

A CREED SHOULD BE BIBLICAL

So let's look at the Apostle's Creed and see if its words are supported by the Bible!

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord

When we confess the Apostle's Creed, we not only affirm that we believe that God can be called Father, is Almighty and is the Creator of the Heavens and the earth...we also confess that Jesus the Christ is God's Son (also God) and our Lord.

I'm not trying to insult your intelligence...but can you think of a Bible passage that plainly says that Jesus is the Son of God?

There are many.

John 3:16 (NKJV) -- ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The above passage doesn't specifically say that Jesus of Nazareth is God's Son...but there are passages that do.

Just so we are clear...in calling Jesus the Son of God we are not saying that He is in some way inferior to God the Father or God the Holy Spirit. We believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit...and we believe that these 3 persons of God make up one God.



John 20:31 (NKJV) -- ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Romans 1:1-4 (NKJV) -- Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Hebrews 4:14 (NKJV) -- ¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.

1 John 4:15 (NKJV) -- ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

Matthew 3:17 (NKJV) -- ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

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Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost...

This truth is both simple and profound. We all understand how conception normally works. A human father provides the sperm and the mother provides the egg and God grants conception.

Every human father (since the fall into sin) is born in the image of sinful Adam. Every human mother (since the fall into sin) is also born in the image of sinful Adam.

The result can only be a sinful child.

Mary was a virgin...so the announcement of her pregnancy was a surprise (to say the least) and an impossibility without God's intervention.

Think of it like this, the Holy Spirit implanted the embryo in the womb of Mary so the child born of her was human, but without sin.

It was the only way the Son of God could be human and yet sinless.

Who was born of the Virgin Mary...

Even though His conception was a miracle, the birth of Jesus was just like every other birth...save being announced by angels!



Luke 1:34-35 (NKJV) -- ³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

Matthew 1:20 (NKJV) -- ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

Isaiah 7:14 (NKJV) -- ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23-24 (NKJV) -- ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." ²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

Luke 2:7 (NKJV) -- ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

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Who suffered under Pontius Pilate...

There are many passages in the New Testament, especially the Gospels, that show the role of Pontius Pilate in Jesus' suffering.

Who was crucified...

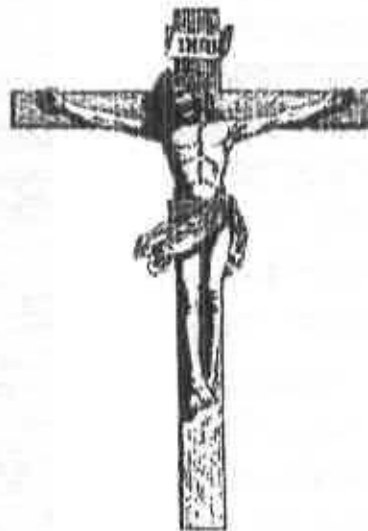
While the Gospel writers don't give us all the gory details, the fact that Jesus was crucified is beyond dispute.

Who died...

Again, the death of Jesus is chronicled by each of the Gospel writers. The fact that he was dead is clarified especially in John's Gospel.

John 19:28-37

These are all matters of FAITH...and are confirmed in the Scriptures. NONE of us witnessed these things with our own eyes, for none of us was alive in the 1st Century!



Matthew 27:24-25 (NKJV) -- ²⁴ When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." ²⁵ And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Mark 15:24-25 (NKJV) -- ²⁴ And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take. ²⁵ Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.

Acts 2:36 (NKJV) -- ³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Mark 15:37 (NKJV) -- ³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

Luke 23:46 (NKJV) -- ⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'Into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.



John 19:28-37 (NKJV) -- ²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" ²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

³¹ Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.

³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. ³⁶ For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

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Who was buried...

After all, that's what you do with dead people. In fact, it was most common in those days to bury people in the ground, like we do today. However, Jesus' burial in a rich man's tomb was foretold in the Scriptures...

The facts are recorded simply. He was buried and his burial was witnessed by the women...the same women who would first see him alive after His resurrection from the dead.



