

*Jesus Christ and Salvation*  
Calvin PCA, Fall Quarter 2011  
Pastor Aaron Garber

### **Class Calendar**

September 11 – The Person of Christ: Christological Heresies  
September 18 – (Pastor Aaron on vacation: Dave Dunlop teaching on WLC 151-153)  
September 25 – (Pastor Aaron on vacation: Satch Miedel teaching on Apologetics)  
October 2 – The Person of Christ: Christ in the Old Testament  
October 9 – The Person of Christ: The Incarnation  
October 16 – The Person of Christ: His Offices and States  
October 23 – The Work of Christ: His Life  
October 30 – The Work of Christ: His Death  
November 6 – The Work of Christ: His Resurrection, Ascension, and Return  
November 13 – Excurses: The Gospel Story, Announcement, and Community  
November 20 – Salvation Applied: Five Points of Reformed Theology  
November 27 – Salvation Applied: The Golden Chain of Salvation  
December 4 – Excurses: Counterfeit Gospels

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## **The Person of Jesus Christ: Christological Heresies**

### **1. Class Overview and Introduction**

### **2. Why Study Theology?**

- a. The Bible is constantly concerned with doctrine and theology (Titus 1:1).
- b. Godliness requires it (Titus 1:1).
- c. Our joy depends on it (1 John 1:1-4).
- d. Our worship depends on it (Rev. 5:9-10).
- e. Our salvation depends on it (2 Peter 2:1).

### **3. Christological Heresies**

- a. Denying Christ's Divinity
  - i. Ebionism
  - ii. Arianism
  - iii. Modern Heresy: Jehovah's Witnesses
- b. Denying Christ's Humanity
  - i. Docetism
  - ii. Apollinarianism
  - iii. Modern Heresy: Christian Scientists
- c. Denying Christ's Unity (one person)
  - i. Nestorianism
- d. Denying Christ's Dual Nature
  - i. Eutychianism

### **4. Council of Chalcedon, 451**

*This council speaks of one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.*

**5. The Admirable Conjunction of Diverse Excellencies in Christ Jesus (sermon by Jonathan Edwards on Revelation 5:5-6)**

- a. *There do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension.*
- b. *There meet in Jesus Christ, infinite justice and infinite grace.*
- c. *In the person of Christ do meet together infinite glory and lowest humility.*
- d. *In the person of Christ do meet together infinite majesty and transcendent meekness.*
- e. *There meet in the person of Christ the deepest reverence towards God and equality with God.*
- f. *There are conjoined in the person of Christ infinite worthiness of good, and the greatest patience under sufferings of evil.*
- g. *In the person of Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience, with supreme dominion over heaven and earth.*
- h. *In the person of Christ are conjoined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation.*
- i. *In Christ do meet together self-sufficiency, and an entire trust and reliance on God.*
- j. *Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept of him, and close with him as your Savior.*
  - i. *How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God in his invitations to you to come to him and trust in him. With what sweet grace and kindness does he, from time to time, call and invite you...*
  - ii. *If you do come to Christ, he will appear as a Lion, in his glorious power and dominion, to defend you. All those excellencies of his, in which he appears as a lion, shall be yours, and shall be employed for you in your defense, for your safety, and to promote your glory, he will be as a lion to fight against your enemies.*

**6. Study Questions**

- a. Why study theology?
- b. What four basic truths about Jesus do the Christological heresies reject?
- c. What Scripture passages would you use to show Christ's divinity? His humanity?
- d. How have heresies aided the church throughout history?
- e. Give several reasons that Jesus Christ is uniquely worthy of our worship.
- f. Why is it important that Jesus was fully man?
- g. Are there problems with saying that Jesus "put on" a human body?
- h. Today, opponents of orthodox Christianity frequently deny the deity of Jesus. Jesus is affirmed as a good man and teacher, but not as God incarnate. What kind of apologetic arguments would you use to refute these ideas?

## **The Person of Jesus Christ: Christ in the Old Testament**

### **1. Review**

- a. What four aspects of Christ's "person" are traditionally denied by Christological heresies?
- b. Why is it important that Jesus was fully man?
- c. Is it ok to say that Jesus "put on" a human body?
- d. Give several reasons why Jesus Christ is uniquely worthy of our worship?

### **2. Prominent Passages with Reference to the Person of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament**

- a. **The Promised Offspring of Eve:** Genesis 3:15 - "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
- b. **The Angel of the Lord:** Genesis 16:7-12; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; 3:1-4; 12:8.
- c. **The Messianic Psalms:** Psalms 2 ("Kiss the Son"); 8 (Heb. 2:6-8); 16 ("you will not... let your holy one see corruption"); 22 ("My God, my god, why have you forsaken me?"); 40 (Heb. 10:5-10); 41 (Jn. 13:18); 45 ("Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.... Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness...." See also Hebrews 1:8-9); 68 (Eph. 4:8-9); 110 ("The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand...'" See also Mt. 22:44; Mk. 12:36; Lk. 20:43; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13; 5:6; 7:17-21); 118 (Mt. 21:42).
- d. **"Isaiah... saw his glory and spoke of [Christ]" (John 12:41):** See Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; 44:6; 53.
- e. **The Son of Man:** Daniel 7
- f. **The Promised King of the Davidic Covenant:** 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (see also Ezek. 37:24-28).

