

A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CHRIST!

Read John 1:1-18

OUTLINE OF JOHN 1:1-18:

THE PRE-EXISTENCE & INCARNATION OF CHRIST:

A. His Eternality: 1 :1-2

- emphasis is on eternity
- emphasis is on personality
- emphasis is on deity

B. His Pre-existent Work: 1:3-5

C. His Forerunner: 1:6-8

- vs. 6 focuses on the sender
- vs. 7 focuses on the purpose
- vs. 8 focuses on the identity

D. His Reception: 1:9-13

- vs. 9 upon entering the world
- vs. 10-11 Rejected by the world
- vs. 19-13 Accepted by some

E. His Incarnation: 1:14-18

- From this passage we will move on to examine some of the key elements of a Theology of Christ.

THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST:

A. The Concept Articulated:

1. Positively stated: In His essential being Jesus Christ never began to be; He existed from-eternity as the Second Person of the Triune Godhead.

2. Negatively stated: In His essential being, Jesus Christ did **not** begin to exist when He was conceived in the womb by His mother, Mary.

3. Practically stated: The Second Person of the Triune Godhead made a conscious and gracious decision to lay aside the glories and reputation of deity and to take upon Himself the nature of man and the form of a servant (Phil 2:5-1 1).

B. The Testimony of the New Testament Regarding Christ's Pre-existence:

1. Christ's affirmation of Himself:

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-John 8:58

-John 17:5

-Revelation 1:8

-John 1:15&30

2. Witness of the New Testament Writers:

-Apostle John: John 1-3, 14

-Apostle Paul: Col:16 & Phil. 2:6

THE DEITY OF CHRIST:

1. Introduction

A central test of Christian orthodoxy is the affirmation that Jesus Christ is truly God. Christ's deity is affirmed by Jesus Himself and the New Testament writers.

2. Called by the titles and names of God

o Introduction:

John 1:1-9 (NASB) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

John 8:12 (NASB) Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Compare to I John 1.5

1 John 1:5 (NASB) And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

John 17:3 (NASB) "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Hebrews 1:8 (NASB) But of the Son He says, "THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM."

John 20:28 (NASB) Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

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Romans 9:5 (NASB) whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen

Titus 2:10,13 (NASB) not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.... looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

Titus 3:4 (NASB) But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared,

- Concept of the Son of God demands equality with God.

John 10:33 (NASB) The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

John 19:7 (NASB) The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God."

- The terms LORD/YHWH related to Christ

John 8:58 (NASB) Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, *I am.*" (note Jewish reaction)

Romans 10:13 (note Joel 2:32)

Romans 10:13 (NASB) for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

Joel 2:32 (NASB) "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Philippians 2:10 (note Is. 45:21)

Philippians 2:10-11 (NASB) that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Isaiah 45:21-23 (NASB) "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. (note speaker)

Isaiah 44:6 (NASB) "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

- The term Lord of Glory

Psalm 24:8-10 compared with 1 Corinthians 2:8 where it is applied to Christ

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Psalm 24:8-10 (NASB) Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift them up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah.

I Corinthians 2:8 (NASB) the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

- The term The Holy One

Hosea 11:9 compared with Acts 3:14

Hosea 11:9 (NASB) I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man, the *Holy One* in your midst, And I Will not come in wrath.

Acts 3:14 (NASB) "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you"

- The term First and Last

Isaiah 44:6 compared with Rev 1:17-18

Isaiah 44:6 (NASB) "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

Rev 1:17,18 (NASB) And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

3. Christ demonstrates/claims the incommunicable attributes of deity

- Source of life

John 1:4 (NASB) In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 5:21 (NASB) "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. (note parallel reference to divine works)

John 14:6 (NASB) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

- Immutability

Hebrews 13:8 (NASB) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.

Hebrews 1:11-12 (NASB) THEY WILL PERISH, BUT THOU REMADVEST; AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD AS A GARMENT, AND AS A MANTLE THOU WILT ROLL THEM UP; AS A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."

- Eternality

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John 8:58 (NASB) Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, *I AM*."

John 17:5 (NASB) "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

- Perfect Righteousness

John 6:69 (NASB) "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

Hebrews 7:26 (NASB) For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinner and exalted above the heavens;

I Pet 2:22 (NASB) WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

- Omniscience

John 6:64 (NASB) "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

John 16:30 (NASB) "Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God."

John 18:4 (NASB) Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

Matthew 9:4 (NASB) And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"

- Omnipotence

Rev 1:8 (NASB) "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Matthew 28:18 (NASB) And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

4. Christ demonstrates the works of deity

- He created all things.

Colossians 1:16-17 (NASB) For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:10 (NASB) And, "THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING DIDST LAY THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THY HANDS;

John 1:3 (NASB) All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

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- He upholds all things.

Hebrews 1:3 (NASB) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

- He judges.

1 Peter 4:5 (NASB) but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NASB) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- He forgave sin

Mark 2:7 (NASB) Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Matthew 9:2 (NASB) And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven."

