

Arbor Foundations

6 – Who is Christ?

Oct 21, 2018

Suggested Reading

1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, Chapter 8: Of Christ The Mediator

<https://reformedbaptistnetwork.com/1689lbcf/lbcfch8/>

Key Ideas / Biblical Basis

Christ as Content of Scripture

The OT reveals the Messiah who is to come; the NT identifies that Messiah as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary.

1- Common misconceptions

- a. This summer, Andy Stanley rightly received some criticism for stating that we “need to unhitch our theology from the Old Testament.” For him, the resurrection of Christ is enough for the Christian faith, and eyewitnesses say that the resurrection occurred. Though he stated that these words were taken out of context, he would later say the same thing in a published article. Note two things about his approach:
 - i. He presents the OT as if it is irrelevant to understanding the events of Jesus’ life
 - ii. He presents historical evidence, not the Bible as the center of understanding Jesus’ work, and not the text of either testament.
- b. Evangelicals such as us will probably not stray into this danger, but this Wednesday night, I was speaking to a recent graduate of Cedarville University who now attends Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In one of his classes, his professor details that when Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15, he is importing into the text of Hosea a messianic meaning that the prophet never intended.

Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”

Matthew 2:15 “and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Again note two difficulties:

- i. The OT is not messianic until the NT explains it as such.

- i. The OT cannot be understood as messianic until the messianic searchlight of the NT is applied to it.

2- Importance of the Concern

- a. Authority of Scriptures: Walt Kaiser has noted that “if it [the messianic reading of the OT in the NT] is not in the OT text, who cares how ingenious later writers are in their ability to reload the OT text with truths that it never claimed or revealed in the first place? The issue is more than hermeneutics; it is the authority and content of the revelation itself.”
- b. Relevance of the OT. If we have to already have an understanding of the Messiah in order to understand the messianism of the OT, then why study it at all? It would provide no benefit to us over against the NT. But Paul states in II Timothy 3:14-17, that all Scripture (and at that point, largely the OT) is profitable and able to make one wise unto salvation.

II Timothy 3:14-17 “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom[a] you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

- c. Understanding of the NT itself. In all of our efforts to see the NT as the *messianic searchlight* for understanding the OT, we are missing one crucial point. It is impossible to understand the messianic significance of the NT without the *messianic searchlight* that the OT provides. Indeed, the Gospel authors depict individuals, such as Simeon, Anna, Nathaniel, identifying from the Hebrew Bible that the longed-for Messiah was Jesus.

John 1:45 “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’”

Luke 24:13-27 – the Road to Emmaus. Jesus could have chosen to identify himself as resurrected in any way, but instead he gives a Sunday School class explaining the truths of the Messiah from the Hebrew Bible.

3- A Model for Understanding the Messianic Center of the Bible

- a. The biblical basis: The NT claims that all of Scripture points to Christ. Luke 24:25-27 “And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Luke 24:44 “Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

John 5:39-40, 45-47 “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.... Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

II Timothy 3:14-17 quoted above indicates that the sacred writings which Timothy knew from childhood are able to make him wise unto salvation through Christ Jesus.

I Peter 1:10-12 “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time[a] the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

- a. OT as Foundation: Later OT and NT authors cite earlier authors not to reinterpret their work, but to clarify its messianic character. Example: Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1
- i. Hosea has already placed his prophecy in an end-times framework in Hosea 3:4-5, where an ideal David reigns and the people seek the Lord.

Hosea 3:4-5 “For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in *the latter days*.”
 - ii. Hosea 11:1 uses Exodus imagery to explain this end-times reality, in a manner akin to Numbers 24 and the oracles of Balaam. Those also in an end-times context (Num 24:14) describes a ruler higher than Gog whom “God brought forth out of Egypt” (Num 24:8).

Numbers 24:14 “And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in *the latter days*.”

