

Who is Jesus?

- Method in Christology
- The career of Jesus
- Divine and human in one person
- Christological controversies

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Method in Christology

- Should we base our Christology on history, or should we affirm it only by faith?
 - Jesus of history (Jesus as he really was).
 - Christ of faith (the Christ proclaimed by the church).
 - Led to the Quests for the Historical Jesus.
- Whenever we try to go behind the Gospels to reconstruct Jesus, we make him in our own image.

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Method in Christology

- Christology from above vs. from below:
 - From above: start with Jesus' deity.
 - From below: start with his historical life.
- Functional vs. ontological Christology:
 - Functional: focus on his role, what he did.
 - Ontological: focus on his nature or being.

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The Career of Jesus

- Significant events in Jesus' career:
 - Conception and birth as fulfillment of prophecy
 - Flight to Egypt; childhood awareness of God
 - Baptism; temptation; intimacy with God
 - Ministry: teaching, healing, exorcism
 - Transfiguration
 - Triumphant entry into Jerusalem; Passion
 - Resurrection; ascension; session and reign
 - Intercession; return in glory; judgment

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The Career of Jesus

- What is the virgin birth?

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The Career of Jesus

- The virgin birth and Mary:
 - Protestants: Mary had other children.
 - Catholics: perpetual virginity of Mary.
 - The virgin birth is NOT the Immaculate Conception (Mary was conceived without sin - Catholicism).
 - Catholics: bodily assumption of Mary.
 - These last two are the only doctrines promulgated by papal infallibility.

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The Career of Jesus

- Theological significance of the virgin birth?
 - Fundamentalists: fundamental doctrine.
 - Some: explains how the incarnation took place.
 - Others: explains Jesus' sinlessness; suggests original sin transmitted through sex.
 - Others: true but theologically dispensable.
 - Emphasizes Jesus' uniqueness, God's grace.

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The Career of Jesus

- Traditional theologies give little attention to Jesus' life.
 - Mine his life for information on his nature and his work.
 - Creeds generally skip over his life.
- Maybe Jesus' life makes us uncomfortable.
- It reminds us he's our example (1 Jn. 2:6).

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The Career of Jesus

- What did Jesus' life look like?

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The Career of Jesus

- Theological significance of Jesus' life?
 - Inaugurated the kingdom of God.
 - Highlights the social dimensions of the gospel.
 - Necessary for our salvation.
 - Shows obedience is crucial to salvation.
 - Serves as foundation for ethics.
 - Source for a theology of suffering.
 - Influences our devotional life.
 - Salvation is a relationship with a Person.

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The Career of Jesus

- What is the incarnation?
 - God became human in Jesus of Nazareth.
 - Jesus was divine and human in a single person.

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The Career of Jesus

- Incarnational Christology in the NT:
 - Christological hymns (early material).
 - John 1:1-14; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:2-4.
 - See a “V” pattern of descent and ascent.

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The Career of Jesus

- What is the kenosis theory?

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The Career of Jesus

- Implications of the incarnation?
 - We can't uphold classical immutability of God.
 - Jesus is Immanuel - God with us.
 - God was the initiator: God added humanity to his deity rather than our adding deity to our humanity.
 - We should get our concepts of deity and humanity from Jesus.
 - All Jesus' acts were of a divine/human person.

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Divine and Human in One Person

- Biblical evidence for Jesus' divinity?

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Divine and Human in One Person

- Biblical evidence for Jesus' humanity?

- Is sinlessness compatible with humanity?
- Could Jesus have sinned?

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Divine and Human in One Person

- Evidence for Jesus as one person?
 - NT treats him as a single subject.
 - This question arises because of Chalcedonian "two natures" formula.

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Divine and Human in One Person

- Implications of Jesus' divinity?
 - He is the complete self-disclosure of God.
 - He is the center of the Bible and history.
 - He is our standard for what God is like.
 - He mediates knowledge of God.

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Divine and Human in One Person

- What does Jesus reveal about God?
 - God is compassionate, self-giving love.
 - This love extends to his enemies.
 - His “filial consciousness” reveals the intimate relationship of Father and Son in the Trinity.

