

MBC MEN'S STUDY

LEADERSHIP 8: THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

CLASS 1: THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Before getting into the book, here is the layout of the framework for our five-month men's study class.

- **August 13th: Introduction and why this Matters**
- September 24th: Jesus, before time began.
- October 29th: The Incarnate Christ
- November 26th: The incarnate Christ
- December 10th: The earthly life of Christ

PURPOSE OF THIS 5 MONTH CLASS

- Why do we want to talk about Christ?
- Why should we desire to know more and more about who Jesus was and who He is now?
- What we do with the doctrine of Christ has eternal ramifications.
- We can't believe in the wrong Christ and think that it is the right way to heaven.
- We can't seek to please the wrong Christ and think that we are living in the right way.
- If we want to know that our salvation is secure and that we are going in the right direction, we must know who Jesus is and what He did.
- If we get this wrong, our entire life can be going in the wrong direction and pointing others in the wrong way as well.
- When we know who Jesus is and what He has done for us, it empowers us to live in such a way that brings honor and glory to God.
- When we live like this, it is going to benefit our own walk with the Lord and all of those around us.
- **The center of our faith and the source of our hope isn't a creed, an idea, an experience, a church, or a philosophy. It's a person: Jesus the Messiah.**
- Knowing him isn't only the beginning of the Christian life – *it's the whole Christian life.*
- As believers, we know Jesus personally, which means Christology is deeply practical.
- The more that you about Christ and what Christ did for you, the more you are going to desire to live for Him. We have been given more resources and promises from being *in Christ* than we can imagine.
- We need to understand these things in order to live a life which brings honor and glory to Christ.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BEING IN CHRIST?

- Romans 3:24 "...being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..."

- Romans 6:11 "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

- Romans 8:1 "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

- Romans 8:39 "...nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- 1 Corinthians 1:2 "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours..."

- Galatians 3:26 "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

- Ephesians 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ..."

- Ephesians 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "...in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

- 2 Timothy 1:9 "...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity..."

- 2 Timothy 2:1 "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

- 2 Timothy 2:10 "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory."

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

- If we have so many promises that are only given to us because we are *in Christ*...we have to know who the Christ of the Bible is.
- This is the most important question that you are going to answer **and** lead your family in knowing.
- Do you know who Christ is and what He has done for you?
- **Matthew 16:14-17** “And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’”
- **What are the implications of this question from Jesus to Peter?**
- **John 20:31** “...but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”
- **Philippians 3:8-11** “8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”
- If we don't know who Jesus is, then we are not going in the right direction.

FALSE TEACHINGS ABOUT JESUS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

- The early church had no shortages of people who were trying to undermine the Christian message.
- They knew that Jesus was the central figure of Christianity so if they could bring Him down, the entire religion would be invalid.
- The early church knew the importance of “getting Christ right.”
- Today, we cannot be afraid to stand up and fight for a right and proper understanding of who Jesus is and what He did for humanity.
- So often our *default* position is one that just brings harmony, not one which seeks to bring the truth in areas where there is strife.
- Here are some of the early heresies that the church had to combat as they were seeking the real Jesus.

Docetism: late 1st and early 2nd century

- This heresy appeared in the late 1st and early 2nd century.
- Those who taught this believed that Jesus only seemed to have a human body.
- In other words, they denied the humanity of Jesus.
- Docetism allowed that Jesus may have been in some way divine, but it denied His full humanity. Hardcore Docetists taught that Jesus was only a phantasm or an illusion, appearing to be human but having no body at all. Other forms of Docetism taught that Jesus had a “heavenly” body of some type but not a real, natural body of flesh. Docetism was closely related to Gnosticism, which viewed physical matter as inherently evil and spiritual substance as inherently good.¹

