

BIBLICAL Christology – The Person of Christ (Part I)

I. Introduction

Last week we considered the problem of sin. For the next three weeks, we'll be considering and glorifying God's solution to the problem of sin, namely, the God-Man, Jesus Christ, the One who came into this world to save sinners. Biblical Christology consists of two main parts: it's the study of the Person and the Work of Christ. We must ask the questions: Who is Christ (His person)? And what has he done (His work)? Our hope and confidence depend on how we answer these crucial questions.

So tonight we're going to consider who Jesus Christ is in two parts: the deity of Christ and the humanity of Christ. And then in the weeks that follow we'll turn our attention to what Jesus has done for us and what he will do for us in and through His life, death, resurrection, ascension, heavenly session, and triumphant return.

Now, as we get started, I want to emphasize how important it is that we know our savior. The center of our faith and the source of our hope **isn't** a creed, an idea, an experience, a church, or a philosophy.

It's a person: Jesus the Messiah.

Knowing him isn't only the beginning of the Christian life – it's the whole Christian life. When we became believers in Christ we entered into a relationship with Jesus which means we began to know Jesus personally. Because of that, we see just how important and practical Christology is.

If we want to know Christ, if we want to build on this relationship he has started with us, we must understand what he has said about himself in the Word; what he has revealed to be true about who he is. And we are going to do just that.

As mentioned earlier, God's Word tells us that in the person of Christ there is this great mystery, that since the incarnation Jesus Christ has been both fully God and fully Man in one person. He is the God-Man, meaning he is one person with two natures. We are

going to begin our dive into the study of Christ by fleshing out the deity of Christ.

So let me start by making the simple statement: Jesus Christ is fully God. The teaching from both the Old and New Testaments concerning Christ's deity is overwhelming. If you acknowledge the authority of Scripture, then you can't miss the fact that Jesus Christ is God.

At the end of this section we will talk through the practical application and importance of Christ's deity. I want to encourage you to consider how this truth applies to our lives as we go along looking at the deity of Christ, starting here with the Old Testaments teachings on it.

II. The Deity of Christ in the Old Testament

Its important that we understand that the OT is reliable to speak on the topic of the person of Christ. Jesus himself believed as much.

In Luke 24, Jesus tells his disciples on the road to Emmaus that the Old Testament is all about Him. In the Old Testament we see prophecies concerning His coming and His triumphant reign. And we learn how he has worked for the salvation of His people from the beginning.

24:44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

What do we see in the OT? In the OT, there are 2 major headings we will mention that discuss the deity of Christ. The first being:

A. Son of Man (Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14; Matthew 9:6, 12:8, 19:28, 20:28, 25:31-32)

In Dan 7 we find Daniel's vision of the Son of Man. In verses 9-10 he describes a glorious heavenly throne room and at the center of this scene is the Lord, the "Ancient of Days", who is seated upon His throne. Just a few verses later, Daniel describes another vision, but this time he sees another figure, the Son of Man.

- **Daniel 7:13-14** "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Here the Son of Man receives worship from all nations and rules over an eternal kingdom. Who else could do that but someone who is divine? With whom else does God share his glory? And who is this Son of Man?

Jesus openly applied the title to himself, and taught in **Matthew 25:31-32**: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." You can hear how Jesus' words allude to Daniel 7.

B. Son of David (Genesis 49:8-10; 2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16; Psalm 2:6-7; Ps. 45; Ps. 72; Isa 9:6-7)

Next, the Old Testament builds prophetic expectation that a Son of David is coming who will reign on David's throne forever. God promises this to David in 2 Samuel 7:13: "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

And yet this highly-anticipated Son begins to be described in terms that are unmistakably divine. The king himself sings in Psalm 2:7, "The LORD said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.'" So, the son of David is also the Son of God. That could mean simply that this king represents God like a son; but other passages suggest that it means even more.

Psalm 72 depicts foreign kings bowing down before this king, and people from all nations blessing his name.

Psalm 45:6-7 gets even more explicit: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." The king... is referred to as "God." Hebrews 1 teaches that this passage is about Jesus.

We see something similar in **Isaiah 9:6-7** "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore."

So, who is this king? Who is this royal son of David who is also "Mighty God"? This royal figure is Jesus Christ.

Speaking on the fulfillment of this prophecy, in Romans 1:2-4 Paul says the gospel is a message about God's "Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord."

So both titles of the Son of Man and Son of David prophetically confirm and hint at the deity of the one to come.

III. The Deity of Christ in the New Testament

Now, while the OT gradually opens the door for us to see that the savior to come is the Son of God. As we enter the New Testament, the door swings open fast for us to get full glimpse at this Son of God.. So let's look at 5 ways the New Testament teaches Jesus is fully God.

