Elenctic Theology: Christology

Kevin Lewis

*Apollinarianism & Monothelitism (AM)[[1]](#footnote-1)*

### The AM position does not account for Christ having humanity like ours (except for sin).

#### The human rational soul is a created substance, bearing the properties of a created thing, that is, it is mutable, finite and contingent.

#### Christ’s humanity is like ours “in all things” except for sin. (cf. Heb. 2:14, 17; Rom. 8:3)

#### The Bible says that Christ “became” a man, which involves Christ adding to himself a complete human soul as well as a body.

##### John 1:14 – Christ “became” (i.e., became something he was not before) flesh.

###### “Flesh” here means the entire man viewed in natural life as opposed to God as spirit.

###### That “flesh” involves more than a physical body is evident from verse 13 of this same chapter, where “will” is attributed to flesh.

###### Note also John 17:2, where Christ received authority over all “flesh.” Clearly flesh refers to more than simply a hominid body.

###### Moving outside of John’s Gospel, we note that elsewhere in Scripture the expression “flesh and blood” refers to the whole person, not just the bodily element (e.g., Matt. 16:17; Eph. 6:12).

##### Heb. 2:11, 14, 17

###### Verse 14 states that Christ “partook” of flesh and blood. As noted above, “flesh and blood” refers to an entire human nature, not merely the bodily part.

##### Phil. 2:7

###### This verse shows that Christ “took on” the form of a slave. In the immediate context, this is tied to his being born in human likeness.

#### Christ is the “seed” of David, Abraham, and Adam, indicating a connection with humanity that involves the immaterial substance.

##### Christ’s connection with Adam (1 Cor. 15:45, 47) and his being the “seed” of Abraham and David would seem to involve a connection through the immaterial substances.

##### The natural connection between the generations seems to be more than physical as it involves the spread of sin, i.e., “that which is born of the flesh is flesh” (Jn. 3:6).

##### If Christ is the “seed” of David as Solomon was, then it seems that his immaterial rational soul was really connected to the human line of David. This also relates to Christ being the “last Adam” and “second man” (1 Cor. 15:45, 47).

### the human soul-spirit is essential in mankind’s relationship with God. Therefore, it is necessary for Christ to have a genuine human soul-spirit in order for Him to perform His saving work.

#### The problem of sin *is focused on the non-physical substance of the human being*, viz. in the soul-spirit, heart, intellect, will, and emotions. If Christ did not take upon himself a human soul like ours, then it is difficult to see how He could become one with us to effect His work of redemption.

##### If His non-physical substance is not like ours, then the connection that must exist between us and Christ in order for Him to be our high priest is missing (cf. Heb. 5:1).

##### In contrast, the Scriptures state clearly that it was necessary for him to appropriate to Himself a human non-physical substance so that He might become one with us, making His priestly work possible (Heb. 2:10-17). Verse 17 makes this point cogently: “He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

#### Without a created, mutable soul-spirit, it is difficult to see how Christ could be *tempted.*

##### The Scriptures say that God cannot be tempted (James 1:13). This includes the second Person of the Trinity, i.e., the Logos. Yet, the AM thesis requires us to affirm that God is indeed susceptible to temptation, albeit according to the reduced mode of consciousness that they have postulated for Him in His incarnation.

##### Furthermore, even considering the matter *before* the incarnation (i.e., before the Logos effects His alleged limited mode of consciousness), God the Logos would still possess the property of being temptable, as this is latent in him as the archetypal man.

#### The denial of Christ’s human soul-spirit destroys the ability for Christ to serve as a *representative* to God on behalf of mankind.

##### If Christ did not assume a human soul-spirit, then he could not proffer His representative obedience of will in fulfilling righteousness in our place.

###### It is not possible for any attribute or property of the preexistent divine Logos to exemplify human obedience on the part of man as one of us.

###### How can a type of “humanity” that is merely a phase of God’s being ever be “under the law” in any sense, much less in the sense required for him to fulfill that law for us? Gal. 4:4 makes it clear that Christ had to be born of a woman, under the law, in order to redeem us from it. Granting that Christ’s fulfillment of the law for us involves preeminently the actions of his immaterial soul, it is evident that this birth must include the assumption of the psychical part of man and not merely the addition of a hominid body.

##### AM cannot adequately account for Christ’s substitutionary *physical* death on our behalf.

###### If the divine Person is merely united with a hominid body, the death of Christ was not a genuine human death.

###### Human death results from the separation of the human soul-spirit from the human body.

##### AM cannot adequately account for Christ’s substitutionary *spiritual* death on our behalf.

###### If the divine Person is merely united with a hominid body, the spiritual death of Christ is not possible.

###### Human spiritual death occurs when there is a cessation of active, conscious fellowship with God by means of the activity of our *human* soul-spirit.

###### If the Logos does not acquire a genuine human soul-spirit, He could not have a human faculties of intellect and will by which he could relate to God as a human being. So He could neither have genuine human spiritual life or death in the AM view.

###### If the AM maintain that Jesus Christ died spiritually, then the only means of accomplishing this would be by means of the divine nature, that is, the Logos would have to die spiritually though the divine nature, which is impossible.

#### AM cannot adequately account for the human religious life of Jesus, with the result that his religious life cannot serve as a model for our own.

##### Consider the *prayer life* of Jesus.

###### Without a human soul-spirit, the AM position necessitates God praying to God.

##### Consider the personal *faith* of Jesus.

###### Without a human soul-spirit, the AM position necessitates God having faith in God.

##### Consider the *anointing* of Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

###### Without a human soul-spirit, the AM position necessitates the Holy Spirit as God, anointing God, the Second Person of the Trinity.

1. Adapted with permission from Dr. Robert Saucy & Dr. Alan Gomes’ treatment on Neo-Apollinarianism and Neo-Monothelitism
 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)