

TH502 – SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY II
SHEPHERDS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Cary, NC

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SYLLABUS
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Course Description

(Catalog Description) “A survey of the doctrines of Christ (Christology), the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology), and angels (Angelology). Introduces, defines, and supports each doctrine using pertinent passages of Scripture.”

General Course Goals

This course partially fulfills a number of the Seminary and Student Objectives:

1. Seminary Objective #1: “Teach an integrated body of knowledge based on the Bible, as expressed in the Seminary’s doctrinal statement.”
This course is an exposition of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and angelic beings (including the devil), as expressed in the doctrinal statement.
2. Seminary Objective #2: “Train students to discern and clarify the theology and mission of the church in their generation.”
This course helps the student clarify his/her theology in the major doctrines of Christology, Pneumatology, and Angelology.
3. Seminary Objective #3: “Provide a learning environment which will extol the supremacy of God and encourage a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”
This course explains in the person and work of Christ and the person and work of the Holy Spirit, demonstrating that Jesus is Savior and Lord in our individual lives, and sanctification is only through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
4. Student Objective #2: “To develop and clearly articulate theological beliefs in language that is consistent with Scripture.”
This course is designed to help the student develop and articulate with

competence one's theological beliefs in the doctrines of Christology, Pneumatology and Angelology.

Specific Course Objectives and Student Outcomes

1. Demonstrate familiarity with selected theological literature addressing issues in Christology, Pneumatology, and Angelology.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the various issues surrounding the doctrines of Christology, Pneumatology, and Angelology.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of key Scripture passages and gain the ability to use that knowledge in theological thinking and argumentation.
4. Develop basic skills in theological research, specifically, in the use of standard references works and works specific to the topics under discussion in this course.
5. Exercise critical creative thinking and expression, especially in the areas of Christology, Pneumatology, and Angelology. This thinking particularly involves the ability to formulate comprehensive theological description, definition, and argumentation.
6. Know God better, and thus, begin the habit of continually responding to theology in character development and worship.

Completing this course, the student will be able –

In Christology:

- 1) To prove from Scripture that Christ was preexistent before His earthly life.
- 2) To demonstrate proper theological research methodology in writing a research paper.
- 3) To quote from memory key Scripture verses that teach and prove details of Christology.
- 4) To defend the deity of Christ by selecting key Scriptures that prove His authority, names, deeds, and throne.
- 5) To explain the kenosis of Christ and demonstrate how this interpretation differs from the Kenotic theologians.
- 6) To appraise the arguments supporting the virgin birth.
- 7) To explain the impeccability of Christ.
- 8) To define the Scriptural terms for the death of Christ.
- 9) To show the significance of the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

In Pneumatology:

- 1) To identify the key biblical arguments for the deity and personality of the HS.
- 2) To demonstrate from Scripture the ministry of the HS in the lives of unbelievers.
- 3) To describe the work of the HS in the Old Testament.
- 4) To explain the baptism of the HS.
- 5) To identify the role of the HS in Christian spirituality and ministry.
- 6) To predict the impact of the HS in the Tribulation and Millennium.

In Angelology:

- 1) To explain the origin of angels, Satan, and demons.
- 2) To identify the names, classes, and ministries of angels.
- 3) To describe the original state and fall of angels.
- 4) To identify the “Sons of God,” in Genesis 6; the “spirits in prison,” and the “angels in Tartarus.”
- 5) To explain and evaluate demon possession as describes in the Bible and in present-day experiences.

Course Requirements

1. To Fulfill the First Two Specific Course Objectives

- a. The student must attend the lectures given at the times indicated on the Seminary Fall Schedule. Attendance is required and will be reflected in the course grade in accord with the Seminary policy in the *Student Handbook*.
- b. The student must complete the required **reading assignments** from the textbooks. Additional reading is to come from a suggested list of books and articles. The student is required to read at least **1200 pages**.

Textbooks (required reading):

Bateman, Herbert W., Darrell Bock and Gordon H. Johnston, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King*. Kregel, 2012. (May not be available until mid-semester.)

Bowman, Robert M., Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski. *Putting Jesus in His Place*. Kregel.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. Zondervan, 1994 (The basic text for the course.)

Konya, Alex. *Demons, A Biblically Based Perspective*. Regular Baptist Press. (This book is out of print and copies may be difficult to locate (see Amazon, etc.). Please, do not pay more than \$18-20 for a copy. If unable to locate a copy, we can arrange to circulate copies.)

Pettigrew, Larry. *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit*. Kregel, 1993, 2001.

Additional Reading (recommended books and articles for TH502):

For suggested reading on the doctrine of Christ, see the bibliography in *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 365-366. See also Grudem at the end of each chapter.

For suggested reading on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, see the bibliography in *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit*, 249-262.

For suggested reading on the doctrine of angels, see the bibliography in Alex Konya, *Demons, A Biblically Based Perspective*, 137-151. See also, C. Fred Dickason, *Angels: Elect & Evil* (Moody Press), 232-238.

2. To Fulfill the Second Specific Course Objective Two Exams will be Given

Midterm exam – 20% of grade (objective and essay; study guide will be provided)

Final exam – 20% (objective and essay; study guide will be provided)

3. To Fulfill the Third Specific Course Objective

Students are required to demonstrate the successful *memorization of selected passages of Scripture* crucial to the doctrines of Christology, Pneumatology, and Angelology. A list of passages is given below. You must recite to another individual all of a passage *word perfect* (including conjunctions, articles, and prepositions!). The listener may not offer any hints or corrections although he/she may tell you that you have or have not recited a verse correctly. Credit will be given as follows: The percentage of passages recited word perfectly at both sittings will be the grade for this assignment. A sitting is defined as one occasion in which you try to cite as many passages as you can without receiving hints, helps or otherwise checking yourself by looking up the passage, checking verse cards, or hearing it read or recited to you. You can try as many "sittings" as you wish in order to correctly recite the highest percentage of passages as is possible for you, but only that percentage cited word perfectly in *one* sitting will be credited. (No cumulative amount compiled over several sittings). The individual who hears you must verify your results by marking an "accountability form" that will be provided and signing his/her name to it. This score sheet will then be turned in.

Scripture Passages to be Memorized:

Christology:

Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 9:6
Isaiah 53:1-12
Matthew 1:22-23
John 20:31
Romans 3:24-26
Romans 10: 9-17
1 Corinthians 15:3-4
2 Corinthians 5:18-21
Philippians 2:6-11
Hebrews 4:15; 7:24-25

Pneumatology:

John 14:17
John 14:26
John 15:26
John 16:7-14
Acts 5:3-4
Romans 8:26
Galatians 5:16-24
Ephesians 4:30
Ephesians 5:18-21
2 Peter 1:20-21

Angelology:

Job 38:6-7
Matthew 25:31
Mark 12:31
John 8:44
2 Corinthians 4:3-4
Ephesians 6:10-12
Colossians 1:16
Hebrews 1:14
James 4:7
1 Peter 5:8-9

4. To Fulfill the Fourth and Fifth Specific Course Objectives: Research Paper

- a. Length – about 10-12 pages of text, plus bibliography – double spaced.
- b. Form – must follow proper research form, as found in Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, and professor’s additional instructions.
- c. Bibliography – at least 15 sources (books and articles)
 - 1). General references (ISBE, Bible Dictionaries, etc.)
 - 2). At least five standard theology books – Erickson, McCune, Hodge, Strong, Berkhof, etc.
 - 3). Journal articles – at least five articles (this is critical as important since the cutting edge of scholarship is usually found in the current journal articles).
 - 4). Exegetical commentaries, Lexicons, etc.
 - 5). Specific books on the subject.
- d. Topic – Select a topic from the suggested list below, or receive approval for another topic from the professor.
- e. Grade – The grade is based on the following criteria. [Note: The following criteria have been suggested at STS by Dr. Pettigrew for the Systematic Theology courses, and will be observed for this class as well.]
 - 1). FORM:
 - a). Grammatical and literary excellence.
 - b). Agreement with Turabian’s guidelines and professor’s instructions.
 - c). Style – written in the third person (no “we,” “I,” “you,” “us,” etc.)
 - d). Page numbering form.
 - 2). CONTENT:
 - a). Scholarly theological content.
 - b). Logical organization and procedure (appropriate headings, correctly inserted, is helpful).
 - c). Evidence of thorough research in the paper and bibliography.
 - d). Specific, “tough,” well-thought-out interaction with opposing views.
 - e). Support and proof for your arguments.
 - 3). GENERAL PROCEDURE:
 - a). Title page
 - b). Table of Contents, following Turabian. Since this paper is only 10-12 pages, do not use “chapters,” but use appropriate headings.
 - c). Introductory matters such as “The Reason for the Study,” and “The Procedure of the Study.” Be sure to state the problem clearly in the Introduction.
 - d). Explain various possible solutions to the problem if there are such.

- e). Cite authorities where necessary. A research paper should have numerous footnotes. Single space the footnotes, but double space between footnotes. Indent first line of each footnote. Punctuate correctly. See Turabian.
- f). Investigate carefully the Scriptural teaching on the problem, include appropriate exegesis.
- g). Be sure to interact with opposing views.
- h). Come to a conclusion with your support of your view.
- i). Bibliography, according to Turabian.

f. Suggested topics:

About anything in the areas of Christology, Pneumatology, or Angelology would be a possible topic. It should be a systematic theology paper, however, and not primarily an exegesis paper. Since this is a brief research paper, please try to narrow your topic down as much as possible. Some suggested topics:

The “Angel of the Lord” and Jesus Christ
 The Meaning of the Term “Son of Man”
 Christ’s Offer of the Kingdom During His Earthly Ministry
 The Baptism of Christ: Why?
 The Baptism of Christ: How Does It Relate to the Church?
 Isaiah 7:14 and the Virgin Birth of Jesus
 The Purpose and Legitimacy of Christ’s Temptation
 The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ
 To What Extent Was Jesus Aware of His Messiahship? When?
 Roman Law and the Trial of Jesus Christ
 The Agony of Christ in Gethsemane and Hebrews 5:7
 The Active Obedience of Christ: Yes and No
 The Atonement of Christ: Limited or Unlimited?
 On What Day Was Christ Crucified?
 What Kind of Evidences Best Defend the Resurrection of Christ?
 Did Christ Descend into Hell?
 Jesus Christ and the Da Vinci Code
 Christ as Intercessor
 Is Jesus on David’s Throne Today? (Progressive Dispensationalism)

The Holy Spirit's Deity and Personality Defended against the Cults
The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the OT
Is the Holy Spirit the Restrainer of Sin (2 Thess. 2:6-7)?
The Baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Gospels
Tongues Speaking on the Day of Pentecost
Baptism of the Spirit into the Body, and Baptism into Christ: A Difference?
The Relationship of the Holy Spirit to Christ in Christ's Earthly Ministry
Gifts: All, Some, or None?
Gifts: Some, All Today?
The Filling of the Spirit in the Book of Acts
The Filling of the Spirit in the Epistles
The Down-Payment of the Spirit
The Seal of the Spirit
What Was the Gift of _____ ?
The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Tribulation
The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Millennium
What Was the Purpose of the Gift of Tongues?

The Original State and Fall of Satan
The Origin of Demons
How Do Christians Defeat Satan
Demon Possession: Today?

Course Grade

Factors determining the Course Grade

The overall course grade is a composite of several factors. It is not a measure of personal worth. And although it is hoped that you will learn many things in this class, the grade is not necessarily a measure of how much you may feel that you have learned. Rather, the course grade is a cumulative figure that bears a relationship to a student's successful completion of the course requirements. This figure is determined in the following manner:

1. **Reading – 25%**
Report the reading total (1200 pages) on Reading Forms

2. **Exams – 40%**
The two exams (20% each) will be assigned a letter and number grade.

3. **Scripture Memory – 10%**
The percentage of passages cited correctly in accordance with the above instructions will be the grade of this assignment. A verification or score sheet must be turned in and signed by the one who hears you. Two forms will be distributed and one must be turned in at midterm, the second at the final exam.

4. **Research Paper – 25%**

5. Class Attendance - See *Student Handbook*
Each absence in excess of the prescribed limit will result in a reduction of the final grade. Any student contemplating an absence should consult the professor.

COURSE SCHEDULE/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE
(Schedule for Monday Classes – afternoon / Tuesday class schedule – evenings)

Date	Topic	Assignment
Jan 23	Course Introduction	
Jan 30	Christology	Grudem, 529-607
Feb 6	Christology	Grudem, 608-633
Feb 13	Christology	<i>PJHP</i> , 15-123
Feb 20	Reading Week – NO CLASS	<i>PJHP</i> , 126-231
Feb 27	Christology	<i>PJHP</i> , 235-288
Mar 5	Holy Spirit	Grudem, 634-653
Mar 12	Holy Spirit	Grudem, 763-786
Mar 19	Mid-term Exam	Term Paper topic selected
Mar 26	Holy Spirit	Pettigrew, 9-107
Apr 2	Holy Spirit	Pettigrew, 109-210
Apr 9	Angelology	Grudem, 397-436
Apr	Easter Recess – NO CLASS	
Apr 23	Angelology	Konya, 10-136
Apr 30	Angelology	Paper due; Reading due
May 7	FINAL EXAMINATION	

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Systematic Theology at STS

What can I expect from studying systematic theology during the four semesters of theology?

- I. This should be a time of intense concentration.
 - A. Study now is built on previous study of doctrine and the English Bible.
 - B. This study provides a convenient basis for future review for ordination.
 - C. Notes now should be a handy reference throughout your ministry.
 - D. A complete survey should provide a Scriptural foundation and framework for your entire life and ministry.
- II. It should be a time of interaction and decision.
 - A. Some of the past will be discarded.
 - B. A variety of views and arguments will be weighed.
 - C. Interrelationships among all your seminary studies will be appreciated.
 - D. Convictions will be reached; at least information will be gathered for delayed decisions.
- III. It provides a time of guided acquaintance (on the shoulders of others).
 - A. Sometimes an extensive survey; for most areas, a completed survey.
 - B. Familiarity with tools for these years and for the future.
 - C. Opportunity to build a file of evidences, arguments, cross references.
- IV. Directed study will include a variety of assignments.
 - A. Advance reading of the texts, especially Scripture.
 - B. Instruction, explanation, illustration, application, review, guidance in class.
 - C. Required and optional outside reading to look more closely into areas of special interest.

