

CHRISTOLOGY

Teachings on
Wednesday Services.
Grace Church of Vaasa

2nd Draft

for

Lectures in Systematic Theology

By

Tero A. Fredriksson PhD., M.Div.

September 28, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN CHRISTOLOGY	1
Christology from Above	1
Christology from Below	2
Historical Jesus	3
CHAPTER 2: THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST	3
God Becoming a Human.....	3
The Incarnation of Christ – Becoming a Human	4
Prophecies about the Incarnation:	4
The Virgin Birth.....	4
The Genealogies in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke:	4
The Biblical Testimony of Christ	5
Theological Implications	5
CHAPTER 3: THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Eternality and P re-existence of Christ	8
Jesus’s Self-Consciousness.....	9
The Titles of Christ.....	10
(1) Messiah	10
(2) Son of God	11
(3) Son of Man.....	11
(4) Lord.....	11

Theological Implications	12
CHAPTER 4 THE UNITY OF PERSON CHRIST	12
The Council of Chalcedon	12
Alexandrian Christology and Apollinarism	13
(1) Apollinarism	13
(2) Contemporary Tendency: Roman Catholicism.....	14
(3) Contemporary Tendency: Lutherans.....	14
Antiochian Christology and Nestorianism.....	15
(1) Nestorianiam	15
(2) Contemporary Tendency: Reformed Theology	15
Biblical Solution	16
Limitations of the Chalcedonian Creed	16
Reasoning.....	16
Biblical Support	17
Theological Implications	17
CHAPTER 5: LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST	18
Jesus' Parents and Cultural Background	18
The Offices of Christ	19
(1) Prophet.....	19
(2) Priest	19
(3) King.....	19
Jesus' Miracles	20
CHAPTER 6 THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.....	21

The Historicity of Jesus	21
Early Creed	21
The Empty Tomb	23
Jesus' Appearances after the Resurrection	24
Theological Implications of the Death and Resurrection of Christ	25
Chapter 7 THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST	27
Will be added to the 3 rd draft	27
Chapter 8 THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28

INTRODUCTION

Christology is a vital branch of Christian theology that unequivocally focuses on the person of Jesus Christ, addressing the essential question of His identity. The Bible serves as the primary source for this exploration, revealing that Christ is one person with two distinct natures: divine and human. He is fully God and fully man, and while He became a man, He unalterably remained human throughout His existence.

In Christian theology, Christ holds a central and indispensable role. Without His atoning death and resurrection, Christianity as we know it would not exist. Christ's significance goes far beyond the atonement; He is the ultimate revelation of God to humanity, as emphasized in John 1:18 and 15:15. Many theologians assert that this revelation is the most complete understanding of God ever presented.

The importance of Jesus Christ transcends soteriological (salvation-related) aspects. For the Church and its members—including children—Christ is the definitive model for Christian living, as demonstrated in Luke 2:52 and Philippians 2:5. Moreover, the New Testament illustrates that Christ's work encompasses not just redemption but serves as a comprehensive example of a redeemed life. Thus, He should be the ethical and spiritual guide for all believers.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN CHRISTOLOGY

Christology from Above

Karl Barth and Emil Brunner model "Christology from above", which firmly centers on the Church's proclamation of Christ. They maintain that the Jesus depicted in the Bible is fundamentally different from the historical Jesus. This approach highlights the transformative impact Jesus' life has on believers, while raising critical questions about the historical accuracy of faith-based portrayals of Christ (Erickson, 608-609).

Proponents of this view assert the following:

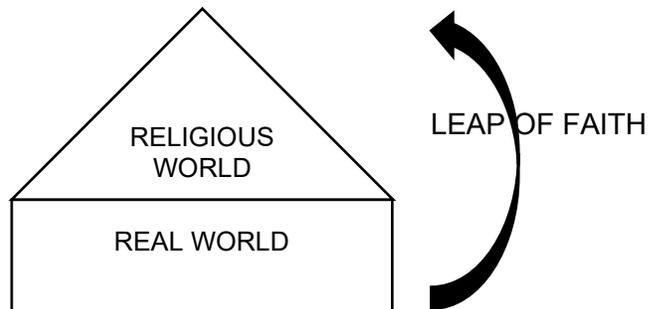
Focus: It emphasizes Jesus's divine nature, His pre-existence, and His role as the Logos (the Word of God).

Starting Point: It begins with the divine, exploring how that divine nature became incarnate in humanity.

Key Ideas: It highlights Jesus's divinity, His role as God's agent in creation and salvation, and His anticipated return in glory.

While the focus on Jesus' divinity is commendable, a significant concern is that the proponents of this approach may not possess faith in Christ but instead rely on personal experiences. This viewpoint can be compared to a house with two floors: the first floor represents the observable

real world, where rational and objective conclusions are feasible, while the second represents the religious realm or the biblical world, which primarily exists based on human experiences and is at best partially reflective of reality.



Christology from Below

In stark contrast, "Christology from below" seeks to establish Jesus' divinity through rigorous historical inquiry, demanding objective historical evidence. Wolfhart Pannenberg and his students embody this approach, arguing for a solid historical foundation for faith in Jesus's divinity, particularly through the resurrection (Erickson, 608-610). This method faces the formidable challenge of affirming Jesus' divinity without preconceived notions.

In his influential book **Jesus and Judaism**, E.P. Sanders decisively argues that Jesus must be understood within his Jewish context, spotlighting his role as a Jewish apocalyptic prophet. He identifies eight undisputed facts about the historical Jesus—ranging from His baptism by John to His crucifixion by the Romans—that significantly bolster this perspective. He later expands his findings by adding seven more critical facts. Recognized as a reliable historian, Sanders employs a modern historical method to present these 15 statements as indisputable historical facts. Below are the eight key facts about the historical Jesus, according to E.P. Sanders (Sanders, *Historical figure of Jesus*, 1993:10-11):

- (1) Jesus was undeniably baptized by John the Baptist, a pivotal figure in Jewish eschatology.
- (2) Jesus primarily operated in Galilee, engaging unequivocally in preaching and healing activities.
- (3) Jesus actively gathered disciples, including the Twelve, who formed his core group.
- (4) Jesus' public ministry was heavily focused on Judea and Galilee.
- (5) He engaged in actions and teachings that directly challenged the established Temple authorities.
- (6) Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by the Roman authorities, an undeniable historical event.
- (7) Following Jesus's death, His followers continued as a distinctly identifiable movement
- (8) Some Jews persecuted the nascent Christian movement, and this persecution undeniably persisted at least until the time of Paul's ministry.

- (9) Jesus had a final meal with his apostles.
- (10) Jesus was arrested and interrogated by Jewish authorities, specifically the high priest
- (11) Jesus was executed on the orders of the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate.
- (12) Jesus' disciples at first fled
- (13) Jesus' disciples saw him after his death
- (14) Because the disciples saw him, they believed that he would return to found a kingdom on the earth
- (15) Jesus' disciples formed a community to await his return and sought to win others to place faith in Him as God's Messiah.

These 15 points are critically drawn from Sander's works. Sanders' work emphasizes that Jesus was rather a figure firmly rooted within Judaism than disjointed from it, and His actions and teachings must be comprehensively understood within that context. Sanders' findings challenge and refute previous scholarly interpretations that aimed to demythologize Jesus, presenting Him as a mere historical figure grounded in reality.

