

BIBLE DOCTRINE SURVEY

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SESSION 4

CHRISTOLOGY:

The Doctrine Of Christ

This doctrinal study was prepared by Pastor Tom Alexander for use in a Bible Doctrine Survey class at Berea Baptist Bible School in Berea, Ohio, and reflects his personal doctrinal beliefs.

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SESSION 4 - CHRISTOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

1. THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS DOCTRINE

A. There Can Be No Salvation Apart From The True Christ

1. There is no possibility of salvation apart from the true Christ - Acts 4:12; I Cor 3:11; Jn 14:6

* Christ had to be true man to die in man's place; He had to be true, sinless and infinite God to pay for man's sin - I Tim 2:5-6; I Jn 2:2

2. Paul pronounces a curse against anyone who distorts the gospel of Christ - Gal 1:8-9
3. Anyone who preaches another Christ is a deceiver and a tool of Satan - II Cor 11:2-4, 13-15

B. The Doctrine Of Christ Is A Key Scriptural Litmus Test Of False Teachers

1. Proper Christology distinguishes between true teachers and false prophets - I Jn 4:1-3
2. Defective Christology indicates that a teacher is a deceiver and an antichrist - I Jn 2:22; II Jn 7

II. THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

A. HIS DEITY - Jesus Christ Is God

1. He claimed to be God.

- a. He referred to Himself as the "I AM" - Jn 8:58-59; cf. Exo 3:14
- b. He identified Himself with the Father - Jn 5:17-18; 10:30-31, 36-39; 14:9-11; 16:15
- c. He claimed uniqueness for Himself - Mt 5:11-12; Jn 14:6, 13-14
- d. He claimed under oath that He was Christ, the Son of God - Mt 26:63-65; Mk 14:61-64
- e. He claimed to fulfill Old Testament prophecy - Lk 4:21; Lk 24:44
- f. Even the Jews realized He claimed to be God - Jn 5:18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33, 39

2. His followers claimed He was God.

- a. Thomas acknowledged He was God - Jn 20:27-28
- b. Peter claimed He was God - Acts 2:22-36
- c. John claimed He was God - Jn 1:1, 14; 20:30-31
- d. Paul claimed He was God - I Tim 3:16; Php 2:6; Col 2:9

3. He had divine names.

* The "Son of God" - Mt 16:16; Lk 4:41; Jn 1:49; 20:31

- * “The Word” is said to be God - Jn 1:1, 14
- * “Lord” - Jn 13:13; 20:28; Php 2:11
- * “God” - Jn 20:28; Php 2:6; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13

4. He exhibited divine attributes.

- a. Omnipotence - Mt 28:18; Jn 11:25-26, 39-44; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 7:11-16
- b. Omniscience - Lk 5:22; 6:8; Jn 1:47-50; 6:64; 16:29-30; Col 2:3
- c. Omnipresence - Mt 28:20; Jn 3:13
- d. Self-Existence (He existed apart from being created. He owes His existence to no one) - Jn 1:2-4; 14:6
- e. Eternality (He has existed forever. He existed before He was born) - Jn 1:1-2; 8:58; Micah 5:2; Php 2:6-7; Rev 1:17
- f. Immutability (He cannot and does not change) - Heb 13:8; 1:11-12; 7:24
- g. Holiness / Sinlessness - Lk 1:35; II Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; I Pet 2:22; I Jn 2:1; 3:5
- h. SUMMARY - Col 2:9 *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

5. He filled divine offices; He exercised divine powers to accomplish divine works.

- a. Creator - Jn 1:3; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:10-12
- b. Preserver (He upholds all things) - Col 1:17; Heb 1:3
- c. Forgiver Of Sins - Mk 2:5-12; Lk 7:48; Col 3:13
- d. Raiser Of The Dead - Jn 11:25-26, 39-44; 6:39-40; 5:21, 28-29
- e. Judge Of All - Jn 5:22, 27; Mt 25:31-46; II Cor 5:10
- f. Savior (He bestows eternal life) - Jn 10:28; 17:1-2; I Jn 5:10-12