Numbers 24:8 “God brings him out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his

- adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows.”
- ii. Ergo, as John Sailhamer writes, “Matthew’s application of the Hosea passage to Jesus suggests he has properly read both the Pentateuch and its commentary in Hosea” (17).
 - b. In sum, from the Pentateuch in such promises of Genesis 3:15 or the first new covenant passage in Deuteronomy 30, in which circumcision of the heart is mentioned, the OT is always pointing beyond the Mosaic covenant to the realization of the Abrahamic Covenant in the inauguration of the New Covenant by the Messiah.
 - c. In this way, the OT reveals the character of the Messiah; the NT then takes this messianic portrait and uses it to identify the Messiah to be Jesus of Nazareth.

The Identity and Person of Christ

Remaining what he was, he became what he was not.

In more detail, the person of the Divine Son without divesting himself of his divine nature added to himself a human nature. The natures are distinct and separate, but inseparable and united in the one person of the Divine Son.

1- Big ideas/Biblical Basis

- a. Christ is fully God.
 - i. Divine attributes – Christ is described as the perfect sum of all of the attributes of deity
Colossians 2:9-10 “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”
1. Moral attributes
 - a. Love (Rom. 8:35-39, Gal. 2:20, Eph. 3:17-19; 5:2, 25)
 - b. Righteousness (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; James 5:6)
 - c. Holiness (Acts 3:14; 4:27, 30; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; I Pet 2:22)
 - d. Wrath (Rev. 6:16)
 - e. God of Truth (of Yahweh, Ps. 31:5, Isa. 65:16; of Jesus, John 1:14, 14:6)
 - f. Wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:3)
 - g. Authority of God (Eph. 1:22, Col. 2:10)
2. Incommunicable attributes
 - a. Eternity (John 1:1, 12:41; I Cor. 10:4, Heb 1:2)
 - b. Glory (John 17:5)
 - c. Omnipotence (Matt. 8:26-27; I Cor. 1:18, 23-25; Eph. 1:19-20; Phil. 3:21; Col. 2:10)

- a. Omnipresence (Matt 18:20; 28:20; Eph. 4:10)
 - b. Immutability (II Cor 1:20; Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8; James 1:17)
 - c. Omniscience (Mark 2:8; John 1:48; 2:25, 6:64; 21:17; Acts 1:24; I Cor. 4:5; Col. 2:3, 9; Rev. 2:23)
- i. Divine rule – The Bible ascribes to Christ a divine rule that is only to be given to Yahweh
 1. The OT ascribes to Yahweh alone divine rule and reign over all creation (Ps. 97:9)
 2. The Bible ascribes this same divine rule and reign to Christ (Psalm 110; Rom. 14:9; I Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 2:10; 3:21; Heb. 1:2; 2:8; I Pet. 3:22; Rev. 1:5).
 - ii. Divine worship – The NT outlines worship of Jesus which the OT understands to be proper of Yahweh alone
 1. God alone should be worshipped (Ex. 20:1-7; Deut 6:4; Acts 14:14-15; Rev. 19:10)
 2. Christ is presented as worthy of divine worship (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 14:33; 21:15-16; 28:9, 17; John 20:28; Eph. 5:19; Phil 2:9-11; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-12).
 3. Christ is presented as a proper recipient of prayer (Acts 1:24-25; 7:59-60; 9:10, 13; 22:17-19; I Cor. 1:2; 16:22; II Cor. 12:8; Rev. 22:20)
 - iii. Divine works – The NT present Christ as doing works which only Yahweh does
 1. Christ is the agent of Creation and the providential Lord of heaven and earth (John 1:3; Rom. 1:18-23; 4:17; 11:36; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3; 2:10; 11:3; cf. Gen. 1; Ps. 102:25; 104:24, 27, 30).
 2. Christ is the inaugurator of the kingdom of God and the age to come, a kingdom which only very God can inaugurate.
 3. Christ dispenses the eschatological spirit (promised to be given by God, Joel 2:28-29, Ez. 36:25-27; cf. John 3:1-10. Given in fact by Christ, Matt. 3:11, 13-17; John 14-16; Acts 2; Acts 2:32-33; Romans 7-8; I Corinthians 2; 3:16-17; II Cor. 3; Gal 3:14; 4:6; 4:21-6:10; Eph. 1:13-20; 2:18-22; 3:14-19; 4:1-16).
 4. Christ raises the dead (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44; cf. Deut. 1:17; I Sam. 2:6; Jer. 25:31; Rom. 14:10) and executes final judgment (John 5:21-23, 28-29; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 14:10 with II Cor. 5:10).
 5. Jesus forgives sins as God and Savior (Mark 2:7, 10; Acts 5:31; Eph. 1:5-7; Col. 3:13; Titus 2:13; II Pet 1:1).

