



Jesus is the Christ!

A SUMMER SERIES ON THE EPISTLE OF 1 JOHN

1 John 2:18-27 Colossians 1:15-20

Hebrews 1:1-4 Luke 4:14-21

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The major theme in the book of *First John* is that of **Christology**: the Apostle John wants us to know, understand, and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you have eternal life.

In John's day, as in our day as well, there were *false teachers* who were peddling a false Jesus. In John's day, the *false teachers* were saying that Jesus was a good man, but that He was not God¹. They taught that Jesus' death on the cross had no salvation value whatsoever. Jesus is reduced to simply a good man, a good teacher, and a good example; but He is not the Savior of the world nor the Son of God.

This false understanding of Jesus destroys faith; anyone who believes that has lost their salvation and their hope of eternal life. *The stakes are high; eternal salvation is on the line.* So the Apostle John writes forcefully:

Who is the **liar**? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the **antichrist**—denying the Father and the Son. **No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.** 1 John 2:22-23

Not only does the Apostle call these *false teachers* **liars** and **antichrists**; but in this book he will also say they are **hypocrites**, **lost** in the darkness, **blind**, and even **children of the devil**. Their teaching is **evil**; and it **robs** people of eternal salvation.

¹ In those days certain false teachers very carefully distinguished between Jesus and the Christ, saying that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary, and that the Christ was a supernatural power which was given Him at His baptism, which, however, forsook Him again when He suffered and died. The First Epistle General Of John, Dr. P.E. Kretzmann

John writes his Epistle so that we might believe in the true Jesus of the New Testament; the Son that the Father sent to be the Savior of the world. **Today, let's review our Christology** to make sure that we know, understand, and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of the World!

For John, the title “*Christ*” captured *everything* about Jesus that we need to know. That Greek word “*Christ*” is the same as the Hebrew word “*Messiah*.” Both words mean *anointed*; Jesus is *anointed* with the Holy Spirit by God the Father to be the Savior of the world. Think of Jesus’ Baptism as a perfect picture of this *anointing*: God the Father sends the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove that lands on Jesus. In His Baptism, Jesus is given the Holy Spirit – He is *anointed* -- to *officially* began His work as the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the world².

When John says that Jesus is *the Christ, the Messiah*, he is signaling that Jesus is the *fulfillment* of all the Old Testament prophecies and promises. You might be familiar with some of those prophecies:

- ⇒ God had promised *Adam and Eve* in the Garden of Eden that one of their sons would crush Satan's head;
- ⇒ God had promised *Abraham* that one of his descendants would bless the entire earth;
- ⇒ God had promised *Moses* that a prophet like him would arise who will speak the very words of God
- ⇒ God had promised *King David* that one of his sons would have an eternal Kingdom;
- ⇒ God had promised *Isaiah* that a virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call Him *Immanuel*: God is with us.

ALL OF THESE, and countless other prophecies and promises in the Old Testament, are fulfilled in Jesus. He is the long awaited and promised *Messiah* of the Old Testament; He is the *Christ*!

Jesus proved that He was *the Messiah, the Christ*, by His teaching and by His miracles. Jesus *proclaimed good news to the poor. He proclaimed freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; He set the oppressed free, proclaimed the year of the Lord's*

² At the same time, you can also understand that Jesus has been doing the work of salvation all of His life, since His birth. He had been actively living a perfect and sinless life for us which will be credited to us as “righteousness” through faith. The Bible speaks in different ways to highlight different themes. In Jesus’ Baptism, the *anointing of the Holy Spirit* to be the “Christ” is emphasized. The significance of this event is seen in that it is the only recorded public appearance of the Holy Trinity in the Bible: The Father speaks, the Son is standing in the Jordan River, and the Holy Spirit is in the form of a dove.

favor. He turned water into wine, He fed 5,000 people, He healed the sick, and He raised the dead. He forgave sins and He made people whole.

Jesus is the *Messiah* of the Old Testament; the very *Son of God* Himself who is *incarnate*; *in flesh*. Jesus is *God in the flesh*; the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who became a Man in His birth in Bethlehem. Jesus is both God and Man at the same time³. **Jesus** is His earthly name that means “Savior”; **Christ** is His title signifying that He is the long promised Messiah of the Old Testament; and **Lord** is the divine name given to Him to show that He is the one, true, and only God⁴. Our faith is in the **Lord Jesus Christ**, the Son of God, who came into the world to be our Savior.