### **3. New Testament Affirmations of the Person of Christ in the Old Testament**

- a. **Jesus on the Road to Emmaus:** Luke 24:13-35
- b. **The Promises of God Find their Yes in Christ:** 2 Corinthians 1:19-20
- c. **The Scriptures Bear Witness About Christ:** John 5:39-40

### **4. Study Questions**

- a. What other Old Testament passages speak clearly of the person and/or work of Jesus Christ?
- b. Is the Old Testament relevant to Christians today? If yes, how so?
- c. Does the Old Testament teach the gospel? If yes, is it clearly present or is it obscured/hidden/mysterious?
- d. If the essence of the Christian faith is found in a person (see John 5:39), is doctrine important?

## **The Person of Jesus Christ: The Incarnation (The Word Became Flesh)**

### **1. The Revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.**

- e. Is Jesus God?
- f. What is God like?

### **2. A First Century Jewish Understanding of Who God Is**

- a. How would a faithful Jew in Jesus' day answer the question, "Who is God?"
  - i. God is one. There is only one God. Monotheism is essential.
    - 1. **Dt. 6:4** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
    - 2. **Ex. 20:3** You shall have no other gods before me.
  - ii. God reveals himself to the world as its sole creator and sole ruler (sovereign Lord).
    - 1. In creation, God acted alone: Is. 44:24.
    - 2. In ruling, God alone reigns from his throne: Is. 46:8-10.
  - iii. God reveals himself to Israel through his name (YHWH), his character (gracious), and his saving actions.
    - 1. The name YHWH reveals the unique identity of God ("I am").
    - 2. God's character in relation to Israel is gracious: Ex. 34:6.
    - 3. God is Israel's savior and deliverer: Ex. 20:2.
- b. In sum, there is one God who is the sole creator and ruler of everything (supreme over all), YHWH, the gracious God, savior of Israel.

### **3. A First Century Christian Understanding of Who Jesus Is**

- a. The New Testament authors openly and deliberately include Jesus within the unique divine identity of monotheism. This inclusion illustrates that the earliest Christians embraced the highest Christology possible, even before the New Testament was written.
- b. Jesus participates in God's unique (sole) rule.
  - i. In his ascension Jesus is exalted to the very throne of God (Mt. 19:28; 25:31; Lk. 1:32-33; Acts 2:30-36; Heb. 1:8; 8:1; 12:2; Rev. 12:5; 22:3).
  - ii. Like God (the sole Ruler), Jesus rules over "all things." (Mt. 11:27; Lk. 10:22; Jn. 3:35; 13:3; 16:15; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 1:2; 2:8).

- iii. Jesus is exalted over the angels which are merely servants of God (Eph. 1:21-22; Heb. 1:7-9, 13-14).
  - iv. To Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Compare Philippians 2:6-11 with Isaiah 45:22-23. Note the monotheism of Isaiah 45:22, "I am God and there is no other."
- c. Jesus participates in God's unique (sole) act of creation.
- i. If God created all things, he alone can rule all things. God's creation and rule go hand in hand (Rev. 4:11). Therefore, if Jesus rules all things, by necessity he must have created all things.
  - ii. Creation attributed to Jesus: John 1:1-5; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2-3, 10-12; Rev. 3:14.
  - iii. Consider the monotheism of 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.
- d. Jesus shares the divine name (YHWH).
- i. See Heb. 1:4 & Phil. 2:9.
  - ii. Jesus shares God's titles of Alpha and Omega, first and last. See Revelation 1:8, 17; 21:6; 22:13. Compare Revelation passages with Isaiah 44:6; 48:12. Note the express monotheism of Isaiah 44:6 ("beside me there is no God").
  - iii. To "call upon the name of the Lord" in OT was to call upon YHWH (1 Kgs. 18:24; Ps. 116:13; Zeph. 3:9)
  - iv. To "call upon the name of the Lord" in the NT was to call upon Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2).
  - v. Jesus' sevenfold "I am he" statements in John's gospel clearly identify Jesus with YHWH.
    - 1. Seven times in John (4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58,; 13:19; 18:5).
    - 2. Also seven times in OT (Deut. 32:39; Is. 41:4; 43:10, 13; 46:4; 48:12; 52:6).
- e. Jesus shares God's character (John 1:14: "full of grace and truth").
- f. Jesus shares in God's saving actions.
- i. Israel identified God as the one who delivered them out of slavery in Egypt (Ex. 20:2).
  - ii. Christians identified Jesus as the one who delivered them from the slavery of sin (Gal. 5:1; Heb. 2:15).

