

CHRISTOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

I. THE NAMES AND NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST

Christology is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is the study of Christ and His provision of salvation for a lost humanity. It is important that we understand this key doctrine as it relates to our eternal destiny.

It has been said that Christ is Christianity. False religions can continue without their leaders; cults can arise and their leaders be soon forgotten. But Christ is Christianity. Without Him Christianity has no meaning.

“The whole substance and strength of the Christian faith centers in Jesus Christ. Without Him there is absolutely nothing.” —Sinclair Patterson

A. INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ is the theme of Scripture. Every book of the Old Testament foretells His coming. The Gospels give us the account of His life on earth. The Epistles and the book of Revelation reveal that He is coming again. Throughout the Bible God gives us beautiful pictures of Jesus Christ:

“God will provide himself a lamb.” Gen. 22:8

“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Matt. 12:40

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” John 3:14

“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” Rev. 5:12

His coming to earth in the form of human flesh (the **incarnation**) was prophesied initially in Genesis 3:15, when God said to the serpent:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Gen. 3:15

This passage is called the “first gospel proclamation.” It implies a virgin birth (“her seed”), shows the battle lines of the ages, and implies a twofold coming of Christ. (At Christ’s first coming His heel was bruised; at His second coming He will bruise the head of Satan.)

The purpose of Christ's incarnation was determined before the foundation of the world.

"Him [Jesus Christ], being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."
Acts 2:23

"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" Rev. 13:8

Jesus Christ was born to die. He came into this world to die on a cross for our sins so we might have eternal life by trusting in Him.

B. THE NAMES OF CHRIST

Whereas Jesus Christ has many names of a general nature, some of His names specifically indicate His deity while others specifically indicate His humanity.

1. Christ (John 1:41; 4:25; Matt. 16:16)

- a. This is His official title.
- b. It is the New Testament name for the Old Testament word **Messiah**, which means "anointed one."

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God." Matt 16:16

- c. The name Christ pictures Jesus in His three offices of **prophet, priest, and king**.

(1) "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." Luke 24:19

(2) "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, ... Jesus the Son of God." Heb.4:14

(3) "And He [Jesus Christ] hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Rev. 19:16

2. Son of God (Matt. 16:16)

Although some today might suggest that Jesus Christ was only "one of many gods," those who knew Him, whether friend or foe, understood His claim to deity.

"Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he [Jesus] said unto them, 'Ye say that I am.' And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth." Luke 22:70—71

- a. This name indicates Christ's position in the Trinity.
- b. It emphasizes His deity.
- c. It is the emphasis of John's gospel.

3. Son of Man (John 5:26—27)

- a. This is the title Jesus applied to Himself.

The phrase Son of man is found approximately eighty times in the Gospels. With one exception, it is always used by Christ in referring to Himself. In the one exception, John 12:34, He is asked about this "unusual" phrase. Evidently Christ desired to veil His deity until the time was right. As a result He tended to use terms that emphasized His humanity and concealed His deity.

- b. This name emphasizes His humiliation. (Heb. 4:15)
- c. This name is the emphasis of Luke's gospel.

4. God (Heb. 1:8; John 1:1; Titus 2:13)

"But unto the Son He saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.'" Heb. 1:8

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13

The Bible clearly states that Jesus Christ is not a mere man. He is called God because He is God.

5. Lord (Luke 6:46)

One of the strongest testimonials to the deity of Christ was given by Thomas, the apostle who initially doubted the possibility of Christ's resurrection.

"And Thomas answered and said unto him [Jesus Christ], My Lord and my God." John 20:28

- a. This title emphasizes His position as the Master, King, and Ruler of our lives.
- b. This title deserves obedience and reverence.
- c. It is equivalent to the Old Testament “God.”

6. Jesus (Matt. 1:21)

- a. This is His personal, human name.
- b. It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name **Joshua**.

Note: The names Jesus and Joshua are occasionally used interchangeably: Acts 7:45.

- c. It means “**Savior**” or “**Salvation**.” (Acts 4:12)

7. Immanuel—“God with us” (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23)

*“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel [Immanuel], which being interpreted is, God with us.”
Matt. 1:23*

8. Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22)

Jesus was a Nazarene (from Nazareth), not a Nazarite. Samson, who took a special vow, was a Nazarite (Judg. 13).

C. THE NATURE OF CHRIST

1. The humanity of Jesus Christ

We speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as being perfect God and perfect man; 100 percent God and 100 percent man. He was as much God as if He were not man at all and as much man as if He were not God at all. Some cults emphasize the humanity of Christ to the exclusion of His deity. But the Scriptures teach both. As a perfect man He can empathize with us in our problems. As perfect God He could die on a cross for the sins of the world. Jesus Christ was both God and man.

a. Jesus Christ was a man.