- D. Organization and expression for examinations; major and minor areas; simple, concise and clear.
- V. Concerning promotion of differing viewpoints:
- A. Students are not to teach in class or in the halls.
 - 1. Questions or comments in class should be for learning, not to instruct.
 - 2. Coffee break discussions can be beneficial, but should be for personal benefit, not to seek a personal following.
 - B. There is no authoritative imposed view, only the catalog minimum for graduation.
 - C. The attitude of instruction is not that of a steamroller but as dispensing ammunition.
 - 1. Classroom time is not given to argue nor for debate; discussion is to explain or clarify, not to persuade.
 - 2. The hope is that each student will have the truth and the tools to serve acceptably.
 - D. Each believer, each pastor is individually responsible to God (Rom. 14:4).
 - E. For many areas where Scripture is not clear, professors and books may differ.
 - 1. Where God is not dogmatic, we should not be (Deut. 29:29).
 - 2. Seeming differences are often only of emphasis.
 - 3. Never preach speculation as dogma.
 - F. Do not rigidly adopt a system or blindly follow a man.
- VI. What is being stressed here at STS?
- A. Consistent with the nature of the study of theology, we work with facts of God's self-revelation rather than with ideas and arguments of men.
 - B. We try to stress the practical uses of theology. Therefore, seek:
 - 1. To not preach theology, but never preach without proper theology (to teach is to instruct; to preach is to try to convince).

2. To learn to see each Scripture passage or teaching in its proper relation to the whole of Scripture.
3. To be convinced that doctrine is properly based on all that the Bible teaches, not just a few select proof passages.
4. To learn to base all doctrine solely on Scripture and not on logic, science, experience, or authority.
5. To develop clear thinking, clear and accurate expression of the truth.
6. To be able to weigh and to judge new teaching or whatever we read or hear.
7. To broaden our preaching horizons; to enable longer, more fruitful pastorates.
8. To improve the content of sermons (milk and meat; to feed, not to entertain).
9. To promote increased use of Scripture and of illustrations in sermons.
10. To proclaim the Word, not just talk about the Word.
11. To promote orderly arrangement and presentation in preaching and teaching.
12. To obtain acquaintance with the leading books of the field.
13. To be able to choose, read, purchase what is most valuable for ministry.
14. To strengthen your own personal faith.
15. To have greater ability in counseling and soul-winning.

Part 1

CHRISTOLOGY

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTOLOGY

We now enter upon one of the most important aspects of Christian theology, namely, the doctrines of the person of Jesus Christ and the work of Jesus Christ.

Christian Theology Is Personally Grounded

Christianity arose out of a particular human life ending in a disturbing, terrible death—then, resurrection. The meaning of Christianity is undecipherable without grasping the meaning of Christ's life and death and living presence. Christianity *is* a relation to a person. It is not essentially an idea or institution. It has defined itself in canon and tradition as a relation to Christ. He is the one to whom faith and in whom faith trusts. Christian teaching is therefore personally grounded. It lives in response to a personal life yet lived; Christian teaching only serves to show the way that leads to faith in this person.

The consequent discipline—Christology, the study of Christ—has emerged in the attempt to understand this fact.

The Question Required by the Facts

The Facts Briefly Stated

Date of birth: between 5 B.C. and A.D. 4. Place: Palestine. Ethnic origin: Jewish. Vocation: probably first a carpenter, then a traveling preacher of the coming rule of God. Length of ministry: three Passovers (John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1). Date of death: Friday, 14 Nisan (the first month of the Jewish year), probably, by our calendar, April 7 A.D. 30 (or by some calculations 3 April, A.D. 33). Place of death: Jerusalem. Manner of death: crucifixion. Roman procurator: Pontius Pilate (A.D. 27-33). Roman emperor: Tiberius.

The Decisive Question

Christology focuses not simply upon bare facts, but upon what this life meant and how these events have been interpreted—especially as they come down finally to a single, pivotal question: whether Jesus is rightly understood as the expected Messiah of Israel, Son of God, Lord—or not. There is no way to dodge artfully this question so as to conclude that Jesus might be *partially* Lord or *to a certain degree* the Christ or *maybe* in some ways eternal Son or *perhaps* truly God. He must either be or not be the Messiah. He must either be or not be Lord.

The Subject

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Christology is that study that inquires critically and systematically into this person, Jesus the Christ. In Him the fitting and true relation between God and humanity is alleged to be knowable. What that means is the subject of Christology.

The Unimportance and Importance of Christology

The systematic study of Jesus' life is less important than trusting in the efficacy of His death. One may be saved by faith without passing an examination on Christology. Yet His life and death remain the central interest of Christian piety and education. The study of Christ implies the study of the divine plan for which humanity was created and the purpose anticipatively revealed toward which history is moving. In Christ God actively embraces fallen humanity and enables humanity to respond to God's active embrace.

The Gospel is a Summary of the Person and Work of Christ

Jesus did not come to deliver a gospel, but to be Himself that gospel. The cumulative event of the sending, coming, living, dying, and continuing life of this incomparable One is the gospel. The gospel does not introduce an idea but a person—"we proclaim *him!*" (Col. 1:28, italics added).

What was written about Him was not written simply as biography, for biographies are written of persons who are dead and quite deactivated. A biography is a written history of a person's whole *bios* ("life"). A biography of a person still alive is by definition incomplete. Rather the gospel is the account of a person who remains quite active, still alive.

Christian theology has customarily drawn a distinction between the "person" of Jesus Christ and the "work" of Jesus Christ. The former term has usually been applied to the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" The latter term has ordinarily been used in reference to the question, "What has Jesus Christ done for us?" The gospel unites these two: the *person* of the Son engaged in the *work* of the servant-messiah.

The doctrine of the person of Christ has been traditionally concerned with the deity and the humanity of Jesus and their interrelation. It may also include such related topics as Jesus' virginal conception, sinlessness, and miracles and the various titles applied to Jesus. The doctrine of the work of Christ, sometimes called in the English-speaking world the doctrine of the "atonement," has been primarily concerned to interpret the saving significance of the death of Jesus, coupled with His resurrection and related to His life. The term "person of Christ" should be differentiated from the term "life of Christ." The life of Christ is the sequence of events that taken together constitute His earthly life and ministry. The person of Christ seeks to describe the nature of Jesus Christ as the God-man.

THE PREINCARNATE CHRIST

The doctrine of Christ may include both a study of His person and His work. However, since

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His principal work was the Atonement, soteriology is usually separated from Christology. His other works are normally considered under Christology.

The doctrine can be organized more or less chronologically. A study of the preincarnate Christ comes first. This would be followed by a section on Christ in His humiliation, i.e., during His earthly life. (It would be erroneous to call this section Christ Incarnate, since the Incarnation continues beyond His earthly life.) Then would come a study of His present and future ministries. The major theological problems appear in the period of Christ's humiliation while in an earthly body, problems like the meaning of *kenosis*, the relation of His two natures, and impeccability. The doctrine of the person of Christ is crucial to the Christian faith. It is basic to soteriology, for if our Lord was not what He claimed to be, then His atonement was a deficient, not sufficient, payment for sin.

I. The preexistence of the preincarnate Christ.

A. The meaning of preexistence.

Preexistence of Christ means that He existed before His birth. For some writers it means that He existed from Creation and before time. But strictly speaking, preexistence is not synonymous with eternity. Practically speaking, they stand for a similar concept, for a denial of preexistence almost always includes a denial of eternity and vice versa.

B. The importance of preexistence.

1. At birth.

If Christ came into existence at His birth, then no eternal Trinity exists.

2. Not God.

If Christ was not preexistent then He could not be God, because, among other attributes, God is eternal.

3. Liar.

If Christ was not preexistent then He lied, because He claimed to be. Then, the question arises, what else did He lie about?

C. The evidence for preexistence.

1. His heavenly origin.

Verses that claim heavenly origin for Christ attest to preexistence before

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birth. Note especially John 3:13 and 31.

2. His work as Creator.

If Christ was involved in creating, then, of course, He had to exist before Creation. See John 1:3; Colossians 1:16, and Hebrews 1:2.

3. His relationship with God.

He claimed equality of nature with God (Jn. 10:30). He claimed equal glory with the Father before the world began (17:5). Paul also claimed Christ had the same nature as God (Phil. 2:6). (These passages are evidences for eternity as well.)

4. His attributes.

He claimed full Deity and others attested to it. (These claims will be examined later, but for now Colossians 2:9 will suffice – in Christ dwells all the fullness of Deity.)

5. His relation to John the Baptist.

Though John was born before Jesus, John acknowledged that Jesus existed before him (Jn. 1:15, 30, literally “first of me” but referring to preexistence as the basis for Christ’s superiority over John).

II. The eternity of the preincarnate Christ.

A. The meaning of eternity.

Eternality means not only that Christ existed before His birth or even before Creation but that He existed always, eternally.

Usually eternity and preexistence stand or fall together, though Arius taught preexistence of the Son but not His eternity. He insisted that if Christ was the Only Begotten He must have had a beginning. Jehovah’s Witnesses today have an Arian-like Christology which denies the eternity of the Logos.

B. The importance of eternity.

If eternity is denied then (a) there is no Trinity, (b) Christ does not possess full Deity, and (c) He lied.

C. The evidence for eternity.

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1. His relationship with God as of the same essence demonstrates eternity, since God is eternal. Notice the word *charakter* in Hebrews 1:3 which indicates that Christ is the exact representation of God's nature or essence.
2. Possession of divine attributes includes the attribute of eternity.
3. The Old Testament prophets claimed eternity for Messiah. Micah said that His goings forth are from the days of eternity (5:2; see Hab. 1:12). Though the words can mean "from the days of old," that is, from earliest times, they can also mean from eternity. Isaiah 9:6, "Eternal Father," likely refers to Christ as a Father to His people always (thus it only looks forward, not backward to eternity past).
4. Christ claimed eternity when He declared, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58). Although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He claimed existence before Abraham. This is more than limited existence before Abraham was born because He said "I AM." "I was" might indicate that He existed for several centuries before Abraham, but I am (*eimi*) states eternity. The tense important; before Abraham was born, Christ *was continually existing*. The statement "I am," of course, is also a reference to His deity and a claim of equality with Yahweh. This is a reference also to Ex 3:14.
5. John 1:1. The word "was" in the phrase, "In the beginning was the Word," is the Greek *hen*, the imperfect tense that stresses continual existence in past time. The phrase could thus be translated, "In the beginning the Word was continually existing." John's beginning probably goes back to the origin of the universe; John indicates that however far back one goes, the Word was continually existing.
6. John's plain statement that Christ is God (Jn. 1:1). "The Word was God." Not the Word was divine (as Moffatt and Goodspeed) since that would require *theios* (as in Acts 17:29 and II Pt. 1:3). Nor does John say that the Word was a god (as Jehovah's Witnesses translate it). Definite nouns that precede the verb, as here, regularly lack the definite article (see Leon Morris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* [Eerdmans, 1971], p. 77n).

III. The activity of the preincarnate Christ.

A. His activity as Creator.

1. Extent

He was involved in the Creation of all things (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). This demonstrates His power (to be able to create all things).

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2. Purpose

All things were created for Him (Col. 1:16), meaning for the purpose of achieving His ends in the Creation. This demonstrated His prerogative (to have Creation serve His purposes).

3. Continuation

He also now sustains His creation, for in Him all things hold together (vs. 17). This demonstrates His presence (continuing to sustain creation).

B. His activity as Angel.

1. His identity as Angel of Yahweh.

Clearly the Angel of Yahweh is a self-manifestation of Yahweh, for He speaks as God, identifies Himself with God, and claims to exercise the prerogatives of God (Gen. 16:7-14; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2; Jud. 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-22; 13:3-22; II Sam. 24:16; Zech. 1:12;3:1; 12:8). Yet He is distinguished from Yahweh (Gen. 24:7; Zech. 1:12-13). That He is a Member of the Trinity is indicated by the fact that the appearances of the Angel of Yahweh cease after the Incarnation. This is confirmed by the Old Testament statement that the Angel of God accompanied Israel when they left Egypt (Ex. 14:19; cf. 23:20) and the New Testament statement that the Rock who followed Israel was Christ (I Cor. 10:4).

2. His ministries as an Angel of Yahweh.

- a. He often acted as messenger to various people (Gen. 16:7-14; 22:11-18; 31:11-13).
- b. He guided and protected Israel (Ex. 14:19; 23:20; II Kgs. 19:35).
- c. He was the instrument of judgment on Israel when God sent a pestilence on the people (I Chron. 21:1-27).
- d. He was the agent of refreshment to Elijah (I Kgs. 19:5-7).

C. His other activities.

No other historical activities of Christ are revealed as happening in His preincarnate state. His work as Messiah required the Incarnation, though it was predicted in the Old Testament. Likewise His work as Savior necessitated the Incarnation. The Old Testament does not give specific revelation of the second

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Person as Savior, only God as Savior. To have done so would also have required an Old Testament revelation of the Trinity. Rather that period is called “the times of ignorance” (Acts 17:30).

Though our Lord was not inactive in His preincarnate state, His greatest works necessitated the Incarnation. Nevertheless, He stands magnificent in His person as the eternal God, but, as it were, in the shadows, waiting the spotlight of the Incarnation to reveal His glory and grace (Jn. 1:17; Ti. 2:11).

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THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

I. The meaning of incarnation.

Though the word itself does not appear in Scripture, its components (“in” and “flesh”) do. John wrote that the Word became flesh (Jn. 1:14). He also wrote of Jesus coming in the flesh (I Jn. 4:2; II Jn. 7). By this he meant that the eternal second Person of the Trinity took on Himself humanity. He did not possess humanity until the birth, since the Lord became flesh (*egeneto* Jn. 1:14, in contrast to the four occurrences of *en* in vs. 1-2). However, His humanity was sinless, a fact Paul guards by writing that He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rm. 8:3).

