



There is no greater pursuit than the pursuit of Christ.
For in Christ Jesus, God has been made known to all people.

John 14:8-10 — *Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? 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? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.*

To know Christ — is to know the Father. Therefore, if Christ is not known, then God the Father is not known. Christ must be known truly or rightly as revealed in the Scriptures for to get Christ wrong is to not know the Father.

It would make sense then that throughout the history of the Church, the theological attacks against Christ have been profuse. Over 60% of the Nicene Creed is about Christ because even by that point in Church History, every possible Christological heresy had been developed:

Docetism: Jesus was fully God, but only appeared to be human. His body was an illusion (heresy: denied the true humanity of Christ).

Ebionitism: Jesus was fully man, not full God. Jesus was a Jewish prophet who perfectly kept God’s law and was adopted by God at his baptism (heresy: Jesus is not co-eternal with the Father and not fully divine).

Modalism: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not distinct persons but rather “modes” of one God (heresy: Jesus is not the 2nd person of the Trinity).

Arianism: Jesus (God the Son) is not eternal but rather He is a created being who is subordinate to the Father (heresy: there was a time when Christ did not exist).

Paul warned Timothy *guard the good deposit entrusted to you (1 Timothy 6:20)*. This guarding included:

2 Timothy 1:13–14 — *Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.*

There is indeed a real devil and his attacks are not only moral but theological. And since it is vital to get Jesus right to know the Father, we should expect these devilish attacks to come against the doctrine of God the Son. Paul gives a prophetic warning about these devilish doctrines:

1 Timothy 4:1 — *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.*



How many false religions today (even pseudo-christian religions) get Christ wrong? Even the ones who affirm a belief in Jesus, they define Jesus differently than the historic, orthodox, Biblical view of Christ (i.e. fully God, fully man, co-equal with the Father, and eternal).

For the Christian gospel to be the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 1:16), it is imperative that Christ Jesus be biblically defined! For if Jesus is defined on human terms or by human logic, then He is not the Jesus of the Bible and that Jesus cannot save.

TABLE DISCUSSION:

#1: How do pseudo-christian religions get Jesus wrong?

#2: How do Christian churches get Jesus wrong (by an over-emphasis or under-emphasis)?

GOD THE SON We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the image of the Father, who as the Word of God reveals and explains God. We believe at the right time in God's plan, God sent His Son to be born of a virgin and take on human flesh. We believe that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and raised on the third day, appeared to His disciples, and ascended into heaven. Now at the right hand of God, He is the head of the Church, our Advocate and Mediator, Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Pioneer and Perfecter of faith, and the only way to the Father. We believe that Jesus will return in glory to rescue His people, judge the world, and consummate His everlasting kingdom.

TRUTH: We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God the image of the Father, who as the Word of God reveals and explains God.

A. Eternal Son of God & the Image of the Father

- i. Eternal Son of God: Jesus is not a created being but rather Jesus is the eternal Son.

John 1:1 — *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:18 — *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

- ii. Image of the Father: Jesus is the true Adam, the perfect image of God, the One who finally and fully revealed God to humanity.

Colossians 1:15-19 — *in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of 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, that in everything he might be preeminent.

EXPLANATION: *the firstborn of all creation* — Jesus being the firstborn of all creation does not mean that Jesus was a created being or that Jesus came into existence when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. It does mean that Jesus holds the place of preeminence among all created beings.

EXPLANATION: *the image of the invisible God* — Jesus being *the image of the invisible God* can only mean one thing — Jesus is God. For the 2nd Commandment is clear in **Exodus 20:4**:

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

Therefore, Jesus is either violating the 2nd Commandment or Jesus is God and is revealing God to all humanity by bearing God's image or likeness.

TABLE DISCUSSION: How is Jesus being *the image of God* (**Colossians 1:15**) important in light of **Exodus 20:4**? What are the implications to Jesus either breaking Exodus 20:4 or fulfilling Exodus 20:4?

B. The Word of God Reveals and Explains God

i. The Word of God Reveals God

John 1:1 — *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

EXPLANATION: Jesus did not just reveal God, but Jesus is the Divine Word of God (i.e. the logos). He is not just a revelation from God, He is the revelation of God. This Divine Word is eternal *both with God and was God.*

ii. The Word of God Explains God

Hebrews 1:1-3 — *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 of the glory of God and the exact imprint 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.