6. He accepted divine worship.

- a. God alone is to be worshipped - Mt 4:10; Deut 6:13-14; Exo 20:1-6
- b. Others refused worship - Acts 10:25-26 (Peter); 14:11-15 (Paul); Rev 19:10 (Angel)
- c. Yet Christ accepted worship - Mt 2:2, 11; 14:33; 28:9, 17; Heb 1:6; Rev 5

7. His name is coupled with God’s - Jn 10:30; II Cor 13:14; II Thess 2:16-17

8. Additional evidences of Christ’s deity:

- a. Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled - Mt 2:4-6; Mt 27:35; Lk 24:25-27
- b. The miracles of Christ - Acts 2:22-23
- c. The bodily resurrection of Christ - Acts 2:24-36; Eph 1:19-23

B. HIS HUMANITY - Christ Became A Man

1. He had human parentage - Mt 1:16; Rom 1:3; Gal 4:4

2. He grew according to ordinary laws of human development - Mt 1:18, 25; Lk 2:40, 52

- a. He had a normal human birth - Mt 1:18, 25

* The conception of Jesus was miraculous, but His development in the womb and His birth followed normal patterns of human development.

b. He grew and developed like a normal child, yet with God's power - Lk 2:40, 52

3. He had the appearance of a human - Jn 4:9; 20:15

a. He looked like a Jew - Jn 4:9

b. Mary mistook Him for the gardener - Jn 20:15

4. He had a human body (Mt 26:12), soul (Jn 12:27) and spirit (Mk 2:8)

5. He was subject to human limitations:

a. Weariness and sleep - Jn 4:6; Mt 8:24

b. Hunger and thirst - Mt 4:2; 21:18; Jn 19:28

c. Temptation - Mt 4:1-11; Heb 2:18; 4:15

d. Suffering and death - Lk 22:44; Jn 19:30, 33

6. He had human names and titles:

* Son of Man - Lk 19:10

* Jesus - Mt 1:21

* Son of David - Mk 10:47

* Man - I Tim 2:5

C. HIS INCARNATION - How Christ Became A Man

1. The Fact Of The Incarnation - Jn 1:1, 14; Php 2:6-8; I Tim 3:16

* The fact that the eternal Son of God added our humanity to His deity is clearly stated in Scripture:

a. He was called Emmanuel ("God with us") - Mt 1:23; Isa 7:14

b. The eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us - Jn 1:1, 14

c. The One who was equal with God took upon Himself the form of a human servant - Php 2:6-8

d. God was manifest in the flesh - I Tim 3:16

e. He took our human nature upon Himself in all respects - Heb 2:14-18

2. The Means Of The Incarnation - The Virgin Birth - Isa 7:14; Mt 1:18-25

* "This is a cardinal truth of Christianity. It is the fundamental foundation upon which our faith rests. without the incarnation, Christianity could not stand." (Mark Cambron, *Bible Doctrines: Beliefs That Matter*, pg. 69)

a. It Was A Scriptural Birth (Foretold in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New)

* Gen 3:15 - The first Messianic prophecy in the Bible foretells the coming of Christ, "her seed." This may be a reference to Christ's humanity, but it also may give an early hint to the virgin birth.