II. The predictions of incarnation.

A. Prediction of the God-Man.

1. The prophecy concerning Messiah in Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah foretold the union of Deity and humanity in Him. He said that a child would be born (a reference to humanity) and that His character would be such that He may be designated as the Mighty God (*el gibbor*, a reference to Deity). Isaiah uses *el* only in reference to God (see 31:3); *gibbor* means hero. Thus the phrase means a hero whose chief characteristic is that He is God. Thus in this single verse both the humanity and deity of our Lord are predicted. (See Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964], 1:335-8.)

2. The name *Immanuel* reveals the same truth about the Lord (Isaiah 7:14).

This means more than God’s presence with His people in His providential dealings. It means in this text that the very presence of the virgin-born Child brings God to His people (see Young, 1:289-91).

B. Prediction of the virgin birth (Is. 7:14).

In this prophecy Isaiah foretold the means of the Incarnation as being a virgin birth. Liberals have challenged the translation “virgin” for the Hebrew word *almah*, stating that *bethulah* should have been used if Isaiah unmistakably meant virgin. It is true that *almah* means a sexually mature, marriageable maiden, and *bethulah* means a separated woman, usually a virgin, but not always (Ex. 2:17; Ezek. 23:3; Joel 1:8). Thus it is not true to say, as the critics do, that *bethulah* would have been a more precise word to use if Isaiah clearly meant virgin. Apparently *almah* is not a technical term for virgin but refers to a young woman, one of whose characteristics is virginity (Gen. 24:43). There is no instance where

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it can be proved that *almah* designates a young woman who is not a virgin. The Septuagint translates it by *parthenos* in tow of its seven occurrences, as does Matthew 1:23. Thus the word means a young woman of marriageable age one of whose characteristics was virginity, and necessarily so in the case of the fulfillment of this prophecy in Christ's birth.

Who is the virgin referred to in the prophecy? The interpretations fall into three basic categories.

1. The nonmessianic interpretation which understands the prophecy fulfilled by some unknown woman in the past who may or may not have been a virgin. (How then can verse 23 be explained?)
2. The strictly messianic interpretation that sees the prophecy referring only to Mary with no reference to any maiden of Isaiah's time. Unquestionably it does refer to Mary (vs. 23), but whether to her *only* is the question. (Without a reference to someone in Isaiah's time what value would the sign have been to Ahaz?)
3. The prophecy refers both to someone in Isaiah's day and to Mary in the future.

According to this third interpretation who would be the maiden in Isaiah's day? Again there are three answers: (a) Ahaz's wife; (b) Some unknown maiden in Israel; (c) Isaiah's second wife to whom he was not yet married when the prophecy was given. If (a) is true then the son was Hezekiah. If (b) is true, then the son is unknown. If (c) is true the son was either Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Is. 8:3) or another unmentioned son of Isaiah. In this view Isaiah's first wife, the mother of Shear-jashub (7:3) had already died.

Matthew unambiguously sees Christ as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Of this there can be no question. And both the strictly messianic and the double-reference views acknowledge that.

III. The means of incarnation.

A. The evidence.

The Virgin Birth was the means of the Incarnation. The Incarnation, once accomplished, is a lasting state for our Lord. It began at His birth and continues (albeit in a resurrection body now) forever. The Virgin Birth was an event that lasted only a matter of hours.

When Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear the Messiah, she protested

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that she would need a husband. The angel's response was in essence, you won't need a husband, because the Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Lk. 1:35). The statement emphasizes more the fact of divine generation of the child, than the method.

Matthew carefully guards the fact of the Virgin Birth in the genealogical table of our Lord (Mt. 1:16). He records that Joseph was the husband of Mary, but that it was by Mary only that Jesus was born. The pronoun "by whom" is feminine singular, indicating clearly that Jesus was born of Mary only and not of Mary and Joseph.

Whether Galatians 4:4, "born of a woman," indicates the Virgin Birth or not is unclear. It may simply mean that Christ assumed humanity just like He assumed a position under the Law, as the next phrase says. Or it might refer to the Virgin Birth since the verb is not the regular verb for "be born" but the same verb as in John 1:14 which refers to the Incarnation, though not to the Virgin Birth as such. However, the passages in Isaiah, Matthew, and Luke are clear.

What was the purpose of the Virgin Birth? It need not be the necessary means of preserving Christ sinless, since God could have overshadowed two parents so as to protect the baby's sinlessness had He so desired. It served as a sign of the uniqueness of the Person who was born. How early and how widely the fact was known among the contemporaries of Christ we cannot say. Of course, when Matthew and Luke were written it was known, and from that time on the early church regarded it as a crucial doctrine, and by the early second century an established doctrine (Ignatius, *Smyrna*, I, 1, for example; see also Hans von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth in the Theology of the Ancient Church*, Studies in Historical Theology [Naperville: Allenson, 1964], 2:10-20).

B. The genealogies.

Matthew and Luke both trace the genealogy of the virgin-born Son. Matthew contains forty-one selected names, while Luke includes seventy-seven. Matthew traces the King back to Abraham; Luke goes back to Adam. Matthew's list is commonly regarded as Joseph's line and Luke's, Mary's.

There has been much discussion particularly over the question of whether Luke's genealogy is that of Jesus through Mary His mother. Alfred Plummer raises this objection to that view: "It is probable that so obvious a solution, as that one was the pedigree of Joseph and the other the pedigree of Mary, would have been very soon advocated, if there had been any reason (excepting the difficulty) for adopting it. But this solution is not suggested by anyone until Amnius of Viterbo propounded it, ca. A.D. 1490" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Luke* [ICC, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910], p. 103).

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On the other side, F. Godet argues effectively for Mary's lineage in Luke on the basis of the absence of the article before Joseph (3:23) which links Jesus directly with Eli and seemingly puts Joseph out of the genealogical line altogether (*A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* [T. & T. Clark, 1920], 1:195-204).

Various explanations are given for both genealogies being Joseph's line. One is that Matthan and Matthat are the same person, making Jacob and Eli brothers and making Joseph the son of Eli and the nephew of Jacob. If Jacob died without heirs his nephew Joseph would have become the heir, or possibly Joseph became the heir of Jacob because Eli (assuming that his wife had died) married Jacob's widow according to the custom of levirate marriage (See J. G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* [New York: Harper, 1930], pp. 207-9).

A strong argument for the Lucan genealogy being Mary's relates to the curse placed on Jehoiachin (Jeconiah or coniah) in Jeremiah 22:30. He was pronounced "childless" which is explained in the verse as meaning no physical descendant of his would prosperously reign on the throne of David. (He apparently did have seven sons, though perhaps adopted, I Chron. 3:17-18). Thus Jesus could not expect to be a ruling king (though He had the legal right) if He were a blood descendant of Joseph who was a descendant of Coniah. Therefore the virgin birth was necessary to free Him from the line of the curse (see Robert Grimace, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], pp. 150-9). However, this could also be accomplished if Jesus is linked to Joseph (not as His natural father, of course) through Nathan rather than Solomon (as Luke might be indicating).

It has also been suggested that the curse on Coniah was ended by god's choosing and exalting Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:23). Making him "as a signet" elevated him to place of authority, and choosing him transferred to Zerubbabel and his family among David's descendants the messianic promise. Zerubbabel's name does appear in both the Matthew and Luke genealogies.

In any case Luke carefully avoids the impression that Jesus might be the natural son of Joseph: yet he preserves His kingly claims by not linking Him solely to His mother (since the claim passed through the male members). Never in His lifetime did anyone dispute Jesus' claim to the throne of David.

IV. The purposes of the incarnation.

Why did God send His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh? The Scriptures give several answers to that question.

A. To reveal God to us.

Though God reveals Himself in various ways including the magnificence of

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nature around us, only the Incarnation revealed the essence of God, though veiled (Jn. 1:18; 14:7-11). The only way man can see the Father is to know about the Son, and the only way we can do that today is through studying the record of His life in the Scriptures. Because He became a man, the revelation of God was personalized; because He is God, that revelation is completely truthful.

- B. To *provide an example* for our lives.

The early life of our Lord is held up to us as a pattern for our living today (I Pt. 2:21; I Jn. 2:6). Without the Incarnation we would not have that example. As man He experienced the vicissitudes of life and furnishes for us an experienced example; as God He offers us the power to follow His example.

- C. To provide an effective *sacrifice for sin*.

Without the Incarnation we would have not Savior. Sin requires death for its payment. God does not die. So the Savior must be human in order to be able to die. But the death of an ordinary man would not pay for sin eternally, so the Savior must also be God. We must have a God-Man Savior and we do in our Lord (Heb. 10:1-10).

- D. To be able to *fulfill the Davidic covenant*.

Gabriel announced to Mary that her Son would be given the throne of David (Lk. 1:31-33). This is not fulfilled by the invisible God reigning over the affairs of men (which He does to be sure). To have an occupant of David's throne requires a human being. Therefore, Messiah had to be a human being. But to occupy that throne forever requires that the occupant never die. And only God qualifies. So the One who ultimately fulfills the Davidic promise has to be a God-Man.

- E. To *destroy* the works of the Devil (I Jn. 3:8).

Notice that this was done by Christ's appearing. The focus is on His coming, not on his resurrection as might be expected. Why was the Incarnation necessary to defeat Satan? Because Satan must be defeated in the arena he dominates, this world. So Christ was sent into this world to destroy Satan's works.

- F. To be able to be a sympathetic *High Priest* (Heb. 4:14-16).

Our High Priest can feel our weaknesses because He was tested as we are. But God is never tested, so it was necessary for God to become man to be able to be tested in order to be a sympathetic Priest.

- G. To be able to be a *qualified Judge*.

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Though most people think of God as the judge before whom all will appear, the truth is that Jesus will be that Judge (Jn. 5:22, 27). All judgment will be executed by our Lord “because He is the Son of man.” This is the title that links Him to the earth and to His earthly mission. Why is it necessary for the Judge to be human and to have lived on earth? So that He may put down all excuses people might try to make. Why must the Judge also be God? So that His judgment will be true and just.

Thus the Incarnation has ramifications in relation to our knowledge of God, to our salvation, to our daily living, to our pressing needs, and to the future. It truly is the central fact of history.

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THE PERSON OF CHRIST INCARNATE

The statement on the person of Christ incarnate formulated at the Council at Chalcedon (A.D. 451) has been considered definitive by orthodox Christianity. It reads as follows:

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards His Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards His manhood; like us in all respects apart from sin; as regards His Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards His manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one Person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two Persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of Him, and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has been handed down to us.

More concisely one may describe the person of Christ incarnate as being full Deity and perfect humanity united without mixture, change, division, or separation in one Person forever. The key components of the description include “full Deity” (no diminution of any attribute of Deity), “perfect humanity” (“perfect” rather than “full” in order to emphasize His sinlessness), “one Person” (not two), and “forever” (for He continues to have a body, though resurrected, Acts 1:11; Rev. 5:6).

- I. The full Deity of Christ Incarnate. Jesus Christ is God.
 - A. He possessed and at times manifested divine attributes.
 1. Eternality. He claimed to exist from eternity past (Jn. 8:58; 17:5).
 2. Omnipresence. He claimed to be everywhere present (Mt. 18:20; 28:20; Rev 1:8).
 3. Omniscience. He showed knowledge of things that could only be known if He were omniscient (Mt. 16:21; Lk. 6:8; 11:17; Jn. 4:29), knowing the nature and thoughts of men.
 - a. He knew the very thoughts of others (Matt 9:4).
 - b. He comprehended mankind as well as the intents of certain men (John 2:24-25).
 - c. His disciples acknowledged this divine ability (John 16:30; Acts 1:24).

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4. Omnipotence. He demonstrated and claimed the power of an omnipotent Person (Mt. 28:18; Mk. 5:11-15; Jn. 11:38-44).
 5. Self-existence (John 5:26; 6:69; Heb 7:16).
 6. Immutability (Heb 13:8).
 7. Holiness (Luke 1:35; Heb 7:26).
- B. He performs works which only God can do.
1. Jesus performed works manifesting deity.
 - a. He was an Agent of creation (John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2, 10).
 - b. He is upholding all things (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).
 - c. He had divine power for raising the dead (John 5:27-29; 10:17; 11:25; 1 Cor 15:22, 45).
 - d. He has been assigned the final act of judging (John 5:27-29; Matt 25:31-32).
 - e. Even on earth, He was capable of forgiving sin (Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21, 23-24).

Again, all of these examples are things He did or claims He made, not claims others made of Him.
 2. Miracles performed in the public ministry of Jesus were greater and more numerous than those connected with any other (John 10:38).
 - a. He performed a great variety of miracles of healing.
 - 1). Man with leprosy (Matt 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-42; Luke 5:12-13), whom Jesus directly touched (feared by Israelites).
 - 2). Roman centurion's servant (Matt 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10), without going near the servant, after an unusual expression of faith (Matt 8:8).
 - 3). Peter's mother-in-law (Matt 8:14-15; Mark 1:30-31; Luke 4:38-39), by touching her hand.
 - 4). Two men from Gadara (Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-15; Luke 8:27-35), possessed by demons who requested to go to nearby pigs.
 - 5). Paralyzed man (Matt 9:2-7; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 5:18-25), forgiving his sins and commanding him to rise (Matt 9:6).
 - 6). Woman with bleeding (Matt 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-29; Luke 8:43-48), who only touched the edge of His robe.
 - 7). Two blind men (Matt 9:27-31), by touching their eyes.
 - 8). Man mute and possessed (Matt 9:32-33), who immediately

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- spoke.
- 9). Man with a shriveled hand (Matt 12:10-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-10), which was whole when he extended his arm.
 - 10). Man blind, mute and possessed (Matt 12:22), who both saw and spoke.
 - 11). Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30), commending her faith (Matt 15:28).
 - 12). Boy with a demon (Matt 17:14-18; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 9:38-43), whom the disciples could not heal (Matt 17:15-16, 18).
 - 13). Two blind men (one named Bartimaeus, Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43), by touching their eyes.
 - 14). Deaf mute (Mark 7:31-37), putting His fingers into his ears and spittle on his tongue (Mark 7:33).
 - 15). Man possessed, in the synagogue (Mark 1:23-26; Luke 4:33-35); the demon announced who Jesus was (Mark 1:24).
 - 16). Blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26), restoring sight in two stages.
 - 17). Crippled woman (Luke 13:11-13), laying hands on her on the sabbath.
 - 18). Man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-4), in the house of a chief Pharisee on the sabbath.
 - 19). Ten men with leprosy (Luke 17:11-19), only one of whom returned to thank Jesus.
 - 20). The high priest's servant (Luke 22:50-51), after Peter had cut off his ear (John 18:10), just by touching the ear.
 - 21). Official's son at Capernaum (John 4:46-54), again at a distance.
 - 22). Sick man, at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9), just speaking to him.
 - 23). Man born blind (John 9:1-7), again using spittle.
- b. The great variety of these healings is particularly significant.
- 1). The circumstances of His healing activities differed greatly.
 - 2). The people who were healed had a great variety of physical or mental needs.
 - 3). Jesus employed numerous patterns of contact (touching, another touching His garment, applying spittle, proclaiming without going).
 - 4). His miracles were accompanied by a great variety of comments, instructions, actions, or teachings.
 - 5). These accounts name specific times, places, and persons; they are not just general accounts of numerous healings.
 - 6). All of these argue against human inventiveness centuries

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later.

