

# **FOUNDATIONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP**

## **Systematic Theology Course**

**Dr. William E. Bell**

### **VOLUME 6**

186

#### **The Doctrine of Christ**

Unit 01 - Historicity of Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ as Jehovah	187
Unit 02 - Deity of Jesus Christ - Continued	191
Unit 03 - Humanity of Jesus Christ; The Hypostatic Union	192
Unit 04 - Kenosis; The Doctrine of Impeccability	195
Unit 05 - Pre-incarnate Work of Christ; His Earthly Ministry	197
Unit 06 – The Atonement of Jesus Christ - Part 1	199
Unit 07 – The Atonement of Jesus Christ - Part 2	201
Unit 08 - Extent of Jesus Christ's Death; The Terms of Salvation - Part 1	203
Unit 09 - Terms of Salvation - Part 2	206
Unit 10 - Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Historicity	208
Unit 11 - Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Significance; Nature of the Resurrection Body	211
Unit 12 - Ascension of Jesus Christ; His Present Work; His Future Work	213

# Historicity of Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ as Jehovah

## *Volume 6 - Unit 1*

### I. The Historicity of Jesus Christ

#### A. Pagan Writers

##### 1. Tacitus (Annals, XV, 44)

Concerning Nero . . . "But not all the relief that could come from man, not all the bounties that the prince could bestow, nor all the atonements which could be presented to the gods, availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration. Hence, to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also . . . "

##### 2. Suetonius (The Lives of the Caesars:)

Nero: "Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition. "

Claudius: " . . . the Emperor Claudius expelled from Rome the Jews who were constantly causing tumults on the instigation of one Chrestus. "

##### 3. Pliny (In a letter to the Emperor Trajan)

"They affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt or their error was that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a trust when they should be called on to deliver it up . . . "

##### 4. Lucian (The Passing of Peregrinus)

" . . . the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world

Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws. "

#### 5. Mara Bar Serapion (To his son)

"Or (what had) the Jews from the execution of their wise King, who at that time was taken away from them in the kingdom? . . . The Jews were destroyed and undone, and driven out of their realm, and now live dispersed everywhere . . . The wise King is not dead, by virtue of the new law he has given. "

### B. Jewish Writers

#### 1. Flavius Josephus (Antiquities)

The High Priest Ananus "had the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, named Jacobus, and some others, accused of transgression of the laws, and stoned. " (XX 9, 1)

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was (the) Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day. " (XVIII 3, 3)

#### 2. Jewish Talmud

Scattered references regarding Jesus as the son of an adulteress, a transgressor in Israel who practiced magic, a traitor, the founder of a godless sect, one who led the people astray, one who was hanged on Passover Eve, and one whose disciples healed the sick in his name. (Cf. Talmudic Tract Bab. Sanhedrin f. 43a; f. ( 7a, etc.)

C. Other World Religions

D. New Testament Witness

E. Consensus

## **II. The Person of Jesus Christ**

A. Deity

1. Jesus as Jehovah

a. The sacred name

b. The claims of Jesus

(1) The "I Am" (John 8:58)

(2) The Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:11, 22:13, Isaiah 44:6)

(3) The Light (John 8:12, cf. Psalms 27:1, Isaiah 60:19-20)

(4) The Shepherd (John 10:11, cf. Psalms 23:1, Ezekiel 34:15)

(5) The Bridegroom (Mark 2:19, Matthew 25:1-13, cf. Hosea 2:16, Isaiah 62:5)

(6) The Forgiver of Sins (Mark 2:10, Luke 5:21, cf. Jeremiah 31:34, Psalms 130:4)

c. Statements of New Testament writers

(1) Matthew 3:3 (cf. Isaiah 40:3)

(2) Luke 1:76 (cf. Malachi 3:1)

(3) John 19:37 (cf. Zech 12:10)

(4) I Peter 2:7-8 (cf. Isaiah 8:13-14)

(5) Romans 14:10-11 (cf. Philemon 2:10, Isaiah 45:23)

d. Objections

(1) John 1:1 ("a God" ?)