- g. In sum, there is one God who is the sole creator and ruler of everything (supreme over all), YHWH, the gracious God, savior of Israel, and the earliest Christians included Jesus in that divine identity at every step.

#### 4. What is God like? (How does Jesus reveal God to us?)

- a. Jesus' humiliation and exaltation significantly reveal the character and identity of God.
- b. Philippians 2:5-11
- c. Revelation 5:6-14
- d. John 8:28
  - i. Isaiah 52:13 (ESV): Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.
  - ii. In John, Jesus is lifted up in and through his humiliation and suffering.
    - 1. "Lifted up" found in John 3:14-15; 8:28; and 12:32-34.
    - 2. In 12:32-34 John tells us that "lifted up" is an enigmatic statement from Jesus to indicate the kind of death he would die. The point being - when Jesus is lifted up in humiliation on the cross, he is also lifted up in exaltation as the victorious Son of Man. In other words, his humiliation and exaltation go hand in hand.
    - 3. Note, John 8:28 is the central of the three "lifted up" statements in John, and it is also the central of the seven "I am" statements in John. Jesus' participation in the divine identity of God (I am he) is deliberately intertwined with him being "lifted up" on the cross.
  - iii. In John, Jesus is exalted/glorified through the cross as well.
    - 1. John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, <sup>a</sup>"The hour has come <sup>b</sup>for the Son of Man to be glorified.
    - 2. John 17:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, <sup>a</sup>he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, <sup>b</sup>the hour has come; <sup>c</sup>glorify your Son that the Son may <sup>d</sup>glorify you,
    - 3. Isaiah 40:5 ("the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together") is ultimately fulfilled at the cross of Christ.
  - iv. As Jesus is lifted up and glorified at the cross, he shows us exactly who our God is.

## 5. The Incarnation

- a. The pre-existence of Christ.
  - i. It is not possible to speak of the incarnation of one who had no previous existence.
  - ii. Christ's pre-existence revealed in NT: John 1:1, 15; 6:38; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6-7; Gal. 4:4.
- b. The incarnation: The Word became flesh.
  - i. **John 1:14** *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
  - ii. Why the incarnation?
    1. The incarnation was made necessary by human sin. Both sin and the incarnation of Christ part of God's eternal plan of redemption. Jesus would not have needed to become a man if man did not fall.
    2. See Luke 19:10; John 3:16; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 3:8.
  - iii. How did "the Word" change in the incarnation? More specifically, did Jesus "give up" his divine attributes?
    1. It is best to think of the incarnation as Jesus gaining human attributes rather than giving up his essential divine attributes.
    2. Phil. 2:6-7: "emptied himself" (NAS); "made himself nothing" (ESV).
    3. "kenosis" – he laid aside his divine majesty; he "functionally" subordinated himself to the Father while retaining his fundamental (essential) equality with the Father. He emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.
    4. Hymn: *And Can it Be That I Should Gain*
      - a. Charles Wesley - *Emptied Himself of all but love; And bled for Adam's helpless race...*
      - b. Appropriately Revised - *Humbled himself (so great his love!); And bled for all his chosen race...*
  - iv. Does Jesus remain incarnate even today?
    1. Yes. His incarnation continues into eternity. Jesus presently reigns in his resurrected body at the right hand of God.

## **The Person of Jesus Christ: His Offices and States**

### **5. Review**

- a. Week #1: Christological Heresies
  - i. Jesus is fully God.
  - ii. Jesus is fully man.
  - iii. Jesus exists as one person.
  - iv. Jesus has two natures.
- b. Week #2: Christ in the Old Testament
  - i. The Scriptures (OT and NT) tell the unified story of Jesus Christ.
  - ii. The Christian faith is ultimately grounded in and focused on a person, Jesus (see John 5:39).
- c. Week #3: The Incarnation (The Word Made Flesh)
  - i. Highest Christology found in earliest Christians.
  - ii. Jesus shares the divine identity of God.
  - iii. One God; Creator; Ruler; YHWH; Gracious Character; Savior.

### **6. The Incarnation (continued)**

- a. The pre-existence of Christ.
  - i. It is not possible to speak of the incarnation of one who had no previous existence.
  - ii. Christ's pre-existence revealed in NT: John 1:1, 15; 6:38; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6-7; Gal. 4:4.
- b. The incarnation: The Word became flesh.
  - i. John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
  - ii. Why the incarnation?
  - iii. How did "the Word" change in the incarnation? More specifically, did Jesus "give up" his divine attributes?
  - iv. Why was the virgin birth (conception) of Christ necessary?
    - 1. Doctrine of virgin birth is plainly taught in Scripture: Is. 7:14; Mt. 1:18,20; Lk. 1:34-35.
    - 2. The virgin birth demonstrates that Jesus was both truly human and truly divine.
    - 3. The virgin birth means that Jesus did not fall under the curse of the law or inherit original sin.
  - v. Does Jesus remain incarnate even today?