- * Isa 7:14 - In a prophecy to King Ahaz Isaiah gave a sign involving a virgin bearing a child. This prophecy had a dual fulfillment - it was fulfilled in Isaiah's day by a young woman bearing a child, and it was ultimately fulfilled by Jesus Christ.
 - ~ The Hebrew word in this verse *can* refer to either a virgin or a young woman. But the Greek word used in the quotation of this verse in Mt 1:23 can only refer to a virgin.
- * Jer 31:22 may give reference to the virgin birth. ". . . for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." For a woman to give birth to a man is not a "new thing" - but for a woman alone, apart from a husband, to give birth to a man, that would be a "new thing." If this is the meaning of the verse, it refers to the Virgin Birth of Christ.
- * Mt 1:16 - The genealogy of Joseph does not state that he "begat" Jesus. It says, ". . . Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." The pronoun "of whom" is feminine, referring to Mary. Jesus was born of Mary, not Joseph.
- * Mt 1:18-25 - Mary was pregnant before she married Joseph (vs. 18). The baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit (vs. 20). Mary was the virgin that was prophesied in Isa 7:14 (vs. 23). Joseph married her, but they did not have marital relations until after the birth of Christ (vs. 25)
- * Lk 1:26-27 - Mary was a virgin engaged to be married when Gabriel came to her.
- * Lk 1:31 - Gabriel told Mary that she would conceive in her womb - no man would be involved in the conception of Christ.
- * Lk 1:34-37 - The birth of Christ was to be a miraculous birth, accomplished through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. The baby would be the Son of God.
- * Gal 4:4 - Paul states that God's Son was "made of a woman" - a possible hint to the virgin birth.

b. It Was A Sovereign's Birth (A fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant)

- (1) God promised David that one of his heirs would establish an eternal kingdom. This was to be specifically fulfilled through Solomon - II Sam 7:12-13, 16; Jer 23:5
- (2) Jehoiachin sinned against God to the degree that God judged him. None of his children or grandchildren would ever rule - Jer 22:30
- (3) How could both of these declarations of God be fulfilled? How could a son of David sit on the throne while God judged the legal line and cut it off?
 - * The answer is in the genealogies of Christ. Luke gives us Mary's genealogy, showing Jesus to be *physically* in the line of David, but through Solomon's brother, Nathan. Thus, the curse against Jehoiachin is fulfilled. Matthew gives us Joseph's genealogy, showing Jesus to be *legally* in the line of David through Solomon and Jehoiachin (Mt 1:11). Thus, the promise to David is fulfilled. Through the virgin birth, both scriptures could be fulfilled!

c. It Was A Supernatural Birth (A miraculous birth)

- * The birth of Jesus involved a human mother but no human father. The divine conception was accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit - Lk 1:35; Mt 1:20

d. It Was A Sinless Birth

- * All mankind is born in sin (Ps 51:5; Rom 5:12). We receive our sin nature from our human parents. Jesus, however, did not have a sin nature. He was holy and sinless (Lk 1:35; Heb 4:15; 7:26). He had no sin nature. Jesus' sinless birth - the absence of a sin nature - was only possible because He had a supernatural, virgin birth!

e. It Was A Savior's Birth

- * Jesus came with a purpose - To die in man's place as the perfect and final sacrifice for sin. In order to die as our substitute, He had to be a sinless human; In order to die for all of us, He had to be infinite God (Mt 1:21; II Cor 5:21; I Jn 2:2).

3. The Purposes Of The Incarnation:

- a. To reveal God to men - Jn 1:18
- b. To fulfill God's purpose of man's dominion over creation - Heb 2:5-9; cf. Gen 1:26-28
- c. To experience what we experience so that He could help us as a merciful and faithful High Priest - Heb 2:14-18; Heb 4:14-5:2
- d. To provide an example for living - I Pet 2:21
- e. To become the final sacrifice for sin, offering eternal life - Heb 10:1-10; Heb 2:17; Jn 1:4, 11-13
- f. To shine as the light in a sin-darkened world - Jn 1:4-10
- g. To destroy the works of the devil and deliver us from Satan's power - I Jn 3:8; Heb 2:15
- h. To reign on the throne of David - Lk 1:31-33

