

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

## Video Lecture Series

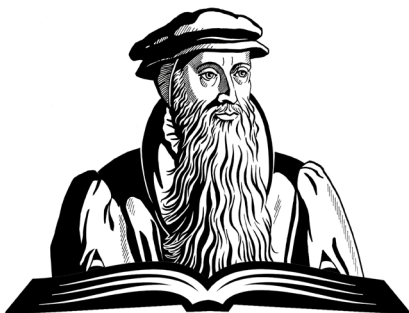
by Dr. Stephen Myers and Robert D. McCurley, ThM

*Module 4:*

### CHRISTOLOGY— THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

*Lecture 2*

### THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST



The John Knox Institute  
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# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

## Video Lecture Series

by Dr. Stephen Myers and Robert D. McCurley, ThM

### *Module 4 ~ Christology*

Lectures by Dr. Stephen Myers:

1. Introduction to Christology
- 2. The Divinity of Christ**
3. The Humanity of Christ

Lectures by Robert D. McCurley, ThM:

4. The Hypostatic Union
5. The States of Christ
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# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

by Dr. Stephen Myers

## *Module 4 ~ Lecture 2*

# The Divinity of Christ

In Matthew, chapter 16, verse 13, Jesus asks his disciples a question: “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” As we discussed in our last time together, this is the most important question in all the world. This question, and our answer to the question, stands at the very center of Christianity. Whom do we say that Jesus is? And the Scriptures give us profound, life-changing answers to that question. Among other things, in the Scriptures, we find out that Jesus both fully and completely God, and he is fully and completely man. Over the next three lectures, we’re going to spend time examining this scriptural witness.

First, how do the Scriptures show us that Jesus is fully God? This is referred to as the divinity of Christ. Next, how do the Scriptures show us that Jesus is fully man? This is referred to as the humanity of Christ. And then, how can we understand how Jesus is both fully God and fully man at the same time? These are important issues. These are issues that give us a glimpse of the glory and the beauty of Jesus Christ. In our time together in this session, we’ll look first, at five ways in which the Scriptures present Jesus as being fully God, and then we’ll spend a little bit of time in four different passages of Scripture, where we see with particular clarity that Jesus is fully and truly God.

But first, what are five ways in which the Scripture presents Jesus as being fully God. Well first, the Scripture repeatedly uses divine names for Jesus. Last time, we saw how the Scripture gives the name Jehovah to Jesus. In fact, that’s at the very center of his name—Jesus. If you’ll remember, in Matthew 1, verse 21, the angel tells Joseph that Jesus’s name is to be JESUS, which means Jehovah saves, because he, Jesus, will save his people from their sin. Jesus is the Jehovah who saves. Well, in Isaiah, chapter 42, verse 8, God says he will give this name, Jehovah, to none other than himself. In being Jehovah, Jesus is God. In fact, the Scriptures call Jesus exactly that. In John, chapter 20, verse 28, which we also mentioned last time, Thomas had cried out to Jesus, “My Lord, and my God.” Similarly, in Romans, chapter 9, verse 5, Paul refers to Christ as “God blessed for ever.” In Titus, chapter 2, verse 13, Paul speaks of “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” In a variety of ways, and in a variety of settings, the Scriptures freely use divine names—names intended only for God—to refer to Jesus.

In addition to having divine names used of him, Jesus also, secondly, displays divine attributes. In John, chapter 8, verse 58, Jesus says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” Now here, Jesus tells us that he existed before Abraham. Jesus’s point is that he was before he became flesh. Jesus is eternal. In Hebrews, chapter 13, and verse 8, we read of “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” We read a very similar description of Jesus, alongside a self-description by Jesus himself, in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 8. There, Jesus says, “I am Alpha

and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” Jesus Christ hasn’t only always been, he’s not only eternal, he also is unchanging, or immutable—qualities, or characteristics, or attributes that are true only of God, are said by the Scripture to be true of Jesus. What does that mean? It means that Jesus is fully God.

But not only is Jesus given divine names, and not only does he display divine attributes, but Jesus also manifests divine power. In John, chapter 6, after Jesus had fed five thousand men with just five loaves of bread and two fish, his disciples boarded a boat to cross the sea of Galilee to Capernaum. Jesus himself stayed ashore. But then in the night, the disciples saw something unexpected. Beginning in John, chapter 6, and verse 19, we read this: “They see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.” Now there are a lot of very important details in those three verses.

