

3 Jesus Christ: The Eternal Son, True God and True Man, Crucified Savior, Risen Lord, and Coming King

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Abstract

This chapter presents the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the living center of Christian faith, worship, salvation, mission, discipleship, and spiritual discernment. Scripture reveals Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God, the Word who was with God and was God, and the Word who became flesh for the salvation of sinners. He is true God and true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, without sin, obedient to the Father, crucified under human injustice and divine purpose, raised bodily from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead. The chapter argues from Scripture alone that Christ is not merely a prophet, moral teacher, religious reformer, created being, angelic mediator, spiritual master, symbolic myth, or one path among many. He is the only Mediator between God and humanity, the Lamb of God who takes away sin, the risen Lord, and the coming King. The chapter develops a biblical Christology by tracing the promise of Christ in the Old Testament, His incarnation and public ministry in the Gospels, His saving work interpreted by the apostles, and His final victory revealed in the hope of His return. It explains the deity of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the hypostatic union, His sinless obedience, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, ascension, intercession, lordship, exclusivity, and second coming. It also addresses historical errors and contemporary distortions, including Arianism, adoptionism, Docetism, Gnosticism, Ebionism, Apollinarianism, Nestorian distortion, Eutychian confusion, Socinianism, Unitarianism, modalistic confusion, liberal demythologizing, progressive reductions of Christ, prosperity distortions, universalism, religious pluralism, Christ consciousness, Cosmic Christ theories, ascended master teachings, channeling, self-deification, and technological messianism. The chapter concludes with pastoral application, reflection questions, and assessment materials for Bible College formation.

Keywords: Jesus Christ; Christology; incarnation; deity of Christ; humanity of Christ; hypostatic union; substitutionary atonement; bodily resurrection; ascension; second coming; Sola Scriptura; spiritual discernment.

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Learning Outcomes

By the end of this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Define Christology and explain why the Person and work of Christ are central to Christian faith and salvation.
2. Demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and fully divine.
3. Demonstrate from Scripture that Jesus Christ is truly human, yet without sin.
4. Explain the hypostatic union in biblically faithful terms, avoiding confusion of Christ's natures and division of His Person.
5. Describe Christ's sinless obedience and explain why His obedience is essential to His saving work.
6. Explain the cross of Christ as substitutionary atonement, including redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, forgiveness, and justification.
7. Defend the bodily resurrection of Christ as historical, doctrinal, and necessary for Christian hope.
8. Explain Christ's ascension, session, priestly intercession, lordship, and continuing reign.
9. Identify and reject major historical, liberal, New Age, occult, pluralistic, and contemporary distortions of Christ by testing them against Scripture.
10. Apply the doctrine of Christ to worship, preaching, evangelism, theological education, pastoral ministry, family discipleship, spiritual discernment, holiness, mission, and readiness for Christ's return.

Key Terms with Definitions

Christology: The theological study of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Biblical Christology asks who Jesus is, what He has done, what He is doing now, and what He will do at His return, according to Scripture.

Incarnation: The act by which the eternal Son of God took to Himself true humanity without ceasing to be God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ([John 1:14](#)).

Eternal Son: Jesus Christ as the Son who exists eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit. His Sonship did not begin at Bethlehem. He was sent by the Father and became incarnate in time ([John 1:1-18](#); [Galatians 4:4-5](#)).

Word or Logos: John's title for the eternal Son, who was with God, was God, created all things, and became flesh ([John 1:1-3](#)). The title reveals Christ as God's self-expression, revelation, and creative Word.

Hypostatic union: The biblical truth that Jesus Christ is one Person in two natures, fully divine and fully human. The two natures are united without confusion, change, division, or separation.

Virgin birth: The truth that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, fulfilling God's promise and showing that His incarnation was God's sovereign act ([Matthew 1:18-25](#); [Luke 1:26-35](#)).

Sinlessness of Christ: The truth that Jesus never sinned in thought, word, desire, or deed. He was tempted as we are, yet without sin ([Hebrews 4:15](#)).

Messiah or Christ: The Anointed One promised in Scripture, God's King, Servant, Prophet, Priest, and Redeemer. The Greek word *Christos* corresponds to the Hebrew concept of Messiah.

Son of God: A title revealing Christ's unique divine identity, eternal relation to the Father, messianic kingship, and full deity. Jesus is not a son of God in the same way believers are adopted children. He is the only Son from the Father ([John 1:14](#)).

Son of Man: Jesus' self-designation that expresses both His true humanity and His Danielic authority as the heavenly figure who receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom ([Daniel 7:13-14](#); [Mark 10:45](#)).

Deity of Christ: The truth that Jesus Christ is fully God, sharing the one divine essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit ([John 1:1](#); [Colossians 2:9](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#)).

Humanity of Christ: The truth that Jesus Christ is fully human, possessing a real human body, rational human soul, emotions, will, and ordinary human experiences, yet without sin ([Hebrews 2:14-18](#)).

Atonement: The saving work by which Christ deals with sin and reconciles sinners to God through His death and resurrection.

Substitution: Christ's death in the place of sinners. He bore what sinners deserved so that believers receive grace, forgiveness, righteousness, and life ([Isaiah 53:4-6](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

Propitiation: Christ's atoning sacrifice that satisfies God's righteous wrath against sin and reveals God's justice and mercy ([Romans 3:21-26](#); [1 John 2:2](#)).

Reconciliation: The restoration of peace between God and sinners through Christ's saving work ([Romans 5:10-11](#)).

Redemption: Deliverance from sin, guilt, slavery, and judgment through the price paid by Christ's blood ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#)).

Resurrection: The bodily rising of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day, by which God vindicated Him, defeated death, confirmed the gospel, and secured believers' future resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:3-8](#)).

Ascension: Christ's bodily exaltation to heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of the Father and reigns as Lord ([Acts 1:9-11](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#)).

Intercession: Christ's ongoing priestly ministry for His people before the Father ([Hebrews 7:25](#)).

Lordship: Christ's sovereign authority over creation, the Church, nations, angels, powers, history, salvation, judgment, and the coming kingdom ([Matthew 28:18](#); [Philippians 2:9-11](#)).

Second coming: The personal, visible, glorious return of Jesus Christ to judge, save, resurrect, reign, and consummate God's kingdom ([Acts 1:11](#); [Revelation 22:12-20](#)).

Final judgment: Christ's righteous judgment of the living and the dead, in which evil is exposed, justice is executed, and God's kingdom is publicly vindicated ([Acts 17:31](#); [Revelation 20:11-15](#)).

Antichrist: A term used in Scripture for those who deny the Father and the Son, deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, or oppose and counterfeit Christ ([1 John 2:18-23](#); [1 John 4:1-3](#)).

False christ: A counterfeit messianic figure or distorted presentation of Jesus that misleads people away from the true Christ revealed in Scripture ([Matthew 24:4-5](#)).

Christ consciousness: A New Age and esoteric idea that redefines Christ as an awakened state, universal principle, or higher consciousness within humanity. Scripture rejects this by confessing Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son, crucified and risen Lord, and only Savior.

Religious pluralism: The claim that multiple religions are equally valid paths to God. Scripture rejects this by proclaiming Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father and the only name by which sinners must be saved ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#)).

Sola Scriptura: The doctrine that Scripture alone is the supreme, final, sufficient, and authoritative rule for faith and life. All theology, tradition, experience, philosophy, and cultural claims must be tested by the written Word of God.

3.1. Introduction

Christian faith stands or falls with Jesus Christ. Christianity is not first a moral program, an institution, an ethnic identity, a political project, a mystical technique, or a general spirituality. It is the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, the eternal Son of God made flesh, crucified for sinners, raised bodily from the dead, exalted at the Father's right hand, and coming again in glory. The question Jesus asked His disciples remains decisive for every person and every generation: "*Who do you say that I am?*" (Matthew 16:15).

The answer cannot be invented by culture, tradition, private feeling, political preference, interfaith diplomacy, psychological need, or academic fashion. It must be received from Scripture. Peter confessed, "*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God*" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus did not treat this confession as human speculation. He said that the Father had revealed it (Matthew 16:17). Christology is therefore not a field in which human beings are free to construct a Jesus who fits the mood of the age. Christology is humble submission to the Father's revelation concerning the Son, preserved for the Church in Scripture by the Holy Spirit.

The doctrinal foundation for this chapter aligns with the biblical Christian statement of belief, which confesses that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, sinless, crucified as a substitutionary sacrifice for sins, risen from the dead, ascended to heaven, and reigning as High Priest and Advocate (Sangwa, n.d.). Related Christological teaching within Open Christian University materials also emphasizes that Christology is foundational because many religions and cultic systems speak about Jesus while rejecting the Jesus presented in Scripture (Sangwa, 2024a). The concern is not merely academic correctness. A false Christ cannot save. A reduced Christ cannot bear sin. A created Christ cannot receive worship. A symbolic Christ cannot rise bodily. A pluralistic Christ cannot be the only Mediator. A New Age Christ cannot judge the living and the dead. The Church must know, worship, preach, and obey the true Christ.

