Elenctic Theology: Christology

Kevin Lewis

*Part 1: Introduction & Deity of Christ*

## Approaches to christology

### Christology From Above v. Christology From Below

#### **Christology From Above**

#### **Christology From Below**

#### **Reasons for Preferring a Christology from Above**

##### Christ’s Eternal Pre-Existence as the Logos

##### Immutability of Christ’s Divine Nature

##### Christ’s Unipersonality

##### The “Root” of Christ’s Person is the Logos

#### **Problems with the “Christology from Above” Model**

##### Minimizing or Ignoring Christ’s Humanity

##### E.g., Christ’s real growth, ignorance of his return, etc.

### Historical Considerations: Alexandria v. Antioch

| **Alexandrian View** | **Antiochene View** |
| --- | --- |
| Is also called a “Word-Flesh” Christology, because it sees Christ as the divine Logos who assumes a human nature. | Is also called a “Word-Man” Christology, because it sees Christ as a man, with whom the Logos associates. |
| Is also called a “Christology from Above,” because it starts with the divine Logos (above) and then attempts to account for the human aspects of Christ. | Is also called a “Christology from Below,” because it starts with the human portrait of Christ in the Gospels (“below,” on earth) and then attempts to account for the divine aspects of Christ. |
| Emphasizes the unity of the person. | Emphasizes the integrity of the natures. |
| Christ is a divine person (the Logos) who assumes a human nature. | Christ is a complete man, whom the Logos indwells, or with whom He sets up a mor­al union. |
| Describes the union of the human and the divine in Christ as a “natural” or “hypostat­ic” union. | Uses indwelling language to describe the union of divine and human in Christ. Also describes the union as a “moral” or sympa­thetic union. |
| Teaches a flow of attributes from the di­vine to the human nature of Christ (*communicatio idiomatum in abstracto*) | Denies a flow of attributes from the di­vine to the human nature of Christ (*communicatio idiomatum in concreto*) |
| Christ’s human nature is “incomplete” in the sense that it has no independent sub­sistence apart from the Logos. That is, his human nature is “anhypostatic.” | Christ’s human nature is seen as complete. That is, Christ’s human nature has its own subsistence; it is “free-standing.” |
| Religious motive based on the Greek soteriology, which sees salvation in terms of “divinizing” our human nature. | Religious motive based on the notion that salvation is seen in terms of imitating Christ through a gracious relationship with the Fa­ther. |
| God died for our sins on the cross. | The deity is involved in the suffering only in so far as it loves and supports the man who suffered. |
| Mary is the mother of God. She is “theotokos.” | Mary is the mother of Jesus. She is “God-receiving” (*theodoxos*), “man-bearing” (*anthropotokos*) or “Christ-bearing” (*Christotokos*). |
| The main problem is that the humanity can get lost or minimized in the person of Christ. | The main problem is that without suffi­cient union of the natures, Christ becomes “schizophrenic,” flip-flopping between hu­man and divine. |
| When pressed to an extreme, this Christology leads to monophysitism, Eutychianism and Apollinarianism. | When pressed to an extreme, this Christology leads to Nestorianism and Dy­namic Monarchianism. |
| Lutheranism tends toward an Alexandrian Christology. | Reformed theology tends toward an Antiochene Christology. |

\*Chart used with permission from Skipper and Captain, Alan W. Gomes, Ph.D.

### Ontological Christology v. Functional Christology

#### **Ontological Christology**

#### **Functional Christology**

## Introductory Issues

### Who is Jesus?

#### Matthew 16:13—The Question Asked

#### “Another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4)

#### The Importance of Having the Correct Jesus (II Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 6:9)

##### A Different Jesus

##### Another Gospel

### The Concept of “Christ”

#### ***Redeemer*** (la@G)) (Is. 44:6; 59:20)

#### ***Messiah*** (h~yv!m\*) (Daniel 9:25,26; John 1:41)

#### ***Christ*** (oJ Crivsto") (Mt. 16:16)

### Necessity & Purpose of the Incarnation of the Logos—*Cur Deus Homo?*

#### Was it necessary for the Logos to become incarnate?

#### It was necessary for a God-man (qeavnqrwpo") to save us from our sins.

##### The Necessity of Christ’s Humanity

##### The Necessity of Christ’s Deity

#### To reveal God to man (Jn. 1:18; 14:9; Heb. 1:3)

#### To be a merciful & faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 5:1-10)

#### To sympathize with us (Heb. 4:15) Die as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin (Mk. 10:45; Heb. 2:9; 9:26, 28; 10:9-10; 1 Jn. 3:5) Provide an Example (Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Pet. 2:21)