Historical Jesus

This section will be added later in the 3rd draft

CHAPTER 2: THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

In the previous chapter, some contemporary issues of Christology were discussed. In this chapter, we will address the humanity of Christ. The discussion will proceed in the following order.

- (1) The Incarnation of Christ – God becoming a human
- (2) The biblical testimony of Christ
- (3) Theological conclusions of Christ becoming a human

God Becoming a Human

Being born of a virgin was an essential step as the second person of godhead became human. Incarnation means that Christ took upon himself a human nature. In the Bible, incarnation is also referred to as 'the Word becoming flesh.' These mentions can be found in the writings of John. This 'becoming flesh' means that God became human by taking the entire essence of a human being, along with all its characteristics, including the body and the inner person, which contains all the same components as all humans have.

Christ also remained in this human nature, not temporarily, but permanently. Jesus is eternally human. The Bible (Zech. 13:6) expresses that Christ will bear the scars of crucifixion in His body

throughout eternity. Christ's incarnation was an act through which humanity was included in the Divinity (the Trinity). This was a precisely defined plan of God for the salvation of mankind. (Gal. 4:4,5) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14) "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." (1 John 4:2) "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh..." (2 John 7).

The Incarnation of Christ – Becoming a Human

Prophecies about the Incarnation:

The term 'gibbor' in Hebrew means strong and signifies a mighty, powerful hero. It can also refer to someone who is God (Isaiah 9:5 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."). The virgin birth indicates that God came to us and became like us (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23).

The Virgin Birth

The concept of Christ having been born of a virgin has been attacked throughout human history. However, it is a clear teaching in the Bible, and giving it up would undermine our faith in the authority of the Word. Isaiah 7:14 The word "virgin" is "almah" and means 'a young woman of marriageable age', not necessarily sexual purity. The prophecy, indeed, did have a natural fulfillment during the Old Testament times, shortly after it was given. However, the prophecy was also fulfilled supernaturally in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Matthew clearly notes in his writings (Matt 1:21-25) that Christ fulfilled this prophecy. When we read about the fulfillment of the prophecy in the gospel of Luke, we notice that Mary herself said: "How will this happen, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34), thus expressing her own sexual purity.

The Genealogies in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke:

Matthew begins Jesus' genealogy with Abraham and ends it in Jesus, while Luke begins it with Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, and ends it in Adam. Matthew records Joseph's genealogy and Luke Mary's. The seeming contradiction of these genealogies can be explained by the fact that one is derived from Jesus' stepfather, Joseph, and the other from Jesus' mother, Mary.

In Jewish culture, a grandson, or even a great-grandson, can be called a son. It explains why the two genealogies are different in length: some generations are missing. Both genealogies, however, were recorded to show that Christ was both a perfect man and a perfect God. Mary's

genealogy demonstrated that He was human. Joseph's genealogy indicated Jesus' legal status as a descendant of the kings of Israel. Thus, Christ has both legal and genetic rights to David's throne. In His many confrontations with the Pharisees and other opponents, no one ever questioned Jesus' status as a member of the house of David. In His trials, Christ was accused of many serious offenses, such as blasphemy. However, He was never accused of falsely appearing as a descendant of David.

The Biblical Testimony of Christ

The New Testament texts present a comprehensive argument for the humanity of Jesus, supported by biblical evidence. It emphasizes that Jesus had a fully human body, was born of a human mother, and experienced a typical human life, including growth (Luke 2:52), nourishment such as "hunger (Matt. 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), and fatigue (John 4:6)"(Erickson, 2013:645), and physical limitations. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke further affirm his human ancestry. Jesus experienced basic human needs such as hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and ultimately suffered and died like any other human.

The New Testament record is clear about the humanity of Christ, including his psychological faculties and emotional range, which encompasses love, compassion, sorrow, and joy. He reacted to situations with appropriate emotions, demonstrating a deep capacity for human feelings. One example of Jesus' sympathetic response and human limitations was his reaction when he heard that his friend Lazarus had died. He truly felt for Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Maria. His intellectual qualities are comparable to those of a normal person, revealing that while he possessed extraordinary knowledge, he also exhibited limitations, as evidenced by his questions and expressions of ignorance about certain matters.

The New Testament addresses Jesus's spiritual life, emphasizing his dependence on God the Father through prayer and worship. Various scriptural references affirm his humanity, including his own declarations and the testimonies of others. The authors of the New Testament, including the disciples, regarded Jesus as fully human. Jesus's personality was so typical of an average human that if Jesus was not human, then no one ever has been. Based on the New Testament, Jesus' humanity is a fundamental aspect of his identity, as evidenced throughout Scripture.

Theological Implications

- (1) Christ revealed God to humanity as a man.

Christ revealed God to humanity in a profoundly personal and transformative way—by becoming human Himself. This is known as the Incarnation, where Jesus, fully divine, took on human flesh to live among us (John 1:1-18)

(2) Christ revealed humanity to God

Without becoming human, Christ could not have died for our sins and been a sufficient sacrifice for the atonement of our sins (1 Cor 15:1-4). A fascinating question arises as a result of this: is it possible for God to die? The question does not have a clear answer, but we can state that the divinity and humanity of Christ led to a mutual sharing of the attributes of God and man. In that sense, God died because God experienced death and mortality. It would have been impossible for this experience to take place without Christ becoming a human being.

(3) Christ fulfilled the covenant of Abraham

Christ is Abraham's son; through the seed of Abraham, all nations were redeemed (Genesis 12:1-3; 1 John 2:2).

(4) Christ fulfilled the covenant of David

According to 2 Samuel 7:12-16, God has made a covenant with King David, promising that a descendant of David's line will rule forever, and that His kingdom and throne will be established eternally. This covenant was unconditional and based on God's faithfulness. Jesus is identified in Scripture as the Son of David (e.g., Matthew 1:1, Luke 1:32–33) and the messianic king in the future (Dan 7:13),

Aspect	Fulfilled Now (Spiritually)	Fulfilled in Millennium (Literally)
Jesus as Son of David	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Eternal Throne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
Earthly Political Kingdom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not yet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Millennium reign
Judgment of Nations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Future event	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Millennium reign

(5) Christ's Present Session

Jesus's intercessory ministry as High Priest depends upon his humanity. As he experienced all of the human temptations and trials, he would be able to empathize with us in our struggles as humans. If he were not human, or if he were only partly human, he would be unable to effectively represent the interests of the people he represents (Erickson, 2013:645).

(6) Christ's office as a prophet

The prophecy of Moses concerning Christ is found in Deuteronomy 18:15-19, where Moses foretells the coming of a Prophet like himself (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). A Prophet Like Moses is a figure who would be divinely appointed, speak God's words, and serve as a mediator between God and the people, just as Moses did.

The Prophecy of Moses includes a messianic expectation. The people of Israel came to understand this passage as referring to the Messiah. In the New Testament, Jesus is repeatedly identified as the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Luke 24:44: After His resurrection, Jesus tells His disciples that everything written about Him in “the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms” must be fulfilled. John 1:45: Philip tells Nathanael, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law... Jesus of Nazareth. Acts 3:22-23: The Apostle Peter directly quotes Moses’ prophecy and applies it to Jesus, affirming that He is the promised Prophet.