(2) Revelation 3:14 ("arche")

We are suggesting something a little different in this volume. The memory assignment for the first 7 units will be the 7 verses of Philippians 2:5-11, which incorporate most of the key doctrines of Christology. Make a 7-week project of it. Note several translation changes which bring out the meaning of the original text more fully.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - Philemon 2: 5-11 – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was in the form of God, thought it not something to be equal with God, but emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto the extent of death, even a cross-death. Wherefore, God also has highly exalted him, and given him the name which is above every name (i.e. Jehovah), that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (i. e. Jehovah), to the glory of God the Father.”

**Deity of Jesus Christ - Continued**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 2*

2. Other Scriptures on the Deity of Christ

- a. John 1:1f.
- b. John 10:30
- c. John 14:9
- d. John 20:28
- e. Hebrews 1:3 ("character")
- f. Colossians 1:15 ("eikon")
- g. Hebrews 1: 8
- h. Philemon 2:6-7 ("morphe", "sche'ma")
- i. Isaiah 9:6
- j. Titus 2:13
- k. Colossians 2: 9 ("theotes ")
- l. Romans 9: 5

3. The Doctrine of the Trinity

(SCRIPTURE MEMORY - Keep working on Philemon 2:5-11)

**Humanity of Jesus Christ; The Hypostatic Union**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 3*

*(II. The Person of Jesus Christ - Continued)*

B. Humanity

1. Born of Mary
2. Normal growth (Luke 2:52)
3. Human appearance (John 4:9)
4. Human infirmities (except sin)
  - a. Hunger (Matthew 4: 2)
  - b. Thirst (John 19:28)
  - c. Weariness (John 4:6)
  - d. Sleep (Matthew 8:24)
  - e. Sadness (Matthew 23:37, John 11:35)
  - f. Temptation (Hebrews 4:15)
  - g. Death (John 19:30)
5. Specific statements of incarnation
  - a. John 1:14
  - b. Hebrews 2:14

c. Hebrews 10: 5

d. Philemon 2: 5 -11

e. I John 4:2-3 (Docetism: Christ *appeared* to have a human body.)

## C. Hypostatic Union

### 1. Definition

a. "hypostasis" (Gr.) "nature, substance, essence"

b. Chalcedon

Christ is . . . “acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of the natures being in no wise taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one person and one subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons.”

c. Summary

- Undiminished deity
- genuine humanity
- joined in one person
- forever

### 2. Heresies

a. Monophysites

b. Monothelites

### 3. The 8 Major Passages

a. Philemon 2: 6 -11

b. John 1:1-14

c. Romans 1:2-5

d. Romans 9: 5

e. I Timothy 3:16

f. Hebrews 2: 7 -14

g. I John 1:1-3

h. Galatians 4:4-5

### 4. The Crucial Significance

a. Redemption

b. Priesthood

c. Prophetic ministry

d. Kingly office

e. Restoration of man

(SCRIPTURE MEMORY - Keep working on Philemon 2:5-11)

# Kenosis; The Doctrine of Impeccability

## Volume 6 - Unit 4

### (II. The Person of Jesus Christ – Continued)

#### D. The Kenosis

1. Definition - "kenoo" = "to empty"

2. Background

3. Of What Did Christ Empty Himself?

a. The "insignia of majesty" (John 17:5) - temporary

b. Unlimited use of divine attributes for His own benefit - temporary

(1) Omnipotence

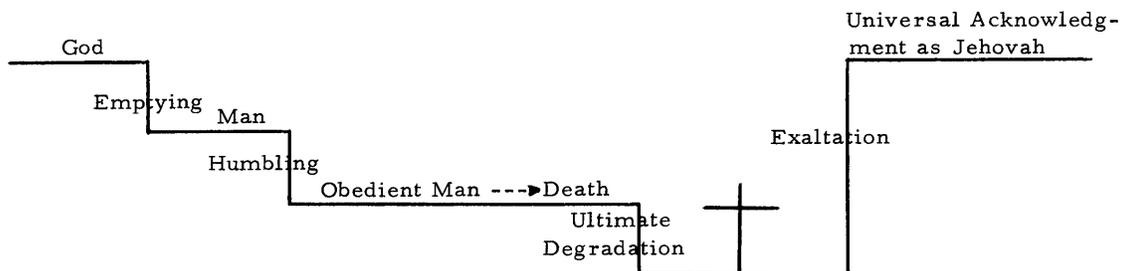
(2) Omniscience

(3) Omnipresence

c. His "equality" with the Father (Philemon 2:6, Matthew 20:28, I Corinthians 15:28) - permanent

d. His non-corporeal existence (Hebrews 10:5, etc.) - permanent

4. Diagram of the Passage



E. The Doctrine of Impeccability (Could Christ have sinned?)

1. The Options

a. Peccability

b. Impeccability

2. The Evidence for Impeccability

a. Immutability

b. Omnipotence

c. Omniscience

3. The Problem of the Reality of the Temptations (Hebrews 4:15, James 1:13)

(SCRIPTURE MEMORY - Keep working on Philemon 2:5-11)