## Factors Needed for an Orthodox Christology

### Nicene Christology (325 AD)

#### The Nicene Creed affirms the full deity of Christ. Christ is *homoousia* with the Father.

#### The Arians or the era affirmed that Christ was *heteroousia*.

#### The Semi-Arians affirmed that Christ was *homoiousia*.

### Chalcedonian Christology (451 AD)

#### Chalcedon does not attempt to solve the mystery of Christ or give an exhaustive set of criteria.

#### It gives the essence (*sine qua non)* for an orthodox Christology and sets boundaries.

### The Chalcedonian Creed

#### The Text of the Creed “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[[1]](#footnote-1) and body; consubstantial [coessential] with the Fa­ther according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us accord­ing to the Manhood;[[2]](#footnote-2) 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**;**[[3]](#footnote-3) one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged **in**[[4]](#footnote-4) two na­tures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indi­vis­i­bly, insepara­bly;[[5]](#footnote-5) 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,[[6]](#footnote-6) 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.” “Since now we have drawn up this decision with the most comprehensive exactness and circumspection, the holy and ecumenical synod hath ordained, that no one shall presume to propose, orally, or in writing, another faith, or to enter­tain or teach it to others; and that those who shall dare to give another symbol or to teach another faith to converts from heathenism or Judaism, or any heresy, shall, if they be bishops or clergymen, be deposed from their bishopric and spiritual function, or if they be monks or laymen, shall be excom­municated.”

### The Essential Chalcedonian Criteria

#### ***Christ is True God*—**consubstantial (*homoousia*) with the Father regarding His Divinity.

#### ***Christ is True Man*—**consubstantial (*homoousia*) with man regarding His humanity, yet without sin.

#### ***Christ is One Person*.**

#### ***The Two Natures are Distinct*.**

##### Without Division and Without Separation (ajdiairevto" kaiV ajcwrivstw")—*contra* the Nestorians

##### Without Change and Without Confusion (ajtrevptw" kaiV ajsugcuvtw")—*contra* the Eutychians

### Heretical Christologies

#### **Ebionism (Rejects Deity)**

##### Jewish Heresy

##### Rejected the deity of Christ

##### Refuted by Irenaeus

#### **Dynamic Monarchianism (Rejects Deity)**

##### Jesus is a mere man who is influenced or indwelled by divine power (*dunamis*).

##### This is arguably the most common view of Jesus among liberal Christians.

#### **Arianism (Rejects Deity & Full Humanity)**

##### Christ, as the Logos, is a created being, different in substance (*heteroousia*) from the Father, not the same substance (*homoousia*). The Logos is also described as being “unlike” (*anomoios*) God the Father.

##### The Semi-Arians taught that the nature of the Logos was similar (*homoiousia*) to that of the Father.

##### Regarding Christ’s humanity, Arians teach the Logos (created being) replaces the rational spirit of the man Jesus. Since Arius was a trichotomist, this left the human nature of Jesus with a physical body, and a soul, but no spirit. Hence, Jesus is only 2/3 human in this view.

#### **Apollinarianism (Rejects Full Humanity)**

##### Regarding Christ’s humanity, Apollinarians teach the Logos, an uncreated Person—the Second person of the Trinity, replaces the rational spirit of the man Jesus.

##### Since Apollinaris was a trichotomist, this left the human nature of Jesus with a physical body, and a soul, but no spirit. Hence, Jesus is only 2/3 human in this view.

#### **Docetic Gnosticism (Rejects Humanity)**

##### Jesus did not have a real, physical body. He only appears or seems to be physical. He is really an apparition or ghost.