The doctrine of Christ is central because salvation is in Christ alone. Scripture declares that there is salvation in no one else, because there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). The doctrine of Christ is central to worship because the risen Jesus receives worship that belongs to God alone (Revelation 5:9-14). It is central to prayer because believers come to the Father through the Son and by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). It is central to mission because the risen Christ sends His Church to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). It is central to holiness because believers are called to follow the crucified and risen Lord (Luke 9:23-24). It is central to discernment because Scripture warns of false christs, false prophets, deceptive spirits, and another Jesus (Matthew 24:4-5; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; 1 John 4:1-3).

This chapter is written under *Sola Scriptura*. Historical creeds and theological scholarship may help clarify errors and summarize biblical truth, but Scripture alone rules the conscience. The Church must not place councils above Christ's Word, experience above apostolic teaching, academic skepticism above eyewitness testimony, or cultural pressure above the gospel. The Christ who saves is the Christ whom Scripture reveals.

3.2. The Biblical Revelation of Jesus Christ

The revelation of Christ does not begin in the manger. It begins in the eternal counsel of God and unfolds through the whole canon of Scripture. The Bible is not a loose collection of moral stories. It is the unified revelation of God's redemptive purpose centered on Christ. After His resurrection, Jesus taught that Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms pointed to Him (Luke 24:25-27; Luke 24:44-47). This does not authorize fanciful allegory or careless symbolic reading. It means that the whole biblical story, rightly understood, moves toward Christ's suffering, resurrection, and the proclamation of repentance for forgiveness of sins to all nations.

The first promise of redemption appears after the fall. God declares that the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent's head, while the serpent will strike His heel (Genesis 3:15). This promise announces conflict, suffering, and victory. Humanity cannot repair itself. The serpent will not be defeated by moral improvement, political progress, religious pluralism, technological development, or hidden spiritual knowledge. God Himself promises a victorious seed.

The promise continues through covenant history. God promises Abraham that all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through his offspring (Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16). God promises David a royal Son whose kingdom will be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The Psalms speak of the Lord's Anointed, the rejected stone, the royal Son, the suffering righteous one, and the priest forever (Psalm 2; Psalm 22; Psalm 110; Psalm 118:22-24). The prophets announce a child called Mighty God and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7), a ruler from Bethlehem whose origin is from antiquity (Micah 5:2), a servant pierced for transgressions (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), and a Son of Man who receives everlasting dominion (Daniel 7:13-14).

The New Testament announces fulfillment. Matthew presents Jesus as the Son of David, Son of Abraham, and Immanuel, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:1; Matthew 1:18-25). Luke presents Him as the holy Son of God whose birth comes by the power of the Most High (Luke 1:26-35). John presents Him as the eternal Word who became flesh (John 1:1-18). Mark presents Him as the Son of God who came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 1:1; Mark 10:45).

The apostles interpret Christ's work as the fulfillment of God's saving plan. Peter proclaims that Jesus was handed over according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, crucified by lawless people, and raised because death could not hold Him (Acts 2:22-36). Paul says that Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Hebrews declares that the Son is the radiance of God's glory, the exact expression of His nature, the One who made purification for sins, and the One seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:1-4). Revelation unveils Him as the slain Lamb, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler of the kings of the earth, and the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 1:5; Revelation 5:1-14; Revelation 19:11-16).

Therefore, biblical Christology is canonical. It receives the whole Christ of the whole Bible: promised in the garden, foreshadowed in sacrifice, anticipated in prophecy, incarnate in the Gospels, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead, proclaimed by the apostles, present with His Church, and coming in glory.

3.3. The Eternal Son and the Deity of Christ

The New Testament does not present Jesus as a creature elevated into divine honor. It presents Him as the eternal Son who shares the divine identity. The deity of Christ is not an optional doctrine for advanced theology. It is essential to the gospel. If Jesus is not God, then He cannot reveal God perfectly, receive worship rightly, forgive sins ultimately, bear divine judgment sufficiently, conquer death decisively, or save sinners completely.

John begins with a clear confession: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Word is personally distinct from the Father, for He was "with God," and He is fully divine, for He "was God." John then says that all things were created through Him and that apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created (John 1:3). This places the Word on the Creator side of the Creator-creature distinction. If all created things were created through Him, He Himself is not a created thing.

John 1 also teaches the incarnation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The eternal Son did not stop being God. He took true humanity to Himself. The glory seen in Christ is the glory of the one and only Son from the Father. This means that the baby in Bethlehem is not the beginning of the Son's existence. Bethlehem is the beginning of His incarnate life, not the beginning of His divine life.

Jesus' own words and works reveal His divine identity. He claims authority to forgive sins, which the scribes rightly understand as a divine prerogative (Mark 2:5-12). He identifies Himself as Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). He declares, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), using language that echoes the divine self-identification of the Lord. He says, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The issue is not merely unity of purpose, because His hearers understand His claim as making Himself God (John 10:33). After the resurrection, Thomas confesses Him as "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Jesus receives this confession, and John immediately states that his Gospel was written so that readers may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and have life in His name (John 20:30-31).

Paul teaches the same truth. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the One in whom all things were created, through whom all things were created, and for whom all things were created (Colossians

1:15-20). The phrase “firstborn over all creation” does not mean Jesus is the first created being. In biblical usage, firstborn often means supreme heir and royal preeminence. The context makes this unmistakable: all things were created by Him and for Him. Paul later says that the entire fullness of God’s nature dwells bodily in Christ (Colossians 2:9). Christ is not a partial manifestation of deity. The fullness of deity dwells in Him bodily.

Philippians 2 teaches that Christ existed in the form of God, did not exploit equality with God for selfish advantage, emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, humbled Himself to death on a cross, and was exalted so that every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:5-11). The humiliation of Christ is not the loss of deity. It is the addition of servant-form humanity and the path of obedient suffering. The exaltation does not make a creature into God. It publicly vindicates the incarnate Son and displays His lordship.

Hebrews presents the Son as God’s final revelation, the Creator of the universe, the radiance of God’s glory, the exact expression of His nature, the sustainer of all things, the purifier of sins, and the enthroned Lord (Hebrews 1:1-4). The Father addresses the Son with royal and divine language and applies to Him language from the Psalms concerning God’s throne and creative work (Hebrews 1:8-12). Titus calls believers to wait for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of “our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Revelation shows the risen Jesus saying, “I am the First and the Last, and the Living One” (Revelation 1:17-18), a title that belongs to the Lord.

The earliest Christian devotion to Jesus is difficult to explain if Jesus was merely a teacher later exalted by imagination. Scholars such as Hurtado (2003) and Bauckham (2008) have argued that devotion to Jesus was present remarkably early within a Jewish monotheistic setting. Their historical arguments do not replace Scripture, but they confirm that high Christology was not a late pagan corruption of Christianity. The apostles worshiped, preached, baptized, prayed, suffered, and died confessing Jesus as Lord.

3.4. The True Humanity of Christ

The same Scripture that teaches Christ’s deity also teaches His true humanity. The eternal Son did not appear to be human. He became human. Any Christology that denies His true humanity is not more spiritual. It is anti-biblical, because the gospel requires a real incarnation, real obedience, real suffering, real death, and real resurrection.

Jesus was conceived in Mary’s womb and born as a child (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7). He grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). He became hungry (Matthew 4:2), thirsty (John 19:28), tired (John 4:6), sorrowful (Matthew 26:38), compassionate (Mark 6:34), and deeply moved (John 11:33-35). He was tempted, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). He suffered, bled, died, and was buried (John 19:30-42). After His resurrection, He showed His wounds, invited His disciples to touch Him, and ate in their presence (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-29).

Hebrews explains why this matters. Since the children share in flesh and blood, Christ also shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death and free those enslaved by the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). He had to be like His brothers and sisters in every way, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest and make atonement for the sins of the people (Hebrews 2:17).

Christ's humanity is necessary for substitution. The Son did not save humanity from a distance. He entered the condition of those He came to save, without sharing their sin. He obeyed where Adam disobeyed. He faced temptation where Israel failed. He suffered under human injustice. He bore the curse. He died a real human death. He rose with a glorified human body. He ascended as the God-man. He intercedes as the High Priest who knows human weakness from within, yet without sin.

This truth guards pastoral comfort. Believers do not have a Savior who is unable to sympathize with weaknesses. They have a High Priest who was tempted in every way as they are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:14-16). Christ understands hunger, pain, rejection, grief, betrayal, exhaustion, temptation, and suffering. Yet His sympathy is holy. He does not comfort sinners by affirming their rebellion. He gives mercy and grace to help them draw near to God.

