
Part 1 | The Biblical and Historical Christ

Everything that we believe about Christ is based on the Scriptures. This section deals with how Christ Himself viewed the Scriptures: divinely inspired and authoritative.

REVIEW: In Session 1 we studied Christ's extensive (and exclusive) use of the Old Testament Scriptures and Christ's view of the divine origin of the Old Testament. In Session 2 we added Christ's view of the inspiration and of the authority of the Old Testament.

The Person of Christ

- Christ: *The Word of God Incarnate*
 - The supreme and final revelation of God was through Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2).
 - Previously God had revealed Himself Before Christ's coming, God's revelation to man came through dreams, visions, laws, institutions, ceremonies, judges, kings, and prophets.
 - The Word of God in the Old Testament and the Word of God in Christ are not in conflict, they are in harmony, complimentary to each other.
 - Jesus revealed the Father to mankind in ways that had never been done. He made known...
 - ...the glory of God (Isa. 40:5, John 1:14, 2 Cor. 4:6)
 - ...the power of God (John 3:2, 1 Cor. 1:24)
 - ...the wisdom of God (John 7:46, 1 Cor. 1:24)
 - ...the life of God (1 John 1:1-3)
 - ...the love of God (John 3:16, Rom. 5:8, 1 John 3:16)
 - ...the grace of God (Luke 2:40, John 1:17, 2 Thess. 1:12).
 - The *written Word* and the *Living Word* stand or fall together. You cannot have one without the other.
 - Both the written Word and the Living Word came from God.
 - Both the written Word and the Living Word contain the same divine authority.
 - Both the written Word and the Living Word complement each other.
 - Both the written Word and the Living Word came to us through the human element.
 - Both the written Word and the Living Word came to us without error / sin.
- Christ's Eternal Existence
 - Christ was the only One ever born of a woman, whose birth had nothing to do with His origin.
 - Christ is as eternal as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
 - Biblical evidence for His eternal existence:
 - John 17:5 shows both the preexistent nature of Christ and the fact that Christ was very conscious of His eternal existence as the Son of God.
 - The prophets spoke of the eternal existence of the Son of God: Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2.
 - The New Testament speaks of the eternal existence of the Son of God:
 - Explicitly – John 1:1, 14, 8:56-58
 - Implicitly – Christ is spoken of seven times as the "Firstborn."
 - Theological evidence for His eternal existence:
 - Every claim for His deity is at the same time a claim for His eternal existence.
 - The doctrine of the eternal Trinity affirms His eternal existence.
 - Jesus Christ's heavenly origin argues for His eternity (John 16:27, for example).

- Christ's Eternal Sonship
 - Christ's eternal existence and eternal Sonship used to be accepted together. In recent years, this has changed.
 - John MacArthur: "Christ was not Son until His incarnation. Before that He was eternal God"¹
 - Christ is nowhere called a *child of God* but always the Son of God.
 - Considerations to determine whether Christ was *always* the Son of God:
 - First, the Son of God existed at the time of creation. He had a part in it (Col. 1:13-17; Heb. 1:2).
 - Second, the Son of God is described as being in the Father's bosom (John 1:18; 1 John 1:1-2).
 - Third, the Son of God was sent by the Father (Isa. 9:6; John 3:16; 20:21; Rom. 8:32; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 4:10, 14).
 - Fourth, the Son of God returned to the Father (John 16:28; 17:5, 24).
 - The relationship of Christ to the Father was not changed by the incarnation. Just as the Father was eternally Father, so Christ is eternally Son.
 - Christ did become *the Son of Man*, but was always *the Son of God*.
- Christ's Virgin Birth
 - At one time, if a person rejected the virgin birth, they were not considered orthodox in their faith.
 - Today, outside of evangelicalism and fundamentalism, it is as common to find the rejection of the virgin birth as it is to find acceptance of it.
 - The Scripture teaches the virgin birth, and belief in it displays a super-natural Christ.
- Christ's Sinless Humanity
 - Gnosticism held to a dualistic philosophy in which that which was spiritual was good and that which was material was evil.
 - Gnostic beliefs caused some to believe that Christ could not have been incarnate, or that, as an incarnate man, He could not have been sinless (since evil was inherent in matter).
- Christ's Undiminished Deity
 - Throughout the history of the church, the Savior's deity has been denied by what would now be called liberal theology.
 - Evangelicals have not typically denied His deity, but have neglected it.
 - Jesus is not *Godlike* nor *nearer to God than anyone else* but rather *as much God as God the Father*.
- Christ: *The God-Man*
 - In the union of humanity and divinity in Christ, each nature was retained. Deity did not permeate humanity, nor did humanity become absorbed in deity.
- Christ's Sinless Life on Earth
 - It is important to note that Christ's active obedience to the Law and his daily suffering through His adult life was *not* substitutionary in any way.
 - Covenant theology teaches a supposed *covenant of works* that required obedience. In Covenant theology, Christ was obedient on our behalf (thus substitutionary).
 - This view makes the work of Christ on the cross *insufficient*.

¹ John MacArthur, Jr., *Hebrews* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), pp. 22-23.