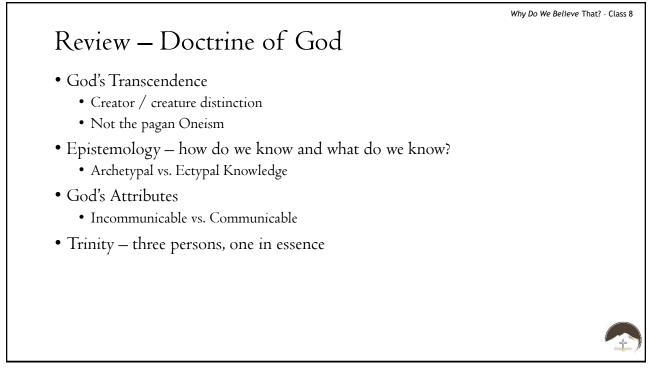


WHY DO WE BELIEVE THAT? Introduction to Reformed Theology

Class 7 The Doctrine of Christ

Education Year 2024-2025

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Why Do We Believe That? - Class 8

Loci of Theology

- Prolegomena
- Theology Proper (Doctrine of God)
- Christology (Doctrine of Christ)
- Anthropology (Doctrine of Man)
- Pneumatology (Doctrine of the Spirit)
- Soteriology (Doctrine of Salvation)
- Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church)
- Eschatology (Doctrine of the End Times)

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OT Names of God

- Yahweh / Jehovah (LORD) יָהוָה
- Adonai (Lord) אָדוֹן
- El or Elohim (God) אֵלֹהִים
- El-Shaddai (God Almighty) אָל שַׁדָי
- Lord/God of Hosts יְהְוֶה צְּבְאוֹת
 - "Lord Sabatoth his name"

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NT Names of God

- God $\Theta \epsilon o \varsigma$
- Lord Kurios
- Father $\Pi \alpha \tau \epsilon \rho$

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Names of Christ

- Jesus
 - Hebrew "Joshua" יָהוֹשׁוּעַ
 - Greek "Jesus" Ἰησοῦς
 - Matt I:21 "You shall call his name 'Jesus' for he will save his people from their sins."
- Christ
 - Hebrew "Anointed One / Messiah" מְשִׁיחַ
 - Greek "Christ" Χριστός
 - John 4:25 "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ)."
 - Shorthand $X\rho$
 - Ancient Church: X+P=X

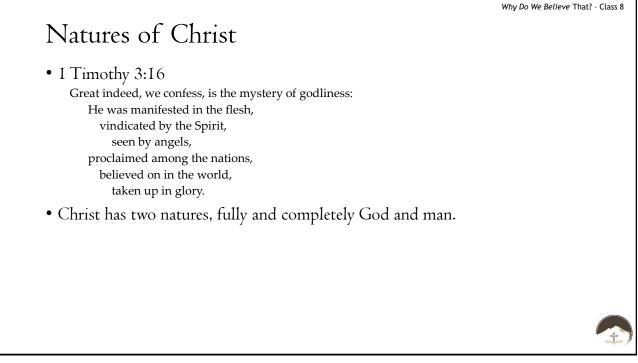
Names of Christ

- "Son of Man" from Ezekiel and Daniel 7:13
 - Most common self-designation of Jesus
 - Expressive of the humanity of Christ

• "Son of God"

- Even Satan and the demons call him this!
- "Nativistic Sense" "designates that the human nature of Christ owes its origin to the direct supernatural activity of God (of the Holy Spirit)."^I
- "Messianic Sense" a description of the office
- "Trinitarian Sense" description of Christ as the second person of the Trinity.
 - Probably what Jesus meant when he called himself the "Son of God"
- "Lord" Polite address, but also his exalted character.

1. All three of these senses come from Berkhof, Manual, 178.



Two Natures of Christ

• BC 19

We believe that by being thus conceived the person of the Son has been inseparably united and joined together with human nature, in such a way that there are not two Sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in a single person, with each nature retaining its own distinct properties.

Thus his divine nature has always remained uncreated, "without beginning of days or end of life,"(Heb 7:3) filling heaven and earth.