(1) *He had a human parent. (Matt. 1:18, 2:11, 13:5; Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4).*

(2) *He had human names. (Jesus, Son of Man, Jesus of Nazareth and The Man Christ Jesus)*

(3) *He had a human appearance (words like, comely, Jewish, beard, blood, eating were all used in context with*

Jesus either describing him or what he was doing).

(4) *He had human sinless infirmities.*

- (a) Hunger (Matt. 4:2)
- (b) Thirst (John 19:28)
- (c) Fatigue (Matt. 8:24)
- (d) Weariness (John 4:6)
- (e) Agony (Luke 22:44)

b. Jesus Christ had human characteristics.
(Humility, love, meekness, etc.)

c. Jesus Christ had human activities. (Prayed, worked, learned, eating, etc.)

2. The deity of Jesus Christ

a. Jesus Christ performed divine activities.

- (1) He **created**. (John 1:1-3, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:1-2)
- (2) He **forgave** sin. (Matt. 9:1—8)
- (3) He exercised **judgment**. (2 Tim. 4:1)
- (4) He was **worshiped**.
 - (a) He accepted worship that was rightfully refused by men (Acts 10:25—26) and angels (Rev. 22:8—9).

This shows that He must have been more than a man or an angel. He must have been God.

- (b) He accepted prayers that were made to Him.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it.” John 14:13—14

b. **He had divine names or titles.** (God, Son of God, Lord, Immanuel, etc.)

c. **He has divine characteristics.**

(1) **He is eternal.** (John 1:1; “Heb. 13:8; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:8)

(2) He is **omnipresent.**

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matt. 18:20

“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. 28:20

(3) **He is omniscient.**

“But He knew their thoughts.” Luke 6:8

“Jesus answered and said unto Him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” John 1:48

(4) **He is omnipotent.**

His miracles proved that He is God (Acts 2:22; Matt. 8:27; Mark 1:27; 2:5—10; John 3:2; 9:33).

All of Christ’s miracles were acts of mercy. Twenty-three of His thirty-five miracles were miracles of healing. Four words are used in the New Testament for Christ’s miracles (works, wonders, signs, and powers).

(5) **He is immutable.** (Heb. 7:24; Heb. 1:12)

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” Heb. 13:8

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST’S SUPERNATURAL LIFE

A. **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is the great divide between the Bible believer and the skeptic. Since the skeptic cannot deny that a man named Jesus Christ lived, he must attempt to deny any concept that this Jesus was God. His rejection of supernaturalism leads the skeptic to deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. But the Bible believer understands that the Bible teaches

such a doctrine and that it is significant to our understanding of salvation itself.

1. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ proves again the reliability of Scripture.

“And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” Matt. 1:16

Normally a genealogy such as the one found in Matthew 1 will mention only the names of the fathers. But the above verse makes an important exception. The phrase “of whom” is in the feminine gender, which shows that Christ was physically related only to Mary. Even the smallest of details is accurately recorded in God’s infallible Word.

2. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of a wonderful prophecy.

“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Isa. 7:14

3. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is a beautiful expression of the supernatural.

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isa. 9:6

Everything about Jesus Christ was wonderful. It would also stand to reason that His birth would be “full of wonder.”

B. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST’S TWO NATURES

1. The incarnation is essential to the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement.

2. Christ must have been perfectly human.

a. Man sinned; therefore, the penalty had to be borne by a Man.

b. Christ had to be a sinless Man in order to atone for sin. The first man, Adam, had the ability to be sinless, but he failed. The “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45), Jesus Christ, was able to be sinless, and He succeeded. For over thirty-three years Jesus Christ lived a perfect life on earth, succeeding where Adam had failed. He thereby was able to die for the sin of mankind and to restore the position of man lost in Adam’s fall.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb 4:14-15

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” Heb 7:26

c. Only a truly human mediator could enter empathetically into our trials and be a perfect example to follow.

3. Christ had to be God.

- a. His sacrifice had to be of infinite value. He could die for the world (1 John 2:2) by dying for Adam (Rom. 5:12).
- b. He bore the wrath of God redemptively so as to free mankind.
- c. He was able to apply His work on the cross to needy humanity.

4. The acceptance of the deity of Christ is necessary to salvation.

There are those today who would have us believe that we can accept a totally human Christ as our example in life. But He cannot truly be our example until He is first our Savior. And he cannot be our Savior until we accept His deity. In John 8:24 Christ says these words:

“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.”