(8) Christ destroyed the evil deeds of the devil

Evil and Sin: According to 1 John 3:8, the Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil. This passage highlights the core mission of Jesus Christ, emphasizing his role in overcoming evil and sin. By destroying the works of the devil, Jesus provides a path to salvation and reconciliation with God. Everything that the devil has introduced into the world through sin is included in this category.

Temptation and Deception: Temptation and deception are real. Satan is the father of lies, leading people astray. Jesus came to offer abundant life to believers (John 10:10). He guides us toward truth and righteousness.

Sin and Rebellion: From the fall of Adam and Eve, sin entered the human condition, separating us from God, but Christ died for our sins. so believers are no longer in eternal separation from God.

Bondage and Fear: The devil’s works enslave people to guilt, shame, and fear, but John 4:18 mentions that “There is no fear in love. But perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love refers to complete, mature love, especially the kind that comes from God, and who has seen Christ has seen God.

CHAPTER 3: THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Introduction

The purpose of this subsection is to present various viewpoints that demonstrate that Jesus Christ is God. The primary source for this presentation is the New Testament. The New Testament is a collection of books formed from independent sources that were later compiled into a single book. Finally, a discussion will be held on the significance of Christ's divinity for Christian theology, and the concepts of Ebionism and Arianism will be presented. Ebionism and Arianism were heresies that emerged in early Christianity, challenging the biblical view of Christ.

Eternality and **P**re-existence of Christ

The concept of Logos, as used by John, is particularly significant in Christology. Logos, or the Word, refers to the eternity of Christ and especially to his actions as God in the creation and arrangement of the universe (John 1:1, 1:14, 1 John 1:1). The concept of Logos is also linked to Christ's active role in God's plan of salvation. This meaning is clearly evident in the Gospel of John, where Christ is associated with the Word of God, Logos (John 1:1).

Greek philosophy (e.g., Heraclitus of Ephesus, 535-475 BC) used this term at that time to describe the ultimate cause of the universe. Christ was the cause that led to the creation of the universe; he existed before the beginning and before the creation of the universe.

Another interpretation of logos corresponds to the rabbinic theological concept of memra (memra in Aramaic, equivalent to the Greek term logos). It is a theological idea that emerged in Jewish thought. Memra is used as a substitute for the name of God in the Targums, especially when the biblical text implies anthropomorphic actions (like God walking or speaking). It represents God's Word as an active, creative, and directive force—not just speech but a manifestation of divine power (The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia: Memra). In any case, John used the term Logos in such a way that readers understood Christ to be the eternal creator of the universe.

Eternity, as a concept, is broader than pre-existence because eternity means that Jesus has always existed. Pre-existence, on the other hand, refers to Christ's existence before he was born as a human. Therefore, pre-existence is not synonymous with eternity. The Arian heresy, which we will discuss later, denied Christ's eternity but accepted his existence before becoming human.

Christ's role as the creator is a clear example of his pre-existence. Since Christ is described in the Bible as the creator, he must have existed before creation (John 1:3, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:2). Christ's own statement that he existed before Abraham (John 8:58) indicates that he at least understood himself to have existed before becoming human. John the Baptist testified that Christ had existed before him, even though he was six months older (John 1:15,30). In this way, John explained to people that Christ pre-existed.

Jesus's Self-Consciousness

Jesus's self-awareness regarding his identity and claims of divinity is a powerful demonstration of his divine nature. Although he never explicitly stated, "I am God," his actions and statements unequivocally implied his divine status. Critics who argue that Jesus's emphasis on the Father indicates that belief in him is secondary are mistaken. In reality, there are numerous instances where Jesus made claims that are only appropriate for someone who is God. For example, he spoke of sending angels (Matt. 13:41; Luke 12:8-9; 15:10) and forgiving sins (Mark 2:5-7)—actions that led to accusations of blasphemy from those who observed him.

Additionally, Jesus's authority over the Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28) and his unique relationship with the Father emphasize his self-perception (John 10:30; 14:7-9). The Gospels clearly show an evolution in Jesus' teachings; he moved from focusing solely on the Father to a clear emphasis on his own central role, especially during the Upper Room Discourse. His claims of preexistence and unity with the Father, as seen in John 8:58, leave no doubt about his divine self-identity.

During his trial, Jesus affirmed his identity as the Son of God, a statement the high priest considered blasphemous, which ultimately led to his condemnation. Throughout his ministry, he openly accepted titles that ascribed deity to himself, including "Son of God" (John 14:23). The New Testament strongly suggests that Jesus's self-perception, combined with the reactions of those around him, clearly shows he believed himself to be equal to God, with divine rights and authority. This is powerfully expressed in Thomas's declaration, "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

Since Jesus claimed to be the Christ, we must carefully examine the validity of these claims. Can we trust that Jesus's assertions are authentic, or are they just the lies of a deceiver? Did Jesus genuinely believe he was the Christ, or was this belief based on a serious misunderstanding? This ultimately gives us three clear options to interpret Jesus's identity.

- (i) Jesus' self-awareness indicated that he was God and the Messiah.
- (ii) Jesus' self-awareness was not reflected in his communication, meaning he was a liar.
- (iii) Jesus' self-awareness was not based on facts, meaning he believed he was God without being so. In that case, Jesus would have been mentally ill.

The evidence clearly indicates that Jesus believed he was God. He had the opportunity to deny being the Son of the living God and the Messiah during his trial before the high priest, an act that could have spared his life, yet he refused. This is a strong indication that Jesus was not a liar.

Jesus exhibited remarkable psychological stability: His teachings embody deep wisdom, emotional intelligence, and moral insight. A madman is usually characterized by erratic behavior,

paranoia, or disorganized thoughts, none of which align with the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels. Instead, he showed compassion, self-control, and courage even under intense pressure, such as during his trial and execution. These qualities contradict the signs of mental instability. Jesus' parables and ethical teachings (like the Sermon on the Mount) are considered some of the most profound ever recorded. Such clarity and depth are not typical of someone mentally unstable.

An argument that Jesus was a liar or mentally ill does not fit into the Gospels' description of his person, so the best possible explanation is that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the second person of the Trinity

The Titles of Christ

(1) Messiah

Jesus was called the Messiah (Μεσσίας) in John 1:41 and 4:25. Μεσσίας is the Hellenized transliteration of משיח (BDGA, 2000:635). It means the anointed one, and its translation in the New Testament is Christ (Χριστός). The Messiah, or anointed one, of the Old Testament is the same as the Christ of the New Testament. The prophet Micah states that the origin of the Messiah is in eternity (Micah 5:1). The prophet Isaiah states that the Messiah is both God and eternal (Isaiah 9:5). Paul confirms that the announcement of Christ's eternity is true (Col. 1:16-17). The titles of Messiah and Christ have contextual meanings that align with the deity of Christ.

Anointing in the Old Testament involved pouring olive oil on the head. It was a deep and layered ritual with spiritual and social importance, where a person was set apart and dedicated to God's purpose. For example, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil as a sign that they were chosen and consecrated for God's mission. Kings like Saul and David were anointed by prophets, symbolizing the authority and duty given to them by God to lead the people.

The messiahship of Jesus, or anointing, was related to the expectation of a king during his time. The king's role was to free the Jews from Roman occupation. Jesus indeed was the awaited messiah. This is clearly evident in the words of Jesus recorded by Luke (Luke 17:20-21) that the kingdom of God is in your midst, which means that the King of Israel, Jesus, was already among that group of people. Jesus made a genuine offer to Israel to be their king and messiah, but Israel rejected him, causing the realization of the kingdom of God on earth to be postponed.

