

## CHRISTOLOGY

### II. Christ Incarnate

#### I. The Incarnation

- A. **Introduction:** “Incarnation” means in the flesh and deals with the fact that the Second Person of the Trinity took upon himself a human nature and became a man. Thus the incarnation is that act in history when God and man met in one person - Jesus Christ being the God-Man (1 Tim. 3:16). To deny the Incarnation is to be an anti-Christ (1 John 4:2-3). Thus the Incarnation not only begins the theanthropic person who continues forever but also begins the period of Christ’s humiliation which lasted until His resurrection.
- B. **A Work of the Trinity**
1. Each member of the Trinity was active in the incarnation (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7; Matt. 1:20).
  2. Therefore the incarnation was not something that merely happened to the Second Person, but was an active accomplishment on His part.
- C. **Exposition of John 1:14**
1. **“And the Word was made (became) *flesh*”** - Technically the Creator (God) cannot be made anything; thus the eternal Son became at a point of time man. He became, not sinful flesh, but perfect humanity (Rom. 8:3 - “likeness of sinful flesh”). He took upon Himself a human nature; yet it was without sin.
    - a. John 1:14 must always be connected with John 1:1 which gives us the teaching of the God-Man, even Jesus Christ. He who was with the Father from all eternity became man. The Second Person of the Trinity took upon Himself a human nature, consisting of body, soul and spirit (Matt. 26:38; John 13:21; John 1:14 cf. Heb. 2:14). **NOTE:** It may be said that (1) the invisible became visible; (2) the intangible became tangible; (3) the transcendent became imminent, and (4) the infinite became finite.
    - b. Our Lord became a real man, yet a sinless and perfect man (Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21).
    - c. When the Word became flesh, it did not mean an alteration in the Trinity (the Trinity still consists of three persons) but it does imply a modification (the eternal Word has a new form of existence—the Word has a human nature). **NOTE:** The Word became what He was not previously; He did not cease to be God but became man.
  2. **“And dwelt among us”** — The word “dwelt” should be translated tabernacled. The tabernacle in the Old Testament signified God’s presence with Israel; thus the Incarnation means God is dwelling among men.
  3. **“And we beheld his glory”** — The Apostle John and others saw in the person of Jesus Christ the glory of God. “Glory” is the manifestation of the sum total of all God’s attributes; they saw the divine perfections of Christ. **NOTE:** Also John, Peter and James saw Christ’s glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Matt. 17).
  4. **“The glory as of the only begotten of the Father”** — Christ is the only begotten in the sense that He alone is the unique Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.
  5. **“Full of grace and truth”** — “Grace” speaks of Christ as the author of a perfect salvation; Christ provided a full and complete redemption for sinners. “Truth”

speaks of Christ as the author of perfect revelation. Christ fulfilled the Old Testament types and shadows and is the perfect and exact revealer of the Father.

## II. The Virgin Birth

- A. Definition: The Virgin Birth means the conception of Christ without a human father and thus contrary to the course of nature. It is not the opening of Mary's womb, as in the case of Elizabeth, but the activating of it apart from a human male being, and after conception took place, the course of pregnancy and birth were normal. It is a supernatural birth.
- B. Major Passages (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:34-38)
- C. Logical Purpose: One does not have to be a Biblical boob or commit intellectual suicide to believe in the Virgin Birth. It is grounded on solid reality of historical fact. NOTE: The Virgin Birth is very logical when viewed from a Christian context! It is the age-long problem of naturalism versus supernaturalism or anti-theism versus theism.
- D. Reasons for the Virgin Birth
  1. REASON #1: The Bible Teaches the Virgin Birth
    - a. The Greek word *parthenes* (virgin) means a woman who never knew a man sexually (Luke 1:27).
    - b. This birth was supernatural because it was to be conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). From the scientific view, it would be said that this was a biological impossibility.
    - c. The one born would be a "holy thing" (Luke 1:35), which speaks of the sinlessness of this Jesus.
    - d. When giving the genealogy of Joseph, Matthew said that Jacob conceived Joseph who was the husband of Mary (Matt. 1:16). But then he qualifies this statement by the words, "of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The "of whom" is feminine in gender and refers to Mary, not Joseph. NOTE: The Holy Spirit, in inspiring the Scriptures, was ever so careful in protecting the concept of a virgin birth.
    - e. CONCLUSION: For a person who does not believe in divine revelation to deny the Virgin Birth of Jesus is understandable, but for a person to claim that the Bible does not teach the Virgin Birth is an insult to the intelligence of the human race! The facts are plain; it is man's heart that is wrong.
  2. REASON #2: The Possibility of Miracles Exists
    - a. Intro.: To accept the Virgin Birth means that one must accept the concept of a miracle. The possibility of a miracle rests in one's view of God and the world.
    - b. Natural Science View
      - 1). Atheistic science states that the world is operating according to certain fixed or regular laws of nature. This is called uniformitarianism. Uniformitarianism states that all things exist as they always did and all physical phenomenon continues according to natural laws. They reject the supernatural.
      - 2). No Christian is against science, for the true facts of science and the Bible will never contradict each other.
      - 3). However, when a scientist leaves the realm of true fact and begins to speculate as to the meaning of certain data is where the Christian might take issue with the scientist. There are many fine scientists that are Christians.
    - c. Supernatural Christian View
      - 1). The Christian believes in God who is the Creator and Sustainer of this universe; He is sovereign over His creation. A recognition of God admits the possibility of a miracle. NOTE: God, who created the apparent fixed

laws of nature, can intervene into his creation when and however He pleases.

- 2). Science is not in a position to judge a miracle. Science deals with the regular and normal laws of nature. NOTE: Scientific knowledge advances through observation and experiment. It works on data supplied by the five physical senses. But a miracle involves the spiritual, not the physical realm and cannot be dealt with on a scientific basis.
  - 3). A miracle cannot possibly conform to any known law or it would not be a miracle. NOTE: The Christian who argues for a miracle is not against the regularity of nature as a general principle but is against the regularity of nature in every instance. POINT: All laws are God's laws and He is free to change these laws at any given time.
  - 4). The issue then is God, for if there is a God, then the possibility of a miracle exists. However God is not known through a test tube but through faith in Jesus Christ, who is declared in the Holy Scriptures. The Virgin Birth is just one of the hundreds of miracles God has done.
3. REASON #3: The Person of Christ
    - a. Christ from all eternity was God. He is a supernatural being.
    - b. It is not incredible to believe that a supernatural being came into the world in a supernatural manner. The deity of Christ demands the Virgin Birth.
  4. REASON #4: Fulfilled Prophecy
    - a. Isaiah in Isa. 7:14, which was written in 700 B.C., predicted the Virgin Birth and it came true as predicted (cf. Matt. 1:22-23). NOTE: Liberals who have denied the Virgin Birth have tried to change the date of Isaiah's writing to make it written a little before the time of Christ. This theory, so highly acclaimed at one time, was shot through when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, and these scrolls were dated at least 200 years before Christ.
    - b. It could not be mere chance that the person of Christ could fulfill literally over 300 prophecies concerning His first coming.
  5. REASON #5: A Supernatural Sign
    - a. It was to be a sign to Israel (Isa. 7:14) and to the world that Jesus Christ is the God-Man.
    - b. A sign would have to be out of the ordinary or it wouldn't carry much impact. What is more extraordinary than a virgin birth?
  6. REASON #6: Relationship to Humanity and Deity
    - a. It is essential that the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, when entering the human family should do so as all others do. By such a procedure no questions would be raised about the genuineness of His humanity or the permanency of it.
    - b. It is true that because of His unchangeable deity, He could not be born of a human father. Had he been born of a human father and mother, there would have been nothing to identify His humanity as a rightful property of deity. On the other hand, had He appeared with no relation to human parentage, there would have been no legitimate basis for the fact of His humanity.
  7. REASON #7: Sinless Humanity
    - a. Without the Virgin Birth there is only a sinful Savior, and such a Savior can provide no real salvation. Had Jesus had a human father He would have inherited a sinful nature like every other person born into this world. The sin nature is passed down (mediated) from Adam to subsequent generations (Psa. 51:5; Eph. 2:1-3). The sin nature may be passed from father to children or parents to children and the sin nature is apparently passed on at the moment

of conception in the womb. But Jesus Christ had no human father; thus He could not receive a sinful nature; thus He was perfect and only God is perfect.

- b. The Holy Spirit was the sole source of this birth. Mary did not contribute an egg (giving the basis for Christ's humanity) and the Holy Spirit a sanctified sperm (giving the basis for a perfect humanity). No! The Holy Spirit did it all. Christ was brought into the world without human relationship and natural sex-functions. Thus Christ had a human parent, Mary, but did not have a sinful flesh as did Mary. Joseph was the legal father of Jesus but not his natural father. The father of Jesus Christ is God, the Father.
  - c. According to Luke 1:34-38 a "holy thing" was to be produced in Mary by the Holy Spirit. Christ was absolutely holy, but most certainly had a human nature. Mary did not generate Christ's humanity, God did. Mary herself was a sinner and in need of a Savior (Luke 1:47), but even though she was sinful, God worked a miracle so a sinless person, Christ, would come from her womb. POINT: There is no basis for the sinlessness of Mary as taught by the Roman Catholics. POINT: Neither is there any basis for the Roman Catholic teaching on the perpetual virginity of Mary (cf. Matt. 12:46; 13:55).
8. REASON #8: The Virgin Birth Removed the Curse on the Royal Line
- a. God promised King David that one would sit upon his throne (2 Sam. 7:12-14, 16) and it is told that this one would be the Messiah (Isa. 9:6-7).
  - b. The one qualified to occupy the throne of David would have to be a person who had the blood rights (through both parents) and the royal rights through the father.
  - c. Luke wrote his genealogies to trace Christ's blood or physical line back to David (Luke 3:23-28). This blood line came through Nathan, David's other son, to Mary. So through Mary there was proper blood lines to David.
  - d. Matthew wrote his genealogies to trace Christ's legal or royal right to the throne. The royal line came through Solomon, David's son. There were many potential rulers to reign on the throne of Israel but they didn't reign because the nation was in bondage because of sin. Joseph was in the royal line to David through Solomon.
  - e. Coniah or Jechonias was a king in this royal line. Because of Jechonias' sin, God put a curse on the royal line, stating that none of his seed should ever sit upon the Throne of David (Jer. 36:30-32; Jer. 22:30). This was the royal line of which Joseph was heir. NOTE: The curse on Jechonias didn't destroy legal rights to the throne but the curse was on the physical descendants.
  - f. Joseph's line had a curse and Mary's line lacked royal rights to the throne. How could the problem be solved?
  - g. Jesus Christ, through adoption, became the legal son of Joseph. Joseph was not the real father of Christ but the legal father. POINT: When Joseph married Mary and took the unborn child under his protecting care, giving Him the title that had come down to Him through His ancestor Solomon, the Lord Jesus became the legal Messiah, the royal Messiah, the uncursed Messiah, the true Messiah, the only possible Messiah.
  - h. Jesus Christ had four half brothers (Mark 6:3). All had the proper blood and legal rights to the throne but the four physical sons of Joseph were under the curse given to Jechonias' line; thus they were disqualified for the throne. POINT: Because Jesus was born of a virgin, apart from a human father, He was not under the curse and received the legal right to the throne as the first son of Joseph by adoption.
  - i. Christ was the only person of His day who could fulfill the royal and blood line claims to the throne. After 70 A.D. all lineages of the Jews

were destroyed. Why? After Messiah had come, there was no longer any need to keep genealogies.

