

Who is Christ? What is the Atonement? What is the Resurrection?

Objectives:

1. Who is Christ?
2. What is the Atonement?
3. What is the Resurrection?

Who is Christ?

- **BFC Article 4 - God The Son**

4-1 Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Word, the eternal and true God who is of one substance and equal with the Father. He took on Himself man's nature, with all of its essential properties except sin: Being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, He embodied two perfect and distinct natures in one person. He is truly God and truly man, the only mediator between God and man.

4-2 The Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation of God to man. In the days of His humiliation⁵ He lived a sinless life, performed miracles, taught the will of God, was crucified, and died. He was buried and arose bodily from the dead on the third day. The Lord Jesus offered Himself a sacrifice for sins, satisfied the justice of the Father, propitiated the wrath of God, reconciled God and man, and obtained an eternal inheritance.

4-3 The Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, from whence He had come, and was exalted, taking His place at the right hand of the Father, where He makes intercession on behalf of all who come to God through Him.

- **The Humanity of Jesus: Jesus is Fully Man**

- **Virgin Birth.** When we speak of the humanity of Christ it is appropriate to begin with a consideration of the virgin birth of Christ. Scripture clearly asserts that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:18, Lk 1:35)

- Why is the Virgin Birth an essential doctrine?
 - It shows that salvation ultimately must come from the Lord. Just as God had promised that the “seed” of the woman (Gen. 3:15) would ultimately destroy the serpent, so God brought it about by his own power, not through mere human effort. (Gal 4:4-5)
 - The virgin birth made possible the uniting of full deity and full humanity in one person. We understand his humanity from his ordinary birth through his mother, and we understand his deity from the miraculous conception in Mary’s womb by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

- The virgin birth also makes possible Christ's true humanity without inherited sin. This is why the angel said, "therefore the child to be born will be called holy." (Lk 1:35)
- To disbelieve the miracle of the virgin birth is to disbelieve the God of the Bible.
- Human Weaknesses and Limitations.
 - Jesus had a human body like ours in every respect.
 - He was born just as all human babies are born (Luke 2:7, 40, 52)
 - Jesus became tired and thirsty just as we do (John 4:6-7, Matt 4:2).
 - Jesus died and ceased to have life in it just as every human body. (Lk 23:46)
 - The resurrection body of Jesus while perfect was still a human body. (Jn 16:28, Lk 24:39, 50-51, Acts 1:9)
 - Jesus had a human mind.
 - The fact that Jesus "increased in wisdom" (Luke 2:52) says that he went through a learning process just as all other children do.
 - Jesus had a human soul and human emotions.
 - Jesus was "troubled" in spirit (Jn 12:27, 13:21). He "marveled" at the faith of the centurion (Matt. 8:10). He wept with sorrow at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35). His soul was "sorrowful, even to death" (Matt 26:38).
 - People nearest to Jesus saw him as only a man. Even his brothers did not believe Jesus was anything but a good man. (Jn 7:5)

"And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his own country he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" And they took offense at him.... And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." (Matt. 13:53-58)

- **Sinlessness.** Though the New Testament clearly affirms that Jesus was fully human just as we are, it also affirms that Jesus was different in one important respect: he was **without sin**, and he never committed sin during his lifetime.
 - We see that Satan was unable to tempt Jesus successfully, but failed, after forty days, to persuade him to sin: *"And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time"* (Luke 4:13).
 - Important verses about His sinlessness: Jn 8:12, 29, 46, 15:10, 18:38, Acts 2:27, 3:14, 4:30, 7:52, 13:35, Rom 8:3, 2 Cor 5:21, Heb 4:15, 7:26, 1 Pet 1:19,
- **Could Jesus have sinned?** Some people argue for the impeccability of Christ, in which the word impeccable means "not able to sin."
 - Scripture clearly affirms that Christ never actually sinned.
 - Scripture clearly affirms that Jesus was tempted, and that these were real temptations (Luke 4:2, Heb 4:15).
 - Scripture clearly affirms that "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13).