- iv. Divine titles
 - 1. Lord (*kurios*)
 - a. Greek word *kurios* is the linguistic substitute for Yahweh nearly 7,000 times in the Septuagint (it will not always bear this significance in the Greek New Testament).
 - b. In places like John 20:28, Rom. 10:12-13, Phil. 2:9-11, I Cor. 16:22, it is likely from the overall context of these verses that the biblical authors are designating Jesus with the divine name.
 - 2. God (*Theos*) – Isa. 9:6; John 1:1-3, 14, 18; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; II Peter 1:1; Heb. 1:8
 - 3. The Son of Man
 - a. Used in the Gospels 84 times, all from the mouth of Jesus as a self-referent; one other use in NT in Acts 7:56 by Stephen in reference to Jesus.
 - b. Background is Daniel 7:13-14; see citation in Matt 26:64.
 - 4. John's "I Am" statements
 - a. The divine name Yahweh from Ex. 3:14; indicates the presence of God with his people
 - b. A feature of John's Gospel is to have Jesus state these words (with or without a complement/predicate) – see also Heb. 11:6
 - i. 4:26 – The one who speaks unto you, even I am he.
 - ii. 6:20 – I am; do not fear
 - iii. 6:35, 48, 51 – I am the bread of life
 - iv. 6:41 – I am the bread which came down from heaven
 - v. 8:12 – I am the light of the world
 - vi. 8:24 – for whoever does not believe that I am will die in their sins
 - vii. 8:28 – when the Son of Man is lifted up, then you will know that I am
 - viii. 8:58 – Before Abraham was, I am (v. 59 the leaders wish to stone him for his words)
 - ix. 10:7, 9 – I am the door of the sheep
 - x. 10:11, 14 – I am the good shepherd
 - xi. 11:25 – I am the resurrection and the life
 - xii. 13:19 – that you may believe that I am
 - xiii. 14:6 – I am the way, the truth, and the life
 - xiv. 15:1, 5 I am the true vine
 - xv. 18:5-8 (in response to the search for

Jesus) I am (the ones looking to arrest
him immediately fall down backward)

- a. Christ is fully human, yet without sin.
 - i. Christ had a human body which grew and developed like anyone else's.
 1. Jesus refers to his body parts (Matt. 26:12, 26-28; Mark 14:8, 24; Luke 7:44-46; 22:20; 24:39; John 6:53-56).
 2. Though unique in his conception, Christ was born and developed like any other child (Matt. 2:11, 14, 16, 19-23; Luke 2:16, 39, 40, 42-42; 3:23) and then suffered and died in the body (Matt. 27:32-61; Mark 15:21-47; Luke 23:26-56; John 19:28-42).
 3. Jesus is described as the seed of the woman, Abraham, and David in the flesh (Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4; Heb 7:14).
 4. The epistles describe Jesus as a man (Rom. 5:14-16; I Tim. 2:5; Heb 2:14, 17).
 - ii. Christ has a mind, will, and soul and experienced life like all other human beings.
 1. Biblical authors present Jesus with a full range of human emotions: pity/compassion (Matt. 9:36; Mark 1:41; 8:2; Luke 7:36-50; John 11:5; 13:34; 15:9-13), distress (Mark 7:34; 8:12; Luke 22:15, 44), angry (Mark 3:5; John 11:33, 38), joy (Luke 10:21; John 15:11), surprise (Matt. 8:10; Mark 6:6), disappointment (Mark 8:17; 9:19), hunger and thirst (Matt. 4:1-2; Mark 11:12; John 19:28), fatigue and weariness (Matt. 8:23-24; John 4:5-6), and temptation (Luke 4:2, 13; 22:28).
 2. Jesus is able to hold these emotions because he has a human soul (Matt. 27:50; Luke 23:46; John 12:27; 13:21).
 3. He also has a human mind. Observe how the biblical authors both indicate him increasing in knowledge and his ignorance of certain things (Matt. 24:36; Luke 2:52; John 5:19, 30; 7:16; 12:49, 50).
 4. Christ also has a human will. The biblical authors present Jesus as subjecting his will to the Father's will, but Christ's *divine* will is the same as the Father's will, so it must be that Christ has a human will to bring in subjection to his own divine will.
- b. Why it matters.
 - i. Only God can save (Jonah 2:9; Ps. 62:2, 6, 7. John 3:15-16; 14:1; Acts 3:16; 4:12; 10:43; 16:31; Rom. 10:12-13; I Cor. 1:2).
 - ii. Full humanity was necessary for the divine Son to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10-13; Gregory of Nazianzus "that which is not assumed is not healed").