By His saying, “I am,” he was clearly indicating His deity. This is seen in John 8:58-59:

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

Those Jews knew exactly what Jesus was claiming when He said “I am.” They had read Ex 3:14. And Jesus said in John 8:24 that a person will die in his sins unless he believes in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. THE HUMILIATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The humiliation of Jesus Christ is defined as those self-humbling desires that caused Him to leave the glories of Heaven, live on this sin-cursed earth, and die on an old rugged cross. His humiliation begins with His incarnation and ends with His burial. His exaltation begins with His resurrection and continues throughout all eternity.

A. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST BEGAN WITH HIS INCARNATION.

1. Christ made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant. (Phil. 2:5—8)

Jesus limited Himself and yet never ceased to be God; He willingly kept within Himself much of His power. He endured life as a human being in order to understand our trials.

2. Christ dwelt in the midst of sinful men.

3. Christ was born in humble Bethlehem. (Mic. 5:2)

4. Christ was born in a humble stable. (Luke 2:16)

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor; that ye through His poverty might be rich.” 2 Cor. 8:9

B. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST CONTINUED IN HIS EARLY LIFE.

He was born to and subject to poor Jewish parents.

C. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST CONTINUED THROUGHOUT HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY.

1. He suffered hunger and thirst. (Matt. 4:1—7; 27:48)

2. He was tried (tempted) continually.

“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted [tried] like as we are, yet without sin.” Heb 4:15

3. He was tortured unmercifully, betrayed, and rejected by His people. (Matt. 27:26—56; Mark 15:7—41; Luke 23:13—49; John 19:1—37)

4. His followers denied Him.

5. He was blasphemed.

D. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST CULMINATED IN HIS BURIAL IN A BORROWED TOMB. (Matt. 27:57—61; Mark 15:42—47; Luke 23:50—56; John 19:31—42)

IV. THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the climax of history. The Old Testament prepared us for it; the New Testament explained its significance. This lesson will discuss the events leading up to and culminating in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ for a world desperately in need of a Savior.

A. THE COURT TRIAL OF JESUS CHRIST WAS ILLEGAL.

The court trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin was grossly illegal. Yet we must remember that **no fair trial** could ever have condemned the perfect Son of God. God can use the wrath of men to praise Him (Ps. 76:10). Jesus was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

1. The events on the night of the betrayal of Jesus actually included three different “trials”:

a. Christ was first brought before Annas and the Sanhedrin at night. It was during the night that Simon Peter denied the Lord three times. (Luke 22:54—62; John 18:12—24)

b. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas (the High Priest) and the Sanhedrin at dawn. (Luke 22:66; John 18:24, 28)

c. The Sanhedrin then led Jesus from its council to Pilate the Roman governor in the early morning hours. (John 18:28—31)

2. The illegalities of Christ’s trial

The following is a list of a few of the illegalities of which the Sanhedrin and the high priest were guilty. Mark 15:10 reminds us of their motives: “For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him for envy.”

a. The Sanhedrin met before the morning sacrifice.

This was illegal. They met at night to quickly push through a verdict of guilty. (The reason for such a self-imposed regulation as waiting till after the morning sacrifice should be obvious. The Jewish people wanted to make sure these

men of the Sanhedrin were “right with God” before they handed down important decisions.)

- b. The Sanhedrin was not to meet on Fridays (the day before the Sabbath) or before feast days regarding issues of capital punishment.

Since an issue of capital punishment may have required the Sanhedrin to reconvene the next day, they imposed this rule to keep from meeting on a Sabbath or a feast day.

- c. The witnesses did not agree. (Mark 14:56—59)

Being a witness was considered a serious matter to the Sanhedrin. In matters of capital punishment he was strongly challenged by a member of the Sanhedrin to tell the truth.

- d. The High Priest was forbidden to tear his clothes.

“And he that is the high priest among his brethren . . . shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes.” Lev. 21:10

“Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?” Mark 14:63

- e. Christ’s defense was never allowed.
- f. The judges should have been disqualified because of previous knowledge of the case.

Note: They had met on three previous occasions to conspire against Him.

- g. The Sanhedrin never reconvened the next day.

Note: In reality they reconvened a few hours later at dawn.

- h. The Sanhedrin constantly changed the charge against Jesus.

(1) The first accusation was sedition.

“We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.” Mark 14:58

What Christ actually said in John 2:19:
“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple (of my body—vs. 21), and in three days I will raise it up.”