- **Why Was Jesus' Full Humanity Necessary?** When John wrote his first epistle, a heretical teaching was circulating in the church to the effect that Jesus was not a man. This heresy became known as *docetism*.
 - For Representative Obedience (Rom 5:18-19, 1 Cor 15:45-47).
 - To Be a Substitute Sacrifice (Heb 2:16-17).
 - To Be the One Mediator Between God and Men (1 Tim 2:5).
 - To Fulfill God's Original Purpose for Man to Rule Over Creation (Heb 2:8, Eph 1:22, Rev 3:21, 1 Cor 6:3).
 - To Be Our Example and Pattern in Life (1 Jn 2:6, 3:2-3, 2 Cor 3:18, Rom 8:29, 1 Pet 2:21, Heb 12:2, Phil 3:10).
 - To Be the Pattern for Our Redeemed Bodies (1 Cor 15:42-44, 15:23, 49, Col 1:18).
 - To Sympathize As High Priest (Heb 2:18, 4:15-16).
- **Jesus Will Be a Man Forever.** Jesus did not give up his human nature after his death and resurrection, for he appeared to his disciples as a man after the resurrection, even with the scars of the nail prints in his hands (John 20:25-27). He had "*flesh and bones*" (Luke 24:39) and ate food (Luke 24:41-42). Later, when he was talking with his disciples, he was taken up into heaven, still in his resurrected human body, and two angels promised that he would return in the same way: "*This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:11). Jesus did not temporarily become man, but his divine nature was permanently united to his human nature, and he lives forever as the eternal Son of God, but also as a man, the Messiah & Savior of his people.
- **The Deity of Jesus: Jesus is Fully God**
 - Incarnation: Though not a biblical term it does refer to the act of God the Son whereby he took to himself a human nature.
 - The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is fully God. (Is 9:6)

"For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily," (Col 2:9 ESV) [see also John 1:1; 1:18; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1.]
 - Jesus contemporaries called Him Lord. (Lk 1:43, 2:11, Matt 3:3, Ps 110:1, Mt 22:44, 1 Cor 8:6, Heb 1:10-12, Rev 19:16)
 - The word Κύριος is used to translate the name of the Lord 6,814 times in the Greek Old Testament.
 - Other strong claims to deity:
 - Jesus claimed to be God when He said He saw Abraham:

"So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple." (John 8:57-59 ESV)
 - Rev 22:13- "I am the Alpha & Omega, the first and the last, the beginning & the end." John 1:1, 14, Matt 26:64-66, Heb 1:1-4.

- Evidence that Jesus possessed attributes of deity: Omnipotence over nature (Matt 8:26-27, Jn 2:1-11), Eternity (Jn 8:58), Omniscience (Mk 2:8, Jn 1:48, Jn 6:64, Jn 16:30), Omnipresence (Mt 18:20, 28:20), Sovereignty (Mark 2:5-7, Matt 11:25-27), Immortality (Jn 2:19-22, 10:17-18, Heb 7:16), Worthy to be worshipped (Rev 19:10, Phil 2:9-11, Heb 1:6)
- Why was Jesus' deity necessary?
 - Only someone who is infinite God could bear the full penalty for all the sins of all those who would believe in him.
 - Salvation is from the Lord.
 - Only someone who was truly & fully God could be the one mediator between God and man.
- **The Incarnation of Jesus: Jesus is fully God & fully man in one person**
 - Jesus is fully God and fully man. What does this mean?
 - ***One person, two distinct natures: each nature will eternally retain their own properties, inseparably united in one person.***

Council of Chalcedon, 451: The purpose of this creed was to define what the church truly believed about the person of Christ in light of the many heretical teaching that were arising:

Apollinarianism, 361 AD: The one person of Christ had a human body but not a human mind or spirit. And that mind and spirit of Christ were from the divine nature of the Son of God. Apollinarianism was rejected by the church because mankind needed a savior who was fully man with a mind of a man in order to save and represent man.

Nestorianism, 428 AD: There were two separate persons in Christ, a human person and a divine person (Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde) contrary to Scripture that teaches Jesus is one person.

Eutychianism, 368-454 AD : Christ had one nature only (also known as "monophysitism"). Both natures of Christ were changed, as they were absorbed into a totally new nature. Rejected by the church because it was deemed that this new nature of Christ was neither human nor divine.

Chalcedonian Creed: "We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people 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 (μονογενῆ Θεόν), 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."

- This is the most amazing miracle in the entire Bible! “Remaining what he was, he became what he was not.” (Keeping His fully deity, and taking on full humanity)
- Religions that deny the deity of Christ: Jehovah Witnesses & Mormons.

What Is the Atonement?