##### Gnostics argue that matter is inherently evil and the messenger of God would never take physical form.

#### **Nestorianism (Rejects Unipersonality)**

##### This heresy makes the Christ two distinct persons. The first is a complete human being (person one) who somehow associates with the divine Logos (2nd Person).

##### In this view, the Logos is God, but Jesus, the free-standing man, is not. Thus, this view rejects the deity of Jesus Christ.

#### **Eutychianism (Rejects the Distinction of Natures)**

##### The two distinct natures of Christ, divine and human, blend into one nature. So as a result of the incarnation, there is not a single person with two distinct natures, but a single person with a new, single nature, which is a combination or “blend” of the previous two.

##### Hence the new person is neither God nor human by nature, but a completely new thing—a third thing (*tertium quid*). He is now less than God but more than man.

##### Eutychians say Christ has a theanthropic nature, that is, one person with one nature, the one nature formed from combining two distinct natures.

##### Orthodoxy says Christ is a theanthropic Person, that is, one person with two natures.

#### **Monophysitism (cf. Eutychianism)**

##### This is another name for Eutychianism.

##### Monopysitism means one-nature-ism.

#### **Monothelitism (Rejects Full Humanity)**

##### This view, classically associated with monophysitism, says that Christ only had one will.

##### Defenders of Chalcedon (451), e.g., John of Damascus, argued that for Christ to be fully human, He must have a human will.

##### Here, “will” refers to the volitional faculty of the soul.

##### Monothelitism means one-will-ism.

## The Deity of Christ

### The Trinity & Christology *(See also the Trinity Syllabus)*

#### The statement “Jesus is God” requires clarification.

#### ***Trinitarian Definitions***

##### ***Simple Definition*:** Three Persons are the one eternal God or the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three eternal Persons who equally share one infinite, undivided divine nature.

##### ***Complex Definition*:** God in an eternal, necessary, infinite, independent, self-existent (*aseitas*), immaterial Being (*ens*) that simultaneously subsists in three personal modes (*modus subsistentia*). The Persons are individually distinguished by their eternal, hypostatic characteristics: the Father’s, Paternity (*paternitas*), is defined by His unbegotteness and active generation of the Son; the Son’s, Filiation (*filiatio*), is defined by His generation from the Father and His procession of the Spirit; the Holy Spirit’s, Procession (*processio*), is defined by His emanation from the Father and Son. The Divine Persons are consubstantial (*homoousia*) and coinhere (*circumencessio*) in each Other.

#### One’s view of the Trinity will necessarily affect her view of Christ. For example:

##### **Modalistic Monarchianism**—Jesus is the Father.

##### **Unitarianism**—Jesus is not God.

##### **Tritheism**—Jesus is a god.

### Five Lines of Evidence to Prove the Deity of Christ

#### **His *Eternal* Preexistence (Note: This is a subcategory of #4.)**

#### **Direct Declarations of His Divinity**

##### By Christ Himself

##### By Others

#### **His Divine Titles & Names**

#### **His Divine Essence & Attributes**

#### **His Divine Works**

### Christ’s Divinity is Demonstrated by His Eternal Preexistence.

#### **The Nature of Preexistence & Eternity**

#### **Old Testament Evidence of Christ’s Eternal Preexistence**

##### ***Micah 5:2—*Jesus is from everlasting*.*** (<l\*ou ym@ym!)

##### ***Isaiah 9:6*—Jesus is designated as the “Eternal Father.”** (du~-yb!a&)

#### **New Testament Evidence of Christ’s Eternal Preexistence**

##### ***John 1:1-3*—The Logos is the Creator and exists prior to the creation of all finite, contingent things. [See Excursis] See Also Is. 44:24; Jer. 10:10-11**

##### ***1 Cor. 8:6*—All things came into existence through Jesus.** (kaiV ei|" kuvrio" jIhsou'" Cristov", di j ou| taV pavnta)

###### **States the same idea as John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:1**

##### ***Col. 1:16-17*—All things were created by Jesus.** (o{ti ejn aujtw'/ ejktivsqh taV pavnta)

##### ***Hebrews 1:1*—The world was made through Jesus.** (di j ou| kaiV ejpoivhsen touv" aijw'na")

##### ***John 17:5, 24*—Jesus existed in glory and was loved by the Father before the world existed.** (proV tou' toVn kovsmon (v. 5) and proV katabolh'" kovsmou (v. 24))