3.5. The Hypostatic Union: One Person in Two Natures

Biblical Christology requires both truths at once: Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, yet He is one Person. The Church later used the term hypostatic union to summarize this truth. The term is not found in Scripture, but the doctrine arises from Scripture. The eternal Son took a true human nature to Himself. He did not become two persons. He did not stop being God. His deity was not mixed with humanity into a third kind of being. His humanity was not swallowed by His deity. He is one Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

The incarnation is not God pretending to be human. It is not a human person adopted into divine status. It is not a divine spirit temporarily occupying a body. It is not the blending of God and humanity into a hybrid. It is the eternal Son assuming true humanity into personal union with Himself. The one who was born of Mary is the same Person who existed eternally with the Father. The one who hungered is the One through whom all things were made. The one who slept in the boat is the One who rebuked the wind and sea. The one who died is the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8).

Historical theology helps the Church avoid old errors. The Nicene Creed confessed the Son as begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made (Nicene Creed, n.d.). The Chalcedonian Definition later summarized Christ as one and the same Son, perfect in deity and perfect in humanity, recognized in two natures without confusion, change, division, or separation (Chalcedonian Creed, n.d.). Such language is useful when it serves Scripture. It does not create doctrine. It protects the Church from misreading Scripture.

The phrase "without confusion" guards against blending Christ's natures. His deity does not become humanity, and His humanity does not become deity. The phrase "without change" guards against the idea that the divine nature changes into something else. The phrase "without division" guards against separating Christ into two acting subjects. The phrase "without separation" guards against loosening the union between His natures. The one Person acts according to both natures. As God, He upholds all things. As man, He sleeps, suffers, obeys, and dies. The mystery is profound, but it is not confusion. It is the glory of the incarnation.

This doctrine matters for salvation. Only God can save; therefore the Savior must be divine. The Lord declares that besides Him there is no Savior (Isaiah 43:11). Yet the one who saves sinners must truly represent humanity; therefore the Savior must be human. The mediator between God and humanity is "the

man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). In Christ, God Himself comes to save, and true humanity offers perfect obedience to God.

3.6. The Sinless Life and Obedience of Christ

Christ did not merely come to die. He came to obey, fulfill righteousness, reveal the Father, defeat temptation, love perfectly, suffer faithfully, and offer Himself without blemish to God. His sinless life is essential to His saving work. A sinful savior would need salvation. A disobedient mediator could not reconcile sinners to God.

The Gospels present Jesus as perfectly obedient to the Father. At His baptism, though He had no sin to confess, He identified with His people and said it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). In the wilderness, He resisted Satan by trusting and obeying Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11). Where Adam fell in the garden and Israel failed in the wilderness, Christ obeyed as the faithful Son.

Jesus says He always does what pleases the Father (John 8:29). He came not to do His own will but the will of the One who sent Him (John 6:38). In Gethsemane, facing the horror of the cross, He prays, “*Yet not as I will, but as you will*” (Matthew 26:39). His obedience reaches its visible depth at Calvary, where He humbles Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

The apostles repeatedly affirm Christ’s sinlessness. He knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth (1 Peter 2:22). In Him there is no sin (1 John 3:5). He was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

Christ’s obedience is sometimes called active obedience and passive obedience. These phrases must be handled carefully. Active obedience refers to His whole life of perfect righteousness under God’s law. Passive obedience refers to His suffering, especially His obedience in death. The terms do not mean that Christ was passive in the ordinary sense. His suffering was active submission to the Father’s will. His whole life and death form one obedience. He fulfills what Adam, Israel, and all sinners failed to fulfill.

This truth matters for justification and assurance. Believers are not saved by their own moral record. They are united to Christ, who bore their sin and gives them righteousness. God made the sinless One to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Salvation is therefore not a transaction in which God ignores sin. It is God’s righteous act in Christ, where sin is judged and righteousness is given by grace.

3.7. The Cross of Christ: Substitutionary Atonement and Redemption

The cross is not an accident, a political tragedy only, a moral example only, or a display of human cruelty only. It is the center of God’s saving purpose. Jesus says that the Son of Man came to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He teaches that His blood is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28). The apostles do not treat the cross as a shameful defeat later turned into inspiration. They proclaim it as God’s wisdom and power (1 Corinthians 1:18-25).

The cross answers the deepest human problem: sin before the holy God. Sin is not merely ignorance, trauma, social maladjustment, lack of self-esteem, or spiritual forgetfulness. Sin is rebellion against God, guilt before His law, corruption in the heart, slavery under evil, alienation from God, and exposure to righteous judgment (Romans 3:9-26). If sin is reduced, the cross is misunderstood. If God’s holiness and

wrath are denied, the cross becomes unnecessary. If human beings are treated as naturally divine, the cross becomes an obstacle to self-realization rather than God's saving act.

Isaiah 53 gives a profound prophetic picture of substitution. The Servant bears griefs, carries sorrows, is pierced because of transgressions, is crushed because of iniquities, and by His wounds there is healing (Isaiah 53:4-6). The Lord lays on Him the iniquity of all. This is not merely solidarity with sufferers. It is substitution. The innocent Servant stands in the place of the guilty.

Paul teaches that all have sinned and fall short of God's glory, yet believers are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24). God presented Christ as the mercy seat or propitiatory sacrifice through faith in His blood, demonstrating His righteousness (Romans 3:25-26). The cross reveals both justice and mercy. God does not forgive by pretending sin is harmless. He forgives through the blood of Christ, where sin is judged and grace is given.

The cross is redemption. Believers are not redeemed with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb (1 Peter 1:18-19). Redemption means deliverance by a price. Christ liberates His people from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, the dominion of darkness, and the fear of death.

The cross is reconciliation. While believers were enemies, they were reconciled to God through the death of His Son (Romans 5:10). The gospel does not merely offer inner peace. It announces peace with God through Jesus Christ. The barrier of guilt is removed. The rebel becomes a child. The enemy becomes reconciled. The condemned receives life.

The cross is victory. Christ disarms rulers and authorities and triumphs over them (Colossians 2:13-15). Through death, He destroys the one holding the power of death and frees those enslaved by fear (Hebrews 2:14-15). Christians must not separate victory from substitution. Christ defeats the powers by dealing with sin, guilt, and death at their root.

The cross reveals God's attributes in unity. God's holiness exposes sin. God's justice judges sin. God's wrath opposes sin. God's love gives the Son. God's grace saves the undeserving. God's mercy rescues the guilty. God's wisdom accomplishes salvation in a way human pride would never invent. The cross is not divine child abuse, as some critics carelessly suggest. It is the triune God's self-giving work in which the Father sends the Son, the Son willingly gives Himself, and the Spirit applies redemption to believers (John 10:17-18; Hebrews 9:14).

Related Open Christian University teaching on salvation emphasizes that salvation is not achieved by human efforts or good works, but received by faith in Jesus Christ, who died and rose again (Sangwa, 2024b). The related critique of prosperity teaching similarly warns that Christ's mission must not be reduced to material success, bodily ease, or earthly comfort (Sangwa, 2024g). The biblical Christ saves sinners from sin and judgment, not merely from inconvenience. He also calls disciples to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24).

3.8. The Bodily Resurrection of Christ

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a metaphor for hope, a spiritual experience among disciples, a symbol of renewal, or the survival of Jesus' influence after death. It is the bodily resurrection of the crucified Jesus from the dead. The tomb was empty. The risen Christ appeared to witnesses. His

resurrection body was transformed and glorified, but it was truly bodily. He invited His disciples to touch Him and ate in their presence (Luke 24:36-43).

Paul states the gospel with clarity: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and appeared to Cephas, the Twelve, more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, James, all the apostles, and Paul himself (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The resurrection is not a later decorative doctrine. It belongs to the apostolic gospel.

Paul also states the consequences of denying resurrection. If Christ has not been raised, apostolic preaching is empty, faith is empty, the apostles are false witnesses, believers are still in their sins, the dead in Christ have perished, and Christians are the most pitiable people of all (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). Christianity does not survive as a noble ethic if the resurrection is false. Without the resurrection, the cross is not vindicated, death is not conquered, justification is not secured, and Christian hope collapses.

The resurrection vindicates Christ's identity. Jesus was declared to be the powerful Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4). It confirms His words. It validates His cross. It defeats death. It inaugurates the new creation. It guarantees believers' resurrection. Christ is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

The resurrection also confronts modern unbelief. Liberal theology often reduces resurrection to symbol, memory, existential encounter, or community faith. Scripture does not allow this reduction. The apostles did not preach that Jesus lived on in their hearts. They preached that God raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:24; Acts 17:31). New Age spirituality may speak of ascension, energy, or spiritual mastery, but it does not confess the bodily resurrection of the crucified Lord as God's victory over sin and death. The Church must not exchange resurrection for symbolism.

3.9. The Ascension, Session, and Intercession of Christ

After His resurrection, Jesus ascended bodily into heaven. The disciples saw Him taken up, and the angels declared that He would return in the same way they had seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). The ascension is not Christ's absence in the sense of abandonment. It is His exaltation, enthronement, priestly ministry, and heavenly reign.