- c. He showed special power in bringing the dead back to life.
 - 1). Jairus's daughter (Matt 9:18-19, 23-25; Mark 5:22-24, 38-42; Luke 8:41-42, 49-56).
 - 2). Widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-15).
 - 3). Lazarus (John 11:1-44).
- d. Power and authority were displayed in commanding the forces of nature.
 - 1). Calming the storm (Matt 8:23-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8:22-25).
 - 2). Walking on the water (John 14:25; Mark 6:48-51; John 6:19-21).
 - 3). 5,000 plus people fed (Matt 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-13).
 - 4). 4,000 plus people fed (Matt 15:32-38; Mark 8:1-9); both mentioned (Matt 16:9-10).
 - 5). Coin in the fish's mouth (Matt 17:24-27).
 - 6). Fig tree withered (Matt 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-25).
 - 7). Catch of fish (Luke 5:4-11).
 - 8). Water turned into wine (John 2:1-11).
 - 9). Another catch of fish (John 21:1-11).
- e. These miracles made abundantly clear God's approval and authentication of His ministry.
 - 1). Note that any miracle was by the power of God, not a special power in the prophet; Jesus as God had godly power Himself.
 - 2). During His public ministry Jesus healed in His Own Name (John 5:21); in Acts disciples healed in the Name of Jesus (Acts 3:6, 16).

C. He was given the names and titles of Deity.

1. Son of God.

Our Lord used this designation of Himself (though rarely, Jn. 10:36), and He acknowledged its truthfulness when it was used by others of Him (Mt. 26:63-64). What does it mean? Though the phrase "son of" can mean "offspring of," it also carries the meaning "of the order of." Thus in the Old Testament "sons of the prophets" meant of the order of prophets (I Kgs. 20:35), and "sons of the singers" meant of the order of singers (Neh. 12:28). The designation "Son of God" when used of our Lord means of the order of God and is a strong and clear claim to full Deity. "In Jewish usage the term Son of . . . did not generally imply any subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature. Thus Bar Kokba, who led the

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Jewish revolt 135-132 B.C. in the reign of Hadrian, was called by a name which means 'Son of the Star.' It was supposed that he took this name to identify himself as the very Star predicted in Numbers 24:17. The name 'Son of Encouragement' (Acts. 4:36) doubtless means, 'The Encourager.' 'Sons of Thunder' (Mk. 3:17) probably means 'Thunderous Men.' 'Son of man,' especially as applied to Christ in Daniel 7:13 and constantly in the New Testament, essentially means 'The Representative Man.' Thus for Christ to say, 'I am the Son of God' (John. 10:36) was understood by His contemporaries as identifying Himself as God, equal with the Father, in an unqualified sense" (J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962], 1:105).

2. Lord and God.

Jesus is called Yahweh in the New Testament, a clear indication of His full Deity (cf. Lk. 1:76 with Mal. 3:1 and Rom. 10:13 with Joel 2:32). He is also called God (Jn. 1:1; 20:28; Heb. 1:8), Lord (Mt. 22:43-45), and King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16). Notice, Jesus was expressly called God.

- a. By the disciple closest to Him (lived longest) in John 1:1.
 - 1). John's first assertion was about the Word (Jesus), eternally existing (*en arche en*), who became incarnate (John 1:14).
 - 2). Second, this eternal existence included close communion, fellowship (with, facing, *pros*).
 - 3). The third assertion emphasized (by position, first) that He was eternally God (*theos en ho logos*).
 - 4). Lack of the article (*theos*) in Greek identifies nature (but not one of many as the indefinite in English).
- b. By a disciple who had asserted doubts (John 20:25, 28).
 - 1). The use of "Lord" by Thomas was accepted by Jesus (thus approved); but such was not accepted by others.
 - a). Both Peter (Acts 10:25-26) and Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:11-18) reacted at bowing down to them.
 - b). The communicating angel refused obeisance of John (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).
 - 2). Clearly the remark was addressed to Jesus: he said (*eipen*), to Him (*auto*), use of the vocative, *ho kurios mou* (John 20:28).
 - 3). The expression was a result of having believed (John 20:29).
- c. Other passages directly ascribe deity to Jesus.
 - 1). John 1:18, the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father.
 - 2). Romans 9:5, Christ who is over all is God blessed forever.

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- 3). Titus 2:13, the glorious appearing of One, the great (article) God and our Savior Jesus Christ.
- 4). 2 Peter 1:1, through the righteousness of One (article), God and our Savior Jesus.
- 5). Hebrews 1:8, 10 (Psa 45:6-7), God, creator; God Thy God.
- 6). 1 John 5:20, Jesus is true God, and we are in Him that is true.
- 7). Colossians 2:9, in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead.
- 8). Philippians 2:6, existing as God, having and retaining the form of God.
- 9). John 5:18; 10:33, even Jewish opponents recognized that Jesus taught that He is equal with God.
- 10). John 14:9, Jesus said to Philip, he that hath seen Me hath seen Father.

D. He claimed to be God.

Perhaps the strongest and clearest occasion of such a claim was at the Feast of Dedication when He said, "I and the Father are One" (Jn. 10:30). The neuter form of "one" rules out the meaning that He and the Father were one Person. It means that they are in perfect unity in natures and actions, a fact that could only be true if He were as much Deity as the Father. The people who heard this claim understood it that way, for they immediately tried to stone Him for blasphemy because He made Himself out to be God (vs. 33).

How can anyone say that Jesus of Nazareth Himself never claimed to be God, but rather that His followers made the claim for Him. Most of the passages cited above are from Christ's own words. Therefore, one must face the only options: either His claims were true or He was a liar. And these claims are for full and complete Deity – nothing missing or removed during His life on earth.

II. The perfect humanity of Christ Incarnate.

The doctrine of the humanity of Christ is equally important as the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Jesus had to be a man if he was to represent fallen humanity. First John was written to dispel the doctrinal error that denies the true humanity of Christ (cf. 1 John 4:2). If Jesus was not a real man, then the death on the cross was an illusion; He had to be a real man to die for humanity. The Scriptures teach the humanity of Jesus. However, they also show that He did not possess man's sinful, fallen nature (1 John 3:5).

Denials of the humanity of Christ are less common than denials of His deity. Why? Because as long as you do not inject the Deity factor into the person of Christ, He is only

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a man, however fine or exalted, and as a man only He cannot disturb people with His claims so much as if He is the God-Man. However, those who may readily affirm His humanity may not so readily affirm His perfect humanity. They may acknowledge Him as a good man (how so if He lied?) Or a great man (how so if He misled others?) but not as a perfect man (for then they might feel more obligated to listen to Him even though they may not acknowledge Him as God).

A. He had a human body.

Though Christ's conception was supernatural, He was born with a human body which grew and developed (Lk. 2:52). He called Himself a man (Jn. 8:40).

B. He had a human soul and spirit.

The perfect humanity of our Lord included a perfect immaterial nature as well as a material one. It was not that the human nature provided Christ's body while the divine nature consisted of soul and spirit. The humanity was complete and included both material and immaterial aspects (Mt. 26:38; Lk. 23:46). The body of Jesus was like the bodies of other men except for those qualities which have resulted from human sin and failure. Luke 1-2 describes Mary's pregnancy and her giving birth to the child Jesus, affirming the Savior's true humanity. Ultimately, He suffered greatly in His human body (John 19:1; 18; 28).

C. He exhibited the characteristics of a human being.

Our Lord was hungry (Mt. 4:2). He was thirsty (Jn. 19:28). He grew weary (4:6). He experienced love and compassion (Mt. 9:36). He wept (Jn. 11:35). He was tested (Heb. 4:15). These are characteristics of true humanity.

D. He was called by human names.

1. His favorite designation of Himself was "Son of man" (over eighty times). This name linked Him to the earth and to His mission on earth. It focused on His lowliness and humanity (Mt. 8:20); on His suffering and death (Lk. 19:10); and on His future reign as King (Mt. 24:27).
2. He was also the Son of David, a title that linked Him to His ancestor David and to the royal promises to be fulfilled ultimately by Messiah.
3. Paul calls Him a man in I Timothy 2:5.

III. The union of Deity and humanity in Christ Incarnate.

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The *hypostatic union* may be defined as the second person, the preincarnate Christ came and took to Himself a human nature and remains forever undiminished Deity and true humanity united in one person forever. When Christ came, a Person came, not just a nature; He took on an additional nature; a human nature—He did not simply dwell in a human person. The result of the union of the two natures is the theanthropic Person (the God-man).

This concept of the *hypostatic* or one-person union of the divine and human natures in one Person is probably one of the most difficult concepts to comprehend in theology. Not one of us has ever seen Deity except as the Scriptures reveal God, and not one of us has ever seen perfect humanity except as the Scriptures reveal pre-fallen Adam and our Lord. To try to relate these two concepts to the person of Christ adds complexities to ideas that are in themselves difficult to comprehend.

A. The meaning of “nature.”

Though the English words “nature” and “substance” can be synonymous, meaning essence, we need to make a distinction between the two words for theological purposes. If nature is conceived of as a substantive entity, then nature and substance would be the same, and the incarnate Christ would consist of two substances, and would be essentially two Persons, as Nestorianism held. But if “nature” is viewed as a “complex of attributes” (Buswell’s suggestion, 1:54) this error is more apt to be avoided. The single Person of the incarnate Christ retained the total complex of divine attributes and possessed all the complex of human attributes essential to a perfect human being.

B. The character of the union.

The Chalcedonian Creed stated that the two “natures” were united without mixture, without change, without division, and without separation. This means that the entire complex of the attributes of Deity and those of perfect humanity were maintained in Jesus Christ at all times since His Incarnation. There is no mixture of divine and human attributes (as Eutychians taught), no change in either complex (as Apollinarians taught), no dividing of them, and no separating them so as to have two Persons (as Nestorianism taught). Orthodoxy says two natures comprising one Person or hypostasis forever. It is correct to characterize Christ as a theanthropic Person, but not accurate to speak of theanthropic natures (since that would mix the divine and human attributes.)

Calvinism has held that the union involves no transfer of attributes from one nature to the other. An attribute could not be taken away from a nature without

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changing the essence of that nature. Walvoord states, “The two natures are united without loss of any essential attributes and that the two natures maintain their separate identity” (*Jesus Christ Our Lord* [Chicago: Moody, 1969], p. 114). There can be no mixture of the two natures; infinity cannot be transferred to finity; mind cannot be transferred to matter; God cannot be transferred to man, or vice versa. To rob the divine nature of God of a single attribute would result in destruction of a true humanity. It is for this reason that the two natures of Christ cannot lose or transfer a single attribute.

Lutheranism teaches the ubiquity of Christ’s body which does involve a transfer of the attribute of omnipresence to the humanity of Christ. In other words, ubiquitarianism holds that Christ is present in His human nature everywhere and at all times. Luther developed this doctrine in 152-28 to support his belief in the Real Presence in the Lord’s Supper.

C. The communion of attributes.

This simply means that the attributes of both natures belong to the one Person without mixing the natures or dividing the Person. Practically speaking, it is the basis for Christ being seen to be weak, yet omnipotent; ignorant, yet omniscient; limited, yet infinite.

We have said that attributes cannot be transferred from one nature to the other. To do so would change the mix of the complex of attributes and thus the nature. If infinity can be transferred to humanity, then Deity loses infinity and is no longer full Deity. However, attributes of both natures must be expressed through the one Person. Thus the Person can seem to “transfer” back and forth from the expression of one or the other natures, though the attributes themselves must remain as part of whichever nature they properly belong to. Thus theologians have developed a system to classify the actions of the person of Christ with respect to origination of the action (see Hodge, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960], 2:78ff, who has four categories, and Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* [Chicago: Moody, 1974], pp. 116-7, who has seven). Some examples include (a) actions predicated on the whole Person, like redemption (both natures being involved); (b) actions predicted on the divine nature (though the whole Person is the subject), like preexistence (true only of the divine nature); and (c) actions predicated on the human nature, like being thirsty.

Whatever help such a classification may give, it seems more important to remember that the Person does whatever He does, revealing whatever attribute of whichever nature He reveals. The Person thirsted; the Person knew all things; the Person does not know the day or the hour; and (probably the hardest one) the Person died. Of course, Deity does not die or thirst, but the Person, Jesus Christ, the God-Man, did both.

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D. The self-consciousness of Christ.

Another question is whether Christ in His own self-consciousness was aware of His deity and humanity at all times. The answer is that the Person was always aware in Himself with respect to His deity and that the Person grew in self-consciousness with respect to His humanity.