Ebionism²: 2nd Century

- The origins of Ebionism are obscure, but the heresy most likely traces back to the earliest days of the church. The first Christian writer to mention them by name was Irenaeus in the late second century. Other writers who wrote against Ebionism include Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and Tertullian. The Ebionites were the heirs apparent of the Judaizers who stirred up trouble in the apostolic age (see Acts 15:1; Galatians 1:6–9; 2:16, 21). One theory explaining the source of the word Ebionism is that it comes from an Aramean word meaning “poor” or “lowly.” If this theory is true, then Ebionites considered themselves the “poor ones,” i.e., “humble” followers of Jesus.
- Ebionism was a false view of the nature of Jesus Christ that arose in the second century. Ebionites denied Jesus’ divinity and believed that Jesus was the Son of God only by virtue of His being “adopted” by God; according to Ebionism, Jesus was a descendant of David and a gifted man, but nothing more. They rejected the epistles of Paul, and only accepted one gospel (Matthew’s) as containing some truth. Ebionism also taught the necessity of keeping the Jewish law. On many levels, Ebionism was heretical.
- Since Ebionites rejected the divinity of Christ, they also rejected the virgin birth. In their glorification of the Law of Moses, they believed that Jesus Himself was justified by keeping the Law. According to Ebionism, if one could just follow Jesus’ example and keep the Law perfectly, then he could also become a “christ” and be justified by God.

Arianism: early 4th century

- Arianism is a heresy named for Arius, a priest and false teacher in the early fourth century AD in Alexandria, Egypt. One of the earliest and probably the most important item of debate among early Christians was the subject of Christ’s deity. Was Jesus truly God in the flesh, or was Jesus a created being? Was Jesus God or not? Arius denied the deity of the Son of God, holding that Jesus was created by God as

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Docetism.html>

² <https://www.gotquestions.org/Ebionism.html>

the first act of creation and that the nature of Christ was anomoios (“unlike”) that of God the Father.

Arianism, then, is the view that Jesus is a finite created being with some divine attributes, but He is not eternal and not divine in and of Himself.³

- Arianism undermines the Bible’s teaching on God being one in essence and three in persons, because only God himself could rescue people from their sin.

Apollinarianism⁴: 4th century

- Apollinarianism was a fourth-century Christian heresy that plagued the early church and that denied the full humanity and perfection of Jesus Christ. It is named after Apollinaris the Younger, who was bishop of the Laodicean church and who originated the teaching c. AD 361. Apollinarianism was rejected in the various early church councils, including the First Council of Constantinople in 381.
- Apollinarianism taught that Jesus’ two natures, human and divine, could not co-exist in the same person. According to Apollinaris, since Jesus was human, He must have sinned, and a sinful nature could not share the same body with the divine nature. To overcome this “problem” in Jesus, the Logos of God came upon Jesus, replacing His human mind or rational nature with God’s and overwhelming the sinfulness inherent in Jesus’ humanity. The Logos thus became the divine nature of Christ, as opposed to the human nature of Jesus.
- Apollinarianism denied the biblical truth that Jesus Christ has two distinct natures (human and divine) united in one Person. We call this coming together of divinity and sinless humanity the hypostatic union. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is both 100 percent God and 100 percent man, the Son of God and the Son of Man, at the same time.

Nestorianism: early 5th century

- The Nestorians are followers of Nestorius (c. AD 386–451), who was Archbishop of Constantinople. Nestorianism is based on the belief put forth by Nestorius that emphasized the disunity of the human and divine natures of Christ. According to the Nestorians, Christ essentially exists as two persons sharing one body. His divine and human natures are completely distinct and separate. This idea is not scriptural, however, and goes against the orthodox Christian doctrine of the hypostatic union, which states that Christ is fully God and fully man in one indivisible Person. God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human nature yet remained fully God at the same time. Jesus always had been God (John 8:58; 10:30), but at the Incarnation Jesus also became a human being (John 1:14).

