



The Career of Christ

[Christology 101]



Pastor Jeff South

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Christology: Career of Christ

Introduction:

- Ever since the holy Babe was laid in the manger in Bethlehem of Judea, devout souls have found in Jesus Christ One who is the worthy object of their worship, whose ineffable person compels their love and obedience. As the Word of God expressed in human form, Jesus Christ has drawn all believing souls to Himself. Although no other person is the object of more scriptural revelation, human pens falter when attempting to describe Him. (Walvrood) The poet, biographer, theologian and orator alike confess their inability to delineate the glories and perfections of our blessed Saviour. Charles Wesley expressed the aspiration of those conscious of their limitations when he composed this great hymn:

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace

- From Genesis to Revelation Jesus Christ is the most important theme of the Bible and almost every page is related in some way to either His person or work. Christianity is Jesus Christ. No other subject is given more complete revelation and yet the half has not been told.(Walvrood)
- The Son of God assumed a human nature in order to perform the work of Mediator on behalf of fallen sinners. The efficacy of his work depends on the worth of his person. It is “the dignity of the person that dignifies the work,” argues Thomas Goodwin. (Mark Jones)
- Spurgeon has a profound introduction to his “The Saint and His Savior.” Spurgeon does not begin with describing the Savior, but rather by recounting the fact that “we esteemed Him not...” In other words, Spurgeon begins by lingering long over our sin... the effect is to feel the weight of our own wickedness... only then Spurgeon directs us to linger longer over our Savior! Oh what glories!!!

Sources for the Life of Jesus:

1) New Testament:

2) Outside the New Testament:

- a) Historical references to Jesus appear in numerous writers from the late first and second centuries AD, including the Jewish historian Josephus, who mentions Jesus twice—once regarding his execution by Pontius Pilate and once concerning the execution of James, his brother.^[1] In the latter reference, Josephus identifies “James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ,”^[1] and many scholars view this passage as authentic to Josephus and historically dated to the late first century AD.^[1]
- b) A first-century Stoic philosopher named Mara, son of Serapion, writing toward the end of the first century AD from prison, provides another fascinating reference.^[1] Mara speaks of three “wise” individuals—Socrates, Pythagoras, and a Jewish king—who were killed by their own people, and while he doesn’t mention Jesus by name, writing shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, he certainly appears to be referring to Jesus.^[1]
- c) Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius also reference Jesus when they mention “Chrestus” or “Christus.” Suetonius, explaining the expulsion of Jews during Caesar Claudius’s reign (AD 41–54), writes that the emperor “expelled them from the city” because “the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.”^[1] Tacitus similarly mentions “Christus” as the name on which the term “Christians” was founded when explaining why Nero blamed his fire in Rome on the Christians.^[1]
- d) From these non-Christian sources, a consistent picture emerges: Jesus was a Jewish teacher with disciples, performed healings and exorcisms, was rejected by Jewish leaders and crucified by Pontius Pilate during Tiberius Caesar’s reign, and his followers claimed to have seen him risen from the dead shortly after his crucifixion, with the Christian movement spreading rapidly enough to reach Rome within decades.^[2]

[1] J. Daniel Hays, *A Christian’s Guide to Evidence for the Bible: 101 Proofs from History and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020), [206–208](#).

[2] J. P. Moreland, *Love Your God with All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), [198](#).

Concerning the Person of Jesus

1) Humanity of Jesus

a) Demonstrated by His life:

- i) A human Birth (Gal. 4:4) & Genealogy (Matt. 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38)
- ii) Developed as a human (Luke 2:52)
- iii) Known as a “man” (Jn 1:30; 4:9; 8:40; Acts 2:22; 13:38) with “flesh & blood” (Heb. 2:14)
- iv) Displayed Attributes of Humanness:
 - (1) Limited Knowledge, had to ask questions (Mk 5:30-33; 9:21; 11:13; 13:32; Lk 2:46, 52; Jn 11:34)
 - (2) Weariness (Jn 4:6)
 - (3) Hunger (Matt 4:2)
 - (4) Thirst (Jn 19:28)
 - (5) Sleepiness (Matt 8:24)
 - (6) Temptation (Luke 4; Heb. 2:18; 4:15)
 - (7) Alarm (Mk 14:33; Lk 12:50; Jn 12:27)
 - (8) Agony (Lk 22:44)
 - (9) Anger (Mk 3:3-5)
 - (10) Sadness (Jn 11:35; Luke 19:41)
 - (11) Spoke Harshly (Mk. 3:12; 10:14)
 - (12) Death (Heb. 2:14)
 - (13) Genuine Dependence on the Spirit (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18; Matt 12:28)

b) Demanded by the Gospel

- i) Suffering and Death atone for sin (1 Jn. 4:1-2; Heb. 2)
- ii) Office as High Priest necessitates humanity (Heb. 5-7)

c) Developed throughout His life: Messianic Consciousness:

- i) Clear awareness of His Messianic Identity (Luke 2:49; 3:21-22; 4:18; John 4:25-26; 5:39; 8:58; 17:5; 13:1-4; Heb. 10:5-7).
- ii) Progressively Developed (Luke 2:52; Isaiah 50:4-9)

2) Deity of Jesus

a) Claims of Jesus

- i) Jesus claimed Preexistence, i.e. “come down from above” (John 3:13, 31; 4:25, 49; 5:43; 6:14, 33-42; 7:28, 31; 8:14, 23, 42; 9:39; 11:27; 12:13, 46-47; 13:3; 15:22; 16:28; 17:18) cf. Dan. 7

- ii) Jesus claimed to possess eternal, inherent life (John 5:26), and the ability to impart life to whom He will (John 3:15-16; 5:25; 6:40)
- iii) Jesus claimed a consciousness of eternity, and an eagerness to “go back to the Father” (John 13:1; 14:1-3, 12, 28; 17:1-5)
- iv) Jesus claimed equal status and equal honor as God (John 5:17-47)
- v) Jesus claimed to be the “I AM” of Exodus 3 (John 8:28, 58).
- vi) Jesus claimed to be one in the same as the “Lord,” who gave the Sabbath (Mark 2:28)
- vii) Claimed authority & prerogative to forgive sins, which God alone can do (Ps. 130:4; Matt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12)
- viii) Jesus interpreted and applied to Himself OT passages, which originally refer to God (Luke 4:14-31; John 10 & Ezek. 34; Matt 9:10-13; 22:41-46; Luke 7:27; 24:27)
 - (1) A comparison of the Old Testament and New Testament passages proves beyond doubt that the Christ of the New Testament bears the title Jehovah or Lord in the Old Testament. This fact has long been recognized by conservative theologians. This does not deny that the Father and the Spirit bear the title Jehovah, but affirms that it also belongs to Christ. The name is used both of the Persons of the Trinity severally and of the Trinity as a whole.
 - (2) Many passages link Christ with the name Jehovah. In Zechariah 12:10b (ASV), where Jehovah is speaking, the description is to be applied clearly to Christ: “They shall look unto me whom they have pierced.” Revelation 1:7 describes Christ in the same language. Again in Jeremiah 23:5–6 (ASV), Christ is declared to be “Jehovah our righteousness” (cf. I Cor. 1:30). Similar comparisons are found in other passages (Ps. 68:18, cf. Eph. 4:8–10; Ps. 102:12, 25–27, cf. Heb. 1:10–12; Isa. 6:5, cf. John 12:41). Christ is the Jehovah of the temple (Mal. 3:1; Matt. 12:6; 21:12–13) and the Jehovah of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8). (Walvrod)
 - (3) It is easily demonstrated that Christ is identified also with the Elohim of the Old Testament. In Isaiah 40:3, Christ is spoken of as both Jehovah and Elohim (cf. Luke 3:4). In Isaiah 9:6–7 Christ is called “the mighty

God [Elohim].” It is apparent that Elohim in the Old Testament is God in the New Testament (Greek, *theos*). Hence all passages in the New Testament referring to Christ by this title link Him with the Elohim of the Old Testament (cf. Rom. 15:6; Eph. 1:3; 5:5, 20; 2 Peter 1:1). (Walvrood)

- ix) Jesus made statements about Himself that would require omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence to be true (Matt. 18:19-20; 28:18; Luke 10:22; 21:12-15; John 14:16-18)
- x) The fact that Christ is omnipresent does not contradict the concept that He also has locality. While living on earth, He also was omnipresent in His deity. At the present time, Christ is at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19; I Peter 3:22) although at the same time omnipresent and indwelling the believer. With the exception of Lutheran theologians, most interpreters regard Christ as omnipresent in His deity and local in His humanity. (Walvrood)
- xi) Jesus demanded loyalties of love and devotion, which in Jewish theological understanding, can rightly be given only to God, otherwise one violates the 1st & 2nd commandments (Matt. 10:32-33, 37-38; John 14:1), even receiving worship (John 20:28; Matt. 14:33).
- xii) Jesus made promises to His followers concerning Himself that He could fulfill only if He were God (Matt 11:27; John 10:25-29)
- xiii) Jesus claimed authority to rule the world at the Last Day (Matt. 19:28)
- xiv) Jesus claimed to own and command the angels of heaven (Matt. 16:27; 26:53; Mark 8:38)
- xv) Jesus claimed authority to condemn unbelievers (Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 13:27; John 5:24-29)
- xvi) Jesus claimed authority to reward every deed (John 5:24-29)
- xvii) Jesus claimed authority to send prophets in His own name, which is a prerogative only of God (Matt. 23:33-36)
- xviii) In keeping with the concept of His omnipotence, the Scriptures also assign sovereignty or authority to Christ. According to Matthew 28:18 (RSV), Christ declared, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Again in 1 Peter 3:22 (RSV), Christ in heaven is declared to

- be at the right hand of God, “with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him.” Other passages bear out the same concept of absolute sovereignty (John 5:27; Acts 2:36; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:9–10; Col. 1:18). He is indeed “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16). (Walvrood)
- xix) Jesus claimed clearly to be the Divine Messiah (Is. 9:6), and that He would set at God’s right hand (John 4:25; Matt. 26:63-66; Mark 14:61-63; Luke 22:66-71)
- xx) Jesus rejected the assessment that He was merely a good teacher and asserted that He was the only Good one... God (Mark 10:17-18).
- xxi) Jesus claimed he would resurrect Himself (John 2:18-22; 10:17-18), and even control the timing of His death (John 13:27)
- xxii) Frequently in the Scriptures Christ is portrayed as having omniscience. As a Child of twelve *in* the temple, He astounded the teachers of His day with His wisdom. In John 2:25 (RSV) it is stated that Christ “knew all men” and again, “he ... knew what was in man.” In John 16:30 (RSV) the disciples bear witness, “Now we know that you know all things” and again in John 21:17 (RSV) Peter declares, “Lord, you know everything.” Perhaps Acts 1:24 refers to Christ when it states, “Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men...” In keeping with His omniscience, Christ was said to have foreknown those who would believe not and betray Him (John 6:64). In a similar way Christ’s foreknowledge is affirmed in other passages (John 13:1, 11; 18:4; 19:28). In keeping with His omniscience, He is declared to have the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:30). Such qualities could not be ascribed to even the wisest of prophets, and they constitute another proof that He possessed all of the divine attributes. (Walvrood)
- xxiii) Christ is constantly represented in Scripture as having qualities which could be possessed only by God. His divine glory is mentioned in John 17:5 and seen in the vision of Revelation 1:12–18. Christ refers to Himself as “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), qualities which inhere only in God. He is the “righteous Branch ... Jehovah our righteousness” (Jer. 23:5–6, ASV), He is the holy Son of God of Luke 1:35. Above all, Christ is the manifestation of

grace—divine love and righteousness combined (John 1:17)
There is not an attribute of Deity which is not directly or indirectly ascribed to Christ. (Walvrood)

b) Claims about Jesus

- i) By John the Baptist: who was 6 months older than Jesus, yet claimed Jesus preexisted him (John 1:29-30).
- ii) By Matthew the Apostle: Jesus is the fulfillment of the Emmanuel prophecy of “God with us...” (Matt. 1:23).
- iii) By John the Apostle: who claimed...
 - (1) Jesus not only preexisted but also is one in the same as the Creator (John 1:1-18).
 - (2) John also records how Thomas attributes the title “God” to Jesus (John 20:28; 1 John 5:20).
 - (3) John also records how Jesus is the object of heavenly worship (Rev. 5:12-13).
- iv) By Paul the Apostle: who claimed that
 - (1) Jesus did have a human birth and genealogy, but that Jesus proved His divinity by the resurrection (Rom. 1:3-4).
 - (2) Though Jesus is of Jewish descent, He is nonetheless the God of Israel (Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13).
 - (3) Jesus is the only true God, who operates the universe (Col. 1:15-20), and exists as the fullness of deity bodily (Col. 2:9).
 - (4) The OT “Day of the LORD,” (Joel 2:31) is one in the same as the “Day of Christ” (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 2 Thess. 2:2).
 - (5) The OT commanded us to “call on the name of the LORD” (Joel 2:32), but Paul sees this as calling upon the name of Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 10:12-14).
 - (6) The “one LORD” of the Shema (Deut. 6:4) is also one in the same as Christ (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:5).
 - (7) The OT predicts that every knee will bow to YHWH (Is. 45:23), which Paul says will be fulfilled in Christ (Phil. 2:10-11).
 - (8) Paul viewed the death of Christ as God shedding His own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - (9) Jesus has power to transform the body (Phil. 3:21). By virtue of His resurrection “he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him” (Heb. 7:25).

He is “able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). He is “able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24; cf. Eph. 5:27). (Walvrod)

- (10) The attribute of immutability, that Christ never changes, as stated in the classic passage of Hebrews 13:8, affirms that Christ is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” In the incarnation Christ added a complete human nature, but orthodox scholars have always held that the divine nature of Christ remains unchanged and is, therefore, immutable. In Hebrews 1:10–12 a quotation is given of Psalm 102:25–27 and it is stated of Christ, “Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” If it is true that Christ has never changed, it also follows that the same Person who existed from eternity past is the One seen on earth during the period of the Gospels and the One who is now the glorified Son of God in heaven. The unchangeableness applies to all of the divine attributes as well as to His divine nature. (Walvrod)

v) By Peter the Apostle: who claimed...