Matthew 27:61 (NKJV)

And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

Luke 23:55 (NKJV)

⁵⁵ And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.

Mark 15:47 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph observed where He was laid.

Matthew 27:7 (NKJV) -- ⁷ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

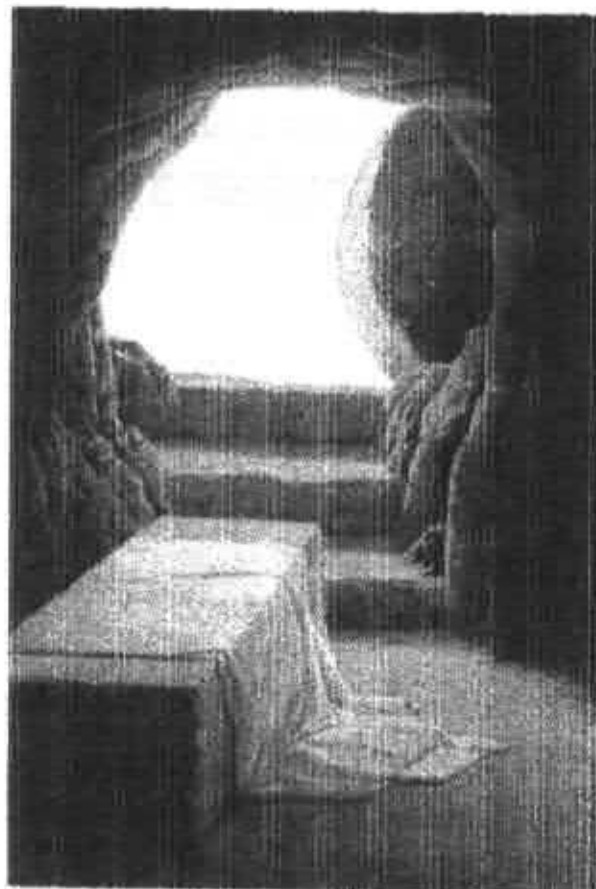
Isaiah 53:9 (NKJV) -- And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

John 19:38-42 (NKJV) -- ³⁸ After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

He descended into Hell....

Let's make sure that we understand this phrase...

The word translated 'preached' means to proclaim as a herald, proclaim aloud, to make known. So Jesus descended into hell to announce His victory over Satan and his host.



False Teachings Concerning Jesus' descent into Hell

It isn't just that some are offended by the phrase and omit it.

There are a number of false teachings concerning Jesus descent into Hell.

- 1) Some suggest that Jesus didn't really descend into hell, but went into 'limbo' or 'purgatory' in order to release Old Testament Believers from suffering. I'm guessing you can figure out who suggests this...and why they suggest it.
- 2) Still others suggest that the 'prison for spirits' is just a reference to the grave...
- 3) Still others suggest that the reason that Jesus descended into Hell was to give the condemned one last chance to believe and escape. There is a very specific Greek word used of proclaiming the good news...and it isn't used here. This suggestion also does damage to God's Justice and His Word.
- 4) Finally, (and I'm sure this isn't the last false teaching about hell, but it is the most prevalent) some suggest that Jesus went to hell to suffer....despite the fact that Jesus said, 'It is finished' before He died.

We speak of Jesus' Humiliation and Exaltation for a good reason.

- † Actually, we speak this way because the Bible speaks of His Humiliation and exaltation....shocking isn't it?

Philippians 2:5-11 (NKJV)

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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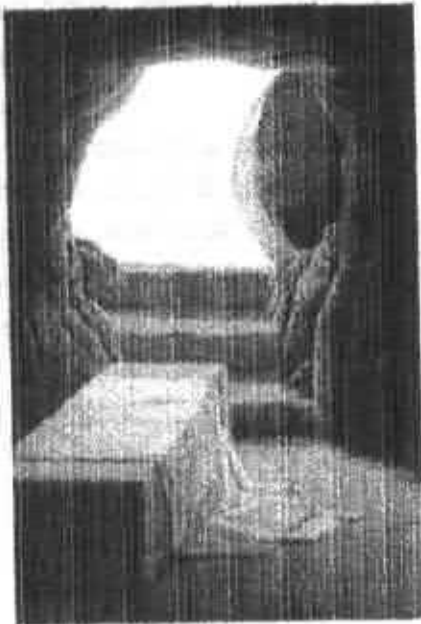
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He descended into Hell...