##### ***John 8:58*—Jesus said, “before Abraham was born, I am.”** (priVn jAbraaVm genevsqai ejgwV eijmiv)

### Direct Declarations of His Deity

#### ***Isaiah 7:14—“Immanuel” “God with us”*(**la@ WnM`u! jEmmanouhvl)

#### ***Isaiah 9:6 cf. 10:21*—Jesus is called “Mighty God.” (**roBG] la@**)**

#### ***John 1:1, 14*—The Word was God.** (kaiV qeoV" h\n oJ lovgo") **[*See* discussion of John 1:1-3, *Excursis*]**

#### ***Titus 2:13*—Jesus is called God and Savior. (**tou' megavlou qeou' kaiV swth'ro" hJmw'n jIhsou' Cristou'**)**

##### *Granville-Sharp Rule: #1:* “When the copulative kai [and] connects two nouns of the same case . . . if the article ho [the] . . . precedes the first . . . and is not repeated before the second . . ., the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first. . . .”

##### See Handout for further clarification.

#### **Other Verses that Directly Declare Christ’s Divinity**

##### ***John 1:18*—Jesus is the “only-begotten God” and “Only-begotten Son”** See also John 1:14; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9 (monogenhV" qeov" or monogenhV" uiJov")

##### ***John 5:18*—Jesus was “calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” (**ajllaV kaiV patevra i[dion e[legen toVn qeovn, i[son eJautoVn poiw'n tw'/ qew'/**)**

##### ***John 10:30*—Jesus said, “I and the Father are one.” (**ejgwV kaiV oJ pathVr e{n ejsmen)

##### ***John 20:28* – “Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and My God.’” (**ajpekrivqh Qwma'" kaiV ei\pen aujtw'/: oJ kuvriov" mou kaiV oJ qevo" mou**)**

##### ***Acts 20:28—*“Shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”** (poimaivnein thVn ejkklhsivan tou' qeou', h{n periepoihvsato diaV tou' ai{mato" tou' ijdivou.)

##### ***Romans 9:5—“…*Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.”** (oJ Crivsto"… toV kataV savrka: oJ w]n ejpiV pavntwn qeoV" eujloghtoV" eij" touV" aijw'na", ajmhvn.)

##### ***Philippians 2:6—*Jesus “existed in the form of God.” (**o{" ejn morfh'/ qeou' uJpavrcwn**)**

##### ***Heb. 1:8*—But of the Son, He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” (**prov" deV toVn uiJovn: oJ qrovno" sou oJ qeoV" eij" toVn aijw'na tou' aijw'no")

##### ***II Peter 1:1*—“by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”** (ejn dikaiosuvnh/ tou' qeou' hJmw'n kaiV swth'ro" jIhsou' Cristou')

##### ***1 John 5:20***—**Jesus Christ is “the true God and eternal life.”** (ouJtov" ejstin oJ ajlhqinoV" qeoV" kaiV zwhV aijwvnio")

##### ***Revelation 1:8 et seq.—*The Alpha-Omega Proof AW** One of the clearest affirmations of the deity of Christ is found in the Book of Revelation. This is known as the Alpha-Omega Proof. The argument can be stated in the following manner.

###### “Alpha and Omega” is a title for Almighty God (Rev. 1:8).

###### Almighty God, the Alpha and Omega, is also declared to be the “First and the Last” (Rev. 21:5-7).

###### The Alpha and Omega, First and the Last, who is Almighty God, declares “I am coming quickly” (Rev. 22:12-13).

###### Then, the speaker, using the first person singular, “I,” declares: “***I, Jesus,*** *have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches”* (Rev. 22:16).Thus, Jesus identifies Himself as the AW and the One who is coming quickly.

###### The author of the Revelation, John, affirms the identity of the AW by saying*. “‘. . .****Yes, I am coming quickly.’*** *Amen, come Lord Jesus”* (Rev. 22:20).