- (1) Jesus preexisted (1 Peter 1:18-21)
- (2) Jesus controls all angelic powers (1 Peter 3:22)
- (3) Jesus is the majestic God & Savior (2 Peter 1:1, 17).
- (4) Jesus fulfills the predicted coming of YHWH (Isaiah 40:3; Mark. 1:3-8)

- c) Prayer to Jesus Christ constitutes yet another evidence for his deity. Jesus instructed his disciples to pray to him (John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23–24). Acts 1:24–25 records that the disciples prayed to Christ for guidance in choosing a replacement for Judas Iscariot. Stephen voiced two prayerful requests to Jesus: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” and “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:59–60). In Damascus, Ananias instructed Saul to be baptized and to call on the name of Jesus (Acts 22:16). The apostle Paul later wrote that “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13; see 1 Cor. 1:2). Paul also appealed to Christ to remove the “messenger of Satan” from him (2 Cor. 12:7–8). Indeed, the New Testament closes with a prayer

to Christ: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).

(MacArthur/Mayhue)

- d) Worship includes more than just prayer; it also involves praise. Ephesians 5:18–20 addresses the matter of speaking to “one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart” (Eph. 5:19). The context distinguishes “God the Father” from “our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20; see also 5:21), making Christ the primary referent of “Lord.” The song of praise in Revelation 5:9–10 also focuses on the Lord Jesus, who paid the ransom price by his own blood. Two biblical hymns in the early church voice praise to Jesus for who he is and what he has accomplished: Philippians 2:6–11 and 1 Timothy 3:16. These creedal hymns concentrate on the doctrine of Christology. Even the Old Testament contains Christological hymns, in the form of messianic psalms like Psalms 2; 22; 24; 45; 72; and 110. Thus, even pre-Christian Jews sang praise to and about the Messiah in the ancient Psalter, the hymnbook of Israel. (MacArthur/Mayhue)
- e) Charles Hodge presents the following summary of the scriptural evidence for the divine attributes of Christ: All divine names and titles are applied to Him. He is called God, the mighty God, the great God, God over all; Jehovah; Lord; the Lord of lords and King of kings. All divine attributes are ascribed to Him. He is declared to be omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and immutable, the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is set forth as the creator and upholder and ruler of the universe. All things were created by Him and for Him; and by Him all things consist. He is the object of worship to all intelligent creatures, even the highest; all the angels (*i.e.*, all creatures between man and God) are commanded to prostrate themselves before Him. He is the object of all the religious sentiments; of reverence, love, faith, and devotion. To Him men and angels are responsible for their character and conduct. He required that man should honour Him as they honoured the Father; that they should exercise the same faith in Him that they do in God. He declares that He and the Father are one; that those who had seen Him had seen the Father also. He calls all men unto Him; promises to forgive their sins; to send them the Holy Spirit; to give them rest and peace; to raise them up at the last day; and to give them eternal life. God is not more, and cannot promise more, or do more than Christ is said to

be, to promise, and to do. He has, therefore, been the Christian's God from the beginning, in all ages and in all places. (Hodge)

3) **Titles given to Jesus (MacArthur/Mayhue)**

- a) "Commander of the LORD's army" (Josh. 5:14–15)
- b) "Wonderful" (Judg. 13:18)
- c) "The LORD of hosts [or the armies]" (Ps. 24:10; Isa. 6:3, 5 with John 12:41; Isa. 24:23; James 5:4)
- d) "The Lord," or *adonai* (Ps. 110:1 with Matt. 22:41–45; Rom. 10:9–10; Phil. 2:9–11)
- e) "Wisdom" / "Wisdom of God" (Proverbs 8; Luke 11:49; 1 Cor. 1:24)
- f) "Immanuel," or "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23)
- g) "Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6)
- h) "Mighty God" (Isa. 9:6)
- i) "Wonderful Counselor" (Isa. 9:6)
- j) "the LORD," or Yahweh (Isa. 40:3 with Mark 1:3; Joel 2:32 with Rom. 10:13)
- k) "Creator" (of Israel, Isa. 43:15; of souls, 1 Pet. 4:19; and of all things, with this title implied, John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2)
- l) "The arm of the LORD" (Isa. 53:1)
- m) "The breaker" (Mic. 2:13 NASB)
- n) "The angel [messenger] of the LORD" (see Zech. 1:11–21, where 1:20 identifies the angel as Yahweh while 1:12–13 shows him praying to Yahweh as a distinct person)
- o) "The bridegroom" (Matt. 9:15)
- p) "The Son of God" (Mark 1:1; John 3:18; 5:25; Rom. 1:4; Eph. 4:13; Rev. 2:18)
- q) "The Holy One" (Mark 1:24; John 6:69; Acts 3:14; Rev. 3:7)
- r) "Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32)
- s) "The Word" (John 1:1)
- t) "The only begotten" (*monogenēs* = unique one; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9 NASB)
- u) "I am" (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; cf. "I AM," Ex. 3:13–14)
- v) "The shepherd" (John 10:14; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; see Ps. 23:1)
- w) "The life" (John 14:6)
- x) "The truth" (John 14:6)
- y) "The way" (John 14:6)
- z) "God" (John 20:28; Rom. 9:5)
- aa) "The Author of life" (Acts 3:15)

- bb) “The power of God” (1 Cor. 1:24)
 - cc) “The Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:8)
 - dd) “The head of the church” (Eph. 4:15; 5:23)
 - ee) “The blessed and only Sovereign” (1 Tim. 6:15)
 - ff) “King of kings” (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; see Dan. 4:37)
 - gg) “Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16)
 - hh) “Savior” (Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1)
 - ii) “The founder of their salvation” (Heb. 2:10)
 - jj) “The source of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9)
 - kk) “The founder and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2)
 - ll) “The Almighty” (Rev. 1:8)
 - mm) “The Alpha and the Omega” (Rev. 1:8)
 - nn) “The Lord God” (Rev. 1:8)
 - oo) “The first and the last” (Rev. 1:17; 2:8)
 - pp) “The true one” (Rev. 3:7)
 - qq) “Faithful and True” (Rev. 19:11)
 - rr) “The beginning and the end” (Rev. 21:6)
- 4) Note Specifically the Christology of the Book of Acts
- a) “Lord,” appears 95x in the book (cf. Acts 10:36). It refers to Jesus being the sovereign ruler of the universe.
 - b) “Jesus” appears 67x in the book of Acts. It refers to Jesus as the historic Son of David from Nazareth (cf. Acts 10:38).
 - c) “Christ” appears 25x in book of Acts. It refers to Jesus as the Messiah of the OT (cf. Acts 2:36; 5:42; 8:5).
 - d) “Servant” appears 4x in the book. It refers to Jesus as THE Servant of Isaiah 40-55 (cf. Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30).
 - e) “Holy One” appears 1x (Acts 3:14). It refers to the perfect, spotless life of Jesus, who was unworthily condemned.
 - f) “Prophet like unto Moses” appears 2x in fulfillment of the Dt. 18 prediction (cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37).
 - g) “Savior” appears 2x (cf. Acts 5:31; 13:23). It refers to the work Jesus came to do in saving His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).
 - h) “Son of God” appears 2x (Acts 9:20; 13:33).
 - i) “Author of Life” (this title appears in Acts 3:15, but connect it to the resurrection in Acts 1:3). cf. also John 5-6 notes on Jesus possessing inherent life.
 - j) “Judge” (Acts 10:42; 17:30-31), who is coming again (cf. Acts 1:11).

- k) Jesus is “God” (Acts 20:28), who “purchased” His church “with His own blood!”
- 5) Implications for Theology: TRINITY (cf. note at Is. 6:3)
- a) Veiled Doctrine in the OT (Gen. 1:28; Deut. 6:4-6; Is. 6:8)... see note at Is. 6:3.
- i) The evidence which has already been considered testifying to the deity and eternity of Christ also contributes to the concept of God existing in three Persons. Historically, the trinitarian doctrine turns largely on the question of whether the Son of God is eternal, whether He has the attribute of personality and the very nature of God. The problems of the doctrine of the Trinity largely arise in the studies of Christ in His incarnate state. The Old Testament, while it assumes the doctrine of the Trinity, does not actually define the relationships of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit except to indicate subordination of the Son to the Father and of the Holy Spirit to the Son as brought out more clearly in the New Testament.
- ii) If Christ is God and as such is distinguished from the Father and the Spirit, preliminary evidence is provided to support the doctrine of the Trinity as normally stated in orthodoxy. It is safe to say that no attack on the doctrine of the Trinity can be made without attacking the person of Christ. It is also true that no attack on the person of Christ can be made without attacking the doctrine of the Trinity, as they stand and fall together. It is for this reason that current liberalism is usually Unitarian, that is, denies the three Persons of the Godhead, or is modalistic, that is, affirming simply that the Persons are modes of existence of the one Person and not actual entities. From our preliminary study it is fair to conclude that the doctrine of the eternity of Christ tends to support the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and the subsequent study of the person and work of Christ in the Old and New Testaments will amplify and support this preliminary conclusion. (Walvrod)
- b) Primarily Revealed by Jesus Himself
- i) Jesus claims the Father sent Him (John 5:43; 10:25; 12:28; 17:5, 11, 21, 24, 25), thus He is separate from the Father...
- ii) Jesus claims He is the unique heir, that is “Son,” of the Father, and thus equal to the Father...

- (1) Believers in Christ are adopted as “children (teknon) of God” (Jn 1:12)
 - (2) Jesus claimed to be the “Only Begotten (unique, one of a kind, unrepeatable) Son (hious) of God” in a special sense (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 5:17-47).
 - (3) The hypostatic union is distinct from the virgin birth and from the incarnation. The incarnation refers to the whole concept of God manifesting himself in human flesh. The virgin birth constituted the means by which the incarnation was accomplished. As Charles Feinberg once explained, “The hypostatic union is that which was effected and brought into being by the incarnation.” The hypostatic union differs from theophanies in that there were multiple, temporary theophanies, while the existence of two natures in Christ since his incarnation is eternal. He is now and forever the God-man.
(MacArthur/Mayhue)
- iii) Jesus claims He would send the Holy Spirit from the Father (Luke 24:49; John 14:16-17; 15:26-27; Acts 1:4; 2:1-4; 5:3-4), thus the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son, yet still viewed as divine...
- c) Triune nature of God is a necessary implication if Jesus is Divine: note the flow of the creeds of Christendom... the deity of Christ was the first major battle, which then led to the articulation of the Trinity...
 - d) Unique to Christianity: *not a human invention, which actually may serve as a stronger suggestion of its authenticity as revelation from God...*

Christology in John: (Kostenberger)

- While the designation of Jesus as Son blends elements of his humanity and deity, other elements of John’s Christology focus more explicitly on Jesus’s divine nature. Among these are the following:
 1. Jesus as the preexistent “Word” (1:1, 14) as well as other claims to Jesus’s preexistence (8:58; 12:41; 17:5)
 2. Jesus’s “signs” (e.g., 2:11; 4:54)
 3. Jesus’s “I am” sayings, which allude to the Old Testament name of God (cf. esp. Exod. 3:14; Isa. 43:10–13, 25; 45:18; 48:12; 51:12; 52:6)

4. Jesus's possession of supernatural knowledge (1:48: Nathanael under the fig tree; 2:19: nature of Jesus's death [cf. 12:24]; 6:64 and 13:11: Judas's betrayal; 11:14: Lazarus's death; 13:38: Peter's denials; 21:18–19: nature of Peter's death; see also 2:24–25; 16:19; 18:4; 19:28; and the references to Jesus's "hour": 7:30; 8:20; and 13:1, 3)
5. Thomas's confession, "my Lord and my God" (20:28), a mirror image of the designation awarded to the Roman emperor at the time of writing

Nevertheless, while John emphasizes Jesus's deity and preexistence, he does not therefore neglect to present Jesus as thoroughly human:

1. He has a human family (1:45; 2:12; 6:42; 7:3–8; 19:25–26).
2. He is worn out and thirsty (4:6–7; 19:28).
3. He weeps when he loses a friend (11:33, 35).
4. He is perceived by others as a man (Pilate: "*ecce homo*" [Lat. "here is the human being"], 19:5).
5. He dies (19:30) and is buried (19:38–42).

Concerning the Work of Jesus

- Viewing Christ's ministry in terms of the three biblical offices of prophet, priest, and king sheds valuable light on the work he accomplished. (Demarest)
- Jesus is currently dressed as a priest (cf. vision of Rev. 1), but will come dressed as a conqueror and king (cf. vision of Rev. 19). (Burggraaf)

- 1) Prophet: (Matt. 21:11, 46; John 4:19; 6:14)
 - a) Sent by the Father (John 12:49; 14:24; 17:8).
 - b) To preach, proclaim, and prophesy
- 2) Priest:
 - a) As an Offering for Sin (Heb. 7:17; 9:26; 10:12)
 - b) As a High Priest to Intercede (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25)
- 3) King:
 - a) Coming to Conquer (Ps. 2; Rev. 11)
 - b) Coming to Consolidate (Eph. 1:10)

Substitutionary Death of Jesus:

General Survey:

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth and took on human flesh to...

1. Live a perfect life (Matt. 5:17; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
2. Die a sacrificial/substitutionary death (Is. 53; Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Col. 2:13-14).
3. Be bodily raised again unto life (Matt. 28:5-6; Luke 24:5-7; Acts 2:22-32; 4:10; 5:30; 13:27-33; Rom. 4:25).
4. He did all this in order to save mankind from their sins (Matt. 1:21; 20:28; Acts 4:12; 5:31; Rom. 3:20-26; 4:25).

Condition/Need of man

1. The first man created by God, Adam, disobeyed God and sin entered the world (Gen. 1-3; Rom. 5:12). *[Adam was created in a state of unconfirmed holiness, or “innocence” with ability not to sin and die.]*
2. Sin has passed upon *all* men (Rom. 5:12), therefore mankind is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), utterly depraved, and by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). *[Though Adam could have passed into the “inability to sin and die,” rather he and therefore his descendants entered a state of “inability not to sin and die.” -Augustine]*
3. Mankind is unable to please God by any works or efforts of their own (Is. 64:6; Phil. 3:9; Prov. 21:4).
4. Mankind is born in sin (Ps. 51:5; 58), and controlled by their fleshly desires (Eph. 2:3; 4:17-19; 1 Peter 1:14).
5. Because of man’s sinful nature and conscious choice, mankind deserves punishment beneath God’s righteous wrath (Ps. 58, 94; Nahum 1:2-3; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:1-3; 2 Thess. 2).

