



20 Beliefs Every Christian Should Know

Lesson 9 – Who Is Christ

Key Verse: Colossians 1:15–16

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

Overview

Edward Perronet wrote the famous hymn “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” As we hail the name of Jesus, we must first know who He is. Jesus asked His disciples in Mark 8:29, “Who do you say that I am?” That is the ultimate question that every person in the world must answer. As we answer this question, it is not enough to know *what* Jesus did, but we must know *who* He is. The study of Jesus in theology is called Christology. In this lesson we will discover who Jesus is so that we might worship Him properly.

He Has Existed Eternally

1. John 17:5. When did Christ have glory with the Father? _____
2. Genesis 1:1. When did God create the heavens and the earth? _____
3. John 1:1–2. What does John say about Christ? _____
4. Micah 5:2. What does this verse tell us about Christ’s existence? _____

5. Colossians 1:17. What does this verse say about Jesus? _____
6. John 8:58. According to this verse, when did Jesus exist? _____

Christ in the Old Testament

An appearance of God in the Bible is referred to as a *theophany*. This is seen in Exodus 19:20. The appearance of the preincarnate Son of God is referred to as a *Christophany*. Below are passages that show an appearance of the preincarnate Son of God.

1. Genesis 16:7–13. Who spoke to Hagar? _____
 - a. How does Hagar identify the One who spoke to her? _____
2. Exodus 3:2–4. Who appeared to Moses in the bush? _____

- a. Who called to Moses from the bush? _____
 3. Judges 6:11–23. Who appears to Gideon? _____
 - a. Who looked at Gideon and spoke in verse 14? _____
 4. John 1:18. What does this verse say about God? _____
 - a. Therefore, who was seen in the Old Testament passages above? _____
 - b. What does the Son do for the Father? _____
 5. What do these passages reveal about the Father and the Son? _____
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James Borland defines these appearances as “those unsought, intermittent and temporary, visible and audible manifestations of God the Son in human form, by which God communicated something to certain conscious human beings on earth prior to the birth of Jesus Christ.”

—James Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament*, pg. 17.

He Is Fully Man

1. Hebrews 2:17. Who was Jesus made in the likeness of? _____
 2. Luke 1:31. Where did the conception of Jesus take place? _____
 3. Luke 2:52. What did Jesus increase (grow) in? _____
 4. John 4:6. What happened to Jesus after His journey? _____
 5. Matthew 4:2. What happened to Jesus after forty days of fasting? _____
 6. John 11:35. How did Jesus respond to the death of Lazarus? _____
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“Jesus was like us in every respect but one: he was without sin . . . [He] had to be fully human to serve as our perfectly obedience representative.”

—Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, pg. 68.

He Is Fully God

1. Colossians 2:9. What dwells in Christ’s bodily form? _____
 2. John 5:18. What did the Jewish leaders understand about Jesus? _____

 3. Hebrews 1:3. What does this verse say about Christ’s nature? _____

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4. Colossians 1:15. What does this verse reveal about Christ? _____

5. Philippians 2:5–7. How does Christ exist? _____
6. John 8:57–58. What title did Jesus claim for Himself? _____
7. Mathew 14:33. What did the disciples do? _____
8. Hebrews 1:6. What did the Father tell the angels to do? _____

“If Jesus wasn’t fully God, He could not have borne the full penalty for sin for the whole world. And if He didn’t bear the penalty for the whole world as a sinless man, there would be no valid payment for anyone’s sins, and nobody could be saved.”

—Wayne Grudem, *Christian Beliefs*, pg. 70.

Hypostatic Union

Charles Feinberg once explained, “The hypostatic union is that which was effected and brought into being by the incarnation.” The hypostatic union differs from theophanies in that there were multiple, temporary theophanies, while the existence of two natures in Christ since his incarnation is eternal. He is now and forever the God-man.

“In AD 451, the Council of Chalcedon agreed that Jesus was at the same time human and divine, involving a ‘hypostatic union’ of the two natures without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation.”

—“Hypostatic Union”, *Biblical Doctrines*, eds. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, pg. 264.

Application

1. In what ways does this lesson challenge your knowledge of Christ?
2. How does the humanity of Christ draw you to worship Christ?
3. How does the deity of Christ draw you to worship Christ?

1. “Emptied Himself” = some say Jesus emptied Himself of some aspect of His deity during the incarnation (this is false!). By definition it is impossible for the eternal, immutable God to cease to exist as God.
 - a. The better definition is:
 - i. (Gk.) *kenoō* = “to make void; to nullify; to make of no effect”
 - ii. The KJV says, “He made himself of no reputation.” This is a good translation of *kenoō* as Christ did not “empty” himself of something but “he nullified *Himself*”
 - iii. Christ made himself of no reputation precisely by taking on a human nature. He emptied himself not by pouring out portions of his deity but by adding to himself full and true humanity. His was an emptying by addition, not by subtraction.

2. “He humbled Himself” = while the Son of God fully possessed his divine nature, attributes, and prerogatives, he did not fully express them. They were veiled. At times he did express them, such as when he read people’s minds (Matt. 9:4) and worked divine miracles (e.g., Luke 5:3–10). But the Master willingly submitted himself to the life of a slave.
 - a. He surrendered the preincarnate glories from which he came. He left the worship of saints and angels to be despised and rejected by men (Isa. 53:3), submitting himself to misunderstanding, denials, unbelief, false accusations, and every sort of reviling and persecution.

 - b. As God the Son, he had every right to exercise his divine prerogatives at will. Yet as the suffering servant of Yahweh, he surrendered himself to the will of the Father in everything (John 5:19, 30). Thus, while he knew Nathanael without having met him (John 1:47) and indeed knew all men (John 2:25), in the humility of his incarnation he did not know the hour of his return (Matt. 24:36). His internal divine glory was still present, though temporarily veiled by him being in the form of a servant.

 - c. Although he was truly human, he also remained fully divine.