³ <https://www.gotquestions.org/arianism.html>

⁴ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Apollinarianism.html>

Monophysitism / Eutychianism: 5th century

- Monophysitism is an erroneous or heretical view concerning the nature of Jesus Christ. Two monophysite schools of thought are Eutychianism and Apollinarianism. Monophysitism taught that Christ has one nature—a divine one—not two. Eutychianism specifically taught that Christ’s divine nature was so intermixed with His human nature that He was, in fact, not fully human and not fully divine. Eutychianism and monophysitism are a denial of the biblical teaching of the hypostatic union, that Christ’s two natures are united yet distinct. Eutychians followed the teaching of Eutyches (378–452), a fifth-century leader of a monastery in Constantinople; the word monophysitism comes from a Greek word meaning “one nature.”
- Eutychianism developed as a fifth-century response to Nestorianism, which taught that Christ has two separate natures resulting in two different persons residing in the same body. Eutyches, however, went too far in his refutation of Nestorius and ended up teaching heresy as well. Eutyches said that Jesus’ humanity was essentially dissolved or obliterated by His divine nature, describing it as being “dissolved like a drop of honey in the sea.”
- Monophysitism, including Eutychianism, was more influential in the Eastern Church than in the West. The teaching was renounced at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, but, at one point in the late fifth century, the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church sought to reconcile monophysitism with orthodox teaching. No agreement could be reached, and the monophysites were eventually excommunicated. Monophysitism continued to be widely accepted, however, in Syrian Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, Egypt.
- Some churches today teach what can be considered a modified form of monophysitism called miaphysitism or henophysitism. Miaphysitism teaches that Christ has one nature, but that one nature consists of two natures, united in one “without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration” (from the Coptic divine liturgy). Oriental Orthodox churches, including the Coptic Orthodox Church, hold to miaphysite or non-Chalcedonian doctrine.

Adoptionism

- Adoptionism is a heretical theology that claims Jesus was God’s adopted Son. Adoptionism teaches that, because of Jesus’ sinless life, God chose Him and adopted Him. Adoptionism also goes by the name dynamic monarchianism; it was declared a heresy by the church in the second century. Scripture makes it clear that adoptionism is not true. Jesus Christ is not adopted; He is “begotten” (John 3:16, KJV).

MORE MODERN FAULTY VIEWS OF WHO JESUS IS⁵

- While the above heresies have been dealt with through various church councils and teachings, there have been some other false teachings about Christ that have risen up since the 19th century.
- After the Age of Enlightenment (or Age of Reason), modern man has sought to undermine who Jesus is and what He accomplished.
- “The Enlightenment's emphasis on reason shaped philosophical, political and scientific discourse from the late 17th to the early 19th century. Matthew White traces the Enlightenment back to its roots in the aftermath of the Civil War, and forward to its effects on the present day.
- **The Enlightenment – the great ‘Age of Reason’** – is defined as the period of rigorous scientific, political and philosophical discourse that characterised European society during the ‘long’ 18th century: from the late 17th century to the ending of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. This was a period of huge change in thought and reason, which (in the words of historian Roy Porter) was ‘decisive in the making of modernity’.[1] Centuries of custom and tradition were brushed aside in favour of exploration, individualism, tolerance and scientific endeavour, which, in tandem with developments in industry and politics, witnessed the emergence of the ‘modern world’.⁶

Jesus was a Pagan Myth

- The roots of the Christ-myth theory go back to 19th-century German scholars like David Strauss (1808–1874), who argued the New Testament (NT) is simply a collection of mythical retellings of Jesus’s life, and Bruno Bauer (1809–1882), who made the more radical claim Jesus never existed.
- The general consensus today is that most of the alleged parallels between Christianity and the mystery religions are either non-existent (sometimes pure fabrications), coincidental, or anachronistic. In fact, there is no evidence pagan mystery religions existed in first-century Israel, and much of our evidence for them elsewhere dates to after the rise of Christianity. So if any borrowing did happen, it was probably the other way around.

Jesus was a failed prophet

- This theory, more popular among critical scholars, is based on a certain reading of some of Jesus’s apocalyptic prophecies (e.g., Matt. 16:28; 24:34) in which Jesus predicts God’s kingdom will arrive, accompanied by cataclysmic celestial signs, within the lifetime of his disciples. They argue that since the world did not end within the lifetime of his disciples, he must’ve been deluded and the whole Christian religion based on a mistake. Further, many who hold this view deny Jesus ever claimed to be divine.