Act of Salvation

- 1) Salvation is an act of God; Salvation was planned by God and performed by God for the purpose of His glory (Eph. 1-3).

- 2) The objects of salvation are sinful men who are under the wrath of God, and in need of saving grace (John 3:18, 36; Rom. 1-3; 5:9).
- 3) Wisdom of Salvation (Rom. 3:20-26; Eph. 3:10)
 - a) Dilemma---How can a perfectly just God forgive sin?
 - b) How can a perfectly loving God punish sinners?
- 4) Answer---
 - a) The *justice* of God was satisfied in Christ (Propitiation of Wrath).
 - b) The *mercy* of God was demonstrated in Christ (Verification of Love).

Substitutionary Death of Jesus: Specific Issues

Defining “Atonement”

- Atonement appears 49 times in the book of Leviticus and derives from an old English word that literally means at-one-ment, that is, it refers to a means of reconciliation and a restored relationship. Compare Colossians 1:19–23.
- The Hebrew verb *kapper* is related to the noun *koper* which refers to a ransom price, (cf. Genesis 32:20), an appeasement price, or perhaps a cleansing.
- The means of atonement throughout Leviticus is a sacrificial substitute, note the concept of laying on of hands in Leviticus 1:4.
- The object to whom the sacrifice is offered is always Yahweh, note the phrase “sweet savor unto Yahweh” Leviticus 4:31; 1:8–9; 2:2; Numbers 16:46. Yahweh is always the indirect object, receiving the act of the sacrifice. Note also the phrase atonement “before the Lord” that is before his face, Leviticus 10:17; 6:7; 16:10, 30; 19:22. Also note the imagery of placing a sacrifice at his feet, or on the mercy seat, Leviticus 16:13-15. Note the lid of the ark of the covenant, over which Yahweh’s presence abode, Exodus 25:10-22, is also known as the footstool of God, 1 Chronicles 28:2; Psalm 99:5; 132:7; Isaiah 66:1. *The imagery*

invokes the picture of laying an offering at the feet of a great monarch.

- The result of atonement is forgiveness and cleansing from sin, Leviticus 16:30; Jeremiah 18:23, As well as being saved “from wrath,” Romans 5:1–11; Numbers 16:46; Hebrews 1:3; 2:11.
- Jesus Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of atonement, Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24; Romans 5:1-11; Ephesians 5:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1: 18-19; Hebrews 9:13-14, 28, 23–24; Romans 3:23-26; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; Colossians 1:19-20.
- Sacrifice pictures God has the active agent being appeased, or better, the person or object being purified before God.
Technically atonement is not an action exercised on God, rather it is directed to the person or object that has become impure... Sacrifice accomplishes the removal of impurity. So technically sin is atoned, we are cleansed, & God is now free to reconcile; or better we are free to now approach God because we have become holy, Exodus 29: 43-46.

Powerful Illustration: “Sweet Aroma” vs. “Stink in the Nostrils...”

cf. Nose imagery in the Bible:

- The “sweet aroma” of sacrifice contrasts the A.N.E. idiom for stink in the nostrils, cf. Psalm 14:3 and Genesis 41:14
- Sin stinks see Genesis 6:11–12, yet a sacrifice is sweet, cf. Genesis 8:21. Our lives send out a stink because of sin see Exodus 5:21; Genesis 34:30; 1 Samuel 13:4. Our stench fills the nostrils of God.
- Anger or wrath in Hebrew means to have “a hot nose.” Yet God is “long-suffering,” literally in Hebrew it means having a long nose. In other words, God takes a long time to get angry. You’re a sacrifice appease his God with a sweet smell, which covers our stench!
- This imagery is fundamental to the sacrificial system, and the phrase “sweet smelling aroma” appears 19 times in the book of Leviticus. And however, the ultimate sacrifice of Christ is sweet and pleasing to God thereby making us acceptable before God

(cf. Ephesians 5:1-2). When we are cleansed by the sacrifice of Christ, our lives become a sweet sacrifice that is pleasing to God see Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:15; Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16; 1 Peter 2:5.

Views of the Atonement throughout Church History: (Ryrie with my Elaboration)

- 1) Ransom to Satan View: Origen (185–254). The death of Christ was a ransom paid to Satan to satisfy any claims Satan had against man. Ultimately Satan was deceived. The Bible does not say anything about to whom a ransom was paid.
- 2) Recapitulation or Recreation View: Irenaeus (130–202). Christ recapitulated in Himself all the stages of life, including what belongs to us as sinners. His obedience substituted for Adam’s disobedience, and this should effect a transformation in our lives. In other words, Jesus is the Last Adam, who began a new human race, of which we are a part if we trust in Him.
- 3) Satisfaction View: Anselm (1033–1109). Sinful man robbed God of His honor. God rewarded the death of Christ by viewing it as a work of supererogation (doing more work than duty requires) so that He can pass on its stored-up merits to us. Faith is necessary to appropriate this. Connect this to the “treasury of merits” idea.
- 4) Moral Influence View: Abelard (1079–1142). Death of Christ was not an expiation for sin but a suffering with His creatures to manifest God’s love. This suffering love should awaken a responsive love in the sinner and bring an ethical change in him. This, then, liberates from the power of sin.
- 5) Governmental View: Grotius (1583–1645). God’s government demanded the death of Christ to show His displeasure with sin. Christ also did not suffer the penalty of the Law, but God accepted His suffering as a substitute for that penalty.
- 6) Dramatic or Christus Victor View: Aulen (1879–1978). Christ in His death gained victory over the powers of evil.
- 7) Barthian or Revelatory View: Barth (1886–1968). Christ’s death was principally a revelation of God’s love and His hatred of sin.

- 8) Penal Substitution or Vicarious Atonement View: Calvin (1509–1564). Christ the sinless One took on Himself the penalty that should have been borne by man and others. In other words, Jesus is our substitute.

Leviticus & Penal Substitution:

- *Leviticus seems primarily to teach a penal substitutionary idea. However, the other views of the atonement are not all wrong, they are just half-right!*
- The moral influence theory of the atonement, for instance, has a fatal flaw illustrated by a man merely jumping into the ocean or dashing into a burning building to meet death. This act would not be viewed as heroic unless it had the saving objective to rescue someone. Otherwise, it is folly, not sacrifice! (Tommy Nelson) Yet on the other hand, the sacrifice of Christ does also inspire us, but it does more than that, it also saves us!
- Though the penal substitutionary view of the atonement is perhaps the best single view, all the major views (excepting the ransom to Satan view) are helpful when combined together. On its own, the moral influence theory of the atonement has a fatal flaw illustrated by a man merely jumping into the ocean or dashing into a burning building to meet his death. This act would not be viewed as heroic unless it had the saving objective to rescue someone. Otherwise, it is folly, not sacrifice! So, while the moral influence view is insufficient on its own, it does rightly highlight that the sacrifice of Christ does inspire us. Yet the sacrifice of Christ does more than merely inspire us, it also saves us! Perhaps it is helpful to see how *the different views are merely viewing the different participants in the process of redemption*. Penal substitution emphasizes the most important aspect of the atonement, namely, how it satisfies the justice of God. Yet the moral influence view highlights the effect that the cross has to inspire us. The Christus Victor view is a military image emphasizing the defeat of Satan and his forces. All are in fact true in so far as what they address, yet they exist as only facets of the whole truth. We must learn to zoom out and account for all of Scriptures, all the attributes of God, and all the implications of the sacrifice of Christ that the Bible describes.

The Biblical Concept of “Forgiveness”

- Central to Christian thought is the idea of *forgiveness*. Islam teaches the idea of scales weighing deeds both good and bad. Christianity on the other hand teaches that our good deeds don't get us into heaven, but our bad deeds keep us out. So, our greatest need is not more good deeds, but *forgiveness for our evil deeds*.
- This sort of necessary removal or cleansing implies a very real guilt or culpability for misconduct, which must be dealt with before forgiveness is extended. In other words, forgiveness is not free. Forgiveness without justice, that is a substitutionary sacrifice, would promote chaos and anarchy and would cause God to contradict himself, Psalm 85. (Stott)
- Some equate God's moral laws with natural laws. In other words, to suspend the laws of justice and retribution and restitution would be as chaotic and harmful to life as suspending laws of gravity and order. Forgiveness cannot be offered freely by God without just retribution. To do so is the fall short of true restoration.
- Note the anthology of synonyms in the Hebrew language which refer to forgiveness:

1) Pictured as a physical removal

- a) *Nasa* means to lift up, carry away, or remove. Compare psalm 32:1–2; Leviticus 16:22.
- b) *Abar* means to Passover, or overlook.
- c) *Kaphar* means to cover, protect, or conceal a blemish. Compare Psalm 32:1; Exodus 30:11–16.
- d) *Rapha* means to cleanse or wipe clean.

2) Pictured as a transaction on an account

- a) (*Salah*) Pictured as a release from an obligation, such as a vow, numbers 30:5, 8, 12. This word appears 10 times in Leviticus.

Compare Psalm 130:4. It is translated Pardon in Numbers 14:19-20. Yahweh is always the subject of this Hebrew verb.

- b) Not to remember, connected to the root *zackar* compare Ezekiel 33:14-16. Compare with *logizomai* in Romans 4:8.
- c) Not to count (*hasabat*) compare 2 Samuel 19:19; Psalm 32:2, also translated impute. cf Genesis 15:6.

Why sacrifice? If sin causes God pain, why would he choose to immeasurably augment his suffering by giving up his Son to the worst possible death? Christ's sacrifice is crucially necessary because it enables God to *maintain his justice when he extends mercy* by forgiving human beings who have violated his law. Only this sacrifice makes it possible for God to be just when he justifies those who believe (Rom. 3:26). Why must grace be so expensive? Why is it so important for God to be just? Because justice and mercy are the two sides of love. If God were to compromise one in favor of the other, whether by doling out easy grace or by protecting himself from pain with a steely armor plate of rejection over his heart, he would not really be a God of love as he claims to be (Ex. 34:6-7; 1 John 4:8), and therefore his government would amount to a hypocritical *tour de farce*.

We are not talking about a kind of legal fiction by which God somehow pays himself off through Christ's sacrifice. The glory of the cross is what it reveals about God's character: He is willing to pay a staggering cost to maintain his absolute integrity as the God of love, who simultaneously maintains justice and offers mercy. (Gane)

The Significance of the Death of Christ (Burggraff)

- The atoning work of Christ is a complex event that has several effects on us. Christ's death met four needs that we have as sinners:
 1. We deserve to *die* as the penalty for sin.
 2. We deserve to *bear God's wrath* against sin.
 3. We are *separated* from God by our sins.
 4. We are in *bondage to sin* and to the kingdom of Satan.
- These four needs are met by Christ's death. The central meaning of the death of Christ focuses on these four basic ideas: Christ's

death was a **substitution** for sinners, a **propitiation** in relation to God, a **reconciliation** in relation to man, and a **redemption** in relation to sin.

- Therefore, the four words that deal with the meaning of the death of Christ are: substitution (sacrifice), propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption.

A substitution for sinners. The concept of “penal substitution”

- The view of Christ’s death being presented here is called the theory of “*penal substitution*.” Christ’s death was “penal” in that he bore a penalty when he died.
- His death was also a “substitution” in that he was a substitute for us when he died. Clearly the Bible teaches that Christ’s death was not a matter of sympathy but of substitution.
- This view of the atonement is sometimes called the theory of *vicarious atonement*. A “vicar” is someone who stands in the place of another or who represents another. Christ’s death was “vicarious” because he stood in our place and represented us. As our representative, he took the penalty that we deserve.

A propitiation in relation to God.

- Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. To remove us from the wrath of God that we deserved, Christ died as a propitiation for our sins (*1 John 4:10 – In this is the love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*)

A reconciliation in our relationship.

- Reconciliation means a change in relationship from hostility to harmony and peace between two parties. To overcome our separation from God, we needed someone to provide reconciliation and thereby bring us back into fellowship with God (Rom. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-21, *katallasso*; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, *apokatallasso*).
- God’s provision of reconciliation is universal. Because of the death of Christ the position of the world is changed – people are now able to be saved. However, that alone saved no one; the

ministry of reconciliation must be faithfully discharged by proclaiming the Gospel. When a person believes, then he receives the reconciliation God provided in the death of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21). The world has been reconciled, but people need to be reconciled – that is, the universal reconciliation changes the position of the world from an unsavable condition to a savable one. Individual reconciliation through faith actually brings that reconciliation in the individual's life and changes the position of the individual from unsaved to saved. Then, and only then, are his sins forgiven, though they were paid for on the cross.

- One comment here – As Seyoon Kim has summarized Paul's statements on reconciliation, he stresses an important point: "It is not God who needs to be reconciled to human beings, but it is human beings who need to be reconciled to God; and it is not repentance, prayers or other good works on the part of human beings that bring about reconciliation between God and human beings, but it is by his grace that God reconciles human beings to himself." (Seyoon Kim, "2 Cor. 5:11-21 and the Origin of Paul's Concept of 'Reconciliation,'" *NovT* 39 (1997): 362.

A redemption in relation to sin.

- Redemption means liberation because of a payment made. The word *redemption* comes from the Greek word *agorazo* and means "to purchase in the marketplace." Frequently it had to do with the sale of slaves in the marketplace. The word is used to describe the being purchased out of the slavemarket of sin and set free from sin's bondage. The purchase price for the believer's freedom and release from sin was the death of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:20–"*For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body*"; 7:23–"*You were bought with a price; do not become slaves to men*"; Rev. 5:9; 14:3, 4).

Word pictures for salvation in the New Testament

- The gospel is like a multi faceted diamond, which requires careful examination and constant turning in order to examine carefully all sides and see its full beauty. The gospel is not a single note plucked on a piano, but a rich, full, and robust cord, the combination of many notes struck in harmony together.