E. The will(s) of Christ.

Did Christ have one or two wills? Chalcedon said one Christ in two natures united in one Person, implying two wills. In the seventh century the Monothelites insisted that Christ had but one will, but this view was declared heresy by the Council at Constantinople in 680. If will is defined as a “behavior complex” as Buswell does, then our Lord may be said to have had a divine behavior pattern and a perfect human one as well; hence two wills. If will is defined as the resulting moral decision as Walvoord does, then the person of Christ always made only one moral decision; hence one will. However, it seems to me that every single decision stemmed from either the “will” of His divine nature or the “will” of His human nature or a blending of both, making it proper to think of two “wills.”

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HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTOLOGY

Included in this section is a brief overview of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity since much of the Trinitarian discussion had direct bearing on Christology.

The Trinity of God

A major problem in formulating the doctrine of the Trinity related to the OT monotheistic belief. How could the church recognize the belief that God was one and yet acknowledge the deity of Christ? In its beginning the church had no clear concept of the Trinity, in fact, Christ was variously explained as the mind of God—an impersonal Logos who became personal at the incarnation. Others pictured Him as eternal with the Father yet subordinate to the Father. There was even less understanding concerning the Person of the Holy Spirit. Some understood Him to be subordinate to both the Father and the Son.

I. Monarchianism.

The two issues facing the church concerning the Trinity were maintaining the unity of God on the one hand and affirming the deity of Christ on the other. The early church fathers did not formulate any clear statement concerning the Trinity. Some were unclear about the *Logos*, and most were unconcerned about giving attention to the Spirit except for His work in the lives of believers. In answer to Praxeus, Tertullian (cs. 165-220) asserted the threeness aspect of God, being the first to use the word Trinity. However, he did not have a full and accurate understanding of the Trinity, his views being tinged with subordinationism.

The first heresy connected with the Trinitarian controversy was Monarchianism. Tertullian was battling Monarchians who opted for the unity of God and denied trinitarianism. Monarchianism existed in two forms.

A. *Dynamic Monarchianism (or adoptionism)*. This was first expounded by Theogotus of Byzantium about 210, and viewed Jesus as a man who was given special power by the Holy Spirit at His baptism. This doctrine was advanced by Theodotus and later by Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch. He taught that the Logos was

consubstantial with the Father, but not a distinct Person in the Godhead. He could be identified with God, because He existed in Him just as human reason exists in man. He was merely an impersonal power, present in all men, but particularly operative in the man Jesus. By penetrating the humanity of Jesus progressively, as it did of no other man, this divine power gradually deified it. And because the man Jesus was thus deified, He is worthy of divine honour, though He cannot be regarded

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as God in the strict sense of the word.¹

It is clear that although this doctrinal view maintained the oneness of God, the distinctiveness of the three persons within the Godhead was lost.

- B. *Modalistic Monarchianism*. This was more influential and popular, attempting not only to maintain the unity of God but also the full deity of Christ by asserting that the Father became incarnated in the Son. In the West it was known as *Patripassianism* since the incarnated Father also suffered in the Son; and in the East as *Sabellianism* after its most famous representative, Sabellius, who taught that the Persons in the Godhead were modes in which God manifested Himself. Though Sabellius used the word “Person” he meant it as a role or manifestation of the one divine essence.

The designation *modalistic* stressed the idea that God was one God who variously manifested Himself as father, other times as the Son, and other times as the Holy Spirit. Even though modalistic monarchians spoke of three persons, they nonetheless believed that there was but one essence of deity who variously manifested Himself in three different modes. Hence, the Father was born as the Son, the Father died on the cross and the Father also raised Himself from the dead. In fact, Praxeas, the probable originator of modalistic monarchianism, said the Father became His own Son.

II. Arianism.

The most prominent name in the Trinitarian controversy is Arius. Arius (cs. 250-336), an antitrinitarian presbyter of Alexandria, distinguished the one eternal God from the Son who was generated by the Father and who thus had a beginning. To suggest that Christ is eternal would be to affirm two Gods. Arius taught that the Son had a beginning; there was a time when the Son did not exist. The Son was not of the “same substance” (Gk. *homoousios*) as the Father; the Son was created by the Father—that is generated by the Father. He further taught that Christ was created prior to all other creation, He being the medium through which God later created. He also taught that the Holy Spirit was the first thing created by the Son, since all things were made by the Son. As such, Christ is the highest ranking of all created beings, however Christ is subject to change because He is not God. He found scriptural support for his views in passages which seem to picture the Son as inferior to the Father (Mt. 28:18; Mk. 13:32; I Cor. 15:28).

Arius was opposed by the highly capable Athanasius of Alexandria (cs. 296-373) who, while maintaining the unity of God, distinguished three essential natures in God and insisted that the Son was of the same substance as the Father. He taught that the Son was generated, but that this was an eternal and internal act of God in contrast to Arius who

¹Berkhof, *History of Christian Doctrines*, p. 78.

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rejected eternal generation.

When the **Council of Nicea** (A.D. 325) convened to attempt to settle the dispute Athanasius and his followers wanted it stated that the Son was of the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father, while a large group of moderates suggested that the word *omoiousios* (“of similar substance”) be substituted. Thorough-going Arians said that the Son was a different substance (*heteroousios*). Emperor Constantine finally sided with the Athanasian party resulting in the clear and unequivocal statement of the Nicene Creed that Christ was of the same substance with the Father (*homoousios*). It reads:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance [*ousias*] of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance [*homoousion*] with the Father, through whom all things came to be, those things that are in heaven and those things that are on earth, who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered, rose the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead.

The designation *homoousion* stressed that Christ is not merely like the Father but He is of the identical substance as the Father. The terms “God from God” and “true God from true God” further stressed the deity of Christ. At the same time “begotten, not made” and “came down” stressed His eternity.

Concerning the Holy Spirit the Creed merely said, “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” However, Athanasius himself, in his own teaching maintained that the Spirit, like the Son, was of the same essence as the Father. In the aftermath of the Council of Nicea many documents were circulated in the fourth century and the Arian party was popular partly because of the influence of Constantius, Constantine’s successor, who was fond of Arius. The controversy continued, with the center of controversy revolving around the term *homoousian*, a term to which many objected. As the controversy shifted back and forth, both Arius and Athanasius found themselves banished at different times. The West favored Athanasius’ view, whereas the East wanted a modified statement.

In the second half of the fourth century three theologians from the province of Cappadocia in eastern Asia minor gave definitive shape to the doctrine of the Trinity and defeated Arianism. They were Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil’s close friend Gregory of Nazianzus. They helped clarify the vocabulary concerning the Trinity by using *ousia* for the one essence of the Godhead and *hypostasis* for the Persons. Their emphasis on the three essential natures in the one God freed the Nicene Creed from suspicions of Sabellianism in the eyes of the moderates. They also vigorously maintained the *homoousios* of the Holy Spirit.

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III. The Council of Constantinople (381).

In 373 a group led by Eustath called the Pneumatomachians (“fighters against the Spirit”) regarded both the Son and the Spirit merely of like substance with the Father (some moderates did affirm the consubstantiality of the Son). The controversy grew to such proportions consubstantiality of the Son). The controversy grew to such proportions that Emperor Theodosius called a council at Constantinople consisting of 150 orthodox bishops who represented the Eastern church. Under the guidance of Gregory of Nazianzus the council formulated this statement concerning the Holy Spirit: “And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-giving, who proceeds from the Father, who is to be glorified with the Father and the Son, and who speaks through the prophets.” Though the creed avoided the term “of the same substance” which had been used of Christ in the Nicene Creed, it described the work of the Spirit in terms which could not be predicted of any created being. Thus it settled the question of the deity of the Spirit, though it was less than a fully satisfactory statement since it did not use *omoousios* of the Spirit and did not define the relationship of the Spirit to the other two Persons.

IV. Augustine (354-430).

A. *De Trinitate*.

The statement of the Trinity in the Western church reached a final formulation in this work by Augustine. In this treatise he stated that each of the three Persons of the Trinity possesses the entire essence and that all are interdependent on the others. Though he was dissatisfied with the word “Persons” to denote the three essential natures, he used it “in order not to be silent.” He also taught that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

B. *The Pelagian controversy (431)*.

Augustine also laid great stress on efficacious grace as the work of the Spirit. This profoundly influenced not only his doctrine of man and of sin but also his doctrine of the Spirit.

V. The Synod of Toledo (589).

While Western theologians generally held to the procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and Son, this was not formalized until the *filioque* (“and Son”) clause was added to the Constantinople Creed at the Synod of Toledo. The Eastern church never accepted this, declaring it to be heresy, splitting the two groups even to today. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople and adversary of Pope Nicholas of Rome, used the *filioque* clause as part of his effort to discredit Nicholas’ claims as universal bishop. He charged the Western church with introducing doctrinal innovations claiming that *filioque* had falsified the holy creed of Constantinople.

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VI. Reformation teaching on the Trinity.

The reformers and all Reformation Confessions express the doctrine of the Trinity in the orthodox fashion formulated in the early church (see Calvin, *Institutes*, I. 13, for example). Calvin seemed to find the idea of the eternal generation of the Son difficult, if not useless, though he did not deny it.

Luther accepted the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity because he felt it was taught in the Scriptures though he felt that faith alone could comprehend it. The Augsburg Confession (1530) clearly declares “that there is one divine essence which is called and is God . . . yet there are three Persons of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” (III.7). Likewise the *Westminster Confession* (1647) states: “In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding: the Son is eternally begotten of the Father: the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son” (II. 3).

Socinianism in the sixteenth century denied the preexistence of the Son, considering Him only a man. It taught that there was only one divine essence containing only one Person. These views influenced English Unitarianism and English Deism. Many Unitarians were not Deists but all Deists had a unitarian concept of God. The heretical lineage was Arianism to Socinianism to Unitarianism to Deism, American Unitarianism was a direct descendant of English Unitarianism.

VII. Modern views.

The orthodox view of the Trinity was and is held by many in the modern period. However there have been many impugners. Kant and Hegel opposed the orthodox teaching and held to adoptionism or impersonal pantheism. Swedenborg and Schleiermacher echoed Sabellianism. Many feel that Barth’s concept was modalistic (Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity* [London: Nisbet, 1955], p. 229). Others defend him as orthodox because he rejected Sabellianism and used his concept of “modes of being” in God in place of the concept of Persons. Paul Tillich felt that the doctrine of the Trinity was produced by man to meet his own needs. Tillich in reality did not believe there was even one Person in the Godhead, let alone three. Jehovah’s Witnesses espouse an Arian-like Christology by denying the eternity of the Son and the doctrine of the Trinity. They, like Arius, see the *Logos* as an intermediate being between the Creator and creation.

Christology

The Trinitarian controversy was clearly a Christological controversy. The discussion involved not only the true deity and genuine humanity of Christ, but also the relationship of His two

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natures. The pendulum swung back and forth: the Docetists denied Jesus' humanity; the Ebionites denied His deity; the Arians "reduced" His deity, while the Apollinarians "reduced" His humanity; the Nestorians denied the union of the two natures, while the Eutychians emphasized only one nature. The details of each controversy are discussed below.

I. The Person of Christ.

A. Docetism.

Docetism, which flourished from about A.D. 70 to about A.D. 170, was the first Christological heresy. Incorporating the fundamental Gnostic concept that the body, like all matter, is evil, this movement (both Marcion and the Gnostics) taught that Jesus only "seemed" or "appeared" to be a man. The term "Docetism" was derived from the Greek verb *dokein*, meaning "to think or suppose" and also "to seem or appear." According to this view, Jesus was God masquerading in human form. Such a view indeed reflects the strength of the doctrine of Jesus Christ during the time Docetism flourished.

The Apostle John refers to this false teaching in I John 4:1-3. This heresy undermines not only the reality of the Incarnation but also the validity of the Atonement and bodily resurrection.²

B. Ebionism.

In the second century this heresy denied the deity of Christ, considering Jesus to be the natural son of Joseph and Mary but elected to be Son of God at His baptism when He was united with the eternal Christ.

C. Arianism.

Arianism, discussed already above, was a heresy that denied the eternality of Jesus as the *Logos*. Arius reasoned that since Jesus was begotten, he must have had a beginning. Arians held that the divine nature of Christ was similar to God, *homoiousian*, but not the same, *homoousian*. The Council of Nicea condemned this teaching in A.D. 325, affirming that Jesus had the same nature as God.

D. Apollinarianism.

Apollinarius, the Younger (died about 390), sought to avoid undue separation of the natures of Christ. He opposed Arianism, so he taught an opposite extreme. He taught that Christ had a human body and a human soul, but that He had the divine *Logos* instead of a human spirit (this assumes a trichotomous view of man).

²Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp. 141, 147, 197-98. 463.

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This *Logos* dominated the passive human body and soul. This was an error affecting the humanity of Christ.

According to the traditional interpretation of the teaching of Apollinaris, he was a trichotomist who held that Christ had a human body and a human (animal) soul but not a human spirit. This was, therefore, as stated above, a denial of the full humanity of Jesus. On the other hand, Kelly, for whom the question as to whether Apollinaris was a trichotomist cannot be definitely answered and hence is of secondary importance, has understood that he held to an extreme form of the Word-flesh Christology.³

Undisputed is the fact that Apollinaris believed the spirit of man was the seat of sin; therefore, to remove any possibility of sin from Christ, Apollinaris felt he had to deny the humanity of Jesus' spirit. The problem with Apollinaris' view was that while retaining the deity of Christ, he denied the genuine humanity of Christ. In Apollinaris' teaching Jesus was less than man. In seeking unity of the person of Christ, Apollinaris denied Jesus' humanity. Apollinaris was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381.

E. Nestorianism.

Nestorius disliked the Chalcedon statement describing Mary as "mother of God" (*theotokos*, meaning "God-bearer" or "mother of God"). Although the statement also affirmed "as to his humanity," Nestorius resisted this statement that led to the worship of Mary. He was willing to accept the term *Christotokos*, or "Christ-bearer." He was trying to resist the ideas that the Godhead itself was born of a woman and that Jesus' humanity was not real manhood like ours. Instead of acknowledging two natures in one Person concerning Christ, Nestorius "denied the real union between the divine and the human natures in Christ . . . (and) virtually held to two natures and two persons."⁴

Nestorianism divided Christ into two Persons (though it is disputed whether or not Nestorius himself clearly taught this). He explained that Jesus Christ was the *prosopon* (form or appearance) of the union of two natures. The humanity had the form of Godhead bestowed on it, and the Deity took upon itself the form of a servant, the result being the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus in this view the two natures were separated, resulting in two Persons. Nestorius taught that while Christ suffered in His humanity, His deity was uninvolved (which was also the view of John of Damascus). The teaching was a denial of a real incarnation;

³Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp. 290-95.