First, as Jesus drew near to the ship, as he drew near to the terrified disciples, what did he say? In verse 20, Jesus said, “It is I.” It’s not always easy to recognize this, as the Scriptures get translated out of their original languages and into different languages, but Jesus there identifies himself by using the most precious name for God in the Old Testament. We’ve seen this name before, we mentioned it just a moment ago. In Exodus, chapter 3, and verse 14, Moses is standing at the burning bush, and God is speak to him out of the burning bush, and God declares for Moses what was his most precious, most personal name—Jehovah. Or sometimes, some people pronounce it as Yahweh. But what it means is, “I am,” or even, “I am that I am.” Who is God? He is the one who simply is. God is the one who cannot not exist. He just is. God’s name is “I am.” And what does Jesus say to his trembling disciples, in John, chapter 6, verse 20? “It is I,” or to translate the passage very directly, what Jesus actually says is, “I am.” He identifies himself as the holy, living God of Israel.

But that identification doesn’t just stop with Jesus’s words. Notice what Jesus is doing in the passage. He’s walking on the waves of the sea. The stormy waves are his path. And when he reaches the boat in calmness, the disciples find themselves at the place they wanted to be. In the Old Testament book of Job, we find many glorious descriptions of God’s power and his majesty, and among those descriptions, we find in Job, chapter 9, verse 8, these words. Job is speaking of who God is at this point, and he says, in Job, chapter 9, verse 8, that God “alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.” Who treads on the waves of the sea? God does. And here comes Jesus, strolling on the sea. Or consider Psalm 107. Beginning in verse 21, Psalm 107 speaks of God’s power as displayed in his control over the seas, how he shows his power through his works there, how he commands the wind, and the rising and the falling of the waves, how he is in sovereign control over those who do their business on the sea. Let’s read there beginning in verse 23: “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.” According to those verses in Psalm 107, what does God do? He controls the seas. And so when his people in distress cry out to him, he delivers them, he calms the waves, and he brings them into their desired haven. And amidst the panicked cries of his disciples, Jesus has come to them, and he’s delivered them,

and they find themselves in their desired haven.

As we've seen already, there are many places in Scripture where Jesus is called God, or he is given divine names, he is called what God is called. But Jesus's divinity as seen in Scripture, is so much richer than just that. All of the things that God alone does, all of the things for which his people had praised him in the Old Testament, all of the mighty things that God and God alone can do, Jesus does them. And he does them in precisely the same way as the Old Testament had described God doing it. This one, this one who makes the stormy waves his path, and who delivers his people to peace, he is God. That's what the Old Testament says, and that's what Jesus demonstrates.

But Jesus doesn't demonstrate this only through his display of raw power. Jesus also, in a closely related way, manifests his divinity through his exercise of divine prerogatives. Not only does Jesus do the things that only God can do, but underlying that, Jesus has the authority that only God has. We read a striking example of this in Matthew, chapter 9, verses 1 through 8. Here, Matthew is referring to Jesus, and he writes, "And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house, and he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."

Now here, Jesus has crossed over the sea of Galilee, he's come to his home town, and he has this dramatic interaction. There's a man with palsy, a man with a debilitating physical affliction, and some of his friends, or some of his family—the passage doesn't say exactly—but some people who care about this man, they bring him to Jesus. This man is unable even to walk. Those who bring him, have to carry him on a bed to Jesus for healing. Jesus sees this man, and verse 2 tells us that Jesus is moved. He sees the faith of the man and his friends. And so what does Jesus do? He doesn't immediately heal the man. No, Jesus sees through the palsy to the man's real need, and he tells the man that his sins are forgiven. Jesus forgives the man's sin. And the scribes, the Jewish religious leaders, they're scandalized. Only God can forgive sin. All of our sin is sin against God. Psalm 51, verse 4 makes that plain. And so only God can forgive sin. As God himself says, in Isaiah 43, verse 25, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." God alone can forgive sins. So when Jesus says that he has forgiven this man his sins, he's claiming to be God. He's claiming to have the authority to do that which only God has the authority to do. And in Matthew, chapter 9, Jesus knows that this has offended the scribes. In verse 4, he asks them why they're offended. Then in verse 5, Jesus makes a very clear observation. It's easy to say that a person's sin has been forgiven. It's easy to say that because there's no real way that man can test it. When Jesus says that his man's sin has been forgiven, there's nothing to which the scribes can point to prove Jesus wrong. It's another thing altogether to tell this lame man to stand up and walk—to tell this man, who has had to be carried into Jesus's presence, to stand up and walk. That's hard. Because if Jesus tells this man to walk, and the man cannot walk, it would be obvious to anyone and to everyone that Jesus does not have the power or the authority to heal him. There would be something very concrete to which the scribes can point to show that Jesus has been wrong. In that way, telling the lame man to walk is harder than telling him that his sins are forgiven, because human beings can test the command to walk. And so Jesus turns to the man with