Sometimes Jesus's kingdom is mentioned as the Kingdom of Heaven. This term is found almost exclusively in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was writing primarily to a Jewish audience, who often avoided saying "God" directly out of reverence. So "Heaven" was used as a respectful substitute for "God."

Another term is the Kingdom of God, which appears frequently in the gospels of Mark, Luke, and John. These Gospels were written for broader audiences, including Gentiles, and didn't shy away from using "God" directly. Both terms refer to the manifestation of God's rule in the eschatological (end-times) realm, occurring on earth for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-6).

(2) Son of God

The Bible refers to Christ as the only begotten Son of God (John 1:14, 18, John 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:19). The original word in these passages is monogenes. This word does not mean descent or birth, but instead signifies a special kind, unique. Therefore, it describes Christ as the only one of his kind in relation to God. The same description would also apply to the Holy Spirit and the Father. Additionally, the Bible calls Christ the firstborn (Col. 1:15, Rom. 8:29, Heb. 1:6, Rev. 1:5).

This original language word, "protokos," does not necessarily mean being the firstborn child. Instead, it relates to superiority. Isaac is called the firstborn of Jacob (Heb. 11:17), but we know Isaac wasn't Abraham's first son, as he was born after Ishmael. The early Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, also uses "protokos" in various contexts, such as when describing symptoms of a deadly disease (Job 18:13) or referring to people in the worst circumstances (Isa. 14:30). This relates to superiority or primacy over similar matters. For example, in the previously mentioned passage from the Letter to the Colossians (1:15), Christ is superior to everything in creation and to creation itself.

(3) Son of Man

"Son of Man" is a complex title that refers to both Jesus' full humanity and his divine, messianic authority. In the Old Testament, especially in Daniel 7:13-14, a figure "like a son of man" announces the end of history and is given eternal dominion and glory by God. This prophetic figure symbolizes God's presence on earth and has a power that no normal human could possess. Jesus identified himself as the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy, the exalted "Son of Man" who would bring in God's kingdom and rule. His suffering and resurrection were key to how he claimed this authority.

Jesus used this title for himself to show his solidarity with humanity (Matthew 8:20) and to convey his divine power, such as his authority to forgive sins and his role as the coming King who would suffer, die, and be raised to life. The title is not limited to the humanity of Christ. Jesus used this title to assert his divine authority, including his power to forgive sins (Mark 2:10) and to be the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28).

(4) Lord

The disciples referred to Jesus as 'Lord,' a title also used by the authors of the New Testament. In Greek, the word is "Kyrios" (κύριος), which appears in the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament—as a translation for the four-letter name of God (YHWH), known as Jehovah. Therefore, "Kyrios" was considered a term that belonged to God. This is highlighted in the writings of Josephus, who noted that the Jews refused to address the emperor as "lord" (κύριος).

The New Testament's use of the term 'Lord' in reference to Jesus aims to portray him as the Old Testament Jehovah. This link is also clear in New Testament quotations from the Old Testament. For example, Philippians 2:10-11 quotes Isaiah 45:23, where it states that everyone is to bow before the Lord God. This New Testament verse shows that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed God

Theological Implications

There are several significant implications of the doctrine of Christ's deity. The four most important points are critically drawn from Erickson (2013:642) and Ryrie:

- (i) We can have real knowledge of God. Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus was God. If we knew what the love of God, the holiness of God, and the power of God are like, we need only look to Christ.'
- (ii) Redemption is available to humanity by providing an effective sacrifice for Sin. The death of Christ is sufficient for all sinners who have ever lived, for it was not merely a finite human, but an infinite God who died.
- (iii) God and humanity have been reunited. It was not an angel or a human who came from God to the human race; rather, God himself crossed the chasm created by sin.
- (iv) Worship of Christ is appropriate. He is as deserving of our praise, adoration, and obedience.
he

CHAPTER 4 THE UNITY OF PERSON CHRIST

The Council of Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon was the fourth ecumenical council, convened to settle Christological disputes after the Nicene and Constantinopolitan councils. It rejected teachings that overly emphasized either Christ's divinity (such as Apollinarism and Monophysitism) or His humanity (such as Nestorianism) and reaffirmed earlier creeds, especially the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

Chalcedonian Christology is the doctrine formulated at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. It teaches that Jesus Christ is one person (hypostasis) in two complete and distinct natures—divine and human—united without confusion, change, division, or separation. The Creed of Chalcedon is written below:

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same **perfect in Godhead** and also **perfect in manhood**; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; **consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood**; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in **two natures, in-confusedly**, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather **the property of each nature being preserved** and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us. (English translation taken from Philip Schaff, *Creeks of Christendom* 2:62-63, modified by Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical*, 2004:557, and Grammarly corrected by AI).

Key tenets of the Chalcedonian Creed are as follows:

- Christ has a complete divine nature, which is eternal and self-existent, as well as a complete human nature, which is created and mortal. This dual nature underscores his full deity and full humanity.
- Hypostatic Union: The divine Logos and the human nature are united in one person, not mixed or altered.
- Unmixed and Unconfused: Each nature retains its own properties; the human does not diminish the divine, nor is the human overwhelmed by the divine.

Even Christians usually accept the key tenets of the creed, but they then have difficulties interpreting them. Confusing interpretations, even within the Protestant camp, can easily lead toward Arianism or Nestorianism. As a result, patristic and contemporary tendencies diverge from the Chalcedonian Creed, which is discussed in the following sections.

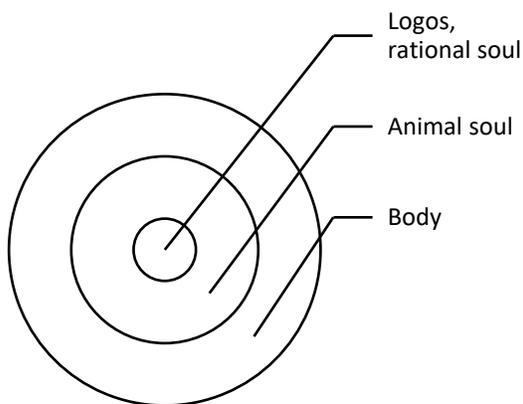
Alexandrian Christology and Apollinarism

(1) Apollinarism

Apollinaris of Laodicea (c. 310-390) gave his name to the movement called Apollinarianism. He is the most well-known figure of this movement. He was the teacher of the famous church father and Bible translator Jerome, and he was a friend of the church father Athanasius.

Apollinarianism is the belief that when the divine Logos became human, He did not take on the full nature of humanity because, in that case, He would have become part of human sinful nature. According to Apollinarianism, the divine and human natures are united into a single nature in Christ. Apollinarianism was built on Greek philosophy, particularly the late Platonic thought typical of the tripartite conception of humanity. Platonists divided the human being into three parts: a body, an animal soul, and a rational soul or mind. The rational soul distinguished humans from animals. According to them, the Logos replaced the rational mind, that is, the human mind.