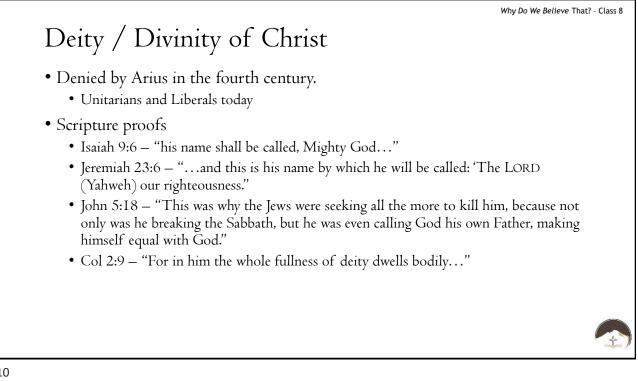
His human nature has not lost its properties but continues to have those of a creature— it has a beginning of days; it is of a finite nature and retains all that belongs to a real body. And even though he, by his resurrection, gave it immortality, that nonetheless did not change the reality of his human nature; for our salvation and resurrection depend also on the reality of his body.

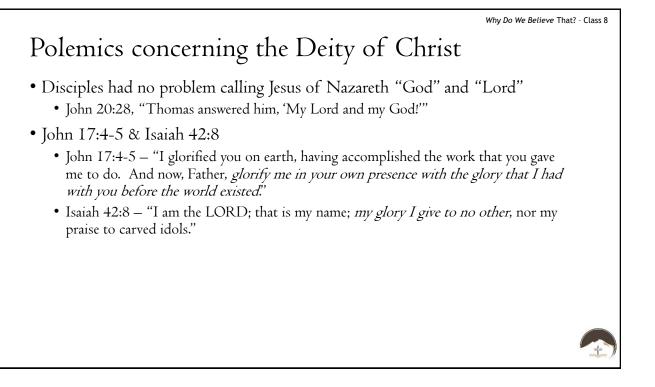
But these two natures are so united together in one person that they are not even separated by his death.

So then, what he committed to his Father when he died was a real human spirit which left his body. But meanwhile his divine nature remained united with his human nature even when he was lying in the grave; and his deity never ceased to be in him, just as it was in him when he was a little child, though for a while it did not show itself as such.

These are the reasons why we confess him to be true God and true man- true God in order to conquer death by his power, and true man that he might die for us in the weakness of his flesh.







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John I:I

- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 'Εν ἀρχῆ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
 - Anarthrous " $\Theta \epsilon o \varsigma$ " Is it "a God" or is referring to "the one true God"? A construction in Greek grammar called "Colwell's Construction" would say that the second use of $\Theta \epsilon o \varsigma$ is speaking qualitatively about "o $\lambda o \gamma o \varsigma$ (the Word), that is, his nature was that of God.
 - Rather, it [this construction] stresses that, although the person of Christ is not the person of the Father, their essence is identical. ... The idea of a qualitative $\Theta\epsilon\sigma\varsigma$ here is that the Word had all the attributes and qualities that "the God" (of 1:1b) had. In other words he shared the essence of the Father, though they differed in person. The construction the evangelist chose to express this idea was the most concise way he could have stated that the Word was God and yet was distinct from the Father.^I

1. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 269.

John I:I – Jehovah Witnesses

- *New World Translation* "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."
 - Because the last use of $\Theta\epsilon o\varsigma$ doesn't have the definite article, the NWT translates it as "a god."
 - However, they are not consistent, and this would be the only time in the NT this construction would be translated this way.¹
 - It is interesting that the New World Translation renders Θεος as "a god" on the simplistic grounds that it lacks the article. This is surely an insufficient basis. Following the "anarthrous indefinite" principle would mean that ἀρχῆ should be "a beginning (1:1, 2), ζωή should be "a life" (1:4), παρὰ θεοῦ should be "from a god" (1:6), Ἰωάννης should be "a John" (1:6), Θεὸν should be "a god" (1:18), etc. Yet none of these other anarthrous nouns is rendered with an indefinite article. One can only suspect strong theological bias in such a translation.²

Wallace, Grammar, 267.
 Ibid.

