

A Historical and Theological Examination of Christ's Nature and Work

Leonard Ndzi

Email: ndzigracebaptist@gmail.com

Abstract

The article examines historical and contemporary perspectives on Christ's dual nature as fully divine and human, highlighting key historical and theological debates and interpretations. It discusses the implications of Christ's role in human salvation and how Christ's nature informs the understanding of God's revelation and the believer's faith experience. It also addresses the impact of Christology on ethical teachings and the lived experiences of Christians. Christ's life and teachings are the foundation for orthodox belief, personal character, ethical system, and faithful Christian living. By synthesizing diverse theological viewpoints and contemporary discussions, the article aims to provide an understanding of Christ's significance in historical and modern contexts, inviting readers to reflect on the profound implications of Christ's existence for individual believers and the broader Christian community.

Keywords: Christology, Humanity of Christ, Divinity of Christ, the Work of Christ, Hypostatic Union

Introduction

Christology is central to the Christian faith and belief, as it explains the incarnation, the person, and the salvation work of Jesus Christ.¹ The Early Church had to address controversies concerning the doctrine of Christ to safeguard the correct doctrine. The paper starts with a historical presentation of Christology and the theological debates and councils that shaped Christian understanding of the doctrine. It notes that the Nicene Creed (AD 325) affirmed Christ's humanity and deity, later strengthened by the Chalcedonian clarification of his dual nature. The paper also reflects on the theological articulation of the identity of Christ and contemporary views related to the doctrine.

¹ Hahn, Ferdinand. 2022. *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*. Translated by Harold Knight, and George Ogg. James Clarke Publishers.



Historical Development of Christology

Since the beginning of the church, a significant area of study in Christian theology has been Christology. Essential discussions and councils during the early decades of Christianity, such as the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) and the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), can be used to track the historical development of Christology. In these councils, fundamental issues about the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ were discussed and documented in creeds. Different theological stances and interpretations of Christ's character have developed over time among various Christian denominations, thus influencing and enriching Christological thoughts.

Early Christological Controversies and Debates

The early Christological controversies and debates were the rudimentary foundation for understanding Christ's nature and the self-identity of members of the early Christian community. The Arian controversy in the fourth century argued that God the Father and Jesus Christ are not the same in time and personhood.² Athanasius opposed the Arian doctrine that humanized the Trinity of God.³ He asserted the equality of the Son and the Father by opposing Arianism and upholding the doctrine of the Trinity. Whether Christ is the *same* or *similar* to God led to the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, resulting in the Nicene Creed that affirmed the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son and condemned Arianism as heresy.⁴ To this day, the Nicene Creed, expressing the belief in the full divinity of Christ, serves as a statement that reaffirms the apostolic heritage and forms the foundation of opposing heretical movements.⁵

The Arian controversy persisted and sparked questions about Christ's nature and whether he was God. Nestorian controversy focused on the relationship between Christ's human and divine natures.⁶ This necessitated the Council of Ephesus, which condemned Nestorianism in AD 431 and affirmed the two natures. Cyril of Alexandria fought against any notion of disunity between Christ's person while insisting on the distinctions between his divinity and humanity. The Monophysite controversy stressed the divine nature of Christ to the extent of not recognizing the two natures. The Chalcedonian statement set a standard for comprehending and expressing

² Lindheimer, Marshall D., Robert N. Taylor, James M. Roberts, F. Gary Cunningham, and Leon Chesley. 2015. "Introduction, History, Controversies, and Definitions." In *Chesley's Hypertensive Disorders in Pregnancy*, pp. 1–24. Academic Press.

³ Stead, Christopher. 1994. "Arianism in Modern Research." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 45(1): 24–36.

⁴ Fernández, Samuel. 2016. "The Council of Nicaea and its Reception." *Teología y vida* 57(2): 297–303.

⁵ Rushdoony, Rousas John. 2009. *The Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church*. Chalcedon Foundation.

⁶ Panicker, Naveen John. 2024. "Nestorianism." In *Christianity*, pp. 581–584. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.



Christ's double nature to avoid the extremes of both Nestorianism and Monophysitism. Chalcedonian affirmation brought clarity concerning Christ's divine and human natures and, at the same time, provided a theological framework for analyzing the mystery of the Incarnation.⁷

The Nature of Christ

Comprehending Christ's dual nature as fully human and fully divine (hypostatic union) is essential to comprehending Christology.