### III. The Deity of Christ

A. Introduction: The Christian Faith stands or falls on the deity of Jesus Christ. The fact of Christ's deity has always been the focal point of all orthodox Christianity, and, without this doctrine, there is no Christianity.

While a firm belief in the deity of Christ has always been the position of the historic church, there has always been a few heretical groups who have denied this teaching. The problem arises out of the fact that Jesus Christ Himself never comes out directly and states that He is God. However the direct and indirect claims of Christ, the statements of others about Christ and the theological concepts about Christ most definitely point to the fact that Jesus is the God-Man, the second person of the Trinity.

#### B. Christ's Personal Claims to Deity

##### 1. Direct Claims

- a. Christ claimed to be one in essence, substance or nature with the Father (John 10:30). The reaction of the Jews, who were monotheistic (one God), was to stone Christ because He was claiming to be God (John 10:31-39 cf. John 5:18).
- b. Christ claimed that to have seen Him was to have seen the Father (John 14:9). This is a rather bold statement to make if He were not God.
- c. Christ claimed to be pre-existent to all things (John 8:58). Only God could be pre-existent. Angels were in existence before creation of the world; yet Christ was pre-existent before all created things; thus He was eternal and God.
- d. Christ claimed to be the only one who knew the Father (Matt. 11:27).
- e. Christ claimed equal authority with the Father (Mark 9:37).
- f. Christ claimed to be able to save men from their sins (Matt. 10:32-33). Only God can save men.
- g. Christ claimed equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula (Matt. 28:19).
- h. Christ said that He was Lord (John 13:13 cf. Mark 2:28).
- i. Christ said that He was the Christ, the Son of God (Mark 14:61,62 cf. Matt. 26:63).
- j. Christ claims to forgive sins (Luke 5:24). Only God can forgive sins.
- k. Christ claimed to be the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).

##### 2. Indirect Claims

- a. He claimed to be the Bread of Life (John 6:35).
- b. He claimed to be the Light of the World (John 8:12).
- c. He claimed to be the Door of the Sheep (John 10:7).
- d. He claimed to be the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).
- e. He claimed to be the Resurrection (John 11:25).
- f. He claimed to be the True Vine (John 15:1).

3. Conclusion: Only God would dare to make these kinds of claims. C. S. Lewis put it this way,

“I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him (Christ): ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice as to whether this man was, and is,

the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.” (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pp. 41-42).

C. Christ Possesses All the Attributes (Characteristics) of God

1. Immutability (Unchanging) (Heb. 13:8)
2. Eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2; John 8:58)
3. Omnipotent (All powerful) (Rev. 1:8; Phil. 3:21; Matt, 28:19)
4. Omniscient (All knowing) (John 2:25; 6:64; 10:15)
5. Omnipresent (Everywhere present) (Matt. 18:20)
6. Life (John 1:4; 5:26; 10:10; 14:6; Heb. 7:16)
7. Truth (John 14:6; Rev. 3:7)
8. Holiness (Luke 1:35; John 6:39; Heb. 7:26)
9. Love (John 13:1; 13:34; 1 John 3:16)

D. Christ Does Works That Only God Can Do

1. Creator (John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:10)
2. Sustainer (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17)
3. Pardons Sin (Luke 5:24; Col. 3:13)
4. Raises the dead (John 5:21, 28-29)
5. Rewards the saints (2 Cor. 5:10)
6. Judges the world (John 5:22)
7. Imparts life (John 5:21)
8. Reveals (Matt. 11:27 cf. Matt. 16:17)
9. Controller of nature (Matt. 8:26)
10. Judges the secret motives of men (Matt. 7:22-23)

E. Christ Is and Equal Object with the Father

1. Equal object of worship (John 5:23; Luke 24:52; Matt. 28:17; John 20:28-29).
2. Equal object of prayer (Acts 7:59; Rev. 22:20 cf. 1 Thess, 3:11; 2 Thess. 2:16ff).  
It is obviously both foolish and sinful to pray to anyone except God.
3. Equal object of belief (John 14:1).
4. Equal object of eternal life (John 17:3).

F. Christ’s Sinless Life Shows That He Is God For Only God Is Perfect

1. Christ never did an act of sin (1 Pet. 2:22).
2. Christ never knew sin or had an evil thought (2 Cor. 5:21).

G. Christ’s Pre-existence Indicates He Is God, For Only God Is Eternal  
(John 8:58; 1:30; 3:31; 6:38; 1 Cor. 10:4; Angel of Jehovah)

H. Christ’s Acts Are Equal with the Father’s

1. Abiding of the Christian (1 John 4:13; John 15:4f).
2. Gospel (Romans 1:1; 1:16)
3. Forgiveness (Col. 2:13; 3:13)
4. Church (Gal. 1:13; Rom. 16:16)
5. Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:11; Rom. 8:9)

I. Old Testament Quotes In the New Testament Show That the Jehovah of the Old Testament Is the Christ of the New Testament

1. Matt. 3:3 cf. Isa. 40:3
2. Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13 cf. Joel 2:32
3. Luke 1:76 cf. Mal. 3:1
4. Eph. 4:8 cf. Ps. 68:18
5. Phil. 2:10-11 cf. Isa. 45:22-25
6. Heb. 1:10 cf. Ps. 102:24-25
7. John 12:37-41 cf. Isa. 6:1,3, 10. According to this verse Isaiah saw the glory of Christ.

8. Luke 2:32 cf. Isa. 60:19
9. John 10:11 cf. Psa. 23:1; Isa. 40:10-11

#### J. The New Testament Writers and Others Acknowledge Christ as God

1. The Apostle John
  - a. John 1:1: ***“And the Word was God”*** (God in essence). The “Word” is an obvious reference to Christ.
  - b. Rev. 1:8: Here John calls Christ the “Almighty”. This is an obvious reference to deity.
  - c. Rev. 21:6-7: Christ is the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the ending).
  - d. 1 John 5:20: While commentators are divided on what the words, “This is the true God,” refer to, many agree that it looks back to the words, “His Son Jesus Christ.” If this is the correct interpretation, then John definitely states that Jesus is God.
2. The Apostle Paul
  - a. Romans 9:5: Proper Translation: ***“Whose are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh, He who is God over all blessed forever.”*** This translation fits the context of Romans 9:1-5 for these verses have enumerated the historic advantage of the Jewish people. Thus Paul concludes by stating one advantage that ranks higher than all, for from the Jewish blood line sprang forth the God-Man.
  - b. Titus 2:13: Proper Translation: ***“Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”*** Greek grammar will now allow for any other translation but the one above (Grandville Sharp Rule).
  - c. 1 Tim. 3: 16: This says that God was manifest in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. It also states that this is a great mystery which is difficult for a human, finite mind to grasp.
3. The Apostle Thomas
  - a. John 20:28: Thomas said that Christ is ***“My Lord and my God.”*** Notice that Christ did not correct Thomas for this statement.
4. The Apostle Peter
  - a. 2 Peter 1:1: Proper Translation: ***“... of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ”*** (Grandville Sharp Rule).
5. The Author of Hebrews
  - a. Hebrews 1:8: In this verse God, the Father, calls His own Son by the title of God.
6. Jude
  - a. Jude 25: God is equated with the Savior. The Savior for God’s people is Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21).
7. Note: Notice also the close relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and God, the Father (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:2; Col. 1:2; Philemon 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2).

#### K. The Names of Christ

1. Introduction: At this point a full discussion of the names of Christ will be undertaken even though many of the names refer to Christ’s humanity. If we had only the names of Christ, we would be able to conclude that He is true deity and true humanity.
2. Lord: A reference to deity (Acts 16:31; John 20:22; Acts 10:36). This emphasizes Christ’s authority and Lordship over all.
3. Jesus: A reference to the Savior or Deliverer from sin (Acts 16:31; Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31).
4. Christ: “Christ” means the Anointed One (John 1:35, 40-41). It is a reference to the fact that He was Israel’s Messiah who would sit upon the throne of David, reigning over Israel forever. This related to the fact that Christ is Prophet, Priest

- and King (Acts 16:31; Matt. 16:16).
5. Messiah: A reference to Israel's Messiah who would sit upon the throne of David (John 1:41; 4:25). The Hebrew word "Messiah" is equivalent to the Greek word "Christ."
  6. Savior: A reference to the Deliverer from sin (Luke 1:47; 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 13:23; Phil. 3:20; Tit. 1:3-4; 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:11).
  7. God: A reference to His deity (John 20:22; Heb. 1:8). Speaks of Christ's oneness in nature and unity with the Father.
  8. Master: A reference to Christ as the Great Teacher (John 13:13-14). This title is equivalent to the term "Rabbi" which also denotes the idea of teacher (John 1:39).
  9. I Am: A reference to the Jehovah-God of the Old Testament. This speaks of Christ's eternal existence (John 8:58 cf. Ex. 3:13, 14).
  10. Emmanuel: This means "God with us" and is a reference to our Lord's deity (Matt. 1:23).
  11. Mighty God: A prophetic reference referring to Christ's deity (Isa. 9:6).
  12. Son of Man: Our Lord most frequently uses this term in describing Himself and is a reference to His humanity (Matt. 8:20). Thus Christ is related to mankind in general (Luke 19:10; Matt. 11:19; 12:40; 20:18; 26:2) and being the perfect man He was qualified to be the redeemer. If it seems strange that Christ chose to use this title when speaking of Himself more than He used any other title, it should be remembered that His humanity was more recent than His deity, which was His eternally. Furthermore the title "Son of Man" is an Old Testament eschatological reference to Messiah (Dan. 7:13) and this would imply His deity. Thus the title speaks of His: (1) lowliness as the man-servant of Jehovah and (2) Lordship as God's vice regent.
  13. Son of God: A reference to His being the eternal Son of God. This designation refers to Christ's original relationship to the Father as He was in His pre-existence before He assumed humanity. Thus this title expresses the deity of the Lord Jesus as distinguished from His humanity (John 20: 30-31). NOTE: While Christ did not often use this title of himself, He never corrected others for calling him the Son of God (Luke 22: 67-71).
  14. Almighty: A reference to His deity (Rev. 1:8).
  15. Alpha and Omega: A reference to the eternality of Christ (Rev. 1:8).
  16. Beginning and the End: A reference to the eternality of Christ (Rev. 1:8).
  17. Logos (Word): This speaks of a personal being who is the Son of God and the complete expression of the thought of God in communication of Himself to man (John 1: 1-2, 14).
  18. First and the Last: A reference to the eternality of Christ (Rev. 1:17).
  19. Lamb of God: A reference to the perfect sacrifice based on Old Testament types who would come and make a perfect atonement for the sins of men (John 1:29).
  20. Wonderful Counselor: A reference to the fact that as a man, Christ could enter into the problems of men (Isa. 9:6).
  21. Everlasting Father: A reference to His eternality and deity (Isa. 9:6).
  22. Prince of Peace: A reference to Christ who can give spiritual peace to the sin-sick soul and will bring social peace to the world in the Millennium (Isa. 9:6).
  23. Bridegroom: (Matt. 9:15).
  24. Chief Corner Stone: (1 Pet. 2:6).
  25. Faithful and True: A reference to the fact that as the God-Man He will judge the world in justice (Rev. 19:11).
  26. Governor: (Matt. 2:6).
  27. High Priest: (Heb. 5:10).
  28. King of kings: A reference to His deity (Rev 19:16).