EXPLANATION: *But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son* — Hebrews is not discrediting the revelation of God provided in the Old Testament. The book of Hebrews is consistently doing a compare & contrast — *this then that*. In other words — if the Old Testament was revelation from God, how much better is the revelation of God in the Son (who is the radiance of the glory of God & the exact imprint of His nature)!

EXPLANATION: *Through whom also He created the world* — This text is another primary text on Jesus Christ, God the Son, as the Creator. Jesus is not somehow indirectly connected to creation, but rather He is stated as the one with the right and privilege of acting as Creator.

EXPLANATION: *Exact imprint of his nature* — the testimony of Scripture is clear, Jesus is not a figment or likeness to God. Jesus is not similar to God. Jesus is exactly like God for Jesus bears the *exact imprint* of God's very nature.

TRUTH: We believe at the right time in God's plan, God sent His Son to be born of a virgin and take on human flesh.

- A. We believe at the Right Time in God's Plan: the promise of a Messiah (i.e. an anointed one) is a glorious theme that is unpacked throughout the entire Old Testament. From the inception of God's promise-plan in Genesis 3:15 to the explicit Son of Man promise of Daniel 7:13-14. The preparation for *the snake crusher* included the forming of a people, the giving of the Law, the establishment of substitutionary atonement, the role of prophets — priests — kings, the blessing for keeping God's Law, the punishment for breaking God's Law, and the promise of a future Deliverer.

Isaiah 7:14 — *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Matthew 1:23-25 — *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

Galatians 4:4 — *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.*



- B. We believe that...God Sent His Son to be Born of a Virgin and Took on Human Flesh:** the God-man had been promised throughout the Old Testament, but this promise came to fruition in the coming of God the Son in the flesh.

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.*

EXPLANATION: *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us* — clearly John believes that the Word existed *before* the Word became flesh. But he also clearly believes that this eternal Word *became* flesh.

EXPLANATION: *we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father* — there is a distinct glory that belongs to God alone (Isaiah 42:8). For Jesus to possess the glory of God is another testament to Jesus being God.

Luke 1:26-33 — *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*

EXPLANATION: *to a virgin betrothed* — is significant because the messianic prophecies hinged on supernatural conception, a virgin conceiving (Isaiah 7:14).

EXPLANATION: *you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus* — the seed promises (all the way back to Genesis 3:15 & 12:1-2) required a real, physical man to fulfill God's promise-plan.

TRUTH: We believe that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and raised on the third day, appeared to His disciples, and ascended into heaven.

- A. We Believe that Jesus Died for Our Sins**

EXPLANATION: The death of Jesus Christ in the place of sinners is inseparable from Christology. For they *why* of Jesus' coming is essential to *who* Jesus is. It is impossible to talk about one without the other.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 — *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,*



that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

EXPLANATION: *that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures* — this statement is profound for it declares that the Old Testament proclaimed that a Messiah would die for our sins. The death of Christ on the cross was not a random event but a predicted, planned, prophesied event.¹

B. We Believe that Jesus...was Buried and Raised on the Third Day

EXPLANATION: *that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day* — the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not inconsequential. For His burial proves His real humanity and His resurrection proves His real deity. In His humanity, Christ perfectly fulfilled the Law. In His resurrection, Christ proved that He alone could conquer death (therefore proving His deity).

C. We believe that Jesus...Appeared to His Disciples & Ascended into Heaven

Acts 1:2 & 9-10 — *until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen...And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes.*

EXPLANATION: The appearance of Christ to his disciples (as unpacked so clearly in Luke 24) validated the real, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He shared food with His followers (Luke 24:42-43). He taught them clearly from the Scriptures (Luke 24:44). Then he ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-51).

TRUTH: Now at the right hand of God, He is the head of the Church, our Advocate and Mediator, Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Pioneer and Perfector of faith, and the only way to the Father.

EXPLANATION: Who Christ is cannot be separated from what Christ does — the two are inextricably linked together. To understand who Christ is you must understand what Christ did/does.