Incarnation of Christ

Incarnation refers to God taking on human form and living among people.⁸ Jesus took human flesh, becoming Man while retaining His divine identity. It is a mystery that surpasses human minds and probing abilities but communicates the boundless nature of God's love and mercy. In Philippians 2:6–7, the Apostle Paul captures the essence of this mystery when he brings up the concept of Kenosis, referring to Christ emptying himself.⁹

Before his incarnation, Christ perpetually coexisted as the Son of God.¹⁰ He who was high above submitted himself and became human to bring salvation. John declares, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14, NIV), emphasizing the radical character of the incarnation as the self-revelation of God in human form.¹¹ The chasm between heaven and earth is crossed by the transcendent God's close entry into the impermanent domain of human existence in Christ. The incarnation of Christ is a profound truth that affirms the goodness of material creation, for God himself voluntarily took human flesh.¹² It also supports the idea that Christ is with us in our moments of happiness, grief, and human struggle because he shares them with us. In this respect, incarnation touches upon the continuity of the Old Testament and the New Testament, the latter of which is the meaning of God's promise of his

⁷ Winkler, Dietmar W. 2023. "Post-Chalcedonian Conflicts in Egypt: On the Historical Context and the Orthodoxy of Timothy Aelurus (457–477)." In *Erica CD Hunter (ed.), Šalmūtā Šapīrtā: Festschrift for Rifaat Y. Ebied in honour of his contributions to Semitic Studies*, pp. 87-99. Gorgias Press.

⁸ Crisp, Oliver D. 2019. "On the Vicarious Humanity of Christ." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 21(3): 235–250.

⁹ Jowers, Dennis W. 2006. "The Meaning of MORFH in Philippians 2:6–7." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49(4): 739.

¹⁰ Barua, Ankur. 2012. "Myth as Metaphysics: The Christian Saviour and the Hindu Gods." *Sophia* 51(3): 379–393.

¹¹ Talbert, C. H. 2011. "Chapter Seven. 'And The Word Became Flesh': When? (1993)" In *The Development of Christology during the First Hundred Years*, pp. 131–141, Brill.

¹² Crisp, Oliver D. 2007. *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*. Vol. 5. Cambridge University Press.



presence and salvation.¹³ In addition, the incarnation of Christ demonstrates God's goal of rebuilding relationships between humans and Himself and restoring all things.

Theological Perspectives on the Hypostatic Union

The hypostatic union refers to Christ's divine and human nature in one person, united irreversibly without combining, confusion, departure, or separation of these two natures.¹⁴ This affirms the mystery of the dual nature of Christ the God and Christ the Man, not in two distinct persons of Christ, but in the one person of Christ. The Chalcedon Council in AD 451, the fourth ecumenical council, formulated a definitive stance on the incarnation and Christological union, declaring that Christ was "truly God and truly man, by nature rational soul and body; consubstantial of the Father according to divinity, and consubstantial with us according to humanity."¹⁵

The Chalcedonian definition of hypostatic union was a significant milestone, but it did not stop theological explanations and speculations about the term. Throughout history, diverse issues and disputes arose concerning the implications of this identity, for instance, the connection between the divine and human wills and the scope of his everyday human experiences.¹⁶ These debates resulted in the refinement of theological positions on the nature of Christ's duality as divine and fully human.

The hypostatic union is critical for Christology because it affirms the entirety of Christ's personality. This union thus makes the accomplishment of Christ's salvific work effective because only the divine-human mediator could cover—with his sacrifice—the estrangement between a sinner and God and have a place to start from redemption. Furthermore, the hypostatic union becomes an essential basis for personal and experiential knowledge about Christ becoming the transcendent Son of God and immanent, the Saviour sharing our human condition. Thus, the hypostatic union is a crucial component of the Christian faith, establishing a structure for interpreting Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.

¹³ Martin, Dale B. 2017. *Biblical Truths: The Meaning of Scripture in the Twenty-First Century*. Yale University Press.

¹⁴ Cross, Richard. 1996. "Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation." *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 60(2): 171–202.

¹⁵ Price, Richard, and Mary Whitby. 2009. "The Council of Chalcedon (451): A Narrative." *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700*. Liverpool University Press, 70–91.

¹⁶ Kurtz, Ronni. 2018. "The Soteriological Significance of B. B. Warfield's Doctrine of Hypostatic Union: An Exploration in his Redemptive Polemics" *Biblical and Theological Studies Faculty Presentation*, Cedaville University.



Exploring Christ's Dual Nature

Christ's divine nature embodies His eternal existence as the Son of God. He shares the same essential and all-encompassing traits as the Father.¹⁷ The Nicene Creed states, "Christ is begotten rather than made of one being with the Father." The sentence affirms Christ's eternal generation and co-equal status with the Father. The divine attributes put Christ above creation in qualities like supremacy, almightiness, and omnipotence.