## **7. The States of Christ: Humiliation and Exaltation**

- a. Philippians 2:6-8: Christ's Humiliation (Incarnation; Suffering; Death; Burial)
- b. Philippians 2:9-11: Christ's Exaltation (Resurrection; Ascension; Reign; Return)
- c. Jesus is the Servant Lord

## **8. The Offices of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King**

### **(WSC) Q. 24. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?**

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

### **(WSC) Q. 25. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?**

A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

### **(WSC) Q. 26. How does Christ execute the office of a king?**

A. Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

## **The Work of Jesus Christ: His Life**

### **1. Jesus' Birth and Infancy**

- a. A New Beginning
  - i. Matthew 1:1 - "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ"
  - ii. John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word..."
- b. Genealogy
  - i. Matthew 1:2-16 - Jesus is the promised Messiah, a descendant of David and heir to the throne... but he also has gentile roots (Rahab).
  - ii. Luke 3:23-38 - Jesus is from Adam, and therefore the hope for all people.
- c. Birth
  - i. Born of a virgin in humblest of circumstances - showing he will be the Servant Lord.
  - ii. Matthew 2:1 - "wise men from the east" came to worship him. Magi, astrologers, magicians... pagans. (Looking ahead to Great Commission).
- d. Prophecy Fulfilled (Mt 1:22-23; 2:5-6; 2:15, 17, 23; 3:3)
- e. Jesus Embodies Israel
  - i. Flight to Egypt (Mt 2:13-15)
  - ii. Hosea 11:1ff - "Out of Egypt I called my son..."

### **2. Jesus' Early Ministry**

- a. Baptism: Declared to be the Son of God (Mt. 3:13-17).
- b. Temptation: Jesus recapitulates the roles of Adam and Israel (Mt 4:1-11).
- c. Jesus Starts to Teach: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." (Lk 4:18; Is 61)
- d. Jesus Begins Calling Disciples, Eventually Choosing Twelve (Lk 6:12-16).

### **3. Jesus' Teaching: Jesus Proclaims the Kingdom of God in Word**

- a. Beatitudes/Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5)
- b. The Law: Love God... Love Neighbor (Lk 10:27)
- c. The Kingdom of God

### **4. Jesus' Miracles: Jesus Proclaims the Kingdom of God in Deed**

- a. Jesus Calms a Storm (Mk 4:35)
- b. Jesus Heals Demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)
- c. Jesus Heals Bleeding Woman and Raises Girl From Dead (Mk 5:21-43)

### **5. Transfiguration: Jesus Offers a Glimpse of the Kingdom of God (Mt 16:28 - 17:8)**

### **6. Jesus' Passion**

- a. Triumphal Entry (Mt 21:1-11)
- b. Temple Cleansed/Judged (Mt 21:12-17; see also Jeremiah 7)
- c. Last Supper/Gethsemane (Mt. 26:26-46)
- d. Arrest, Trial, Crucifixion (Mt 26-27)

### **7. Theological Significance of Jesus' Life**

- a. Jesus was without sin
- b. Jesus taught a new ethic in light of the inbreaking kingdom of God.
- c. Jesus' miracles gave evidence of the inbreaking kingdom of God.
- d. Jesus did battle with Satan, had compassion on the people - he came to seek and to save the lost.
- e. Pillars of Judaism (temple, land, people, law) find completion in Jesus.

## **The Work of Jesus Christ: His Death**

### **1. The Necessity of the Atonement: Why did Jesus have to die?**

- a. The source of the atonement is found in the free and sovereign love of God.
  - i. John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son...*
  - ii. Romans 5:8 - *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
  - iii. See also Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 John 4:10; Jeremiah 31:3; Romans 8:38-39
  - iv. God's love has specificity. That is, before the foundation of the world he directed his love specifically toward countless multitudes through election and predestination (Ephesians 1:4-5). The atonement therefore accomplishes his loving eternal purpose.
  - v. God is love, yet it was not necessary for God to set his electing love upon hell-deserving sinners. God's nature (love) did not constrain him to atone for our sins through Christ. Rather, he freely chose to love us and bring atonement for our sins.
  - vi. The atonement does not win or constrain God's love. God does not love us *because* our sins have been atoned for; rather, our sins have been atoned for *because* God has freely loved us.
- b. Two views on the necessity of the atonement:
  - i. It was hypothetically necessary (hypothetic necessity). God could have saved his elect by other means, but he decreed the atonement necessary. Although other means were possible, the atonement was the means through which God's grace is most marvelously exhibited and man's blessings are most multiplied.
  - ii. It was absolutely necessary (consequent absolute necessity). In order to save man from sin God *necessarily* had to send his Son to die. God's own perfect nature (his justice, moral perfection, holiness), not his decree, made atonement absolutely necessary.
- c. Biblical evidence for the absolute necessity of the atonement:
  - i. God cannot overlook sin.
    1. He will not clear the guilty (Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:8; Nahum 1:3);