- **Definition:** The work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation!
- **BFC Article 12 - Salvation**

12-1 Salvation is the work of God in which He reconciles fallen men to Himself, ultimately removes the consequences of the curse, and bestows upon His redeemed Creation the riches of His grace, all to His glory.

12-2 Salvation is offered in the gospel to all men and is accomplished in all the elect. It is received by grace through faith and the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, apart from works or human merit. Salvation centers in a person, Jesus Christ, and receiving Him includes the remission of sins on the grounds of His shed blood on the cross, the imputation of His perfect righteousness, the reception of the Holy Spirit, and the impartation of eternal life.

- **The Cause of the Atonement:** What was the ultimate cause that led to Christ’s work?
 - God’s love (Jn 3:16)
 - God’s justice

“...whom God put forward as propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to *show God’s righteousness*, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Rom 3:25-26 ESV)
- **The Necessity of the Atonement:** Was there any other way for God to save humanity?
 - Though it was not necessary for God to save anyone, in His love He chose to save some. (2 Pet 2:4 - God did not spare angels when they sinned)
 - Once God made that decision, His justice made it necessary for Christ to come. (Matt 26:39 - Jesus prayed - “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”” (Luke 24:26 ESV)

“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb 10:4; 9:12, 26 ESV)
 - Only the blood of Jesus would take away sins. (Heb 9:25-26)

- **The Nature of the Atonement**
 - Christ earned righteousness for those whom He redeemed by living a perfect, obedient, & righteous life: His “active obedience.” (1 Cor 1:30, Rom 5:19, Matt 3:15, Phil 3:9, 2 Cor 5:21)
 - Christ paid the penalty for our sins by suffering in our place: His “passive obedience.”
 - Suffering throughout his whole life (Mt 4:1-11, Heb 5:8, 12:3-4, Is 53:3).
 - Suffering the pain on the cross:
 - His physical pain & death. (Matt 26:38, Mark 15:24)
 - The pain of bearing sin. (Is 53:6, 12, Jn 1:29, 2 Cor 5:21, Gal 3:13, Heb 9:28, 1 Pet 2:24)
 - The abandonment by His disciples and even from God His Father. (Mt 26:56, 27:46)
 - Bearing the very wrath of God against sin (“propitiation”). (Rom 3:25-26, Heb 2:17, 1 Jn 2:2, 4:10)
 - God the Father Himself inflicted this penalty & suffering. (Is 53:6, 10, Rom 5:8)
 - This suffering was not a perpetual and eternal suffering but a complete payment made once & for all. (Is 53:11, Jn 19:30, Heb 9:25-28) This is contrary to the Catholic teaching about the mass as a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ.
 - Very often the blood of Christ is referred to as the judicial payment for our redemption. (1 Peter 1:18-19, Heb 10:19)
 - Christ’s death was a “substitutionary” payment.
 - The Bible speaks of the atonement in four different ways:
 - **Sacrifice:** Christ died as a sacrifice for us. (Heb 9:26)
 - **Propitiation:** Christ died to remove the wrath of God we deserved. (1 Jn 4:10)
 - **Reconciliation:** Christ died to overcome our separation from God to bring us back into fellowship with God. (2 Cor 5:18-19)
 - **Redemption:** Because we were in bondage to sin & Satan, we needed someone to provide redemption and thereby ‘redeem’ us out of that bondage so as to make a ‘ransom’ payment to God the Father. (Mk 10:45, Col 1:13)
 - We must reject **The Ransom to Satan Theory** held by Origen (185-254 AD)
 - We must reject **The Moral Influence Theory** promoted by Peter Abelard (1079-1142) who denied the need for God’s payment and saw the cross simply as a moral lesson of God’s love to sinners.
 - We must reject **The Example Theory** promoted by the Socinians (1539-1604) who taught that the cross only teaches us how to live in light of Christ’s example of obedience and a horrible death.
 - We must reject **The Governmental Theory** promoted by Grotius (1583-1645) that taught that the cross which was simply God’s demonstration of the fact that his laws had been broken and that as the moral lawgiver and governor of the universe some kind of penalty would be required.

- **The Extent of the Atonement:** Was Christ's atonement limited?
 - Universal Atonement: All people will be saved by the sacrifice of Christ.
 - Limited Atonement: Only those who believe will be saved.
 - **General Redemption:** Christ died generally for all, but only believers will be saved. (Jn 1:29, 3:16, Jn 6:51, 2 Cor 5:19, 1 Jn 2:2, 1 Tim 2:6, Heb 2:9)
 - **Particular Redemption:** Christ died only for the believing elect, a particular people that he foreknew, and a particular people who were given to Him by His Father. (Jn 10:11, 15, Acts 20:28, Rom 8:33-4, Eph 5:25, Jn 6:37-39, Jn 17:9, 20, Rom 5:8-10, Gal 3:13)

What Is the Resurrection?