Hebrews says that after making purification for sins, the Son sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3). Sitting down signifies completed sacrifice and royal authority. Christ does not repeatedly offer Himself. His once-for-all sacrifice is complete (Hebrews 9:24-28). He now appears in God's presence for His people.

Christ's intercession gives believers strong comfort. He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them (Hebrews 7:25). His intercession does not mean the Father is reluctant to show mercy and the Son must persuade Him. The Father Himself sent the Son in love (John 3:16). Christ's intercession is the ongoing priestly application of His finished work, grounded in the will of the triune God.

The ascended Christ is also Lord of the Church. He gives gifts to His people for the building up of the body (Ephesians 4:7-16). He walks among the churches, commending, correcting, warning, and promising (Revelation 2-3). No pastor, bishop, teacher, prophet, apostle, institution, state, donor, influencer, or academic guild is head of the Church. Christ is the head (Colossians 1:18). Ministry must

therefore be governed by His Word, not by personality, market pressure, ideological fashion, or spiritual performance.

The ascension also shapes Christian mission. The risen Lord declares, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). Because He has all authority, the Church makes disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the triune name and teaching them to obey everything He commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). Mission is not colonial ambition, religious marketing, or institutional expansion. It is obedience to the Lord who reigns and promises His presence.

3.10. The Lordship and Exclusivity of Christ

Jesus Christ is not one religious option among many. He is Lord. The Father has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

Christ’s exclusivity is not arrogance invented by Christians. It is the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Peter says there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12). Paul says there is one God and one Mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). John says that whoever denies the Son does not have the Father (1 John 2:23).

This truth must be spoken with humility. Christians do not possess Christ as a tribal property. They are sinners saved by grace. They must not mock, coerce, manipulate, or dehumanize people of other religions. They must love neighbors, defend human dignity, speak truthfully, and bear witness patiently. But humility does not require denying what Christ has said. Love does not require affirming falsehood. Evangelistic compassion does not permit interfaith compromise.

Religious pluralism usually sounds generous because it claims that many paths lead to God. Yet it dishonors Christ by treating His incarnation, cross, resurrection, mediatorship, and coming judgment as unnecessary or merely symbolic. If sinners can come to God through many ways, then the cross becomes one spiritual illustration among many. Scripture rejects this. The Son did not become flesh and die under divine judgment merely to provide one religious path. He came because sinners are lost without Him.

The related Open Christian University article on true religion argues that the modern claim that all religions lead to heaven contradicts the exclusive words of Christ in John 14:6 (Sangwa, 2024d). That point is not narrow hatred. It is biblical clarity. If Jesus is who Scripture says He is, then He cannot be placed beside other saviors as one among many. If He is not who Scripture says He is, then Christianity is false. There is no honest middle ground that preserves the language of Christian faith while denying Christ’s unique saving identity.

3.11. The Return of Christ and Final Judgment

The Jesus who ascended will return. The angels told the disciples that Jesus would come in the same way they saw Him going into heaven (Acts 1:11). The return of Christ is personal, visible, glorious, and certain. It is not merely a symbol for social progress, personal awakening, institutional renewal, or mystical consciousness. The New Testament hope is the appearing of Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus warns His disciples not to be deceived by false christs, false prophets, signs, rumors, and spiritual confusion (Matthew 24:4-14). He also teaches that no one knows the day or hour (Matthew 24:36). Therefore, biblical readiness does not mean date-setting, fear-driven speculation, or imaginative timetables beyond Scripture. It means faithfulness, watchfulness, endurance, holiness, prayer, mission, and obedience.

The return of Christ includes judgment. Paul tells the Athenians that God has set a day when He will judge the world in righteousness by the man He has appointed, and He has provided proof by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31). Jesus says the Father has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22-29). Revelation presents the conquering Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-16).

Final judgment is not contrary to divine love. Love without justice would abandon victims and trivialize evil. The crucified and risen Christ will publicly vindicate God's righteousness, judge evil, deliver His people, and bring God's kingdom to consummation. Believers do not long for judgment in a spirit of cruelty. They long for Christ's appearing because His coming brings truth, justice, resurrection, restoration, and the end of evil.

Related eschatological teaching emphasizes watchfulness and the rejection of deception while warning against setting dates where Scripture commands humility (Sangwa, 2025a, 2024i). This is an important balance. The Church must be awake, but not speculative. Alert, but not panicked. Courageous, but not arrogant. Ready for Christ, but not distracted from ordinary obedience.

3.12. Historical and Doctrinal Witness to Christ

The Church's historical witness is useful when it serves Scripture. The early Church did not invent Christ's deity at a council. It confessed, defended, and clarified what Scripture already taught. Councils and creeds have no authority to create doctrine. Their value is ministerial, not magisterial. They help believers recognize how old errors return under new vocabulary.

The Nicene Creed responded to Arian claims that the Son was a creature. It confessed Jesus Christ as true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father (Nicene Creed, n.d.). The Athanasian Creed guarded both Trinity and incarnation by refusing to confuse the Persons or divide the divine essence (Athanasian Creed, n.d.). The Chalcedonian Definition guarded the truth that Christ is one Person in two natures, true God and true man (Chalcedonian Creed, n.d.).

These historical formulations remain useful because many contemporary errors are old errors in modern clothing. When a teacher says Jesus became divine at baptism or resurrection, adoptionism has returned. When a group says the Son is exalted but created, Arian logic has returned. When people say Jesus only seemed human, Docetism has returned. When teachers divide the Jesus of history from a spiritual Christ principle, Gnostic patterns return. When Christ is reduced to moral example without atoning sacrifice, liberal moralism returns. When Christ is made a prosperity agent for wealth and health, the cross is emptied of its biblical offense.

Historical theology should make Christians humble. Many believers suffered, studied, prayed, and defended the faith before us. Yet history must always be tested by Scripture. The Church is not preserved by traditional language alone. It must continue confessing the biblical Christ with understanding, holiness, courage, and love.

3.13. Common Misconceptions and False Teachings About Christ

3.13.1 Adoptionism

Adoptionism teaches that Jesus was a merely human person who was adopted as God's Son at baptism, resurrection, or exaltation. Scripture rejects this. The Son existed before His incarnation (John 1:1-18), was sent by the Father (Galatians 4:4-5), created all things (Colossians 1:16), and became flesh (John 1:14). Jesus does not become Son by promotion. He is the eternal Son who becomes incarnate.

3.13.2 Arianism

Arianism teaches that the Son is the highest creature but not fully God. Scripture rejects this by placing Christ on the Creator side of the Creator-creature distinction. All things were created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). He is worshiped by angels (Hebrews 1:6). The fullness of deity dwells in Him bodily (Colossians 2:9). Modern groups that deny Christ's full deity, including Jehovah's Witness theology, repeat this fundamental error. Previous Open Christian University apologetic teaching has warned that groups may claim Christian identity while denying the deity of Christ and the biblical way of salvation (Sangwa, 2024e).

3.13.3 Docetism

Docetism teaches that Jesus only appeared to be human. Scripture rejects this. The Word became flesh (John 1:14). Jesus shared in flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14). He was born, ate, slept, wept, suffered, died, and rose bodily. John says that every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God (1 John 4:2-3).

3.13.4 Gnosticism

Gnostic patterns often separate spirit from matter, treat salvation as secret knowledge, and distinguish the heavenly Christ from the earthly Jesus. Scripture rejects secret-knowledge salvation. Eternal life is knowing the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent (John 17:3), but this knowledge is not esoteric initiation. It is revealed in the gospel. Christ is not divided. The Jesus who walked, died, and rose is the eternal Son.

3.13.5 Ebionism

Ebionism denied Christ's full deity and often treated Him as a righteous human teacher or prophet. Scripture honors Jesus as prophet, but not merely prophet. He is God the Word made flesh (John 1:1-14), Lord of all (Acts 10:36), and the One in whom all the fullness of deity dwells (Colossians 2:9).

3.13.6 Apollinarianism

Apollinarianism compromised Christ's true humanity by denying that He possessed a complete human rational soul or mind. Scripture teaches that He became like His brothers and sisters in every way, yet without sin (Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 4:15). What Christ did not assume, He did not heal. His true humanity includes a real human mind, will, emotions, and body.

3.13.7 Nestorian Distortion

A Nestorian distortion separates Christ into two acting subjects or persons. Scripture does not present a divine person and a human person cooperating. It presents one Lord Jesus Christ. The one who was born is Immanuel (Matthew 1:23). The one who was crucified is the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8). The one Person acts according to both natures.

3.13.8 Eutychian or Monophysite Confusion

Eutychian confusion blends Christ's divine and human natures into one mixed nature, often diminishing the fullness of His humanity. Scripture requires both full deity and full humanity. The Word became flesh (John 1:14), yet remained the divine Word. The Son shares our flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14), yet upholds all things by His powerful word (Hebrews 1:3).

