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Incarnation Anyway: Arguments for Supralapsarian Christology (AAR Academy Series)

By Edwin Chr Van Driel



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This book raises in a new way a central question of Christology: what is the divine motive for the incarnation? Throughout Christian history a majority of Western theologians have agreed that God's decision to become incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ was made necessary by "the Fall": if humans had not sinned, the incarnation would not have happened. This position is known as "infralapsarian." A minority of theologians however, including some major 19th- and 20th-century theological figures, championed a "supralapsarian" Christology, arguing that God has always intended the incarnation, independent of "the Fall."

Edwin Chr. van Driel offers the first scholarly monograph to map and analyze the full range of supralapsarian arguments. He gives a thick description of each argument and its theological consequences, and evaluates the theological gains and losses inherent in each approach. Van Driel shows that each of the three ways in which God is thought to relate to all that is not God -- in creation, in redemption, and in eschatological consummation -- can serve as the basis for a supralapsarian argument. He illustrates this thesis with detailed case studies of the Christologies of Schleiermacher, Dorner, and Barth. He concludes that the most fruitful supralapsarian strategy is rooted in the notion of eschatological consummation, taking interpersonal interaction with God to be the goal of the incarnation. He goes on to develop his own argument along these lines, concluding in an eschatological vision in which God is visually, audibly, and tangibly present in the midst of God's people.



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