Christ embraced human nature in addition to the divine. He was born of the Virgin Mary and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, shared our physical limitations, emotions, and earthly lives, but not sin.¹⁸ The Gospels reveal Christ's humanity, including his hunger, fatigue, compassion, and emotions. Through Christ's incarnation, he demonstrated how much he empathized with human weaknesses, creating a lasting connection with God and humanity. The character of Christ, while manifesting human and divine natures that are not one and mutual, remains the eternal Son of God; his divinity is not compromised.¹⁹ Therefore, Christ unites his two natures without confusion, alteration, division, or separation. Christ's unity as God and man enables him to mediate between God and humanity, reconciling them through his sacrifice and resurrection.

The Salvation Work of Christ

The incarnation of Christ brought salvation to humanity. The death of Christ on the cross demonstrates his eternal love, forgiveness, and redemption for human beings. He becomes the mediator between God and humankind.

Redemptive Mission

Christian theology emphasizes that the essence of Christ's redemption is the liberation of humanity from sin, the most fundamental problem affecting humankind. Redemption is a winning out of slavery, and it is based on re-establishing the relationship between God and humanity in the light of the death of Jesus the Saviour.²⁰ Many atonement theories aim to show the relevance of sacrificial death in re-establishing the original relationship between God and

¹⁷ Bennett, David. 2016. "The Nicene Creed: Symbol of the Catholic Faith." *Ancient and Future Catholics Blog*.

¹⁸ Ahn, Ho-Jin. 2012. "The Humanity of Christ: John Calvin's Understanding of Christ's Vicarious Humanity." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65(2): 145–158.

¹⁹ Torrance, Thomas F. 2016. *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

²⁰ Noble, I. 2018. Essays in Ecumenical Theology I: Aims, Methods, Themes, and Contexts. In *Essays in Ecumenical Theology I*, Brill.



humanity. The satisfaction theory postulates that Christ's death pleases divine justice by paying a price that human beings offended, consequently bringing back a disturbed relationship between God and humanity.²¹ The doctrine of atonement, vicarious and comparable to a substitute, points out that Christ took, on our behalf, all the judgment due to humanity's sinfulness. According to the moral influence theory, Christ's humble life and instruction allow people to rediscover their nature and how to mend their relationship with God.

The crucifixion of Christ, which symbolizes the climax of his redemption, is the perfect sacrificial gesture since he gladly offered himself to save humankind from their sins. His defeat not only vanquished death but also conquered the power of sin, enabling anyone who believe in him to claim victory.²² Another essential aspect of Christ's resurrection is the victory over death. Furthermore, this demonstrates Christ's power to subdue the power of death and provide hope to all who believe in him.

Christ as the Mediator between God and Humanity

By offering a sacrifice, the high priest, positioned between God and humanity, fosters a connection between believers and God. One essential ministry that Christ performed as a High Priest was through prayers and petitions to the Father, requiring him to pray for mercy and forgiveness on behalf of sinful people.²³ Therefore, Christ's intercession ensures that the faithful believe in the power of his saving act and receive God's favor and grace in their lives.

The New Testament presents Christ as the sole mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2:5).²⁴ Christ's mediation, surpassing mere prayer, fulfills the purpose of uniting humans with God. Christ's involvement in the human race, through his death and resurrection, has eliminated the sin that previously separated human beings from God, thus bringing unity and reconciliation. Christ's mediation presents the hope of forgiveness, redemption, and final salvation for every person who seeks God's salvation by faith. In his role as mediator, Christ's work is not merely an inspiring example to follow but rather a fulfillment of the role assigned to

²¹ Schmiechen, Peter. 2005. *Saving power: Theories of Atonement and Forms of the Church*. Wm. B. Eerdmans.

²² Paulson, Steven D., and Nicholas Hopman. 2016. "Christ, the Hated God." *Lutheran Quarterly* 30(1): 1–27.

²³ Kvidahl, Clifford B., and Dan Liroy. "'You are a Priest Forever': An Exegetical and Biblical Theology of High Priestly Christology." *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 29(1): 40–60.

²⁴ Schreiner, Thomas R. 2016. *Women in the Church. An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2: 9–15*. Wheaton Crossway.



humanity that we cannot accomplish on our own.²⁵ This teaches believers the significance of the mediatorial role in Christian faith and practice.