3.13.9 Socinianism and Unitarianism

Socinian and Unitarian approaches deny the Trinity and the full deity of Christ, often treating Jesus as a uniquely inspired human teacher. Scripture rejects this. Jesus receives divine honor (John 5:23), shares divine works (John 5:19-24), bears divine names (Revelation 1:17-18), and is confessed as God (John 20:28).

3.13.10 Modalistic Confusion

Modalism denies real personal distinctions among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It treats Father, Son, and Spirit as different modes or roles of one divine Person. Scripture rejects this. The Son prays to the Father (John 17:1-5), the Father sends the Son (John 3:17), and the Father and Son send the Spirit (John 14:26; John 15:26). At Jesus' baptism, the Son is baptized, the Spirit descends, and the Father speaks (Matthew 3:16-17). Related Open Christian University teaching on Oneness Pentecostalism addresses this problem by showing that Scripture presents real distinction without dividing the one God (Sangwa, 2024f).

3.13.11 Liberal Demythologizing

Liberal demythologizing often treats incarnation, miracles, substitutionary atonement, resurrection, ascension, and second coming as symbols rather than historical and doctrinal realities. Scripture does not allow this. The apostles preach events: Christ died, was buried, was raised, appeared, ascended, reigns, and will return (1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 1:9-11).

3.13.12 Progressive Reductions of Christ

Some progressive Christian approaches keep Jesus' ethical teachings while rejecting His exclusivity, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, final judgment, and authority over sexuality, holiness, and truth. This produces a Jesus useful to modern moral preference but not the Lord revealed in Scripture. Christ cannot be separated from His words, apostles, cross, resurrection, and coming judgment.

3.13.13 Prosperity Distortions

Prosperity teaching often presents Christ as a means to wealth, health, comfort, and personal success. Scripture certainly teaches that Christ heals, provides, comforts, and will restore all things, but His

mission is not reducible to earthly prosperity. He came to save sinners (John 3:17), give His life as a ransom (Mark 10:45), and call disciples to self-denial (Luke 9:23). Related critique of prosperity teaching warns that such teaching shifts attention from salvation in Christ to material gain (Sangwa, 2024g).

3.13.14 Moral Example Only Theories

Christ is indeed the supreme example of love, humility, obedience, and suffering. Yet He is not only an example. If the cross merely shows love but does not atone for sin, sinners remain guilty. Scripture teaches that Christ bore sins in His body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24) and gave Himself as a ransom (Mark 10:45).

3.13.15 Denial of Substitutionary Atonement

Some reject substitutionary atonement as primitive, violent, or morally unworthy. Scripture presents substitution as God's gracious and righteous way of saving sinners. The Lord laid on the Servant the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). Christ became a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). He bore sins (1 Peter 2:24). This is not cruelty. It is holy love and voluntary self-giving within the triune will of God.

3.13.16 Denial of Bodily Resurrection

Denying bodily resurrection empties apostolic preaching and Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14). Scripture presents the risen Christ as bodily raised, not as a mere idea, vision, or continuing influence.

3.13.17 Denial of Final Judgment

Some prefer a Christ who never judges. Scripture reveals a Christ who saves and judges. The Father has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). The risen Christ will judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31). A Christ without judgment cannot fully answer evil.

3.13.18 Universalism and Religious Pluralism

Universalism teaches that all will finally be saved. Religious pluralism teaches that many religious paths lead to God. Scripture teaches that God is patient and compassionate, and that the gospel should be proclaimed to all. Yet it also teaches that salvation is in Christ alone and that those who refuse the Son do not have life (John 3:36; Acts 4:12).

3.14. New Age, Occult, Esoteric, and Contemporary Distortions of Christ

False teaching often keeps biblical words while changing biblical meanings. Scripture warns that some will proclaim another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). The danger is not only open atheism. A counterfeit Christ may sound loving, inclusive, enlightened, therapeutic, mystical, or advanced, while quietly denying the incarnate Son.

3.14.1 Christ Consciousness

Christ consciousness redefines Christ as an awakened state of consciousness, a divine potential within humanity, or a universal spiritual principle. Scripture does not teach that Christ is an inner state everyone may realize. It teaches that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son who became flesh, died for sins, rose bodily,

and reigns as Lord (John 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The gospel is not awakening to one's own divinity. It is repentance and faith in the crucified and risen Lord.

3.14.2 Cosmic Christ Theories Detached from Jesus of Nazareth

Some teach a Cosmic Christ detached from the historical Jesus, the cross, the resurrection, and final judgment. Scripture does speak of Christ's cosmic supremacy. All things were created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). Yet this cosmic Lord is Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and risen. The universal scope of Christ's lordship must not be twisted into a vague spiritual principle that bypasses sin, atonement, repentance, and faith.

3.14.3 Ascended Master Teachings

Ascended master teachings often treat Jesus as one enlightened master among others, a guide to personal Christhood, or a spiritual teacher in a hierarchy of masters. Scripture rejects this. Jesus is not one ascended master among many. He is the only Son, the only Mediator, the Lord of all, and the coming Judge (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Revelation 19:11-16).

3.14.4 New Thought, Manifestation, and Law of Attraction

New Thought and law-of-attraction systems often reinterpret Jesus as a teacher of mental power, positive confession, manifestation, or divine potential. They may use biblical words such as faith, prayer, asking, and believing, but the underlying worldview is different. Biblical faith trusts God; it does not manipulate reality. Biblical prayer submits to the Father; it does not command the universe. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray for the Father's name, kingdom, and will (Matthew 6:9-10), not to manifest personal desire as sovereign creators.

3.14.5 Gnostic Gospels and Alternative Jesus Narratives

Modern fascination with so-called lost gospels often claims that historic Christianity suppressed a more mystical or liberated Jesus. The Church must answer with care, not fear. The canonical Gospels are apostolic testimony to the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord. Gnostic-style texts often present salvation through hidden knowledge and a Jesus detached from the biblical gospel. Such accounts must not be given authority over Scripture.

3.14.6 Channeling "Jesus" and Spirit-Guide Revelations

Some contemporary spiritualities claim to receive messages from Jesus through channeling, mediumship, automatic writing, or spirit guides. Scripture forbids seeking revelation through spirits (Deuteronomy 18:9-14) and commands believers to test the spirits (1 John 4:1). A message that denies Christ's incarnation, deity, atoning death, bodily resurrection, exclusive mediatorship, holiness, or coming judgment is not from the Holy Spirit.

3.14.7 Interfaith Jesus

The interfaith Jesus is a softened figure acceptable to multiple religions because His exclusive claims are removed. He becomes a prophet, wisdom teacher, compassion symbol, peace activist, or shared moral model. Scripture does affirm His compassion, prophetic office, wisdom, and peacemaking. Yet it does not

allow Him to be reduced to these. The biblical Jesus says no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

3.14.8 Self-Deification and Higher-Self Spirituality

Self-deification says the human problem is ignorance of inner divinity. Scripture says the human problem is sin against God. Human beings are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27), but they are not God. Salvation is not the discovery of the higher self. It is reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ (Colossians 1:20-22).

3.14.9 Occult Numerology Applied to Jesus

Biblical numbers can carry literary meaning, but occult numerology treats numbers as hidden mechanisms for secret power or special revelation. Scripture calls believers to receive the revealed Word, not to pursue esoteric codes detached from context. Hidden things belong to the Lord, but revealed things belong to His people so that they may obey (Deuteronomy 29:29).

3.14.10 AI and Technological Messianism

Technology can serve human stewardship when governed by truth, humility, justice, and love of neighbor. Yet technological messianism treats human systems, artificial intelligence, surveillance, biotechnology, or global governance as savior-like means of overcoming human limitation, moral evil, ignorance, and death. Scripture rejects every counterfeit salvation. Christ alone conquers sin and death. No machine can atone for guilt. No algorithm can regenerate the heart. No global system can replace the kingdom of God. The Church should use tools responsibly while refusing to trust them as redeemers.

3.14.11 One-World Religion Narratives and the Redefinition of Christ

Related Open Christian University teaching on New Age spirituality and one-world religion warns that global spirituality often presses toward unity at the expense of biblical truth, calling believers to test the spirits and hold fast to Christ (Sangwa, 2025b). Christians should avoid careless accusations and speculative certainty beyond Scripture. Yet Scripture does warn of deception, false worship, and spiritual systems hostile to the Lamb (Revelation 13; Revelation 17:1-6). Any movement that redefines Christ as merely a symbol of global religious unity while denying His cross, resurrection, exclusivity, and judgment must be rejected.

3.15. Apologetic Responses to Major Objections

Christian apologetics must be governed by Scripture, not by pride, fear, or the desire for intellectual victory. The aim is to give a reasoned defense with gentleness and reverence, while keeping a clear conscience before God (1 Peter 3:15-16). The objections below are not answered by minimizing Christ, softening His claims, or reducing the gospel to a message acceptable to every worldview. They are answered by listening carefully, distinguishing caricature from real difficulty, and showing that Scripture presents a coherent, historically grounded, theologically necessary, and spiritually saving witness to Jesus Christ.

