

# Christmas II

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[ 0 : 00 ] The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Words from this morning's lesson from Isaiah, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Throughout her life, the church has always had enemies. She still has them today. She will have them until our Lord returns.

Some of those enemies are outside of the church. These are corporations, secular institutions, government agencies, and just unbelievers that hate the fact the church stands on truth the way Jesus did.

Ultimately, they hate Christ. And so they hate the church because she is the visible body of Christ and represent Him on earth. But as dangerous as outside enemies can be, the church's most dangerous enemies come from within.

These enemies are those who say they are followers of Jesus, but are actually heretics. They formulate and perpetuate false doctrines.

[ 1 : 16 ] Heretics are so dangerous because they operate within the church. They weave their lives below the surface and deceive many along the way. Historically, men like Arius, Nestorius, and Pelagius were heretics.

In our day, we also have men and women, bishops and priests, pastors and teachers, who propagate heresy within the church, or at least amongst the Christian consumer class.

One of the more popular of these modern heresies is the Kenotic theory. If you're familiar with Bethel, Hillsong, Elevation, these are all churches that have gone into this Kenotic theory.

The Kenotic theory heresy is based on a heretical interpretation of Philippians 2, 5-8, which states, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Those who propagate this heresy teach that in making himself of no reputation, verse 7 of Philippians 2, Jesus divested himself of his divinity and was born as a mere man, chosen by God to do the special work of teaching, healing, and other miracles, and ultimately dying upon the cross as the sacrifice for sin.

[ 3 : 03 ] They say that he did this not as the Son of God made man, but as a man. They teach Jesus is not the unique Son of God, who has two complete natures, his eternal divinity, consubstantial with the Father, and his sinless humanity, a rational soul and human body, obtained at his conception from his Immaculate Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Instead, they teach Jesus obtained a form of divine power, but that it was super added at his baptism. Up until then, Jesus was just a good man.

This is how they understand what Isaiah prophesied in today's lesson. The Spirit of the Lord came upon and anointed Jesus with divine power. Divine power was not his eternal nature.

It is by that super added power, divine power, Jesus did miracles, but he did them as a man, endowed with power from the Holy Spirit, and not as the only begotten Son of God, not as God in the flesh.

Now, of course, this is totally false. Scripture easily defeats the Kenotic heresy. St. John 1, verses 1-14 teaches Jesus is the eternal Word made flesh who dwells among us.

[ 4 : 37 ] St. John 8, verse 58, Jesus says he is the I Am, that he is God. And in St. John 10, verse 30, he says, I and my Father are one.

In the incarnation, Jesus did not divest himself of his eternal divinity. No. He took a sinless human nature to his eternal divine nature and was made one unique person, the man Christ Jesus.

The church defines this union of the two natures and is one person as the hypostatic union. Colossians 2, verse 9 states, In him, in Christ, dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Hebrews 1-3 states, Jesus is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person. And as St. Augustine of Hippo taught, Jesus is divinity wrapped in flesh. We see this truth clearly in the transfiguration when Jesus allowed his divinity to shine through his humanity. Yes, Jesus concealed his divinity during his earthly life, but he did not let it go. [ 5 : 59 ] He remained equal with the Father, but did not cling to it. Jesus making himself of no reputation, Philippians 2-7.

He was the one who consisted in his will to join the lowly human nature to his divine nature in one person so he could conceal his glory as God and die upon the cross as man for our salvation. In the incarnation, the union of the two natures was made permanent. Today, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, fully eternal God, and fully resurrected and glorified man. When we study any heresy, we need to see how it came to exist and what its purpose is. With the earliest of heresies, one could understand how certain bishops and teachers fell into errant understanding.

The church was still formulating her understanding of the great mysteries of the nature and person of the Godhead and the person of Christ. And so some misunderstanding was bound to happen. [ 7 : 15 ] Errant teachers only became heretics after they obstinately maintained their false understanding and continued to teach it, even after the church met an ecumenical council and corrected them.

But modern heretics cannot be given such a pass. But the church has believed always, everywhere, and by all, is readily available, and yet they reject it.

Instead, they choose to be like those described in 2 Peter 2, 14 and 15, having eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls.

They have a heart trained in covetous practices and are accursed children. They are forsaken the right way and gone astray. The end game of the Kanaudic heresy is to normalize Jesus so its teachers can stand on equal footing with him in order to empower themselves to gain followers of themselves with the fame and the financial gain it entails.

By teaching, Jesus was a mere man like you and I, who was baptized with water and the Holy Spirit just like you and I. They make Jesus small and make themselves big in order to say that they, and by extension, their followers could do the same things Jesus did.

[ 8 : 53 ] Any baptized person then can heal the sick, cast out devils, or multiply bread and fish, or cash or their investments. They can even raise the dead.

I heard a sermon by one of the more popular Kanaudic heretics where he said, I am God Almighty. meaning he can do the things Jesus did when he was on earth.

And he said this in his amphitheater church, packed with people clapping wildly and simulcasting it all over the world. Now you would think given the plain teachings of scripture and 2,000 plus years of clear tradition, these modern heretics would not be able to gather followers.

But that isn't the case. We live in a time described by St. Paul in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verses 3 and 4. We are in a time when men will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.

Modern heretics preach fables. Many are ready to believe them. So brethren, the most dangerous enemies the church faces are not those found on the outside.

[ 10 : 24 ] We can see them coming. We see where they're at. The most dangerous are those inside her gates. In order to not fall into their false teachings or be fooled by their slick personalities and marketing strategies, we must be grounded in the truth found within the one holy Catholic and apostolic church.

In Ephesians chapter 4, verses 11 through 16, St. Paul states, Christ has given us the gift of the church that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love may grow up and all things into him who is the head of Christ.

We must know sacred scripture as it is rightly divided by sacred tradition. We must know and use the prayer book which is our church's magisterium, the living Anglo-Catholic tradition from which our spiritual life is derived.

survived. Whether it is the kenotic theory or any other heresy that comes down the pike, we must remain sober and vigilant and be not deceived.

As in the days of Arianism, whole parts of the church may buy into a heresy, but we must not. Like St. Athanasius who stood almost alone against the followers of Arius, we must stand firm in the truth at all costs.

[ 12 : 12 ] And we can by remaining faithful to the true Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man from the moment of his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who by his Holy Spirit leads the church into all truth, keeping us safe from the enemies of his church, particularly the enemies from within.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.