Christ as the Embodiment of Divine Love, Grace, and Truth

The incarnation of Christ serves as the ultimate expression of God's love for humanity, as the eternal Word becomes flesh and dwells among us (John 1:1). In the person of Christ, God shows the depths of his kindness and the way to make things right in a broken world by sacrificing his life for human sins.²⁶ The fact that Christ took human nature shows how boundless God's love is in redeeming humanity. In his ministry, Christ expressed grace and truth in action, granting forgiveness to sinners and confronting hypocrisy.²⁷ He demonstrated the sanctifying effect of God's grace and truth, which transforms the entirety of a person from the inside out and destroys the captivity of the human will to sin. Christ's life is the ultimate model of moral living, guiding people to emulate his compassion, love, and righteousness. Christ's teachings, like the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5), instruct Christians to conform to God's will.²⁸

The Significance of Christ's Salvific Work

Christ's redemptive turpitude is at its heart, known in reconciliation and salutation. The conviction that Christ is the only basis for salvation is critical.²⁹ His death and victorious resurrection serve as the sole means for humans to break free from their enslavement, thereby offering them forgiveness of sin and the opportunity to establish a harmonious relationship with their Creator. Christ's fundamental work as Savior of humanity demonstrates the indivisible element and significance of Christology and soteriology, emphasizing Christ's significant role and contribution to human salvation.

Furthermore, Christ, in his incarnation, reveals God's nature and character, manifesting divine attributes filled with the inspiration of love, grace, mercy, and truth.³⁰ Through him, the entire majesty of God is manifested. Christ embodies the human quality divinely, serving as the

²⁵ De Lacey, Douglas R. 1987. "Jesus as mediator." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 9(29): 101–121.

²⁶ Huizenga, Annette Bourland. 2016. *1–2 Timothy, Titus*. Vol. 53. Liturgical Press.

²⁷ Synan, Vinson. 2018. *The Truth about Grace*. Charisma Media.

²⁸ Birch, Bruce C., Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, and Larry L. Rasmussen. 2018. *Bible and ethics in the Christian life: a new conversation*. Fortress Press.

²⁹ Steiner, Rudolf. 2004. *From Jesus to Christ*. Rudolf Steiner Press.

³⁰ Veldman, Meredith. 2017. "'Dressed in an Angel's Nightshirt': Jesus and the BBC." *Journal of British Studies* 56(1): 117–137.



pinnacle of divine existence. Accordingly, Christ interacts with the Father and the Holy Spirit.³¹ Christ's life and teachings are the foundation for the ethical system, personal character, and motivation for Christian living. The notion that one should "imitate" or "emulate" Christ constitutes the main thought of imitating Christ in realizing Christ's moral and ethical example in ordinary life.³² The tenets of Christ's loving, compassionate, forgiving, and just life become the basic discipleship principles for Christians, motivating them to manifest their faith daily. The disciples did as Christ taught, setting an ethical compass for the church through practical life.³³ The implications of Christ extend beyond abstract theoretical conceptions among theologians, embracing every aspect of Christianity and uniting believers on their faith and discipline journey.

Christology and the Trinitarian Doctrine

Jesus' nature and his eternal Sonship to the Father are an inseparable unit within the borders of the Trinity.³⁴ Christology establishes the interface between his divinity and eternal Sonship.

The immanent Trinity is a term that indicates the internal and external relationship between the distinct persons of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, meaning that they share the qualities of equal authority, eternity, and sameness.³⁵ However, each person is entirely separate and different from the other and has a single divine essence. Christology shows that the divine complex is not made up of two separate parts because there is only one person.³⁶ In the economic Trinity, Jesus Christ bestows mercy on the world through salvation. Christ, the Son, discloses the Lord's plan for humanity and his creation.

Jesus Christ, as the Eternal Son, physically manifests this relationship in His earthly life but still retains unity with the Godhead.³⁷ This allows us to observe the boundless nature of love, which transcends spiritual or doctrinal boundaries and illuminates the church's sacramental and

³¹ McLaren, Brian D. 2007. *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change Everything*. Thomas Nelson.

³² Borg, Nicola Jane. 2011. "The Role of the Virtues in Christian Discipleship in James Keenan SJ and William Spohn: A Comparative Investigation," Masters Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia.

³³ Hecht, David Wolfe. 2018. *A Discourse Analysis of Colossians 1: 28 and a Process for Discipleship in Paul's Letter to the Colossians*. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

³⁴ McCall, Thomas H. 2013. "The Trinity." In *The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought*, pp. 493-502. Routledge.

³⁵ Cross, Richard. 2002. "Two Models of the Trinity?." *The Heythrop Journal* 43(3): 275–294.

³⁶ Doran, Robert M. 2012. *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*. Vol. 1. University of Toronto Press.

³⁷ Kasemann, Ernst. 2017. *The Testament of Jesus: A study of the Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17*. Vol. 6. Wipf and Stock Publishers.



practical life. For instance, when believers participate in the Eucharist's retelling of Christ's sacrifice, it feels as though the divine scheme itself encompasses them, mystically and materially connecting them to the salvation story.³⁸ The Holy Spirit, sometimes called the Spirit of Christ, is characteristic of Christian theology and doctrine. The Spirit gives Christ glory, and His completion of the salvation mission manifests the Spirit's work.