Several objections arise because people assume that Christian claims must fit modern categories before they can be true. Scripture reverses that order. Christ is not placed under the judgment of the age. Every age, every philosophy, every religion, and every human heart is judged by the Christ whom God has raised from the dead and appointed as Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

3.15.1 “Jesus never claimed to be God.”

This objection often assumes that Jesus would need to say the exact modern sentence, “I am God,” in order to claim deity. That is a poor way to read first-century Jewish texts. Scripture reveals divine identity not only by direct titles, but also by names, works, authority, worship, honor, prerogatives, and relationship to the Father. In the biblical world, for a man to forgive sins by His own authority, receive divine honor, identify Himself with the divine name, claim unity with the Father, and speak as the final judge of humanity was not modest prophetic language. It was a claim that placed Him within the unique identity of God.

Jesus forgives sins, and the scribes rightly ask, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:7). Jesus does not correct their assumption that forgiveness belongs uniquely to God. Instead, He heals the paralytic to demonstrate that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (Mark 2:10-12). In John 5, Jesus calls God His own Father in a way His hearers understand as making Himself equal to God (John 5:18). He then says that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father (John 5:23). No faithful prophet would invite the same honor due to God unless He shared the divine identity.

Jesus also says, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). The reaction of His opponents shows that they understood the force of His claim. He says, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), and His hearers respond that He, being a man, is making Himself God (John 10:33). After the resurrection, Thomas confesses, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Jesus receives the confession rather than rebuking it. The claim that Jesus never claimed deity therefore collapses under the cumulative testimony of the Gospels. The biblical Jesus does not merely speak for God. He reveals God, acts with divine authority, receives divine honor, and shares divine glory with the Father (John 17:5).

3.15.2 “Jesus was only a prophet.”

Scripture does affirm that Jesus is a prophet. He speaks God’s Word, exposes sin, announces judgment, reveals truth, and fulfills the prophetic expectation of Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Yet the word “only” is the problem. Jesus is not less than a prophet, but He is infinitely more than a prophet. Hebrews begins by contrasting the prophets with the Son: God spoke through the prophets in many portions and ways, but in these last days He has spoken through His Son, through whom He made the universe (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The prophets declared, “This is what the LORD says.” Jesus repeatedly speaks with direct authority: “But I tell you” (Matthew 5:22). Prophets called people to worship God. Jesus receives worship (Matthew 14:33; John 20:28). Prophets pointed forward to salvation. Jesus accomplishes salvation by His blood (Mark 10:45; Hebrews 9:12). Prophets died and remained in their graves. Jesus rose bodily and lives forever (Revelation 1:18).

A respectful view of Jesus as prophet is still insufficient if it denies His deity, incarnation, atoning death, bodily resurrection, and lordship. Scripture does not permit a reduced Jesus who is honored verbally while rejected doctrinally. The true prophet is also the eternal Word made flesh, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the risen Lord, and the coming Judge.

3.15.3 “The resurrection is a myth.”

The apostles did not preach the resurrection as myth, metaphor, seasonal renewal, or the survival of Jesus' moral influence. They preached that God raised the crucified Jesus from the dead in history. Peter proclaims that Jesus was crucified and that God raised Him because it was not possible for death to hold Him (Acts 2:23-24). Paul says that Christ died, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to identifiable witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

The resurrection claim contains several features that resist reduction to myth. First, it is connected to the recent public death of Jesus under known authorities. Second, it includes burial, empty tomb testimony, and appearances. Third, it was proclaimed early, not after centuries of legendary development. Fourth, it transformed fearful disciples into public witnesses willing to suffer. Fifth, it became the center of apostolic preaching in Jerusalem, where the claim could be contested. These observations do not replace faith, but they show that the apostolic claim is not a vague religious symbol.

Paul openly admits that Christianity stands or falls with the resurrection. If Christ has not been raised, preaching is empty, faith is empty, believers are still in their sins, and the dead in Christ have perished (1 Corinthians 15:14-18). This is remarkable honesty. Christianity does not ask people to believe resurrection as a useful myth. It proclaims the bodily resurrection as God's decisive vindication of His Son, the defeat of death, the guarantee of final resurrection, and the foundation of Christian hope.

3.15.4 “The Gospels are unreliable.”

This objection must be answered carefully. The Gospels are not detached modern biographies written to satisfy contemporary academic conventions. They are theological histories, written to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ. Their theological purpose does not make them unreliable. Luke explicitly states that he carefully investigated the events and wrote an orderly account so that Theophilus might know the certainty of what he had been taught (Luke 1:1-4). John states that the signs of Jesus were written so that readers may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and have life in His name (John 20:30-31).

Differences among the Gospels should not be treated automatically as contradictions. Independent witnesses often arrange material, emphasize themes, summarize speech, and select details differently. The Gospels present complementary testimony to the one Christ. Matthew emphasizes fulfillment, kingship, and discipleship. Mark emphasizes the suffering Son of God and the urgency of the kingdom. Luke emphasizes salvation history, the work of the Spirit, and the gospel's movement to the nations. John emphasizes signs, divine identity, and believing life. These emphases enrich rather than destroy the witness.

The reliability of the Gospels also rests on their rootedness in apostolic testimony. The first Christians did not proclaim a timeless philosophy detached from eyewitness memory. They proclaimed what was seen, heard, touched, fulfilled, suffered, and witnessed (Luke 24:44-48; 1 John 1:1-3). A serious reader should examine alleged contradictions case by case, read each Gospel according to its literary purpose, and avoid the prejudice that theological meaning and historical truth cannot belong together.

3.15.5 “Paul invented Christianity.”

Paul did not invent Christianity. Before his conversion, Paul persecuted the Church, which means Christian worship of Jesus, proclamation of His resurrection, and confession of His lordship existed

before Paul became a believer (Acts 8:1-3; Galatians 1:13-16). He did not create the movement he once tried to destroy.

Paul says that he delivered what he had also received: Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared to witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). This language of receiving and delivering indicates tradition already present in the Church. Paul also met with the Jerusalem apostles, and they recognized the grace given to him and extended fellowship to him (Galatians 2:1-10). This does not describe a rival religion invented by Paul, but apostolic unity around the one gospel.

Paul's theology also coheres with Jesus' own teaching. Jesus speaks of His blood poured out for forgiveness (Matthew 26:28), gives His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45), predicts His resurrection (Mark 8:31), and sends the apostles to proclaim repentance and forgiveness in His name (Luke 24:46-47). Paul's letters unfold the meaning of Christ's work; they do not replace Christ with another religion.

3.15.6 “The doctrine of Christ was created by councils.”

Councils did not create the deity of Christ, the incarnation, the Trinity, the atonement, or the resurrection. They clarified and defended the apostolic faith against distortions. Long before Nicaea and Chalcedon, the New Testament confessed Jesus as the Word who was God (John 1:1), the One in whom the fullness of deity dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9), the exact expression of God's nature (Hebrews 1:3), the risen Lord worshiped by believers (Matthew 28:17; Revelation 5:9-14), and the only Savior (Acts 4:12).

The councils became necessary because false teachers used biblical words while changing biblical meanings. If someone says Jesus is “Son of God” but means a created being, Scripture must be defended. If someone says Christ is divine but denies His true humanity, Scripture must be defended. If someone speaks of one Christ but divides Him into two acting subjects, Scripture must be defended. The language of Nicaea and Chalcedon served as a protective fence around biblical truth. It has value only because it summarizes Scripture, not because it stands above Scripture.

Therefore, the claim that councils invented Christology confuses clarification with creation. The Church did not make Jesus Lord by voting. God raised Him, exalted Him, and commanded all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31).

3.15.7 “All religions honor the same Christ.”

Many religions and spiritual systems speak positively about Jesus. Some call Him prophet, teacher, healer, enlightened master, avatar, moral reformer, or symbol of compassion. Christians should recognize sincere respect where it exists and respond with humility. Yet respect is not the same as biblical faith. To honor a reconstructed Jesus while denying the Son revealed in Scripture is not to honor the biblical Christ.

John writes that whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, but the one who confesses the Son has the Father also (1 John 2:23). The test is not whether a system uses the name Jesus, but whether it confesses the incarnate Son, His divine identity, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His exclusive mediatorship, His lordship, and His coming judgment. A “Jesus” who does not save sinners by the cross, rise bodily from the dead, and bring sinners to the Father is another Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:4).

This does not justify arrogance toward people of other religions. It requires truthful love. Christians must defend religious liberty, speak respectfully, refuse coercion, and serve neighbors with compassion. But

they may not pretend that contradictory claims about Christ are equally true. The biblical Christ is not available to be revised into an interfaith symbol detached from His own words.

3.15.8 “A loving God would not require the cross.”