The **Lord Jesus Christ** is the One who took your sins upon Himself and died on a cross in Jerusalem. This really becomes the *sticking point* with a lot of false teachers; they cannot believe that God would die on a cross. Others do not want to admit they are sinful and need someone to die on the cross for them. **So they turn Jesus into something He is not.** They claim that Jesus just a good example; a life coach, a *genie in a bottle*, a good luck charm, a boyfriend type figure, a therapist, cheerleader, a community organizer, a champion for the poor, or a whole host of other things that He is not. All of this is because the Cross of Jesus becomes a *stumbling block* for many people.

But **the cross of Jesus** is *exactly* what Scripture teaches; and that is *exactly* what St. John is defending in his epistle.

**Jesus, the Christ, suffered and died on a cross
for the sins of the world.**

The Son of God was mocked, beaten, and crucified for us and our salvation. He took your sin and guilt to the cross and was punished for you and in your place. He died, was buried, and on the Third Day the same Jesus rose from the dead. *The crucified man Jesus is risen from the dead, and He is the Son of God, and the Savior of the world!*

For the Apostle John, this is all captured in the title “*Christ*.” By believing these things about Jesus you have eternal salvation. If you deny these things you have lost eternal salvation. Those who deny these things are liars, antichrists, and children of the devil.

³ “We regard our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Man in one person, neither confounding the natures nor dividing the person.” *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, VIII.43*

⁴ The *Gospel of John* was written to precisely teach this: that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*, and that by believing in His Name you might have eternal life! (John 20:31)

The warning is strong; be sure to listen to it today! Make sure that your faith is in *the right Jesus*. Know, understand, and believe that Jesus the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, is the same One who was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead on the Third Day for you and your salvation! He is the One who forgives your sins, He has reconciled you with the Father, and He has given you eternal life. Only in the **Lord Jesus Christ** do you find eternal salvation!

When you believe *Jesus is the Christ*, the Son of God, then you are holding to the Word of God, you are in fellowship with the Apostles, and you have a relationship with God the Father and His Son Jesus.

This is the most important theme in the epistle of First John. Eternal salvation depends on Who you believe in. There are many, many false teachers today who twist, turn, and warp the doctrine of Christ; you have to be very careful. John writes

As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life. 1 John 2:24-25

As conservative Lutherans, we are very concerned about the teachings of Holy Scripture⁵. We encourage our people to be *biblically literate* and *doctrinally sound* so that they will not be deceived by false teachers; so that they can see and learn for themselves the teaching of Scripture and hold to it; so that what they have heard from the beginning remains in them, and is not stolen by false teachers⁶.

Today guard your faith and the doctrines of Holy Scripture. Think through your Christology, go back and study the Second Article of the Apostles Creed in your Small Catechism, and know, understand, and believe that

*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
the Savior of the world who gives you eternal life! Amen!*

⁵ The Lutheran Church is nothing else than the Church of the Bible. It does not deviate from the Bible; it does not take away or add to it, but stands squarely on the Word of God. In all its teachings and in its practice, the Lutheran Church lives by this key principle. C.F.W. Walther, First President of the LCMS. "Law and Gospel", p.148

⁶ In his Commentary on Galatians, Martin Luther insightfully comments, "a man labors for a decade before he succeeds in training his little church into orderly religion, and then some ignorant and vicious poltroon (= utter coward) comes along to overthrow in a minute the patient labor of years. (1:6)" Later, in the same commentary, Luther will comment, "the article of justification is fragile. Not in itself, of course, but in us. I know how quickly a person can forfeit the joy of the gospel. I know in what slippery places even those stand who seem to have a good footing in matters a faith. In the midst of conflict when we should be consoling ourselves with the gospel, the law rears up and begins to rage all over our conscience. I say the gospel is frail because we are frail. (1:11-12).

1 John 2:18-27

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.[e] 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life. 26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Colossians 1:15-20

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Hebrews 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

Luke 4:14-21

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.