If you recall, this is one of those phrases that was not included in the Old Roman Creed. In fact, it's a phrase that some Methodists and Presbyterians omit today because they find it offensive and suggest that the phrase merely refers to the burial.

Hmm. I don't think so.

What can we say about this phrase? The basis for the phrase is found in 1 Peter 3:19 and alluded to in Colossians 2:14-15.



He descended into Hell....

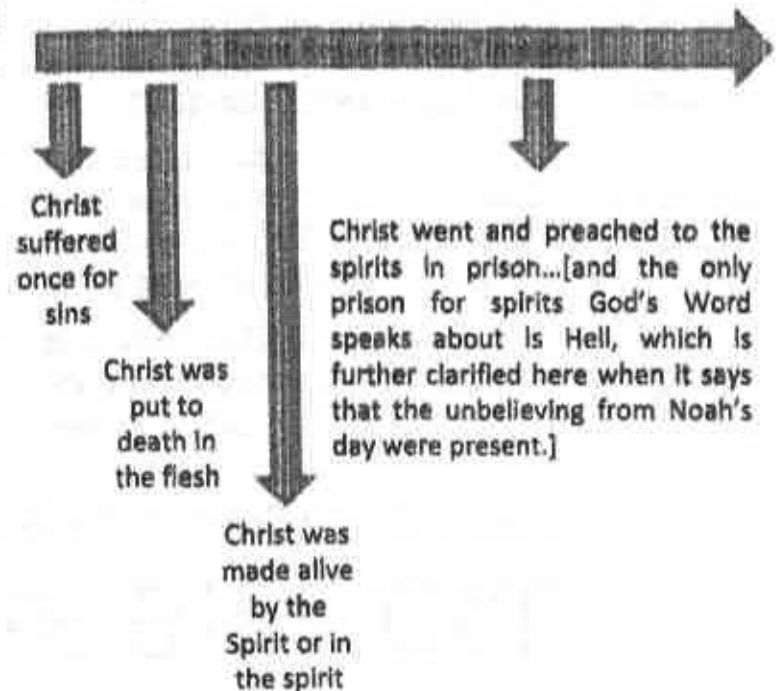
In other words, sometime on the first day of the week, after He had arisen from death, before He appeared to anyone, Jesus went and preached [made an announcement] to the spirits in hell.

The word translated 'preached' means to proclaim as a herald, proclaim aloud, to make known...like a town crier would. Jesus descended into hell to announce His victory over Satan and his host.

Colossians 2:14-15 (NKJV)

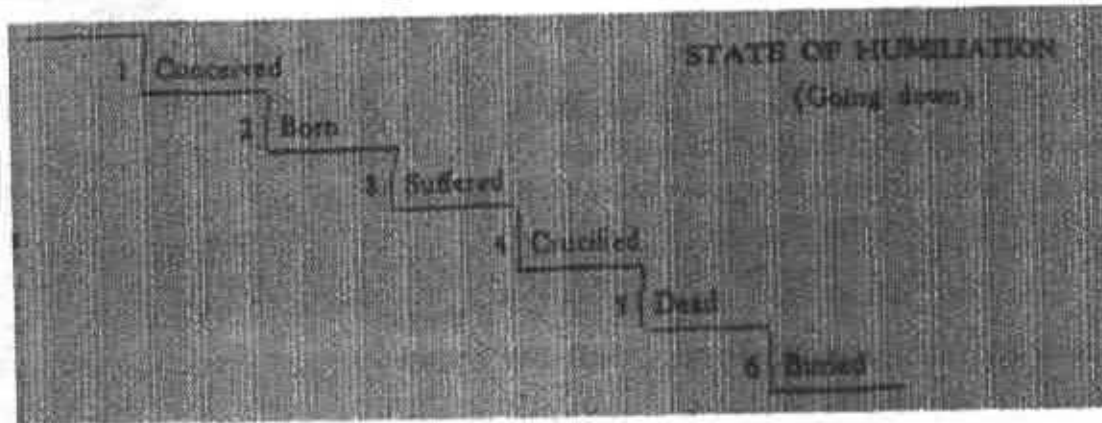
¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