This objection often defines love as unconditional affirmation and justice as unnecessary severity. Scripture defines love differently. God’s love is holy love, and His holiness is loving holiness. If God simply ignored evil, He would not be righteous. If guilt were dismissed without judgment, the moral order of creation would be denied. The cross is necessary because sin is real, God is holy, justice matters, and sinners cannot save themselves.

Romans 3:21-26 teaches that God presented Christ as the propitiatory sacrifice through faith in His blood to demonstrate His righteousness, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus. The cross shows that God does not save by moral compromise. He saves by judging sin in Christ and justifying sinners by grace. Romans 5:8 also teaches that God proves His love in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The cross is therefore not the contradiction of divine love. It is the demonstration of divine love.

Nor is the cross a division within God, as if a reluctant Son suffered to appease an unwilling Father. Scripture presents the work of salvation as the united purpose of the triune God. The Father sends the Son in love (John 3:16). The Son lays down His life willingly (John 10:17-18). The eternal Spirit is involved in Christ’s self-offering (Hebrews 9:14). The cross is holy love in action.

3.15.9 “The exclusivity of Christ is arrogant.”

Christ’s exclusivity would be arrogant if Christians invented it to exalt themselves. But Christians confess it because Christ and His apostles teach it. Jesus says no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). Peter says there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12). Paul says there is one God and one Mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

This doctrine humbles rather than exalts believers. It says that no one, including the Christian, can save himself by morality, culture, intelligence, religion, suffering, activism, ancestry, or sincerity. All must come by mercy. The exclusivity of Christ is not the claim that Christians are better than others. It is the confession that Christ alone is sufficient for sinners.

The Church must therefore proclaim Christ with tears rather than pride. Biblical exclusivity never authorizes cruelty, contempt, coercion, or cultural superiority. It calls believers to witness, prayer, sacrifice, and missionary love. If there is only one Savior, then evangelism is not aggression. It is love compelled by truth.

3.15.10 “The second coming is symbolic only.”

Scripture certainly uses symbols, especially in apocalyptic passages, but symbolism does not cancel reality. The cross has symbolic meaning, but it was a real crucifixion. The resurrection has theological meaning, but it was a real resurrection. Likewise, the return of Christ carries prophetic imagery and cosmic significance, but it is not merely a symbol of social progress, personal transformation, or spiritual awakening.

Acts 1:11 says that the same Jesus who was taken up into heaven will come in the same way. Revelation 1:7 says that He is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him. Jesus Himself speaks of the Son of Man coming with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). The New Testament hope is not that humanity will gradually evolve into Christ-consciousness, nor that institutions will build the kingdom apart from the King. The hope is the appearing of Jesus Christ Himself.

The doctrine of Christ's return must also be protected from speculation. Jesus says no one knows the day or hour (Matthew 24:36). Therefore, denying the return is unbelief, but date-setting is disobedience. Biblical readiness means watchfulness, holiness, endurance, mission, prayer, and faithful stewardship until the Lord comes.

3.15.11 "Substitutionary atonement is divine violence or child abuse."

This objection is common in contemporary theology and popular criticism, but it misrepresents the biblical doctrine. Substitutionary atonement is not a story of an angry Father abusing an unwilling Son. Scripture teaches the unified will and action of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in salvation. The Father sends the Son in love (John 3:16). The Son willingly gives Himself (Galatians 2:20). No one takes His life from Him; He lays it down of His own accord (John 10:18).

The objection also fails to reckon with the seriousness of sin. If sin is merely woundedness, ignorance, or social failure, then substitution may appear unnecessary. But Scripture teaches that sin is guilt before God, rebellion against His holiness, and bondage under death. The Servant is pierced because of transgressions and crushed because of iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). Christ bears sins in His body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). He becomes a curse for us (Galatians 3:13). These are not marginal images. They are central to the biblical witness.

The cross should therefore be understood as voluntary, triune, holy, and redemptive self-giving. In Christ, God Himself bears the cost of forgiving sinners. The judge does not simply waive justice from a distance. The Son of God becomes man and gives Himself for the guilty. This is not divine cruelty. It is divine holiness and divine love meeting in the salvation of sinners.

3.15.12 "If Jesus is God, how could He pray, suffer, or die?"

This question is important because it touches the mystery of the incarnation. The answer is not that God ceased to be God, nor that Christ's suffering was unreal. The answer is that the eternal Son became truly human without ceasing to be truly divine. As the incarnate Son, Jesus prays to the Father, obeys the Father, suffers in His human nature, and dies a real human death. His deity does not make His humanity fake.

The Son's prayers do not disprove His deity. They reveal His incarnate mission and His real relationship with the Father. The Son is distinct from the Father, not the same Person under another role. His suffering does not mean the divine nature is passible in a creaturely way or that God stopped upholding the universe. It means the one divine Person of the Son truly suffered and died according to His human nature. The subject of the cross is the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8), but death is experienced in His humanity.

This preserves both the glory and the comfort of the gospel. The One who dies for sinners is not a mere man. He is the Son of God. Yet He does not save by pretending to suffer. He truly enters human suffering, bears sin, tastes death, and rises bodily. The mystery should lead not to confusion, but to worship.

3.15.13 “Miracles are impossible in a modern world.”

This objection usually assumes naturalism before examining the evidence. If God does not exist, miracles are impossible. But if the God of Scripture created the heavens and the earth, sustains all things, and raises the dead, then miracles are not violations of an independent universe. They are acts of the Creator within His own creation. The question is not whether miracles fit a closed secular worldview. The question is whether that worldview is true.

The miracles of Jesus are not random displays of power. They reveal the kingdom, authenticate His identity, show compassion, confront evil, fulfill Scripture, and point to the new creation. He heals the sick, cleanses lepers, casts out demons, calms the storm, feeds the hungry, gives sight to the blind, raises the dead, and finally rises Himself. These signs are not detachable wonders. They testify to who He is (John 20:30-31).

Modern people may claim to be too sophisticated for miracles, but every worldview rests on faith commitments. A worldview that excludes divine action before investigation is not neutral. Scripture calls readers to consider the works and words of Christ together, culminating in the resurrection, by which God has given assurance to all people that Jesus is the appointed Judge and Lord (Acts 17:31).

3.16. Contemporary Application

3.16.1 Worship

True worship is Christ-centered because the Father is glorified in the Son and the Spirit bears witness to the Son. The Church must sing, pray, preach, baptize, celebrate the Lord's Supper, and serve in a way that confesses the biblical Christ. Worship that uses Jesus' name while avoiding His holiness, cross, resurrection, lordship, and return is spiritually thin. Worship must not become emotional self-expression detached from truth.

3.16.2 Preaching

Paul resolved to know nothing among the Corinthians except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). This does not mean every sermon repeats the same words. It means all preaching must be governed by Christ's Person and work. Moral advice without Christ becomes legalism. Inspiration without Christ becomes self-help. Social commentary without Christ becomes ideology. End-time teaching without Christ becomes fear or curiosity. Biblical preaching proclaims Christ from all Scripture.

3.16.3 Evangelism and Mission

Evangelism is not recruitment into a religious brand. It is witness to Jesus Christ. The Church must call all people to repentance and faith because Christ is Lord of all and Judge of all (Acts 17:30-31). This witness must be humble, truthful, patient, and courageous. In pluralistic settings, Christians should respect persons while refusing to relativize Christ.

3.16.4 Discipleship

Discipleship means learning to obey everything Christ commanded (Matthew 28:20). It is not merely church attendance, religious identity, or intellectual agreement. To follow Christ is to deny oneself, take up the cross, and walk in His way (Luke 9:23).

3.16.5 Theological Education

Bible Colleges must teach Christology as central, not as a disconnected doctrinal unit. Students should learn to interpret Scripture Christologically without allegorical carelessness, defend Christ's deity and humanity, explain the atonement, identify false christologies, and apply Christ's lordship to life and ministry. Academic excellence without submission to Christ becomes spiritual danger.

3.16.6 Pastoral Ministry

Pastors shepherd under Christ the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). They do not own the flock. They must resist celebrity culture, manipulation, prosperity promises, and self-exalting ministry. Pastoral warnings against ministers seeking personal recognition over Christ rightly challenge the Church to make Christ known, not the personality of the servant (Sangwa, 2024j).

3.16.7 Family Formation

Families must teach children who Jesus is. Children should not merely hear that Jesus is kind or helpful. They should learn that He is Lord, God the Son, Savior, risen King, and coming Judge. Family worship, Scripture reading, prayer, confession, and conversations about false teachings help form discernment.

3.16.8 Spiritual Warfare and Discernment

Spiritual warfare is not fascination with demons or obsession with hidden conspiracies. It is steadfast allegiance to Christ, resistance to deception, prayer, holiness, truth, and gospel witness. Believers must test spirits by their confession of Christ (1 John 4:1-3). Any spirituality that bypasses the cross, denies Christ's incarnation, softens sin, or replaces repentance with awakening must be rejected.