29. Morning Star: (Rev. 22:16).
30. Nazarene: (Matt. 2:23).
31. Prince of Life: (Acts 3:15).
32. Good Shepherd: (John 10:11).
33. Great Shepherd: (Heb. 13:20-21).
34. Chief Shepherd: (1 Peter 5:4).
33. Word of Life: (1 John 1:1).
34. Only Begotten (*Monogenas*): (John 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9).
  - a. Jesus Christ is often called the **“Only Begotten Son”**. To the English reader this word would imply that Christ was begotten in eternity, concluding that Christ was a created being. Actually the English is not clear but the Greek makes it more evident that “Only Begotten” is a special title for the Son of God to express His deity.
  - b. The word “only” does not modify “Son” but “Begotten” and does so in a qualitative, not numerical, sense. In the Greek it gives the thought of one of a kind, only, or unique. The meaning being that Christ is the Only Begotten relationship of sonship to the Father. Thus Christ’s relationship to the Father is singular and unique. Christ is the unique Son of God. NOTE: Thus the Father speaks of Christ as His own Son (Rom. 8:32) and Christ speaks of the Father as His own Father (John 5:18) — a unique relationship as equal members of the Trinity.
  - c. That the words “only begotten” refer to a unique relationship, and not to the fact that Christ was a created being, can be clearly seen from Heb. 11:17 where Isaac is said to be Abraham’s only begotten son. Yet it is a proven fact that Abraham had Ishmael as a son long before Isaac ever came into this world. Isaac was called the only begotten because he was the child of the promise, the child that God had picked to be the heir of the promise. Thus Isaac was a unique son, the only begotten, because he was heir of the promise, not because he was born first.
  - d. It is interesting that the better Greek manuscripts have translated John 1:18 as follows: “No man hath seen God at any time; God only begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,” The best manuscripts have “God” not “Son”, which speaks of deity uniquely begotten. It is an incomprehensible concept, yet one to be believed.
  - e. THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM: When did Christ become the Son of God? Christ never became the Son of God, but was always the Son of God from all eternity. Jesus Christ claimed a unique sonship to the Father. When a believing sinner is begotten of God, then birth takes place. But the birth of Jesus Christ as the Son of God never took place; it is an eternal fact.
- 1). False Views on the Time of Christ’s Sonship
  - a). At Incarnation: Christ became the Son of God at His human birth. REFUTE: A child was born but a son was given (Isa. 9:6 cf. Gal. 4:4). This implies that Christ’s sonship with the Father was already in existence before the Incarnation.
  - b). At Baptism: This view is held by adoptionists who believed at Christ’s baptism He was absorbed into the Godhead becoming at that time the Son of God. REFUTE: The voice from heaven only acknowledged this was His Son (Matt. 3:17). Besides, Christ was called the Son of God many times before His baptism.
  - c). At Resurrection: According to Rom. 1:4 and Acts 13:32-33, Christ became a son at His resurrection. REFUTE: The resurrection gave proof that He was the Son of God but it did not make Him a son.
  - d). At Ascension: REFUTE: Christ was called the Son of God

before this event.

2). Correct View on the Sonship of Christ

- a). Theologically it is stated that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation, that is that Christ was always the Son of God (John 5:26; 14:11; Heb. 1:3; John 3:16).
- b). A passage to help the finite mind understand this concept is Psa. 2:7, "I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto Me, thou are my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." According to this passage Christ is declared the Son of God and begotten in the day of the eternal decree (eternal plan). This in effect is a statement that Christ is eternally the Son of God as the decree itself is eternal.
- c). CONCLUSION: Since the uniqueness of His birth (eternal generation) includes His eternal relationship as Son to the Father, it may be argued that He, because of His eternity of being, must be God.

3). Eternal Generation Illustrated

"One of the creeds says that Christ is the Son of God begotten, not created; and it adds 'begotten by His Father before all worlds'. Will you please get it quite clear that this has nothing to do with the fact that when Christ was born on earth as a man, that man was the son of a Virgin? We are not now thinking about the Virgin Birth. We're thinking about something that happened before nature was created at all, before time began, "Before all worlds" Christ is begotten, not created. What does it mean?

We don't use the words, begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of: To create is to make. And the difference is just this: when you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers, and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set. . . now that's the first thing to get clear. What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man. What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man."

(C.S. Lewis, Beyond Personality: The Christian Idea of God, pp. 4-5).

35). First Born (prototokes): (Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18; Matt. 1:23; Luke 2:7; Rev. 1:5; Heb. 1:6).

- a). Jesus Christ is often called "Firstborn" (Col, 1:15; Rev. 1:5). At first glance in the English translation one might suspect that Jesus Christ was created rather than the Creator, but a closer examination of the meaning of "first-born" and placing the word in context will show that this is expressing clearly Christ's deity.
- b). The word "firstborn" has two connotations which are first in time (priority) and first in rank (sovereignty) (cf. John 1:30; Psa. 89:27).
- c). If Paul had wanted to say "first created" he would have used the Greek word protoktistes, but Paul used the word prototokes which means "firstborn" and that for a specific purpose.
- d). Col. 1:15: Translate: "Who is the exact image of the invisible God, the firstborn with respect to every created thing." Christ is said to be the firstborn of creation. Notice Paul does not say, "first created" but "firstborn" which signifies something quite different. According to Col. 1:15 the

thought of “firstborn” refers to priority (time) and sovereignty (position or rank). LOGIC: As the firstborn, Christ was prior to all created things. Since Christ existed prior to all created things, He must be uncreated, since uncreated, He must be eternal, and because eternal, He must be God.

POINT: As the firstborn, Christ was sovereign over all creation. Christ was always the firstborn of all creation, not the first created, not created at all, but the Creator, the Head, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, the Lord from heaven (cf. Col. 1:16 - “for by Him were all things created).

- e. Rom 8:29: Christ is said to be the firstborn in resurrection. Christ in His position as Sovereign One, was the first to conquer death and rise from the dead by resurrection.
- f. Col. 1:18: Christ is said to be the firstborn from the dead. This is the same as Rom. 8:29.
- g. Matt. 1:23; Luke 2:7: Christ is said to be the firstborn in Incarnation. Firstborn in position in that there never had been an incarnation (God becoming flesh) before.

#### L. Major Passages on the Deity of Christ

1. John 1:1-4: Translation: “In (the) beginning the Word always was, and the Word was in the beginning face to face with God. All things through His intermediate agency came into existence; and without Him there came into existence not even one thing which has come into existence. In Him life always was, and the life that always was the light of men.”

##### a. Pre-existence of the Word 1:1a

- 1). **“In the beginning”** — The Greek really says, “In beginning,” corresponding to Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God.” Christ’s existence was beyond time for He existed from all eternity. Christ was not from the beginning but “in beginning,” speaking of eternity past. Christ could not have a beginning or He could not be “The Beginning and “the Ending” (Rev. 22:13). LOGIC: If Christ was “in beginning” then He was Himself without beginning, which is only the negative way of saying He was eternal. Only God is eternal; therefore, Christ must be God.
- 2). **“Was”** — Christ always was, and there never was a time when He wasn’t. Thus He is eternal.
- 3). **“The Word”** — The Word was a Jewish concept to express pre-existence (cf. Prov. 8:27-30) A word is an expression of speech in any language. By analogy, then, the Word of God is Deity expressing itself in audible terms.
  - a). A word gives expression of an inner thought: Christ is the Word of God in that He expresses or reflects the mind of God.
  - b). A word reveals a thought to others: Christ reveals God to men. God is communicating to men through Jesus Christ (John 1:18).
  - c). Conclusion: The Word is the Son of God and the complete expression of the thought of God in communication of Himself to men.

##### b. The Individuality of the Word 1:1b

- 1). **“And the Word”** — A reference to Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God.
- 2). **“Always was with God”** — This speaks of Christ being face to face with God. It indicates that the Word existed in the closest possible fellowship with the Father; He had perfect, intimate fellowship with the Father. This also indicates the Word, Christ, had individual identify from the Father. LOGIC: It does not say the Word was with the Father but with God. God is the proper title for all three persons of the Trinity, while “Father” is a special title for the first person only. Had he said the Word was with the Father, this would have excluded the Holy Spirit; had he said God was with God, he would not have made a distinction in the Trinity of the

different personalities. This verse clearly indicates the individuality of the person of the Son of God within the Trinity.

c. The Nature of the Word 1:1c

- 1). **“And the Word”** — A reference to Christ.
- 2). **“Was God”** — This is a clear statement of the fact that Christ is God. There is no definite article “the” in the Greek before “God”; therefore this is stressing the fact of quality, showing that Christ as to His very nature, substance or essence was God. POINT: The Jehovah Witnesses, in their New World Translation, translate this, “And the word was a god,” playing down the deity of Christ and making Him a creature rather than the Creator. If the Jehovah Witnesses’ translation is correct (which it isn’t) then the Bible teaches polytheism (many gods) for there would be many gods if Jesus were just one of the many.

d. The Eternality of the Word 1:2

- 1). **“The same”** — A reference to the Word, Christ.
- 2). **“Was in the beginning with God”** — This is just repeating for emphasis to make sure Christ is given His proper place as the eternal Son of God.

e. The Creation and the Word 1:3

- 1). **“All things were made (came into existence) by (through) him.”** — Here Christ is seen as the intermediate agent of creation. All things came into existence through His intermediate agency, as the beginning of created things. That John is referring to Jesus Christ as Creator, rather than creature, is clearly stated in the second half of this verse. LOGIC: All things were created by Christ, and this could not be true if He were just a creature, even though He was the first and the highest creature. A creature could not create “all things” because a creature is a created being. Christ is Creator and, therefore, He is God.
- 2). **“And without Him not anything was made (came into existence) that was made (that came into existence).** — This is a clear claim that Jesus Christ is the Creator and not a creature; thus He is God. LOGIC: Since Jesus existed before all created things came into existence, He is uncreated, because He is uncreated, He had no beginning. Since that is true, He is eternal, and being eternal, He must be God, for only God is eternal.

f. Life And The Word 1:4

- 1). **“In him was life”** — Life or eternal life was always in the person of Christ. This life had no beginning or ending. Only God is eternal; therefore, Christ must be God.