2- Common Misconceptions in History and Today

a. Arianism

- i. Definition: Believed by the theologian Arius, Arianism teaches that Jesus was the first creation, and not God himself.
- ii. Soteriological problem: Under this system, salvation would need be accomplished by a mere man, which is impossible (see above).
- iii. Modern examples: Jehovah’s witnesses hold to a similar belief today. Also, Ligonier’s “The State of Theology Survey” in 2018 reveals that 78% of evangelicals agree with the statement “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.”
- iv. Early church response: The Council of Nicaea (325) and the Nicene Creed
 1. Affirms deity of the Son by describing him as being of the same substance of the Father and calling him the “true God”;
 2. Affirms that the Son is not a creature, but was eternally begotten of the Father, begotten, not made;
 3. Places the discussion of the nature and identity of Jesus firmly within soteriological discussions.

b. Apollinarianism

- i. Definition: Deriving its name from Apollinarius, Apollinarianism affirms the deity of Christ, but states that the Son merely took on a human body, but not a human soul.
- ii. Soteriological problem: For Christ to serve as our representative head, he must fully assume a full human nature.
- iii. Early church response: Council of Constantinople (381)
 1. With a careful distinction between nature and person, the church affirmed two natures in Christ.
 2. Affirms that Christ assumed a complete humanity – body, soul, mind, and not a body alone.
 3. Affirms that the unified active subject (person) of the two natures is the person of the Divine Son.

c. Nestorianism

- i. Definition: Akin to Adoptionism, Nestorianism states that a human person and a divine person are united at the time of the incarnation. *Theotokos* vs. *Christotokos*.
- ii. Textual problem: Scripture does not speak of two personal subjects united in the text, but one person acting through two natures.
- iii. Soteriological problem: Our condemnation before God is such that we need God himself to save, and not a composite union between God and man.
- iv. Early church response: Council of Ephesus (431)

d. Eutychianism/Monophysitism

- v. Definition: Identified with Eutyches, monophysitism (mono = one; physis = nature) believes that Christ's human nature was absorbed into his divine nature, such that a unique third type of nature (mostly divine) is produced (*tertium quid*).
- vi. Soteriological problem: If the natures are combined in any way, Christ cannot be either fully God or fully man. He might possibly be neither.
- vii. Modern examples: "Kenotic" (*kenoo*= empty) Christology. Argues that Christ had to empty himself of divine attributes to become man, in this way, conflating the natures together. This rhetoric permeates evangelical churches, including our own.
- viii. Early church response: The Council of Chalcedon (451)
 - 1. Affirms that Christ was fully God and fully man;
 - 2. Affirms that the person of the incarnation is God the eternal Son;
 - 3. Affirms that the human nature of Christ does not possess a second person;
 - 4. Affirms that the natures of Christ do not form a union together, but rather, the properties of each nature are retained;
 - 5. Affirms that Christ's full humanity entails that he possess a human soul and psychology.
- ix. Some implications:
 - 1. One nature does some things that the other nature does not do.
 - a. For example, in the manger, while the Divine Son through his human nature is crying helplessly, he is through his divine nature sustaining that very manger.
 - b. This explains the biblical idiom that Christ is both omniscient (via his divine nature) and does not know things (via his human nature).
 - 2. Anything that either nature does is done by the person of Christ.
 - 3. Titles that refer to one nature may be appropriately used to describe actions the Son performs through the other nature (e.g. "They have crucified the Lord of glory" I Cor. 2:8).