3.16.9 Public Witness, Culture, and Technology

Christ's lordship extends over public life. Education, business, media, law, politics, science, technology, and the arts are not outside His authority. Yet Christians must not confuse Christ's kingdom with any earthly party, nation, ideology, or technological project. The Church bears witness to Christ as Lord while refusing both withdrawal from the world and conformity to the world.

3.16.10 Readiness for Christ's Return

Readiness for Christ's return is not escapism. It is faithful obedience. The Church waits by preaching the gospel, pursuing holiness, caring for the vulnerable, resisting deception, enduring suffering, and worshiping the Lamb. The final prayer of Scripture remains the Church's hope: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

3.17. Pastoral Exhortation and Spiritual Readiness

Believers must behold Christ as Scripture reveals Him. Do not settle for a smaller Jesus. Do not exchange the eternal Son for a moral teacher. Do not exchange the crucified Savior for a prosperity consultant. Do not exchange the risen Lord for a symbol of inner awakening. Do not exchange the coming King for a vague hope of human progress. Do not exchange the only Mediator for interfaith approval.

Trust Christ. He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25). Worship Christ. The Lamb who was slain is worthy (Revelation 5:12). Obey Christ. He asks why people call Him Lord and do not do what He says (Luke 6:46). Proclaim Christ. There is no other name by which sinners must be saved (Acts 4:12). Abide in Christ. Apart from Him His disciples can do nothing (John 15:5).

Discern false christs. A message that denies Christ's deity, humanity, cross, resurrection, lordship, exclusivity, holiness, or return is not harmless. The last days are marked by deception (Matthew 24:4-5). Yet believers should not live in fear. The true Christ has conquered. His sheep hear His voice, He knows them, and they follow Him (John 10:27).

Endure suffering. The servant is not greater than the Master (John 15:20). Following Christ may bring rejection, loss, persecution, and tears. But the risen Christ is with His people always, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). Live ready. The King is coming. He will wipe away tears, judge evil, raise the dead, and make all things new (Revelation 21:1-5).

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, true God and true man, crucified Savior, risen Lord, and coming King. This confession is not the product of religious imagination, church politics, mystical speculation, or interfaith synthesis. It is the testimony of Scripture. The Old Testament promises Him. The Gospels reveal Him. The apostles proclaim Him. The Spirit glorifies Him. The Church worships Him. The nations will answer to Him.

If Christ is not fully God, He cannot save. If He is not truly human, He cannot represent us. If He is not sinless, He cannot be the spotless sacrifice. If He did not die in the place of sinners, guilt remains. If He did not rise bodily, faith is empty. If He did not ascend and intercede, believers lack priestly comfort. If He is not Lord, discipleship is optional. If He is not the only Mediator, mission loses urgency. If He is not returning, Christian hope is incomplete.

But Scripture declares the truth with clarity. The Word became flesh. The Lamb was slain. The grave is empty. The Son is seated at the right hand of the Father. The Spirit testifies to Him. The gospel is to be preached to all nations. The King will return. Therefore, the proper response is faith, repentance, worship, obedience, courage, discernment, mission, holiness, and hope.

The Church must refuse every false Christ and return continually to the biblical Christ. He is not merely useful. He is worthy. He is not one way among many. He is the way, the truth, and the life. He is not a symbol of human potential. He is the Lord from heaven. He is not a dead teacher remembered by followers. He is the Living One who died and is alive forever and ever (Revelation 1:18).

Reflection Questions

1. Why is the doctrine of Christ central to every major area of Christian faith and life?

2. How does John 1:1-18 establish both the deity and incarnation of Christ?
3. Why is it necessary to affirm that Jesus is fully God and fully human?
4. How does the virgin birth demonstrate God's sovereign initiative in the incarnation?
5. Why does Christ's sinlessness matter for His atoning work?
6. What does substitutionary atonement mean, and why is it necessary?
7. How does the cross reveal God's holiness, justice, wrath, love, grace, mercy, and wisdom together?
8. Why does Paul say that Christian faith is empty if Christ has not been raised?
9. How should Christ's ascension and intercession comfort believers?
10. Why is religious pluralism incompatible with the biblical teaching about Christ?
11. What are some modern ways people speak positively about Jesus while denying the biblical Christ?
12. How can churches identify and resist New Age distortions such as Christ consciousness and ascended master teachings?
13. How should pastors preach Christ without reducing Him to moral example, prosperity promise, or political symbol?
14. What does readiness for Christ's return look like in ordinary Christian life?
15. How can Bible Colleges form students to confess, defend, worship, and proclaim the true Christ?

Multiple-Choice Assessment

1. What is Christology?
 - A. The study of church buildings and Christian rituals.
 - B. The theological study of the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - C. The study of angels and demons only.
 - D. The belief that all religions teach the same truth.
2. Which passage most directly teaches that the Word was God and became flesh?
 - A. Genesis 12:1-3
 - B. John 1:1-14
 - C. Proverbs 3:5-6
 - D. Acts 17:26
3. Which statement best describes the deity of Christ?
 - A. Jesus is a created being who later became divine.
 - B. Jesus is fully God, sharing the one divine essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
 - C. Jesus is divine only in a symbolic sense.
 - D. Jesus is one of many spiritual masters.
4. Which statement best describes the humanity of Christ?
 - A. Jesus only appeared to have a human body.
 - B. Jesus became human but also became sinful.

- C. Jesus is truly human, with a real body and human experience, yet without sin.
 - D. Jesus' humanity began only after the resurrection.
5. What does the hypostatic union mean?
- A. Jesus is one Person with two natures, fully divine and fully human.
 - B. Jesus is two persons working together.
 - C. Jesus is half God and half man.
 - D. Jesus changed from God into a human and stopped being God.
6. Why is the virgin birth important?
- A. It shows that Jesus was not truly human.
 - B. It shows that the incarnation was God's sovereign act through the Holy Spirit.
 - C. It means Mary is a mediator equal to Christ.
 - D. It means Jesus only appeared to be born.
7. Which biblical truth is taught in Hebrews 4:15?
- A. Jesus was never tempted.
 - B. Jesus was tempted as we are, yet without sin.
 - C. Jesus sinned but was forgiven.
 - D. Jesus became divine by resisting temptation.
8. What does substitutionary atonement mean?
- A. Christ died only as a moral example.
 - B. Christ died in the place of sinners, bearing the judgment they deserved.
 - C. Christ died because He failed politically.
 - D. Christ's death was only symbolic.
9. Which passage says that God made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us?
- A. 2 Corinthians 5:21
 - B. Psalm 23:1
 - C. Acts 1:8
 - D. Revelation 3:20
10. Why is the bodily resurrection of Christ essential?
- A. Without it, Christian preaching and faith are empty.
 - B. It is merely an inspiring symbol of hope.
 - C. It proves that matter is evil.
 - D. It allows Christians to ignore the cross.
11. Which passage gives Paul's summary that Christ died, was buried, was raised, and appeared to witnesses?
- A. Romans 12:1-2
 - B. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
 - C. Matthew 5:1-12
 - D. James 2:14-26
12. What does Christ's ascension teach?
- A. Jesus abandoned His Church.
 - B. Jesus ceased to be human.

- C. Jesus is exalted, reigning, and interceding for His people.
 - D. Jesus became only a spiritual memory.
13. Which passage teaches that Jesus always lives to intercede for those who come to God through Him?
- A. Hebrews 7:25
 - B. Genesis 1:1
 - C. Ecclesiastes 3:1
 - D. Acts 5:1
14. Why is religious pluralism incompatible with biblical Christology?
- A. It encourages kindness toward neighbors.
 - B. It denies that Jesus is the only way to the Father and the only Savior.
 - C. It studies other religions.
 - D. It believes religion matters.
15. What does John 14:6 teach?
- A. Jesus is one of many ways to God.
 - B. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him.
 - C. Jesus is only a prophet.
 - D. Jesus' words apply only to His first disciples.
16. Which error teaches that Jesus is a created being and not fully God?
- A. Arianism
 - B. Docetism
 - C. Eutychianism
 - D. Modalism
17. Which error teaches that Jesus only appeared to be human?
- A. Adoptionism
 - B. Docetism
 - C. Tritheism
 - D. Religious pluralism
18. What is the central problem with Christ consciousness teaching?
- A. It teaches too strongly that Jesus rose bodily.
 - B. It redefines Christ as an inner awakened state or universal principle rather than the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord.
 - C. It affirms substitutionary atonement.
 - D. It emphasizes final judgment too clearly.
19. What is a biblical response to channeling messages from "Jesus" or spirit guides?
- A. Accept them if they sound loving.
 - B. Treat them as equal to Scripture.
 - C. Test the spirits by Scripture and reject anything that denies the biblical Christ.
 - D. Prefer them over apostolic teaching.
20. What is the proper Christian response to the doctrine of Christ?
- A. Curiosity without obedience.
 - B. Worship, faith, repentance, obedience, proclamation, discernment, holiness, and hope.

- C. Interfaith relativism.
- D. Reducing Jesus to a moral example.

Further Reading by the Author

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