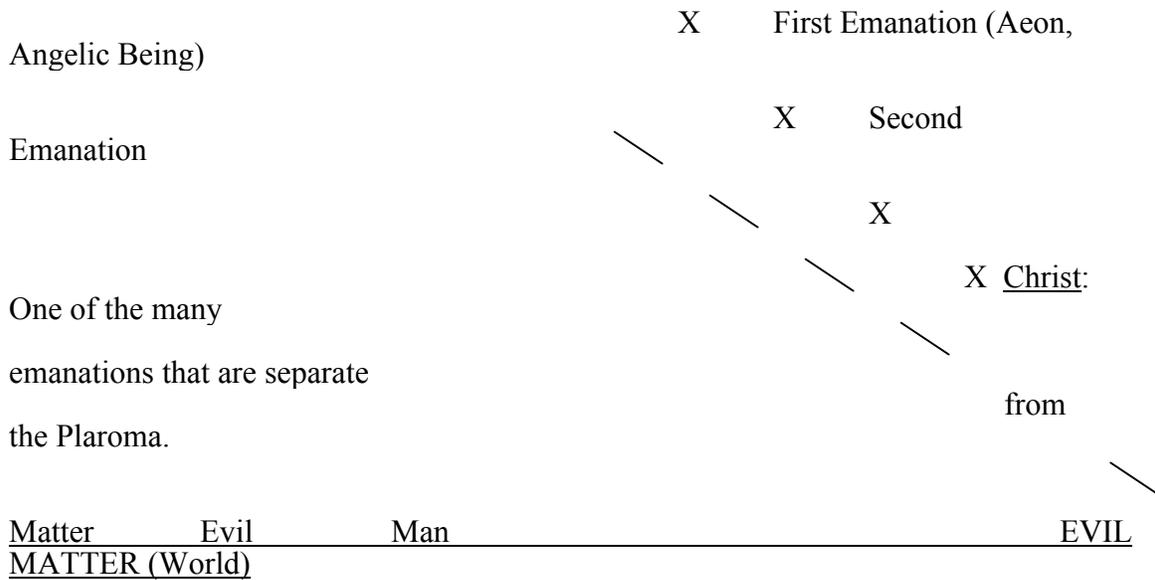
2. Colossians 1:15-17: Translation: “Who is the exact reproduction and manifestation of the invisible God, who has priority to and sovereignty over all creation. Because in Him were created the all things in the heavens and upon the earth, the visible things and the invisible ones, whether they are thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities. The all things through Him, through Him as intermediate agent and with a view to Him, stand created. And He Himself is before all things, and the all things in Him hold together.”

- a. Background: At Colossae there were a group of Gnostics who were not in the church, but who were evidently very influential on some who were in the church at Colossae. This false teaching of Gnosticism was the beginning to rub off on some of the Christians, and Paul writes to combat this heresy.

b. Chart on Gnosticism

<u>Spirit</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>God</u>	<u>PLAROMA (God – Ultimate In The Spirit World)</u>

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c. Explanation of Gnosticism: Gnosticism was a type of philosophical thinking which took many different forms, but whatever form it took, it always denied the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis* which means knowledge. Gnostics claimed that the answer to every problem pertaining to God and the universe was theirs, obtained by their hodge-podge of mysticism and philosophy. The particular form of gnosticism to hit Colossae was Judaistic-Gnosticism which was simply a combination of Old Testament works and Greek philosophy. For this study in the Book of Colossians, it is only necessary to study the gnostic aspects of this Judaistic-Gnosticism that was trying to force its way into the thinking of the Christians, getting them to deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gnostics believed that all matter was evil and in violent opposition to the spirit world. The ultimate in the spiritual world was the *plaroma*, which to them was the sum total of the divine powers and attributes. If matter is evil, then God and matter (creation) must be antagonistic. Therefore the Gnostics endeavored to keep the pure divinity and the gross world as far apart as possible, while intellectual necessity forbade the entire breaking of this bond between them. Thus to bridge the gap between God (*plaroma*) and evil they cleverly devised a system whereby intermediate beings called aeons or emanations filled the void between spirit and matter until the intangible and the infinite were confined and curdled into earthly matter. This brought naturally the ascetic mortification of the flesh because the flesh was considered evil. They believed that salvation was the liberation of the soul from the world of matter and entrance into the *plaroma* world of spirit.

Gnosticism could not accept the fact that Christ was God because matter is evil and Christ had a humanity. Therefore the Gnostics made Christ a sub-angelic being (aeon, emanation) somewhere along the scale between *plaroma* and matter. The Gnostic asked himself, "How could a holy God create a sinful world?" The Gnostic answered this by saying that God limited Himself in creation. There was evolution of created beings from God, who was the *plaroma*. The first evolution involved a second and so on. The more numerous the emanations (evolving spirits or angelic beings) the farther away from deity they became, and as a result the divine element in them became more feeble until it became so diffused that contact with matter was possible and creation of the material world took place. These emanations

were so far removed from deity (*plaroma*) that now sinful matter could be created. These angelic mediators (aeons, emanations) became responsible for creation. Thus a holy God was not held responsible for the creation of an evil world; the emanations were held responsible. Thus the Gnostics saw Christ as nothing more than a high form of an angelic mediator somewhere along the scale between spirit and matter.

NOTE: It is interesting to note that the ancient Colossian heresy of Gnosticism which Paul had to combat resembles the opinion of the modern day Jehovah Witnesses, for the Jehovah Witnesses advocate that Jesus Christ was the first among many other created intermediaries between God and man. Thus the Jehovah Witnesses say God created Christ and then gave Christ the authority to create other things. The modern viewpoint of the Jehovah Witnesses is the very thing Paul sets out to refute in Col. 1:15-17.

d. The Person of Christ 1:15-17

1). In Relation To God 1:15

a). ***“Who is the image of the invisible God”*** — The word “image” has two basic ideas attached to it: (1) Representation which means stamp on or impression, a precise reproduction in every aspect and implies an archetype (original). It suggests a likeness that is not accidental but is purposed to resemble the original. For example, the original and the make of an automobile or the head of a person on a coin. The resemblance is not accidental, as an egg is like another, but an “image” or “archetype” of which it is a copy. This is equivalent to our Lord’s teaching in John 14:9 where he claims to be the visible image of the invisible God. (2). Manifestation means that Christ was the outward showing forth of God. The present tense implies that He is always and everywhere the manifestation of God. Jesus Christ is the great and final theophany. A theophany is a visible manifestation of God such as seen in the burning bush, the Shekinah glory, etc. This is equivalent to the Apostle John’s teaching in John 1:18.

b). ***“The firstborn of every creature”*** — Translate: “The firstborn of all creation.” The word “firstborn” speaks of Christ’s priority of creation and His sovereignty over it.

2). In Relation To Creation 1:16-17

a). ***“For (because) by (in) him were (the) all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers”*** — The “for” actually should be translated because, referring to the fact that Jesus Christ is Creator from Col. 1:15.

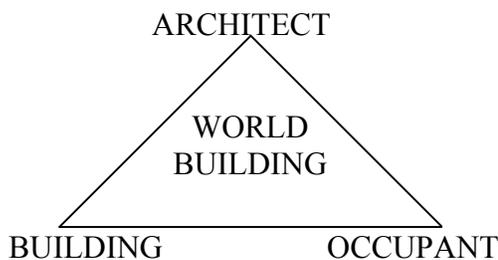
This says in the Greek, “Because in Him were all things created,” The act of creation rested in the sphere of Christ originally. Christ was the primary cause of creation; thus creation is dependent upon Christ. HE IS THE ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE. LOGIC: If Christ created all things, He himself cannot be created, for only God can create. NOTE: Jehovah Witnesses translate this verse the following way: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation because by means of him all (other) things were created in the heavens and upon the earth. . . all (other) things have been created through him and for him. Also he is before all (other) things and by means of him all (other) things came into existence.” The Jehovah Witnesses have added words to the text that are not in the original Greek.

b). ***“All things were created by him”*** — This in the Greek says, “All things were created through (by means of) him.” Thus all things by

means of Christ were created. CHRIST IS THE BUILDER OF THE UNIVERSE (cf. John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2).

- c). **“And for him”** — Christ is the full purpose of creation. All of creation is for His glory. Creation belongs to Christ and it is to reflect His glory. CHRIST IS THE OCCUPANT OF THE UNIVERSE.

Several steps are involved in the construction of a building. First an architect is obtained to design the building and prepare plans and specifications in accordance with the expressed desires of the owner. THUS CHRIST IS THE ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE (in Him). Then plans are submitted for bids to builders and contractors and a builder is secured. THUS CHRIST IS THE BUILDER OF THE UNIVERSE (through Him). After the completion of the building, it is occupied by the owner and devoted for its intended use. THUS CHRIST IS THE OCCUPANT OF THE UNIVERSE (for Him).



- d). **“And he is before all things”** — This is a very strong or intensive word in the Greek and could be translated, “He himself and no other is continually before all things (the universe).” This is a strong statement for the pre-existence and eternity of the person of Jesus Christ, which is another way of stressing His deity.
- e). **“And by him all things consist”** — This may be translated, “And in him all things hold together.” Christ is the principle of cohesion in the universe. He is not only Creator but Sustainer and Preserver of this universe. Without Christ holding the universe together, it would go back into nothing. LOGIC: Only God can sustain and hold together the universe. Thus Christ is God.
3. Colossians 2:9: Translation: **“Because in him (Christ) dwells ‘deep down ‘continuously and permanently all the fullness (plaroma) of the Godhead bodily wise.”**
- a. “For” — This should be translated because and it gives the cause or reason why the Colossian church was to beware of vain philosophy (cf. Col. 2:8).
- b. **“In him dwelleth”** — In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The Greek word for “dwell” means to dwell deep down permanently and speaks of the continual permanence of the Godhead that dwells in the person of Jesus Christ.
- c. **“All the fullness (plaroma)”** — All the divine attributes that make up God have their fixed abode in the person of Jesus Christ. To the philosophy of the Gnostics, the ultimate in the spirit world was the plaroma or God thus Paul says that the plaroma dwelt in the person of Jesus Christ, This is a strong statement for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ,
- d. **“Of the Godhead bodily”** — The “Godhead” refers to all the essence of God (attributes or quality). All that God is dwells in Christ; thus Christ is God. The word “Bodily” refers to the human body prepared for

Christ in the Incarnation and which is now glorified in heaven.

