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St. John of Damascus on Separation from God

We're sometimes asked "Are you sure the adoption of humanity is the gospel? I've never heard it before." In this light we find it helpful to look at the writings of other Christians who have expressed the gospel clearly.

John of Damascus, writing in the 8th century, explained what it does and does not mean to be separated from God. Separation cannot describe a state of being in which the Trinity is located in one place and humanity located in another. Rather, separation can only mean a separation in nature: the Trinity is Divine and we are created; the Trinity lives in perfect relationship and our relationships are sinful.

If separation from God meant removal from one place (in the Son) to another (not in the Son) then humanity would cease to exist. In light of the Biblical teaching that the Son "upholds all things by his powerful word" (Heb. 1:3), we have to conclude, as John did, that we all exist because we are all in that which exists: the Great I AM, God the Son. Here's what John of Damascus had to say. The emphasis is ours:

*All things are far apart from God, not in place but in nature. . . He who longs alway after God, he seeth Him: for God is in all things. Existing things are dependent on that which is, and nothing can be unless it is in that which is. God then is mingled with everything, maintaining their nature: and in His holy flesh the God-Word is made one in subsistence and is mixed with our nature, yet without confusion. *An Exact Exposition of the Christian Faith*, 1.13.*