1. Jesus Christ is called **God and Lord** (John 1, Matthew 1:21-23; Luke 2:11; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13, Phil. 2:11/Isaiah 45:23)

John 1:1 says "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Rom 9:5 calls him "Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever." Titus 2:13 calls him "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

We also have many instances where the words used for God [*Theos*] and Lord [*Kyrios*] in the Greek translation of the Old Testament [*Septuagint*] are applied directly to Jesus.

Perhaps one of the most staggering examples of this is Phil 2:11, where Paul says that every tongue will "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here, he is quoting Isaiah 45:23 nearly word for word. And yet the one to whom every knee bows and every tongue swears allegiance in Isaiah 45 is none other than Yahweh, the covenant Lord of Israel.

For Paul's readers, immersed in the language of the Old Testament, Philippians 2 could not be any clearer: Jesus is Yahweh!

2. Jesus Christ **claimed to be God** (John 8:58, 10:30-33)

And, second, of course, we have Jesus' claims of himself. There is his great statement in John 8:58, "**Before Abraham was born, I am!**" The Jews understood that he was claiming to be God.

"I AM WHO I AM" was God's way of identifying Himself to Moses in Exodus. They picked up stones to kill Jesus because their unbelieving hearts judged this to be a blasphemous statement. Jesus was equating himself with God!

In case you think this may have just been a misunderstanding, later, in John 10:30, Jesus says “I and the Father are one,” and again the Jewish leaders attempt to stone him. Why? Verse 33, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.”

So Jesus deliberately spoke to people in his day, claiming to be God in flesh.

3. Jesus Christ is presented as the object of the believer’s worship (Matt 2:10-11, 28:17; John 5:23; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:12)

The Judaism we see in the Bible was staunchly monotheistic, meaning there was only 1 God to be worshiped. That being said, in **Matthew 2:10-11** we read of Jesus being worshiped. It says: When [the Magi] saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.

Here this worship towards Jesus should intrigue us, being portrayed as the right thing to do. In **John 5:23** we see Jesus speaking of the Father, saying he “has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.”

Now, remember Isaiah 48:11 – God says “My glory I will not give to another.” And yet from his birth in Matthew 2 to the heavenly throne room in Revelation, Jesus receives worship, glory, and honor. This isn’t blasphemy or idolatry. It is appropriate, delightfully so, because Jesus is God.

And as God he is to be worshiped rightly. That leads us to number

4. Jesus Christ is described as both being God and performing the very works of God (John 1:1-3, 14-18; Hebrews 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-20, Luke 5:20-24), like creating the universe, forgiving sins, and more.

John 1:1-3, 14-18 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” So Jesus is the

Creator.

Then in Hebrews 1:1-4 “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” So by his coming, Jesus reveals God and sustains all creation.

!!much of the same in!!

In Colossians 1:15-20 we read of Jesus that: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Then, in **Luke 5** we have the story of Jesus forgiving the sins of the paralytic let down through the rough before healing him. At the words of Jesus forgiving the man of his sins, we see the scribes and pharisees question the authority of Jesus to forgive. But through Jesus’s great healing of the paralytic, it is made known to all that Jesus does have power and authority to save and heal because he is indeed God and able to do the very works of God.

So Jesus is God because he does what only God can do, like create and forgive sins, etc.

5. Jesus Christ is assumed to have been preexistent as the eternal Son of God prior to His incarnation (1 Cor. 8:6; 10:4, 9; 2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 4:4; Rom 8:3; Col. 1:15-20; Phil 2:6; 1 Tim 1:15; 3:16; 2 Tim 1:9-10).

This is an important point, because it emphasizes that God the Son has always existed. It’s not that Jesus, a human being, became God somehow – say, by his miraculous birth

or marvelous baptism. No, it's the other way around: God, the second person of the Trinity, took on a human nature in addition to his divine nature.

(idk about this) The incarnation is not subtraction, but addition.

We see this in a passage like **Phil 2:6-7**: "Though he was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." He didn't give up his divinity, but the status and privilege of his heavenly standing. Or **2 Tim 1:9-10**, God gave us grace "in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which has now been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ."

In these passages, it's important that we see that Paul **isn't** attempting to defend the position of the preexistence of Christ. Paul, on the basis of a commonly held belief that Christ is the Son of God is arguing FROM the preexistence of Christ, not FOR it. That's how bedrock a truth this is. Christ deity, his preexistence, and power to save encourage us and shape the way we live and worship. We are going to get into the practical ways this truth shapes our lives in just a moment, but before we do:

Questions or Comments?

V. The Importance and Beauty of Christ's Deity

Christ's deity is supremely important and beautiful. When we rightly understand the person of Christ, it should lead us to joy, confidence, and worship. Why does the deity of Christ matter? Here are 3 reasons.

1. The deity of Christ matters for revelation.

God hasn't merely sent us a prophet, messenger, or press secretary. He hasn't just given us a book.