A. Now at the Right Hand of God: Christ's present position is a place of honor and completion. At the right hand is a place of honor. The idea of being seated communicates that completed nature of his redemptive work (i.e. *it is finished* — John 19:30).

¹ Acts 2:22-36 might be the most clear and succinct statement of God's promise-plan coming to fruition in the life, death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. The entire section is worth your consideration. However, v. 23 sums it up well — *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.* Christ's death was not a random act of lawless men but rather it was the definite plan and by the foreknowledge of God.



Hebrews 12:2 — *looking to Jesus.... seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- B. He is the Head of the Church:** the idea of head communicates being in charge of the body, for the head dictates what the rest of the body does. And so Christ is the head over His body, the Church. Through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, Christ is actively dwelling with and working among His people.

Ephesians 1:22 — *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church*

Ephesians 4:15 — *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ*

- C. Christ is Our Advocate and Mediator:** the present ministry of Christ is not passive. Christ is currently acting as the Advocate and Mediator for all who place their faith in Him. An advocate is a legal representative — someone who takes your case before another. Christ is the advocate with the Father, the legal go between, declaring that all who have placed their faith in Him are covered in His righteousness. Similar to advocate (but nuanced differently) is Christ's role as mediator. To mediate is to go between. To reconcile a broken relationship. Christ then not only serves as our legal representation but as our functional mediator. He is the one that bridges the gap in the broken relationship between God the Father and all mankind.

1 John 2:1 - *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

1 Timothy 2: 5 — *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

- D. Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of Our Confession**

APOSTLE: the idea of apostle is messenger or sent one — one who is sent with a message. Indeed Jesus Christ was and is then the ultimate Apostle! He came and proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom with one who possessed all authority — repent and believe! And Christ Jesus continues to proclaim this message through Spirit-empowered witnesses who proclaim His all sufficient Word (Colossians 3:16).

HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION: a high priest is one who accesses the presence of God for another. The high priest not only had access to God's presence (i.e. the holy of holies), but the high priest went into the presence of God on behalf of the people. The role of the high priest in the Old Testament was massively important *for* once a year on Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-30), the high priest would make atonement for



the sins of the people. Hebrews 5-7 demonstrates that Jesus is the better and ultimate and eternal high priest.

Hebrews 3:1 — *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession.*

Hebrews 7:25 — *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

- E. Christ is the Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith:** Jesus Christ is the one who founded or pioneered the way for all people to be right with God by grace through faith alone (apart from the works of the law). He paved the way for all people to be right with God. The Old Testament was preparing the way for this ultimate *perfecter of faith* — the One who would perfectly fulfill all righteousness and the one who would very literally become the end or completion of our faith. So then Jesus is not just the object of our faith, Jesus is the aim or end of our faith (quite literally - Jesus is the one who brought us along and brings our faith to completion).

Hebrews 12:2 — *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- F. Christ is the Only Way to the Father:** on account of who Jesus is and what Jesus accomplished in opening up the way to God for all people — there is no other way to God but through Him. For there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12).

John 14:6 — *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

REMEMBER: Since Jesus is who He is and since there is no way to be right with God but through Jesus Christ (rightly understood and submitted to by faith), the Devil goes hard to pervert the person & work of Christ to keep people from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4).

TABLE DISCUSSION: Why is Christ’s full humanity essential to Jesus being all of these things (Advocate, Mediator, High Priest, Pioneer, Perfecter, Only Way to God)?

TRUTH: We believe that Jesus will return in glory to rescue His people, judge the world, and consummate His everlasting kingdom.

- A. We believe that Jesus will return in glory to rescue His people:** the day is coming when Christ will return to rescue His people. The disciples anticipated that day,



the angels prophesied that day, and Paul wrote about that day — when Christ would return to rescue His people.

Matthew 24:3 — *As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*

Acts 1:11 — *and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 — *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

- B. We believe that Jesus will return in glory to...judge the world:** When Christ returns to consummate His kingdom, He will bring final and complete judgment upon all who have rejected Him.

