

Systematic Christology

- Presuppositions and method in Macleod
- Jesus as divine
- Jesus of history
- Christ of faith
- Jesus as human
- Jesus as divine and human
- Jesus' sinlessness
- Modern developments

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Presuppositions and Method

- How does Macleod approach Christology?

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Jesus as Divine

- What is the virgin birth?

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Jesus as Divine

- What is the biblical foundation?
 - Birth narratives in Matthew and Luke.
 - Overshadowed by Holy Spirit; the “theophanic presence of God” (42).
 - Allusions (and silence) in the rest of the NT.
- Is the virgin birth inconsistent with Jesus’ humanity?
- What is the theological significance of the virgin birth?

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Jesus as Divine

- Tying sinlessness to this is problematic.
 - Negative results from this in church history.
 - Augustine: sex is inherently sinful.
- Macleod: “the humanity of Christ was created by the Holy Spirit” (40-41).
 - Dutch Anabaptists’ “celestial flesh” idea.
 - Christ’s humanity was created from the substance of Mary (42).
- Positive roles for Mary and the Holy Spirit.

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Jesus as Divine

- What does preexistence mean?
 - He existed before his human life.
 - Macleod: part of Jesus’ self-consciousness.
 - Theological objections: Incompatible with humanity? Leads to tritheism?
 - The “post-existence” of Christ.
 - The divinity of Christ.
 - Doesn’t mean immutability: “The Person (the Son of God) is modified by the experiences of the earthly life” (Macleod 69).

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Jesus as Divine

- Jesus as Son of God
 - Meaning of *monogenes* (unique, not only-begotten).
 - Equality vs. subordination
- Does Jesus have to have an explicitly divine self-consciousness?
 - Macleod: yes
 - Wright: no.

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Jesus as Divine

- Gerald O'Collins, *Christology*:
 - Christ's personal identity (like ours) doesn't depend on his human self-awareness or memory.
 - His human memory began with his human life.
 - "Christ's personal pre-existence is in itself compatible with his having, during his earthly life, a limited (human) understanding of his divine identity and no consciousness at all of his eternal pre-existence."
 - An awareness of the infinite in the finite.

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Jesus of History

- Macleod's comments about historical criticism (111).
- Disincentives to divinizing Jesus.
- The scandal of the cross.
- The usual Jesus of history isn't sufficient to account for the Christ of faith.

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Christ of Faith

- Christological controversies
- What is the significance of *homoousios*?
- Trinitarian heresies:
 - Dynamic monarchianism: the power of the Logos directed Jesus.
 - Modalism: God was one, not three. God only appears to be three from our perspective.
- Macleod: safeguard the intersubjectivity of the Trinity.

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Christ of Faith

- The eternal Sonship of Christ
 - Was the eternal Logos always the Son?
 - Or did the Logos become Son at the incarnation?
 - Without eternal Sonship, the immanent and economic Trinity are not the same.
- What is the eternal generation of the Son?

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Christ of Faith

- The numerical identity of Son and Father.
 - Father, Son, and Spirit share a *single* essence.
 - For the Trinity, $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$.
- What is *perichoresis*?
 - Also called coinherence and circumincession.
 - Term suggests a mutual dance.
 - Mutual indwelling or interpenetration of the three persons.
 - Human analogy: Christ and believer; the church.

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Christ of Faith

- What is the *filioque* controversy?

- Jesus as *autotheos* - God in his own right – but never apart from Father and Spirit.

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Jesus as Human

- In what ways was Jesus similar to us?

– Clement of Alexandria: “For He ate, not for the sake of the body, which had its continuance from a holy power, but lest those in His company might happen to think otherwise of Him, just as afterwards some did certainly suppose that He had appeared as a mere phantasm. He was in general dispassionate, and no movement of feeling penetrated Him, whether pleasure or pain.”

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Jesus as Human

- In what ways was Jesus similar to us?

- How was Jesus different from us?

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Jesus as Human

- Was Jesus omniscient?

- Could Jesus make mistakes?

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Jesus as Human

- Jesus experienced human emotions.
 - He felt the full range of emotions without sin.
 - He needed emotional support from his disciples.
 - He suffered the loss of filial consciousness on the cross (the cry of dereliction).
 - Jesus suffered *for us* and suffers *with us*.
 - “What Golgotha secured for us was not sympathy but immunity” (Macleod 178).

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Jesus as Human

- Why is Jesus’ humanity significant?
 - He had to be human to be our representative, high priest, to experience consequences of sin.
 - He had to be human to fulfill the law, to be perfectly obedient, to be the perfect son of God.
 - He had to be human to become the origin of a new humanity.