Christ's influence does not stop at the Church's creed and hymns; it permeates all aspects of a faithful Christian life. It mirrors the Christian liturgy in a profoundly interconnected way, not only remembering Christ's life events—death, resurrection, and ascension—but also making them present in the symbolic actions of the liturgy.³⁹ The community responds to the expressions of hymnal and doxology, which reveal the impression of the incarnate Word, with gratitude for the mystery of the incarnation and the following salvation. In addition, Christological ideals shape Christian ethics, where Jesus' life and teachings become the basis for leading a moral and ethical life.⁴⁰ He provides the most prominent and direct example of compassion, justice, love, and godliness that helps believers direct their decisions and interactions as Christ did. Christians believe that they can never be too close to the image and virtues of Christ when it comes to fulfilling God's plan.

Christology focuses on the message of Jesus Christ's saving grace, exemplified in His grace and restoration, and calls believers to be faithful witnesses to His teachings. Christ's works demonstrate a significant component of incarnation, which centers on meeting, supporting, and understanding individuals from diverse backgrounds.⁴¹ Bringing God's Word to various cultures mainly reflects the spreading of the gospel, which is an example of the love and humility of Christ. At the same time, since the world is becoming more diverse, the Christological doctrine calls upon Christians to communicate Jesus Christ's truth so that people of different cultural groups and religious backgrounds can share and benefit from God's salvation. The understanding

³⁸ Benedict, X. V. I. 2007. "Sacramentum Caritatis: Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission." In *Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*.

³⁹ Kapic, Kelly M., and Wesley Vander Lugt. 2007. "The ascension of Jesus and the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Patristic Perspective: A Theological Reading." *Evangelical Quarterly: An International Review of Bible and Theology* 79(1): 23–33.

⁴⁰ Cerbus, Laura. 2024. "The beauty of the body and the ascension: A reclamation and subversion of physical beauty." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 77(2): 138–148.

⁴¹ Burger, Hans. 2024. *Jesus Christ, Hermeneutics, and Scripture: From Epistemology to Soteriology*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.



of the Trinity not only leads to a deeper knowledge of the nature of God, but it also extends to practical matters of faith.⁴² It offers the chance to develop a relationship with the Triune God.

Contemporary Perspectives and Debates

The current perspectives and conversations in Christological studies include the identity and nature of Jesus Christ in modern religious, cultural, and philosophical contexts. It includes issues related to the historical Jesus, the development of Christology in early Christianity, the relationship between faith and reason, and the relevance of Christ for interfaith understanding and human experience.

A Christology in Ecumenical Dialogues and Interfaith Encounters

Christology is essential in discussions between Christians from diverse confessional traditions or inter-religious dialogues where multiple religions view Jesus as significant.⁴³ Using the Chalcedonian definition as an example, the ecumenical statements aim to resolve contradictions by establishing a biblical teaching that the entire Christian society can share. The Christian views on Jesus differ from one faith tradition to the other. For instance, in Islam Jesus is considered a prophet but not divine; in Judaism, Jesus is only viewed as a historical figure and not the prophet.⁴⁴ Usually, the dialogue does not dwell on the difficulties and divergent interpretations.⁴⁵ However, religious conversations enrich and deepen theological development.

Challenges and Debates in Modern Christological Thought

Many modern perspectives, including atheism, rationalism, naturalism, and historical sensibility, question Christology and attempt to alter the traditional models. Feminist and liberationist theologians view traditional Christological appellations as having patriarchal value.⁴⁶ These critiques argue that Christology should stress Jesus' radical inclusivity and his opposition to the dominant social beliefs, proposing a Christology that tests against the established social powers while bringing social justice and equality. Postmodernists also disagree with the traditional view

⁴² Power, David N., and Michael Downey. 2012. *Living the justice of the triune God*. Liturgical Press.

⁴³ Afayori, Robert. 2016. "Christology in Christian-Muslim Dialogue: The Hermeneutics of Interreligious Dialogue for the Promotion of Common Values." (2016). Masters Thesis, University of Edinburgh.

⁴⁴ Waardenburg, Jacques. 2013. "Christians, Muslims, Jews, and their Religions." In *Islam and Other Religions*, pp. 1–21. Routledge.

⁴⁵ Andrabi, Abroo Aman. 2020. "Interfaith Dialogue: Its Need, Importance and Merits in the Contemporary World." *International Journal Of Academic Studies* 2(3): 264–271.