He has given us himself.

How would you feel if someone showed up on your doorstep with a message from the President? Now, what about if you opened your door and there was the President himself?

This point should reassure us. We don't have to wonder about what God is like, if he is really merciful or compassionate. Hebrews 1, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son." John 1:18, "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

We can sometimes struggle with how to imagine God – is God for me? A man named Michael Reeves said this: "For all our dreams, our dark and frightened imaginings of God, there is no God in heaven who is unlike Jesus... 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,' he says (John 14:9). God cannot be otherwise."

If you want to know God, you need only to look to Jesus Christ. He is God in the flesh. He has perfectly revealed God's character in his life and God's heart for sinners by his sacrificial death on the cross.

2. The deity of Christ matters for salvation.

The constant message of the Bible is that no mere man could achieve salvation for himself, let alone on behalf of others. Salvation belongs to the Lord, Jonah 2:9 declares. God himself achieves this salvation, and he does so in the person of his Son.

In a striking phrase in Acts 20:28, Paul teaches that God bought the church "with his own blood." Col 1:19-20, we see Jesus made "peace by the blood of his cross."

The blood of a mere man, it seems, could not atone for countless millions. Only the God-man could serve as the perfect mediator between man and God (1 Tim 2:5).

Jesus didn't just die as a good example. He died as a sinless sacrifice, "the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet 3:18)

And his resurrection, while proving his divinity, serves to show us from Heb 7:16 that Jesus is our high priest “by the power of an indestructible life.” Because he can never die, his high priestly office for us will never come to an end. He is always available to make intercession for us.

This means that sin-stained rebels like us have a sure and steady hope. Our salvation doesn't come through something shaky: higher consciousness, positive thinking, religiosity, the five pillars of Islam or the eightfold path of Buddhism, all of which assume that human beings can basically be delivered from our plight with enough discipline and devotion.

God himself accomplishes and guarantees our redemption. That is our only hope! Trust in Christ, and you will never be disappointed.

3. The deity of Christ matters for the **Christian life.**

Remember earlier that we said Christ's deity is argued from, not for.

Paul was using this foundational belief to call the church to walk in humility as Christ walked. He used it to call us to holiness in honor of the holy one who became sin and died for us.

But we can't do any of this on our own. Because Christ is God, it is his very Spirit that lives in us and transforms us to make us capable of serving God rather than self. This is confirmed in 2 Cor 13:5 as Paul tells the Corinthian believers “Jesus Christ is in you.” Christ dwells in us by his Spirit, and that is why we can walk in a way pleasing to God.

When we sin, Christ's perfect spotlessness covers us. His indestructible life intercedes for us. His divine resurrection preaches hope to us that one day we will rise and leave sin behind forever.

So Abide in Christ. Listen to his Word. And adore Jesus, as our great God and King who alone has accomplished our salvation. Find strength in Christ to leave behind sin and to live for the glory of his great name.

We now turn our attention to the humanity of Jesus. But before we do, any questions?

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

II. The **Humanity** of Christ in Scripture

- We see the humanity of Christ clearly described in 1 John 4:2-3. You’ll see it there on your handout...
- **1 John 4:2-3** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

If you’re following along on your handout, we’re going to look at Jesus’ humanity in three broad categories. We’ll look first at the Virgin Birth, then at his weaknesses and limitations, and finally at his sinless humanity.

A. **Virgin Birth.**

(Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25, 24-25; Luke 1:35, 3:23)

When we speak of the humanity of Christ it is appropriate to begin with a consideration of the virgin birth of Christ. Scripture clearly asserts that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father.

- **Isaiah 7:14** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
- **Matthew 1:18** "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit."
- **Luke 1:35** "And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

The doctrinal importance of the virgin birth:

1. The virgin birth was the means God used to send his Son (John 3:16; Gal. 4:4) into the world as a man. Jesus experienced the full span of human life, including in his mother's womb. But the miraculous nature of the virgin birth testifies to the fact that he was not *only* a man, but the **unique** God-man.

2. The virgin birth also seems to hold some significance for Jesus as the New Adam. It dramatizes the fact that unlike the rest of us, who inherit a sinful and guilty nature from our first father Adam, Jesus had no earthly father.

He is a **new representative** of the human race, of all those who would be united to him by faith.

The virgin birth is important here, because it shows us that Jesus did not descend from Adam in exactly the same way in which every other human being has descended from Adam. And this helps us to understand why the legal guilt and moral corruption that belongs to all other human beings did not belong to Christ.

This idea seems to be indicated in the statement of the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:35 – because Jesus would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, therefore he would be called holy.

