinforced by the Holy Spirit who reminds Jesus that this was a decision made by the Triune God before all time. Jesus has faith (which in this instance is an assurance and strong conviction), though the entire mission is not available for his gaze in its complete form. Jesus knows he will be ultimately vindicated and victorious, but he could not see the entire mission as God could.
Whereas von Balthasar's idea of Jesus' mission is built strongly around the mission christology of the Gospel of John, Brown would answer this proposition from a different angle since he does not see the Gospel of John as being as reliable as some of the earlier texts. Brown asserts that there is a big difference between superhuman detailed foreknowledge of one's mission and an unshakably strong conviction of ultimate vindication. About this point, von Balthasar and Brown agree. To directly answer the question of Jesus' knowledge of his mission as posed by this proposition, Brown examines the use of the title "Messiah." Since Jesus did not really accept the title "Messiah" in the way others used it (the only place he explicitly accepts it is talking with a Samaritan woman, whose concept of Messiah was not so political: Jn 4:25-26), Brown contends that Jesus knew what his mission was, but it was not exactly what "Messiah" meant at the time.

Further, while Jesus did not have express knowledge of his mission in detail (and in this way was ignorant), he did have a consciousness of what it (his mission) was in reality. Once again, this is very congruent to von Balthasar's assertions. Finally, Brown asserts that the authoritative way Jesus presented the Kingdom of God illustrates very clearly that Jesus was aware of a very unique relationship with God.

The third proposition the I.T.C. sets forth is:
To realize his salvific mission, Jesus wanted to unite men with the coming of the Kingdom and to gather them around himself. With this end before him, he did certain definite acts that, if taken altogether, can only be explained as a preparation for the Church, which will be definitively constituted at the time of the Easter and Pentecost events. It is therefore to be affirmed of necessity that Jesus willed the foundation of the Church.\footnote{Ibid., p. 311.}

This proposition (as is the fourth) is a little further away from the focus of our work here, but nonetheless worth briefly examining. This third proposition, concerning Jesus’ knowledge of (and will concerning) the foundation of the church, asserts that Jesus and the Church are inseparable. Both authors seem to agree with that premise.

Von Balthasar’s concept of inclusion in Christ seems to be relevant here, for it is within this concept von Balthasar posits that all people are determined by the Person of Jesus Christ because he began the drama of which we are all actors. In addition, by imitating Christ’s mission, we can participate fully in the drama with him. Jesus calls us to participate with him in his mission. In this way, Jesus calls us forth to follow him and take up his mission of presenting the Kingdom of God, which seems to me to be the basic meaning of the I.T.C.’s third proposition. In such a way, Jesus did will the foundation of the church by calling people to himself and presenting them with a part in the work of his mission.
Brown would address this third proposition by disagreeing with anyone who asserts that the NT gives evidence that Jesus knew about and willed the foundation of the church in an explicit way, just as an architect hands blueprints to the builders. He contends that there is no biblical evidence to that point. However, he does hold that scripturally, Jesus did found the church by calling together his followers in community and calling them to work in the Spirit.\textsuperscript{124} This is very similar to von Balthasar’s answer above:

(followers) understand that their calling believers together into a community was the direct continuation of what Jesus had done when he called them together and sent them out to continue his work. For that reason, I insist on retaining the notion that Christ founded the church.\textsuperscript{125}

The fourth and final proposition the I.T.C. establishes concerning the knowledge Jesus had of his mission and identity is:

\textit{The consciousness that Christ had of being the Father's emissary to save the world and to bring all mankind together in God's people involves, in a mysterious way, a love for all mankind so much so that we may all say: "The Son of God loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal 2:20).}\textsuperscript{126}


\textsuperscript{125} Brown, Raymond E. \textit{Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible}, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 314.
This fourth proposition asserts that Jesus’ knowledge of his identity and mission involved a soteriological collective love of all humankind and an individual love of each and every human being.

To this fourth proposition, von Balthasar asserts that Jesus’ mission was both eschatological and universal. Since within this mission, we are all included because of Jesus’ foundation of the drama, we are loved both collectively and individually. Jesus bore all evil and God-forsakenness because he loved us and his mission called him to do so. Jesus must have known why he was giving up his life in total self-sacrifice: "it is impossible to suppose that God could use this death to reconcile the world to himself if the one who died was unaware of its significance."127 In this way, then, Jesus mission as God’s emissary did involve a knowledge of who he was and what he was. This mission was carried out in love for each one of us.

Raymond Brown would address this proposition by reminding us that we can take part in Jesus’ ultimate vindication of his death on the Cross and his Resurrection by participating in the mission to which he has called each and every one of us. While Jesus may not have known explicitly what his salvific mission was, he did possess some inexpressible consciousness of his salvific mission to all people.

Now that we have addressed some specific conclusions of von Balthasar and Brown in a comparative manner, let us conclude this work with some brief afterthoughts.
CONCLUSION

The creation of this thesis has been a long, but rewarding journey. It is my only hope that there is some insight within worthy of shedding light on the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. In examining these two brilliant authors, we have seen that, though their use of sources and premises are quite different, through their common goal to elucidate the person of Jesus Christ, they in part share their conclusion concerning his knowledge of his identity and mission.

There are so many factors that come into play in a scholarly discussion of this issue. How does one define identity? consciousness? knowledge? mission? or the Hypostatic Union? By thoroughly examining the basic theological tenets and the specific christological assertions of these two authors, we have attempted (as much as our abilities allowed and grace abounded) to explore how two scholars from such different geographic areas, theological backgrounds, and scholarly areas of research can come together on an issue and assert that Jesus did know who he was - - with qualifications.
What we have seen in these two authors, I echo in my own christological thought. Jesus did understand his identity and mission -- but the extent to which that understanding soared, as Brown so aptly put it, "No one knows." In the deep and unreachable consciousness of Jesus there was knowledge of what he was and of the mission he, as part of the Triune God, had ordained from before all time. This knowledge, however, was not present in Jesus' immediate awareness as explicit knowledge that he could explain or clearly proclaim. Through the experiences of living and learning, Jesus understood more and more about who he was, just as we all do.

In the final estimation, as has already been shown, we cannot discover what Jesus actually did understand of himself and his mission as the Incarnate Word of God. In this situation, informed speculation manifests our most noble capability. Is it worth the trouble, then? I would not be so pessimistic as to answer in the negative. On the one hand, is this quest for understanding what Jesus knew of himself and his mission necessary for us to have in our salvation? Probably not, but that certainly does not mean that the issue is moot. No, as we have seen in both von Balthasar and Brown, the knowledge Jesus possessed concerning his identity and mission is at the center of our understanding of who God is.

\[^{128}\text{See footnote \# 115.}\]
Finally, we must take recourse to the beauty and truth of the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon: For Jesus Christ to make a difference in my life and communicate real understanding of the situations I encounter in this world, he must be fully human, in all things save sin. At the same time, for Jesus Christ to truly represent the Incarnate Word of God and offer God’s grace, salvation, and an intimate, eternal relationship with God the Father, Jesus must be true God from true God, begotten not made, One in being with the Father.

Through the Scriptures, the Traditions of the Church, and our own understanding and hunger for knowledge through theological study, we can come a step closer to understanding who Jesus Christ is and who he believed himself to be. However, in the end, my tired and stretched mind takes refuge in the fact that it is ultimately a mystery that, while on this earth, we will never fully understand, but have been given the grace to accept and believe, through faith, that Jesus is as human as we are in all things save sin, and true God from true God, the Incarnate Word.
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