2. He hates sin/sinners... and he will judge them (Psalm 5:4-6; Nahum 1:2; Romans 1:18).
3. For God to remain just while justifying sinners, Christ's blood had to be shed (Romans 3:25-26).
- ii. God's holy, immutable law (grounded in his nature, not his decrees), demands justice (Deuteronomy 27:26; Matthew 5:18).
- iii. God decreed the penalty of death upon disobedience (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23).
- iv. Without the shedding of blood, sin cannot be forgiven (Hebrews 9:22)

## 2. The Nature of the Atonement

### a. Penal Substitutionary Atonement

- i. Penal - Christ's death paid the penalty for sin.
- ii. Substitutionary - Christ died in the place of the elect.
  1. OT - Sins symbolically transferred to sacrificial animal (Leviticus 1:1-4; 16:20-22).
  2. Our sins are laid upon Christ (Isaiah 53:6,12; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24).
  3. Jesus is said to have died *for* sinners (Romans 5:6-8; 8:32; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 2:9).

b. *Atonement* means making amends, blotting out the offense, and giving satisfaction for wrong done; thus reconciling to oneself the alienated other and restoring the disrupted relationship (J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology*).

c. The atonement is accomplished through the obedience of Christ.

- i. John 6:38 - *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*
- ii. Philippians 2:8 - *He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death...*
- iii. Romans 5:19 - *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

d. Christ's vicarious obedience was active and passive.

- i. Active obedience - He fulfilled all the demands of God's righteous law on our behalf.
- ii. Passive obedience - He suffered the curse and condemnation due to sin on our behalf.

- e. Throughout Scripture the atonement is spoken of as sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption.
  - i. Sacrifice - Jesus' sacrificial death removed the liability of sin (Hebrews 9:26).
  - ii. Propitiation - God's just wrath/anger against sin is pacified or appeased (Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10)
  - iii. Reconciliation - Our alienation from God is removed and we are restored to his favor (Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:12-16; Colossians 1:20-21).
  - iv. Redemption - We are released from sin (its power and curse) through the payment of a ransom (Matthew 20:28).

### **3. Divergent Theories of the Atonement**

- a. Ransom-to-Satan Theory: Wrongly holds that a ransom is paid to Satan in order to cancel the claims he has over sinful man.
- b. Moral Influence Theory: The atonement is not necessary. Christ's death is not a payment for sin, it was merely a picture of God's love as he suffered with man. The cross softens human hearts and leads them to repentance.
- c. Example Theory: Jesus' life and death served as an example of true obedience for men to follow, thus inspiring them to lead similar lives.
- d. Governmental Theory: Because God is absolutely sovereign, he can relax the demands of the law and forgive men without atonement. The cross impresses upon men the horror of sin and God accepted the sacrifice, even though it was not actually sufficient to pay the penalty of sin.

### **4. Questions for further reflection:**

- a. Why did Jesus have to die? Couldn't God have just forgiven sin?
- b. How were Old Testament saints saved?
- c. For whom did Jesus die? What is the extent of the atonement?

## **The Work of Jesus Christ: His Resurrection, Ascension and Return**

### **1. The Resurrection of Christ**

- a. The Historicity of the Resurrection:
  - i. The resurrection is based on numerous eyewitness accounts (1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1 - 21:25; Acts 1:22; 2:32; 13:30-31)
  - ii. The testimony of the first Christians depended on the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:14; Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:2; 10, 33; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 34, 37; 17:18, 32)
  - iii. The first Christians staked their lives on the resurrection (Acts 23:6; 1 Corinthians 15:19).
  - iv. The resurrection story was not borrowed from pagan mythology, but is absolutely unique.
- b. The Nature of Christ's Resurrection:
  - i. It was a physical, bodily resurrection (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39; John 21:12).
  - ii. It was the same body, yet transformed.
- c. Implications of Christ's Resurrection:
  - i. Christ's resurrection ensures new life for us today (1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:5-6).
  - ii. Christ's resurrection ensures our justification (Romans 4:25).
  - iii. Christ's resurrection ensures our own resurrection (1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:12-58; 2 Corinthians 4:14).
  - iv. Our sanctification is grounded in Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Colossians 3:1-4; Romans 6:8-14).
  - v. Christ's resurrection wins the decisive victory over Satan (Colossians 2:11-15).