1. **Reconciliation:** this word pictures us as an enemy of God. It was used either in a marriage context or a military context. Before the courts would issue a divorce there by dissolving the marriage, a couple had to first speak out the possibility of reconciliation. When warring parties come together and forge a peace treaty, this is reconciliation.
2. **Redemption:** this pictures us as a slave to the tyrant of sin. We are in bondage, yet God comes to pay the price, release us from captivity, so that we willingly devote ourselves to service to him.
3. **Adoption:** this pictures us as strangers to God. To be estranged from God means to be without hope (Eph. 2:11-13), with nothing good to look forward to other than the wrath of God. Yet we went from being strangers before God to his sons, joint heirs with Christ! This is the picture of a mighty king adopting us and promoting us from the recesses of poverty and meaninglessness.
4. **Forgiveness:** this word pictures us as a debtor with an enormous debt, which we could never repay (Matt. 18:21-35). Yet God through Christ Jesus our Lord has set us free. Consider the parable of Christ on forgiveness and the debt of 10,000 talents, which was more than the annual income of the Roman empire at the time.
5. **Justification:** this word pictures us as a condemned criminal, standing before the judgment bar, worthy to be put to death. Yet our guilt is meted out upon someone else, who willingly takes our place (Rom. 3-4). Thus the judge legally declares us not guilty, and we are released. Yay it is more than that... Justification is not merely to be pronounced not guilty, but to actually be pronounced innocent or righteous, vindicated as if we had never done the crime.
6. **Propitiation:** this word views salvation in terms of the temple and sacrifice. Propitiation is the act of assuaging the wrath of God, while expiation is the act of cleansing the sinner from sin. These are two sides of the same coin. Cf. Romans 3:25.

Propitiation or Expiation?

- The noun *propitiation* appears in Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5. The verb form of this word occurs in Luke 18:13; Hebrews 2:17.

- The debate over the meaning of this word was started by Dodd. He argued that this word should be translated *expiation* rather than *propitiation*.
- Expiation makes man the object of the act, and communicates the idea of cleansing, that is the removing of defilement.
- Propitiation makes God the object and means of the act and refers to the satisfying or placating of God's wrath.
- Leon Morris skillfully dismantled Dodd's theory by showing that classical, koine Greek, Josephus, Philo, LXX, and apocrypha bear out the meaning of propitiation over expiation. Maurice notes that if Dodds theory is correct, the New Testament uses these words apart from the norm.
- However, both ideas of propitiation and expiation are present in the New Testament, and one should not be exalted above the other.

The Career of Christ Outline: (My Outline)

Introduction:

1. Importance of Knowing & Meditating on Christ (Phil. 3:10 note)
2. Impact of Meditating on Christ (2 Cor. 3:18)
3. Importance of the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-10)

Study at a Glance:

- 1) Foreordination
 - a) Preexistence
 - b) Plan
 - c) Preparation
- 2) Humiliation
 - a) Incarnation
 - b) Mission (Messianic consciousness)
 - c) Perfection

- 3) Exaltation
 - a) Resurrection
 - b) Ascension (Christ reentering heavens glory, compare Utibaca sermon from 2023)
 - c) Mediation (Heb 7 & 9 notes)
- 4) Consummation
 - a) Coronation
 - b) Conquest
 - c) Consolidation (Millennial & Eternal kingdom)

Foreordination: Christ the Eternal Son (John 17:1-5; Eph. 1; Col. 1; 1 Peter 1:18-20)

- 1) Preexistence
 - a) The doctrine of the eternity of the Son of God is the most important doctrine of Christology as a whole because if Christ is not eternal then He is a creature who came into existence in time and lacks the quality of eternity and infinity which characterizes God Himself. If on the other hand it is held that Christ is eternal, it is immediately affirmed that He is not dependent upon another for His existence, but is in fact self-existent... The arguments for His eternity and for His deity are therefore inseparable. John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Galaxie Software, 2008), 23.
 - b) Evidence and statements which support the concept of the preexistence of Christ are so many that it is impossible to deny them without denying the accuracy of both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus claimed Preexistence, i.e. “come down from above,” or was “sent from God” (John 3:13, 17, 31; 4:25, 49; 5:43; 6:14, 33-42; 7:28, 31; 8:14, 23, 42; 9:39; 11:27; 12:13, 46-47; 13:3; 15:22; 16:28; 17:5, 18, 24) cf. Dan. 7
 - c) Other Scriptures too numerous to quote also speak of His heavenly origin (John 1:15, 18, 30; 3:13, 16; 6:33, 42, 50–51, 58, 62; 7:29; 8:23, 42; 9:39; Eph. 1:3–5; I Peter 1:18–20).
 - d) The OT also includes evidence for the eternity of Messiah (cf. esp. Is. 9:6; Mic. 5:2). The name Jehovah frequently given to Christ as well as to God the Father and the Holy Spirit is another assertion of eternity, for this title is defined as referring to the eternal I AM (cf. [Exodus 3:14](#)).¹¹ John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Galaxie Software, 2008), 24.

- e) His preincarnate works of creation, providence, preservation and His promises in eternity past, the appearances of Christ in the Old Testament, and the many other intimations of preexistence combine to form a massive proof that Christ existed before His birth in Bethlehem. The total testimony leaves no possibility of doubt as to the preexistence and eternity of Christ for anyone who accepts the testimony and accuracy of Scripture. The attribute of eternity is supported also by all the other divine attributes. (Walvrood)
- 2) Plan (1 Peter 1:21; Eph. 1:3-14)
- a) The plan of redemption is clearly a part of God’s eternal purpose and therefore is included in the decree of God. To this concept the Scriptures give specific testimony (Rom. 8:28–30; Eph. 1:4–11; 3:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; James 2:5; 1 Peter 1:1–2).
 - b) A careful reading of the Bible will reveal that the plan of salvation was not an emergency device conceived after the fall of man as a plan of rescue, but rather that it was the solemn decision of God in eternity past in contemplating the whole of creation. It is a matter of great significance that it was decreed from eternity past that Christ should become incarnate, that He should suffer the death on the cross for the sin of the world, and that He should triumph in His resurrection, in the salvation of all who believe, and in the ultimate consummation of God’s plan. All this was as certain and clear to God from eternity past as it will be from the viewpoint of eternity future. (Walvrood)
- 3) Preparation in History:
- a) Summary: The revelation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament forms a most important background to the New Testament narratives. In general, the major lines of divine revelation relating to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament include His titles, His work as Creator, His work as the Preserver and Executor of the providence of God, His activity especially in relation to the people of Israel, and the many theophanies of Christ in the Old Testament. (Walvrood)
 - b) Pattern (Genesis 1-2)
 - c) Promise (Gen 3; 12)
 - d) Preparation via the History of Israel
 - e) Portrayed in “The Angel of the Lord.”
 - i) See Excursus below on “The Angel of the Lord”

- ii) Walvood has a great summary in “Jesus Christ our Lord,” pages 44-46.
 - iii) Imagine the appearances of “the Angel of YHWH” from the perspective of God the Son, who appears at decisive moments in the drama, but has an eye on His future role at the incarnation.
- f) Pictured by Prophets, Priests, and Kings
- i) Prophets: the need for a messenger (Exodus, Deut. & Prophets). *Prophets:*
 - (1) *Powered by God’s Spirit (Numbers 11:17; Isa 59:21; Ezek 2:2; 3:24)*
 - (2) *Proclaimed the word of God (Exod 4:10–12; 1 Sam 3:19; Isa 6:6–9; Jer. 1:5-9)*
 - (3) *Performed signs and wonders (Exod 4:30; 11:10).*
 - (4) *“While God empowered his prophets to speak his word, the prophetic role had a sense of incompleteness. False prophets arose, the people did not listen to the prophet’s voice, and the prophetic task was limited to certain individuals.” (Schriener)*
 - (5) *So the OT built an anticipation for a perfect prophet to come (cf. Dt. 18:15-18).*
 - ii) Priests: the need for a mediator (Lev.-Numbers).
 - (1) *Priests served as representatives between God and men. They bridged the yawning chasm between the human and divine (Ex. 19).*
 - (2) *Note the representative nature of the clothing of the High Priest (Ex. 28).*
 - (3) *The role of priest was a coveted position in antiquity (Num. 16-17).*
 - (4) *While the OT celebrates the ministry of the priesthood, indications of their insufficiency abound (cf. 1 Sam. 1-2; Mal 2:1-10).*
 - iii) Kings: the need for a monarch (1 Sam.-2 Kings)
 - (1) *When the time came for Israel to anoint an official king, a few qualifications, rights, and duties arose for this commission. Kings were chosen by the Lord to rule with justice and righteousness, defeat Israel’s enemies, promote the Torah, and bless the world. In all these descriptions, the Old Testament displays how each king*

of Israel lacked the strength and righteousness to accomplish these tasks.

- (2) Therefore, with each portrayal a longing exists for a new and true king.
 - (3) The ideal king: 1. Chosen by God (Dt. 17:15). 2. Mediates God's Rule (Ps. 72). 3. Models Torah (Dt. 17:18-19). 4. Blesses the World (Ps. 72). Yet Samuel warned that human kings would fail at this (1 Sam 8 & 12).
- iv) Isaiah's Servant Songs (Is. 41; 49; 50; 52-53).
- (1) Introducing YHWH's "servants" in Isaiah: Israel was appointed as the servant of Yahweh, 41:8-9, but has failed in the task, Isaiah 42:18-25. So Israel was sent into captivity, Isaiah 39:3-8, because of her sinfulness, Isaiah 42:18-25.
 - (2) The solution: deliverance via "the" servant of Yahweh: who is part of Israel, Isaiah 49:3, but is not sinful like Israel, Isaiah 49:5-6. Since he will deliver Israel, he must be viewed as an individual distinct from Israel, i.e. "the" servant.
 - (3) The big theme of *the first servant song (Is. 42:1-4)* is that a gentle Spirit endowed servant will be resolved and undeterred until he brings justice and order and deliverance to the oppressed, not merely in Israel, but even to the Gentiles. He will bring this deliverance not only to some Gentiles, but even to the far flung isles! This mission will bring light to the world and glory to God! *Second Servant Song (Is. 49:1-13)*: The servant of Yahweh is especially chosen and commissioned by Yahweh, he is also encouraged by Yahweh because he has resisted by people, versus seven. The servant's mission is to bring Jacob back to Yahweh, but not merely Jacob's tribes, he will also establish a covenant relationship with Gentiles! Wow! Unprecedented! Compare Ephesians 2. The servant will be held up by Yahweh and will triumph! He will be both an instrument of judgment, v. 2, and a gentle shepherd, v. 9-12. Compare Revelation 7:9-17.
 - (4) The third servant song, Isaiah 50:4-9. The servant of Yahweh is submissive, eager, and willing to learn and

obey. Note especially v. 4 and the reference to being awakened "morning by morning."

- (5) Fourth Servant Song (Is. 52:13-53:12). Up to this point the mission of Yahweh's servant is to bring justice and judgment, light and deliverance to both Jacob and the Gentiles. This mission will require encouragement and resolve because it will be resisted, yet the servant will ultimately triumph. Yet here it becomes even more clear that this servant's mission involves intense suffering, shame, and death! Compare how this was alluded to in Isaiah 50:4-9. The reason for this suffering is the sin of God's people, yet the purpose of the suffering is the sprinkling, i.e. ceremonial cleansing, of many nations, and the justification of many! This passage brings clarity to the function of Messiah foreshadowed at its inception, Genesis 3:15, namely to deliver the human race from sin and death, and reconcile us back to God!

Excursus on "The Angel of the Lord"

Introduction:

- The identity of "the Angel of the Lord" is a fascinating study that has implications both for Old Testament narratives, as well as New Testament theology. The term "angel of the Lord" appears a total of 67 times in the Old Testament, though like phrases appear bringing the total to around 90 occurrences.
- MacArthur and Mayhue list four major theories regarding the identity of the Angel of the Lord. These theories range from a normal angel, to Michael the archangel, Melchizedek, a theophany of Yahweh, or a Christophany (cf. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 720). A careful study of the appearances of the Angel of the Lord reveals that He is simultaneously considered equal to Yahweh, yet distinct from Yahweh.
- Here is a summary of the findings...

1) Divine Equivalency

- a) The “angel of the Lord” claims a divine nature ([Ex. 3:2–5](#); [Judg. 13:17–18](#)) & displays divine attributes ([Ex. 23:21](#); [33:14](#); [Isa. 63:9](#)).
 - b) Scripture equates the “angel of the Lord” with the Lord (Yahweh), even with God ([Gen. 16:11–13](#); [22:9–18](#); [32:24–30](#); see [Gen. 48:15–16](#); [Ex. 3:2–6](#); [13:21–22](#) [compared with [14:19](#)]; [32:34](#); [33:2](#); [Num. 22:35](#) [compared with [23:5](#)]; [Judg. 6:11–16](#); [13:21–23](#); [Hos. 12:4](#)).
 - c) The “angel of the Lord” possesses the name of “the Lord” ([Ex. 3:14](#); [Judg. 13:17–18](#); see [Isa. 9:6](#)).
 - d) The “angel of the Lord” receives worship ([Ex. 3:5](#); [Josh. 5:15](#); [Judg. 13:20](#)).
 - e) The “angel of the Lord” forgives sin ([Gen. 48:16](#); [Ex. 23:21](#)).
- 2) Distinct Personhood
- a) Yet the Lord (Yahweh) and the “angel of the Lord” are not the same person. For instance, the Lord sends the angel ([Ex. 23:20–23](#)).
 - b) At other times, the “angel of the Lord” speaks to the Lord ([Zech. 1:12](#)).
 - c) The Lord answers the angel ([Zech. 1:13](#)).
- 3) Obvious Implications
- a) The appearances of the Angel of the Lord are important especially when those appearances indicate plurality in the Godhead.
 - b) What is especially important for Trinitarianism is that the Old Testament shows that the angel of Yahweh was called Yahweh and God but was also distinct from Yahweh.