**Pre-incarnate Work of Christ; His Earthly Ministry**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 5*

**III. The Work of Jesus Christ**

A. Preincarnate

1. Creation (John 1:3, I Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2, 10)

2. Theophanies

a. The Angel of Jehovah

(1) Identified as Jehovah (Genesis 16:7-13, Exodus 3:1f., Jud 13:9-22)

(2) Yet distinct from Jehovah (Lev 1:12-13, 3:1-2, Genesis 24:40)

(3) Identified as the preincarnate Christ

(a) The visible God of the New Testament

(b) Absence of Angel of Jehovah after the incarnation

(c) Sent by the Father

(d) The nature of the Father and the Spirit (John 1:18)

b. Other appearances

(1) To Abraham (Genesis 18:1-33)

(2) To Jacob (Genesis 32:24-32)

(3) Other

## B. Earthly Ministry

1. He announced a kingdom (Mark 1:15).
2. He was announced as the Lamb to be slain to establish the kingdom (John 1:29).
3. He was observed by men for 3 1/2 years - even as Passover lamb was observed - to insure its perfection.
4. His ultimate mission was to die (Matthew 20:28).

(SCRIPTURE MEMORY - Keep working on Philemon 2:5-11)

**Atonement of Jesus Christ - Part 1**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 6*

*(III. The Work of Jesus Christ - continued)*

C. His Death

1. False Concepts

- a. The Accident Theory
- b. The Martyr Theory (Socinians - Unitarians)
- c. The Moral Influence Theory (Schleiermacher, Ritschl)
- d. The Governmental Theory (Grotius, Moon)

2. Scriptural Significance

a. Ransom (Redemption)

(1) Definition: To deliver a person or thing by paying a price.

(2) Scripture

(a) Romans 7:14

(b) Romans 3:24

(c) Ephesians 1:7

(d) I Peter 1:18-19

(e) Passover lamb (Exodus 12)

(f) Hosea

(g) Kinsman - redeemer (Leviticus 25, Ruth)

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - Continue work on Philemon 2:5-11. (You should be about through by now!)

**Atonement of Jesus Christ - Part 2**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 7*

*(2. Scriptural Significance continued)*

b. Propitiation

(1) Definition: Christ satisfies all of God's attributes.  
(EVERY OTHER "THEORY OF ATONEMENT"  
IGNORES SOME ATTRIBUTE OF GOD!)

(2) Scripture

(a) Romans 3:25

(b) I John 2:2

(c) The "mercy seat" - "hilasterion" (Hebrews 9:5,  
Romans 3:25)

c. Substitution

(1) Definition: The death of an innocent victim in place of  
the guilty sinner.

(2) Scripture

(a) I Corinthians 5:7

(b) Isaiah 53:4-6

(c) I Peter 2:24

(d) I Peter 3:18

(e) II Corinthians 5:21

(f) The Old Testament sacrificial system (typology)

d. Reconciliation

(1) Definition: Christ's death terminates the enmity between God and man caused by man's sin.

(2) Scripture

(a) II Corinthians 5:18-20

(b) Romans 5:10

(c) Colossians 1:20-21 (cf. Ephesians 2:16)

(3) Illustration

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - You should now have completed your memorization of Philemon 2:5-11. We will move ahead to other verses in the next unit.

