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Introduction To Christology

II Timothy 3:16–17

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished [to be made fully qualified from the inside out] unto all good works.

There are three basic reasons why this study of the Bible doctrines concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance:

1. Jesus Christ is the SUM and SUBSTANCE, the CENTER and ESSENCE of Bible Christianity.

If we take Buddha from Buddhism — we still have a system of belief. If we take Mohammed from Islam — we still have a system of belief. If we take Joseph Smith from Mormonism — we still have a system of belief.

BUT

If we take Christ from Christianity—we have nothing!!

Christianity is not a system of beliefs, but a PERSON. One does not become a Christian through the observance of rules and rites, but through a PERSON, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence we may conclude that if we are wrong on the doctrine of Christ we will have the wrong kind of Christianity. II John 9-11

2. Jesus Christ is the CENTRAL FIGURE of human history.

Jesus Christ cannot be ignored. Even the most avowed atheist acknowledges Him every time he writes a date, for this Man separates all human history. No other Person has influenced the lives of men and women — or the course of nations — as has the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is ...

“Heaven’s bread for earth’s hunger

Heaven’s water for earth’s thirst

Heaven’s light for earth’s guilt

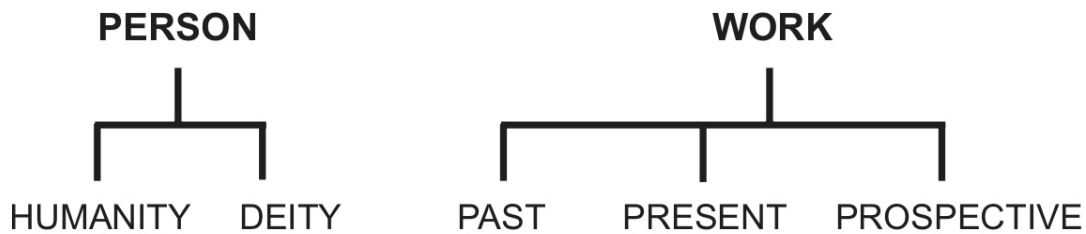
Heaven’s beauty for earth’s ugliness

Heaven’s wisdom for earth’s folly

Heaven’s peace for earth’s strife

Heaven’s justification for earth’s condemnation

Heaven’s salvation for earth’s damnation.”



3. Jesus Christ is the PRIME TARGET of Satanic attack.

The underlying thrust of the Devil’s attacks upon Bible Christianity is directed at the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan particularly seeks to discredit Christ by tempting men to doubt the Bible (which Christ accredited) and its miracles (which Christ performed.)

Satan knows what is at stake — there can be only ONE Lord! (See: Isaiah 14:14). This is why the temptation of Christ was so critical: [“Fall down and worship me...” — Matthew 4:9.](#)

Satan was trying to make a devil-worshiper out of Christ, knowing that a successful outcome would have made him the devil, Lord.

Satan’s emissaries (which include a lot of modernistic “churchmen” and “scholars” — II Corinthians 11:4,13-15) have fomented much false doctrine concerning the Son of God, thereby making it all the more important for each student to KNOW the truth and be able to STAND by it.

In studying the doctrine of Christ (in theology called “Christology”) we are concerned with two areas — the PERSON and the WORK of Christ.

It is essential that the student of the Word of God discern which of the above categories applies to any given passage of scripture relating to Christ. The Bible sometimes refers to Jesus Christ as a man, and at other times as God. An overall, balanced Christology must be developed, taking into account the entire testimony of scripture.

Each of the four Gospels portrays the Lord Jesus Christ in a different light, from a different perspective, and often to a specific audience. A good way to understand the differences between the four Gospels is to consider how an average family records its own history and accomplishments. Over a period of time, an array of photographs, video footage, audiotapes, newspaper clippings, locks of hair, awards, letters, diaries, and memories will be accumulated — each of which gives part of the story; all of which compose the full story.

MATTHEW .. is like a portrait — stately and regal
Presents Christ as the KING — declaring His Sovereignty.

- Jews

MARK is like a video — fast-moving action

Presents Christ as the SERVANT — declaring His Ministry.

- Romans

LUKE is like a scrapbook — pictures of life, personal

Presents Christ as the MAN — declaring His Humanity.

- Greeks

JOHN is like a photographic study — pictures with a purpose (John 20:21) Presents Christ as GOD — declaring His Deity.

- World

(Jehovah’s Witnesses and other unitarian cults will focus more on the Gospels of Mark and Luke — and especially steer clear of John’s Gospel!)

SOME WORDS TO EXPLAIN

1. JESUS:

This is transliterated from the Greek word [pronounced “Yay-sous”] and is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, or Jehoshua.

The name means “Saviour,” or more precisely, “Jehovah-Saviour.”

Matthew 1:21 — “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

2. CHRIST:

This is transliterated from the Greek word [‘Christos’] which means “anointed.” It is equivalent to the Hebrew “Messiah.”

3. DEITY:

This a theological term derived from the Latin word “deus” meaning “God.” When we speak of the “deity of Christ,” we are referring to the fact that He is God.

4. INCARNATION:

This word means, “to embody in flesh,” and refers to the coming of Christ to this world as a Man.

5. THE “ONLY BEGOTTEN SON:”

The Greek word translated “only begotten” is [‘monogenes’]. Most would think of begetting in the sense of human generation — a father produces a son, e.g. Matthew 1:2. This is not the case with the Son of God, Who was “in the beginning” — John 1:1.

The term is one of relationship, not generation. “The only begotten Son is that association in the Godhead which can be best illustrated to man by the relationship of father and son.” (2)

This point is demonstrated by Hebrews 11:17, where Isaac is called Abraham’s “only begotten son” when in fact Abraham begat other children, including Ishmael who was actually born first! Isaac was the heir. God has many other sons — by creative fiat (Job 38:7), by natural generation (Malachi 2:10a; Acts 17:26a), and by spiritual regeneration (John 1:12; James 1:18). These kinds of sonship have come about through an ACT of God — but not so with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the term “only begotten Son” is exclusive to Jesus Christ to indicate the unique relationship He has with the Father in the Godhead.

6. THE WORD:

This name for Christ is used only in the writings of the apostle John (John 1:1,14; I John 1:1; 5:7; and Revelation 19:13). It is translated from the Greek word “LÒgoV” [‘logos’] which means, “word” or “expression.” Jesus Christ is the full expression and revelation of God. He is the Revealer. “As language expresses thought, so Christ is the Expression, the Revealer, the Manifestor of God.” (3)

The same word is also used of the Bible. Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God, the Bible is the written Word of God.

CHRIST

John 14:6

John 5:58

John 14:6

Acts 16:31

Titus 2:14

Hebrews 10:14

Romans 15:9

John 11:25

TRUTH

EVERLASTING

LIFE-GIVING

SAVING

PURIFYING

SANCTIFYING

GLORIFYING GOD

LIVING

BIBLE

John 17:17

Psalms 119:89

James 1:18

I Corinthians 15:1,2

I Peter 1:22

John 17:17

Acts 13:48

I Peter 1:23

Toward the close of the first century A.D., the Holy Spirit evidently moved the apostle John to write certain passages in his Gospel and epistles to counteract the rising Gnostic heresy. Gnosticism grew out of the unholy blending of pure Christianity with Greek pagan philosophy, and viewed Jesus Christ as an “emanated being” — a god, among lesser deities. The term “logos” was employed by philosophers such as Philo (c.20B.C.–C.50 A.D.). This word only refutes the notion of Christ being emanated along with other æons; the term “only begotten Son” refutes the Gnostic concept that He was lesser, subordinate, or inferior to God.