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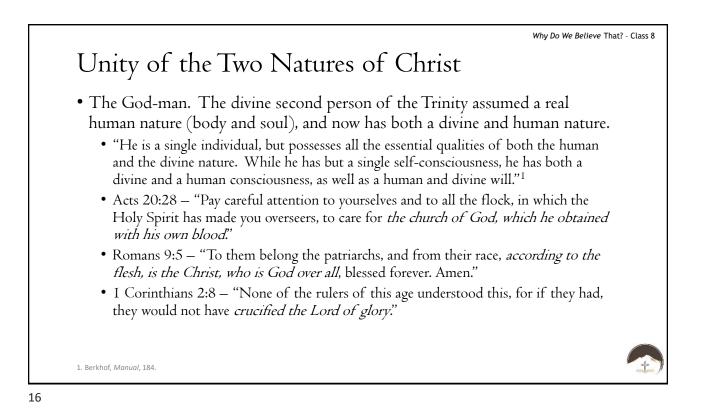
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Mormons on Christ¹

Mormon	Christian
A created being, the brother of Lucifer	Uncreated God
Common (one of many gods)	Unique (second person of the only Godhead)
Conceived by a physical sex act between God (Elohim) and Mary	Conceived by the Holy Spirit – a true virgin birth
Once sinful and imperfect (they would say that he was sinless as a human)	Eternally sinless and perfect.
Earned his own salvation	As God, never required salvation
A married polygamist?	An unmarried monogamist

1. John Ankerberg & John Weldon, Fast Facts on Mormonism, 61

Why Do We Belleve That? - Class B Humanity of Christ Denied by Apollonaris in the fourth century. "...while Christ was a real man, he was without sin. He not only did no sin, but could not sin, because of the essential bond between the human and divine natures in him."¹ Scripture Proofs Isaiah 11:1 – "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse…" John 1:14 – "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us…" Romans 1:3 – "...concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh…" I Timothy 2:4, "...and there is one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus…" I Timothy 3:16 - ...He was manifested in the flesh…"



Why Do We Believe That? - Class 8

Communication of Properties

- Communicatio idiomatum
 - Reformed What can be said of the nature can be said of the person.
 - The divine nature of Christ is omnipresent, therefore the person of Christ is omnipresent.
 - Lutheran What can be said of the person can be said of the nature.
 - The person of Christ is omnipresent, so the divine and human natures are omnipresent.

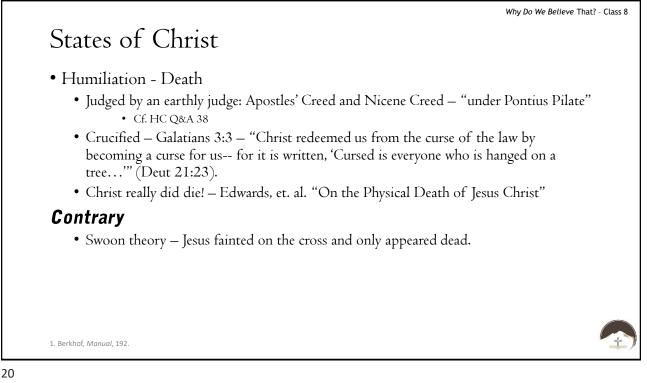
States of Christ

- Humiliation
 - Christ assumed a human nature in the form of a servant. Didn't change the essence of his divinity.
 - Incarnation and Birth
 - Derived his human nature through being born of his mother Mary.
 - The Holy Spirit kept the human nature of Christ from the pollution of sin.
 - Suffering
 - Not limited to just his "Passion Week", but "during his whole life on earth, but especially at the end, Christ sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race" (HC Q&A 37).
 - "...Christ my Lord, by suffering unspeakable anquish, pain, and terror of soul, on the cross by also earlier... (HC Q&A 44).

States of Christ

- Humiliation
 - Death
 - Judged by an earthly judge: Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed "under Pontius Pilate"
 Cf. HC Q&A 38
 - Crucified Galatians 3:3 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree..." (Deut 21:23).
 - Christ really did die!
 - Buried
 - Punishment of sin is returning to the dust (Gen 3:19)
 - In Acts 2:22-36 Peter makes mention a few times of Christ's burial.
 - HC Q&A 4I his burial testifies that he really died.
 - "The burial of Christ served the purpose of removing the terrors of the grave for the redeemed and of sanctifying the grave for them."¹
 - Descent into Hell
 - HC Q&A 44

1. Berkhof, Manual, 192.

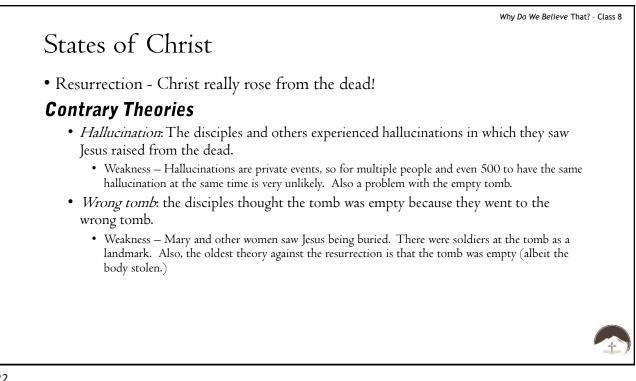


States of Christ

- Exaltation
 - Resurrection
 - Christ really rose from the dead!