### **2. The Ascension of Christ**

- a. After forty days, Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:3, 6-11; Luke 24:50-51).
- b. In his ascension Christ assumed his rightful place on the throne, at God's right hand (Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 3:1). See especially Psalm 24.
- c. From the throne Christ intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:34).
- d. From the throne Christ subdues his enemies (Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25).
- e. From the throne Christ rules over the entire cosmos (Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter 3:22).
- f. From the throne Christ rules over his church (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- g. Implications of Christ's ascension:
  - i. Christ's ascension insures our place in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17; John 14:2-3).

- ii. Through Christ's ascension we share in the spoils of his victory (Ephesians 2:6-7; 4:8-16; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; Revelation 2:26-27).
- iii. Christ's ascension guards us against an over-realized and under-realized eschatology.

### 3. The Return of Christ

- a. There will be a sudden, personal, visible, bodily return of Christ (Matthew 24:44; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Peter 3:10; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 22:20).
- b. Christ will judge all men upon his return (Revelation 20:11-15; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10, 12).
- c. God will restore/renew creation (Romans 8:19-22; Revelation 21:1).

### 4. The Christian Hope

David Wells (*Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Postmodern World*, pp. 205-206): *The Jewish hope, which slowly swelled in its passage through time, became quite simple. It was the hope that one day the world order would be set right, that what was wrong would be banished and what was right would be rewarded and God's people would be given rest from their enemies....*

*The Christian confession, as we have seen, is that this future has already arrived, that it has been realized in ways more grand than could have been imagined, that it was divinely ushered in through Christ's death, and that it can be experienced and tasted now, thereby transforming human life. For those in Christ, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come (2 Cor. 5:17). This is not simply a personal statement, that at a certain time their conversion happened. It is even more profound than that. It is Paul's affirmation that those in Christ have already entered the age to come and have been extracted from the world of darkness in which they once were at ease and at home.*

*Christian hope is not about wishing that things will get better, that somehow emptiness will go away, meaning will return, and life will be stripped of its uncertainties, its psychological aches and anxieties. Nor does it have anything to do with techniques for improving fallen human life, be those therapeutic or even religious. Hope, instead, has to do, biblically speaking, with the knowledge that "the age to come" is already penetrating "this age," that the sin, death, and meaninglessness of the one is being transformed by the righteousness, life, and meaning of the other, that what has emptied out life, what has scarred and blackened it, is being displaced by what is rejuvenating and transforming it. More than that, hope is hope because it knows it has become part of a realm, a kingdom, which endures, where evil is doomed and will be banished, that it has left behind it the ship of "this age" which is sinking. And if this realm did not exist, Christians would be "of all men most to be pitied (1 Cor. 15:19), because their hope would be groundless and they would have lived out an illusion.*

## Excurses: Counterfeit Gospels

### 5. **Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope, by Trevin Wax.**

- a. The threefold crisis in the church:
  - i. A lack of gospel confidence.
  - ii. A lack of gospel clarity.
  - iii. A lack of gospel community.
- b. The gospel as a three-legged stool.
  - i. **The Gospel Story** - *First, there is the gospel story, the overarching grand narrative found in the Scriptures. The Bible tells us about God's creation of a good world that was tainted by the sin of Adam and Eve. God gave the law to reveal His holiness and our need for a perfect sacrifice, which is provided by the death of Jesus Christ. This same Jesus will one day return to this earth to judge the living and the dead, and thus renew all things. The gospel story is the scriptural narrative that takes us from creation to new creation, climaxing with the death and resurrection of Jesus.*
  - ii. **The Gospel Announcement** - *The second leg of the stool is the gospel announcement, namely that God—in the person of Jesus Christ—lived a perfect life in our place, bore the penalty for our sin through His death on the cross, was raised from the dead to launch God's new creation, and is now exalted as Lord of the world. The announcement centers upon Jesus and what He has done to reconcile us to God. Our response to this announcement is to repent of our sins and put our trust in the work He has accomplished on our behalf.*
  - iii. **The Gospel Community** - *The third leg of the stool is the gospel community. Our response to the gospel announcement—repentance and faith—is not a one-time event. It's a lifelong expression of gratitude that wells up from the bottom of our hearts and overflows into love for God and His beloved community. We are shaped by the gospel into the kind of people who herald the grace of God and spread the news of Jesus Christ. God has commissioned the church to be the community that embodies the message of the gospel. Through our corporate life together, we "obey the gospel" by living according to the truth of the message that Jesus Christ is our Savior and the Lord of the world.*
- c. The three-legged stool and the counterfeits

### 6. **The Gospel Story**

- a. Biblical hints of the Gospel story
- b. What is the gospel story?
  - i. Creation: God made all things; God made us; original creation was good, full of shalom/peace; God is personal; God establishes his authority over us; God is holy (Genesis 1-2; Psalm 19:1-4)