(2) ***The second accusation was blasphemy.***

*“Then the high priest ... saith, What need we any further witnesses Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?”
Mark 14:63-64*

(3) ***The third accusation was treason.***

*“And the whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying the He Himself is Christ a King.”
Luke 23:1—2*

- i. According to Jewish law, a unanimous verdict of guilty was considered an acquittal (a setting free).

*This is one of the most amazing aspects of Jewish law, but it is not without some logic. A unanimous and simultaneous verdict of guilty was considered a verdict lacking in mercy. It was thought be the result of a conspiracy and mob violence rather than **mature judicial deliberation**. Christ’s trial was indeed the result of a conspiracy.*

“Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.” Mark 14:64

B. THE SUFFERING OF JESUS CHRIST WAS MORE THAN PHYSICAL.

1. **He died in the presence of sinners.** (Ps. 22:13; Ps. 22:16—17)
2. **He suffered tremendous shame and embarrassment.** (Isa. 50:6; Heb. 12:2; Matt 27:27-30; Mark 15:27—28)
3. **He was forsaken by God the Father.** (Ps. 22:1)

4. He bore the sins of every man.

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed.” 1 Pet. 2:24

V. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

A. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the act by which He, of His own will, came back to life bodily after His death and burial. It is of paramount importance to understand what the Bible teaches about this key doctrine.

1. The nature of the resurrection

a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a bodily resurrection. The Bible does not teach that it was merely Christ’s spirit or influence that lived on. His was a bodily resurrection. On resurrection morning He was held by the feet (Matt. 28:9). One week later Thomas was able to touch the crucifixion scars of Jesus (John 20:25—28). In the presence of His disciples Jesus ate food (Luke 24:41—43). He was recognized by those who had known Him before His death (Luke 24:34—39). The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the guarantee that someday we will experience a **bodily resurrection**.

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” 1 Cor. 15:54

b. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a **unique resurrection**.

Others, like Lazarus, were resuscitated and ended up dying again.

What made the resurrection of Jesus different? First, He was resurrected by His own power. Secondly, He arose, never to die again. And Thirdly, Christ’s resurrection was unique because through Him all will someday experience a resurrection.

2. The importance of the resurrection

a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the claims of Christianity stand, or fall, together. (1 Cor. 15:12-19)

“...If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

- b. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:22; John 14:19)
- c. Christ’s claims would be worthless if He did not rise from the dead.

B. FALSE TEACHINGS AGAINST THE RESURRECTION

An excellent way to see the strength of the evidence supporting the supernatural resurrection of Jesus Christ is to observe the ridiculous lengths to which the skeptic will go in attempting to disprove this key doctrine. Our confidence in God’s Word is increased as we see man’s meager attempts to discredit the Bible.

God used those who hated Christ the most to show that no trickery was involved. The zeal of the chief priests and Pharisees (Matt. 27:62—66) gave antagonistic confirmation to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These four ideas of the skeptics came about as a result of their denial of a supernatural resurrection. As always happens when men reject the truth, the stories of these men are foolishness to those who know the Scriptures.

1. The theft lie

- a. The skeptics’ argument

According to this oldest lie about the resurrection, disciples stole Christ’s body while the soldiers slept to make it look like a resurrection. The religious authorities paid the soldiers to tell this lie—Matthew 28:11—15.

- b. The Scripture’s answer

- (1) It admits that the tomb of Jesus was empty.

If the theory can be disproved, it gives more credence to a resurrection. This shows the illogical position into which a skeptic is forced when he rejects the plain teaching of God’s Word.

- (2) It was the very thing the soldiers were guarding against. (Matt. 27:62—66)

These soldiers would not have been inexperienced. They were either some of the best soldiers Rome had or they were a part of the carefully chosen Temple

guard. If they couldn't defend the grave against a group of fishermen, then no one could!

(3) Falling asleep on watch was punishable by death for a Roman sentinel.

It is amazing that any guard would admit such miserable failure. Even if the guard were a Jewish temple guard, he was still held accountable to Pilate.

“Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.”
Matt. 28:13—14

(4) If the soldiers were sleeping, how could they say the disciples stole the body?

“The lie for which the priests paid so much money is suicidal; one half destroys the other. Sleeping sentinels could not know what happened.” —A. B. Bruce

(5) It is nowhere suggested that the disciples were ever accused by any authority of stealing the body of Jesus.