Chalcedonian Definition: "In agreement, therefore, with the holy Fathers, we all unanimously teach that we should confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, the same of a rational soul and body; consubstantial with the Father in the Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in Manhood; like us in all things except sin; begotten from the Father before the ages as regards his Godhead, and in the last days, the same, because of us and because of our salvation, begotten from the Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos*, as

regards his Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, made known in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the differences of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved, and coalescing in one *prosopon* and one *hupostasis* - not parted or divided into two prosopa, but one and the same Son, only begotten, Divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets of old have taught us about Him and the Creed of our Fathers has handed down."

3- The Chalcedonian Box

- a. Side A – Jesus is fully divine
- b. Side B – Jesus is fully human
- c. Side C – Jesus is one person
- d. Side D – Jesus has two unconfused natures

Life of Christ

- 1- Immaculate/Virgin Conception. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, partaking of her human nature. The virgin conception does not account for how Christ could be sinless of itself, but thinking of the reverse, would not a sinless birth require a miraculous birth? In essence, the biblical authors tend to present the virgin conception as the way in which Jesus is born of Adam, but not in Adam.

Isa. 7:14-15; Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-21

- 2- Sinlessness. Jesus was fully human, but this does not necessitate that he sinned or had a sinful nature. Indeed, the biblical authors portray him as a second Adam who was fully human without sin. Thus redeemed humanity will be fully human ourselves without sin.

Isaiah 53; Psalm 34; Matt. 3:15; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:16-18; 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; I Peter 3:19-22; I John 2:1; 3:5

- 3- Death. Jesus' death was to take the punishment for our sins, bearing the wrath of God, and conquering sin, death, and the devil forever. It is primarily one of a substitute for his people once and for all.

Isa. 53:6, 10; I Cor. 15:3-4; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 1:18-19; 3:19-22; Heb. 9:25-28; Rev. 12:10-11;

- 4- Resurrection. After Jesus died, he was resurrected on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures. This resurrection was a bodily resurrection and a first fruits for the resurrection of God's people. Paul also calls us it the grounds of our justification while Peter describes the resurrection as the basis for our regeneration.

Matt. 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:1-21:25; Acts 10:41; Rom. 4:25; 6:4, 11; I Cor. 6:14; 15; II Cor. 4:14; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1-4; I Pet. 1:3-5

- 5- Ascension. After his resurrection, Jesus ascended into his heaven in bodily form where he sits at the right hand of God serving as the prophet, priest, and king of his people. At the end of the age, he will return in the same manner as he went up from here.

Three-fold Office of Christ

1- Overview

- a. The term Christ is the transliteration of the Greek translation of the word Messiah. Both words refer to an “anointed one.”
- b. The biblical idiom uses this term most for the king, but Calvin and those following him have noted that there were three OT offices which were anointed and the OT expects that the Messiah would occupy all three offices.
- c. Both testaments speak of Christ as anointed of the Spirit rather than by oil (e.g. Isa 11:2, 61:1), which might explain the usage of anointing in I John 2:20.