⁴⁶ Magezi, Christopher, and Jacob T. Igba. 2018. "African theology and African Christology: Difficulty and Complexity in Contemporary Definitions and Methodological Frameworks." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 74(1).



of Christ's absolute claims. They argue that these claims are false because metanarratives show a universalist philosophy, which rules out other possible Christian worldviews and human experiences of the Divine.⁴⁷ The writers of the Synoptic Gospels not only reinforce Christological ideas but also provide an opposing view. The critiques stimulate a re-evaluation of Christological assertions, leading to a pluralistic approach that welcomes multiple interpretations of the nature of Christ and His mission. Theological answers to these challenges are heterogeneous, ranging from the simple endorsement of traditional historical doctrines to the innovative and constructive theological deconstruction that tries to integrate these critical ideas without losing the core message of Christianity and the significance of the work of Christ.

Christological Interpretations and Their Implications

Due to the global and multicultural nature of modern Christianity, there appear to be different ways of interpreting Christ's image that are peculiar to particular cultures and social orders. Contextually, Christologies such as Black, liberation, and feminist theologies displace the central notions of faith from established structures, reinventing them to address injustice and distinguish Jesus' life and mission from the angles of struggle and emancipation.⁴⁸ For instance, liberation theology interprets Christ as a liberator who supports the oppressed. In contrast, Black Theology sees his fighting as a means to unravel the entanglement of racism in our society.⁴⁹ These perspectives bring into play the current reality of our experience, making Christology come alive to the challenges present in this generation.

A high view of Christology should challenge culture and tradition to uproot social evils. Nevertheless, this diversity eventually brings speculation on theological pluralism and the issue of finding common ground among the variety of Christological insights into sharp focus. Consequently, the work that pastors, theologians, and church leaders should sustain is the one that recognizes and creatively challenges this diversity of perspectives in such a way that enables them to foster both a unified and a diverse way of thinking about Christology, allowing them to serve faithfully through what increasingly becomes more complex questions in modern life.

Practical Implications of Christology

⁴⁷ McGlasson, Paul C. 2019. *Invitation to Dogmatic Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

⁴⁸ Ezigbo, Victor I. 2008. "Contextualizing the Christ-event: A Christological Study of the Interpretations and Appropriations of Jesus Christ in Nigerian Christianity," Masters Thesis, University of Edinburgh.

⁴⁹ Clark, Adam. 2013. "Honoring the Ancestors: Toward an Afrocentric Theology of Liberation." *Journal of Black Studies* 44(4): 376–394.



A sound Christology enlivens and affects how Christians live out their faith in the world while deepening their theological understanding.

Christological Foundations for Worship and Liturgy

Christology primarily concerns Jesus Christ's role in overall religious worship; therefore, the liturgy focuses on Jesus Christ in all Christian religious practices. Thus, during the Eucharist, believers reenact the Passion and the Last Supper ritual in which Jesus instituted the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine as symbols of His body and blood, which were sacrificed for the salvation of humanity.⁵⁰ This highlights the Lord's death and resurrection as the cornerstone of our Christian faith. Similarly, psalms and doxologies reflect and reverberate Christological depth because they sing praises to the incarnate Word.⁵¹ Individuals begin to comprehend that Christ's invaluable deeds and sacrifices are digestible through practicing the hymns' verses. This awareness has the value of placing a high premium on liturgical practices, which are not mere commemorations but provide ongoing experience with Christ, an effort to help an individual live a more experiential relationship with Him.

Christological Ethics: Living Christ-Like Way

Social justice, one of the central issues of the Christological ethic, is directly associated with the kingdom of God, where people unite, owners count, and rules count.⁵² Christians are encouraged to stand up for social justice and commit to an equal society by attempting to emulate Jesus' mission, which advocated for a more equitable society. Jesus' teachings on his engagement with the poor and the oppressed significantly contribute to Christological ethics.⁵³ This model pushes Christians to act with compassion, offering care as a physical expression of the love of God for humanity. Christlikeness means that Christian worshippers must use the gospels as a moral compass in tracing Jesus' life and words to address ethical and moral perplexities in modern-day society.

Christology in Mission and Evangelism

Christology, which aims to prove and witness to the gospel of Christ, profoundly forms the foundation of the missionary and evangelistic nature of Christianity. It includes preaching about

⁵⁰ Hahn, Ferdinand. 2022. *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*. James Clarke.

⁵¹ Loke, Andrew Ter Ern. 2017. *The Origin of Divine Christology*. Vol. 169. Cambridge University Press.

⁵² Trozzo, Lindsey. 2020. "Elevated Christology and Elusive Ethics: Unity and Identity in the Gospel according to John." In *Johannine Christology*, pp. 260–306. Brill.

⁵³ Dean, Debra J., and Robert B. Huizinga. 2022. "Following in the Footsteps of Jesus: Conclusion." In *Followership and Faith at Work: Biblical Perspectives*, pp. 263–266. Cham: Springer International Publishing.



Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and coming back—central Christian doctrines that form Christians' beliefs. By identifying with the culture and context of the mission fields, missionaries serve with the same humility and dedication as Christ, embodying the incarnation of mission work.⁵⁴ This approach necessitates a profound and genuine empathy, considering the emotions of those who have endured poverty and suffering and embracing them with the same compassion that Jesus Christ would have shown. Furthermore, by communicating the Christological truth across cultural boundaries, missionaries face the challenge of presenting the gospel through culturally sensitive methods so that the message of Christ is understood and embraced according to the cultural background, yet with a respectful and meaningful way of expression.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The paper discussed the dimensions of Christ's identity, work, and significance within the broad scope of Christian theology. The ecumenical church councils addressed the nature of Christ against various heresies. It affirmed the deity and humanity of Christ, thus formulating a creedal response to erroneous and unbiblical beliefs. In contemporary society, Christology has to deal with profound challenges arising from cultural shifts, scientific progress, and global contacts. Still, the "new" issues cause Christians to rethink their teachings and proclaim Christ's significance today and in the future. The practical significance of Christology for liturgy, ethics, mission, and evangelism shows that it is not just the guiding belief for people's lives individually but also the cornerstone of ensuring their communities bear witness to the justice, compassion, and reconciliation the Christ taught. The doctrine of Christ calls on believers to be faithful in life and witness. Christ's identity and work encourage deeper, more profound knowledge and experience of his presence and power in believers' lives.

⁵⁴ Plantinga, Richard J., Thomas R. Thompson, and Matthew D. Lundberg. 2022. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Cambridge University Press.

⁵⁵ McGrath, Alister E. 2016. *Christian theology: An Introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.



Bibliography

- Afayori, Robert. 2016. “Christology in Christian-Muslim Dialogue: The Hermeneutics of Interreligious Dialogue for the Promotion of Common Values.” Masters Thesis, University of Edinburgh.
- Ahn, Ho-Jin. 2012. “The Humanity of Christ: John Calvin’s Understanding of Christ’s Vicarious Humanity.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65(2): 145–158.
- Andrabi, Abroo Aman. 2020. “Interfaith Dialogue: Its Need, Importance And Merits in the Contemporary World.” *International Journal of Academic Studies* 2(3): 264–271.
- Barua, Ankur. 2012. “Myth as Metaphysics: The Christian Savior and the Hindu Gods.” *Sophia* 51(3): 379–393.
- Benedict, X. V. I. 2007. “Sacramentum Caritatis: Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission.” In *Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*.
- Birch, Bruce C., Jacqueline E. Lapsley, Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, and Larry L. Rasmussen. 2018. *Bible and Ethics in the Christian Life: A New Conversation*. Fortress Press.
- Borg, Nicola Jane. 2011. “The Role of the Virtues in Christian Discipleship in James Keenan SJ and William Spohn: A Comparative Investigation,” Masters Thesis, University of Notre Dame Australia.
- Burger, Hans. 2024. *Jesus Christ, Hermeneutics, and Scripture: From Epistemology to Soteriology*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Cerbus, Laura. 2024. “The Beauty of the Body and the Ascension: A Reclamation and Subversion of Physical Beauty.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 77(2): 138–148.
- Clark, Adam. 2013. “Honoring the Ancestors: Toward an Afrocentric Theology of Liberation.” *Journal of Black Studies* 44(4): 376–394.
- Crisp, Oliver D. 2007. *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered*. Vol. 5. Cambridge University Press.
- Cross, Richard. 1996. “Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation.” *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 60(2): 171–202.
- Cross, Richard. 2002. “Two Models of the Trinity?.” *The Heythrop Journal* 43(3): 275–294.
- De Lacey, Douglas R. 1987. “Jesus as Mediator.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 9(29): 101–121.
- Dean, Debra J., and Robert B. Huizinga. 2002. “Following in the Footsteps of Jesus: Conclusion.” In *Followership and Faith at Work: Biblical Perspectives*, pp. 263–266. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Doran, Robert M. 2012. *The Trinity in History: A Theology of the Divine Missions*. Vol. 1. University of Toronto Press.
- Ezigbo, Victor I. 2008. “Contextualizing the Christ-event: A Christological Study of the Interpretations and Appropriations of Jesus Christ in Nigerian Christianity,” Masters Thesis, University of Edinburgh.



