

Christian Ministry Unit 1

Introduction to Theology

Week 2 – Christology

Introduction

“Christology” means _____.

Many views of Jesus

2 Corinthians 11:4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

What “other Jesuses” are circulating in our culture?

- “Jesus, like Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed, was one of many great spiritual teachers who taught different, but equally valid, ways to God.”
- “Jesus was a man whom God elevated to divine status because of his obedience.”
- “Jesus was God’s firstborn creation, the brother of Lucifer.” (Mormonism)
- “Jesus was created by God and existed as the archangel Michael before taking human form.” (Jehovah’s Witnesses)
- “The real Jesus was very different from the account given in the New Testament. Other books gave the truth about Jesus—but they were suppressed by the Church elite.” (*The DaVinci Code*)
- “We have no idea who the real Jesus was, what he taught, or whether he even actually existed!”

Two key New Testament passages about Jesus

John 1:1-18 – This passage teaches Jesus’ deity and humanity.

John 1: ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. ⁹There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John testified about Him and cried out,

saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" ¹⁶ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

What does this passage say about "the Word?"

- (1:1)
- (1:14)
- (1:18)

This passage describes what is called the Incarnation. "Incarnation" literally means "enfleshment." At the Incarnation, two *natures* (full deity and full, sinless humanity) were inseparably united in one *Person*, Jesus Christ. This union is called the Hypostatic Union.

NOTE:

Paul makes this same claim about Jesus.

Colossians 2: ^{9*} For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

The Old Testament also predicted the Messiah would be both human and divine.

Isaiah 9: ⁶ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Why is the Incarnation/Hypostatic Union essential for our salvation?

Jesus had to be fully human in order to die for the sins of humanity (Heb. 2:17; 10:4-7).

Hebrews 2: ¹⁷ Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Jesus had to be sinless in order to die for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18).

1 Peter 3: ¹⁸ For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just (i.e. righteous) for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.

Jesus had to be fully God in order for his death to pay for all of our sins (Heb. 10:10-12; Col. 2:9,13).

Colossians 2: ⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form... ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

Philippians 2:1-13** – This passage teaches an important implication of the Incarnation, and an important application for us as Jesus’ followers.

Philippians 2: ¹ Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Phil. 2:6,7 teaches that Jesus emptied himself of certain divine prerogatives when he became a human. This self-emptying is called the Kenosis (from the Greek word *kenoo*, which is translated “emptied”). What did Jesus lay aside?

- HIS POSITION (vv. 7,8)
- HIS ENVIRONMENT
- THE INDEPENDENT USE OF HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES (v. 8)

Luke 2:⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

John 4:³ He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. ⁴ And He had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar . . . ⁶ and Jacob’s well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Matthew 24 ³⁶ “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

How then did Jesus perform miracles?

Acts 10³⁸ "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

How then did Jesus live a sinless life?

Hebrews 9: ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Why did Jesus lay aside his rights?

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- (vv. 9-11)

How does all this apply to us as Christians?

- We are to follow Jesus example of sacrificial service (2:2-4,12).
- God will provide us with all the resources we need to follow Jesus' example (2:1,13; see also 1 Pet. 5:6).

Jesus' resurrection

Resurrection vs. resuscitation

- NOT resuscitation:
- BUT resurrection:

1 Cor. 15:1-23** - This passage teaches why Jesus' resurrection is so important.

1 Corinthians 15:¹ Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now,

but some have fallen asleep; ⁷ then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; ⁸ and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. ¹¹ Whether then *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹² Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. ¹⁵ Moreover we are even found *to be* false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷ and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. ²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming,

- Jesus' resurrection validates the _____ and _____ of Jesus and His message (vv. 13-15).

- Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that _____ Jesus' atoning sacrifice (v. 17).

- Jesus' resurrection guarantees our _____ (vv. 18-23).

What is the evidence that Jesus was resurrected? While we obviously do not possess empirical proof (evidence from observation through our five senses) for Jesus' resurrection, the apostles did receive this kind of proof (Acts 1:3; 1 John 1:1; John 20:25,27), and we have their testimony.

“A basic principle of evidence is that personal knowledge of the witness or declarant is essential to admissibility. The speaker must have seen, heard, or otherwise perceived the event about which he speaks.” Graham Lilly, “An Introduction to the Law of Evidence”

Positive evidence for Christ's resurrection:¹ Forensic evidence. We can conclude by several lines of reasoning based on the data available to us that the best explanation for what happened is that Jesus rose from the dead.

- The Christian movement began in the very city where its founder had been executed and buried only days earlier. This movement was based solely on the apostles' claim (along with 500 other people—see 1 Cor. 15:6) that they had witnessed Jesus alive after his execution.

- With the possible exception of John, the apostles were all executed rather than retract their claims that they had witnessed Jesus alive after his execution.

- The conversion of Paul is difficult to explain apart from his own explanation.

Inadequate explanations:

- **Stolen Body Theory:** Someone stole the body, which explains the disciples' belief in the resurrection as well as the empty tomb.
 - *But who would steal it?*

- **Swoon Theory:** Jesus didn't really die. He was given a drug while on the cross which simulated death, and later recovered, passed himself off to his disciples as resurrected, and then lived out the rest of his life in hiding.
 - *But Jesus would not have had the strength to leave the tomb.*

- **Hallucination Theory:** The disciples didn't really see Jesus rise from the dead. They hallucinated seeing him, because they wanted so badly for him to be alive.
 - *But this still doesn't deal with the empty tomb.*

¹ For more information on this topic, see Lee Strobel, *The Case For Christ* (Zondervan, 1998).

- **Legend Theory:** The story of the resurrection is not factual, but reflects a legend which the early church came to believe.
 - *But the gospels and epistles have been accurately dated to 50-95 AD.*

Jesus' ascension

After his resurrection, Jesus was removed bodily from earth and is in the presence of God the Father, where he continues to work out God's redemptive plan.

- He intercedes for his followers (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34).
- He pours out his Spirit on his followers (Jn. 7:37-39; Acts 2:32,33).
- He leads his followers to spread the good news of his victory over sin and Satan (Lk. 24:46-51; 2 Cor. 5:14-20; Eph. 1:20-23).

Jesus' return

At the end of the age, after some from every people-group have become his followers, Jesus will return bodily to earth to establish God's kingdom. (Matt. 24:14,29-31).

Memory verses

Colossians 2:9* – Jesus is fully God and fully human

Philippians 2:6,7* – Jesus laid aside his divine privileges (including the USE of certain divine attributes) at the Incarnation

1 Corinthians 15:1-23** – Jesus has been resurrected, and his resurrection proves he is Messiah and assures our salvation

Assignment

Read Genesis 1-5. Identify and list conditions *before* Adam and Eve fell and *after* they fell.