the palsy, in verse 6, and he tells him to stand up, to take the bed on which he had been carried, and to go to his house. And the man does it. He stands up. The bed that just moments before had been required to carry him, he takes it up, and he goes to his home. The lame man walks to his home. No one there could deny that Jesus had the power to heal that walking man. And, as Jesus puts it in verse 6, neither could they then deny that Jesus has the power to forgive sin. That thing which only God can do—forgive sin—Jesus can do it. The formerly lame walking man proves it. Jesus can forgive sin. Jesus exercises divine prerogatives, because Jesus is God. He's divine.

In fact, because he is divine, we find Jesus, in the Scripture, receiving divine worship. And this receipt of divine worship is itself a further evidence of Jesus's divinity. In the Scripture, of course, it's clear that worship is due to God alone. As we read in Deuteronomy, chapter 10, and verse 20: "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by this name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God." Or, as Jesus puts it, in Luke, chapter 4, and verse 8: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Only God is to be worshipped. In Acts chapter 14, Paul and Barnabas were ministering in Lystra, and when Paul healed a man there, the people of Lystra tried to worship Paul and Barnabas. But Paul and Barnabas stopped them, they said that they were men just like them, they weren't God, and therefore they were not to be worshipped.

In the same way, in Revelation, chapter 22, at verse 8, the Apostle John, having seen the wonders and the beauties of the new Jerusalem, fell down at the feet of the angel who had shown him all of these things, to worship that angel. And what does the angel say? In Revelation, chapter 22, verse 9, the angel says, "See thou do it not: . . . worship God." God alone is to be worshipped. And what do we find a little earlier in Revelation? Among other places, in Revelation, chapter 5, at verse 13, we read of all creation crying out, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." All of creation is worshipping the Lamb—they're worshipping Jesus. Jesus receives worship which is due to God alone, and he accepts that worship, because he is God. He's divine. Being fully God, Jesus receives, and he accepts divine worship. All of these things are spread throughout the Scriptures. All of these clear evidences of Jesus's divinity. He has divine names. He has divine attributes. He has divine power. He exercises divine prerogatives. He receives divine worship. Jesus is God. It's laced throughout all of the Scriptures.

But we want to take the time that we have remaining to look at four specific places in the Scripture, where we see the full divinity of Jesus with particular clarity and power. The first place, and really one of the places where we see the divinity of Jesus most clearly, and most movingly in the Scriptures, comes in the opening verses of the Gospel of John. In John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 4, we read this: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

In those verses, John speaks of this figure—the Word. Who or what is this "Word"? Well, that becomes clearer just a little bit later, in verse 14. In John 1, verse 14, we read: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Word is the one who became flesh. The Word is Jesus, as John names him in verse 17. So when John refers to the Word in these opening verses, he is referring to Jesus.

Now, John tells us a lot about Jesus in these verses, but I want us to notice just two of them. First, John explicitly says that Jesus is God, verse 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word was God. Now, of course, John also says that

the Word was with God. And there, John is giving us a glimpse into the doctrine of the Trinity, but that's a topic for a different set of lectures. Looking just at Jesus, just at the Word, John directly, explicitly says that he is God—he is divine.

But John also tells us something further. Notice how verse 1 starts: “In the beginning.” Those words may sound familiar to you perhaps. That's exactly the way that Genesis 1, verse 1, the very first verse of the entire Bible begins. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” When John starts his gospel with exactly the same words, “In the beginning,” he's wanting to bring Genesis 1, verse 1 into our minds. In the beginning, before creation, when the only thing that existed was God himself, the Word was there, and he was God. In fact, as John tells us in verse 3, it was this Word, it was the Son who created, who made all things. So in these verses, John makes it unmistakably clear that Jesus is fully God. He directly calls him God, and he tells us that when only God existed, and then began to create all things, the Word was the one who did the creating. The Word is God—Jesus is God.