In Christ, the Logos replaced the human mind, and Christ's humanity was limited solely to the soul and body of a human being. The doctrine developed by Apollinaris thus denied the full humanity of Christ and claimed that Christ had only divine self-awareness. The doctrine was declared heretical at the Councils of Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451). The core of Apollinarianism was in Alexandria, Egypt. At that time, the Nestorianism adopted by the School of Antioch formed a contrasting view to the Apollinarianism supported by the Alexandrian School, which we will examine next.



(2) Contemporary Tendency: Roman Catholicism

Christ is both fully divine and fully human. The guiding force within Christ was His deity. He neither possessed faith nor hope, as these would undermine His deity. Even from His mother's womb, He was aware of all things, being omniscient. He exercised all the attributes of His deity at all times during His life.

(3) Contemporary Tendency: Lutherans

Lutheran theology aligns more with Alexandrian Christology, mainly because it emphasizes the unity of Christ's person and the communication of attributes between His divine and human

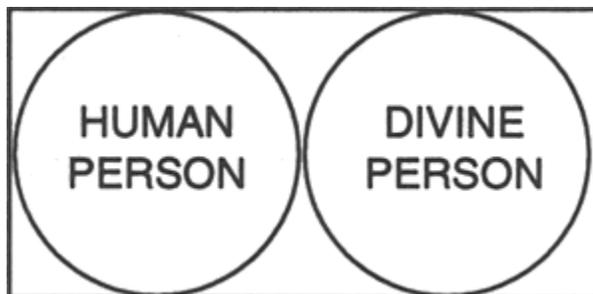
natures. This is reflected in the doctrine of Real Presence in the Eucharist: Lutherans believe Christ's body and blood are truly present in the Lord's Supper. This belief is based on the idea that Christ's human nature shares in divine omnipresence. It is a perspective that is more Alexandrian than Antiochene.

Antiochian Christology and Nestorianism

(1) Nestorianism

Nestorianism is the opposite Christological view of Apollinarism, which argued for Christ's full humanity. Named after Nestorius, the Archbishop of Constantinople in the 5th century (died 451), Nestorianism's main teaching was that Christ had two distinct natures: divine and human, which were united by purpose. Christ was human by birth, but God chose to dwell in him.

Nestorius compared the connection between Christ's divine and human nature to marriage, noting that a husband and wife are one, even though they remain two separate individuals. Marriage brings two different people together into one through purpose. Similarly, divinity and humanity are united through purpose into a single nature in Christ. Because of this, Nestorianism was condemned as heresy at the Council of Ephesus in 431, which emphasized that Christ is both God and man in one person.



(2) Contemporary Tendency: Reformed Theology

The reformed view is examined through Grudem's understanding of the unity of Christ's person. He correctly affirms that Jesus died physically, but the immaterial part of his person "was separated from his body and passed into the presence of God the Father in heaven" (Grudem, 2004:560). Furthermore, he states that Jesus' "divine nature somehow experienced something of what it was like to undergo death. The person of Christ experienced death, and both human and divine natures somehow shared in that experience."

Then Grudem suggests that Jesus “has two wills and two centres of consciousness.” He uses this to argue how Jesus could learn new things and yet know all things (Mark 13:32; Luke 2:52; John 2:25; 16:30; 21:17) (Grudem, 2004:561). This view should be resisted because consciousness and will are typically associated with personhood.

Biblical Solution

Limitations of the Chalcedonian Creed

The Chalcedonian definition seems to have an inherent problem: it clearly states what doctrine regarding the person of Christ cannot be accepted, but it leaves the correct content of that doctrine vaguely defined. Protestant solutions still need further development. The proposed solution is mainly based on the presentation by Craig and Moreland (2003:606-613). They are influential theologians and philosophers in evangelical circles, and both are highly respected by philosophers outside of evangelicalism. Craig and Moreland have constructed their theology around Molinism, personal theism, and social trinitarianism. However, the proposed solution is independent of other theological influences behind Craig and Moreland; instead, it is formulated based on the teachings of the Bible.

William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland have sought to clarify how human nature and God's nature are unified in Christ. Their Christology differs from the approaches of Lutheran and Reformed theologians (Craig and Moreland: 2003: 602-614). In theological discussions, Christ is generally seen as the second person of the Trinity. According to Moreland's and Craig's perspective, the Logos is the second person in a non-material form. Only Christ's divine nature is necessarily a part of the Logos. During the incarnation, the Logos assumed human nature contingently. Contingent existence refers to things that exist due to an external cause and could potentially not exist (Craig; On Guard, p. 63, 2012). Therefore, the Logos has human nature contingently.

Reasoning

The divinity of Christ was mainly subconscious during his earthly life. The proposed solution aligns with Apollinaris' views that the Logos is the unconscious and subconscious part of Christ's rational soul. Christ's divine nature, or specifically divinity, is present in his immaterial aspect. One of God's attributes is immateriality, meaning God's nature experiences things through the senses of Christ's body. The Catholic Church's and Lutheranism's concept of Christ's bodily presence in the world and in communion is rejected.

Apollinarianism reduces Christ's human nature to just that of an animal, since Christ's humanity is seen as limited to the body. However, the Logos, even before becoming human, possessed all the attributes of a person as a complete immaterial being. The creation of man in God's image means that humans shared the same immaterial attributes as God. The Bible refers to these attributes with terms like soul, spirit, heart, and mind. <part of the soul/spirit>. One benefit of this view is that it can help avoid Apollinarianism, at least in its standard form.

Biblical Support

The attributes of Jesus as God were, therefore, mostly subconscious or unconscious until his resurrection. Jesus' conscious mind was his human mind, which was limited to being human: Christ developed self-awareness as he matured (Luke 2:52). Over time, the human conscious mind gradually connected with the subconscious and unconscious minds, enabling the logos to slowly enter the conscious mind of Jesus Christ. This process happened in a way that aligned with human experience.

Jesus appeared to His disciples behind locked doors, saying “Peace be with you” and showing His wounds (John 20:19–20). This confirmed His bodily resurrection and eased their fears. Thus, Christ had two levels of consciousness, which, according to the Gospel accounts, gradually came closer to each other. Ultimately, He has (after the resurrection or at least the ascension) only one level of consciousness, which is, of course, God's consciousness. An argument suggests that Jesus had two levels of existence, one of which was transcendental in relation to matter.

The prayer life of Christ (Luke 22:42) supports the idea that Jesus had two levels of consciousness, but not two separate consciousnesses. Christ was dependent on God the Father as a human in the same way that we are dependent on the Father's guidance and care through prayer.

Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, and raised the dead—all seen as manifestations of the Spirit working through Him (e.g., Matthew 12:28). Matthew 12:28: Jesus says, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” This verse is often cited as evidence that His miracles were performed through the Spirit's power.

Theological Implications

Beyond its technical definitions, Chalcedonian Christology shaped how Christians understand the meaning of salvation: only a fully divine Redeemer could conquer sin and death, and only a fully human Savior could authentically represent humanity.

The proposed model avoids the Nestorian doctrine of two separate persons and provides an alternative to Alexandrian Christology. However, it has two weaknesses. First, it involves the mutual sharing of divine and human attributes within a single consciousness. Second, the theory depends on the authors' views of anthropology and psychology. The future psychological developments may challenge the proposed version.