4. Hebrews 1:1-3

a. Background: The main purpose for writing the Book of Hebrews was to show the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant (Testament) over the whole Old Testament system, especially the Old Covenant, which is the Mosaic Law. In Hebrews 1:1-3 the author of Hebrews sets out to show the superiority of the person of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament prophets.

b. Jesus Christ Has Superior Revelation over the Old Testament Prophets

1:1,2a

- 1). ***“God, who at sundry times (in many parts)”*** — In the Old Testament God spoke through the Pentateuch (Law), prophets, poetical books, history, etc. Each of these sections only set forth a part of God’s will and was not final or complete. This indicated that revelation of the Old Testament was not complete. Old Testament revelation was progressive; all could not be revealed at once because all could not be understood at once.
- 2). ***“And in diverse manners (in many ways)”*** — In the Old Testament many different ways or methods of revelation were used - visions, dreams, prophecy, tabernacle, offerings, priesthood, types, etc.
- 3). ***“Spoke in times past unto the father by the prophets”*** — God, who revealed truth in the Old Testament, is the same God who reveals truth in the New Testament. God in the Old Testament revealed Himself and His plan to the fathers (leaders) of Israel through the prophets (a prophet represents God before man).
- 4). ***“Has in these last days”*** — The word “last” means extreme or last in time. God has made His final revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. There will be no more after this revelation. The final and complete revelation of God is in His Son, Jesus Christ.
- 5). ***“Spoken unto us by (his) Son”*** — The text says “in Son,” stressing the quality and character of the revelation. The stress is upon the nature of the revealer. The emphasis is not upon what He said as much as who he is and what He has done. POINT: Jesus Christ can make a final and complete revelation because He is to His very nature the Son of God. “In Son” speaks of a special relationship the Son sustains to the Father. This speaks of the distinction that exists between the prophets as God’s creatures used as instruments in His hands and the Son who by nature is deity. What kind of revelation is this? It is a Son-revelation.

c. Why Does Jesus Christ Qualify To Be The Revealer? 1:2b-3

- 1). ***“Whom he has appointed heir of all things”*** — This may mean two things: (1) The dominion promised Adam which he lost through the Fall into sin. This dominion the Son of God regained as the Last Adam through His Incarnation, vicarious death, and victorious, bodily resurrection. In the future Messianic Kingdom, the Lord Jesus, as Messiah, will reign over a perfect earth and a glorified humanity. He will be heir of all things; or (2) A better thought is to take “has appointed” (timeless aorist) and give it a timeless meaning. Eternal sonship and heirship go together. One could not be appointed heir of all things (the universe) and not be co-equal with God. If Christ is heir of all things, He must be equal in all things. Therefore Christ is qualified to reveal.
- 2). ***“By (through) whom He made the worlds (ages)”*** — The word “worlds” should be translated ages and includes all that exists in the

world, physical and spiritual under the conditions of time. This includes not only things and spirit beings but in addition plans and purposes. POINT: It was through Christ as intermediate agency that God made the world. Christ here is seen as the builder, manager and operator (sustainer) of this universe throughout successive time periods. Christ is the instrument God used to plan the ages. Therefore Christ is qualified to reveal.

- 3). ***“Who being (always being) the brightness of His glory”*** — The word “brightness” should be translated radiance, outraying or effulgence and speaks of light beaming from a luminous body. This word does not mean to reflect which indicates to flash forth an external light, but radiate, which means to flash forth an intrinsic light. Jesus Christ radiates the glory of God. “Glory” speaks of all the divine attributes. Jesus Christ radiates the glory of God. Christ can make a revelation of God because He possesses deity intrinsically in His nature (cf. John 1:14). Thus Christ is qualified to reveal.
- 4). ***“And the express (exact) image (substance) of His person”*** — The word “express” means to mark or impress with a tool. And it came to mean exact replica. The word “image” means substance. Thus Christ is the exact replica of the substance of God; therefore Christ is God. Thus Christ is qualified to reveal (cf. John 10:30).
- 5). ***“And upholding all things by the word (spoken word) of His power”*** — The word “upholding” seems to mean bearing along and refers to movement or progress towards a definite goal. Jesus Christ is managing or governing all things in God’s program to a certain end. POINT: This indicates there is a goal within history and it is all moving towards certain future events that will bring ultimate and complete glory to God (cf. Eph. 1:11-12). Thus Christ is qualified to reveal.
- 6). ***“When he had by himself purged (having made cleansing) our sins”*** — Notice the emphasis is not upon what Christ did for us per se, but what He did to our sins. Christ solved the sin problem at the Cross forever (cf. Heb. 9:26). Christ made cleansing of sin by himself; He did it voluntarily; it was not done by a priest as in the Old Testament but by the death of Jesus Christ. Christ’s death made it possible for men to come to God. Thus Christ is qualified to reveal. POINT: There is no use to reveal God to a helpless sinner unless something is done for that sinner that he might understand the revelation. Thus Christ had to die for sin.
- 7). ***“Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”*** — When Christ sat down, it indicates that His work for sin was final and complete. The Old Testament priests never sat down when going through their ritual for sin. Why? Because their work was never finished, but Christ died once for all and forever for sin. Thus having finished His work for sin, Christ is qualified to reveal.

#### M. The Importance of the Deity of Christ

1. If Jesus were not true God, then He could not have borne the load of sin which the Father placed on His shoulders on Calvary — He could not have been the Savior of men from sin.
2. If Jesus were not true God, then He could not have presented Himself pure and undefiled as an acceptable sacrifice before God as the Lamb without spot or blemish.
3. If Jesus were not true God, His teaching would be a mockery, His claims would

be worthless, and we would be worse than fools to follow in His way.

4. The deity of Christ is of such significance that one's faith may be tested by it, for it is impossible to be a Christian and reject Christ's deity (1 John 4:15; 5:5).
- N. Problem Passages on the Deity of Christ

1. Introduction: No doctrine of Scripture is completely free from problems, for there are isolated verses that seem to contradict the particular doctrine set forth. This is also true of the deity of Christ, but there are far less problems with this doctrine than other doctrines of Scripture. The cultist and liberals pounce on these verses and try to make a case for the fact that Jesus was not God but a good man. While the evidence for the deity of Christ is overwhelming, we must have answers to those verses that might come into dispute.
2. John 1:1: Much is made by amateur grammarians about the absence of the definite article (the) before God in the words, "**and the word was God.**" These pseudo grammarians attempt to translate the word "a god," indicating that the Word (Jesus Christ) was not the God (Jehovah) but a lesser god. ANSWER: (1) Grammarians know that the absence of the article places emphasis upon quality or essence. Thus a free translation could be, "And the Word as to His essence was God." (2) The article is omitted before the noun God in four other places in this chapter (1:6, 12, 13, and 18) and in John 13:3 "God" is written once without the article and once with it. In each of these places "God" means "God in essence" and should never be translated "a god," (3) If Jesus Christ (the Word) is "a god" and Jehovah is "the God" then we have polytheism because Christ would be just one of many gods.
3. John 14:28: Here our Lord said, "**My Father is greater than I.**" Those who oppose the deity of Christ say that this proves that Christ is inferior to the Father and less than deity. ANSWER: Christ is one with the Father in essence (John 10:30) but He is subordinate to the Father in His mediatorial office (1 Tim. 2:5). This must refer to His position which is a result His own self-imposed limitations because of the Incarnation. Thus this refers to priority, not inferiority.
4. Mark 13:32 (Matt. 24:36): In this verse the Lord says, "**Concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son, but the Father.**" Many have taken this to mean that the Lord was not omniscient; thus He is not true deity. ANSWER: Jesus is speaking here in the capacity as the Son of Man under the self-imposed limitations of incarnation. While Christ had all the attributes of deity, He surrendered the independent use of these attributes. Buswell comments,

“. . . there is no contradiction in the statement that the Son, at the time of the Olivet discourse, did not know the day and the hour of His Second Coming, and yet He retained, in the Incarnation, all the attributes of His eternal deity, including His omniscience. There is no contradiction, I say, because it is a fact that even in human psychology there are different levels of consciousness. It is not a contradiction to say that a person may know something which he does not know. In one sense of the word he knows it, in the sense of the power of recall. In another sense he does not know it — he does not hold it in his active consciousness. Prior to the Incarnation the eternal Second Person of the Trinity chose, when He became flesh, to operate in a normal human horizon so that He might literally have common human experience. Thus, though omniscient, He chose not to have in His active consciousness at this time, the knowledge of the day and hour of His return.” (J. O. Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, II, 406).

“It is significant that after His resurrection, when asked in regard to the

time of His return, He did not say that He did not know, but He said, “It is not for you to KNOW THE TIMES OR THE SEASONS, WHICH THE Father has placed within His own authority” (Acts 1:7). (Ibid. II, 31)

Note also that in one sense this is an extra-ordinary claim. Christ places Himself above the category of angels (the highest created beings) and classes himself with the Father. The order seems to be: man, angels, Son, Father.