D. THE UNITY OF HIS TWO NATURES

- * Since early church history, the true nature of the person of Christ has been debated. How could Jesus Christ be both God and man? Some have tried to deny the full deity of Christ. Others have tried to deny his true humanity. The union of deity and humanity in one Person is called the "hypostatic union."
- * This doctrine teaches that Jesus Christ was both full deity and true sinless humanity. These divine and human natures have been eternally united in one Person without mixture or confusion.
- * "Christ possessed a human nature and a divine nature -- both are complete. It is not Scriptural to say Christ is God and man; rather, He is the God-Man." (Mark Cambron, *Bible Doctrines: Beliefs That Matter*, pg. 92)

E. HIS IMPECCABILITY - Jesus Christ Is Sinless

- * The fact that Jesus Christ is sinless is clearly stated in Scripture - Heb 4:15; Heb 7:26; II Cor 5:21; I Pet 2:22; I Jn 3:5
- * A theological debate has raged over the question, "Could Jesus have sinned?" One side says that since He is God, He could not sin. The other side asks, "If that is true, then were His temptations real?"
- * The answer lies in the fact that Christ's temptations were real, but they were designed to prove that He was sinless. He faced every type of temptation that we face, and He actually faced them to a greater degree, because He never yielded. Jesus Christ is sinless!

III. THE DEATH OF CHRIST

A. The Reason For Christ's Death

1. The Question: Death is the result of sin (Rom 5:12; 6:23). Jesus Christ never sinned (I Pet 2:22). So why did He die?
2. The Answer: He took the sin of mankind upon Himself and died to pay the penalty for that sin. He died for *my* sin! - II Cor 5:21; I Pet 2:24; I Pet 3:18; Rom 5:8

B. The Extent Of Christ's Death

1. His death was sufficient to save all - II Cor 5:14-15; I Tim 2:4-6; Heb 2:9; II Pet 2:1; I Jn 2:2
2. His death is efficient only for those who believe - Jn 3:16, 36; Rom 10:9-13; I Tim 4:10

C. The Nature Of Christ's Death

1. It was a shameful death by crucifixion - Php 2:8; Heb 12:2; Isa 53; Ps 22
2. It involved taking the curse of our sin - Gal 3:13
3. It required the shedding of Christ's blood - Heb 9:22; Acts 20:28; Eph 1:7; I Pet 1:18-19

D. The Accomplishments of Christ's Death

* Note: These points are taken from *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Charles C. Ryrie, Moody Press, 1972, pp. 118-126

1. It was a substitution for sin - Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; II Cor 5:21; I Pet 3:18
 - * Christ died in the place of sinners.
2. It provided redemption from sin - Rev 5:9; I Cor 6:19-20; Heb 9:12; Titus 2:14
 - * Christ purchased us, removed us from bondage, and set us free.
3. It effected reconciliation - II Cor 5:19-20
 - * Christ's death changed man from a state of alienation and brought him to a place where he is now able to be saved.
4. It provides propitiation - Rom 3:25; I Jn 2:2
 - * Christ's death satisfied God's holy wrath on sin. Nothing more needs to be added!
5. It judged the sin nature - Rom 6:1-10
 - * Christ broke the power of sin in the believer's life. The Christian must put this freedom from sin's power into practice by yielding to Christ's control.
6. It brought the end of the law - Rom 10:4; Col 2:14
 - * The Mosaic law is no longer binding on the believer. (It still teaches us much about God's holiness and man's sinfulness.)
7. It is the ground for the Christian's cleansing from sin - I Jn 1:7-10
 - * As Christians our sins are forgiven upon confession based on the death of Christ.
8. It is the basis for the removal of pre-cross sins - Heb 10:4; Rom 3:25

* The sins of Old Testament saints were covered through the sacrificial system. They were actually forgiven through the payment of Christ's death on the cross.