###### **See Also Revelation 1:17-18; Is. 44:6; 48:12-16**

###### **Conclusion:** Jesus is Almighty God, Jehovah (hwhy), the Alpha & Omega, the First & the Last.

### Christ’s Divine Titles

#### **Refer to the chart below:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name or Title** | **OT Reference  to Yahweh** | **NT Reference to Jesus** |
| **I AM** | **Ex. 3:14** | **Jn. 8:58; Jn. 18:5-6** |
| **First & Last** | **Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12** | **Rev. 1:17; 2:8; 22:13** |
| **Light** | **Ps. 27:1; Isa. 60:19-20** | **Jn. 1:4-9 (cf. 1 Jn. 1:5)** |
| **Bridegroom** | **Hosea 2:16; Isa. 62:5** | **Mk. 2:19; Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 21:2** |
| **Forgiver of Sins** | **Jer. 31:34; Ps. 130:4** | **Lk. 5:21; Col. 3:13** |
| **Creator** | **Isa. 40:28; Jer. 10:16** | **Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:2** |
| **Redeemer** | **Hosea 13:14; Ps. 130:7** | **Titus 2:13; Gal. 3:13; Rev. 5:9** |
| **Shepherd** | **Ps. 23:1; Ezek. 34:15** | **Jn. 10:11, 16; 1 Pet. 2:25; Heb. 13:20** |
| **Savior** | **Isa. 43:3; Ezek. 34:22** | **2 Pet. 1:1, 11, etc., etc.** |
| **Co-partner of Divine Glory** | **Isa. 42:8; 48:11** | **Jn. 17:1, 5** |
| **Judge** | **Joel 3:12** | **2 Tim. 4:1; 2 Cor. 5:10** |

#### **Other NT passages where the Name of Yahweh (**hw\h=y~**)(**ho`hy**+) is applied to Christ.**

##### Rom. 10:9-13 cf. Joel 2:32

##### Phil. 2:9-11 cf. Is. 45:23

##### Heb. 1:10 cf. Ps. 102:24-25

##### 1 Pet. 2:3-4 cf. Ps. 34:8

##### 1 Pet. 3:14-15 cf. Isa. 8:12-14

### Christ’s Divine Essence & Attributes

#### **Heb. 1:3—The Divine Essence Jesus is the exact representation of God’s nature. (carakthVr th'''" uJpostavsew")**

#### **Christ Possesses the Incommunicable Attributes of God[[7]](#footnote-7)**

##### **Aseity—John 5:26 […He gave to the Son to have life in Himself]**

##### **Immutability—Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8**

##### **Eternality—Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; 8:58; 17:5; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:2**

##### **Omnipotence—Matt. 28:18; Rev. 1:8; Isa. 9:6**

##### **Omnipresence—Matt. 18:20; 28:20; Eph. 1:23; Col. 3:11**

##### **Omniscience—John 2:23-25; 13:19; 16:30; 21:17; cf. 2:23-24**

### Christ’s Divine Works

#### ***Jesus created the entire universe, visible and invisible.*** (See John 1:1-3; Col. 1: 16-17; Heb. 1:1, *supra*, cf. Is. 44:24)

#### ***General Providence of the Universe is ascribed to Jesus*** (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3)

#### ***Jesus forgave sins.*** (Matt. 9:5-8)

#### ***Jesus gives eternal life.*** (John 10:27-29)

## Texts Commonly Raised Against the Deity of Christ

### Methodology for Rebuttal & Refutation

#### ***Presumptions in the Arguments***

##### Opponents of the deity of Christ commonly presume that a limitation in Christ precludes Him from being God in any sense.

##### Limitations, in fact, prove His real humanity. For one to refute the deity of Christ by proving some sort of limitation in the Person of Christ, one must demonstrate that it necessarily follows that Christ cannot have a divine nature if He has a human nature.