CHAPTER 5: LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus' Parents and Cultural Background

The birth of Jesus was discussed from a theological perspective in the previous chapters (the humanity of Christ), in connection with the virgin birth. At the same time, it was pointed out that Jesus' lineage genetically linked him to the house of David. Joseph's lineage demonstrated that Jesus descended legally from the kings of Israel and Judah, and he had a legitimate claim to the throne of the king of Israel. Jesus' birthplace was Bethlehem, the city of David, where his parents went to register for tax purposes. However, his parents' residence was in Nazareth, Galilee.

During the time of Jesus' birth, Galilee was a multilingual area, but the dominant everyday language was Aramaic, particularly its Galilean dialect. This dialect differed from the Aramaic spoken in Jerusalem and other parts of Judea. Aramaic was a common spoken language among the Jews in Galilee. It was used in daily life, trade, and informal communication. Jesus likely spoke this language fluently, especially the Galilean version of Aramaic. Some continuity of the Israelite population may have persisted through the Persian and Hellenistic periods, though evidence is sparse. Richard Horsley argues that many Galileans in Jesus' time were descendants of Northern Israelites, not necessarily Judeans.

Hebrew was still used in religious contexts and writings. Jesus was literate and possibly skilled in writing, as evidenced by when Jesus read from the scroll in the synagogue at Nazareth. This event is recorded in Luke 4:16-21, and it marks the beginning of His public ministry. Koinē Greek, also known as common Greek, was widely spoken due to Hellenistic influence and administrative trade, as well as among the non-Jewish population. There's no strong evidence of Greek-speaking Diaspora Jews returning to Galilee in significant numbers before or during Hasmonean rule. Most Diaspora Jews remained in places like Alexandria, Antioch, and Asia Minor, where they had thriving communities.

In the vibrant region of Galilee, particularly in cosmopolitan hubs like Sepphoris, Greek emerged as the predominant language spoken by the majority. Interactions between Jews and Roman authorities, as well as among the diverse local populace, took place largely in Greek. While Aramaic resonated as the heart language of Galilee, Jesus likely navigated the world with proficiency in both Hebrew and Greek, setting him apart as one of the most linguistically adept individuals of his time.

A compelling argument for Jesus' fluency in Greek lies in his formative years spent as a refugee in Egypt, where he fled from the persecution orchestrated by Herod (Matt 2:13-23). The visitation of the Magi took place in Nazareth. It happened 2-4 years after the birth of Jesus. The bible calls Jesus "παιδίον," which evidences that Jesus was not a baby but a young child under 7 years old.

The Jewish communities in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt were vibrant and deeply interconnected, thriving in significant urban centers. Alexandria, the crown jewel of these cities, was not alone; other regions also boasted flourishing Jewish communities. In these dynamic environments, Greek became the common language among the Egyptian Jewish population, particularly in bustling urban settings like Alexandria.

The creation of the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, in Alexandria, powerfully illustrates this cultural and linguistic shift. Greek became an integral part of daily life, influencing legal documents and philosophical writings alike; Philo of Alexandria. For example, Philo wrote all of his works in Greek. During their time in Egypt, Jesus' family undoubtedly relied on Greek to communicate with other Jews, further adding to the richness of his multilingual background.

The Offices of Christ

This section is critically drawn from Ryrie's work (199:292-296). "The Threefold Office of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King," a concept with historical roots traced back to Eusebius. "Furthermore, a connection can be made between Messiah, the Anointed One, and the fact that prophets (1 Kings 19:16; Isa. 61:1), priests (Exod. 30:30; 40:13), and kings (1 Sam. 10:1; 15:1; 1 Kings 19:15–16) were all inaugurated by anointing. (Ryrie, 199:296)

(1) Prophet

This section is critically drawn from Ryrie's work (199:292-296). "The Threefold Office of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King," a concept with historical roots traced back to Eusebius. "Furthermore, a connection can be made between Messiah, the Anointed One, and the fact that prophets (1 Kings 19:16; Isa. 61:1), priests (Exod. 30:30; 40:13), and kings (1 Sam. 10:1; 15:1; 1 Kings 19:15–16) were all inaugurated by anointing. (Ryrie, 199:296)

As a Prophet, Christ fulfills Moses' prediction of a prophet like himself, recognized by the people for His authoritative teaching and ability to deliver God's message (Deut 18:15). His ministry involved preaching and teaching in various contexts, often using illustrations and questions to engage His audience. Key teachings include the Sermon on the Mount, parables about the kingdom, the Olivet Discourse, and the Upper Room discourse, each addressing different aspects of God's program, including the Law, the church, and the kingdom.

(2) Priest

In His role as Priest, Christ differs from Aaronic priests, as He belongs to the order of Melchizedek. While Aaronic priests offered repeated sacrifices, Christ's sacrifice was once for all, providing eternal redemption. The Melchizedekian priesthood is characterized by its royal nature and superiority over the Aaronic order. (Genesis 14:18–20 and Hebrews 7:1–3).

(3) King

In the historical context, Israel rejected the Messiah, which resulted in a temporary pause in the establishment of the promised kingdom. It mentions that Jesus and the apostles expected this kingdom, even though it was not fulfilled during Jesus' earthly ministry. His return will bring the kingdom back to Israel. The turning point happens in Matthew 13 when Jesus realizes that Israel will reject him as their King. After this rejection, Jesus began teaching with parables and explained them only to his disciples. Before the rejection, he sincerely offered to establish a political and

spiritual kingdom of God on earth. The Sermon on the Mount provided ethical guidance for what the messianic rule on earth could be.

Christ will return literally and physically to reign as King over His people. The concept of the "Messianic Kingdom" refers to a literal political reign of the Jewish Messiah on Earth. This idea highlights that the "kingdom of God" includes various aspects, such as spiritual, political, ecclesiastical, economic, physical, and moral dimensions. A number of biblical passages, including Genesis 49:10 and 2 Samuel 7:11-12, support the belief that a future, tangible kingdom will be established by the Messiah, who is prophesied to come from the lineage of David.

The rapture of the Church occurs before Jesus returns to earth. It is followed by seven years of tribulation, also called Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah 30:7. During this time, Israel will be gathered to the Promised Land. The rapture is a Christian eschatology concept that refers to a future event when believers in Jesus Christ—both living and dead—will be caught up or "snatched away" to meet Him in the air. It is often seen as a divine rescue moment before a period of tribulation and judgment on Earth. Key elements of the rapture are described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 18: "the dead in Christ will rise first" and then "we who are alive... will be caught up together with them in the clouds," and 1 Corinthians 15:50–54 speaks of a sudden transformation: "in the twinkling of an eye" believers will be changed into glorified bodies.

Jesus' Miracles

The miracles of Jesus weren't just dazzling displays of divine power—they were deeply intentional acts with spiritual, prophetic, and personal significance. Here's a breakdown of their core purposes:

- (i) **To Reveal His Identity as the Messiah:** Jesus' miracles served as proof of His divine authority and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. As He said in John 10:25, "The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me". They validated His claim to be the Son of God, the long-awaited Messiah foretold in scriptures like Isaiah 35:5-6, which predicted healing of the blind and deaf.
- (ii) **To Demonstrate Compassion:** Many miracles—healing the sick, feeding the hungry, raising the dead—were acts of deep mercy. Though not the primary reason, His compassion for human suffering was evident in nearly every miracle.
- (iii) **To Fulfill Prophecy:** Jesus' actions echoed messianic prophecies, reinforcing that He was the one foretold by prophets like Isaiah. Matthew 8:17 connects His healing ministry to Isaiah's words: "He took on our infirmities and carried our diseases". The passion of Christ is described in Isaiah 53, especially in verses 53:3-5.
- (iv) **To Fight Evil and Restore Creation:** Miracles like casting out demons and calming storms showed His power over evil, nature, and death. They were glimpses of the Kingdom of God breaking into the world, restoring what was broken.