Summary:

- Many scholars note the evidence above and conclude that the Angel of the Lord must be none other than the second member of the Triune God. MacArthur and Mayhue note that “at least four possible identities have been offered over the centuries: (1) an “angel” from

heaven, possibly the archangel Michael; (2) Melchizedek; (3) the Lord (Yahweh) himself (a theophany); or (4) a christophany or *huiophany* (from Gk. *huios*, “son”)—that is, a preincarnate appearance on earth by the Lord Jesus Christ.” (cf. MacArthur, *Biblical Doctrine*, 720). After dismissing the first two possibilities as unlikely or unbiblical, MacArthur and Mayhue note that the Theophany theory does justice to the divine nature of the Angel of the Lord, but does not account for the distinguishing of the Angel from Yahweh in passages like Ex. 23:20-23 and Zech. 1:12-13. They then conclude: “The only identification of the “angel of the LORD” that satisfies all the characteristics in the biblical record is the preincarnate appearance of the second person of the triune Godhead, the eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2 of *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006, 110). This view also fits well with New Testament evidence concerning the claims of Christ to be both equal to and distinct from the Father, yet also the means by which the Father reveals Himself (John 1:1-18).

Humiliation: Christ the Prophet (Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 2:1-52; Isaiah’s Servant Songs)

1) Incarnation:

- a) Examining the Incarnation: Definition: "Incarnation" is Latin for "robed in flesh." Incarnation is the act of the immortal God assuming humanness (Cf. John 1:14; Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:3-11; Col. 1:21-22; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 4:1-3). "Likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3) does NOT mean sinful (Heb 4:15), but DOES mean mortal (Heb. 2:9).
- b) Illustration: My first workout on 9th grade football team with my father as the conditioning coach. I stank, I hurt, I puked, & nearly blacked out! Yet I would not say, "daddy stop!" Why? Because I had assumed the role of football player to his coach. I had not lost my status as a son, but I had temporarily laid aside the privileges of son-ship to suffer alongside my team. Why? Because there was GLORY IN IT!
- c) Distinction to Christian Doctrine: In Homer's Iliad Juno says to Vulcan, "son, it is not the etiquette of the gods to suffer on behalf of humans." Greek theology taught that impassibility was a key

feature of divinity. Islam also despises the doctrine of the incarnation, believing it to violate the dignity of God.

- d) Implications of the Incarnation:
 - i) The Love of the Father for the human race.
 - ii) The Love of the Son for the human race.
 - iii) The Loyalty of the Son to the Father.
 - iv) The Dignity of Man for God to willingly suffer along side of us so we might be redeemed.
 - v) The GLORY the Son deserves for it all!
- e) Obligation of the Incarnation: (Heb. 2)
 - i) Incarnation Facilitated Execution (v. 9)
 - ii) Incarnation Facilitated Revelation (v. 10)
 - iii) Incarnation Facilitated Purification (v. 11-16)
 - iv) Incarnation Facilitates Mediation (v. 17-18)
- 2) Mission: (Matt. 1:21)
 - a) To save His people from their sins in a tangible and temporary way (i.e. miracles).
 - b) To save His people from their sins in a spiritual and eternal way (i.e. redemption).
- 3) Completion: (John 17:4)

Exaltation: Christ the Priest (Phil. 2:9-11; Hebrews 8-10)

- 1) Resurrection Vindicates Christ
 - a) As a True Prophet (John 2:13-22)
 - b) As the Divine Son (John 10:17-18; 2 Kings 5:7; Rom. 1:1-4)
 - c) As a Sinless Person (Acts 2:22-25; 1 Cor. 15:56)
 - d) As an Acceptable Sacrifice (Rom. 4:25; Eph. 5:1-2)
 - e) As an Assurance of His Priestly Ministry (Heb. 7:23-25)
 - f) As a Signal for Coming Role as Judge (John 5:22-27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 14:9)
- 2) Significance of the Ascension / Coronation
 - a) Foretold by Christ, thus authenticates him as a true prophet. John 6:62; 7:33; 13:33; 14:28; 16:5, 10, 16, 28; 17:11.
 - b) Features the conquest of Christ, Ephesians 1:15-23; 1 Peter 3:22
 - i) Prophesied, Psalm 68; 110
 - ii) Christ plotted against, Luke 22:53; John 13:27.
 - iii) Pictured as a victory March, Colossians 2:14-15; Philippians 2:5-11.
 - c) Facilitates the new ministry of Christ, Hebrews 4:14-16; 9:24.

- i) In the ascension Jesus goes to the central control room of the universe, from whence he can direct and build his church.
 - ii) Christ was limited to time and space while on earth, but via the ascension, and the mediation of the Spirit, those limits are gone.
 - iii) The primary means of this mediatorial ministry are prayer and the Spirit (John 14:12-18). Contrast prayer in an OT context (1 Kings 8).
 - d) Foreshadows the return of Christ, in the clouds, with angels, to the mount of olives, Matthew 16:27-28; 26:64; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:11; Daniel 7; Zechariah 14.
 - e) Forecasts our own ascension, which is a spiritual reality now, Ephesians 1-2, but will be a physical reality later, 2 Corinthians 5; 1 Corinthians 15.
- 3) Mediation:
- a) The chasm b/t God and Man.
 - b) The role of the temple, priest, and altar as the bridge.
 - c) The sufficiency of Christ to bridge the gap (cf. Gospel of John).
 - i) Jesus came from God; John 3:13, 31; 4:25, 49; 5:43; 6:14, 33-42; 7:28, 31; 8:14, 23, 42; 9:39; 11:27; 12:13, 46-47; 13:3; 15:22; 17:18.
 - ii) Jesus went back to God; John 13:1; 14:12, 28; 17:1-5.
 - iii) Thus Jesus can now function as a sympathetic High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16).
 - iv) Priests had to be human, humane, and Heavenly called (Heb. 5).
 - d) The Work of Christ Presently in Heaven... (cf. Heb. 7:25 note)
 - i) His Entrance into Heaven (Heb. 4:14)
 - ii) His Taking His Seat (Ps. 110; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2)
 - iii) His Installation as High Priest (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:10)
 - iv) His Activities as High Priest
 - (1) Representation
 - (2) Inauguration
 - (3) Intercession
 - (4) Mediation
 - (5) Preparation
 - (6) Anticipation

Consummation: Christ the King

- 1) Coronation of the King: The Resurrection & Ascension of Christ essentially functioned as His coronation day (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4). cf. Plot to *Lion King*. (P. Schriener) In order for Simba to claim his kingdom and be installed as the king, he must ascend Pride Rock, the rightful place of the ruler, to ritually demonstrate he has conquered. Simba dramatically ascends the rock and roars. When he does, the other lions acknowledge his victory, dominion, and authority. Though Simba has been designated as the king from the start of the movie, though he has conquered in battle, he still is not installed as king until he ascends Pride Rock. In a better way, Jesus is *designated* as the king and Lord from the beginning of the Gospels. God declared him to be David's son and anointed him as God's Son in the baptism. Jesus' mission on the earth was to defeat the powers of darkness, pay for sin, and restore the right rule of his kingdom. However, if readers stop after his victory, the story is left incomplete.
- 2) Conquest: The Book of Revelation
 - a) Jesus Rallies His Church (Rev. 1-3). Revelation 1-3 begin with a dramatic unveiling (i.e. Revelation) of Jesus Christ, as He appears to John the Apostle while John is on the Island of Patmos. Jesus appears and dictates to John a series of 7 letters to 7 specific churches throughout Asia Minor, which are at various stages of spiritual health. All these churches are faced with spiritual struggles and political pressure. Yet some of the churches have stood strong, while others have not. Revelation was written to assure an aged 1st generation of Christians that Jesus is indeed coming back, as well as ignite future Christians to long for His return, and ask "how ought we then live?" (2 Peter 3). The visions contained in the book of Revelation were given to these churches to assure them that their victory was not in doubt. Jesus, and not Caesar, is Lord of ALL. Jesus' sacrifice as the Lamb, and His return as the Lion serve as the goal of history. Regardless of how things appear now, God will judge sin, He will vindicate Himself, and will vindicate His people So we must stand in hope! Proclaiming Christ will absolutely invite persecution, but He is worth dying for! A radical contrast exists between God's kingdom, and the values of this present world. Don't be deceived by this present world, because it is temporary (1 John 2:15-17), and will burn in the end. Rather,

seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, faithfully endure suffering, because one day we will triumph.

- b) Jesus Reclaims the Earth (Rev. 4-20). Revelation 4-5 begin with a dramatic throne room scene, where God the Father sovereignly sits and presides over the proceedings, which will reclaim the rebellious universe that He created. Jesus Christ steps forward as the only One worthy to claim right over creation, and rule it in perfect justice & peace. Revelation chapters 6-19 record the spectacular events whereby Jesus retakes the earth using a series of dramatic judgments, which unfold in 3 groups of 7 judgments each (Seals, Trumpets, Bowls). They all serve the ultimate purpose of eradicating evil and restoring righteousness. The climactic scene in the book is the descent of Jesus Christ upon a white horse in the clouds of heaven to return to earth, triumph over His enemies, and set up His eternal kingdom (Rev. 19-20).
 - c) Jesus Renews all Things (Rev. 21-22). The conclusion to the Book of Revelation, yea verily the whole Bible, is a flashback to Eden, where God recreates the heavens and the earth (Rev. 21-22). These final two chapters of Revelation bring perfect symmetry to the Bible as a whole. God reunites heaven and earth by causing the heavenly Jerusalem to descend and take up residence upon a renewed earth. God wipes away every tear, eradicates all sin, and brings redeemed humanity back into perfect fellowship with Himself for all eternity... thus we live happily ever after!
- 3) Do a Sermon or two on the eternal state and what life will be like in eternity. Then give Spurgeon's application... The place (heaven) is prepared. Are you prepared for it?" (Col. 1:13)...

A Theological Perspective on the Humanity of Jesus (Bookman)

1. Concerning the reality and integrity of the **humanity** of Jesus
 - In order to rightly apprehend and appreciate Jesus Christ as portrayed in the narratives of the Gospels, it is imperative that we be scrupulously careful with what those Gospels reveal concerning His *unique person*. By the same token, because there is that about the Theanthropic person which is ultimately inscrutable to the finite mind of man, the two-fold reality of

Deuteronomy 29:29 needs to be consciously honored in that effort. My concern is that with regard to the person of Jesus one element of that which has been revealed (and which therefore belongs to us and to our children forever) has been too little celebrated. To be more specific, it is my persuasion that the tendency today (for a number of reasons, some of them noble) is often to undervalue--even to compromise by deficient definition--the integrity and reality of the *human nature* of Jesus.

a. Statement of the doctrine:

1. Formal statement concerning the person of Jesus: "...in the one person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity, and these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. In brief, orthodox doctrine forbids us either to divide the person or to confound the natures" (Strong, 673).¹
2. An important emphasis, with reference to the *humanity* of Jesus:
3. Again, this is not to deny that there is bottomless mystery in that which the Bible declares concerning the unique person of Jesus. It is to affirm, however, that Jesus of Nazareth was really and genuinely a human being. Thus, Jesus should be conceived as living out His mortal life *normally* (though not perpetually) *under all of the restrictions intrinsic to* (unfallen) *humanity*.²

b. Scriptural proofs of the orthodox doctrine of the humanity of Jesus

1. Jesus possesses the essential elements of human nature
 1. (1) Body (Heb 2:1;4; 1 Jn 4:2; Jn 2:21)
 2. (2) A rational soul/spirit (Mt 26:28; Jn 12:27)
2. Jesus expressly referred to Himself as a "man" (Jn 8:40)
3. Jesus often referred to Himself as the "Son of Man", a Hebraism which speaks of real identification and oneness with humanity (Jn 5:27; Mt 20:28; Lk 19:10)
4. Biblical expression demand that we understand Jesus in His incarnation to have taken upon Himself real humanity, with all that is involved in that concept
 1. (1) Lk 2:12,43--*a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes*
 2. (2) Ac 2:30--*descendant of David*
 3. (3) Rom 1:3--*of the seed of David*
 4. (4) Rom 9:5--*of whom concerning the flesh Christ came*

5. (5) Hebrews 2:1--*the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same*
5. Jesus partook of all the elements intrinsic to human life; He exercised all of the attributes of human existence
 1. (1) Birth, including a pre-natal period (Lk 2:5,12)
 2. (2) Growth and development (Lk 2:40,52)
 3. (3) Emotions (Anger, Mk 3:5; sorrow, Jn 11:35; compassion, Jn 13:23; trepidation, Jn 12:27; agony, Lk 22:44)
 4. (4) Physical appetites (hunger, Mt 4:2; thirst, Jn 19:28)
 5. (5) Human restrictions and limitations (weary, Jn 4:6; exhausted, Lk 22:43, ignorance, Lk 2:46, Jn 11:34; disappointment, Mk 11:13)
 6. (6) Human appearance (Mt 16:13,14; Jn 4:9; Jn 20:15)
 7. (7) Suffering and death (Lk 22:44; Jn 19:30,34)
- The Scriptures teach that Christ had a complete human nature. That is, He had a true body and a rational soul. By a true body is meant a material body which in everything essential was like the bodies of ordinary men....This is plain from His being born of a woman. He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary and was nourished of her substance so as to be consubstantial with her. His body increased in stature, passing through the ordinary process of development from infancy to manhood. It was subject to pain, pleasure, hunger, thirst, fatigue, suffering and death. It could be seen, felt, and handled. The Scriptures declare it to have been flesh and blood: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same" (Heb 2:14). He was predicted in the Old Testament as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David. He was declared to be a man, a man of sorrows, the man Christ Jesus, and He called Himself the Son of man. This designation occurs some eighty times in the Gospels. Nothing, therefore, is revealed concerning Christ more distinctly than that He had a true body. It is no less plain that Christ had a rational soul. He thought, reasoned, and felt; He was joyful and sorrowful; He increased in wisdom; He was ignorant of the time when the day of judgment would come. He must, therefore, have had a finite human intelligence. These two elements, a true body and a rational soul, prove that Christ had a perfect or complete human

nature. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology: Abridged Edition*, p 354

c. The classic creedal statement of the orthodox doctrine

i. The definitive creedal statement with reference to the relationship of the human and divine natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ is the Creed (or Definition) of **Chalcedon**. Produced by the fourth ecumenical Council in AD 451, the Creed is a deliberate attempt to maintain an orthodox position in the face of a number of Christological heresies which had infected the Christian world by that time.

ii. **The Creed of Chalcedon**, which “became and continues to be, the standard for Christological orthodoxy,” is as follows: *Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father; in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness. We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten -- in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality (hypostasis). They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word (Logos) of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers (the Nicene Creed) has handed down to us.*

iii. With regard to the historic commitment of Christianity to the doctrine of Jesus’ real humanity: “Nor did the Church in her collective capacity ever so insist on Christ’s Godhead as to lose

sight of the truth of His Perfect Manhood. Whether by the silent force of the belief of her children, or by her representative writers on behalf of the faith, or by the formal decisions of her councils, she has ever resisted the disposition to sacrifice the confession of Christ's created nature to that of His uncreated Godhead. . . . Nor is the Manhood of our Saviour prized by the Church only as a revealed dogma intellectually essential to the formal integrity of the Creed. Every believing Christian knows that it touches the very heart of his inner life. What becomes of the one Mediator between God and man, if the Manhood whereby He places Himself in contact with us men is but unreal and fictitious? What becomes of His Human Example, of His genuine Sympathy, of His agonizing and world-redeeming Death, of His plenary representation of our race in heaven, . . . of the 'touch of nature' which makes Him, most holy as He is, in very deed kin with us? All is forthwith uncertain, evanescent, unreal. If Christ be not truly Man, the chasm which parted earth and heaven has not been bridged over. God, as before the Incarnation, is still awful, remote, inaccessible."⁴

d. Why is a proper and biblical understanding of the doctrine of the humanity of Christ important today?