⁵ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/refuting-5-false-theories-about-jesus/>

⁶ <https://www.bl.uk/restoration-18th-century-literature/articles/the-enlightenment#:~:text=The%20Enlightenment%20%E2%80%93%20the%20great%20'Age,the%20Napoleonic%20Wars%20in%201815.>

- The “failed prophet” theory is generally traced to the German scholar Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965). Though Schweitzer was right to draw attention to the eschatological (end-time) character of Jesus’s message, he tended to cherry-pick the evidence, highlighting some prophetic statements while ignoring others—such as Jesus’s claims that God’s kingdom was a present reality (Luke 11:20; 17:20–21) or his own confession of ignorance regarding the timing of his return (Matt. 24:36). Critics following Schweitzer also mistakenly suppose that first-century Jewish apocalyptic language (e.g., the sun being darkened, stars falling from heaven, etc.) must have been intended literally. A comparison with Peter’s sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:17–21), however, shows this isn’t always the case. Jesus was certainly expecting something climactic to happen within his disciples’ lifetime, but it wasn’t necessarily the end of the physical universe. God’s kingdom, as Jesus saw it, defied expectations.

Jesus as a moral philosopher

- If the “failed prophet” theory tends to exaggerate Jesus’s apocalyptic expectations, the “moral philosopher” theory tends to ignore them altogether. This portrayal of Jesus as a wisdom teacher promoting timeless moral truths is fairly common among non-Christian laypeople, but among scholars it has often taken the more specific shape of Jesus as “Cynic philosopher.” The term “cynic” in the Greco-Roman world didn’t refer to a generally pessimistic or distrusting person (as we ordinarily use it today), but rather one who renounced worldly goods and social conventions.
- The Cynic Jesus theory is usually associated with members of the Jesus Seminar, which reached its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s. Some of these scholars, such as Burton Mack and John Dominic Crossan, helpfully pointed out a number of similarities between Jesus and Cynic philosophy. However, there are at least two fatal flaws to the portrayal of Jesus as a Cynic himself. First, we have no historical evidence of the presence of Cynic philosophy in Galilee at the time of Jesus (in fact, the evidence we do possess reveals strong Jewish resistance to pagan influence in Galilee). Second, the differences between Jesus and Cynic philosophy far outweigh the similarities. Today, very few in the scholarly world continue to promote this theory.

Jesus, the violent revolutionary

- This is an old theory about Jesus that pops up every now and again, but it’s never gained much traction. Its roots go back to the man credited with launching the first modern “quest” for the historical Jesus, German deist Hermann Reimarus (1694–1768). Reimarus argued Jesus never intended to found a new religion or die for the sins of humanity; rather, his message was a call to national liberation from Roman oppression, which ended in failure and crucifixion.
- As NT scholar Darrell Bock points out, Jesus declares the arrival of the kingdom not through amassing an army, but through casting out demons and healing the sick (Luke 11:20). The enemies Jesus targets aren’t the Romans but the spiritual forces that hold the world in captivity to sin. In fact, Jesus’s strongest criticisms

in the Gospels are directed not at the Romans but at his Jewish compatriots who expected God to vindicate them based on their nationalistic zeal and rigorous adherence to the Law (Matt. 23:1–36). It’s also worth remembering that one of Jesus’s own disciples was a tax collector—hardly what you’d expect from an anti-Roman revolutionary movement.

Jesus, the ahistorical existentialist

- Lastly, a few scholars have given up altogether on the quest for the historical Jesus. For them, determining what Jesus actually said and did isn’t only near impossible, but also beside the point. The purpose of the NT, they say, is to bring us into a one-on-one personal encounter with God, not to communicate certain alleged facts about the past—facts that probably aren’t all that factual to begin with.
- This theory goes back to German scholar Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976), who promoted a “demythologizing” approach to Scripture. This involved getting past all the imaginative and irrelevant details of the Gospel stories about Jesus and reaching what Bultmann saw as the central truth of Christianity—the kerygma (Greek for “proclamation”) of the gospel. This kerygma was defined in existentialist terms, stressing an individual’s experience of God and a personal call to decision. Like other critical scholars before him, then, Bultmann accepted the wall of separation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. But whereas other scholars tried to use history to undermine faith, Bultmann tried to insulate faith from history. One could say he treated the NT almost like an ear of corn: history was the husk, kerygma the kernel.

HOW HAS THE CHURCH FOUGHT AGAINST THESE ERRORS

- Throughout church history, the church has fought to maintain the Biblical definitions of who Christ is and what He did.
- Through writings and councils there has been much to say about Christ.

