



# Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 2 – THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

LESSON 52 – THE TRINITY: JESUS THE SON – THE INCARNATE CHRIST (PART 1)

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE (JOHN MACARTHUR), PGS. 255-322

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# The Incarnation

- ▶ Jesus was the God-Man – truly and fully God as well as truly and fully human. In His incarnation He manifested outwardly His internal divine essence.
- ▶ Philippians 2:6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
- ▶ Christ possessed the Divine glory (John 17:5), thus the writer of Hebrews proclaims that He was the exact representation of Deity.
- ▶ Heb. 1:6 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...
- ▶ Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

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- ▶ Jesus told the disciples that if they had seen Him then they had seen the Father. In other words, to see Him was to see God.
- ▶ John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”
- ▶ Christ, as God, is worthy of worship.
- ▶ Heb. 1:6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”
- ▶ Phil. 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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- ▶ The Second Person of the Trinity was not only “with God” at creation, but He Himself is God (John 1:1-3).
- ▶ Evidence of His deity is also seen in the instructions He gives His disciples to pray to Him (John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23-24).
- ▶ We are never instructed in Scripture to pray to anyone other than God because prayer is a form of worship, including adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication.
- ▶ Praise is also a form of worship and is offered to Christ as God.
- ▶ Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

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- ▶ Two hymns from the early church are included as praise to Christ:
- ▶ 1 Tim. 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.
- ▶ Phil. 2:6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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- ▶ Divine Characteristics of Christ:
- ▶ Eternality – Micha 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; Col. 1:17
- ▶ Glory – Matt. 16:27; 24:30; Luke 9:32; John 17:5
- ▶ Grace – John 1:14-17; Rom. 1:7; 16:20
- ▶ Holiness – Luke 4:34; John 6:69; Heb. 7:26
- ▶ Immutability – Heb. 1:10-12; Psa. 102:25-27; Heb. 13:8
- ▶ Life – John 1:4; 5:21; 11:25; 14:6; Acts 3:15; Rev. 1:18
- ▶ Love – Mark 10:21; John 11:3, 5; 14:21, 31; 15:9-11

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- ▶ Mercy – Mark 5:19; 1 Tim. 1:2; Heb. 2:17
- ▶ Omnipotence – 1 Cor. 1:23-24; Heb. 1:2-3
- ▶ Omnipresence – Matt. 18:20; Eph. 4:10
- ▶ Omniscience – John 1:47-49; 21:17; Acts 1:24; 1 Cor. 4:5
- ▶ Righteousness – Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 2 Peter 1:1
- ▶ Self-existence (Aseity) – John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 1:8, 17-18
- ▶ Sovereignty – Eph. 1:21; Col. 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22
- ▶ Truth – John 1:14, 17; 14:6; Eph. 4:21

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- ▶ Divine Titles of the Son of God:
- ▶ The Lord of Hosts – John 12:41; James 5:4
- ▶ The Lord (Adonai) – Matt. 22:41-45; Rom. 10:9-10; Phil. 2:9-11
- ▶ Immanuel (God with us) – Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23
- ▶ Everlasting Father – Isa. 9:6
- ▶ Mighty God – Isa. 9:6
- ▶ Wonderful Counselor – Isa. 9:6
- ▶ Yahweh – Isa. 40:3; Mark 1:3; Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:13
- ▶ Creator – 1 Peter 4:19; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2

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- ▶ The Son of God – Mark 1:1; John 3:18; 5:25; Rom. 1:4; Eph. 4:13; Rev. 2:18
- ▶ The Holy One – Mark 1:24; John 6:69; Rev. 3:7
- ▶ “I Am” – John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25; 14:6
- ▶ God – John 10:28; Rom. 9:5
- ▶ The Author of life – Acts 3:15
- ▶ The Lord of glory – 1 Cor. 2:8
- ▶ The blessed and only Sovereign – 1 Tim. 6:15
- ▶ The Almighty – Rev. 1:8
- ▶ The Alpha and Omega – Rev. 1:8

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- ▶ Kenosis: In His incarnation, Christ voluntarily yielded the independent exercise of His divine attributes to the will of the Father.
- ▶ Phil. 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.
- ▶ The Greek term for “emptied Himself” is *kenoō* , emptying, a voluntary act of becoming a slave (*doulos*) as a continuous state of being for a time.
- ▶ He emptied Himself stooping from God to humanity and humbled Himself stooping from humanity to death.

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- ▶ Some have misunderstood Kenosis and have taught that Christ emptied Himself not of the use, but of the actual possession of some aspects of His deity during His incarnation.
- ▶ However, by definition, it is impossible for the eternal, immutable God to cease to exist as God. Even in His state of humiliation the Lord could still say, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).
- ▶ On the Mount of Transfiguration, His deity was revealed visibly as if He peeled back the veil of His humanity allowing His divine nature to shine forth (Matt. 17:2). So He did not empty Himself of any part of His deity or His divine attributes, but He did limit their use to the direction of the Father.

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- ▶ He “made Himself of no reputation” (Phil. 2:7) by taking on human nature, not by emptying Himself of portions of His divine nature, but by adding to Himself the limitations of true and full humanity.
- ▶ In order to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, He had to be made like His brothers in every respect (Heb. 2:17); therefore, while the Son of God fully possessed His divine nature, attributes, and prerogatives, He did not fully express them and voluntarily allowed them to be veiled.
- ▶ At times He did express them according to the Father’s will: reading people’s minds (Matt. 9:4); working miracles (Luke 5:3-10); and revealing His power and glory (Matt. 17:2; John 18:6).
- ▶ At all times, Christ maintained equality with God (Phil. 2:6).

# The Incarnation

- ▶ Next week – Part 2
- ▶ The Virgin Birth
- ▶ Christ's Full Humanity and the Hypostatic Union
- ▶ Heresies about the Person and Natures of Christ