⁴A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), p. 671.

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instead of affirming Christ as God-man, He was viewed as two persons, God and man, with no union between them. Nestorius believed that because Mary was the only source of Jesus' humanity, He must be two distinct persons.

In seeking to defend Christ's deity against Arianism and to resist Mariolotry, he ultimately denied the unity of Christ. The teaching was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431.

F. Eutychianism.

Eutyches (cs. 378-454), a monk in Constantinople, reacted against Nestorianism and taught that there was only one nature in Christ. This error is also known as *monophysitism*. For him presumably the Lord's humanity was totally absorbed by his deity; for he held to only one nature after the incarnation and denied that Christ's humanity was consubstantial with ours. The divine nature was not fully divine, nor was the human nature genuinely human, and the result was a mixed single nature. Kelly's final verdict was that Eutyches was not a Docetist or an Apollinarian but "a confused and unskilled thinker."⁵

The result of the Eutychian teaching was that Christ was neither human nor divine; Eutychians created a new third nature. In their teaching, Christ had only one nature that was neither human nor divine. This view was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but the view continued in the Coptic church in Egypt.

The *Council of Chalcedon* (451) rejected the Christological errors of the preceding century and a half and affirmed "our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body, co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, and co-essential with us according to the Manhood . . . to be acknowledged in two natures. . . ."⁶

A similar error developed after Chalcedon which taught that Christ had only one will though conceding verbally that He had two natures. It is called monothelitism. Dyothelites, who hold to two wills and two energies, ultimately prevailed over the Monothelites, who defended one will and one energy, at the Council of Constantinople III. Monothelitism was condemned at this third Council of Constantinople in 680.

⁵Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp. 331-33.

⁶Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 2:62.

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N. B. A study of errors should help clarify the truth and make us more careful how we express it. Semantics are very important in the statements of theology.

G. Medieval West

The Symbol of Chalcedon with its two-nature doctrine continued to be acknowledged formally, and monks such as Bernard of Clairvaux had a great attachment to the humanity of Jesus. But the Christology of an impersonal humanity of Christ was radically affirmed by Peter Lombard and retained by Thomas Aquinas, whose Christology Mackintosh has labeled as “Monophysite.” Moreover, as the intercession of Mary and the saints was increasingly sought, Jesus became remote or was removed to the realm of deity alone.⁷ The art of the period majored on themes as the Madonna and the Child and the crucified Christ but depicted little of Jesus’ public ministry.⁸

H. Reformation Christology

Sydney Cave concluded that, whereas Calvin taught the two-nature doctrine of Chalcedon with an Antiochene emphasis, giving special attention to Jesus’ humanity, Luther, though also teaching that Jesus was human, leaned more definitely to the Alexandrian emphasis on the one divine-human Christ.⁹ Paul Althaus, in interpreting Luther’s Christology, has stressed Luther’s acceptance of the ancient dogmas, his teaching that Jesus “is true God” who brought salvation, his teaching of his humanity, and his teaching the two-nature doctrine, a kind of Christology “from below,” and the Word’s self-emptying. Only one element in Althaus’ analysis offers support of Cave, namely, that Luther taught the “impersonality of the human nature of Christ.”¹⁰ Care must be taken lest too much of a Christological distinction be made between these two Reformers. Thus, one may conclude:

1. Calvin (and Zwingli) followed the orthodox view of Christ – He is one

⁷H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, International Theological Library (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1916), pp. 217-18.

⁸See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through The Centuries* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 83-132.

⁹*The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925), pp. 151-52.

¹⁰*The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 179-95.

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Person with two distinct natures, with no intermingling of the two natures.

2. Luther took a different view. He held to a real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, teaching that the human nature of Christ takes on certain attributes of the divine nature, such as omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. The problem with this view is that it fails to maintain a proper distinction of the two natures of Christ.

I. Radical Reformers

Certain of the Radical Reformers developed and defended a doctrine of the "celestial flesh" of Christ, which, to their opponents, seemed to be a resurgence of monophysite teaching.

1. Clement Ziegler (?-c. 1533) differentiated a preexistent body of Christ from a fleshly body that He took from Mary. For others Christ owed even less to Mary.
2. Caspar Schwenckfeld (1489-1561) held that Christ had two natures but the human nature was "uncreaturely" and hardly distinguishable from his divine nature, though it did come from the Virgin Mary.
3. Malchoir Hofmann (c. 1495-c. 1543) taught that the body of Jesus Christ was entirely from heaven and took nothing from Mary, like water flowing through a pipe. He became flesh but did not take on flesh, and He had only one nature.
4. Michael Servetus taught that the divine body that came from heaven was consubstantial with the Father.
5. Menno Simons did allow that Jesus was nourished by Mary while in the womb, but there were not two natures and he was no earthly man.¹¹

J. Kenoticism

In nineteenth-century German Lutheranism a new Christological movement arose because Lutheran orthodoxy was seen as having failed to magnify the self-emptying of the Word or Son and having neglected the humanity of Jesus, and because there had been dissatisfaction with the Calvinist doctrine of two natures. The new school built its theory on Paul's use of *ekenosen*, "he emptied himself" in Phil 2:7a. Gottfried Thomasius (1802-75) of Erlangen taught that Jesus

¹¹Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, pp. 325-37, 394-96.

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surrendered His relative attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence) but retained His immanent attributes (holiness, truth, love, etc.). Wolfgang Friedrich Gess (1819-91) took the theory to its extreme by asserting that Jesus surrendered both kinds of attributes and that in the incarnation He “reduces Himself to the germ of a human soul,” though subsequently as a human being He regained His identity with the Word.¹²

Kenoticism did give emphasis to a self-giving in the incarnation that was designed to demonstrate the genuine humanity of the incarnate Word as well as to show the glories of His preexistent state. But, on the other hand, it has been criticized for contravening the immutability of God,¹³ for teaching a “temporary theophany” instead of the incarnation,¹⁴ and for denying a genuine simultaneous union of the divine and the human in Jesus.¹⁵

K. The Enlightenment and Deism

The eighteenth-century enlightenment fathered the modern idea of Jesus’ being primarily an ethical teacher. Such a view is not altogether distinguishable from Romanticism’s idea of Jesus as a religious genius. According to these perspectives, the uniqueness of Jesus lay in the quality of His teaching rather than in the saving value of His death or in the identity of His person. It was thought that the teaching of Jesus could be, to a considerable extent, separated or extracted from orthodoxy’s claims concerning the person of Jesus Christ and His atoning or saving death. Likewise, the distance or difference between Jesus and other human beings was only one of degree, not kind.

The new and growing discipline of comparative religion seized on this concept of Jesus as ethical teacher as the basis for the comparison of Christianity with other major world religions. Such comparisons often had in view minimizing the uniqueness of Christianity by finding common strands in the ethics of Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, and others.

For the Deists Jesus became only one expositor of eternal, timeless, universal

¹²Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 264-69.

¹³Mackintosh, p. 270.

¹⁴Donald Baillie, *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948), pp. 96-97.

¹⁵Baillie, pp. 97-98.

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truths; at best He was a teacher of natural religion.¹⁶

L. “Jesus of History” School and Ritschlians

The “Jesus of history” school, by opting for a return to the so-called “historical Jesus” and by engaging in the writing of lives of Jesus, served to stress the humanity of Jesus, but often in a context in which Jesus was viewed as little more than an ethical teacher.¹⁷ Students of Albrecht Ritschl carried this historical emphasis to an obscuring or a denial of the transcendent elements in Christology, that is, preexistence,¹⁸ ascension, the Trinity, and the like, while reckoning Jesus as having “*the religious value of God.*”¹⁹ Yet the “Jesus of history” movement did help to put an end to Docetism, at least of an avowed type.

For the Ritschlian school also Jesus was viewed as ethical teacher but much more in relation to His vocation as founder and proclaimer of the kingdom of God. Therein Jesus was more distinctive than in the Enlightenment or Deism, and yet the Ritschlians failed to affirm the more transcendent aspects of Christology.

In view of modern efforts to identify the central role of Jesus as ethical teacher, religious genius, and/or expositor of timeless truths, Jesus’ teaching role must be clearly related to other titles and functions, including the incarnate Word and the eternal Son of God.

M. Form Criticism

The Form Critics of the NT have accepted the humanity of Jesus but often have

¹⁶See, for example, *Jefferson’s Extracts from the Gospels: “The Philosophy of Jesus” and “The Life and Morals of Jesus,”* ed. Dickinson W. Adams, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 2nd ser. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

¹⁷Baillie, pp. 30-34, 39-53.

¹⁸During the latter nineteenth century several rejections of or alternatives to the eternal personal preexistence of Jesus Christ were formulated in German Protestantism. Albrecht Ritschl, turning away from transcendence to perceived religious values, seemed not to allow for such personal preexistence as would be essential to the Son’s self-giving love. Adolf Harnack traced the idea to the concept of the preexistence of the Messiah in Jewish apocalypses and reckoned the apostolic use of the concept to be syncretistic, but other scholars were finding evidence only for pre-Christian belief in the pre-existence of the Messiah’s *name*. See Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 450-56.

¹⁹Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, pp. 278-81.

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had little interest in its actual concrete manifestation, for they have been inclined to think that “the real historical Jesus is beyond recapture.”²⁰

N. Neoorthodoxy

Although Karl Barth did not avow any denial of the humanity of Jesus, he has been criticized for downplaying it. According to Donald M. Baillie (1887-1954), the Neoorthodoxy reaction against the “Jesus of history” movement led to a “theology of the Word of God” or “Logotheism” rather than to a “theology of the Word-made-flesh.”²¹ Yet Barth taught that the Logos assumed “fallen human nature,” while also teaching that Jesus was sinless. Barth had a doctrine of the “divine incognito” that surely had implications for Jesus’ humanity, and Emil Brunner, according to Baillie, set no limits on “the completely human character of our Lord’s experience.”²²

II. The Self-emptying of Christ.

A. The origin of the concept.

The question of Christ’s self-emptying or *kenosis* (from the verb in Phil. 2:7) has been discussed throughout church history. The Synod of Antioch in 341 said that Christ emptied Himself of “the being equal with God” while clearly defending the full deity of Christ. During the Reformation the discussion centered on the possibility of Christ emptying Himself of the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence without affecting essential Deity. In the seventeenth century some boldly asserted that Christ was actually less than divine. But the nineteenth century brought an almost new form of Christology with the appearance and spread of many false ideas of the *kenosis*. This was due to the fact that that century saw the rise of many new scientific theories like evolution and radical criticism. It also brought an emphasis on the rediscovery of the “real” humanity of Jesus and with it the magnitude of His self-denial and self-emptying.

Of course, there is a true statement of *kenosis* since it is taught in Philippians 2:7, and a statement which does not contradict other truths which the Scriptures reveal about the Lord. Actually the Bible does not elaborate a doctrine of *kenosis*, though basic elements usable in forming a true statement are revealed. To put this all together and to avoid heresy is the task of this chapter.

²⁰Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, pp. 54-55.

²¹Baillie, pp. 53-54.

²²Baillie, pp. 16-19.

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B. The true meaning of the concept.

1. The central passage.

The central passage on the *kenosis*, Philippians 2:5-11, begins with an exhortation to humility of mind, following the example of Christ who left glory to suffer on the cross. Then follows this concise statement about the preincarnate and incarnate Christ.

a. The eternal existence of Christ (vs. 6).

This is clearly stated by the form *hyparchon* which in this present participle (especially as contrasted with the following aorists) declares Christ's indefinite continuance of being. There is in the choice of this word (in contrast to *eimi*) a suggestion of being already (as in Acts 7:55), thus underscoring the eternality of His existence. That indefinite existence was in the *morphe* of God, the essential form including the whole nature and essence of Deity. If "form of God" implies anything less than fully God, then "form of a bondservant" in Philippians 2:7 would have to mean that on earth Christ was something less than a servant. But the full reality of His being a Servant is the point of the passage. Likewise, the full reality of His deity is the point of "form of God" in verse 6.

J. B. Lightfoot, after a detailed study of *morphe* in Greek philosophy, in Philo, and in the New Testament, concludes that it connotes that which is intrinsic and essential to the thing. Thus here it means that our Lord in His preincarnate state possessed essential Deity (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* [London: Macmillan, 1913], pp. 127-33).

Paul then reinforces Christ's deity by asserting that coequality with God was not something to be grasped, simply because He always had it. He did not cover it; He had no need to, for it was His eternally. Nor did He exploit it; rather, he willingly emptied Himself.

b. The self-emptying (vs. 7-8).

Notice that whatever the emptying involved, it was self-imposed. No one forced Christ to come into this world and eventually die on a cross as our Sin-bearer. Other uses of the verb empty are found in Romans 4:14 (void); I Corinthians 1:17 (void); 9:15; II

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Corinthians 9:3: but they do not really contribute to the understanding of this passage.

Of what did this consist? Of all that was involved in His eventual death on the cross. This included taking the form (*morphe*) of a slave. Yet in this form He was no less at the same time in the form of God though His glory was veiled to most (but see John 1:14). To take the form of a slave He had to be human, something the next two phrases in Philippians 2:7-8 describe. He was made “in the likeness of men.” “Likeness” indicates two things: first that He was really like men, and second that He was different from men. His humanity subjected Him to trials and limitations; yet the word “likeness” guards against concluding that He was identical with men. He was different because He was sinless (see Rom. 8:3). Further, He was found in the appearance (*scheme*) of a man. This word refers to that which is outward; i.e., in actions, dress, manners, and all appearances He was man. Thus He humbled Himself and became obedient to death on a cross, the epitome of shame.