The ecumenical councils

- The ecumenical councils were official gatherings of church leaders from all over the Christian world (the word ecumenical meaning, “representing the whole of a body of churches”). The purpose of the councils was to discuss various issues of theology and church practice and make binding decisions for the church at large.
- The early ecumenical councils were made up of Christians from throughout the Roman Empire. As Christianity spread, the leaders who attended the councils came from further parts abroad. The earlier councils pulled leaders from the entire church, but, as the church divided on various issues of theology and practice, the councils became less than truly ecumenical. The final council on the list below, the Second Vatican Council, drew Catholic leaders from all over the world, but other Christian denominations were understandably excluded. Thus, the ecumenical nature of the councils has changed over the years from

involving the whole church to involving people from every part of the world who are part of the Roman Catholic Church.

- FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAIA (325) – Affirmed the deity of Christ. The false doctrine of Arianism was rejected.
 - **Arius’s appeal to what he considered the logic of monotheism illustrates a recurring tendency throughout Christian history to subject the facts of divine revelation to current conceptions of “the reasonable.”** If, Arius argued, God was absolutely perfect, absolutely transcendent, and absolutely changeless, and if he was the originator of all things—without himself being derived from anything else—then surely it was obvious that everything and anyone else in the universe was set apart from God.⁷
 - **1.** Christ was true God from true God. Jesus himself was God in the same sense that the Father was God. Differentiation between Father and Son may refer to the respective tasks each took on or to the relationship in which each stands to the other. But the key matter is that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all truly God.
 - **2.** Christ was consubstantial [of one substance] with the Father. The Greek word used in this phrase (homoousios, from homo-, “same,” and ousia, “substance”) led to great controversy, both because this technical philosophical term is not found in the Bible and because a large faction in the church preferred the assertion that Jesus was “of a similar substance with the Father” (using the key word homoiousios, from homoi, “similar,” plus ousia; later writers referred dramatically to the importance of the distinguishing i, or iota, the smallest Greek letter). In the end homoousios won out because it reinforced as unequivocally as possible the fact that Christ was truly “very God of very God.” The term was held to be a just summary of Jesus’s own teaching, that “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).
- FIRST COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (381) – Clarified the nature of the Holy Spirit.
- COUNCIL OF EPHESUS (431) – Clarified the nature of Christ’s personhood. The false teaching of Nestorianism was repudiated.
- COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON (451) – Clarified the teaching concerning Christ’s nature and person, including the “hypostatic union.” The false doctrine of monophysitism was rejected.
 - The church set forth its official position on the person of Christ in a statement made by the Council of Chalcedon of 451. The basic message of this statement is that Jesus Christ has two natures, a divine nature and a human nature, in one person. Your nature is what you really and

⁷ Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3rd Ed. (GR, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 46.

truly are, your essence, your substance. Your nature can be described as a set of attributes that make you what you are.

- **The Chalcedonian Formula says that Jesus Christ is essentially God**, God by nature, the second person of the Trinity. That's what he really and truly is. But Jesus Christ is also man. That, too, is his nature, his essence, what he really and truly is. He is fully and completely God and fully and completely man. Everything that is true of God's nature is true of Jesus, and everything true of human nature is true of Jesus.⁸
- The idea here is not that God and man become mingled together into a third reality or that divinity changes into humanity or vice versa. The Chalcedonian Formula denies this by saying that the two natures exist together without confusion and without change. Here it preserves the distinction between God and man. God is the Creator, mankind is his creature. Even in Jesus Christ, where God and man are most intimately united, God does not become man, nor does man become God (as some cultists claim), nor do they merge into a third thing. Jesus' two natures are distinct from one another.
- SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (553) – Confirmed the conclusions of the first four councils.
- THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (680–681) – Clarified the nature of Christ's will.
- SECOND COUNCIL OF NICAIA⁹ (787) – Established guidelines for the veneration of images. (Some Protestants reject this council, while accepting the Council of Hieria of 754, which rejected the veneration of icons.)

WHY WE MUST GET THIS RIGHT

- It is important to know where we have come from, what has come up against the church in the past and how they have handled it.
- The primary issue in false religions, as we have seen in church history, is a misunderstanding about the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- There is no other name which has inspired greater devotion or ignited greater controversy than Jesus.
- There has been a battle, from the time of the Pharisees until our present day, over who Jesus really is.
- Everyone has an opinion about who Jesus is and this has led many to stray from the truth.