In short, Jesus' miracles were multi-layered: they authenticated His mission, invited belief, fulfilled prophecy, and revealed the heart of God. Want to explore a specific miracle and its deeper meaning?

CHAPTER 6 THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The Historicity of Jesus

A significant amount of material about Jesus has been discovered within the scope of ancient history, and much of it dates back to an early period. Both Christians and non-Christians wrote about him within 150 years of his lifetime. In comparison, sources about Alexander the Great, a major figure in ancient history, were written at least 300 years after his death. Therefore, Jesus cannot be regarded as a myth or fictional figure based on written references. The crucifixion of Jesus is widely accepted as a historical fact. The Roman historian Tacitus (c. 55–120 AD) writes about early Christians and their crucified leader:

“The persistent rumor suggested that Emperor Nero was the one who started this fire. To suppress the rumor, he accused a sect of being responsible for the crime, which was generally despised for its practices of worship, and whose members were called Christians. The name was given to them after a certain Christ, whom Pontius Pilate, the procurator, condemned and crucified during the reign of Tiberius. This dangerous sect, which I have described earlier, has taken root not only in Judea, from where it originates, but also in Rome itself, where all fearful and shameful things gather and find their home.”

The Christians' proclamation of the crucified Messiah was extremely unfavorable, as crucifixion was the most repulsive and shameful way to die. This would have been terrible marketing for a new religion. The story of the crucified Jesus cannot have been invented. However, there was also another side to the Christians' message about the Messiah's crucifixion. This crucified Jesus was said to have risen from the dead

Early Creed

The Bible Scholars today agree that the text found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 is an early Christian creed, believed to have originated as early as 2 years after.

Brothers, I will lead you to know the gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received and in which you stand, and by which you are also being saved, if you hold fast to the word I proclaimed to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)

The message of Christians was therefore clear from the outset – the crucified Christ had risen from the dead. Christ died, was buried, rose from the dead, and appeared. Researchers mostly agree on five facts behind this resurrection message:

- (1) Jesus really died
- (2) Jesus' disciples believed He rose and appeared to them
- (3) Paul converted as a result of an apparition
- (4) Jesus' brother James, who doubted Jesus, converted
- (5) The tomb was empty.

Points 1-4 are quite indisputable, but some doubt the fifth. The question of the empty tomb is indeed central to the evidence of Jesus' resurrection, as it determines how concretely the resurrection can be understood. Here is a closer look at the creed found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

English version	The Greek Bible
<p>3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received</p> <p>that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,</p> <p>4 and that he was buried,</p> <p>and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,</p> <p>5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.</p>	<p>3 παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον,</p> <p>ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς</p> <p>4 καὶ ὅτι ἐτάφη</p> <p>καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς</p> <p>5 καὶ ὅτι ὤφθη Κηφᾶ εἶτα τοῖς δώδεκα</p>

Each of the first lines starts with the sentence “ὅτι” translated as “that”, forming a line formula. Line by line, the discourse adds information, and it is cohesive as a whole, providing information in a creedal style. Paul mentions that he has received the four-line creed and just delivered it to the Corinthians. In the sentence “I delivered what I also received,” the words for “receiving” and “delivering” are the rabbinical terms for the transmission of sacred tradition. Thus, the text does not originate from Paul, but from an older Christian tradition.

This creed was likely well-known to the Corinthians, further emphasized by Paul’s remark in 1 Corinthians 15:2, where he refers to “the gospel that I preached to you and that you received.” This assertion underscores that the four-line creed serves as a poignant reminder of the beliefs held by the Corinthians.

According to William Lane Craig, there is additional evidence supporting the existence of an older Christian tradition. Furthermore, the phrase “on the third day” is written in somewhat awkward Greek, suggesting a Semitic or Aramaic origin. Translating “on the third day” back into Aramaic implies that its structure is more aligned with Aramaic than with Greek. Additionally, the use of the

Aramaic name “Cephas” for Simon Peter reinforces the idea that the creed has Hebrew or Aramaic roots.

The early tradition of the creed shows that belief in the resurrection was widespread and confirmed by many eyewitnesses. Mentioning all the apostles in 1 Corinthians 15:6-11 and James indicates that the creed reflected apostolic teaching and experience. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, the only two individuals named are Cephas and James, the only ones Paul saw during his visit to Jerusalem (Galatians 1:15-19). James was initially an unbeliever before Jesus' resurrection, but witnessing the resurrected Jesus led to his conversion, and he became a leader of the Jerusalem church. He died as a martyr because of his faith in the resurrected Christ.

The Empty Tomb

What reasons are there to believe that the tomb was indeed empty? Some factors support the authenticity of the gospel accounts claiming the empty tomb:

- (1) Something prompted the apostles to proclaim the resurrection precisely in Jerusalem, where the crucifixion and burial took place. If the tomb had not been empty, opponents could have easily pointed to the body lying inside. Jerusalem was a relatively small city at that time, making it easy to ascertain that Jesus had not risen from the dead.
- (2) The gospels tell that women were among the first to witness the empty tomb (Mark 16:1-8) and to witness the resurrection of Jesus (John 20:11-17), which was quite unfavorable in a culture that often looked down on women.
- (3) The Jews acknowledged that the tomb was empty because they accused the disciples of stealing the body. Matthew (Matt 28:11-15) and Jewish sources mention this theory of explanation regarding the empty tomb.
- (4) In the Gospel of Mark, the discovery of Jesus' empty tomb is described simply and unembellished. Thus, it is not a legend that has developed over time.

In the Gospels, women and disciples are depicted bluntly and honestly as they react to the appearance of a resurrected Christ in the presence of the disciples. At first, they could hardly believe their eyes (cf. John 20:11–18, 24–25; Luke 24:8–12). The descriptions in the Bible exude truthfulness as they recount how disbelieving and cowardly the disciples were, abandoning their teacher.

The biblical authors also did not tailor their stories to please their audience when describing how women were the first to discover Jesus' empty tomb. They simply aimed to report what actually happened, even if it sounded unbelievable to their readers at the time. This honesty is, in one

sense, the greatest strength of the biblical narratives because it shows that the accounts are not made up.

Jesus' Appearances after the Resurrection

This section summarizes Craig's (2010: 233–234) and Grass's (1974: 80) research. After the resurrection, Jesus' brothers joined the Christian community in the upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:14), marking a significant change in their lives. Their transformation is highlighted when they reappear in Acts 12:17, showing their dedication to the faith.

The mention of Jesus' brothers in 1 Corinthians 9:5 highlights their role not only as believers but also as active participants and leaders in ministry, serving alongside the apostles. A key point from this passage is that "He appeared to James." This encounter serves as one of the most compelling confirmations of Christ's resurrection, providing strong evidence of His divine authority and the profound transformative power that ensued. Through this moment, insight is gained into the depth of their faith and the pivotal role they played in the early church (Craig 2010: 233–234; Grass, 1974:80).