9. It is the basis for the judgment of Satan and his demons - Jn 12:31; Col 2:15

IV. THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST

A. The Nature Of The Resurrection - He Rose Bodily

1. The tomb was empty - Mt 28:5-6; Lk 24:12; Jn 20:1-7

2. Jesus showed Himself to the disciples in bodily form - Jn 20:11-16, 19-20; I Cor 15:4-8

* The disciples touched Him - Jn 20:26-29

* He ate food - Jn 21:9-14

B. The Proofs Of The Resurrection

1. The Empty Tomb - Mt 28:5-6

2. The Grave Clothes Jn 20:3-8

* The graveclothes were lying there, still wrapped and undisturbed, like a cocoon. How could the body have been removed, without disturbing the graveclothes?

* This also indicates that the women had found the right tomb.

3. The Post-Resurrection Appearances - I Cor 15:4-8

* There are at least 10-12 separate appearances recorded over a period of 40 days, including one to over 500 brethren at once. These could not have been hallucinations. If the story was fabricated, someone would have recanted before being martyred.

4. The Reactions Of The Officials - Mt 28:4, 11-15

* Trained, hardened, and experienced soldiers were filled with fear.

* The religious leaders paid a large bribe to provide a cover-up.

5. The Changed Lives Of The Disciples

* Fear, hiding and unbelief were transformed into boldness, powerful preaching and martyrdom!

6. The Formation Of The Church

* Scared and scattered disciples do not go around proclaiming a message they do not believe! The events of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the rapid growth of the church indicate that Jesus was truly alive!

7. The Change In The Day Of Worship - Acts 20:7; I Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10

8. The Testimony Of The Early Church

* The doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Christ was never debated in the early church.

9. The Testimony Of Changed Lives Throughout History - II Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20

* "He lives within my heart!"

C. The Significance Of The Resurrection

1. It Gives Witness To Christ's Deity - Rom 1:4; Acts 2:24, 36
2. It Assures The Christian Of His Justification - Rom 4:25
 - * The resurrection is God's "Amen!" to Christ's "It is finished!"
3. It Assures The Bodily Resurrection Of All Men - I Cor 15:22
4. It Assures The Reality Of A Coming Day Of Judgment - Acts 17:31; Acts 10:40-42; Jn 5:21-29

V. THE PRESENT MINISTRIES OF CHRIST

A. His Activities In Relation To His Creation

1. He Is Sustaining The Universe - Col 1:16-17
2. He Is Exercising Universal Authority - Mt 28:18; Eph 1:20-22a

B. His Activities In Relation To The Church

1. He Is Building His Church - Mt 16:18
2. He Is The Head Of The Church - Eph 1:22b-23
3. He Is Giving Spiritual Gifts To The Church - Eph 4:7-11
4. He Is Sanctifying The Church - Eph 5:25-27

C. His Activities In Relation To The Believer

1. He Has An Intimate Relationship With Every Believer - Gal 2:20; II Cor 5:17
2. He Serves As Our Great High Priest - Heb 4:14
3. He Prays For Us - Jn 17:9, 20; Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34
4. He Is Our Advocate When We Sin - I Jn 2:1-2; Heb 9:24
5. He Answers Our Prayers - Jn 14:13-14
6. He Helps Us Face Temptations - Heb 2:18; 4:15
7. He Enables Us To Bear Fruit - Jn 15:4-5

D. His Present Activities In Relation To The Future

1. He Is Preparing A Place For Believers - Jn 14:1-3
2. He Is Waiting For His Future Kingdom - Heb 10:12-13

VI. THE FUTURE MINISTRIES OF CHRIST

A. He Will Come For The Church At The Rapture - I Thess 4:13-18

B. He Will Reward Christians At The Judgment Seat Of Christ - II Cor 5:10

C. He Will Pour Out His Wrath During The Tribulation - Rev 6:16-17

D. He Will Return To Reign On Earth During The Millennium - Rev 19:11-16

E. He Will Judge Sinners At The Great White Throne - Rev 20:11-15

F. He Will Reign Forever - Rev 21:1-3; 22:1-4