(6) The graveclothes testified to the impossibility of theft. (John 20:1—8)

(7) The disciples would not have died a martyr's death for the sake of a lie. (Acts 12:1—2)

THEY DIED FOR THE TRUTH - According to early historians, the apostles died the following martyrs' deaths:

1. Peter was crucified upside down.
2. Andrew was crucified.
3. James the son of Zebedee was killed by the sword.
4. John died a natural death, although he was persecuted and exiled by Dornitian.
5. Philip was crucified.
6. Bartholomew was crucified.
7. Thomas was thrust through with a spear.

8. Matthew was killed by the sword.
9. James the son of Alphaeus was crucified.
10. Thaddaeus was killed by arrows.
11. Simon the Zealot was crucified.
12. Paul was beheaded.

2. The swoon story

a. The skeptics' argument

According to this false teaching, Jesus never actually died on the cross. He just "fainted" and then the cool air of the tomb and the embalming spices revived Him from this unconscious state.

b. The Scripture's answer

(1) The soldiers, Joseph, and Nicodemus testified to His death.

(a) The soldiers (Mark 15:44—45; John 19:31—37). This particular group probably had much experience at executions. They certainly would not make a mistake that crucial.

(b) Joseph. *"This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre."* Luke 23:52—53

(c) Nicodemus. "And there came also Nicodemus.... Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices." John 19:39—40

(2) On the very Sunday of His resurrection Jesus walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus (Luke 24:13—18) and back again (Luke 24:33—36). The total distance of that trip would have been approximately 120 furlongs, or 13 miles. That would be an amazing amount of walking for anyone, let alone an individual who had "almost" died a few days earlier.

3. The hallucination explanation

- a. The skeptics' argument: According to this "theory," all of the eyewitnesses of Christ's post-resurrection appearances were actually hallucinating.
- b. The Scripture's answer
 - (1) Were more than 500 people all hallucinating? (1 Cor. 15:3—8)
 - (2) These appearances were seen by those who initially doubted the possibility of a resurrection. (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:31—39; John 20:25—29)

These eyewitnesses would have quickly dismissed anything other than an actual appearance of Jesus Christ. The doubting of Thomas shows the folly of this theory. He would have made sure Christ was a reality. Thomas's touching Christ's hands and side dispel forever the idea of a hallucination.

VI. THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The exaltation of Jesus Christ is the act of God His Father by which the Father gave the Son the honor due Christ because of His deity. Because of God's exaltation of His Son, all believers will exalt Him forever.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him [Jesus Christ], and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:9—11

"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5:13

A. THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST BEGAN WITH HIS RESURRECTION.

After Christ's resurrection, the understanding of the disciples was greatly increased. They were able to exalt Him as God in a way vastly superior to their veiled attempts before His crucifixion. Thomas could testify, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Christ stayed on earth for forty days after His resurrection to give full proof of His deity and to aid the apostles in their exaltation of Him as they preached the gospel.

For this reason the eyewitness accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ are significant. They gave

power and substance to the messages of those early disciples. It is extremely difficult to deny the resurrection if over 500 people at different times and places were eyewitnesses of the post-resurrection appearances of Christ. The empty tomb stood readily available for inspecting by even the strongest of skeptics. The chronological order of His appearances is most likely this:

1. On the day of His resurrection He appeared to:

- a. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:14)
- b. The women returning from the tomb (Matt. 28:9—10)
- c. Simon Peter (Luke 24:34)
- d. The disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13—33)
- e. The apostles (Luke 24:36—43; John 20:19—24)

2. Between the day of His resurrection and the day of His ascension He appeared to

- a. Thomas (John 20:26—29)
- b. Seven disciples by the Lake of Tiberias (John 21:1—23)
- c. “Above five hundred brethren at once” (1 Cor. 15:6)
- d. James (1 Cor. 15:7)
- e. The eleven apostles (Matt. 28:16—20; 1 Cor. 15:7)

3. At His ascension (Acts 1:3—12)

The eleven apostles saw Him.

4. After His ascension He appeared to

- a. Stephen (Acts 7:55)
- b. Paul (Acts 9:3—6; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8)
- c. John on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:10—19)

B. THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST CONTINUED WITH HIS ASCENSION.

The ascension of Jesus Christ was the return of Jesus Christ to heaven forty days after His resurrection. (Acts 1:9—11)

“To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days.” Acts 1:3

“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.” Acts 1:12

C. THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST WILL CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE.

1. Jesus will ultimately return in power.

“And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the LORD shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” 2 Thess. 2:8

2. Jesus will reign on earth for one thousand years.

“They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years... But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Rev. 20:4—6

3. Jesus will be the object of glory and honor in Heaven for all eternity.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.” Phil. 2:9-11

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” Rev. 5:12