- He gave life

John 6:54 (NASB) "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 11:25 (NASB) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,

5. Christ receives worship as deity

- Only God receives worship

Exodus 20:5 (NASB) "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me,

Exodus 34:14 (NASB) –for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God–

Matthew 4:10 (NASB) Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

- Men are to refuse worship

Acts 10:25,26 (NASB) And when it came about that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man."

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- Angels, who are higher than men, refuse worship

Rev 19:10 (NASB) And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Rev 22:9-10 (NASB) And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God." And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near."

- Jesus receives worship as God

Matthew 15:25 (NASB) But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

Matthew 28:9-10 (NASB) And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to holy brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they shall see Me."

Hebrews 1:6-9 (NASB) And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM." And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE." But of the Son He says, "THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM. "THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY COMPANIONS."

John 5:23 (NASB) in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

John 9:38 (NASB) And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.

6. Christ explicitly called God

John 1:1,18 (NASB) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 20:28 (NASB) Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Titus 2:13 (NASB) looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Savior, Christ Jesus

Hebrews 1:8 (NASB) But of the Son He says, "THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM."

2 Peter 1:1 (NASB) Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

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1 John 5:20 (NASB) And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

7. Christ claimed to be the Son of God

- At the age of twelve

Luke 2:49 (NASB) And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"

- At His baptism

Matthew 3:17 (NASB) and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

- By setting His teaching on par with the Old Testament

Matthew 5:21-29 (NASB) "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

- In sending out the disciples

Matthew 10:1,8 (NASB) And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.... "Heal the sick' raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give.

- In His direct statements

1-Claimed pre-existence

John 8:58 (NASB) Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

John 17:5 (NASB) "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

2-Claimed oneness with the Father

John 10:30 (NASB) "I and the Father are one."

John 17:11 (NASB) "And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou has given Me, that they may be one, even as We are.

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3-Claimed the title Son of God

John 10:36 (NASB) do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

4-Claimed future demonstrations of glory

Matthew 25:31 (NASB) "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST:

A. Definition:

-The act of the second person of the Trinity whereby He took upon Himself the form of man and became flesh, the God-Man

B. The Texts:

-Phil. 2:5-11

-John 1:14

* Many theologians will use the term Theanthropic to describe Christ as having both a perfect and complete human nature as well as a perfect and complete divine nature.

C. Purpose of the Incarnation:

1-To fulfill the Promises of God.

-Genesis 3:15

-Romans 15:8

2-To reveal God directly to mankind.

-John 1:13

3-To take away sin.

-I John 3:5

4-To be the ultimate High Priest.

-Hebrews 2:17-18

-Hebrews 10:21

5-To be the second Adam and model true-humanity.

-Romans 5:14-15

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6-To subjugate all to Himself.

-1 Corinthians 15:25

D. Prediction of the Incarnation in the Old Testament:

1 -The Promise: Genesis 3:15 (The seed of woman)

2-The Place: Micah 5:2 (Bethlehem Ephrathah)

3-The Manner: Isaiah 7:14 (Born of a virgin)

4-The Lineage: 2 Samuel 7:1-16 (Line of David)

5-The Date: Daniel 9:24-25

THE HUMANITY CHRIST:

A. The Importance of this doctrine:

1. Why is a proper and Biblical understanding of the doctrine of the humanity of Christ important to us today?

a) The apostle John makes this doctrine a test of orthodoxy (1 John 4:2).

b) It is because Jesus took upon Himself the nature of man that He can function as the Redeemer of man (Hebrews 2:14).

c) It is because Jesus lived His earthly life within the limitations and restrictions of (un-fallen) humanity that He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15).

B. Scriptural Proofs of this doctrine:

1. Regarding Christ's human development:

a. He was called a man:

-John 7:27

-John 9:29

-Mark 2:7

b) He had a human body:

-John 19:38

-Hebrews 10:5-35

c) He possessed immaterial aspects of humanity:

-Matthew- 26:35

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-Acts 2:27

-Mark 4:34

d) He was subjected to human limitations:

1-He got tired: John 4:6

2-He got thirsty: John 4:7

3-He got hungry: Matthew 4:2

4-He experienced emotion: John 11:33-35

5-He got angry: Matthew 21:12-13

6-He grew and matured: Luke 2:52

7-He was tempted: Matthew 4

8-He voluntarily experienced restricted knowledge: Phil. 2:5-11

THE KENOSIS:

A. A prevailing theological persuasion concerning the relationship between the divine and human natures of Jesus: the **Kenotic formula**

1 -The term Kenosis is taken from Philippians 2:7, where Paul states that Christ emptied himself. (KJV: made himself of no reputation) when He took upon Himself the form of a bond servant. The Greek word translated emptied himself, from which we take the English word Kenosis (a reference to the self-emptying of Jesus in His incarnation).

Note: There is much discussion as to precisely what that expression means; it is an issue, which must be addressed both exegetically and theologically. The basic issue is this: in what sense did Jesus "empty Himself" of deity when He took upon himself humanity. For our purposes here, it is sufficient to simply articulate the theological concept at stake.