- **BFC Article 24 - Resurrection**

24-1 The bodily resurrection of Christ is the basis for the resurrection of man. At the return of the Lord the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised, and the living believers will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. Believers will, at the resurrection, receive spiritual and immortal bodies like Christ's own glorious body.

24-2 The event of the resurrection is divided into two stages, separated by a period of a thousand years and differing in respect to both their subjects and their issues. The first resurrection includes only the righteous dead. The second resurrection is universal and occurs at the close of the millennium when all the unregenerate dead are raised to be brought before the great White Throne for judgment.

- **Evidence of the Resurrection**

- The Gospels contain abundant testimony to the resurrection of Christ. (Matt 28:1-20, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-53, Jn 20:1-21:25). The book of Acts & Revelation speak of indisputable evidence of Christ's resurrection.
- Not only were all the Apostles eyewitnesses of the resurrection but over 500 people saw the resurrected Christ. (1 Cor 15:6)

- **The Nature of the Resurrection**

- The resurrection body was a transformed body. Christ's resurrection was not just a coming back from the dead like Lazarus who was still subject to weakness & aging and eventually died again. As the "first fruits" (1 Cor 15:0, 23), Jesus rose from the dead with a new kind of human life, a life in which his body was made perfect, no longer subject to weakness, aging, or death, but able to live eternally. His body "put on immortality" and was raised "imperishable....in glory...in power....a spiritual body." (1 Cor 15:42-44)
- The resurrection body was His original body. While Jesus did not look exactly like He did before, there was certainly continuity between his physical body before His death

- and after His resurrection. His original body was restored to its full youthful appearance of perfect health. (Jn 20:20)
- The resurrection body was not a spirit but rather a physical spiritual body. Jesus could be touched and handled. He also could eat. (Mt 28:9, Luke 24:30, 39, Jn 20:27)
 - **The Source of the Resurrection**
 - Scripture teaches that the Father raised Jesus from the dead. (Acts 2:24, Rom 6:4, 1 Cor 6:14, Gal 1:1, Eph 1:20)
 - Scripture also teaches that Jesus had a part in His own resurrection. (Jn 10:17-18, 11:25, Heb 7:16)
 - **The Significance of the Resurrection**
 - Christ's resurrection insures our regeneration. (1 Pet 1:3) Our spirits are made alive with the resurrection power of Jesus. (Eph 2:5-6) We also have the power of the resurrected Christ at work within us, sanctifying us and empowering us for ministry. (Eph 1:19-20, Rom 6:4, 11, 14, 1 Cor 15:17, Acts 1:8)
 - Christ's resurrection insures our justification. (Rom 4:25) Raising Jesus from the dead was the approval of God the Father that the penalty of sin had been fully paid. Since God 'raised us up with him' (Eph 2:6) by virtue of our union with Christ, God's declaration of approval of Christ is also his declaration of his approval of us.
 - Christ's resurrection insures that we will receive perfect resurrection bodies as well. (1 Cor 6:14, 2 Cor 4:14, 1 Cor 15:12-58)
 - **Jesus' Ascension**
 - Christ ascended to a certain place in heaven. (Luke 24:50-51)
 - Christ received glory and honor that had not been His before as the God-Man. (Jn 17:5, Acts 2:33, Phil 2:9, 1 Tim 3:16, Rev 5:12)
 - Christ was seated at God's right hand signifying the completion of His redeeming work, & His authority over the universe. (Ps 110:1, Heb 1:3, Eph 1:20-21, 1 Peter 3:22, Acts 2:33, 7:56)
 - The significance of Christ's ascension
 - Christ's going up into heaven foreshadows our future ascension into heaven with him. (1 Thess 4:17, Jn 14:3)
 - Christ's ascension gives us assurance that our final home will be in heaven with him. (Jn 14:2-3)
 - Because of our union with Christ in his ascension, we are able to share now (in part) in Christ's authority over the universe and we will later share in it more fully. (Eph 2:6, 1 Cor 6:3, Heb 2:5-8, Rev 2:26-27, 3:21)