5. 1 Cor. 1:3: “***And the Head of Christ is God.***” Paul cannot imply inferiority by this statement, any more than in the case of the wife to the husband, which would be a contradiction of Gal. 3:28.
6. 1 Cor. 15:28: “***And when all things are subjected to him, then the Son also himself will be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.***” Paul is speaking of the relation of the Son to the Father (verse 24) which was ever one of subjection (cf. John 5:30). But subjection does not imply subordination in the sense of inequality. The reference in verse 28 may well refer to organizational matters that do not come within the purview of revealed knowledge.
7. John 17:21: This verse is quoted in an attempt to weaken the force of John 10:30, “I and the Father are one”, about the meaning of which his audience was in no doubt whatever (cf. verse 33), In 17:21, however, the second “one” is not in the best manuscripts (cf. R.V.); thus simply, “that they also may be in us.”
8. Philippians 2:5-8: A fair rendering of this passage might be: “*Cultivate this attitude of mind among you, which was in Christ Jesus, who being already in the form of God did not treat it as a prize to be equal with God, but divested himself, taking the form of a servant.*” No one would dispute that when Paul says, Christ was in the “form” of a servant, he means that he was a servant in the truest and fullest meaning of the word. There is no ground for taking the phrase “in the ‘form’ of God” to mean less. Now from the nadir of his humiliation God has re-invested Him with the insignia of His ineffable and divine glory, “and has given him the name that is — without exception — above every name.”
9. Mark 10:17-18: The rich young ruler came to the Lord and said, “***Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?***” ***And Jesus said unto him, ‘Why callest me good? There is none good but one, that is God.’*** There are those who believe that Jesus Christ in this passage is disclaiming his sinlessness and thus denies His deity. ANSWER: The rich young ruler called Christ “Good (*ayathos*) Master.” The Greek word for “good” means intrinsic goodness and “master” is a title for Christ’s humanity. Our Lord wants the young ruler to think about the title he has given Christ and to challenge his own understanding on the person of Christ. When our Lord says that no one is good but God, He is indirectly pointing to Himself as true goodness and true deity. He wanted the young ruler to see that He is God. Notice also in verse 21 the Lord commands the young man to follow Him. He demands a response that had hitherto been the prerogative of God (Num. 14:24). Thus Christ in context must be speaking of the fact that He is truly God.
10. Mark 15:34 (Matt. 27:46): This prayer on the Cross (“***My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?***”) has been seized upon as a possible refutation of Christ’s claims to deity. We cannot, of course, know all that these words meant for Him at that terrible moment, but there are several possible interpretations. First, He was still in communion with his Father, in spirit of the past tense of the verb. Second, the meaning of these words to an attentive Jew would be that He was claiming all the Twenty-second Psalm for Himself, for it was a common practice to name books and Psalms by their opening words, e.g.,

Psalm 113 was called the “Hallel,” from the Hebrew word with which it begins. An approximate analogy might be a dying Christian saying only: “Just as I am without one plea”; but his friends would know that the hymn as a whole was in his mind. The third possibility is that He was quoting it with the immediate context in mind, namely, forsaken with regard to present help. The fact that He did not use the Hebrew wording of the original but that of His mother tongue serves only to bring out the poignant depth of his feeling of desolation.

#### IV. The Humanity of Christ

- A. Major Passages: Phil. 2:6-9; John 1:14; Rom. 1:2-5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 1:1-3; Gal. 4:4-5.
- B. Introduction: Jesus Christ is as much a man as He is God. The problems revolving around the person of Christ become more intensified as one considers the humanity of Christ in relation to His deity. This is one of the great mysteries of the Faith (1 Tim. 3:16), which will never be completely understood as long as we are in the human body. The Scriptures teach that Christ is both God and man but to grasp the total meaning is beyond the thinking capacity of the human mind; thus this doctrine, like many others, is accepted by faith. Liberals are willing to make Christ a good man, even the best man, but they will never accept that He is the God-Man. As one liberal put it, “Don’t put skin on God or you lose the spiritual meaning of God!”
- C. The Incarnation
  1. The Act of the Incarnation: This deals with the Virgin Birth of Christ and this subject has been covered in these notes (cf. pp. 4-7).
  2. Purposes for the Incarnation
    - a. To be a Savior (Heb. 2:9-12; 9:26; Mark 10:45; 1 John 3:5): The Savior had to be a perfect, sinless, human sacrifice for sin that would meet the holy righteous demands of God against sin. Christ was the spotless Lamb of God, who, as a man, bore the sins of men in His body.
    - b. To be a Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5): There is one mediator between God and man and this is the God-Man, Christ Jesus. A mediator must be both God and man or he does not qualify for a mediatorial office.
    - c. To be a High Priest (Heb. 5,7,9): A priest represents man before God. Only a man could do this. Christ is the Christian’s great High Priest, who is constantly bringing every Christian in intercession before the throne of God. Christ is both sacrifice and sacrificer.
    - d. To be a King (2 Sam. 7:16-19; Matt. 27:37): Christ must sit on the throne of David ruling over the nation of Israel. Only a man could reign as King.
    - e. To be an example (1 Pet. 2:21): Christ must be a man if Christians are to follow His footsteps in righteousness, holiness and suffering.
    - f. To reveal the Father (John 1:14, 18; 14:9; 2 Cor. 4:4-6).
    - g. To confirm God’s promises (Rom. 15:8, 9 cf. Isa. 9:6; 7:14; Mic. 5:2).
    - h. To destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14, 15; John 12:31; 14:30; Col. 2:15).
    - i. To provide for the future resurrection of God’s people (John 11:24, 25; 5:28; 5:39, 44).
    - j. To prepare for the Second Advent (Heb. 9:28; 2:8; Rom. 8:19-25).
    - k. To be highly exalted (Phil. 2:8-9).
  3. Nature of the Incarnation
    - a. It was voluntary (Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 10:7).
    - b. It was deeply condescending (Heb. 2:16).
    - c. It was wondrous and supernatural, the Creator partaking of the created — taking the image and nature which He had given Adam.

- d. It was holy (Heb. 4:15; Luke 1:35).
  - e. It was self-emptying (Phil. 2:7, to be treated later).
  - f. It was becoming in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7 cf. Rom. 8:3). Christ's flesh was like that of a human being but it was sinless.
  - g. It embraces the union of the divine and human natures in one person, a subject dealt with below.
  - h. It is permanent (Rev. 1:13; Acts 7:56) in order that He might reign on the throne of David and be the Eternal Mediator between God and man.
4. Problems Relating To the Incarnation — The Kinesis Theory
- a. Introduction: The passage in dispute is Phil. 2:7 and the question is, "What did Christ empty himself of?" The words "made himself of no reputation" should be translated "emptied himself."
  - b. "**Being**" — This implies eternal existence. It shows our Lord's pre-existent deity, previous to His human birth.
  - c. "**Form**" — The word "form" gives the thought of an expression of inner character. Our Lord was of the same essence or nature of God. He had the same attributes or qualifications as God; therefore Christ is God. This is a clear statement of Christ's deity.
  - d. "**Not robbery**" — Translate: "A prize to be held on to," Our Lord willingly set aside his divine prerogatives and privileges to take upon Himself a human nature.
  - e. "**Equal**" — Translate: "On an equality with God." Our Lord was equal with God because He is God. Christ is co-existent, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father. He shared the glory of the Father (cf. John 17:5).
  - f. "**Made himself of no reputation**" — Translate: "Emptied himself." What did Christ empty Himself of?
    - 1). Incorrect Theories of What Christ Emptied Himself Of:
      - a). Docetism: They denied the humanity of Christ. They believed that He emptied himself of his humanity. ANSWER: The Apostle John answers this theory in 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7.
      - b). Abolition Theory: They say that in the Incarnation Christ relinquished all of His divine attributes. ANSWER: This would make Christ only a man, denying His deity.
      - c). Partial Abolition Theory: They say that Christ emptied himself of his relative attributes -omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. ANSWER: Why stop at just three attributes? If Christ did not have these attributes, He would not be God.
    - 2). Correct Interpretation of What Christ Emptied Himself Of:  
 Christ emptied "himself in that He voluntarily restricted the independent use of His attributes and veiled His glory (John 17:1, 5). It was necessary for Christ to put certain limitations on Himself because He had become a man. However He did not relinquish any of His attributes. Christ stripped Himself of the robes of glory, and covered Himself with the rags of humanity.
  - g. "**The form of a servant**" — As the mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), Christ did the will of His Heavenly Father and not His own. Thus Christ, as a man, surrendered His human will to the Father. He was in subjection or a place of submission. He remained what He had ever been, the eternal Son, but He took a human body, spirit and soul into union with the divine nature. He now becomes the God-Man.
  - h. "**Likeness of man**" — Our Lord was like man but He was not a mere man with a sinful flesh. He was the God-Man.
  - i. "**He humbled himself**" — As God, our Lord became man, and walked among sinful men. What an act of humility! For Christ to be made flesh was more

humility than for angels to be made worms.

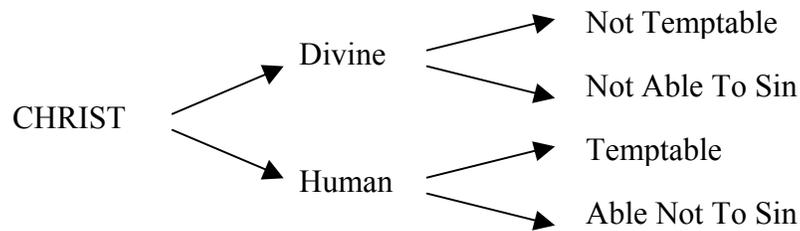
- j. ***“The death of the Cross”*** — The Incarnation had in view the crucifixion. Without the Cross, there is no meaning to the Incarnation. At the Cross, the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb without spot or blemish, died for sinners and solved the sin problem forever. Note that the extent of Christ’s submission to the Father was a willingness to be put to death for sin. NOTE: The eternal Son of God became lowly flesh. He was mocked, scorned, beaten, spat upon, falsely accused, and crucified. All this because He loved us. The God-Man had to go to the Cross to bear the sins of sinners. This was the only way men could be brought to God.

#### D. The Human Nature of Christ

1. Introduction: The incarnate Christ has a true and complete humanity. He is God, but He is also man.
2. Christ Had a True Human Body: (1) He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4); (2) His body was composed of flesh and blood and it was material like that of all men’s bodies (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 4:2-3), and (3) It was handled by men (1 John 1:1).
3. Christ Was Subject To Normal Growth (Luke 1:80; 2:52).
4. Christ Possessed a Human Soul and Spirit (Matt. 26:38; John 13:21).
5. Christ’s Body Partook of Normal Body Functions: (1) Agony and pain (Heb. 5:8; Luke 22:24; Mark 15:34); (2) Hunger (Matt. 21:18); (3) Thirst (John 19:28); (4) Weariness (John 4:6); (5) Breathing (John 20:22) and (6) it was tested (Matt. 4; Luke 4).
6. Christ’s Body Had Normal Human Emotions: (1) Love (Mark 10:21); (2) Compassion (Matt. 9:36); (3) Joy (Luke 10:21); (4) Sorrow (Luke 19:41); (5) Surprise (Luke 7:4 cf. Mark 6:6); (7) Anger (Mark 3:5; John 2:13-16, Matt. 21:12-17).
7. Christ’s Body Could Die: His deity could not die but His humanity could die.
8. Conclusion: The Bible presents Jesus as truly human. As a man, He partook of all the normal bodily functions that men do. He needed to bathe, have his clothes washed, get his beard shaved, etc., like every other man.