This same glorious truth is communicated to us in Colossians 1, so we want to look there as well. In Colossians 1, verses 15 through 20, Paul is speaking of Jesus, and he writes, “Who is the image of invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”

Those verses are filled with the glory of Jesus, the divinity of God the Son. In verse 15, Paul begins by telling us that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. In Jesus, we see the God who is invisible. The God, who no one in the Old Testament could see, is seen in Jesus. When you look upon Jesus, you see the invisible God.

Paul then refers to the Son as “the firstborn of every creature.” Now, this statement gets misunderstood sometimes. Paul is not saying here that Jesus was the first creature born, or the first thing that God created. No, the idea of “the firstborn” has to do with power and authority. Jesus being “the firstborn of every creature” means that Jesus has unrivaled authority and power over all of creation. In fact, in verse 16, Paul tells us why this is—why does Jesus have authority over all of creation? Because, according to verse 16: “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” Jesus has unrivaled authority over all of creation, because he created all of creation. Paul is at pains there, in verse 16, to make plain that the Son created everything. Outside of God himself, there is nothing that exists that was not created by the Son. And therefore, he has authority over it. If you think back to verse 15, as I mentioned, Paul's statement that Jesus is the “firstborn of every creature,” sometimes gets confused to mean that Jesus was the first creature. Well, given what Paul has said here in verse 16, that simply can't be. If Jesus were a creature, then Paul could not say in verse 16 that Jesus created everything outside of God that exists, because he himself would be a creature that he had not created. Outside of God himself, anything and everything that exists, the Son created. Once again, we see that the Son is God, and he is doing the things that God does.

Paul doesn't stop there, of course, he goes on in verse 17 to say that “by him all things consist.”



The Son didn't just create all things, he holds all things together, moment by moment. If the Son somehow were to withdraw his hand, all of reality would evaporate. It would pass into in nonbeing. All of created reality was not only created by the Son, but it all is held together by the Son. This one is God.

Paul tells us the same thing in a more compressed way, in Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 and 6. Philippians 2:5 and 6 is part of a larger, more familiar passage of Scripture, and we'll return to that passage in a later lecture. But we want for now to focus just on these two verses. In Philippians 2, verses 5 and 6, we read: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." What does the Apostle Paul, who wrote the book of Philippians, tell us there about Jesus? He tells us that Jesus was "in the form of God." That can sound like a peculiar way to state it, but what Paul is saying is that Jesus is God. Everything that makes God, God, Jesus is. He is in the form of God. He is God. What that means, among other things, is that, as Paul says in the second half of verse 6, for Jesus, equality with God is not robbery. When we speak of Jesus being God, we are not diminishing the glory or the grandeur of God at all. He is fully equal with God. He is, in fact, God. As I said, we'll come back to Philippians 2.

So in the interest of time, we need to move quickly to look at one final passage of Scripture, and that passage is Hebrews, chapter 1, verses 1 through 3. In those verses, we read this: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Now there are a lot of complexities here that we could explore, if we had more time. But at the very least, we find here that Jesus, God the Son, he is the brightness of the glory of God. He is the image of who God is. When we consider Jesus, when we read the words of Jesus, we are not considering one or reading the words of one who is very exalted, or one who is next to God. When we consider Jesus, we are considering God himself—the one who always has been and always will be the living God. When we read Jesus's word, we're reading the word of one who always has been, and always will be the living God.

In our time together this session, we've looked at a number of things. We've looked at ways in which Jesus is treated in Scripture, being given divine names, divine, worship, and all the rest. We've looked at specific passages that show us the outer margins of the glory of Jesus. And take them all together, and then remember Isaiah, chapter 42, verse 8, where God says, "I am the LORD, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." The living God of heaven and earth will not give his glory to another. Those who seek to claim it, he strikes down. And then we see Jesus receiving the glory of the living God. What are we to do, but fall down and cry out before him, as Thomas did, in John 20, verse 28: "My Lord, and my God." In Jesus, we have to do with the living God, the one who was, and who is, and who is to come. He is God, and he deserves our worship, and our very lives.

In our next session, we will look at how this one, Jesus, who is fully God, also is fully man.