2- Prophet

- a. OT office – *The prophet spoke God’s words to the people.*
- b. Messianic expectation
Deut 18; 34; Isa. 9:6; 28:29; 32:19; 61:1-2; Joel 2:28.
- c. Messianic identification – *Christ reveals God to us and speaks his word.*
His work in turn stands as the definitive revelation from God and the ultimate goal of all OT prophecy.
John 4:19; 6:14; 9:17; Acts 3:22-24; I Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3; Heb. 1:1-2
- d. Why it matters today
 - i. Christ should be at the center of what we think about when it comes to God.
 - ii. Christ as the definitive prophet and the definitive revelation of God explains the Father to us. We know Christ through the Scriptures. So Scripture is the way to know God.

3- Priest

- a. OT office – *The Priest offered sacrifices, prayers, and praises to God on behalf of the people*
- b. Messianic expectation
II Sam. 7; Is. 6; Zech 3; 6:9-14; Ps. 110; Dan. 9:24; I Chr. 17
- c. Messianic identification – *Christ offers himself as a sacrifice on our behalf and ever prays for us.*
John 17; Rom. 8:34; I Tim. 2:5; Hebrews; Heb. 3:1; 5:6; 7:15, 25; 9:22; 10:4
- d. Why it matters today
 - i. No need to make sacrifices for our sins. Christ has paid the penalty in full and we must take refuge in him alone, rather than try to remedy our sin on our own.
 - ii. He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and grants us access to the throne room of grace in time of need.
 - iii. He prays for us continually. What encouragement to know that

- 4- King
- a. OT office – *The king ruled over the people as God’s representative*
 - b. Messianic expectation
Gen. 49; Num. 24; II Sam 7; Isa. 9:6-7; 11; 55:4; Ps. 2; 89:35-37; 110; Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14; I Chr. 17
 - c. Messianic identification – *Christ rules over the church and the universe as well, but this kingdom is not of this world.*
Matt. 2:2; 3; 4; 21:15; 28:18; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 1:32-33; 17; 20-21; 19:38; John 1:49; 3:1-15; 18:36; Acts 7:56; 17:7; Rom. 14:7; Eph. 1:19-21; 2:6; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3; 12:1-2; I Pet 3:22; Rev. 19:11-16; 20:7
 - d. Why it matters today
 - i. It fixes our gaze on the right treasure – Christ and his eternal kingdom, rather than the luxuries of the day. This provides a motivation for enduring suffering.
John Calvin “For this reason we ought to know that the happiness promised us in Christ does not consist in outward advantages – such as leading a joyous and peaceful life, having rich possessions, being safe from all harm, and abounding with delights such as the flesh commonly longs after. No, our happiness belongs to the heavenly life! In the world the prosperity and well-being of a people depend partly on strong defenses that pretext them from outside attacks. In like manner, Christ enriches his people with all things necessary for the eternal salvation of souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unconquerable against all the assaults of spiritual enemies.”
 - ii. We have assurance that in the midst of our crazy lives, our king will never abandon us, but will supply all that we need for life and godliness.
 - iii. If the kingdom is spiritual and not earthly, there is in some sense a need to desert the world in order to partake of it.

So What?

Understanding the person of Christ is the rubric given for true Christianity (I John 4:2-3)

Four of the first ecumenical councils were centered around the doctrine of Christ as the line between orthodoxy and heresy is primarily centered around the doctrine of Christ.

The councils also reveal that significant heresy occurs at the slightest misstep in this area. So we should tread carefully with our language and nuance.

The person of Christ our Savior and the means he took to save us is a complex enough subject such that this 13-page handout is almost an inadequate

For Further Study

Calvin, John. *Institutes*. (Book II, Chapter 15)

<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.iv.xvi.html>

Short summary:

https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/threefold_sproul.html

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology*. (Chapters 26-29)

Rydellnik, Michael. *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?*

Sailhamer, John. "The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible" *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society*, March 2001.

<http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/38692/383126/1266497733837/The+Messiah+and+the+Hebrew+Bible.pdf?token=N3FjAUKyXf3aoLyvY4sOda9Rlk0%3D>

Wellum, Stephen. *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*.

Wellum, Stephen. *Christ Alone – The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior: What the Reformers Taught... and Why it Still Matters*.