#### E. The Sinlessness of Christ

1. Verses Stating the Sinlessness (Impeccability) Of Christ
  - a. John 8:46: No one could convict Christ of sin.
  - b. John 14:30: Satan had no hold on Christ and Satan grips anything that is sinful.
  - c. 2 Cor. 5:21: Christ had no evil thoughts.
  - d. 1 Pet. 2:22: Christ did no acts of sin.
  - e. Heb. 4:15: Christ was tested (tempted) to the infinite degree, yet He did not sin.
  - f. Heb. 7:26: Christ is separate from all sin.
  - g. Luke 1:35: Christ is called “the holy thing”.
  - h. Conclusion: Christ was not able to sin, not able not to sin. Christ had no capacity for sin because He was perfectly holy. If we say that Christ was able not to sin, it means that His Sinlessness rested on His choice and most certainly indicates He may have had the capacity for sin if He yielded to it. It is better to say that Christ was not able to sin which indicates His Sinlessness was based on His essence or nature.
2. Can a Sinless (Impeccable) Person Be Tempted?
  - a. Christ had no sin nature but His sinless human nature was tempted. The temptation that came to Christ did not come from within His person (human nature) but came from with-out.
  - b. Christ’s divine nature is not temptable (Jas. 1:13) but His human nature was externally tempted.



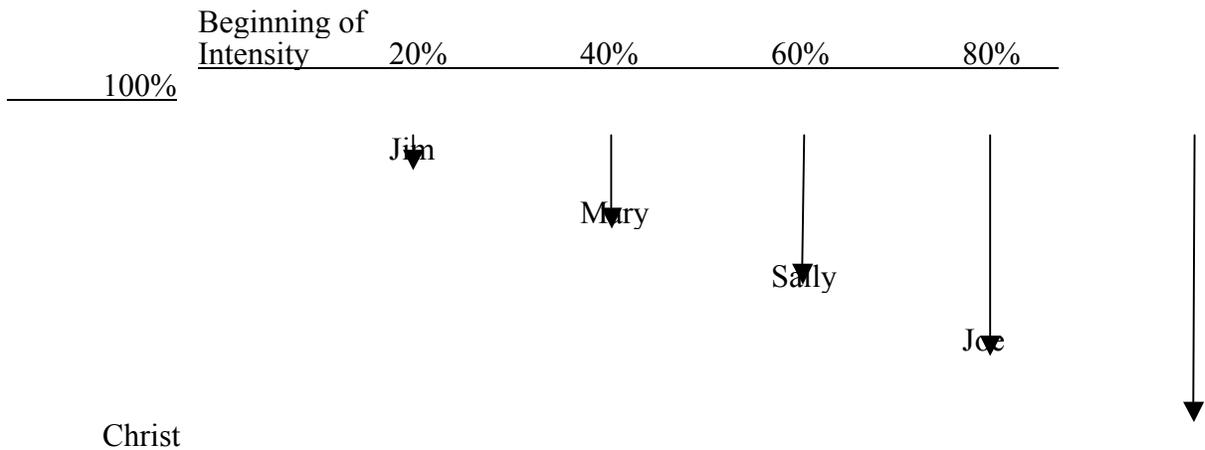
- 1). POINT: When the divine and the human meet in one person, the ability to sin (peccability) is cancelled out because of deity, but temptability of the human nature remains.
- 2). POINT: Temptation is not sin itself but it is solicitation (wooing) to do evil.
- 3). POINT: While the temptation may be real, there may be infinite power to resist that temptation, and if the power is infinite, the person is not able to sin.
- c. Theological Problem: Can a sinless person be tempted? This is the same as saying is it possible to attempt the impossible? Yes! It is possible for a rowboat to attack a battleship even though it is impossible for the rowboat to conquer the battleship.
- d. Practical Illustration: The testings came to Christ to prove that He could not sin and was qualified to be the Savior.  
 Years ago a huge bridge was constructed across a deep canyon to save miles of railway travel.. On the day of the dedication of the massive spider-web-like bridge, stretching across the gap, hundreds of railway officials, construction engineers, and others were gathered far below, looking up at the impressive work just completed. As the spectators watched with wonder, come doubtful as to whether the bridge would hold the load that would be taken across, two trains were brought from opposite directions and stopped while directly on the bridge. This test was not to see whether the bridge would hold or not, but to prove it could not break, despite the load which was far greater than any it would ever have to take at any time.
3. Were the Temptations of Christ Real?
  - a. While Christ never had a sin nature, being not able to sin, he never experienced the inner struggle with sin; yet His testings were real.
  - b. Christ was absolute holiness and so an external contact with sin brought an intensity of sin not comprehensible to sinful man. Christ had 100% sensibility to sin.
    - 1). Forty days of hunger and testing by our Lord have never been experienced by any other human frame in such intensity of suffering.
    - 2). The temptation to turn stones to bread was very real because Christ had the power to do it.
    - 3). Who ever has been offered the kingdoms of the world?
    - 4). Christ who was perfectly holy struggled as He contemplated the Cross in the Garden of Gethsemane.
    - 5). Our Lord experienced a testing that no other man could, He died for the sins of men on the Cross.
4. How Do the Testings of Christ Relate to the Christian's Testings? (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:14-16)
  - a. The Bible states clearly that Christ was tested in all points just as a Christian; yet He was without sin (Heb. 4:14-16). To be tested at every point may refer to testing in the realm of the world, the flesh (outward testing to perfect humanity) and the devil (cf. Luke 4:1-13; Matt. 4:1-11). Others think the testing was in the realm of the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride

of life (1 John 2:14-15). NOTE: Christ did not have to be tested in every area of sin but only in every point of sin.

- b. Jesus Christ is not sympathetic with the evil the Christian might do for He hates sin and died for it. But Christ is sympathetic and understands the testings of the world, the flesh and the devil which the Christian is daily subjected to. Sin is lawlessness or disobedience to God's Word (1 John, 3:4). It is a tendency to become independent from God, and Christ never is pleased when the Christian sins, although He died for every sin the Christian might commit.

5. How Can Christ Be Sympathetic Since He Has No Sin Nature?

- a. The sympathy is with the intensity of the testing.
- b. All testing is the same in essence whether it comes from within or without. Whether Christ does not have a sin nature does not affect the issue.
- c. Jesus Christ was tested to the infinite degree and did not yield to the temptations. Christ experienced the ultimate in intensity of suffering in temptation, and overcame the temptation. Therefore He can be fully sympathetic with the temptations set forth by the devil towards the Christian.



The intensity of Christ's sufferings were the maximum of intensity.

F. The Two Natures of Christ

- 1. Introduction: Jesus Christ is called the theanthropic person in that He is both God and man.
- 2. Two Natures Theologically Stated
  - a. One personality: Jesus Christ was not two persons but one person with two natures. POINT: "Though Christ sometimes operated in the sphere of His humanity and in other cases in the sphere of His deity, in all cases what He did and what He was could be attributed to His one person. Even though it is evident that there were two natures in Christ, that is, a human nature and a divine nature, He is never considered a dual personality. The normal pronouns such as I, Thou, and He are used of Him frequently" (Walvoord, "The Person of the Incarnate Christ", Bib-Sac, 466:105, Apr. 1960).
  - b. Two natures: Jesus Christ has two distinct natures, inseparably united; yet no mixture, loss or transference of attributes from one nature to the other. This is referred to as the hypostatic union.
  - c. Final statement: Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe. He is perfect humanity and undiminished deity united in one person forever.

3. The Results of the Two Natures of Christ
  - a. As man, Christ could die; as God, Christ's death has infinite value as the one acceptable sacrifice for sin.
  - b. As God, His priesthood could be eternal after the order of Melchizedek. As man, His priesthood could evidence human sympathy.
  - c. This union largely makes possible the prophetic office of Christ. While God can speak from heaven, it was His purpose to reveal Himself more clearly by becoming man — hence, the Incarnation.
  - d. The kingly office of Christ likewise demanded both natures: a literal son of David to sit upon the throne of Israel; and One who is God, to insure the quality of His government and everlasting duration of His reign.
  - e. We worship Christ because He is God; He understands our deepest needs because He is a man.
  - f. The humanity of Christ is unique, for He had no human father. He was also without a sin nature and never committed personal sin.
  - g. His human nature, while remaining human, has been exalted to infinite glory through the resurrection and ascension. Hence, the promise that we shall be like Him, having a glorified body (Phil. 3:21).
4. The Two Natures Historically Related
  - a. Introduction: From the very beginning, the Church of Jesus Christ has been defending and developing the doctrine of the deity of Christ. More controversy has taken place over the person of Christ than all the other phases of theology put together. The reason for this is that if Jesus Christ is not true deity and true humanity then there is no Christianity. Thus the orthodox position of the Church is that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, and any viewpoint that holds differently must be considered heresy.
  - b. First Century
    - 1). Docetists: This was a form of Gnosticism that accepted the deity of Christ but rejected His humanity. Because they felt matter was evil, they concluded that for Jesus to be God he must not have a true humanity. Thus to the Docetist the humanity of Christ was but an optical illusion, having only ghost-like qualities.
    - 2). Gnostics: The most prominent heresy was to deny the deity of Christ because of His humanity, which they said was evil. The Gnostics believed all matter was evil. This heresy is clearly refuted in the New Testament (John 1:1-3; Col, 1:15-17; 2:9 and 1 John).
  - c. From 100 A.D. to 451 A.D.
    - 1). Ebionites: This was an early heresy that saw Jesus as born of human parents, chosen, inspired and exalted of God. The emphasis was placed on the excellence of His character but Jesus was definitely not God.
    - 2). Alogoi: They believed that Christ was purely human, born of a virgin, and divinely adopted (adoptionism) when the Spirit descended on Him at baptism and exalted Him at resurrection. This view says that Christ was mystically absorbed into the Godhead and became a Son at His baptism.
    - 3). Monarchianism and Sabellianism: A third century heresy was Monarchianism and it took the following forms:
      - a). Dynamic Monarchianism: This view bordered on Adoptionism and desired to maintain the humanity of Christ. It emphasized the unity of the Godhead, denying the distinctions of three persons in the Godhead. Thus Jesus is only a man and the Holy Spirit but a divine influence. This was popularized by Paul of Samosata.
      - b). Modalistic Monarchianism: This view tried to maintain the divinity of Christ by stating that the Father Himself had become incarnate in Christ (Patripassianism). Thus the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are but three

modes of manifestation, not three distinct persons. This view was popularized by Sabellius.