- ii. Fall: Man sins, disobeys God, is alienated from God; Sin is cosmic treason; the fallout from sin is devastating; God's wrath against sin is aroused; his curse falls upon creation; all men become sinners through Adam (Genesis 3; Romans 1:18-32; 3:9-20)
  - iii. Redemption: Immediately upon man's fall God reveals his rescue plan through Eve's descendant; God's plan of redemption unfolds throughout OT as God promises blessings (great nation/land/our God, his people); story climaxes in person of Jesus, the king who brings redemption (Genesis 12; 17:1-10; Exodus 12; 2 Samuel 7; Isaiah 42:1-4; 53:4-11; Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-16; Luke 22-24; John 1:1-18; 3:1-21; Acts 2; Romans 3; Ephesians 2:1-10).
  - iv. Restoration: Through Jesus' work we see a new creation is dawning; already, not yet; Jesus will return to bring justice and salvation; all things will be made new (Acts 1:6-11; Romans 8; Ephesians 1; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:11; Hebrews 12:18-29; 2 Peter 3:1-13; Revelation 21-22).
- c. Counterfeit gospels that compromise the gospel story:
- i. The Therapeutic Gospel.
    1. Therapeutic gospel confuses our spiritual symptoms (troubled marriage, anxiety, anger, addictions) with our spiritual disease (sin).
    2. Therapeutic gospel distorts the gospel story by answering all of the big questions in superficial, merely therapeutic ways.
  - ii. Evangelical versions of the therapeutic gospel:
    1. Happy Meal Gospel: Pursuit of happiness central goal - the idea that we need peace with God is lost.
    2. Fill'er Up Gospel: God exists to fill up our depleted (emotional) reservoir until we feel restored/fulfilled. Sin becomes nothing more than our lack of self-esteem. God exists to offer us therapy (like Dr. Phil) and the cross loses its central place.
    3. Paid Programming Gospel: *Come to Jesus and your life will get better*. Gospel more like an infomercial than cosmic message of redemption and restoration.
    4. God as the Vending Machine: The prosperity gospel and more subtle alternatives. We scratch God's back, and then expect him to scratch ours.
  - iii. Results of therapeutic gospel:
    1. Disillusionment when suffering comes.
    2. Shrunken view of sin.
    3. People desire God's gifts rather than the giver.
- d. The Judgmentless Gospel.
- i. The judgmentless gospel forgets the end of the story - that God will judge. Extremely popular to talk about doing justice today... not so popular to talk about God's coming judgment.
  - ii. Forms of judgmentless gospel.
    1. Everybody is going to heaven.
    2. The afterlife is not as important as the mission life.
    3. God doesn't send anyone to hell. People choose to go there.

4. God looks at your heart.

## 7. The Gospel Announcement

- a. Outlining Gospel Announcement:
  - i. The Life of Jesus: Jesus inaugurates God's kingdom in his life (healing sick, feeding hungry); Jesus lives life of perfect righteousness on our behalf; Jesus forgives sin and restores peace with God.
  - ii. The Death of Jesus: Jesus atones for our sin; he died in our place, for us.
  - iii. The Resurrection of Jesus: A vindication of Christ's sacrifice; the beginning of the new creation; death defeated.
  - iv. The Exaltation of Jesus: Jesus raised to throne where he reigns as Lord over all.
- b. Our response: Repentance and Faith.
- c. Counterfeit gospels that compromise the gospel announcement:
  - i. The Moralistic Gospel.
    1. Common forms:
      - a. Good advice instead of good news.
      - b. Begin with grace, but quickly return to law.
      - c. Spiritualizing gospel announcement: *Christ has been raised! So now you need to realize you have the power to get up too.*
    - ii. The Quietist Gospel.
      1. This gospel turns the public news of the gospel will all of its cosmic implications for nations and history and the whole of humanity into merely a personal, private message of hope.
      2. Versions of Quietist Gospel:
        - a. The gospel is only about individual salvation.
        - b. The only role Christians should have in world is evangelism.
        - c. The church has nothing to do with politics.

## 8. The Gospel Community

- a. The gospel announcement births the church.
  - i. The gospel incorporates us into a community of faith (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:9-10).
  - ii. The gospel community is the place where we are sanctified.
- b. Counterfeit gospels that compromise the gospel community:
  - i. The Activist Gospel
  - ii. The Churchless Gospel
    1. The institutional church is a pagan invention.
    2. The church is optional for Christians.
    3. The church is a hindrance to true spiritual growth.

## **The Order of Salvation: Part 1**

### **1. Salvation Is of the Lord**

- a. To be saved is to be rescued from some calamity. Christian salvation is to be rescued from the ultimate calamity, falling under the wrath of God (1 Thessalonians 1:10; Zephaniah 1)
- b. Salvation is in its entirety of the Lord (Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 7:9-10).
- c. The Bible speaks of our salvation in terms of God's work in the past, present, and future.
  - i. We have been saved (Ephesians 2:8)
  - ii. We are being saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-2)
  - iii. We will be saved (Romans 5:9)

### **2. The Golden Chain of Salvation**

- a. Romans 8:29-30 (foreknew - predestined - called - justified - glorified)
- b. Can this chain be broken?