**Extent of Jesus Christ's Death;  
The Terms of Salvation - Part 1**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 8*

*(III. The Work of Jesus Christ - continued)*

*(C. His Death – cont.)*

3. The Extent of Christ's Death - (For Whom Did Christ Die?)

a. The Options

(1) Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption)

(a) Double jeopardy

(b) Divine election

(2) Unlimited Atonement

(a) I John 2:1-2

(b) John 3:16

(c) II Co r 5:19

(d) I Timothy 2:6

(e) I Timothy 4:10

(f) Titus 2:11

(g) Hebrews 2:9

(h) II Peter 3:9

(i) II Peter 2:1

#### 4. The Terms of Salvation (How does one appropriate the benefits of Christ's death?)

##### a. The Problem Stated

(1) Believe (Acts 16:31)

(2) Repent, be baptized (Acts 2:38)

(3) Confess, believe (Romans 10:9-10)

(4) Call (Romans 10:13)

(5) Trust (Hope) (Romans 15:12)

(6) Become a disciple, i. e. a "follower" (Luke 9:61)

(7) Come after me, deny self, take up cross (Matthew 16:24)

(8) Repent, be converted (Acts 3:19)

##### b. Relation of Repentance to Faith (Belief)

(1) Metanoeo

(2) Metamelomai

(3) Metanoeo in salvation passages

(a) Mark 1:15

(b) Acts 3:19

(c) II Corinthians 7:10

(d) Hebrews 12:17

(e) Acts 20:21

(4) Repentance (metanoeo) = a change of mind and attitude toward God (and Christ), resulting in a change of life direction (conversion) and a new dependence (faith in Christ).

Repentance - integral part of faith -cf. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2, John 1:7)

No mention of metanoeo in Gospel of John - noun or verb - yet cf. 20:31.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - I John 2: 2 – “And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

**Terms of Salvation - Part 2**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 9*

*(4. The Terms of Salvation – continued)*

c. Relation of Confession to Faith (Belief)

(1) Meaning of "confession" (homologeō)

(2) Romans 10:9-10

(3) Luke 12:8

d. Relation of "discipleship" to faith (belief)

(1) A popular view, making distinction

(2) Viewed as synonyms

(a) Acts 11:26 (= Christian)

(b) Concordance study

(c) Christ's singular demands - Matthew 16:24f.

-Luke 14:25-33

-Luke 18:18-30

e. Relation of Water Baptism to Salvation

(1) The problem passages

(a) Mark 16:16

(b) Acts 2:38 (cf. Acts 3:19, 5:31, 10:42-48, 11:15-17)

(c) Acts 22:16

(d) I Peter 3:21

(2) Final arguments

(a) New Testament writers contradictory?

(b) No command to be baptized in Gospel of John (yet cf. 20:31).

(c) Thief on cross

(d) I Cor 1:14, 4:15

f. The Meaning of "Faith" (or "Believe")

(1) Believe = "trust", "rely on"

(2) Illustration

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - Acts 16:31 – “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”

**Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Historicity**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 10*

*(III. The Work of Jesus Christ - continued)*

D. His Resurrection

1. Historicity

a. The Modern Attitude

b. The Empty Tomb

(1) Swoon theory

(2) Wrong tomb theory

(3) Wild animals theory

(4) Enemies stole the body theory

(5) Friends stole the body theory

Psychologically impossible

- Martyrdom

- Collusion

(6) Resurrection

c. The Eyewitness Testimony

(1) Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)

(2) The "other women" (Matthew 28:9-10)

(3) 2 disciples, road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-32)

(4) Peter (Luke 24:33-35, I Corinthians 15:5)

(5) 10 disciples, Thomas absent (Mark 16:14, Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-25)

(6) 11 disciples, including Thomas (John 20:26-31, I Corinthians 15:5)

(7) 7 disciples beside Sea of Galilee (John 21)

(8) More than 500 on appointed mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:15-18, I Corinthians 15:6)

(9) James (I Corinthians 15:7)

(10) Ascension appearance (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:44-53, Acts 1:9-12)

(11) Post-ascension appearances

d. Existence of Christian Church

e. Celebration of Sunday

f. Change in Apostles; Their Martyrdom

g. The New Testament

h. Fulfilled Witness to the Old Testament - (1) One illustration - Micah 5:2

i. Logical Culmination of Christian World View

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - I Corinthians 15:3-4 – “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again (and is still risen) the third day according to the scriptures.”

Note: In the Greek text, "rose again" is the perfect tense, indicating completed action with continuing results. Both "died" and "was buried" are in the aorist tense, indicating simply completed action at a point in time, with no reference to continuing results.

