

# Saint Ambrose Incarnation Lord CLEANED

St. Ambrose: Saint Ambrose Incarnation Lord THE SACRAMENT OF THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD \*\*Ambrose of Milan\*\* \*\*Chapter 1\*\* I wish to fulfil do not find my creditors of yesterday unless they thought to disturb us with a sudden visit. Yet true faith is never disturbed. Until they arrive, let us turn to the story of the two farmers: Cain, who offered a sacrifice from the fruit of the land, and Abel, who offered a sacrifice from the first-born of his flock. I find no fault in the type of gifts, except that Cain knew his offering was displeasing to the Lord. Scripture says, If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned. The fault lies not in the gift, but in the disposition of the one offering it. Some believe Abel selected the best to offer, while Cain gave what was cheap. The Lord desires not just a bodily sacrifice, but spiritual one hence, Be still, meaning it is better not to offer at all than to offer without faith. Abel knew how to divide he offered from the firstlings of his flock. This teaches that gifts tainted by sin do not please God, but those that reflect grace do. He prophesied our redemption through Christ's passion, of whom I written, Behold of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Thus, Abel offered from the firstlings to signify the First-born, pointing toward the true sacrifice acceptable to God. To Cain, the Lord said, Be still, and this applies to all outside the Church, whose gifts are refused. \*\*Chapter 2\*\* This sentence condemns all the impious. If a Jew, who separates from the Father, makes an offering, If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned; be still. The same applies to Eunomians (Arian heretics), Sabellians (who confuse Father and Son), Marcionites (who believe God one of the Old, one Testament), Manichaeans, Valentinians, and others who deny the true human flesh or the divinity of Spirit. Those who divide the body of the Church, such as Novatus, Donatus, and all schismatics, told: If you offer but do not divide rightly, you have sinned. The true sacrifice is the Church gathered in unity, offering itself to God. Some, like Apollinaris followers, try to separate the human soul from Christ's incarnation. They may believe in Trinity, yet they fail to distinguish between human and divine natures; if you remove the soul or but you destroy whole nature of man. Thus, this sentence stands against all heresies which, under the name of brother, wound the Church, and separate us from the eternal King and from Mother Church. Let us not allow anyone to separate from the bosom of the Father or the truth of the Incarnation. We must divide the divine and human natures lest we confuse Creator with His works, or say the Author of time began after. \*\*Chapter 3\*\* Let Scripture be our guide: In the beginning was the Word. John does not speak as a fisherman, but as one in Christ. He declares the everlasting divinity of Word and the Word was with God to show that, as the Father without beginning, so too does the Word. "What beginning; what is, does not

receive a beginning in angels and time have beginnings, the Word precedes all beginning. Word is God. Do not let the similarity with human words deceive you. The Son is not a created word, neither can nor God be incorporeal, and so is the Word. John claims only what he has seen and heard. He saw Christ not as a substance (which is invisible by nature as one who took on what could be seen human flesh).

**\*\*Chapter 4\*\*** We must not confuse what is proper to divinity with what is proper to humanity. If you believe Christ assumed the flesh, but do not distinguish the natures, the warning applies: If you offer rightly, but do not divide rightly, you have sinned. Christ assumed flesh not to confuse but to complete. If you conflate or confuse the natures, you cease to be orthodox. The one God of both Testaments who made you subordinate Christ to time or other creatures. When Christ asked men say that I am? Peter confessed, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Commended this confession opinions of the people who said He was merely a prophet. Peter speaks for all, and Christ's own approval confirms apostolic faith in His divinity and unique sonship.

**\*\*Chapter 5\*\*** Faith is the foundation of the Church, for it was said of Peter's flesh, but of his faith, that the gates of hell shall not prevail. This faith conquers heresy in every generation: that Christ is the eternal Son of God, born of Virgin Mary, both divine and human, undivided in person. Generation from the Father does not diminish His generation from the Virgin, nor does His suffering diminish what He suffered as man, not as God. When He said, My God, why have you forsaken me? it was the voice of humanity, nature. He died in the flesh but remained immortal in divinity. His flesh tasted death; His power was impassible. Grave, His body was at rest while His divinity bestowed freedom to the dead. Do not attribute bodily suffering to divine nature. Christ's wisdom was unchangeable even as His soul was His wisdom, which is outside time and remains with the Father.

**\*\*Chapter 6\*\*** Christ did not suffer in appearance (as some heretics claimed), but in that He was not two persons, but one: Word became flesh refers to one Lord Jesus, not two. The idea that His divinity and humanity are of one nature is a grave error. The Word was not changed into flesh, nor was the divine substance turned into body. He assumed time, not coeternally. The Council of Nicea affirmed that the Word is of one substance with the Father but the flesh is from the Virgin. Christ suffered in the flesh, not in His divinity. Scripture testifies that Christ received human nature from Mary, born of her, predestined by prophecy, made of the seed of David according to the flesh. He offered Himself as a sacrifice for humanity, and conferred to us, from His generosity, the reward of redemption. Christ's divinity was not changed by the assumption of the body; He remained unchangeable throughout. He redeemed flesh that had sinned and was atoned for through flesh.

**\*\*Chapter 7\*\*** Christ assumed a rational, human will as a body. He laid down His life willingly for humanity, proving the fullness of human nature in Him. He redeemed the whole man, not in part, and rose again as a complete man. Christ retained the faculties of mind and body. He was of sensation, growth, and emotion in His human nature, untouched in His divinity. His human senses advanced; His divinity is unchanged. When Scripture says

He grew in wisdom and stature, it refers to His humanity, not His divinity. We divide Christ by recognizing both His divinity and humanity; rather, we proclaim one Christ in two natures without division. \*\*Chapter 8\*\* Some argue that the Father is unbegotten and the Son begotten, and so cannot be of the same substance. This is a scriptural distinction nowhere do we read the term unbegotten for the Father. The term is a heresy, not of the apostles. Scripture does attest to the divine nature and substance: the Son is the splendor of the Father's glory and of His substance. Peter says we become partakers of the divine nature, showing the one God's nature. If the Father, Son, and Spirit shared divine nature, then unity is affirmed and the Father and Son are one. \*\*Chapter 9\*\* Should they persist in arguing about unbegotten and begotten as different in nature: consider, creation even among birds and men, different origins do not imply different natures. The flesh of Christ, conceived of the Virgin without male involvement, shares our human nature, just as Adam's descendants, though from different nature. Therefore, the Son, though begotten, is of the same divine nature as the Father. \*\*Chapter 10\*\* Some say the Son is like the Father, but not of one substance. However, true likeness among creatures is in not just in appearance. The Son, as the image of the invisible God, shares in the fullness of divinity. All that is divine in the Father is shown in the Son; to lessen the image is to lessen Him whose image He is. Thus, since the Father is uncreated omnipotent, and perfect, so too is the Son not another, but of the same substance and power. \*\*\*(The text ends urging of substance and power among Father, Son, and Spirit, as witnessed in the Nicene Creed and confessed by the Church.)\*\*.