

Fathom Academy: Christian Theology

WEEK 3: CHRISTOLOGY PT. 1

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Week 3: The Person of Jesus Christ in the New Testament [*Christology I*]

Introduction | “The *who* question”

- **“But *who* do you say that I am?”
(Matt. 16:13–17)**
- **“[The question is] Not, ‘How are you possible?’—that is the godless question, the serpent’s question—but ‘Who are you?’” [Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Wer war und Wer ist Jesus Christus?*]**

Introduction | The Silence of the Christ

“Jesus’ supreme, eloquent silence before his judges is, in a sense, the moment of supreme revelation in the Gospels. It is where he becomes visibly the mysterious reality that nobody knows how to talk about. ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?’ asks the High Priest, and Jesus says ‘I you want.’ ‘Are you the king of the Jews?’ asks Pilate, and Jesus says, ‘As you say.’ And this terrible refusal to answer the questions tells both Caiaphas and Pilate that what is happening in Jesus is something immeasurably out of the ordinary categories and habits by which people organize the world. . . . [In that moment] *nobody knew what to call him*, because there were no words for God made human.”

Rowan Williams, *Being Human*

Humanity of Christ | Biological Dimensions

Thesis #1: Jesus Christ was genuinely human in every dimension, physical and psychological

- **Bodily/Biological Dimensions:**
- **Jesus was born of a human mother (Luke 2:1–7)**
- **Jesus grew, developed, and learned (Luke 2:41–52)**
- **Jesus experienced the limitations and constraints of finitude**
 - **Hunger (Matthew 4)**
 - **Thirst (John 4)**
 - **Weariness and Fatigue (John 4; Mark 4)**
- **Jesus suffered and died a mortal death (John 19:31–37)**

Humanity of Christ | Psychological Dimensions

Psychological/Emotional Dimensions:

- **Jesus experienced the full range of human emotions**
 - **Love (John 13:1, 23)**
 - **Anger (John 2:13–17)**
 - **Indignation (Mark 10:14)**
 - **Grief (John 11:35; Matthew 23:37–39)**
 - **Distress (Matthew 26:36–44)**
 - **“He felt it in his guts” (Matthew 9:36)**



“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest and we have seen it . . .” [I John 1:1–2a]

Humanity of Christ | The Significance of the Incarnation

“That which he has not assumed, he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves must be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole. Let them not then begrudge us our complete salvation, or clothe the savior only with bones and nerves and the portraiture of humanity.”

Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle 101*

Deity of Christ | Overview

Thesis #2: Jesus Christ is fully divine, sharing the same divine essence as the Father and the Spirit

- **The Son’s divine self-understanding**
- **The worship and devotion of the earliest Christians**

Deity of Christ | Claim to Divine Prerogatives

- **Authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5–12)**
- **To judge the peoples of the earth (Matthew 25:31–46)**
- **Worthiness to accept devotion and worship (John 20:28; Matt. 16:13–20)**
- **Lordship over nature/creation (Matthew 8:23–27)**

- **Mastery over death and power to raise up life from death (John 11)**

Deity of Christ | Authority over Divine Institutions

- **“Lord over the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27–28)**
- **Lord over the Law (Matthew 5:21–28)**

Deity of Christ | Identical Relationship to the Father

- **“I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)**
- **“... Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” (John 14:9–10)**
- **“And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” (John 17:5)**
- **“Truly, truly, I say to you: before Abraham was, I am [ἐγὼ εἰμί].” (John 8:58)**

Deity of Christ | Johannine Christology

The *Logos* made flesh (John 1:1–18)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [πρὸς τὸν θεόν], and the Word was God [θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος]. He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1–2)

“And the Word became flesh [σὰρξ] and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known [ἐξηγήσομαι].” (John 1:18)

Deity of Christ | Pauline Christology

The image and fullness of God (Colossians 1:15–20)

“He is the image [εἰκὼν] of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, and in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness [πλήρωμα] of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

Excursus | Kenosis [Philippians 2:1–11]

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God [μορφῇ θεοῦ], did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied [ἐκένωσεν] himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Deity of Christ | Christology in Hebrews

The exact imprint of the divine nature (Hebrews 1:1–4)

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance [ἀπαύγασμα] of the glory of God and the exact imprint [χαρακτήρ] of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”