- Fernández, Samuel. 2016. “The Council of Nicaea and Its Reception.” *Teología y vida* 57(2): 297–303.
- Hahn, Ferdinand. 2022. *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*. Translated by Harold Knight and George Ogg. James Clarke publishers.
- Hecht, David Wolfe. 2018. *A Discourse Analysis of Colossians 1: 28 and a Process for Discipleship in Paul’s Letter to the Colossians*. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Huizenga, Annette Bourland. 2016. *1–2 Timothy, Titus*. Vol. 53. Liturgical Press.
- Jowers, Dennis W. 2006. “The Meaning of MORFH in Philippians 2:6–7.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49(4): 739.
- Kapic, Kelly M., and Wesley Vander Lugt. 2007. “The Ascension of Jesus and the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Patristic Perspective: A Theological Reading.” *Evangelical Quarterly: An International Review of Bible and Theology* 79(1): 23–33.
- Kurtz, Ronni. 2018. “The Soteriological Significance of B. B. Warfield’s Doctrine of Hypostatic Union: An Exploration in his Redemptive Polemics.” *Biblical and Theological Studies Faculty Presentation*, Cedarville University.
- Kvidahl, Clifford B., and Dan Lioy. 2020. “‘You are a Priest Forever’: An Exegetical and Biblical Theology of High Priestly Christology.” *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 29(1): 40–60.
- Lindheimer, Marshall D., Robert N. Taylor, James M. Roberts, F. Gary Cunningham, and Leon Chesley. 2015. “Introduction, History, Controversies, and Definitions.” In *Chesley’s Hypertensive Disorders in Pregnancy*, Academic Press.
- Loke, Andrew Ter Ern. 2017. *The Origin of Divine Christology*. Vol. 169. Cambridge University Press.
- Magezi, Christopher, and Jacob T. Igba. 2018. “African Theology and African Christology: Difficulty and Complexity in Contemporary Definitions and Methodological Frameworks.” *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 74(1).
- Martin, Dale B. 2017. *Biblical Truths: The Meaning of Scripture in the Twenty-First Century*. Yale University Press.
- McCall, Thomas H. 2013. “The Trinity.” In *The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought*, pp. 493-502. Routledge.
- McGlasson, Paul C. 2019. *Invitation to Dogmatic Theology: A Canonical Approach*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2016.
- McLaren, Brian D. 2007. *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change Everything*. Thomas Nelson.
- Noble, I. 2018. *Essays in Ecumenical Theology I: Aims, Methods, Themes, and Contexts*. In *Essays in Ecumenical Theology I*. Brill.
- Panicker, Naveen John. 2024. “Nestorianism.” In *Christianity*, pp. 581–584. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.



- Paulson, Steven D., and Nicholas Hopman. 2016. “Christ, the Hated God.” *Lutheran Quarterly* 30(1): 1–27.
- Plantinga, Richard J., Thomas R. Thompson, and Matthew D. Lundberg. 2022. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Power, David N., and Michael Downey. 2012. *Living the Justice of the Triune God*. Liturgical Press.
- Price, Richard, and Mary Whitby. 2009. “The Council of Chalcedon (451): A Narrative.” *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700*. Liverpool University Press, 70–91.
- Rushdoony, Rousas John. 2009. *The Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church*. Chalcedon Foundation.
- Schmiechen, Peter. 2005. *Saving Power: Theories of Atonement and Forms of the Church*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. 2016. *Women in the Church. An Interpretation and Application of 1 Timothy 2: 9–15*. Wheaton Crossway.
- Stead, Christopher. 1994. “Arius in Modern Research.” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 45(1): 24–36.
- Steiner, Rudolf. 2004. *From Jesus to Christ*. Rudolf Steiner Press.
- Synan, Vinson. 2018. *The Truth about Grace*. Charisma Media.
- Talbert, C. H. 2011. “Chapter Seven. ‘And The Word Became Flesh’: When? (1993).” In *The Development of Christology during the First Hundred Years*, Brill.
- Torrance, Thomas F. 2016. *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons*. Bloomsbury.
- Trozzo, Lindsey. 2020. “Elevated Christology and Elusive Ethics: Unity and Identity in the Gospel according to John.” In *Johannine Christology*, Brill.
- Veldman, Meredith. 2017. “Dressed in an Angel’s Nightshirt”: Jesus and the BBC.” *Journal of British Studies* 56(1): 117–137.
- Waardenburg, Jacques. 2013. “Christians, Muslims, Jews, and their Religions.” In *Islam and Other Religions*, pp. 1–21. Routledge, 2013.
- Winkler, Dietmar W. 2023. “Post-Chalcedonian Conflicts in Egypt: On the Historical Context and the Orthodoxy of Timothy Aelurus (457–477).” In: *Erica CD Hunter (ed.), Šalmūtā Šapīrtā: Festschrift for Rifaat Y. Ebied in honor of his contributions to Semitic Studies*, pp. 87–99. Gorgias Press.