### **3. Union with Christ**

- a. We are in Christ - and Christ is in us – and every ounce of blessedness that flows from God to us comes because we have been united to Christ.
- b. Throughout the New Testament the remarkable theme of our union with Christ is ever-present...
  - i. In the words of Jesus...
    - 1. John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you.
    - 2. John 17:20-21 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us
  - ii. In the words of Peter...
    - 1. 1Peter 5:14-1 Peace to all of you who are in Christ.
  - iii. In the words of John...
    - 1. 1 John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.
  - iv. From the author of Hebrews...
    - 1. Hebrews 3:14 For we have come to share in Christ
  - v. And of course, over and over and over again, the apostle Paul speaks of this reality as well.



## **The Order of Salvation: Part 2**

5. Union with Christ (see part 1)
6. Predestination (see part 1)
7. Regeneration
  - a. Regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit upon spiritually dead people to bring them into a new spiritual life, to make them new creations in Christ, to enlighten their hearts and minds to the goodness and truth of the gospel.
  - b. John 3:3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.
  - c. 1 Peter 1:22-23 love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...
  - d. Ezekiel 36:26-27 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
  - e. Regeneration is an act of God that is sovereign, immediate, and instantaneous.
  - f. Regeneration precedes faith.
8. Effectual Calling
  - a. WSC Q. 31. *What is effectual calling?*  
A. *Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*
  - b. Two types of calling:
    - i. General outward calling given to all people to repent and believe;
    - ii. Special effectual calling through which God accomplishes his desired effect, bringing people to faith.
  - c. John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.
  - d. Act 16:14 ESV One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.
  - e. Effectual calling is sometimes referred to as irresistible grace.
9. Faith and Repentance
  - a. WLC XIV - *The principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.*
  - b. Faith stands in contrast to works... faith looks outside of ourselves to Christ... God's people have always been distinguished from the world by faith (Galatians 3:7-9).
  - c. Faith involves both credence (belief in truth of God's Word/promises) *and* commitment (James 2:17-22).
  - d. Repentance is a radical turning from sin to Christ (Psalm 51).
  - e. Faith and repentance do not cause new birth/regeneration; rather they are the fruit of new birth/regeneration.

## 10. Justification

- a. WSC Q. 33. What is justification?  
A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.
- b. Justification resolves the biggest problem mankind has, how can we be made right before God? In justification God declares us to be righteous, not by our own righteousness, but by Christ's righteousness credited to us.
- c. Romans 5:18-19 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

## 11. Adoption

- a. WSC Q. 34. What is adoption?  
A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.
- b. Our adoption is legal and relational
  - i. Legal - an essential, eternal change in our standing before God. God moves us from being children of the devil (1 John 3:10), sons of disobedience (Ephesians 5:6), and children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), to being true children of God, co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).
  - ii. Relational – an essential, eternal change in our relationship with God. We are no longer estranged from God, we are his children who can cry out to him, *Abba! Father!* (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6).
- c. Adoption and Discipline: God's loving discipline in your life is a mark of your status as his child (Hebrews 12:4-10).
- d. Adoption and Jesus: As adopted children we become co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17; Hebrews 2:17 – 3:1).
- e. Adoption and the Brotherhood of Believers: Our bonds of brotherhood in the faith run strong and deep.  

John Calvin – *We are all in common to call him Our Father. By this we are reminded how strong the feeling of brotherly love between us ought to be, since we are all alike, by the same mercy and free kindness, the children of such a Father.... Let the Christian, then, so regulate his prayers as to make them common, and embrace all who are his brethren in Christ.*

## 12. Assurance

- a. Assurance is a firm belief/trust in God's promises, knowing they are true and knowing they apply to your own life in such a way that your salvation is certain.
- b. 2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.
- c. Four possible positions regarding assurance.
- d. False assurance is possible (Matthew 7:21-23).
- e. The Lord intends for his children to normally live under the assurance of salvation (1 John 5:13).

## 13. Sanctification

- a. WSC Q. 35. What is sanctification?  
A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

- b. 1Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- c. Do we cooperate with God in sanctification?

#### 14. Perseverance

- a. Chapter XVII Of the Perseverance of the Saints
  - i. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.
  - ii. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.
  - iii. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.
- b. See John 10:28 and Philippians 1:6.

#### 15. Resurrection

- a. WSC Q. 37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?
  - A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united in Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection.
- b. WSC Q. 38. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?
  - A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

#### 16. Glorification

- a. Glorification is the final step in salvation, the completion of the whole process of redemption, it is that moment in which all of God's people will together be made glorious in our resurrected bodies, free from sin and its consequences, in the presence of the Lord.
- b. 1Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
- c. The hope of glorification gives purpose and direction to our lives today.