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Jesus as Human

- Why is Jesus' humanity significant?
 - He had to be human to heal human sin by uniting humanity with divinity.
 - Gregory of Nazianzus: "For what has not been assumed has not been healed; it is what is united to his divinity that is saved."
 - God values his creation enough to become part of it and become one with us.
 - He knows our situation from the inside.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- Exactly who became incarnate?
- What effect did the incarnation have on God?
 - The Word took on human nature.
 - God had new experiences (human life).
 - Any concept of divine immutability must be understood in light of the incarnation.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- What is the hypostatic union?
- Involves three affirmations:
 - Christ is one person.
 - The union between the two natures derives from the two natures belonging to one person.
 - This one person, the Son of God, is the agent behind all of the God/man's actions and the subject of all his experiences.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- Jesus' human nature as anhypostatic or enhypostatic (Macleod).
 - Means that the Son assumed human nature, not a human person.
 - Christ's human nature has no independent subsistence (doesn't have its own hypostasis).
 - The Logos/Son was the hypostasis of the union.
 - Erickson: This suggests that Christ assumed human nature in the abstract.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- Jesus' human nature was particular.
 - *Theosis* idea: what is assumed by Christ is saved.
 - The God/man was a particular human being.
 - He didn't assume universal human nature (or every human would be saved automatically).
 - The incarnation reunited divine and human, but we don't share in that unless we are united with Christ by faith.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- Analogies of divine and human in Jesus.
 - Not the same as union of persons in the Trinity.
 - The Trinity has person-to-person relations.
 - Not the same as human soul and body
 - The human soul doesn't "assume" a body.
 - These are two dimensions of one human nature.
 - Not the same as Christ/believer union.
 - This mutual indwelling isn't perfectly mutual.
 - It is a person-to-person relation.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- Macleod proposes one self with two levels of consciousness.
 - The two levels connected by the Holy Spirit.
 - Comments?
- What is the *communicatio idiomatum*?
 - Communication (transfer) of properties from one nature to the other.
 - Antioch vs. Alexandria; Lutheran vs. Reformed.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- The incarnation isn't as absurd as we usually think.
 - Human beings are created in God's image.
 - We were intended to reflect God to creation.
 - The incarnation of God in human beings is more appropriate than in any other creature.
 - Perhaps we were created with the purpose of joining with God in the incarnation and in the consummation.

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- What is kenotic Christology?

- What is at stake?

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Jesus as Divine and Human

- The theological significance of kenosis?
 - The Son didn't insist on his rights.
 - C. F. D. Moule: "because he was God."
 - Macleod: "The impulse to serve lies at the very heart of deity" (215). Cf. John 13.
 - This was an *addition*, not a *subtraction*.
 - Obscured his divine glory; "breath-taking risks."
 - Real renunciation, but not renunciation of deity.

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Jesus' Sinlessness

- What does it mean that Jesus was sinless?
 - Free from actual and inherent sin.
- Is sinlessness incompatible with humanity?

- In what ways was Jesus tempted?

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Jesus' Sinlessness

- Could Jesus have sinned?
 - Macleod: we can't predicate sin of God.
 - Macleod: Jesus didn't know he couldn't sin.
 - Erickson: Jesus in his human nature could have chosen to sin, but his divine nature would never have allowed the sin to be actualized.
 - Is the temptation real?
 - Can Jesus be an example for us?

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Modern Developments

- Recent questions about uniqueness of Jesus.
 - John Hick, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*.
- Views of Christ among world religions:
 - Exclusivism: Jesus saves only believers in him.
 - Inclusivism: Jesus may save non-Christians.
 - Pluralism: Religions may save without Jesus.
- Hick: all religions are partial human views of the one divine Reality. All may be salvific.

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Modern Developments

- Evangelicals are usually not pluralists.
- Critiques of pluralism:
 - Hick's pluralism is also culturally conditioned (Enlightenment rationalism).
 - Adherents of world religions would not agree with Hick's characterization of their religions.
 - Leslie Newbiggin: This approach puts no limit on subjectivity.

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Modern Developments

- Newbiggin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*:
- "The culture in which this type of thinking has developed is one in which the most typical feature is the supermarket. In a society which has exalted the autonomous individual as the supreme reality, we are accustomed to the rich variety offered on the supermarket shelves and to the freedom we have to choose our favorite brands. It is very natural that this mentality should pervade our view of religion. . . . It is a move that puts the self in the center of the universe. . . . It is the authentic product of a consumer society."

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