1. The Apostle John makes this doctrine the test of orthodoxy (1 John 4:2)
2. It is because Jesus took upon Him the nature of a man that He can function as the redeemer of man (Heb. 2:14).
3. It is because Jesus lived an earthly life within the limitations and restrictions of unfallen humanity that He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Heb. 4:12).

2. A prevailing theological persuasion concerning the *functional* (if not the *ontological*) relationship between the divine and human natures of Jesus:⁵ **During the period between His physical conception and His ascension to the Father, Jesus voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes.**⁶

⁵This formulation has sometimes been denominated "the kenotic theory."⁶ I am uneasy with this designation on two counts. First, the term kenosis is taken from Phil 2:7; however, the point being made by the apostle in that passage is not directly related to the issue at stake in this theological construct. Second, the term "kenotic theology" has been understood for 200 years to refer to a Christological approach which involves in some sense a compromise of the deity of Jesus (at least during the period of

His mortality). [See S. M. Smirth, , “Kenosis, Kenotic Theology,” EDT.] Thus, the term necessarily involves unfortunate prejudice against the point I am trying to make here. The relationship between the divine and human natures in Jesus is bottomlessly mysterious; it is inappropriate for the finite mind to attempt to fathom that mystery. None of the present discussion relates to comprehending or explaining that mystery. (Classic discussion under the heading of kenotic theology does involve that effort, however.) The present discussion seeks to be scrupulously honest with the narrative as it stands, to acknowledge both the clear statements and the necessary implications of the Gospel accounts. In short, though there is inscrutable mystery in what it means to say that Jesus is very God and very man, there is no mystery whatever as to the fact that Jesus is very God and very man; both of those realities demand to be honored, even though the affirmation of those two realities necessarily confronts finite man with a mystery.

6Cf. Hawthorne, who deliberates how Jesus’ deity and humanity may be embraced “without portraying a being who appears to be two distinct persons, one divine and one human, both existing side by side in one body, alternating in thinking and acting between the two—a being unlike any other being in the world..., certainly one that would not at all be like a truly human being as we know human beings to be,” and concludes: “The particular view of the person of Christ which seems to me most able to do this and which seems most in harmony with the whole of the teaching of the New Testament is the view that, in becoming a human being, the Son of God willed to renounce the exercise of his divine powers, attributes, prerogatives, so that he might live fully within those limitations which inhere in being truly human” (Presence & Power, 208).

7“Because Christ took upon Himself the form of a servant at His Incarnation (Phil. 2:7), He relied upon the direction and power of the Holy Spirit in His ministry” (Dr. Larry Pettegrew, The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit [Kregel, 2001], 57).

A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p 703

The humiliation [of Christ], as the Scriptures seem to show, consisted...in that act of the preexistent Logos by which he gave up his divine glory with the Father, in order to take a servant form. In this act, he resigned *not the possession, nor yet entirely the use, but rather the independent exercise, of the divine attributes*

Note: There is profound and inscrutable mystery in this, and there is no suggestion here that this formula solves that mystery. However, this formula does seem to honor what the Scriptures teach regarding the

Person of Jesus. Notice specifically with reference to this suggested *formula*:

i. The formula *does not suggest* that Jesus surrendered deity; Jesus did not surrender *any* attributes of deity for *any* time.
ii. However Jesus’ “self-emptying” is understood, it must be recognized as entirely *voluntary* (Phil 2:7)
iii. The teaching of Scripture is that when Jesus surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes, He surrendered them to the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:28; Lk 4:14-18).⁷

1. (1) That is, in His *incarnation* and consequent *humiliation*, Jesus became totally subservient to the will of the Father; He became a perfect Servant, living to do the Father’s will (Jn 8:28,29; 12:49). In thus submitting Himself to the Father, Jesus in His incarnation acquiesced entirely to the guidance, control and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:2; Lk 3:21,22; Ac 10:38; Jn 3:34)
2. (2) This is not to suggest that Jesus was without the resident attributes of deity (the power to do miracles, for instance). He did not surrender the divine attributes themselves; He surrendered the independent exercise of those attributes (Isa 11:2, 61:1).

b. This construct does not solve the enigma of the ontological relationship between the divine and human natures in the Theanthropic Person.. (Indeed, that enigma cannot be solved.) It does, however, express the Biblical teaching concerning the way in which Jesus of Nazareth lived out His life upon the earth, and thus reflects what the Gospels teach concerning the *functional* relationship between those natures.

Deep-Dive on the Humanity of Christ

Overview

- The book of Hebrews uniquely contributes to the doctrine of the humanity of Christ.
- Primary passages at play (Heb. 2:5-18; 4:14-15; 5:7-9; 7:23-28; 10:5-9).

Necessity of Christ's Humanity:

1. *B/c of Role as our Sacrifice Jesus had to live, suffer, and die in order to redeem humanity.*
2. *B/c of Role as our High Priest Jesus had to become and remain human in order to identify with and intercede for humanity.*

Practicality of Christ's Humanity:

1. *He Identifies with us by His humanness*
2. *He Inspires us by His example*

Key Theological Concepts to Consider:

1. *Incarnation*
2. *Infirmity*
3. *Impeccability*

Incarnation [Heb. 2:5-18; 10:5-9]

- “Made a little lower than the angels” (2:5)
- “Partakers of flesh and blood, he also... took part of the same” (2:14)
- “Made like unto his brethren...” (2:17)
- “A body you have prepared me...” (10:5)

Infirmity [Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15; 5:7-9]

- “He Himself has suffered” (2:18)
- "Sympathize with our Weakness" (4:15)
- “Compassed about with infirmity” (5:2)
- “With strong crying & tears” (5:7)
- "He learned obedience" (5:8)
- “Having been perfected” (5:9)

Impeccability [Heb. 2:18; 3:1-6; 5:7-9; 7:23-28]

- "He Himself has suffered, being tempted" (2:18)
- “Faithful to him that appointed him...” (3:2)
- “He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin” (4:15)
- "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (5:8)
- “Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners...” (7:26)

Purpose of the Incarnation [2:5-18]

1. Execution
2. Revelation
3. Purification
4. Mediation

Process of the Incarnation

Divine Conversation: (Heb. 10:1-10)

1. *OT sacrifices could not provide permanent cleansing (10:1-4)*
 2. *So God found the solution in the sacrifice of Christ (10:5-10)*
 1. *O.T. Quotation from Ps. 40 (10:5-7)*
 2. *N.T. Application to life of Christ (10:8-10)*
- *Our author takes Psalm 40 and creatively shows how David's attitude of devotion toward God is all the more displayed by Jesus' devotion toward the Father (John 5:19; 12:49-50; 17:4).*
 - *"The messianic mission was deliberated by the Triune God in eternity past (cf. Eph. 1 & 1 Pt. 1:20). Yet Hebrews 10:5-7 was spoken at the moment of the incarnation, as well as reaffirmed throughout Christ's life" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28) (Mark Jones)*

Virgin Conception: (Luke 1:26-38)

- Prophesied in the Old Testament, (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14).
- Necessary because of inherited corruption from Adam, Genesis 5:1-3; Psalm 51:5.
- Though Jesus was mortal and confined to humanity, he was without a sin nature (Hebrews 2:8-14; 5:7-9; 4:15).
- "That holy thing in you" (Luke 1:35; 2:40; John 8:24, 46; Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:30; 7:52; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26).
- The virgin birth is a unique sort of creative act similar to Genesis 1:1-2. The Greek word "Overshadow" is used in the LXX to describe God taking up residence in Exodus 40:35. cf. John 1:14; Matthew 1:23.
- Similar concept in 2 Peter 1:21 and the creation of inspired Scripture. Also similar creative and the creative act of the Spirit in the life of the believer, Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3:10.
- Virgin birth uniquely facilitated the union of divine and human nature's, Isaiah 9:6.
- The virgin birth ultimately evidences that salvation must come from God and it can never be achieved by men. (cf. "come down" over 20x in the Gospel of John)

- The virgin birth also helped God keep his promise while avoiding his threat of the blood curse on king Jeconiah (cf, Jer. 22:24-30; Matt. 1; Luke 3).

Reality of Infirmary

1. Christ's Sufferings
2. Christ's Limitations

Christ's Sufferings:

Jesus was Subject to...

- *Weariness (Jn 4:6)*
- *Hunger (Matt 4:2)*
- *Thirst (Jn 19:28)*
- *Sleepiness (Matt 8:24)*
- *Agony (Lk 22:44)*
- *Death (Heb. 2:14)*
- *Sickness? (Heb 5:2 uses the word "infirmary," often translated "sickness," cf. Matt. 8:17 and Acts 28:9)*

"Learned Obedience through Suffering"

- *The Greek word translated "learned" is actually the word from which we get the word "disciple," manthano (μανθάνω). Jesus became a disciple of suffering!*
- These verses read, "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered. And having been made perfect, he became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation." Clearly Hebrews cannot mean that Jesus eventually learned to obey his Father having disobeyed him so many times previously. It cannot mean that he finally was perfected having been quite imperfect previously. We know this cannot be its meaning since just a few verses earlier we read that Christ was "tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). So rather, Heb 5:8-9 means this: through the things that Christ suffered, through the trials, temptations, and afflictions of life, he learned to obey increasingly difficult demands of his Father until at last, he was prepared—made mature, if you will, strengthened in faith and character—to go to the cross. Even then, we know from the agony he expressed in the garden of Gethsemane that obedience to the Father was excruciatingly

difficult, and it was anything but automatic. Could Jesus have gone to the cross successfully three, or five, or fifteen years earlier? The answer that seems to suggest itself is, no. He learned to obey harder and harder demands, and proved himself “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). His resistance of temptation and obedience to the Father were not automatic since these were not brought about from his impeccable divine nature. Rather, he learned to obey as a man, and as a man he fought temptation and sought to obey in increasingly demanding situations of life. But he always did obey, and through this regular obedience he was made ready, strengthened, for the biggest challenge of all, death on the cross, in order that he would be the source of our eternal salvation. (B. Ware)

Christ’s Limitations:

1. Limited in Knowledge
2. Limited in Power

Christ was Limited in Knowledge:

- *He had to learn (Lk 2:46, 52; Is. 50:4-9; Heb. 5:7-9).*
- *He had to ask questions (Mk 5:30-33; 9:21; 11:13; 13:32; Jn 11:34).*

Messianic Consciousness:

- *Christ was clearly aware of His Messianic Identity (Luke 2:49; 4:18; John 4:25-26; 5:39; 8:58; 17:5; 13:1-4; Heb. 10:5-7).*
- *Yet Christ had to learn of His Messianic Identity (Luke 2:52; 3:21-38; Is. 50:4-9; Heb. 4:15; 5:7-9)*

When and how did Christ b/c Conscious of His Messianic Identity?