The movement of the passage starts with Christ’s preincarnate glory and proceeds to His shameful death on the cross. Obviously, in order to die, He had to become man. In order to do that He had to empty Himself of His preincarnate position, yet without diminishing the Person. There was no way He could become a man and remain in the position He had in His preincarnate state. But He could and did become a man while retaining the complete attributes of His preincarnate Person, that is, of full Deity.

The self-emptying permitted the addition of humanity and did not involve in any way the subtraction of Deity or the use of the attributes of Deity. There was a change of form but not of content of the Divine Being. He did not give up Deity or the use of those attributes; He added humanity. And this in order to be able to die. Isaiah put it this way: “He poured out Himself to death” (53:12).

It seems that even evangelicals blunt the point of the passage by missing its principal emphasis as suggested above and focusing on trying to delineate what limitations Christ experienced in His earthly state. To be sure, the *God-Man* experienced limitations; but equally sure the *God-Man* evidenced the prerogatives of Deity. Therefore, conservatives suggest that the *kenosis* means the veiling of Christ’s preincarnate glory, which is true only in a relative sense (see Mt. 17:1-8; Jn. 1:14; 17:5). Or they suggest it means the

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voluntary nonuse of some of His attributes of Deity. This was true on occasion but certainly not always throughout His life (see 1:48; 2:24; 16:30). Neither did He only do His miracles always in the power of the Spirit, but sometimes in His own power (Lk. 22:51; Jn. 18:6). So if our understanding of *kenosis* comes from Philippians 2, we should get our definition of the concept there. And that passage does not discuss at all the question of how or how much Christ's glory was veiled. Nor does it say anything about the use or restriction of divine attributes. It does say that the emptying concerned becoming a man to be able to die. Thus the *kenosis* means leaving His preincarnate position and taking on a servant-humanity.

2. A definition.

In the *kenosis* Christ emptied Himself of retaining and exploiting His status in the Godhead and took on humanity in order to die.

C. The wrong meaning of the concept.

1. Christ surrendered some or all of His attributes.

There is the misconception that Christ actually gave up His attributes of deity or at least His relative attributes (omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience). This is theologically impossible and Biblically false. If Christ surrendered any attribute, He ceased to be God during His early life (negating John 10:30).

2. Christ appeared as a man by disguising His deity.

This is a denial that Christ was fully God and fully man. (In addition, how would one reconcile John 14:9?)

Summary of Philippians 2:6-8

I. The passage has but one subject throughout, Jesus Christ (Phil 2:6-8).

A. He was the preexistent *Logos* (Phil 2:6-7) and He was the incarnate *Logos* (Phil 2:8); He functioned in two realms in two ways.

1. There are two assertions concerning His eternal nature.

a. He existed and still exists genuinely God.

b. He is fully equal in the Godhead.

2. There are two assertions of personal choice; He emptied Himself and He

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humbled Himself.

- a. He came to function as the Messiah-Servant, doing so by an existence as a true man.
- b. In His substitutionary work He functioned solely as a man, fulfilling all righteousness even unto death.

- B. Textual indications of change from speaking of the preexisting state to speaking of the incarnate state.
1. The direct contrast, form of God (Phil 2:6), form of a servant (Phil 2:7).
 2. The participles, taking, becoming (Phil 2:7), being found (Phil 2:8).

II. Concerning His equality with God.

- A. The glory of the Godhead was not something to be forcibly retained, held on to (Phil 2:6).
1. It could be voluntarily set aside such that it was not independently, directly employed.
 2. The reality of the divine nature was unaffected by voluntary non-display of the form of God; He remained true God.
- B. His eternal existence (a continuous imperfect) as God still continued when He was a servant, when He was subordinate as a man.
1. The "form of God" underwent no change; eternal immutability is changeless.
 2. Assigned divine activity continued; Jesus upheld the very earth on which He walked.
- C. He did not independently employ His glory during the incarnation; any manifestations were directed by Another.
1. He only divested Himself of the privilege of manifesting the glory, of the independent exercise of His powers and prerogatives.
 - a. He was frequently directed to show publicly supernatural power and knowledge.
 - b. When He did manifest deity, it was His Own nature displayed, not an accompanying power (as with the O T prophets).
 2. His purpose was to become man (true God and true man), truly live a human life, and finally to die.

III. Concerning His attitude as a servant (presented by Paul as an Example: let this mind be in you, Phil 2:5).

- A. He was truly man, but without sin; remaining God as well as man; He chose to employ exactly the same powers we have.

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- B. He was humble and obedient; He was a supreme Example for all men.
1. The action of self-subordination was expressed by two action verbs, He emptied Himself (Phil 2:7), He humbled Himself (Phil 2:8).
 2. The action of emptying included (1) taking the form of a servant and (2) being made in the likeness of men (modal participles, Phil 2:7).
 3. There were two humbling modalities, being found in fashion as a man and becoming obedient unto death (participles, Phil 2:8).
- C. He was fully, approvingly obedient, even unto death; a "mind," attitude and actions.
1. Paul's emphasis was on His willing submission to the task assigned by the Father, on loyalty (not on cringing acquiescence).
 2. Jesus did not need to die for any sin of His own; He willingly died, the just for the unjust (2 Cor 5:21).
 3. In His death He suffered the wrath of God which our sin deserves, an infinite separation.
 4. He physically died on the cross and was physically buried (form of man).

Conclusion: Man can conceive of no greater Example than God has provided.

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EARTHLY LIFE OF CHRIST

Introduction

The earthly life of Christ is important in the study of Christology inasmuch as it authenticates Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. The gospel writers demonstrate that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies throughout His life. Matthew, for example, has 129 references to the Old Testament. Many of these are quoted with an introductory formula such as, “that it might be fulfilled, saying” (cf. Mt. 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17, 23, etc.). Each of the gospel writers wrote for a different audience, but all wrote as an apologetic concerning Christ and His claims. All the gospel writers emphasize the authenticity of His claims as Messiah.

Words of Christ

The teaching of Christ was important in authenticating His claims of Messiahship, hence, the gospel writers give considerable space to the actual word or teachings of Christ. Clearly, the gospel writers have a decided emphasis on the actual spoken words of Christ. Matthew emphasizes the words of Christ more than the other writers. In his gospel, Matthew records several major discourses of Christ. Matthew 5-7 records the Sermon on the Mount, which reveals the authority of Christ in His teaching. Throughout the discourse statements such as, “you have heard . . . but I say to you” occur and reflect Christ’s authority. He taught contrary to tradition and the rabbis; moreover, He quoted no other teachers (as Israel’s teachers customarily did); He was the authority within Himself. When the discourse ended the people were amazed at the authority in His teaching; He was most unlike their scribes.

Christ’s omniscience was also reflected in His teaching, as in the parables of the kingdom (Mt. 13), in which He traced the course of this age, and in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24-25), as He revealed the cataclysmic events that would occur in the Tribulation. In the upper room discourse (Jn. 14-16) Jesus instructed His disciples, teaching them important new truth concerning the Holy Spirit’s ministry. In so doing, Jesus was preparing the disciples for His departure.

Additionally, the four gospels contain many discourses and parables reflecting the authority of Christ in His teaching. The teaching of Christ authenticated His claims as Messiah; He indicated the words He taught were from the Father who had sent Him (Jn. 12:49) and that He had come forth from the Father (Jn. 6:63, 68); they reflected the wisdom of God (Mt. 13:54); even unbelievers were astonished at the wisdom and power in His teaching (Mk. 6:2; Lk. 4:22). The words of Christ were important in verifying the claims He made.

Works of Christ

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Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and healing to the lame (Is. 29:18; 32:3; 35:5-6; cf. also Zeph. 3:19). When John’s disciples came to inquire of Jesus. He reminded them of these prophecies and applied them to Himself (Mt. 11:4-5). The miracles that Jesus performed were attestations to His deity and Messiahship; He performed the works of God in their midst. When the miracles are studied this truth becomes evident.

JESUS’ WORKS OF GOD	
Work of Jesus	Work of God
Stilling the storm (Mt. 8:23-27)	Psalm 107:29
Healing he blind (Jn. 9:1-7)	Psalm 146:8
Forgiving sin (Mt. 9:2)	Isaiah 43:25; 44:22
Raising the dead (Mt. 9:25)	Psalm 49:15
Feeding the 5,000 (Mt. 14:15-21)	Joel 2:22-24

Many of the miracles that Christ performed anticipated His messianic, millennial kingdom.

MILLENNIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST’S MIRACLES		
Miracle	Millennial Significance	Prophecy
Water to wine (Jn. 2:1-11)	Joy, gladness	Isaiah 9:3; 4; 12:3-6

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The 5,000 fed (Mt. 14:15-21)	Prosperity, abundance	Isaiah 30:23-24- 35:1-7
Walks on water (Mt. 14:26)	Environment change	Isaiah 30; 41
Catch of fish (Lk. 5:1-11)	Abundance; authority over animal world	Isaiah 11:6-8
Storm stilled (Mt. 8:23-27)	Control of elements	Isaiah 11:9; 65:25
The blind healed (Mt. 9:27-31)	No physical or spiritual blindness	Isaiah 35:5
Raising the dead (Mt. 9:18-26)	Longevity; no death for believer	Isaiah 65:20

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When John wrote his gospel he selected seven pre-resurrection miracles that demonstrated Christ's authority in different realms. Christ performed many more miracles but those seven were representative in reflecting Christ's authority over every realm of mankind.

Jesus' witness to the nation concerned His words and His works – His teaching and His miracles. Both were attestations of His deity and Messiahship, hence, Jesus reminded John's disciples, "Go and report to John the things which you hear and see" (Mt. 11:4).

Rejection of Christ

Jesus came as Israel's Messiah and bore witness to His Messiahship through His words and His works. The gospel writers wrote their accounts of the life of Christ from a thematic viewpoint. This is particularly reflected in Matthew's gospel. In chapters 5-7 Matthew relates the teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount and demonstrates His Messiahship through His teaching (Mt. 7:28-29); in chapters 8-10 Christ performed miracles over various realms as an authentication through His works. As a result, the nation was given the witness by Messiah through His words and His works. It was now incumbent on the nation to respond to the Messiah, and the religious leaders were the ones to lead the people in acknowledging the Messiah. In Matthew 12 the issue came to a climax as the religious leaders drew their conclusion: "This man casts our demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of demons" (Mt. 12:24). They acknowledged that Christ performed miracles but concluded that He performed them through the power of Satan. The nation rejected her Messiah. As a result the kingdom that Christ offered would not be inaugurated at His first coming but would be held in abeyance until His Second Advent. Jesus then instructed His disciples concerning the interim age that would take place between His first and second comings (Mt. 13:1-52).

Death of Christ

(To be discussed under Soteriology)

Resurrection of Christ

- I. Importance.
 - A. The resurrection determines the validity of the Christian faith. Paul exclaimed, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17).
 - B. It was the guarantee of the Father's acceptance of the Son's work. The resurrection indicated that the work of the cross was completed. Christ prayed that the cup would pass from Him (Mt. 26:39); it was a prayer not for the

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avoidance of the cross but for death to issue in life through the resurrection (Ps. 16:10). The Father heard the prayer (Heb. 5:7) and raised the Son from the dead, indicating His acceptance of Christ's work.

- C. It was essential in the program of God. Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit as a Helper for the disciples (Jn. 16:7), but the Holy Spirit could only come to them if Christ would depart (necessitating the resurrection).
- D. It fulfilled the prophecies concerning His resurrection. David prophesied of Christ's resurrection (Ps. 16:10); Peter indicated the resurrection of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 16:10. Christ Himself predicted not only His death but also His resurrection (Mt. 16:21; Mk. 14:28).

II. Proofs.

- A. The empty tomb. Either Christ was resurrected or someone stole the body. If opponents took the body why did they not simply produce it later? The disciples could not have stolen the body because Roman soldiers were guarding the tomb and had placed the Roman seal on the tomb. The empty tomb was an obvious proof of the resurrection.
- B. The shape of the linen wrappings. When John entered the tomb "he saw and believed" (Jn. 20:8). John saw the linen wrappings that still retained the shape of the body and the headpiece "rolled up in a place by itself" (Jn. 20:7; cf. 11:44). John knew no one could have taken the body out of the wrappings and replaced the wrappings to retain the shape of a body. There was only one explanation: the body of Jesus had passed through the linen wrappings.
- C. The resurrection appearances. The resurrected Lord was seen by many people in the forty days that followed. Among them were the faithful women at the tomb, the two on the Emmaus road, Peter, the Twelve, five hundred believers at one time, James, the apostles, and Paul (Mt. 28:1-10; Lk. 24:13-35; I Cor. 15:5-8). Those witnesses were an important testimony to the veracity of the resurrection. Post-ascension appearances of the Lord Jesus to Paul and John are recorded in Acts and Revelation.
- D. The transformed disciples. The disciples knew Christ had died and were skeptical at first concerning His resurrection, but when they saw Him they were completely changed. The Peter of Acts 2 is quite different from the Peter of John 19. Knowledge of the resurrection made the difference.
- E. Observance of the first day of the week. The disciples immediately began to meet together in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection (Jn. 20:26; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

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- F. Existence of the church. The existence of the church is dependent on the fact of the resurrection. The early church grew through the preaching of the doctrine (Acts 2:24-32; 3:15; 4:2).

Ascension of Christ

I. Facts of the ascension.

The ascension of Christ is described in Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51, and Acts 1:9. It is also mentioned in Acts 2:33, where Peter indicates the evidence of Christ's ascension is the fact that He sent forth the Holy Spirit, who was witnessed by so many on the day of Pentecost. Peter further emphasizes that Christ's ascension was in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1 where the Lord said, "Sit at My right hand." Paul emphasizes the same truth in Ephesians 4:8, where he indicates Christ "ascended on high . . . and He gave gifts to men." The book of Hebrews encourages believers to draw near to the throne of grace with confidence because "we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (Hb. 4:14). Peter indicates the believer is saved through an appeal to the risen, ascended Lord (I Pt. 3:22).

