

Christology – Discovering Doctrine

- This week, we'll be studying Jesus Christ
 - Christology is the study of Christ
 - Our foundation booklet has five statements on this doctrine...
1. We believe that Jesus Christ was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit.
 2. We believe that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary.
 3. We believe that Jesus Christ was the son of God.
 4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God, the Son.
 5. We believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and rose bodily from the grave on the third day.
- The first two "we believe" statements fit so closely together, they are almost impossible to separate in the text
 - Statement number three is also closely related in our gospel accounts
 - Jesus' coming forth of the Holy Ghost
 - His birth of a virgin
 - And the revelation of His divine sonship are sometimes declared together within the context
 - And they are key part of any discussion of Christology
- We begin with points one and two in Matthew...

Matthew 1:18-21

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

- Before they came together means before they were married
- Literally, before their "conjugal cohabitation"
- Which gives us the first clue as to the reality of this situation
- She was found with child, but not just any child
- This was a child of the Holy Ghost
- To confirm this, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream

- The very same message is brought in this dream
- Saying "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost"
- This means something really special
- That the Savior of Israel (and of the world) is coming
- And His name will be Jesus
- There are more details in Luke...

Luke 1:26-35

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

- This text clears up any confusion, specifically calling Mary a virgin twice
- She has been favoured by God, in that she has been given the privilege of carrying and bringing forth His son
- Which Gabriel calls Son of the Highest
- Declaring Him to be the rightful heir of the throne of David
- Reigning over Israel, not just for a lifetime, but forever
- Mary asks the obvious question
- How can this be?
- She has never been with a man
- But Gabriel explains
- And the ESV translates the explanation this way...

"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God."

- And this is our first mention of Jesus being the Son of God
- But Gabriel is not the only one who called Him the Son of God
- Many - even His enemies - called Him this
- When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, Matthew says...

Matthew 4:5-6

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,
6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

- Satan seemed rather certain of His identity
- Even partially quoting Psalm 91:11-12...

"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

- Demons also seemed to understand His identity...

Matthew 8:28-32

28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

- They called Him the same thing those at His crucifixion called Him...

Matthew 27:37-43

37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.
 39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,
 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
 41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,
 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.
 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

- John the Baptist (forerunner of the Messiah) declared Him the Son of God too...

John 1:29-34

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.
 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.
 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.
 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.
 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.
 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

- There are similarities and differences between calling Jesus the Son of God and God the Son
- Our church obviously teaches that He is both
 - To say He is the Son of God is to affirm He is not born of man - without imputed sin
 - It is also to say He comes down from God
 - That He is set apart in a way that no one else is set apart
 - A keeper of the whole law
 - No sin is found in Him - neither a sinner by birth or by choice
- To say He is God the Son is to affirm He is the second person of the Godhead
 - God in His very essence, like unto God the Father and God the Holy Spirit
 - Hebrews would call Him the "express image of God's person"
 - Colossians says in Him dwells "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"

- The religious Jews understood what being God the Son meant, it seems...

John 10:27-33

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 I and my Father are one.

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

- By saying that Jesus was one with the Father, He was declaring Himself God the Son
- This is the blasphemy they decried
- The prophecies about Him revealed His identity
- One of the most cited, regarding His birth in Bethlehem declares it...

Micah 5:2

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

- This expression "from of old, from everlasting" is an expression used to signify the eternity of God
- It is used in reference to God in Psalm 55:19, Psalm 90:2, Proverbs 8:23, Habakkuk 1:12
- The gospel of John gives us a similar sense from its first verse...

John 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

- We are talking about an eternal Word
- The Creator of all things
- A Word that was God
- His identity is revealed as we continue reading...

John 1:14-18

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

- Jesus Christ is the Word
- The eternal Word
- The Word that "was God"
- The only begotten of the Father
- In Him - in His very person, in His character - God the Father is revealed
- As though He and the Father (just as He said) are one
- This Son of God, God the Son is the centerpiece of the good news
- The gospel that is outlined and defined in four New Testament verses...

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

- This is our fifth "we believe" statement
- Jesus the Messiah was crucified in our place and for our sins
- And He died
- Was buried (only dead people are buried)

- And rose again
- Peter preached this message not long after His resurrection...

Acts 2:22-24

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

- In saying it was not possible that death should hold Him, in some ways our other points are substantiated
- He was the God capable of conquering death - and He did
- The events of this gospel story are outlined for is in Mark...

Mark 15:33-39

33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

- Even the miraculous events surrounding His death give us clues about His identity
- The centurion, being an eyewitness, certainly made note of them
- Declaring himself one of our key doctrinal points
- Though His death is recorded here, it is also confirmed
- Pilate wanted it confirmed...

Mark 15:44-46

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

- Another translation may help us understand verse 44...

"Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead."

- When the centurion knew He was dead
- Permission was given to Joseph to bury Him
- This burial is not a point to be overlooked
- In that it is a confirmation of His literal, physical death
- Be He also rose from the dead and was observed by many...

Mark 16:1-7

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

- An angel declared it to be so
- But it was also confirmed by eyewitness account...

Mark 16:9

9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

- Mary
- And...

Mark 16:12

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

- Plus...

Mark 16:14-15

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

- When His resurrection was in doubt, He appeared to them
- With many infallible proofs, showing who He was
- Confirming the reality of His words to them so often
- Providing us with reason to do as He commanded them
- To go and preach
- To proclaim after the manner of a herald these truths
- The five we have outlined in our foundations book and no doubt many more about Him
- He is worthy of every ounce of energy and effort
- Worthy of service in life and in death