- *He was clearly aware of it by age 12 (Luke 2:49).*
- *Yet His baptism experience confirmed it (Matt 3 & Luke 3).*

Christ was Limited in Power

- *He Genuinely Depended upon prayer (Luke 5:16; 6:12; 11:1 et al.)*
- *He Genuinely Depended on the Spirit (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18; Matt 12:28)*

Christ was Dependent on Prayer:

- *He prayed early, Mark 1:35.*
- *He prayed alone, Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16; Mark 6:46.*
- *He prayed long, Luke 6:12.*
- *He prayed often, Luke 11:1.*
- *He prayed before big decisions, Luke 6:12.*
- *He prayed in order to learn to submit, Matthew 26:36-46; Hebrews 5:7.*
- *He prayed earnestly with strong crying and tears, Luke 22:41-44; Heb. 5:7.*
- *And he prayed for others, Luke 22:31-32; John 17.*
- *He prayed with joy, Luke 10:21-22.*
- *He prayed as a Son to his Abba, Mark 14:32-39.*

Spirit of God in the Life of Christ:

- *The son of God voluntarily emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation (Phil 2:5-11). This is not a reduction of deity, but a restraint of it.*
- *By emptying Himself, the eternal Son surrendered the outward manifestation and thus reputation of deity.*
- *In other words he allowed himself to be considered a servant. He surrendered his rights in order to serve others.*
- *Christ poured himself out, taking the form of a servant. Yes, he pours out by taking; he empties by adding. (Illustration of a muddy Ferrari on the showroom floor).*
- *The Deity of Christ, while fully possessed, could not be fully expressed due to his having taken on human nature.*
- *Jesus willingly subjected himself to the confines of unfallen humanity, (i.e. the last Adam... Jesus was like unto to the first Adam before the fall, 1 Cor. 15:45).*
- *Isaiah 11:1-2 predicts and John 3:34 confirms that Messiah would have the Spirit without measure, that is without time limit, and no limitations due to sinful human resistance.*
- *Whereas the Spirit helps overcome and empower innate sinful human weaknesses, the Messiah did not have any. In other words, Messiah would have no sinful weaknesses to overcome rather he had divine attributes to access!*

- *By nature of the kenosis, Jesus submitted the independent exercise of his divine attributes to the spirit of God.*
- *As such, Jesus would never use his miracle working power on his own behest, compare Matthew 4:1-11; 26:53; John 2:1-11, and the significance of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12 and Mark 3. Note especially Luke 4:18 and Isaiah 61:1-2.*
- *“The church has never sufficiently confessed to the influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon the work of Christ.” Abraham Kuyper.*

Summary:

- “Now one must ask the question: why did Jesus need the Spirit of God to end well and empower his life? After all, he was fully God, and being fully God, certainly nothing to be added to him, for us God he possesses already, infinity and eternity, every quality or perfection that there is.
- Yet Jesus was indwelt by the Spirit and ministered in the power of the Spirit. So we ask: what could the Spirit of God contribute to the deity of Christ? Nothing! As God, he possessed every quality infinitely and nothing can be added to him.
- So then we ask instead this question: what could the Spirit of God add to the humanity of Christ? The answer is: everything of supernatural power and enablement that he, in his human nature would lack.
- The only way to make sense, then, of the fact that Jesus came in the power of the Spirit is to understand that He lived His life fundamentally as a man, and as such, He relied on the Spirit to provide the power, grace, knowledge, wisdom, direction, and enablement he needed moment by moment, day by day, to fulfill the mission the father sent him to accomplish.” (Bruce Ware)
- The Spirit preserved Jesus physically and otherwise, helping him maintain his purpose to offer himself on the cross as the substitutionary sacrifice for sinners in submission to the will of the Father. Christ’s decision, though enabled by the Spirit, was still his own to make: “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” (John 10:17–18). (MacArthur/Mayhue)

Holy Spirit Ministry to Christ (MacArthur/Mayhue)

The Holy Spirit ministered to Christ in many ways:

1. Prophesying his ministries (Isa. 11:1–2; 42:1–4; 61:1–3; Zech. 12:10)
2. Implementing his virgin conception and birth (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:34–35)
3. Descending on him in baptism (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34)
4. Anointing him to preach (Matt. 12:15–21; Luke 4:17–21)
5. Empowering him (Matt. 12:28; Luke 4:14–15; 11:20; Acts 10:38)
6. Filling him (Luke 4:1–2; John 3:34)
7. Leading him (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1, 14; Acts 1:2)
8. Rejoicing with him (Luke 10:21)
9. Aiding him in offering himself for crucifixion (Heb. 9:14)
10. Raising him from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 8:11)

Question:

- When did Jesus receive the Spirit? In Luke 2:40 or Luke 3:22?

Impeccability [Heb. 2:18; 3:1-6; 4:15; 5:7-9; 7:23-28]

Impeccability

- *Latin and means "not able to sin..."*
- *Discussion regarding the temptability of Christ.*

Question Rises Due to two seemingly opposing ideas:

- *"God cannot be tempted by evil" (Jas 1:13).*
- *Yet Jesus was "tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).*

Classically summarized by this question:

- *"Was Christ not able to sin, or able not to sin?"*

In other words, why was Jesus sinless?

- *B/c of His Human character, i.e. He resisted?*
- *B/c of His Divine character, i.e. He was immune?*

Scriptural Affirmations:

1. *Christ never sinned... 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 3:5.*
2. *Christ was made perfect through suffering, Heb. 2:10.*
3. *Christ learned obedience by the things which He suffered, Heb. 5:8.*

Basic Observations:

- *Perfection implies maturation.*
- *Immaturity does not equal immorality.*
- *"Learning obedience" does not refer to disobedience, but new and harder experience.*

Helpful Illustration: (Bruce Ware)

- *To understand better the distinction here invoked between why something could not occur and why it did not occur, consider this example: Imagine a swimmer who wanted to attempt breaking the world's record for the longest continuous swim (which, I've read, is something over 70 miles).*
- *As this swimmer trains, besides his daily swims of 5 to 10 miles, he includes weekly swims of greater distance. On some of the longer swims of 30 and 40 miles, he notices that his muscles can begin to tighten and cramp a bit, and he becomes worried that in attempting to break the world record, his muscles may cramp severely and he could then drown.*
- *So, he consults with friends, and they decide to arrange for a boat to follow along behind the swimmer 20 or 30 feet back, close enough to pick him up should any serious problem arise, but far enough away so as not to interfere in any way with the attempted historic swim itself.*
- *On the appointed day, conditions being just right, the swimmer dives in and begins his attempt at breaking the world record. As*

he swims, all the while the boat follows along comfortably behind ready to pick up the swimmer, if needed.

- *But no help is needed; with determination and resolve, the swimmer relentlessly swims, and swims, and swims, and in due time, he succeeds in breaking the world record.*
- *Now, consider two questions: (1) Why is it that in this record-breaking event the swimmer could not have drowned? Answer: the boat was there all the while, ready to rescue him if needed.*
- *But (2) Why is it the swimmer did not drown? Answer: he kept swimming! Notice that the answer to the second question has nothing at all to do with the boat, that is, it has nothing to do with the answer to the first question.*
- *In fact, if you gave the answer of “the boat” to question 2, the swimmer would be both astonished and dismayed. It simply is not true that the swimmer did not drown because the boat was there. The boat, quite literally, had absolutely nothing to do with why the swimmer did not drown.*
- *Furthermore, although the swimmer knew full well that he could not drown due to the boat following along behind him, that knowledge had nothing to do with why he did not drown, since he also knew that if he ever relied on the boat his mission of breaking the world record would be forfeited.*
- *So although he knew that he could not drown due to the boat, he also knew that he could only accomplish his goal by swimming as if there were no boat there at all.*

Profound Questions: (Bruce Ware)

- *"Though Jesus never sinned, do not think that life was easy or effortless for him. His sinlessness was earned with victory after victory. He in fact knows the full force of temptation in a way we do not, because he endured it to the end, when we give in at the beginning!"*
- *Given the fact that [going to the cross] was the greatest act of obedience he rendered, requiring the deepest commitment of faith and hope in his Father, in light of the severest of all suffering he was about to encounter on the cross, does it not stand to reason, then, that the Father had prepared Jesus for this moment?*

- *Can we not now see that all the previous tests of his faith, the divine demands that he followed and the sufferings that he experienced, were preparatory and strengthening for his obeying the Father in the garden?*
- *So here's an interesting question: Could Jesus have obeyed the Father and gone to the cross to die for our sins when he was twelve years old? Could he have done so at the outset of his ministry, at age thirty?*
- *"The resources given to Christ for his obedience are now also given to us. For each of these, scripture, prayer, community of faith, Holy Spirit empowerment, consider just how well you are doing in making use of these God-given means... How much you grow in taking greater advantage of these resources?"*

Profound Inspiration (Ware)

- Consider afresh the staggering command of 1 Pet 2:21-22: Christ left us an example that “we should follow in his steps, who committed no sin. . . .” If Christ resisted temptation and obeyed the Father out of his divine nature, how could he be an example for us? If Christ lived out his life and carried out his mission in the power of his divinity, how could we be commanded rightly to follow in his steps? But if Christ lived the prototype of new covenant life, by prayer and the word and the power of the Spirit, and then if he shared those same resources with us, his followers, then we can rightly be called to live like him. Indeed, the expectation is so fully right and real that Peter has the audacity to say, as we have seen, “follow in his steps, *who committed no sin* . . .” Christ is the only Savior by virtue of his perfect and sinless obedience, and he was sinlessly obedient by virtue of living in dependence upon his Father, in the power of the Spirit. In his temptations, and in all of his acts of obedience, it was not the divine nature to which he turned for empowerment, and defense, and resource. Rather, as Peter instructs us, he was *filled with the Holy Spirit and with power*, so he went about doing good, and healing all who oppressed by the devil, for God was *with* him. Indeed, though he was fully God, it was as “the man Christ Jesus” that he lived his life and so became the model of new covenant living we should seek, by God’s grace and Spirit-enablement, to emulate. To be like Christ is to be the kind of human he was. May God grant us vision and grace to see Jesus

rightly and obey him as he obeyed the Father, by the power of the Spirit, to the glory of the one true and living God. (B. Ware)

Excursus: TEMPTATION OF CHRIST (Burggraff)

Definition

- *Although Christ was repeatedly “tempted” during His ministry (cf. Lk. 4:13; 22:28; Mk. 8:11), His great temptation (Mt. 4:1 and parallels) is the focus of this study unity. His temptation was a testing for demonstration of His purity and sinlessness (Heb. 4:15) without any possibility of enticement to evil (Jam. 1:13).*

Peccability

- *The view that Christ could have sinned is termed peccability (Lat. *potuit non peccare*, “able not to sin,”) while the view that Christ could not have sinned is designated impeccability (Lat. *non potuit peccare*, “not able to sin”). Among evangelicals the issue is not whether or not Christ sinned; all evangelicals would deny that Christ actually sinned. The question in the debate is whether or not Christ could have sinned. Generally (not always), Calvinists believe that Christ could not have sinned, whereas Arminians generally believe that Christ could have sinned but did not.*
- *Those who hold to the peccability of Christ do so on the basis of Hebrews 4:15: He “has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.” If the temptation was genuine then Christ had to be able to sin, otherwise the temptation was not a genuine temptation. Charles Hodge, a Reformed theologian, is perhaps the best representative of this view. He states: If He was a true man He must have been capable of sinning. That He did not sin under the greatest provocation; that when He was reviled He blessed; when He suffered He threatened not; that He was dumb, as a sheep before its shearers, is held up to us as an example. Temptation implies the possibility of sin. If from the constitution of his person it was impossible for Christ to sin, then his temptation was unreal and without effect, and He cannot sympathize with his people.” (Systematic Theology, 3 vols. [Reprint, London: Clarke, 1960]. 2:457).”*
- *The supposed strength of this view is that it alone identifies Christ with humanity in His temptation – they were real temptations. The weaknesses of this view are that it does not*

sufficiently consider Christ in His Person as God as well as man. Additionally, the word temptation (Gk. peirazo) is also used of God the Father (Acts 15:10; I Cor. 10:9; Heb. 3:9) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:9). It is unlikely that anyone would say the Father or the Holy Spirit could have sinned. The conclusion is that temptation does not demand the ability to sin. The people genuinely tempted God the Father and the Holy Spirit, but there was no likelihood of those Persons of the Trinity sinning.

Arguments for Impeccability:

- *Those who hold to impeccability suggest Christ's temptation by Satan was genuine, but it was impossible for Christ to sin. Several introductory observations should be noted.*

I. Observations.

- *The purpose of the temptation was not to see if Christ could sin, but to show that He could not sin. The temptation came as a critical time: the beginning of Christ's public ministry. The temptation was designed to show the nation what a unique Savior she had: the impeccable Son of God. It is also noteworthy that it was not Satan who initiated the temptation by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 4:1). If Christ could have sinned, then the Holy Spirit solicited Christ to sin, but that is something God does not do (James 1:13).*
- *Christ's peccability could relate only to His human nature; His divine nature was impeccable. Although Christ had two natures, He was nonetheless one Person and could not divorce Himself of His deity. Wherever He went, the divine nature was present. If the two natures could be separated then it could be said that He could sin in His humanity, but because the human and divine natures cannot be separated from the Person of Christ, and since the divine nature cannot sin, it must be affirmed that Christ could not have sinned.*

II. Evidence: The evidence for the impeccability of Christ is set forth by Shedd and others in the following way.

A. The immutability of Christ (Heb. 13:8). Christ is unchangeable and therefore could not sin. If Christ could have sinned while on earth, then He could sin now because of His

immutability. If He could have sinned on earth, what assurance is there that He will not sin now?

B. The omnipotence of Christ (Mt. 28:18). Christ was omnipotent and therefore could not sin. Weakness is implied where sin is possible, yet there was no weakness of any kind in Christ. How could He be omnipotent and still be able to sin?

C. The omniscience of Christ (Jn. 2:25). Christ was omniscient and therefore could not sin. Sin depends on ignorance in order that the sinner may be deceived, but Christ could not be deceived because He knows all things, including the hypothetical (Mt. 11:21). If Christ could have sinned then He really did not know what would happen if He would sin.

D. The deity of Christ. Christ is not only man but also God. If He were only a man then He could have sinned, but God cannot sin and in a union of the two natures, the human nature submits to the divine nature (otherwise the finite is stronger than the infinite). United in the one Person of Christ are the two natures, humanity and deity; because Christ is also deity He could not sin.

E. The nature of temptation (Ja. 1:14-15). The temptation that came to Christ was from without. However, for sin to take place, there must be an inner response to the outward temptation. Since Jesus did not possess a sin nature, there was nothing within Him to respond to the temptation. People sin because there is an inner response to the outer temptation.

F. The will of Christ. In moral decisions, Christ could have only one will: to do the will of His Father; in moral decisions the human will was subservient to the divine will. If Christ could have sinned then His human will would have been stronger than the divine will.

G. The authority of Christ (Jn. 10:18). In His deity, Christ had complete authority over His humanity. For example, no one could take the life of Christ except He would lay it down willingly (Jn. 10:18). If Christ had authority over life and death, He certainly had authority over sin; if He could withhold death at will, He could also withhold sin at will.

