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Gregory of Nyssa on Humanity's Salvation

We're sometimes asked "are you sure the adoption of humanity is the gospel? I've never heard it before." In that light we find it helpful to go back to the ancient Christians who saw the gospel in light of humanity's adoption into the Triune Life.

St. Gregory of Nyssa lived in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) in the 4th cen. Gregory accepts the reality of hell but he defines it in light of the truth about who Jesus is. He knows that Jesus is the union between God and humanity and that in him "all humanity is joined to the divinity." Therefore hell is not separation from God but the suffering that comes from resisting the truth of our inclusion in God. In this way he sees hell as purgative, not punitive. He believes that eventually everyone will stop resisting their inclusion and leave hell.

Commenting on 1 Cor. 15:22-28 Gregory said this:

And this he said to be so: he said that the pure and undefiled divinity of the only-begotten one came to exist in the mortal and perishable nature of humanity. And on account of the whole human nature with which the divinity was mixed - which is a certain sort of first-fruits of the common dough - humanity exists according to Christ, *through whom all humanity is joined to the divinity.*

This translation of Gregory's writing is taken from Every Knee Should Bow: Biblical Rationales for Universal Salvation in Early Christian Thought by Steven R. Harmon. University Press of America, 2003. p. 101.