



## Cur Deus Homo: with Dr. Junius Johnson

### Lesson 1: Book I

#### Outline:

In the first of two lectures, Dr. Junius Johnson discusses the central question from Anselm's enduring work of why it is necessary that the Savior be both God and man.

- Background of Anselm's work:
  - The text presents itself as a dialogue between Anselm and an interlocuter based on reason alone to draw in the unbeliever.
  - It is divided into two books, first proving man's impossible debt to God and then reasoning through Christ how atonement must be made.
  - Anselm argues from the medieval mindset of his day invoking feudal obligation and the code of honor.
- The objections in Book I are well-developed so that Anselm can reason through a common set of arguments about the nature of the Divine.
- Anselm uses these objections to set up his thesis which is only God could be the author of salvation.
  - Salvation enacts a debt of servitude on the part of the one rescued from eternal death.
  - Humans were created to serve God alone.
  - Therefore, any other redeemer would violate the servitude owed to God.
- The central problem of the book unfolds around an attack on the ransom theory of atonement which holds:
  - God could have ransomed us by divine command alone.
  - God could have remitted us of our sin by divine will alone.
  - God could have saved us without the difficulty of suffering and death.
  - God could have conquered the devil from heaven.
- The dialogue Anselm weaves together clears the way for him to present something new by way of offering a four-fold premise:
  - Humans were created for blessedness beyond this world.
  - No sinful person can arrive at this blessed life.
  - No one passes through this life without acquiring sinfulness.
  - Ascent to the "articles of faith" is necessary to believe.
- As a result, Anselm arrives at the development of the notion of satisfaction:
  - To sin is to not render to God what is due.
    - This robs Him of his honor.
  - Either the sinner pays willingly, or it is exacted through punishment.
  - The injury beyond the theft requires payment beyond what was stolen.
  - The notion of satisfaction for sin takes care of the offense and the penalty together.



- Why can't God just remit sin without satisfaction?
  - To leave sin unpunished is unjust.
  - Justice is regulated by law.
  - Unpunished sin is not subject to the law and therefore is an injustice.
  - Neither mercy nor freedom is demonstrated by injustice.
- The study of angels helps us to understand the planned nature of salvation.
- Anselm concludes the book with the argument, achieved through logical deduction apart from scriptural revelation, that salvation by Christ is necessarily possible.