8 False Views on Christology: (MacArthur/Mayhue)

- 1) **Ebionism.** One of the earliest errors to infect the church insisted on the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of his deity because its proponents denied the preexistence of Christ—a view influenced by first-century Jewish teachings. This heresy became known as Ebionism. Jesus, to the Ebionites, was a great man, a prophet of God, one who was endowed with the Spirit of God and exalted to kingship after his death. Some of the Ebionites accepted Jesus’s miraculous conception, but others rejected it. By the fifth century this viewpoint had left the church. Some adherents probably returned to Judaism, while others capitulated to the biblical viewpoint (or perhaps to another erroneous view popular at the time) and remained in the church. Although the church left this view behind, the Islamic view of Jesus is essentially that of Ebionism, as Heick observes: “The religious syncretism evident in this movement was of great historical significance in that it contributed to the origin and rise of Mohammedanism as the third great monotheistic religion of the world.”²⁶
- 2) **Gnosticism.** As a movement with roots preceding the New Testament church, Gnosticism gradually assimilated Christian elements. It consisted of a second-century eclectic cult combining Greek philosophy, Persian dualism, Judaistic thought, elements of oriental mystery religions, and Christianity. Gnosticism’s main tenet echoed Plato’s concept of matter being evil and spirit being good. Its proponents believed that a series of emanations had come from God. These emanations were termed *eons*, and each one became progressively more matter and less spirit—thus, more evil and less good. Since the Yahweh of the Old Testament was the creator of all things (just another eon), Gnosticism labeled him *Demiurge*. The Demiurge was a heavenly being who was subordinate to another, greater eon, the Supreme Being. As the creator and the controller of the physical world, the Demiurge was depicted by the Gnostics as antagonistic to that which is spiritual. In Gnostic thought, Christ was either a phantom seeming to appear in a body (see “Docetism” below), or an eon that united with Jesus sometime between his baptism and death on the cross. The Gnostic concept of salvation consisted of a special *gnosis* (or knowledge) given through Christ to only the elite through an intellectual process.

- 3) **Adoptionism/Modalism.** Some in the early church accepted a view holding that God adopted (thus the term *Adoptionism*) the man Jesus as his son at some point following his birth—either at his baptism or his resurrection. Artemon was often associated with this heresy, but little is known about him. Paul of Samosata (third century AD) and Theodotus the Cobbler (fl. ca. AD 190) propagated the viewpoint of the Adoptionists. The Adoptionists can be considered one of the Monarchianist groups, those who denied the Trinity and referred to one God as one ruler or monarch. Monarchianism emphasized the oneness of God—a Unitarian view. Proponents understood the three persons of the Godhead to be merely three different modes of the one God’s existence and work. Since they did not believe the Father and the Son to be distinct persons, they spoke of Patripassianism—the notion that God the Father died on the cross of Calvary. Sabellius became an advocate of the Modalist movement in the early third century, and though he was excommunicated in AD 217, the movement arising out of his leadership became known as Sabellianism.
- 4) **Docetism.** The Docetists derive their name from the Greek term *dokeō*, meaning “seem” or “appear.” This group took the opposite extreme of the Adoptionists and insisted on the deity of Christ while rejecting his humanity. To the Docetists, material existence is inherently evil—the view proposed by Plato. Therefore, it was impossible for the pure and holy Son of God to take on himself sinful flesh. They believed that the Son of God appeared on earth as an illusion, a kind of theophany. Jesus had no human body and could not suffer or die a real death. Valentinus (fl. ca. AD 136–ca. 165) became a leading personality in this heretical movement. Irenaeus (ca. AD 120–202) opposed Valentinus, writing a five-volume work against the errors of the Docetists. Marcion (ca. AD 85–ca. 160) was another famous member of the Docetist sect, and Tertullian (ca. AD 160–ca. 220) took up the pen to do battle with Marcion’s teachings (AD 207–208). The church father Ignatius (ca. AD 50–ca. 110), bishop of Antioch, insisted on the use of “really” and “truly” as descriptions of the divine and human natures of Christ in contradistinction to the Docetists’ use of “apparently” to refer to Christ’s humanity.
- 5) **Arianism.** The next heresy to assail the person and work of Christ arose out of the teachings of Arius (AD 250–336), an elder in the church at Alexandria, Egypt. He and his followers assumed that the

Son's temporary submission to the will of the Father in the program of redemption involved an eternal inequality between the Father and the Son. Arians viewed Christ as merely a created being, although he was the first and most supreme of all creatures. Christ was not of the *same* substance as God but of a *similar* substance. Thus, they placed Christ in a realm somewhere between God and man as a creature to be worshiped because of the authority God had delegated to him. The Councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381) responded to this heresy. The debate centered on the presence or absence of an *iota* ("i") in a single Greek word: *homoiousia* ("similar substance") or *homoousia* ("same substance"). The difference boiled down to whether or not Christ was truly God, and the council declared its conviction from Scripture that Christ was truly and completely God and man. Athanasius (AD 295–373), who later became bishop of Alexandria, rose in defense of the biblical testimony concerning the true deity of Jesus Christ. The councils resulted in the affirmation that Christ was "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

- 6) **Apollinarianism.** The next error to arise in the early church affirmed the true deity of Christ but denied his full humanity. The Apollinarians—named for Apollinaris (ca. AD 315–ca. 392), bishop of Laodicea—believed that Christ possessed a real body and an immortal sensitive soul, but they denied to him a truly human mind (or rational soul). In fact, they believed that Christ was God masquerading in human flesh. Therefore, they attributed all the human weaknesses of Jesus to his deity—such things as ignorance, suffering, obedience, and worship. In reality, Apollinaris had also been infected by the dualism of Plato, who taught that the spirit is good but the body is bad. Apollinaris held that Christ, if God, could not have a human will. The Council of Constantinople condemned Apollinarian teachings as heretical in AD 381, and the Council of Chalcedon did likewise in AD 451. Those in the early church who responded to Apollinaris pointed out that he could not explain the struggle between the divine will and the human will of Jesus in a text like Luke 22:42. Also, since sin affects the body, will, and mind, a complete redemptive work by Jesus required that his mind be involved in redeeming the believer's mind. Certainly, imagining a truly human being without a mind would be inconceivable.

- 7) **Nestorianism.** A significant division occurred in the early church due to the false teachings of Nestorius of Constantinople (ca. AD 381–ca. 451). He attributed a dual personality to Christ—two persons and two natures, rather than one person and two natures. Nestorius correctly understood that Mary did not conceive the divine nature of Christ, yet he, in effect, proposed that Jesus was a deified man. He compared Jesus’s relationship to the Father as basically the same as a believer’s relationship to Christ. Some historians argue that Nestorius received a bad reputation from those who misunderstood his view that the impassibility of the Logos and the full humanity of Jesus must be preserved. Even Martin Luther defended Nestorius against the charge that he taught that Christ should be divided into two persons or hypostases.²⁷ Nichols explains that Nestorius “so stressed the humanity and divinity of Christ that he veered very near to saying that the two natures are so distinct in Christ that Christ is a divided person, a human person and divine person, that Christ is two ‘he’s’ and not merely two natures.”²⁸ After his condemnation in the councils held at both Ephesus (AD 431) and Chalcedon (AD 451), Nestorius insisted that he had been misunderstood and that he had always adhered to Christ existing in two natures and one person. Thus, Nestorius might not have adhered to the erroneous doctrinal system that became known as Nestorianism. Yet he might have overemphasized Christ’s two natures in such a fashion as to downplay Christ’s unity in one person, thereby rightly drawing fire from Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, as well as the rebuke of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. It is clear that believers were demanding precise doctrines regarding the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 8) **Eutychianism.** The view of Apollinarianism led to another controversy called Monophysitism (belief in “one nature”) or Eutychianism, referring to its originator, Eutyches of Constantinople (ca. AD 378–ca. 454). Eutyches held that the deity and humanity of Christ were devoid of distinction—the two were fused together into a third nature that was neither God nor man but something in between. Since Jesus possessed only one life, one mind, and one will, he must have possessed a single nature in a single person. The variation of Eutychianism that focused on the one will became known as Monotheletism. The Council of Chalcedon condemned Eutychianism in AD 451, and the Third Council of Constantinople condemned Monotheletism in AD 680.

Appendix: Excursus on the Descensus

Introduction:

1. Define "Descensus"
2. Survey History of Interpretation
3. Walk through Primary Passages at Issue

Defining "Descensus"

- The term "descensus" is Latin for "descent," and refers to the phrase that appears in the Apostle's Creed, stating that after the death of Christ He "descended into hell."
- The Apostle's Creed is the earliest known creed in the history of the Christian church. A "Creed" comes from the Latin word for "believe," and refers to a statement of belief.
- *"I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of Heaven and Earth; and in Jesus Christ His only (begotten) Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen."*

History of Interpretation

- Though the Descensus is contained in the Apostles Creed, it has been opposed by Wayne Grudem and many modern theologians.
- There was unanimous consent on the descensus for the first 15 centuries of church history.

- Beginning with Ignatius of Antioch (*only one generation removed from the apostles*), the patristic reference to the descensus begins.
- Justin Martyr testifies that Jesus was in Hades after the crucifixion and seemingly connects Jeremiah 11:19–20 with Matthew 16:18 in stating that *the bars and gates of hell will not prevail against Jesus*.
- Melito of Sardis (ca. AD 190) is the first to use battle imagery for Christ's descent which will become common place throughout the fathers and medieval period.
- The descensus throughout history emphasized three key points of Christ's descent:
 1. *Preaching*
 2. *Releasing the OT saints*
 3. *Triumphant defeat of death and Hades*

Regardless of how imaginative the understanding of the descensus becomes in later centuries, the historical core a threefold purpose of Christ descent is one of the best attested Christian doctrines from the early church. Even most of the later Reformers taught a version of the descensus.

Key Concept: "Sheol"

- "Sheol" is a Hebrew word that appears 640 times in the OT, and refers to the abode of both the righteous and unrighteous dead (Ps. 89:48).
- Yet Sheol is far more dreadful for the unrighteous than the righteous (Ps. 9:17; 49:14).
- Sheol is always associated with a downward direction (cf. esp. Job 7:9; 11:8).
- Yet Sheol is a place of consciousness (Is. 14:9-10; Ezek. 32:17-32).
- Sheol is not outside of God's jurisdiction (Dt. 32:22; Ps. 139:8), yet considered apart from God's direct presence (Is. 38:9-20).

- Levels or compartments exist within Sheol (Dt. 32:22; Ps. 86:13).
- The compartment of Sheol reserved for the unrighteous is also called the Pit, or Depths (Ezek. 32:17-32).
- The NT labels the compartment for the righteous as "paradise" or "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22; 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7).
- "Paradise" migrates from the downward direction of Sheol to being "in heaven" (2 Cor. 12:4).
- Comparing Revelation 2:7 & Revelation 22:2 we discover that paradise will ultimately reside in the New Jerusalem.
- Yet how this transition occurs is best answered by the doctrine of the "descensus."

Key Passages for the Descensus

1. Matthew 12:40
 2. Matthew 27:52-53
 3. Acts 2:25-27
 4. Ephesians 4:8–10
 5. 1 Peter 3:18-22
 6. 1 Peter 4:5–6
 7. Revelation 1:18
- It is important to remember that the origin of the doctrine of the descensus is from the lips of Christ Himself, Matthew 12:40.
 - In the Gospel of Matthew there is a running theme of Christ fulfilling the hope of the righteous OT saints, cf. Matthew 4:16; 8:11; 12:40; 13:17; 16:18; 22:32; 27:52-53.
 - In short Jesus is promising that the impenetrable gates of Hades will not enclose him, or his new community!
 - Matthew 27:52-53 states that many were raised from the dead after Christ crucifixion, we do not know who.

- Christian tradition has listed Zachariah, Simeon, Simeon's two sons, Anna and Joseph, among others. These are recorded in the gnostic gospel of Nicodemus, which is far from a credible source...
- Luke is arguably one of the strongest voices in this discussion because he actually records that Christ's soul was in Hades between his death and resurrection, Acts 2:27, 31.
- Acts 2 conceives of Hades as travailing with countless souls in her womb. When God brought forth Jesus out of the womb of Hades, these birth pangs were ended and the way was opened for others to follow in the resurrection.
- In other words, the abyss can no more hold the redeemer than a pregnant woman can hold her child in her body!
- Luke 16:22-23 clearly separates being physically buried and the soul descending into Hades as two separate realities.
- In Luke and Acts the OT saints dwell in Abraham's bosom in the underworld before the coming of Christ, Luke 16:19–31; 20:38; Acts 2:29, 34.
- Christ descended, with the criminal, to Paradise/Abraham's bosom in Hades after his death, Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27, 31.
- Ever since Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension believers ascend immediately to heaven at death to be with Christ, Acts 7:55–60.
- Paul references the descensus in Romans 10:6-7; Ephesians 4:8–10; Philippians 2:10.
- Romans 10 speaks about what is impossible such as snatching Christ from heaven (*which cannot be done because he is already there*), or bringing Christ up from the underworld (*which cannot be done because he has already been resurrected*).
- In contrast to what is impossible to reach, Paul is saying that the word of faith is near us and within everyone's grasp, Romans 10:8.

- Acts 2:27, 31 and Romans 10:7 are the two strongest passages to be reckoned with if one believes that the doctrine of Christ dissent is not taught in the NT. It is very difficult to read these passages in any other way.
- Ephesians 4, on the other hand, can be read in more than one way, but might be referencing the descensus in light of Romans 10.
- Ephesians 4 pictures Christ as a conquering hero ascending His throne and granting gifts to those loyal to Him (cf. 2 Sam 19).
- If 1 Peter 3:18–22 is discussing the descensus, it must be admitted to contain the most detail of Christ’s activity during this time period of all the passages in the NT.
- The book of Revelation then greatly AIDS our development of these ideas.
- In Revelation 1:18 death and Hades ought be seen as personified, not merely the realm of the dead.
- Death and Hades are unambiguously personified beings unleashing hell earth in Revelation 6:8 and they are thrown, like Satan, into the lake of fire at the end of the book, Revelation 20:14.
- If they are personified in Revelation 1:18, this would demand a previous battle taking place between them and Christ for the keys.
- It is evident that if Christ won the keys from death and Hades, this occurred in a battle at his descent into the underworld between His death and resurrection, Revelation 1:18.
- Christ’s power over the keys is most clearly revealed when he commands death and Hades to release all the souls of the dead for the great resurrection at the last judgment, Revelation 20:13.
- Lastly, Christ hurls death and Hades into the lake of fire, Revelation 20:4, symbolizing the end of death in the realm of the dead because the saints will live forever in the new Jerusalem, Revelation 21-22.

Summary:

- Compare Revelation 1:18 with Hebrews 2:14. Satan has now lost the keys because Christ has stripped him of all his power and weapons forever.
- Along with the audience of Revelation, all who are in Christ can take great solace in the truth that Christ has the power over the keys of death and Hades.
- Tertullian succinctly said it best, Christ went to the underworld for this very purpose, that we might not go there!!!