Contrary Theories

- *Twin Theory* Jesus had an identical twin brother that nobody knew about who took Jesus' place on the cross.
 - Weakness The twin would have had to been in hiding for Jesus' whole life, and then somehow be the one to be crucified.
- *Stolen Body:* Jesus' followers stole his body. A theory that dates from the first century, in fact, Matt 28:11-15 records it.
 - Weakness Doesn't explain the disciple's actions. Jesus spoke of his resurrection, but they don't have the expectation that he would appear to them again physically. They initially scattered, but 50 days later they are preaching and they all became martyrs. There was a detachment of soldiers tasked to prevent this from happening.



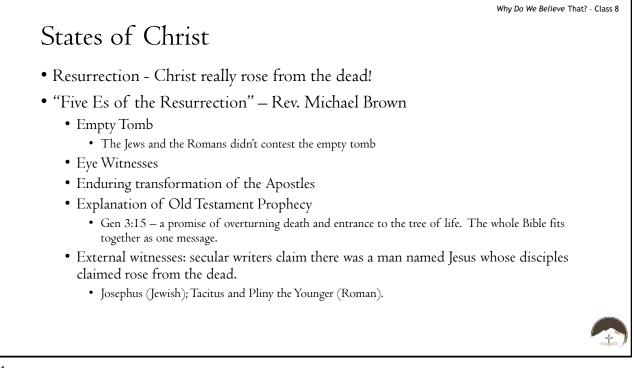
States of Christ

• Resurrection - Christ really rose from the dead!

Contrary Theories

- *Legend:* Jesus was never taken from the cross and was left to rot and be eaten by birds or his body was thrown into a common grave and scavenged by dogs. The disciples later realized what they could do with this information and still carry on his teaching. The Gospel accounts of the resurrection are just parables and symbols for an uneducated audience.
 - Weakness: claims that Jesus was indeed buried, and the oldest theory of a stolen body. There were too many historical details that could have been immediately proven true or false if the disciples simply made everything up. Such a made up story would not include suspicious elements in the story (i.e. the discovery by women whose testimonies would have meant nothing).
- *Alien theory*: Jesus was an alien from another planet with advanced knowledge of medicine and science. He had highly developed psychic abilities and what was natural to him looked supernatural to us (i.e. telepathy, healing himself, moving around unnoticed, teleportation, etc.).
 - Weakness: proved too much, anything could just be attributed to his being an alien and is therefore unfalsifiable.

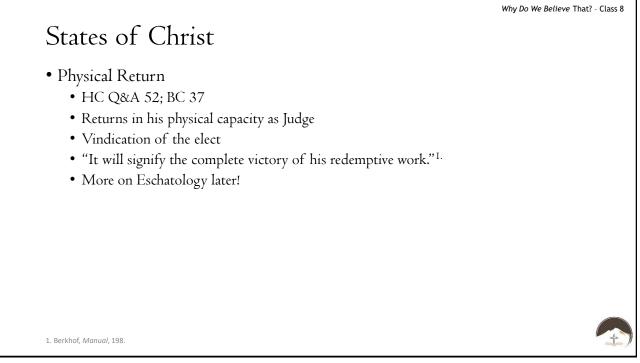




States of Christ

- Ascension
 - "Without the ascension... the biblical story as a whole would lack the outcome it demands." $^{\rm I}$
 - HC Q&A 46-49
 - Compare with Q&A 45. Why only one on the resurrection and four on the ascension?
 - *Extra calvinisticum* HC Q&A 48 "Christ's divinity is surely beyond the bounds of the humanity that has been taken on..."
 - Communicatio idiomatum
- Session
 - Christ's being seated at the right hand of God (figuratively)
 - HC Q&A 50-51

1. Douglas Farrow, Ascension and Ecclesia, 23.



Next Week

- More on Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons?
- Doctrine of the Holy Spirit