Craig (2010:234-236) argues that the postmortem appearances of Jesus demonstrate that 'the resurrection was a historically credible event.' His argument is based on several premises, including eyewitness accounts in 1 Corinthians 15:5-11. Independent gospel accounts offer separate reports of Jesus' physical appearances, such as the meeting with Thomas in John 20:24-29, which support the accounts in Paul's writings. These appearances are consistently described as physical, with examples like Jesus showing His wounds to Thomas and eating with the disciples.

Some key historians have suggested that post-crucifixion sightings of Jesus were hallucinations caused by grief and anticipation among Jesus's followers. This claim lacks psychological evidence. Hallucinations are personal experiences that typically occur in individuals, not groups. The assertion that over 500 people saw Jesus simultaneously (1 Corinthians 15:6) goes against the nature of hallucinations, which are subjective and not shared by many at once.

It is important to note that Jesus appeared to people in a variety of settings, at different times, and under different circumstances, such as indoors, outdoors, walking, eating, etc. This variety makes a single psychological explanation unlikely. Also, the disciples weren't expecting a resurrection. Contrary to the theory's assumption, the disciples were not psychologically prepared to see Jesus alive. They were devastated and fearful, not hopeful. Many doubted even after seeing him (e.g., Thomas), which weakens the idea of expectation-driven hallucinations. According to historical

evidence, Jesus' postmortem appearances were both physical and meaningful to the early Christian faith.

The Question of The Death of Jesus Christ

The apparent death theory, first proposed by H. E. G. Paulus in 1828, posits that Jesus did not actually die on the cross but fell into a state of unconsciousness, subsequently reviving in the tomb and persuading His disciples of His resurrection. This theory, which is associated with the natural explanation school, has faced significant criticism for its lack of plausibility and perceived artificiality. Paulus's interpretations of Jesus' miracles have been described as excessively convoluted, leading some to suggest that a more straightforward belief in the miracles would be more rational.

Moreover, the theory does not adequately address the severe physical injuries that Jesus endured during His arrest, trial, and crucifixion, which included beatings, scourging, and the agonizing process of crucifixion itself.

Crucifixion is recognized as a slow and excruciating method of execution, often carried out by Roman authorities through means such as breaking the legs or stabbing the victim. The Gospels document that Jesus was confirmed dead by the thrust of a soldier's spear, resulting in blood and water flowing from His side. Furthermore, the apparent death theory casts Jesus in the light of a deceiver, which undermines His moral integrity and the profound impression He left on His disciples.

Critics, including D. F. Strauss, have argued that a half-alive Jesus could not have inspired His disciples to embrace the belief in His resurrection or elevate their reverence to the level of worship. Ultimately, the apparent death theory has been largely discredited and lacks support among contemporary scholars, remaining primarily in the realm of fringe propaganda or sensationalist literature.

It is implausible that an individual who emerged half-alive from the tomb—weak and in need of medical attention, requiring bandages and care—could have instilled in His disciples the belief that He was a conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life. Such a resuscitation would likely have diminished the profound impact He had made both in life and in death; at best, it could have imparted a tone of elegy but could not have transformed their sorrow into enthusiasm or elevated their reverence into worship (Strauss, 1879:1:412; Craig, 2000:39–40).

Theological Implications of the Death and Resurrection of Christ

The Corinthians acknowledged Christ's resurrection, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; however, they struggled with the idea of a general resurrection of the dead. They probably held a dualistic view of body and soul, believing that while the soul is immortal, the body decays and cannot be raised. This view came from their Hellenistic background and understanding of Hades, where the afterlife was generally seen as undesirable (Sanders, 2015:377-379).

Paul refutes their beliefs by arguing that without the resurrection of the dead, Christ was not raised, which makes their faith pointless. He also highlights their practice of baptism for the dead as evidence of their belief in some sort of life after death.

Paul acknowledges the Corinthians' concerns about the body and resurrection. He highlights that resurrection involves the entire person—body and spirit—not just the immaterial parts. Although indeed, decayed and corrupted bodies cannot inherit eternal life's glory, this fact does not lessen the promise of bodily resurrection.

Paul aims to affirm the core truth of resurrection while carefully addressing the cultural perceptions and personal experiences that might cause the Corinthians to doubt. According to him, the physical body plays a vital role in the promise of eternal life, highlighting the importance of the body in the resurrection process.

Paul acknowledges the Corinthians' concerns about the body, emphasizing that the resurrection involves the whole person, not just the immaterial part of the human. While decayed bodies cannot inherit eternal life, this does not negate the resurrection of the body. Ultimately, Paul seeks to affirm the resurrection while addressing the cultural and experiential objections of the Corinthians, stressing the importance of the body in the resurrection process.

Chapter 7 THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST

Will be added to the 3rd draft

Here is a summary of my intentions:

The chapter discusses the Penal Substitution Theory of atonement, arguing that it encompasses valid insights from other theories while asserting that these insights depend on the substitutionary aspect. The Socinian view posits that Christ's death serves as an example of dedication, but I question the validity of this example if Christ's death was unnecessary. An analogy is drawn with a firefighter who sacrifices himself without a child to save, suggesting that such an act would be seen as foolish rather than noble.

Similarly, the moral-influence theory claims Christ's death demonstrates God's love, but I argue that this demonstration loses significance if the death was not necessary for forgiveness. The governmental theory emphasizes God's justice, suggesting Christ's death was merely a demonstration of the consequences of sin. However, I challenge this view, asserting that if God could forgive without penalty, then Christ's death would seem unjust.

The text concludes that the Penal Substitution Theory preserves the themes of God's justice and triumph over evil, emphasizing that Christ's death was necessary to fulfill the Noahic, Mosaic, and Natural Law (or Moral Law toward Gentiles) and liberate humanity from sin's condemnation. It argues that Christ's sacrifice was essential for both demonstrating God's love and achieving victory over Satan, as it addressed the root of sin's power by satisfying the law's requirements.

All of these issues will be discussed by using the Bible quotes and references from the leading systematic theories and books from the multispectrum series. After the discussion, I will show proof that penal substitute theory is consistent with personal theism and the theory of 2 natures of Christ as it is presented in these lecture notes. I will teach the doctrine of Salvation in the fall of 2026 and intend to finish and fine-tune doctrines of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Angels, Humanity, and Salvation as late as 2027.

Chapter 8 THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST

Will be added to the 3rd draft. I will argue here for the exclusivity of Christ, which means that there is no salvation in any other name than Christ. The chapter will be finished in the fall of 2026

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fredriksson, Tero. "A Critical Analysis of N.T. Wright's View of Spiritual Formation in His "Paul and Faithfulness of God." Master's thesis, North-West University, 2020.
- Wessels, F. 2013. Did Luther get it altogether wrong? Luther's interpretation of the function of the Mosaic Law in Galatians. *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif* 54 (Supplement 5):321–331.
- Zuck, Roy B. *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth*, ed. Craig Bubeck Sr. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1991. Hans Grass, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte*, 4th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974).
- William Lane Craig, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2010).
- E P. Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 375–402.
- David Friedrich Strauss, *A New Life of Jesus*, authorized trans., 2d ed., 2 vols. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1879),
- William Lane Craig, *The Son Rises: The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 39–40.
- I will go through the paper once more with systematic theology books, multispectrum works and articles, and add quotes here. I try to improve this paper once a year.