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Divine and Human in One Person

- Implications of Jesus’ humanity?
 - He understands human life from the inside.
 - He is our standard of what humans should be.
 - He is our faithful high priest, representative, intercessor, and helper in times of need.
 - He is our example in the Christian life.
 - Evangelicals should beware of docetism.
 - Jesus’ humanity reminds us that human nature (as created) is good.

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Divine and Human in One Person

- Implications of Jesus as one person?
 - The incarnation is a reality.
 - Divine and human are brought together.
 - Paradigm for our relationship with God.
- Jesus shows us what true humanity is supposed to be like!

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Christological Controversies

- Christological controversies were driven by salvation issues.
 - East: deification or divinization.
 - "The Word became human so that we might become divine" (Athanasius).
 - "For what has not been assumed has not been healed; it is what is united to his divinity that is saved" (Gregory of Nazianzus).
 - West: legal view (represent us, pay our debt).

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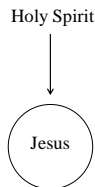
Christological Controversies

- Outgrowth of Trinitarian debates.
- Settled early in West (Tertullian - "two natures, one person").
- Ongoing controversy in East.
- Swung between overemphasis on divinity and overemphasis on humanity.

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Christological Controversies

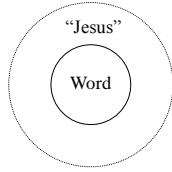
- Ebionism - Jesus is a God-inspired man.



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Christological Controversies

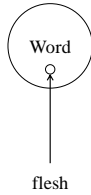
- Ebionism - Jesus is a God-inspired man.
- Docetism - Jesus only appeared to be human (from *dokeo*, to seem or appear).



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Christological Controversies

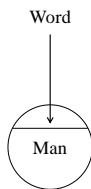
- Alexandrians emphasized the divinity and the unity between the natures.
 - Greek influence.
 - “Word-flesh Christology.”



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Christological Controversies

- Antiochenes emphasized the humanity and the distinction between the natures.
 - Jewish influence.
 - “Word-man Christology.”
- Western theology was in the middle.



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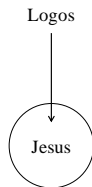
Christological Controversies

- What is Arianism?
 - Maintain absolute monotheism.
 - *Logos* is a creature, neither divine nor human.
 - Condemned at Nicea (325).
 - *Logos* was *homoousios* with the Father.
 - Nicea affirmed divinity of the *Logos/Son*.
- Antioch and Alexandria both opposed Arianism.

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Christological Controversies

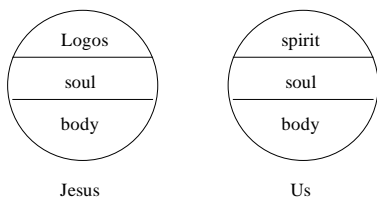
- Eustathius - *Logos* dwelt in human Jesus.



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Christological Controversies

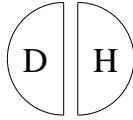
- Eustathius - *Logos* dwelt in human Jesus.
- Apollinaris - *Logos* replaced human spirit.



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Christological Controversies

- Eustathius - Logos dwelt in human Jesus.
- Apollinaris - Logos replaced human spirit.
- Nestorius - conjunction, not union.

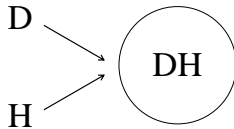


- Could Mary be called *theotokos* (God-bearer)?

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Christological Controversies

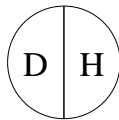
- Eutyches - two natures before the incarnation, one nature after the union.



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Christological Controversies

- Eutyches - two natures before the incarnation, one nature after the union.
- Chalcedon - two natures in union.



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Christological Controversies

- Hypostatic union - union in one *hypostasis*.
 - The human nature doesn't have its own *hypostasis*.
 - The *hypostasis* of the union is that of the *Logos*.
- Controversies after Chalcedon:
 - Monophysite - one nature.
 - Nestorian - two distinct natures.

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Christological Controversies

- Alexandrian and Antiochene views resurfaced in Reformation discussion of Lord's Supper.
 - *Communicatio idiomatum* (communication of properties).
 - Lutherans = Alexandrian (Jesus' body could be everywhere in the Eucharist).
 - Reformed = Antiochene (Jesus' body was in heaven; he was spiritually present in Eucharist).

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