**The Doctrine of Christ**

*God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

*1 Corinthians 1:28-31*

**The Mediator** (from the Valley of Vision)

Everlasting Creator-Father, I have destroyed myself, my nature is defiled, the powers of my soul are degraded; I am vile, miserable, strengthless, but my hope is in thee. If ever I am saved it will be by goodness undeserved and astonishing, not by mercy alone but by abundant mercy, not by grace but by exceeding riches of grace; And such thou hast revealed, promised, exemplified in thoughts of peace, not of evil. Thou hast devised means to rescue me from sin’s perdition, to restore me to happiness, honour, safety.

I bless thee for the everlasting covenant, for the appointment of a Mediator. I rejoice that he failed not, nor was discouraged, but accomplished the work thou gavest him to do; and said on the cross, ‘It is finished.’ I exult in the thought that thy justice is satisfied, thy truth established, thy law magnified, and a foundation is laid for my hope. I look to a present and personal interest in Christ and say, Surely he has borne my griefs, carried my sorrows, won my peace, healed my soul. Justified by his blood I am saved by his life, Glorying in his cross I bow to his sceptre, having his Spirit I possess his mind. Lord, grant that my religion may not be occasional and partial, but universal, influential, effective, and may I always continue in thy words as well as thy works, so that I may reach my end in peace.

**Introduction:**

**12. Q.** Since, according to God's righteous judgment we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how can we escape this punishment and be again received into favor?

**A.** God demands that His justice be satisfied. Therefore full payment must be made either by ourselves or by another.

1. **Jesus is the perfect “mediator” between God and man.**
	1. **Job 9:32-35**
		* + 1. **Isaiah 55:8-9**
				2. **Isaiah 59:2**
				3. **Psalm 24**

**WCOF 8.1** It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom he did from all eternity give a people, to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

**Calvin on Christ the Mediator**

 “His task was to restore us to God’s grace as to make the children of men, children of God; the heirs of hell, the heirs of the heavenly kingdom. Who could have done this had not the self-same Son of God become the Son of man, and had not so taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

“For the same reason it was also imperative that he who was to become our Redeemer be true God and true man. It was his task to swallow up death. Who but the Life could do this? It was his task to conquer sin. Who but very Righteousness could do this? It was his task to rout the powers of world and air. Who but a power higher than world and air could do this? Now where does life or righteousness, or lordship and authority of heaven lie but with God alone? Therefore our most merciful God, when he willed that we be redeemed, made himself our Redeemer in the person of the only begotten Son.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

“In short, since neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it, he coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the one to death; and that, wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win victory for us. Those who despoil Christ of either his divinity or his humanity diminish his majesty and glory, or obscure his goodness.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

* 1. The work of the mediator is to satisfy God’s wrath through offering himself as a propitiation for sin.

“In Christ alone, Who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless babe! This gift of love and righteousness,

Scorned by the ones He came to save. **Till on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied**; For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—Here in the death of Christ I live.”

**Isaiah 53:4-5**

**John 3:14-17**

**1 John 1:8-2:2**

1. **How the two natures make one person.**

**WCOF 8.2** The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

* 1. **The Pre-existence of Christ.**

**Arius** (via Athanasius): “The Son was not always, for when all things emerged out of nothingness and all created essence came into being, then it was that God’s logos also came forth out of nothing. There was a time when he was not, and he was not until he was brought forth, for even he had a beginning, when he was created. For God was alone, and at that time there was neither Logos nor Wisdom.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Nicene Creed (325AD began, 381AD in final form):** “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten not made, being of the same substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.”

**Bavinck:** “Even though Christ has assumed a human nature which is finite and limited and which began to exist in time, as a person, as Self, Christ does not in Scripture stand on the side of the creature but on the side of God. He partakes of God’s virtues and of His works; He possesses the same divine nature. This last point comes into particularly clear expression in the three names which are given Christ: that of Image, the Word, and the Son of God.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. **The “*Logos*”:**
2. **John 1:1-5, 14**
3. **John 17:1-5, 24**
4. **The “Image”:**
5. **Hebrews 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-19**

**Chalcedon (451AD):** We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means 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, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

Summary on the Hypostatic Union:[[6]](#footnote-6) (Hypostatic union refers to the combination of two natures in one person)

Joyce Meyer on the person of Christ:[[7]](#footnote-7)

"He could have helped himself up until the point where he said I commend my spirit into your hands, at that point he couldn’t do nothing for himself anymore. He had become sin, he was no longer the Son of God. He was sin."

**Belgic Confession Art 19:** “But these two natures are so closely united in one person that they were not separated even by His death. Therefore that which He, when dying, commended into the hands of His Father, was a real human spirit, departing from His body. But in the meantime the divine nature always remained united with the human, even when He lay in the grave; and the Godhead did not cease to be in Him, any more than it did when He was an infant, though it did not so clearly manifest itself for a while. Wherefore we confess that He is *very* God and *very* man: very God by His power to conquer death, and very man that He might die for us according to the infirmity of His flesh.”

Mormonism:[[8]](#footnote-8)

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!!! . . . We have imagined that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see," (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* p. 345).

"The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood - was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers," (*Journal of Discourses,* vol. 8, p. 115).

"Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers" (*Mormon Doctrine,* by Bruce McConkie, p. 547).

“Jesus is the literal spirit-brother of Lucifer, a creation” (*Gospel Through the Ages*, p. 15).

Jehovah’s Witnesses:[[9]](#footnote-9)

“Jehovah's first creation was his 'only-begotten Son' . . . was used by Jehovah in creating all other things," *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 390-391.

“Jesus was Michael the archangel who became a man,” *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1963, p. 307; *The New World*, 284.

“Jesus was only a perfect man, not God in flesh,” *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, p. 306.

“Jesus did not rise from the dead in his physical body,” *Awake!* July 22, 1973, p. 4.

Jesus was raised "not a human creature, but a spirit." *Let God be True*, p. 276.

* 1. **The Humanity of Christ**

**WCOF 8.2** “The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man

* + 1. Early challenges to the humanity of Christ:
			1. **Docetism** (present in 1st century), which became full-blown **Gnosticism** (post-1st century):
			2. **1 John 1:1-4; 4:2-3**
			3. **Romans 1:2-3, 8:3, 9:5**
1. John T. McNeill, trans., *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2 vols.; Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 465. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid., 466. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 466. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 317. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Lane, Tipton, “Classically Reformed and Contemporary Christologies: Introduction and Overview” (Lecture presented at the ST 223, Westminster Theological Seminary, n.d.). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “Joyce Meyer”, n.d., n.p. [cited 21 March 2014]. Online: http://carm.org/joyce-meyer. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “A Comparison Between Christian Doctrine and Mormon Doctrine”, n.d., n.p. [cited 21 March 2014]. Online: http://carm.org/comparison-between-christian-doctrine-and-mormon-doctrine. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Jehovah’s Witness’ Beliefs”, n.d., n.p. [cited 21 March 2014]. Online: http://carm.org/jehovahs-witnesses-beliefs. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)