# **Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Significance; Nature of the Resurrection Body**

## *Volume 6 - Unit 11*

*(D. His Resurrection - cont.)*

### 2. Significance

- a. Authenticated the claims of Christ (Romans 1:4)
- b. Ratifies the efficacy of the atonement (Romans 4:25, 8:34)
- c. Assures the believer of needed power (Ephesians 1:19-22, Philemon 3:10)
- d. Assures the believer of his own resurrection (John 14:19, I Corinthians 15:17-23)
- e. Assures the world of the certainty of judgment (Acts 17:31, John 5:22)

### 3. The Nature of the Resurrection Body

- a. Identified as the same body that was entombed
  - (1) Retained nail prints (John 20:25-29)
  - (2) Retained wound in the side (John 20:25-29)
  - (3) Christ recognized by his disciples (unless temporarily veiled)
  - (4) Christ could eat (Luke 24:42-43)

(5) The body was material - could be felt (Mt 28:9, Luke 24:39, John 20:17)

(6) The body was visible to the natural eye.

(7) The body could breathe (John 20:22)

(8) The body possessed flesh and bones (Luke 24:39-40)

b. Yet the body was changed

(1) Apparently not restricted by distance and ordinary means of transportation

(2) Entered closed rooms without difficulty (Luke 24:36, John 20:19)

(3) Able to appear and disappear (Luke 24:17)

(4) Apparently didn't need rest or sustenance (could eat - but didn't have to)

(5) A glorious body (Acts 7:56, 9:3-6, Revelation 1:12-30) -but temporarily veiled during 40 days

c. Our resurrection body will be like His. (Philemon 3:21)

d. Cf. I Corinthians 15:35f.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - John 14:19 – “Because I live, you shall live also.”

**Ascension of Jesus Christ; His Present Work; His Future Work**  
*Volume 6 - Unit 12*

*(III. The Work of Jesus Christ - continued)*

E. His Ascension

1. Where Was He During the 40 Days?
  - a. Spirit (soul) goes to the Father (Luke 23:43, 46)
  - b. Body is buried, for 3 days (Luke 23:53)
  - c. "Preached" to the spirits in prison (I Peter 3:18-20)
  - d. The necessity for the visible ascension
2. The Event (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:6-12)
3. The Arrival in Heaven (Acts 2:33-36, 7:55-56, 9:3-6, etc.)
4. Where is Heaven? (Hebrews 4:14, "through the heavens")
5. The Theological Significance
  - a. Renewal of preincarnate glory (John 17:5)
  - b. Bestowal of new honor and glory - as a result of His work (Philemon 2:9 - "wherefore", Isaiah 53:12 - "therefore" . . . "because")

c. Entrance of resurrected humanity into heaven guarantees our own entrance (Hebrews 6:20)

d. Beginning of His present work

## F. His Present Work

### 1. The Work of Exercising Lordship

a. A reality now (I Peter 3:22, Ephesians 1:20-22)

b. But limited temporarily (Psalms 110:1, I Corinthians 15:23-28)

### 2. The Mediatorial Work of the Great High Priest (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, 9:24)

a. Meaning: Christ prays for us.

b. What does He pray for? (John 17)

(1) Our eternal salvation (and fellowship) (John 17:11, 15)

(2) Our sanctification (John 17:17, 19)

(3) Our oneness (John 17:21-23)

(4) Our eventual presence in heaven with Him (John 17:24)

c. Not perpetual sacrifice (Hebrews 9:28, 10:10, 18)

d. One mediator (I Timothy 2: 5)

### 3. Earthly Ministry Through His Church (Acts 1:1-2)

#### G. His Future Work

1. The second coming
2. The resurrection of dead believers
3. The transformation of living believers
4. The translation (rapture) of both from the earth
5. The binding of Satan
6. The institution of the millennial kingdom on earth
7. The defeat of the final rebellion (Gog, Magog)
8. The final incarceration of Satan in the lake of fire
9. The dissolution of the present heavens and earth
10. The resurrection of the unrighteous dead
11. The judgment of the great white throne
12. The final incarceration of unbelievers in the lake of fire
13. The new heavens and the new earth, the New Jerusalem
14. The deliverance of the kingdom to the Father
15. The eternal state

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - Hebrews 7:25 – “Wherefore he is able also to save them completely that come unto God by him, because he lives forever to make intercession for them.”