

# *deeper*

word faith life

## Module 2

The Doctrine of Christ

Prophecy and the Birth of Christ

The Law and the Cross of Christ

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

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## Session 2 – The Doctrine of Christ or Christology

### THE PERSON OF CHRIST

In the last session, we had a look at the Person of Christ with respect to His humanity. Now we will look at the Person of Christ with respect to His Deity. We'll also have a look at some ancient heresies that frequently pop up regarding the Person of Christ.

#### Scriptural Evidence for Jesus' Deity

\_\_\_\_\_ Used as a Reference to Jesus - This usually refers to "God the Father" in the New Testament, but there are at least seven references to Jesus being God. (John 1:1,18; 20:28) There is also one reference in the Old Testament, Isaiah 9:6.

\_\_\_\_\_ Used as a Reference to Jesus - The Luke 2 account which we read a lot around Christmas time. (Luke 2:11,18) Paul the Apostle also uses the term "Lord" in reference to Jesus being God. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Statement - This statement by Jesus was enough to make His Jewish hearers want to execute Him by stoning. There was nothing ambiguous in what Jesus said. (John 8:57-58)

The \_\_\_\_\_ Statement - This statement puts Jesus on equal footing with God, compare Revelation 22:13 to Revelation 1:8.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Reference - This title is used eighty-four times in the Gospels, only by Jesus and only in reference to Himself. Daniel 7:13,14 is clearly referenced by Jesus at His trial before the Sanhedrin. He explicitly refers to His deity in the account in Matthew 26:63,64.

#### Jesus Has the Attributes of Deity

\_\_\_\_\_ - This is clearly demonstrated on many occasions, but we will have a look at three of them. Firstly when He changed the water into wine at a wedding in John 2:1-11. Secondly when He calmed the storm in Matthew 8:26-27. And thirdly when He fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish in Matthew 14:15-21.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus demonstrated His omniscience by knowing the hearts of men in Mark 2:5-12. And again in John 6:64-71, Jesus has a very searching conversation with His own disciples. John 2:23-25 states that Jesus knew what was in every person.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus demonstrated His omnipresence in John 20:26-29, when He revealed Himself to Thomas and the other disciples, entering the house even when the doors were locked closed. In Matthew 28:20 after commissioning His disciples, He states that He will be with them always, even to the end of the age.

\_\_\_\_\_ - He had the Authority of God in Him, when He taught and demonstrated the Kingdom, Matthew 11:27 confirms this. People marvelled at the authority of His teaching in Luke 4:32. John the Baptist confirms this in John 3:34-36.

\_\_\_\_\_ - John 10:17-18 demonstrates this point clearly. Hebrew 7:16 says this, "One who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life." 1 Timothy 6:15-16 confirms that only God is immortal.



\_\_\_\_\_ - No one else and nothing else in all of creation is worthy of worship except God alone. Philippians 2:9-11 says this, "Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Jesus is worshiped universally in Revelation 5:12,13.

### Did Jesus Relinquish Some of His Divine Attributes?

In order to answer this question, let's take a look at Philippians 2:5-8.

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!"

The Kenosis Theory, developed in the 19th century, proposes that Christ relinquished some of His divine attributes while He was on earth. It was developed around the translation of Philippians 2:7, where the original Greek uses the word [KENOO] translated [TO EMPTY] which gives us "He emptied Himself". The NIV uses "He made Himself nothing", which better describes what that emptying in fact was.

The context here demands that it was a humbling of Himself and not a diminishing of His Godly attributes. He did not empty Himself of His deity but what He did do was to take "the very nature of a servant". So it is in fact a humbling of Himself. He voluntarily and temporarily suspended His glory, status and privilege to become human, to live as a man. (John 17:5; 2 Corinthians 8:9) Paul is in reality saying from verse 5, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ" which is humility. It was never about them becoming a lesser or weaker or diminished version of themselves, but rather being more Christlike.

We therefore reject the Kenosis Theory as an inaccurate understanding of the Deity of Christ.

### The Necessity of Jesus' Deity

\_\_\_\_\_ - Humanity was in a predicament. Man could not meet God's standard of perfection and therefore could never make up for his sin. Only God could pay the penalty for man's sin, the penalty that a righteous God demands.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Man could not save himself. The man drowning in the sea, cannot save himself, he needs someone to rescue him. Only God can save man from his sin.

\_\_\_\_\_ - In order for mediation to take place you need someone who is completely impartial. Jesus had to be fully God and fully man in order to mediate between God and man.

### Heresies Regarding the Person of Christ

During the first four centuries of church history, up until the Chalcedonian Definition of AD 451, there had been many deficient views pertaining to the Person of Christ, here are the main ones worth mentioning:

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus was man but not God. They came after the Judaizers in the New Testament. They were a Jewish Christian sect that existed in the first couple of centuries of the church. They regarded Jesus as the Messiah, but denied His deity and His virgin birth. They believed in following Jewish law and religious rites as well as Jesus.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus was divine in some way but not man. They believed that Jesus humanity was an apparition, or an appearance. They believed that



He looked like or seemed like a man but was not. Jesus suffering on the cross was just an illusion and there could therefore not have been a resurrection. John takes aim at the Docetists in his epistles. 1 John 1:1 says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us."  
Modern versions of this heresy: Christian Science, most New Age belief systems

\_\_\_\_\_ - Taught that Jesus was a finite created being with some divine attributes. Arius, an early church leader in Alexandria around the early fourth century began teaching that Jesus was not really God, but that God created Him as His first act of creation.  
Modern versions of this heresy: Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, The Unification Church

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus was God and man with a defective humanity. Apollinaris, a bishop in Laodicea, started his teaching in AD 361. He taught that Jesus' two natures, human and divine could not co-exist in one person. If Jesus was human, then He must have sinned, and therefore could not have shared the same body with the divine nature. He believed that Jesus was a kind of hybrid between God and man, denying the atonement.

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus was two persons with two natures. Nestorius, who was archbishop of Constantinople, came up with the idea that there had to be two natures and two persons in Jesus Christ. He taught the disunity of Christ's human and divine natures.  
Modern versions of this heresy: Christian Science, most New Age belief systems

\_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus was one person with one nature. As a response to Nestorius' heresy, Eutychus ended up teaching heresy himself. He taught that Jesus humanity was dissolved by His divine nature. So, he taught, Christ had only one nature, His human nature was absorbed into His divine nature in such a way that both natures were changed.

The Person of Christ is a huge subject and we have tried to cover the basics here. Because Jesus is divine, He is worthy to be worshiped, and was able to save us, because He is human, He fully understands the human experience and mediates on our behalf. We hope this study draws you closer to Him.

To quote Wayne Grudem from his work, *Systematic Theology*, "The fact that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal Son of God could become man and join Himself to a human nature forever, so that infinite God became one person with finite man, will remain for eternity the most profound miracle and the most profound mystery in all the universe."

Memory Verse:

Philippians 2:9-11 NIV

"Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."