##### This would be analogous to asserting the proposition that it is impossible to have a soul if one has a body.

#### ***Burden of Proof & Burden of Persuasion***

##### **Burden of Production**

###### The one asserting the position, e.g., Jesus is not God, carries the burden of proving his case.

###### One should not begin to refute or rebut the claim until the opponent has actually made a credible argument.

##### **Burden of Persuasion**

###### This is the level of proof required for one to justify his claim.

###### The various levels are:

Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

Criminal Law Standard

Clear and Convincing Evidence

Special Legal Circumstances

Preponderance of the Evidence

Civil Cases-Means more probable than not

Probable Cause

Reasonable Suspicion

#### **Rebuttal Arguments (Minimal Burden)**

##### These attack the arguments in support of the position.

#### **Refutations (Greater Burden)**

##### These attack the position directly.

### The Verses Raised *Contra* the Deity of Christ

#### **Psalm 110:1—Yahweh said something to “my Lord.”**

##### This does not necessarily disprove the deity of Christ.

##### It proves a plurality of Persons.

#### **Proverbs 8:22-23—Jesus is the “Earliest” of Gods creative acts.**

##### It is personification of wisdom—the same as chapters 1-9.

##### Is Christ a woman who cries out in the streets? (cf. 1:20, 21)

##### Did God’s wisdom have a beginning? God was never a fool!! It is from everlasting.

#### **Isaiah 9:6—Jesus is a “mighty” God, but not the Almighty God.**

##### See Isaiah 10:21. Yahweh is called “Mighty God” in this passage.

##### See also the Alpha Omega Proof from the Book of Revelation.

#### **Micah 5:2—Jesus has an “origin” so He must be created.**

##### Cf. Mime Olam discussion for the deity of Christ.

##### Cf. Habakkuk 1:12

#### **Mk. 10:18—Only God is good.**

##### Jesus never denies that He is God.

#### **Mk. 13:32—Jesus is ignorant of His return.**

##### Note that he is speaking as a man. And as a man, He possesses real limitations

##### But Lk. 2:52 affirms real growth in knowledge and therefore real ignorance.

##### All this proves is His genuine humanity.

##### It does not necessarily follow that because Jesus has a human nature that He cannot have a divine nature as well.

#### **John 3:16—Jesus is begotten.**

##### Begotten does not necessarily mean He was created.

##### The Begottenness of the Son (John 1:18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9)

###### ***Eternal Generation***

This concept was introduced by Origen.

“begotten of the Father before all worlds” (Nicene Creed)

This term describes an eternal relationship between the Father and the Son.

John 5:19; 26; 8:28

###### ***Monogenes (*monogenh")**

*Mono* (mono") – Only, alone, sole

*Gennao* (gennavw) - Beget

*Genos* (gevno") – race, people, class, kind

*Ginomai* (givnomai) – Born, begotten, made, created [This most likely not the root of “genes” in monogenes.]

##### If *Genos* is the root, the concept is “of sole descent,” meaning “unique.”

##### *Monogenes* is also used in LXX in Judges 11:34 (Translation of Hebrew, Yachid)

##### The word likely indicates that the thing is “unique” in some special sense. See Lk. 7:12; Heb. 11:17. This uniqueness can mean that the person is the only one considered “generated” or “begotten” in the context.

##### Jesus is the eternal, unique Son of God. He is God the Son and should be distinguished from the other kinds of “Sons of God” (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1; Luke 20:36; John 3:16; 20:31; I John 4:9)

##### Note John did not use *monoktisis*, which would clearly indicate “only created.”

#### **John 14:28—The Father is greater than Jesus.**

##### Here, Jesus is either speaking as a man or referring to the economic ordering of the Godhead.

##### If this refers to the ordering of the Trinity, it is a comparison of position, not nature.

##### It does not necessarily follow that a person has a better nature because he is in a greater position. The president of U.S. is greater in position than I, but not better in nature.

#### **Jn. 20:17—Jesus has a Father and a God.**

##### Jesus is speaking as a man.

##### Note the distinction He makes between his relationship with the Father and that of his disciples. I.e., “My God” and “your God,” not “Our God.”