- c). Conclusion: Monarchianism, in its desire to maintain the unity (one God) of God, failed to make a distinction of the persons within the Godhead and the divinity of Christ became a mere power or influence. Monarchianism was opposed by Tertullian and Hippolytus in the West and Origen in the East. Tertullian was the first to assert clearly the tri-personality of God, and to maintain the substantial unity of the three Persons. Origen did not have a clear understanding of the Trinity, for he spoke of the Second Person of the Trinity as being subordinate in essence to the First Person and implied that the Holy Spirit was created by the Son.
- 4). Arianism: This was a third and fourth century controversy that took on great proportions. This is the most important controversy over the deity of Jesus Christ. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria in the East, carried Monarchianism to its logical conclusion and claimed that Christ was a superhuman creature; the first of creatures, not God, and yet more than man. The man to oppose Arius was Athanasius, who was a deacon. Athanasius was zealous to maintain the deity of Christ. Arius said that Christ was *homoiousias* (of like substance with God); that is that Christ was like God but not the same nature or substance as God. Athanasius said Christ was *homoousias* (of the same nature as God); that is that Christ was equal in essence with God and thus Christ was God. Athanasius' fundamental position was that union with God is necessary unto salvation, and that no creature but only one who is Himself God can unite us with God. Athanasius held strongly to the eternal generation of the Son, while Arius said that the Son was generated from the Father. The position of Athanasius became the position of the Western church and that of Arius became that of the Eastern church. It is said that the Eastern and Western sections of the church split over the Greek letter *iota* (i). Doctrine was important to Athanasius for he saw that Christianity stood or fell on a proper understanding of the deity of Christ. Arianism was condemned as heretical at the Council of Nicea in 324 A.D. which stated, "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten not made, being of one substance (*homoousias*) with the Father. . ." Arius was banished to Illyria. However two years later Emperor Constantine put Arius back into favor and Athanasius, then bishop of Alexandria, was exiled. Thus Arianism grew in the Eastern section of the church. NOTE: Arianism is the same teaching the modern day Jehovah Witnesses give to the deity of Christ.
- 5). Christological Controversies: Once it was determined that Christ was equal with God in substance the question arose as to how Christ could be both God and man at the same time. Thus controversy arose as to how Christ's humanity, if He were God, could be tempted.
  - a). Apollinarianism: He denied the proper humanity of Christ. He conceived of man as consisting of body, soul and spirit, and sought the solution of the problem of the two natures of Christ in the theory that the Logos took the place of the human soul in Jesus. He did not deny the deity or sinlessness of Christ but denied that Christ had a human soul, making Him less than a man.
  - b). Nestorianism: He acknowledged two persons in Christ, mystically united; thus the two natures were two distinct persons, making Christ have a dual personality.

- c). Cyril of Alexander: He opposed Nestorius but was not clear on his teaching. He taught that the Logos took upon Himself a human nature, making two distinct natures but he saw the unity of the natures by means of a mutual communication or transference of attributes between the two natures.
  - d). Eutichianism: He fused the two natures so as to make them indistinguishable.
  - e). Conclusion: At the Council of Chalcedon, (451) Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutichianism and even the teachings of Cyril of Alexander were condemned as heretical. The conclusions of the council were: (1) Christ was truly God and truly man; (2) Christ was *homoousias* with God and *homoiousias* with man; (3) Christ was like man but without sin; (4) Christ was begotten of Mary, the God-bearer and (5) Christ had two distinct natures and one personality but there was no fusion or change or division of these natures. NOTE: All these conclusions are correct except #4. Mary is not the mother of God, but the mother of Jesus' humanity.
- d. From 451 A.D. To the Reformation: During this time there wasn't too much controversy about anything. The Roman Catholic Church was in complete control and this was the dark ages for the Church as well as the world, especially from 800 A.D. on. There were however a few heresies but they were all repeats of some previous form of false teaching.
- 1). Monophysites: Christ had only one nature. This was a revival of Eutichianism.
  - 2). Monothelites: Christ had two natures but only one will. This was a form of Apollinarianism.
  - 3). Adoptionism: This group stressed the humanity of Christ and claimed that He became divine by being adopted into the Godhead either at the Incarnation, His baptism, resurrection or ascension.
- e. From the Reformation To the Nineteenth Century
- 1). The Reformation did not bring any new change in the doctrine of Christ. Both Rome and the Reformation churches subscribed to the doctrine of Christ as it was formulated at Nicea and Chalcedon. From this time on there is simply a repetition of the earlier heresies concerning Jesus Christ.
  - 2). There was one group called the Socinianists, who believed that Christ was but a mere man and the Holy Spirit an influence. This was just a further development of Arianism.
  - 3). The Lutherans, however, fell into a slight error on the two natures of Christ. The Lutherans teach the Ubiquity of Christ in that as the God-Man He is everywhere present. They believe that after the ascension of Christ the human nature is omnipresent. This position had to be taken because of the Lutheran position of the real presence of Christ in the sacraments of the Lord's Supper. The result of this was the fusing or permeation of the two natures of Christ.
- f. The Nineteenth Century
- 1). Because of the Renaissance (where the mind was set free from all authority), the development of modern science, the study of comparative religions and the higher criticism of the Bible, the German rationalists came into prominence. This was the beginning of modernism or liberalism in Christianity as we know it today. These modernist in essence saw Christ as nothing more than the best of all men; He was a good example but not God. Liberalism has at its roots the denial of supernaturalism because it refuses to acknowledge the God of Scripture.

- a). Schleiermacher: Christ never rises above the human level. Christ was in unbroken union with the divine. Every man has a spark of divinity but Christ is the one man who had perfect union with divinity. Christ was the supreme example of God-consciousness. He is the perfect religious man; thus the fountain of all religion.
  - b). Kant: Christ is merely an abstract ideal. The real historical Christ only symbolized the ethical ideal. Kant said that the church was mistaken on its orthodox viewpoint of the God-Man.
  - c). Hegel: The beliefs of the church regarding the person and work of Christ are merely man's stammering utterances of ontological idea; that is, they are simply symbols expressive of metaphysical truth.
  - d). Ritschl: He starts with the work of Christ rather than the person of Christ. The work of Christ determines His dignity. Christ is a mere man but, in view of the work He accomplished and the service He rendered, we attribute to Him the title of God. He who does the work of God can be described in the terms of God. Christ has the value of God because of His work but is not God in essence.
- 2). It was during this time that the Unitarians became a powerful force, denying both the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- g. The Twentieth Century
- 1). Neo-orthodoxy: Neo-orthodoxy was a reaction to liberalism and its complete rejection of supernaturalism, revelation, sin and redemption. Neo-orthodoxy is supposedly a bridge between orthodoxy and liberalism. In most cases it is "sugar coated" liberalism, using fundamental terminology but changing the meaning of the terms. Neo-orthodoxy was championed by Karl Barth and has been modified by Neibuhr, Brunner and Tillich. Barth is closer to orthodoxy for he acknowledges the full deity of Jesus Christ, but questions whether the Holy Spirit was a real person. Most all other men of the neo-orthodox persuasion speak of the divinity of Christ but by this they do not mean that He was full deity. They are Modalistic in their concept of the Trinity.
  - 2). Cults: During this century there has come into being a great many cults because they deny either the deity or humanity of Christ. Groups such as Christian Science, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Unity, etc. fail to accept the orthodox and historic position on the person of Christ.
5. The Two-Natures in the Historic Creeds
- a). Westminster Confession (Presbyterian — 1648): "The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very man and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of times was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of The Virgin Mary, of his substance. So that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhood and manhood, were separately joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man."
  - b). Thirty-Nine Articles (Church of England — 1562): "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man; who truly suffered, was crucified, died and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of

men.”

## 6. Conclusion

“This brief discussion is sufficient to show that there are two strands of teaching about the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. On the one hand there are those passages which show us that He was fully divine, that He was one with God and must not be thought of as only a superlatively inspired man. On the other hand there are the other passages which demonstrate no less clearly that He was man, compassed about with the weakness of this human frame.

It is not very difficult to hold firmly to one or other of these strands of teaching. There have always been some, for example, who find it easier to think of Jesus as God than as man. In the early church there were some who denied outright the humanity of Jesus and maintained that all evidence to the contrary must be explained as illusion. In modern times few would go as far as that, but there are many, and usually very devout souls, who think of Jesus with such reverence that they effectively remove Him from contact with man. They love to dwell on the divine side of His nature, and they gloss over His human ignorance, His “strong crying and tears” (Heb. 5:7).

Others find it easy to think of Jesus as a man, a man uniquely inspired, but who find it insuperably difficult to think of Him as really God. They cannot envisage a process whereby God would become man and sojourn among men, so they dismiss the whole thing as impossible.

He who would be true to the Bible evidence has the more difficult task of holding these two sets of truth in balance. He realizes that here is a mystery, in fact, the ultimate mystery. Man cannot know how an incarnation is possible. It is not within his power to envisage the means whereby One who is Almighty could compress Himself within human frame and live a human life. But he does not limit God by his own puny powers. He takes the evidence as it stands, and does not try to explain away that which does not please him. Thus he finds himself affirming that Jesus was both human and divine, both God and man. Nothing less will do justice to the Bible evidence.” (Leon Morris, *The Person Of Christ*, p, 15).

## VI. The Offices of Christ

- A. Prophet: A prophet is one who speaks God’s message to man. Jesus Christ is the Great Prophet (Deut. 18:15, 19 cf. Acts 3:22). He claimed to be a prophet (Mark 6:4) and others recognized that He was a prophet (Matt. 21:11, 46; John 4:19; John 6:14; 7:40).
1. Christ was a foreteller. He predicted certain events such as His death, resurrection and ascension (Matt. 17:22; 16:21; 20:18-19; 12:40; 17:23; John 16:16; 16:7-8; 16:12-14, etc).
  2. Christ was a forthteller. He instructed men about the will and work of God (Sermon on the Mount, Olivet Discourse, Upper Room Discourse, etc.).
  3. Christ revealed God. Unlike other prophets, Christ’s life and person revealed God in addition to His message (John 1:14, 18).
- B. Priest: A priest is one who represents man before God. Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest (Heb. 5 and 7). According to the Epistle to the Hebrews Christ fulfilled all the five necessary requirements of priesthood; (1) He was qualified for the office (Heb. 1:3; 3:1-6); (2) He was appointed of God (Heb. 5:1-10); (3) His priesthood was of a higher order than that of Aaron’s, Christ’s priesthood superceding Aaron’s as Aaron’s had superceded the patriarchal system (Heb. 5:6, 10; 7:1 thru 8:6); (4) All functions of priesthood were performed by Christ (Heb. 7:23-28; 9:11-28; 10:5-18); (5) His priesthood was eternal, indicating its superiority and finality (Heb. 7:25). As the High Priest He is both the offerer and

the sacrifice for sin, for all the typical Aaronic priesthood was fulfilled in anti-type by Christ. Thus as the Christian's High Priest, He can sympathize with the sufferings and temptations of man (Heb. 4:14-16) and make intercession for them (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

- C. King: One of the basic reasons of the incarnation was to fulfill the earthly purpose of God in the Davidic covenant. The Old Testament had predicted the coming of a king who would fulfill the promise of God to David (2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 2; 45; 72; 110; Isa. 9:6-7; Dan, 7:13-14; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 9:9). In the future millennial reign of Christ, He will sit as King over Israel and the world. There is a sense in which Christ is a King today for He rules as King in the hearts of all those who acknowledge him as Lord, Savior and Messiah (1 Tim. 6:15). Every person who trusts in Jesus Christ now is guaranteed a place with Christ in His future kingdom.