1 Peter 3:18-20 (NKJV) -- ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.



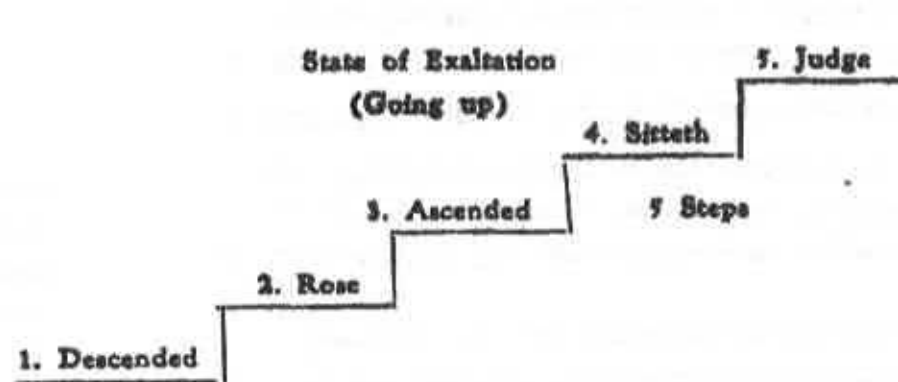
STATE OF HUMILIATION

The term 'state of humiliation' refers to the fact that Jesus humbled Himself in order to redeem us. The 'steps of humiliation' refer to the things Jesus did that were necessary for our redemption.



STATE OF EXALTATION

The term 'state of exaltation' on the other hand, refers to the fact that God exalted Jesus because He completed the work of our redemption. While the 'steps of humiliation' refer to the things necessary for our redemption, the 'steps of exaltation' are the proofs that we stand redeemed.



Jesus' Descent into Hell is part of His Exaltation.

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The Third Day He Rose again from the Dead...

Jesus foretold that He would rise from the dead.

The facts of the Resurrection are described simply. After spending 3 days in the tomb (part of Friday, Saturday and Sunday) Christ returned from death.

The Bible says that He arose and that He was raised up from death. This isn't a contradiction, but both are true. Christ himself arose as He promised. Christ's being raised up by the Father was also a message that the atonement is complete.

When we say that He rose again from the dead, we mean that the same Jesus came back to life bodily. Jesus did not come back as a spirit merely, but physically arose from death.



Romans 4:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Matthew 12:40 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Mark 8:31 (NKJV) ³¹ And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 (NKJV) ³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

John 10:17-18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Acts 2:23-24 (NKJV) ²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; ²⁴ whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

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He ascended Into Heaven...

The Ascension of the Christ took place 40 days after His glorious resurrection.

The Ascension is the Coronation of the Christ, and further proof that our redemption is complete. Jesus, having completed the work of salvation returned to His native heaven.

The Ascension is a reminder of Christ's glorious 2nd Coming.

The Ascension reminds us that Christ is preparing a place for us in the Father's House.



Acts 1:3 (NKJV) ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 4:8-10 (NKJV) ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." ⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

Acts 1:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

John 14:1-3 (NKJV) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

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He sits at the right hand of God the Father...

Christ told the religious leaders of that day that He would sit at the right hand of God.

As Stephen was being executed, He was allowed to see the Exalted Christ at the Right Hand of God.

This does not mean that Christ is sitting on a chair in the heavens to the right of the Father. The expression 'right hand of God' refers to the highest position of honor and glory.

We know what Christ is doing for us at the Right Hand of God...acting as our advocate and ruling all things for our benefit.



Matthew 26:64 (NKJV) ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Acts 7:55-56 (NKJV) ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Ephesians 1:20-23 (NKJV) ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Romans 8:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.