The Doctrine of Christ is the foundation for Christianity.

⁸ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Intro to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 129–130.

⁹ This was the final council which was accepted by the Protestants. The remainder of councils are about the RCC in nature.

- **1 Corinthians 15:13-14** “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”
- If Christ has not been raised from the dead, our faith is in vain.
- If we don’t know who Christ is and what He accomplished, then all we believe is for nothing.
- The bedrock of our faith lies in Christ, His work and His resurrection. For if Christ is still in the grave then all we believe to be true has no foundation.

Our Theology is significantly linked to the person and work of Christ.

- **Colossians 1:16** “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.”
- All things were created *by Him*. That means that the doctrine of creation is linked to Christ.
 - We must be able to answer *why is that significant?*
- All things were not just created by Him...but they were created through Him and for Him.
 - What does this mean about Christ’s eternity and authority?

Christ is the center of God’s revelation and program for mankind.

- **Ephesians 1:10** “...with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.”
- **John 1:1, 14** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- **Hebrews 1:1-2** “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”

The focus of Scripture is the person and work of Christ

- **John 5:39, 46** “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; ... "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.”
- **Luke 24:27** “Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”

THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF KNOWING CHRIST

- If all we want to do is *know* more about Christ without it effecting our life, then all of our studying and knowledge is in vain.
- To *know* Christ is to have a desire to follow more after Him.
- **John 14:15** “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”
- **1 John 2:3** “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”
- **1 John 2:4** “The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
- Do you see the importance of not just knowing Christ but then living like you do know Him?
- All of our study is an exercise in futility if we continue to live like we have not been changed.
- John Owen said, “You love Him not, because you know Him not.”
- John Calvin wrote, “Since rich store of every kind of good abounds in [Christ], let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other.”
- We should adore Jesus Christ as God!
- As Paul says in **2 Corinthians 4:6** “For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”
- There is no higher beauty, no greater glory, no better love than his.
- He shines forth with incomparable loveliness. He is our Prophet, Priest, and King, the radiance of the glory of God: worthy of worship, awe, wonder, and affection.
- He is supreme and lifted up, yet he humbled himself on the vilest cross.
- He took our filthy rags and clothed us in his brilliant righteousness.
- One day he will return, and we will sit with him at the banquet table of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.
- The cleansed and radiant Bride with her glorious, loving, faithful, divine Bridegroom.

Christ is the center of the believer’s life.

- **Colossians 3:3** “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”
 - All the power and riches of the eternal God are available to those whose lives are hidden with Him through Christ His Son.
- All that we do and all that we are center around who Christ is now.
- “That the believer died with Christ to his former life is clear from the previous chapter. Well, then, says Paul, if so, your spiritual life flowing from your union with Christ is not yet apparent; it is hidden by God. People do not know that God Himself dwells in you in the Person of the Holy Spirit. But when Christ returns, and it is manifested who is/is not of God, your identification with Him will be made apparent. You will appear in the glory of heaven that you will openly share. There may not be much left here in this

world...to lean on...but there is much to look forward to. When you...look upward...you look forward with joy and anticipation.”¹⁰

We should be growing in our knowledge of Christ.

- **Philippians 3:10** “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death...”
- Do you know Christ *and* the power of his resurrection *and* the fellowship of His death?
- “Indeed, Paul wanted to go farther. He wanted to know Christ so well that he could experience the power that raised Him from the dead and even understand what the sufferings of Christ were like by participating in the same kind of sufferings Christ endured. If he was conformed to Christ’s death (i.e., all that led to it) he would be satisfied, because then, he could be able to experience a resurrection like His.”¹¹
- **2 Peter 3:18** “...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

We should be anticipating and eagerly awaiting His return.

- **Titus 2:13** “...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus...”
- When we know Christ and what He has done, it not only effects what we do in our present life but what we are ultimately looking forward to.
- We have a greater hope than anything this world can offer us. When we keep this in mind we are able to see this world for what is.

NEXT MONTH

- The Preexistence of Christ
- The Deity of Christ

¹⁰ Jay E. Adams, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 155.

¹¹ Jay E. Adams, Romans, Philippians, I Thessalonians, and II Thessalonians, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary (Cordova, TN: Institute for Nouthetic Studies, 2020), 170.