2-The theological expression of the kenotic formula: During the period between His physical conception and His ascension to the Father, Jesus voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes.

"The humiliation [of Christ], as the Scriptures seem to show consisted... in the act of preexistent Logos by which he gave up his divine glory with the Father, in order to take a servant form. In this act, he resigned *not the possession; nor yet entirely the use, but rather the independent exercise of the divine attributes.*" A.H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p 703:

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B. There is profound and inscrutable mystery in this, and there is no suggestion here that this formula solves that mystery. However, this formula does seem to honor what the Scriptures teach regarding the Person of Jesus. Notice specifically with reference to this suggested *formula*:

1-The formula does not suggest that Jesus surrendered deity; indeed, Jesus did not surrender any attributes of deity of any time.

2-The self-emptying of Jesus, however it is understood, was voluntary (Philippians 2:7).

3-Jesus maintained His divine self-consciousness ~ this self-emptying (John 8:14; 19:97)

4-The teaching of Scripture is that when Jesus surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes, He surrendered them to the Holy Spirit (Mt 19:98; Ezekiel 4:14-18).

(a) That is, in His incarnation and consequent humiliation, Jesus became totally subservient to the will of the Father; He became a perfect Servant, living to do the Father's will (John 8:28,29; 12:49). In thus submitting Himself to the Father, Jesus in His incarnation acquiesced entirely to the guidance, control and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:2; Luke 3:21,22; Ac 10:38; John 3:34)

(b) This is not to suggest that Jesus was without the resident attributes of deity (the power to do miracles, for instance). He did not surrender the divine attributes themselves; He surrendered the independent exercise of those attributes (Isaiah 11:2; 61:1).

- In fact, this construct does not solve the enigma of the relationship between the divine and human natures in the Theanthropic Person, Jesus Christ. (Indeed, that enigma cannot be solved.) It does, however, express the Biblical teaching concerning the self-emptying of Jesus Christ.

The Hypostatic Union of Christ

1. Definition:

The unique combination of true humanity and undiminished deity that has existed since the incarnation. These two natures (divine and human) existed without confusion or loss of separate identity and they were inseparably united without transfer or attributes.

2. Elements of the Hypostatic Union:

- Christ had a human and divine nature united in one personal subsistence.
- In Christ, the one person, the two natures are inseparably united without confusion.
- This unity of two natures is permanent

3. Historical Perspectives (false)

Arianism

- Arose in the third century

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- Followers of Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria
- Belief that Jesus pre-existed as the first creature which came from the hand of God
- Contemporary example--Jehovah Witnesses

Gnosticism

- Arose during the first century (c.f. I John and Colossians)
- An integration of Hellenistic idealism and/or Zoroastrian dualism with Christianity
- Belief that matter was evil, thereby denying the true humanity of Christ
- Scripture Refutations

Colossians 2:9 (NASB) For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

I John 1:1 (NASB) What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life-- (note- you cannot handle a ghost!)

Apollinarianism

- Arose during the fourth century
- Followers of Apollinaris, a distinguished bishop of Laodicea
- Belief that (Christ had only a human body and soul, but did not have a human spirit. He therefore denied the integrity of the human nature of Christ. Apollinaris was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381.

Nestorianism

- Arose during the fourth century
- Followers of Nestorius, a Patriarch of Constantinople
- Denied the real union of the divine and human natures in Christ, thus two natures and two persons, He separated the human and the divine in Christ to the point of denying that what could be said of the human and divine in Christ could be said of the one person. Nestorius was condemned for his views by the Synod of Ephesus in AD 431.

Eutychianism

- Arose during the fourth century
- Followers of Eutyches a presbyter of Constantinople

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- Belief that there was but one nature in Christ because by incarnation or hypostatical union, the human was changed into divine. Eutychianism was condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.

Ebionism

- Arose in the early second century
- A Jewish sect
- Belief in Christ's deity incompatible with strict monotheism

Modern Liberalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Neo-Evangelicalism

- Ritschl, Schleiermacher, Barth, Niebuhr, Bultmann
- An Errancy view of the Bible, which leads to discrediting factual historicity of Jesus Christ

Orthodox Position

- In one person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature each in its completeness and integrity, and these two natures are organically and indissolubly united yet so that no third nature is formatted thereby.
- Orthodox position forbids us to either divide the person or to confuse the natures.
- The classic creedal statement of the orthodox doctrine
- The definitive creedal statement with reference to the relationship of the human and divine natures in the one Person of Jesus Christ is the Creed (or Definition) of Chalcedon.
- Produced by the fourth ecumenical Council in AD 451, the Creed is a deliberate attempt to maintain an orthodox position in the face of a number of Christological heresies which had infected the Christian world by that time.
- Specifically at stake were two issues:
 1. The unity of Christ's person; and
 2. The distinctiveness and integrity of Christ's two natures (divine & human)

The Creed of Chalcedon

The Creed of Chalcedon, which "became and continues to be, the standard for Christological orthodoxy, is as follows:

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Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness. We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten -- in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality (hypostasis). They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word (Logos) of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers (the Nicene Creed) has handed down to us.