

Introduction to Christology

I. What is Christology?

A. Christ: Anointed One – the one God promised to raise up to deliver his people.

B. Ology: the study of.

1. Systematic theology is when we go to the Bible with questions and systematically answer them by pulling together and studying various passages on the topic.
2. Christology is going to the Bible to answer
 - a. Who is the Christ – his identity
 - b. What did Christ do - his work

C. Key Verse on Christology: Gal. 4:4-5 (see also Heb 1, Phil. 2)

D. A related, but distinct, area of study is Theology Proper (study of God).

1. **Trinity** – There is one God, and he eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. In Christology, we are studying Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God (2nd person of the Trinity) become a man.

II. The Person of Christ

A. Four statements must be understood and affirmed in order to attain a complete biblical picture of the person of Jesus Christ:¹

1. Jesus Christ is fully and completely *divine*.
2. Jesus Christ is fully and completely *human*.
3. The divine and human natures of Christ are *distinct*.
4. The divine and human natures of Christ are completely *united* in one person.

B. Hypostatic Union

1. Hypostatic from the Greek word meaning person or being. “The union of Christ’s human and divine natures in one being.”²
2. Some passages showing the distinction and unity of Christ’s two natures in one person
 - a. Isaiah. 9:6
 - b. Luke 2:11
 - c. Gal. 4:4
 - d. Matt. 8:24-27
3. The hypostatic union means that certain things Jesus does may flow from his human or divine nature, but all is done by the one person – Christ Jesus.
 - a. Can God bleed and die? No, but ...
 - (i) Acts 20:28 says “the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”
 - (ii) And 1 Cor. 2:8 says that the “Lord of glory” was crucified.
 - (iii) This is only possible because he was truly human...
 - (iv) But since Jesus Christ is one person, we can rightly speak of God, specifically Jesus Christ, dying and shedding his blood.

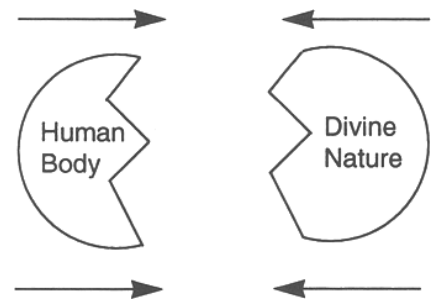
¹ Taken from the ESV study Bible article on Systematic Theology.

² Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 558.

C. Some Heresies to avoid.³

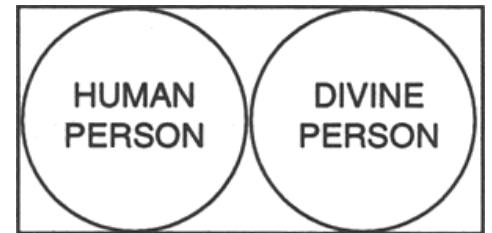
1. Apollinarianism – “God in a bod”

- Human body, but not human soul, mind, etc.
- Deity in a shell of a human body.
- We need not just our body redeemed but our inner man too. What is not assumed by the Son of God, cannot be redeemed.



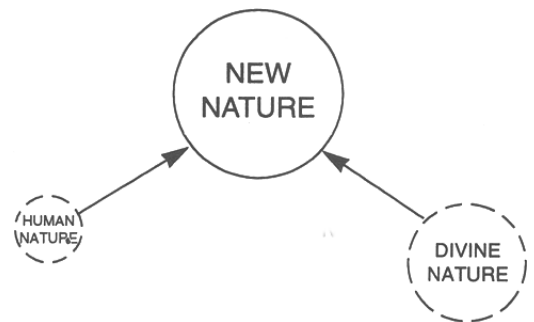
2. Nestorianism – “Split personalities”

- The notion that Jesus was two distinct persons
- But, he says things like “I came to do the will of the Father;” not “we came to do the will of the Father”
- He does refer to himself and the Father as “we” (see John 14:23).
- He’s not two different people in one body, He is one person with two natures.



3. Monophysitism – “Mixing bowl”

- Argued there is one nature in the one person... the nature is a mix of human and divine natures.
- Like having a cup of water and putting a drop of ink in it. It isn’t water or pure ink...it is a mix.
- But if he isn’t fully man, and not fully God, we don’t have salvation.



D. A Defense of the Truth: Chalcedonian Creed

Following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in divinity and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man . . . of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; . . . recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence [*hypostasis*], not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ.⁴

III. Why studying Christology is valuable

- “The Christ” is central to God’s entire plan of salvation** (Gen. 3, the promised seed through OT history, Is. 7:14, Luke 2:11, Matt 16:13-17, Rev. 11:15)
- Knowing and trusting Christ is the only way to know God and be saved (Jn. 14:6, 17:3)**
- To grow in our love and relationship with Christ (1 Pet. 1:8)**

³ Illustrations taken from Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology.

⁴ Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 376-77.