2 Timothy 4:1 — *I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.*

Matthew 16:27 — *For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.*

- C. We believe that Jesus will return in glory to...consummate His everlasting Kingdom:** When Christ came to earth — He inaugurated his kingdom (Mark 1:15). However, there is an aspect of Christ’s kingdom that is yet to come (Matthew 6:10). The day is coming, when Christ will return and will consummate His kingdom once and for all!

Hebrews 9:27-28 — *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

Daniel 7:13-14 — *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*



THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

Any discussion on Christology would be incomplete without looking at the incarnation of Christ in greater depth. For Jesus Christ has been the Son of God from eternity past, the 2nd Person of the Trinity for all eternity. And yet, in the incarnation, the Son of God left the glory of heaven and willingly gave up certain rights & privileges of His deity, so that He might become fully human. This presents a theological mystery, for God is unchanging. And yet, in the incarnation something about the 2nd Person of the Trinity, Christ Jesus, changed forever — He took on flesh.

According to Philippians 2, Jesus Christ emptied himself of something, by taking on human form. The theological category for this discussion is called *the kenosis* (which comes from the Greek word *κενόω*, meaning to empty). In Philippians 2:5-8, Paul helps us to understand (in part) what Christ emptied himself of to become man.

Philippians 2:5-8 — *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied 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.*

EXPLANATION: *Being in the form of God* — to be in the form of God is to be God. For nothing can be in the form or image of God unless that thing is an idol or unless that thing is God. Clearly Jesus is not an idol of God so Jesus must be God.

EXPLANATION: *Did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped* — Jesus consistently submitted to the Father's will (Luke 22:41-42) and Jesus consistently lived for glory to the Father (John 17:4). Instead of demanding the glory that rightfully belonged to Him, he willingly deflected glory to God the Father.

EXPLANATION: *But emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, being in the likeness of men* — Christ emptied himself of the divine use of His attributes and took on the form of a slave. He was willing found in human likeness — fully-man in every regard (yet without sin). In this taking on of human form, Christ willingly emptied himself of the rights and privileges that belonged to Him from eternity past.

EXPLANATION: *and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross* — Christ's human likeness or form did not end in the incarnation. He did not live a human life and then skip death. Christ willingly subjected himself to the most brutal, torturous death possible — death on a cross. The ultimate humility was the Creator dying for His creation. Christ did not demand what was His, infinite glory and honor. Christ willingly gave up what belonged to Him, so that He might take on human flesh and die a brutal death in the place of sinners.



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

#1: What one thing about Jesus most encouraged you from your Word-Worksheet on John 1:1-18?

LEADERS GUIDE: John 1:1-18 is the most condensed Christology in the Bible. Many aspects of Christ's deity and humanity are unpacked in the prologue of John's Gospel. There is not right or wrong answer here. Since each participant was supposed to do a Word-Worksheet on John 1:1-18, the question is simply to get each participant to think about what most encouraged their faith about Jesus from John 1:1-18.

#2: Read John 1:1-5 in your group. Discuss how Jesus has made the One True God more fully known? What about the One True God has been more fully revealed in Christ?

LEADERS GUIDE: This question is not limited to John 1:1-5. This question is designed to get your group thinking "macro" about how Christ more fully revealed the One True God. For instance, in the Old Testament YHWH is revealed as abounding in steadfast love and mercy, but in Christ the love of God was put on full display (John 3:16). For instance, in the Old Testament God's righteousness was revealed, but in Christ God's righteousness is on full display (Romans 3:21-22). For instance, the Law came through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Try to get your group thinking about how Jesus is the final and complete revelation of God (Hebrews 1:1-3).

#3: As a group, come up with as many biblical arguments as possible (with clear references) for Christ's deity. How do these verses encourage your confident hope in Christ?

LEADERS GUIDE: It is common today for Christ's true or full deity to be questioned. People will say things like — *well, Jesus never just came out and said, I am God, equal with the Father from all eternity*. Take some time and come up with a list of arguments from the Word that would demonstrate the eternal, deity of Jesus. For instance, Jesus bearing the exact image of God is a strong testament to His deity because only God can bear the image of God without violating the 2nd commandment. For instance, Jesus claims to be the Creator. Which means He proceeded the very act of creation and therefore could not be a created being.