B. Jesus Endured Human Weaknesses and Limitations

- **Jesus Had a Human Body (with human emotions and human mind)**

(Luke 2:7, 40, 52; 23:46, 24:42; Matt. 4:2, 11; John 4:6, 19:28; 21:9, 13)

The fact that Jesus had a human body just like our human bodies is seen in many passages of Scripture. His body:

- **WAS BORN:** He was born just as all human babies are born (Luke 2:7).
- **GREW:** He grew through childhood to adulthood just as other children grow: “And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40).
- **TIRED:** Jesus became tired just as we do, for we read that “Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well” in Samaria (John 4:6).
- **HUNGERED AND THIRSTED:** He became thirsty and hungry, for when he was on the cross he said, “I thirst” (John 19:28). After he had fasted for forty days in the wilderness, we read that “he was hungry” (Matt. 4:2).
- **GREW WEAK:** He was at times physically weak, for during his temptation in the wilderness he fasted for forty days (the point at which a human being’s physical strength is almost entirely gone and beyond which irreparable physical harm will occur if the fast continues).

At that time “angels came and ministered to him” (Matt. 4:11), apparently to care for him and provide nourishment until he regained enough strength to come out of the wilderness.

When Jesus was on his way to be crucified, the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross (Luke 23:26), most likely because Jesus was so weak following

the beating he had received that he did not have strength enough to carry it himself.

- **DIED**: The culmination of Jesus' limitations in terms of his human body is seen when he died on the cross (Luke 23:46). His human body ceased to have life in it and ceased to function, just as ours does when we die.

Jesus also rose from the dead in a physical, human body, though one that was made perfect and was no longer subject to weakness, disease, or death. He demonstrates repeatedly to his disciples that he does have a real physical body: he says, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39).

He is showing them and teaching them that he has "flesh and bones" and is not merely a "spirit" without a body. Another evidence of this fact is that "they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them" (Luke 24:42. v. 30; John 20:17, 20, 27; 21:9, 13).

In this same human body (though a resurrection body that was made perfect), Jesus also ascended into heaven. In Acts 1:9, we read, "As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9).

All of these verses taken together show that, as far as Jesus' human body is concerned, it was like ours in every respect before his resurrection, and after his resurrection it was still a human body with "flesh and bones," but made perfect, the kind of body that we will have when Christ returns and we are raised from the dead as well.

And the ascension of Jesus is meant to teach us that he continues to exist in that human body in heaven.

C. Jesus was Fully Human and Also **Sinless**

(2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15-16; 1 Peter 1:19; Acts 2:27; 3:14; 4:30; 7:52; 13:35)

- **2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- **Hebrews 4:14–16** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Scriptures make crystal clear that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life. But more than that, he lived righteously.

- **Athanasius (AD 373):** “Such and so many are the Saviour’s achievements that follow from His Incarnation, that to try to number them is like gazing at the open sea and trying to count the waves. For, indeed everything about it is marvelous, and wherever a man turns his gaze he sees the Godhead of the Word and is smitten with awe.”

We must worship Jesus, the God-man!

- Worship Jesus, the **Second Adam** (Rom. 5:18-19; 1 Cor. 15:45)

Jesus was our representative and obeyed for us where Adam had failed and disobeyed.

- Worship Jesus, **our Substitutionary Sacrifice** (Heb. 2:14-17)

If Jesus had not been a man, he could not have died **in our place** and paid the penalty that was due to us.

- **Worship Jesus, the Mediator between God and Men** (1 Tim. 2:5)

Because we were alienated from God by sin, we needed someone to come between God and ourselves and bring us back to him. We needed a mediator who could represent us to God and who could represent God to us. There is only one person who has ever fulfilled that requirement.

- **Worship Jesus, our Perfect Example** (Phil 2:5-11; 1 Pet 2:21; Heb. 12:2)

Jesus had to become a man like us in order to live as our example and pattern in life. Disciples are Christ-followers. Our goal should be to be like Christ all our days, up to the point of death, and to die with unfailing obedience to God, with strong trust in him, and with love and forgiveness to others.

- **Worship Jesus, our Sympathetic High Priest** (Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16)

If Jesus had not been a man, he would not have been able to know by experience what we go through in our temptations and struggles in this life. But because he has lived as a man, he is able to sympathize more fully with us in our **experiences**.

- **Worship Jesus, First-Born from the dead** (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:49)

Jesus had to be raised as a man in order to be the “first-born from the dead” (Col. 1:18), the pattern for the bodies that we would later have. We now have a physical body like Adam’s, but we will have one like **Christ’s**: “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (1 Cor. 15:49).

- **Worship Jesus Christ, the God-Man forever** (Luke 24:39ff; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:13-17)

Jesus did not temporarily become man, instead his divine nature was permanently united to his human nature, and he lives forever not just as the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, but also as Jesus, the man who was born of Mary, and as

Christ, the Messiah and Savior of his people. Jesus will remain fully God and fully man, yet one person, forever