II. Significance of the ascension.

- A. It ended the earthly ministry of Christ. It marked the end of the period of self-limitation during the days of His sojourn on earth.
- B. It ended the period of His humiliation. His glory was no longer veiled following the ascension (Jn. 17:5; Acts 9:3, 5). Christ is now exalted and enthroned in heaven.
- C. It marks the first entrance of resurrection humanity into heaven and the beginning of a new work in heaven (Heb. 4:14-16; 6:20). A representative of the human race in a resurrected, glorified body is the Christian's intercessor.
- D. It made the descent of the Holy Spirit possible (Jn. 16:7). It was necessary for Christ to ascend to heaven in order that He could send the Holy Spirit.

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TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

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 (Ja. 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.

Impeccability

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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 but 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 (Ja. 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 Shedd²³ 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

²³Perhaps the most capable and thorough discussion of this view is by Wm. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3 vols. (Reprint. Nashville: Nelson, 1980), 2:330-49.

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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.

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THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

He is a Prophet

God spoke through the prophets to mankind. The office of prophet was established in Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and also looked forward to its ultimate fulfillment in Christ (cf. Acts 3:22-23). No singular prophet completely revealed the will of the Father except Jesus Christ. When Christ came He completely revealed the Father to the people; He explained the Father to the people (Jn. 1:18).

He is a Priest

Whereas the prophet revealed God to man, the priest represented man to God. Psalm 110:4 establishes Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Heb. 5:6-10; 6:20; 7:11,17). As a priest: (1) Christ continually represents the believer because He lives forever (Heb. 7:24); (2) Christ completely saves the believer because His intercession never ceases (Heb. 7:25); (3) Christ has no personal sins to impede His work as priest (Heb. 7:27); (4) Christ finished His priestly work by one offering (Heb. 10:12).

He is King

Genesis 49:10 (see earlier discussion) prophesied that Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah and reign as king. Second Samuel 7:16 indicated Messiah would have a dynasty, a people over whom He would rule, and an eternal throne. In Psalm 2:6 God the Father announced the installation of His Son as King in Jerusalem. Psalm 110 indicates that Messiah would subjugate His enemies and rule over them (cf. Is. 9:6-7; Dan. 7:13-14; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9; Mt. 22:41-46; 25:31; Lk. 1:31-33; Rev. 1:5; 19:16).

These three offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King are the key to the purpose of the incarnation. His prophetic office was involved with the revealing of God's message; the priestly office was related to His saving and intercessory work; His kingly office gave Him the right to reign over Israel and the entire earth. All the divine intention of these three historic offices was perfectly culminated in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Three Offices of Christ Explained

- I. The O T offices of prophet, priest, and king prepared for appreciating these three aspects of Christ's Messianic, substitutionary work.
 - A. They were divinely designed prefigurations of Christ's person and work.
 1. They were eternally designed by the Creator, not invented by human

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- 2. culture or by later interpreters.
 - 2. As types, they had didactic significance for contemporaries and predictive preparation for fulfillment; they enable believers to comprehend more clearly.
 - B. Each alone or all three combined provide but imperfect and partial teaching of the perfect work of Jesus.
 - 1. The O T likenesses fall far short of the NT fulfillment.
 - 2. The divine work accomplished can be only vaguely comprehended by human comparisons.
 - C. Like marriage (Eph 5:31-32), human offices and relationships were divinely designed to teach spiritual truths.
- II. In the fulfillment by Christ, these were not three separate functions.
- A. The three offices identify distinct, yet interdependent aspects of His one total work.
 - 1. They do not identify the honor of position, office, or title, but actual function, endeavor, accomplishment.
 - 2. They do not identify separate functions but aspects of the one redeeming work of the incarnate Son (as brain, heart, lungs of the human body).
 - B. Each one implies and incorporates the other two.
 - 1. He is a prophetic priest-king.
 - 2. He is a priestly prophet-king.
 - 3. He is a royal prophet-priest.
 - C. In the O T theocracy these three offices were usually kept separate.
 - 1. David was primarily a king; he also composed psalms, one function of a prophet.
 - 2. Isaiah, Jeremiah, others were prophets of God to kings but did not rule.
 - 3. Samuel was prophet, priest, and judge.
 - 4. Melchizedek was both priest and king.
 - D. The predicted Messiah would be:
 - 1. A prophet like unto Moses (Deut 18:15).
 - 2. Ruler of the line of David (Matt 22:42-45).
 - 3. A priest upon His throne (Zech 6:13).
 - 4. A priest-king after the order of Melchizedek (Psa 110:4; Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:21).
- Conclusion: God's historical preparation for sending His Son was ages-long.

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Christ as Prophet

Que: How did Christ function as the supreme prophet?
Intro: He spoke for (*pro*) God; He spoke as God.

I. The nature of His prophetic work.

- A. He was the fullest possible, supreme revelation of the nature of God (Heb 1:1-3).
 - 1. His life, acts, words, all revealed God (John 14:9).
 - 2. Similar to most O T prophets, He was forteller, forthteller and foreteller.
 - a. For = in the stead of, an official spokesman, one speaking in the place of another; human prophets functioned as a mouthpiece for God.
 - b. Forth = public proclamation, heralding, announcing; prophets spoke prominently, vocally.
 - c. Fore = ahead of, prior to, predictions.
 - 3. Not all prophets foretold the future; predictive prophecy was not the main message of any prophet.
 - a. Abraham (Gen 20:7), patriarchs (Psa 105:15), John the Baptist (Matt 11:9) were called prophets.
 - b. N T proclaimers were preachers (Acts 21:9; Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10, 28; 14:3, 5-6, 24, 29, 31, 37, 39; Eph 2:20; 3:5).
- B. Scripture sets forth three methods whereby Christ fulfilled His office as a prophet during His public ministry.
 - 1. By teaching (Matt 5:3-7:29).
 - 2. By predicting (John 2:19-21; Matt 16:21).
 - 3. By performing confirming miracles (John 6:11-14).
- C. Christ called Himself prophet (Matt 13:57; Luke 13:33; John 3:2, 12; 8:26; 17:8).
- D. He was called a prophet by others (Matt 21:11, 46; Luke 24:19; John 6:14; 7:40; 9:17; Acts 3:22-23 from Deut 18:15).

II. The five stages of Christ's prophetic work.

- A. Teaching by pre-incarnate Christophanies (1 Pet 1:11).
 - 1. This work of direct communication was only within special revelation, not in other religions or philosophies.
 - 2. These were part of the O T preparation (Gen 18:26; Dan 3:25).
- B. His earthly incarnate ministry (Heb 1:1-3).
 - 1. He Himself was the Word (John 1:1).
 - 2. He acted in His own name; in Acts the apostles acted in His name.
 - 3. He was the prophet like Moses (Deut 18:15; Acts 3:22).
 - 4. He was directed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:34).
 - 5. He conveyed the words of God the Father (John 14:24; 17:8, 14).
 - 6. He was able personally to speak of God and heaven (John 1:18; 3:13; 8:58).

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7. He was a living as well as a spoken message (John 14:9).
- C. His continuing teaching ministry throughout the church age (Matt 28:20).
 1. He instructs directly through His *alter ego*, the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:12-14).
 2. He is continuing to do and to teach (Acts 1:1; cf. Acts 9:4).
 3. He is present with believers through the age (Matt 28:18-20; 2 Cor 5:20).
 4. He is in the believer (John 14:20; Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:17); an active indwelling teaching presence.
- D. His personal instruction during the millennium (1 John 3:2).
 1. He will be providing personal interpretation of the Bible and additional information.
 2. He will be personally directing government, guiding subordinates, rendering decisions of justice.
- E. His unending communication throughout eternity.
 1. There will be final fulfillment of all that has been partial and typical.
 2. We will be with Him; we will see Him; we will never learn all about Him.

The Intercessory Work of Christ as Priest

- I. The priesthood of Christ as intercessor continues forever.
 - A. He abides forever, the ascended God-man (Heb 7:23-25; Rom 8:33-34).
 - B. He can function fully (Heb 7:25); there are no limitations of time, nature, or kind of sin.
- II. Included in Christ's priesthood on behalf of believers.
 - A. The nature of His intercession for His own.
 1. It is real, a special activity.
 - a. His prayer is in the very presence of God, at the Throne of Grace.
 - b. He is making specific requests (Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
 2. It secures blessings of grace, protection, and provision.
 - B. The objects of His priestly prayers.
 1. In general, to secure temporal blessings for all men (Isa 53:12; Luke 23:34).
 2. To request special blessings for believers (John 17:9; Matt 18:19; Eph 2:18; 3:12).
 3. He has sympathetic concern (Heb 2:17-18; 4:15-16).
- III. The relation of the Holy Spirit to the Son and to us in prayer.
 - A. The Holy Spirit is an advocate within us (Rom 8:26-27), directing us in prayer.
 1. He asks for things we do not realize we need (Rom 8:26).
 2. He expresses needs which we fail to formulate in words or thoughts (Rom 8:26).

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3. He aids saints to accomplish the will of God (Rom 8:27).
- B. Christ is our advocate in heaven (Rom 8:34), pleading regarding our prayers.
 1. He is in a place of authority as co-regent.
 2. He is actively making requests for believers.
- C. The two complement each other; they are parts of one whole provision for us.
- D. The relation of this heavenly intercession to the prayers of believers.
 1. God gives the impulse within the believer.
 2. Christ is the sole mediator; we pray to God through Him (1 Pet 2:5).
 3. All participants in the priesthood of believers are one in their High Priest.

The Kingly Office of Christ

- I. The present exercise of the Lordship of Jesus pertains to three important relationships.
 - A. Jesus is reigning on high as Co-regent over the universe following His ascension.
 1. This exaltation was by divine appointment (Psa 2:6-8; 8:6; Luke 19:38; Heb 1:3, 8; 2:8-9).
 2. He is controlling and awaiting (Matt 28:18; 1 Cor 15:25; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:8-9; 1 Pet 3:21-22); the present waiting is part of God's plan.
 - B. Jesus rules by a spiritual Lordship over believers.
 1. There should be personal submission of each believer (Luke 2:11; John 18:36-37; Acts 9:6; 22:10; Rom 10:9).
 2. Each one is redeemed, bought with a price, and belongs to Him (1 Cor 6:20).
 3. Jesus is living in and through believers (2 Cor 4:10-11; Phil 1:21).
 - C. He is to be acknowledged as Lord of each church (Acts 1:24; Eph 1:22); Christ is the head of each body of believers (Col 1:18).
- II. Jesus will be the worldwide millennial ruler on this earth.
 - A. Predicted (Psa 2:8; 45:6-7; Isa 9:7; Matt 19:28; 25:31-32; Heb 1:8).
 - B. Described.
 1. Righteousness and holiness will prevail (Zech 14:20-21).
 2. His will be a rule of true justice (Isa 11:3-4; Jer 23:5).
 3. Truth will prevail (Zech 8:3).
 4. It will be a time of mercy and peace (Isa 16:5; 54:13).
- III. His kingdom rule will culminate in an eternal Lordship.
 - A. Every knee shall bow (Phil 2:9-11).
 - B. All will be subject unto the Father (1 Cor 15:27-28).

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PRESENT AND FUTURE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

Christ is Building His Church

I. Formation of the Body.

First Corinthians 12:13 indicates the Holy Spirit is forming the church, the Body of Christ; however, Christ as head of the church is guiding and controlling it. Acts 2:47 indicates Christ is the One who is producing the increase in the church. This is consistent with Acts 1:1 where Luke indicates that the gospel he wrote describes the work Jesus began to do, suggesting that His work continues today in building the church.

II. Direction of the Body.

Christ is not only head of the Body, but also head over it (Col. 1:18) in giving direction and sovereign rule (Eph. 5:23, 24). As the human head gives direction to the entire physical body, so Christ, as head of the church, gives direction to the church through the Word of God (Eph. 5:26).

III. Nurture of the Body.

As an individual nourishes the human body, so Jesus Christ is the source of nourishment to the church; He is the means to nourish it to maturity (Eph. 5:29, 30). Christ in His present work is bringing the Body to maturity.

IV. Cleansing of the Body.

Christ is involved in the cleansing of the Body. He is producing sanctification in the believer (Eph. 5:25-27). This denotes the progressive sanctification in which Christ is cleansing the church.

V. Giving gifts to the Body.

Christ is the source of the spiritual gifts; the Holy Spirit administers them (Eph. 4:8, 11-13). Gifts are given with the purpose that the whole church might be built up and increased in this manner. Ephesians 4:11-13 indicates the gifts are given that the Body of Christ, the church, might grow to maturity.

Christ is Praying for Believers

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I. Christ's intercession assures the security of our salvation.

The believer could lose his salvation only if Christ would be ineffective in His role as mediator (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). The intercession of Christ involves (1) His presence before the Father; (2) His spoken word (Lk. 22:32; Jn. 17:6-26); and (3) His continual intercession (note the present tense in the verbs).

II. Christ's intercession restores us to fellowship when that fellowship is broken through sin.

Christ is termed the believers' "Advocate" (Gk. *parakletos*), meaning "defense attorney" (I Jn. 2:1). "In rabbinical literature the word could indicate one who offers legal aid or one who intercedes on behalf of someone else. . . the word undoubtedly signified an 'advocate' or 'counsel for the defense' in a legal context."

III. Christ is preparing a heavenly abode for us (Jn. 14:1-3).

In glory Christ is preparing many dwelling places in the Father's house. The picture is that of a wealthy oriental father who adds additional rooms to his larger home in order to accommodate his married children. There is room for them all.

IV. Christ is producing fruit in the lives of believers (Jn. 15:1-7).

As a vine is rooted to the branch and draws life and nourishment from the branch to sustain life and produce fruit, so the believer is grafted into spiritual union with Christ to draw spiritual nourishment from Christ. Spiritual fruit will be the result.

Future work of Christ

The hope exhibited in the Scriptures is the ultimate restoration of all things under Messiah. In one phase His coming will fulfill the glorious hope for the church, an event of resurrection and reunion (I Cor. 15:51-58; I Thess. 4:13-18; Ti. 2:13); in another phase His coming will be a judgment on the unbelieving nations and Satan (Rev. 19:11-21), and will be a rescue of His people, Israel, and the inauguration of the millennial reign (Mic. 5:4; Zech. 9:10).