##### This is functional, not essential subordination.

#### **I Corinthians 8:6—There is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.**

##### The Father is called God (1 Pet. 1:2) and Lord (Matt. 11:25)

##### Jesus is called God (John 20:28) and Lord (Rom. 10:9)

##### If JW logic is correct, the Father cannot be Lord—which is incorrect.

#### **1 Cor. 11:3—The Head of Christ is God.**

##### But see also Eph. 5:23.

##### Women are not inferior to men even though the husband is the head of the wife.

#### **1 Cor. 15:28—Jesus is subjected to the Father.**

##### But Jesus was also subjected to his parents and was not inferior to them (Lk. 2:51).

##### The same Greek word is used here.

#### **Phil. 2:5-9—Jesus did not grasp after Godhood.**

##### The verses do not say that Jesus is not God.

##### Says he existed in the form of God.

##### One does not have to grasp after what is already one’s by nature.

#### **Colossians 1:15—Jesus is the Firstborn of all creation.**

##### The Greek word *prototokos* can indicate the person is “preeminent.”

##### David was the last-born son of Jesse, but is called “firstborn” by God (Ps. 89:27)

##### See also Gen. 41:50,51; 48:8-21 cf. Jer. 31:9)

##### Jesus is the eternal Son of God, meaning, he had the same nature as God—Son of… (John 19:7 cf. Lev. 24:16)

#### **Hebrews 1:6—Jesus only received “obeisance,” not worship.**

##### **Greek: *Proskuneo***

##### **Jesus always received such worship, while righteous, created beings do not (cf. Acts 14:11-18; Rev. 22:8).**

###### Thomas-Jn. 20:28

###### Angels-Heb. 1:6

###### Wise Men-Mt. 2:11

###### Leper-Mt. 8:2

###### Ruler-Mt. 9:18

###### Blind man-Jn. 9:38

###### Mary Magdalene-Mt. 28:9

###### Disciples-Mt. 28:17

###### Revelation 4:10, The Father is worshipped

###### Revelation 5:11-14, The Lamb is worshipped

#### **Rev. 3:14—Jesus is the Beginning of the Creation of God.**

##### *Arche* can mean source, origin, etc.

##### Jesus is the source of God’s creation.

#### **Jesus Christ is Michael the Archangel**

##### **Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1**

###### See Jude 9 cf. Matt. 4:10

###### Note that there is more than one “chief prince.”

##### **I Thessalonians 4:16**

###### Jesus is coming “with the voice of the Archangel” and “with the trumpet of God.”

###### If coming with the voice of the Archangel makes Christ Michael, then it also makes Christ a trumpet.

##### **I Peter 3:18 Christ was made alive in the spirit, so He must be a spirit, Michael.**

###### The antithetical relationship is between flesh and spirit.

###### Flesh and spirit do not refer to the “parts” of Christ, such as his human body and human spirit, but refer to his human sphere of life and His resurrected sphere of life. (cf., Kittel, TDNT 6:417, 447; 7:143)

###### See Luke 24:37-39; John 20:26-28

##### **I Corinthians 15:44-50**

###### Similar discussion to 1 Pet. 3:18

#### **If God died on the cross, then who ran the universe?**

##### This presumes a Unitarian view of God. The Bible teaches the Trinity.

##### It also presumes that God ceases to function as God in the incarnation or that the divine nature transubstantiated into a human nature.

1. Against Apollinarianism [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Consubstantial” (*homoousios*) is used here in two differ­ent senses. In the case of the Father, there is a numerical unity of essence. On the other hand, Christ’s consubstantiality with man is only of a generic kind. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The reference to Mary as “Mother of God” (*theotokos*) is di­rected against Nestorianism. However, note the important limita­tion: she is the mother of God “according to the Manhood.” This is to guard against Mariolatry and the heathen­ish notion that the eternal God could have beginning in time. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Important note: Originally the overwhelming majority at the council favored the formula “*ek duo phuson*,” which leaves open the possibility of speaking of only one nature even after the incarna­tion. It was only with considerable pressure that the council was induced to adopt the formula “*en duo phusesi*,” which means that Christ is in two natures even after the incarnation. See Seeberg, 1:272. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Inconfusedly” (*asugchutos*) and “unchangeably” (*atreptos*) is directed against Eutychianism, which confounded the human and divine natures of Christ (the human nature was absorbed by the divine). “Indivisibly” (adiairetos) and “insepa­rably” (achoristos) is direct­ed against Nestorianism, which lost sight of the unity of the person. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Greek here reads “*eis pros­­­opon kai mian hupostasin.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For a comprehensive outline of the deity of Christ and the Trinity, see Rob Bowman’s outline at <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/t06.html#six> . [↑](#footnote-ref-7)