

Systematic Theology – “Thinking God’s Thoughts After Him”

Class 10 – Jesus Christ the Redeemer

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I. Hello...and Catechism Quiz (Questions 27–28)

II. Jesus and Genesis 3:15

Remember, we said the covenant of grace began with Genesis 3:15:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Gen 3:15)

The heart of this covenant is God’s promise to save his people through the work of a Redeemer who will crush the Serpent.

Jesus is the One!

III. “Who do you say I am?” (Matt 16:15)

The most important question Jesus asked and he continues to ask it of all people:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. (Matt 16:13–17)

There are basically two answers given here. “People” give one, which is different ways of saying Jesus is a great man but not God—a *holy man (John the Baptist), a miracle worker and maybe fulfillment of some prophecy (Elijah, Micah 4:5), a teacher (Jeremiah)*.

People still say such things. But this view of Jesus doesn’t rise high enough.

Peter gives the right one: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” He answered rightly and is commended for it. But we also learn the “Father who is in heaven” was the one to “reveal” (*apokaluptō*) this to Peter.

Peter saw Jesus as the fulfillment of the great hope and expectation of the Old Testament (“the Christ”). But Peter also saw Jesus as a person unlike any other, a person who can rightly and exclusively claim the title of “the Son of the living God.”

In C.S. Lewis’ book *Mere Christianity* he said something that still challenges us. He was trying to get at the tendency to see Jesus like the “people” in Matthew 16. To see Jesus as a great teacher or a holy person—but not God. C.S. Lewis said you can’t do that:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*³⁹

IV. Fully God and Fully Man

A. Jesus is One Person with Two Natures, One Divine and One Human.

B. Fully God

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.²⁴ But Jesus on his part did not

³⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1952), 55–56.

entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. (John 2:23–25)

This is not Jesus functioning with “the word of knowledge” but Jesus as God who knows all things.

Matthew 8:23–28 and Psalm 65:5–7 (Yahweh stills the storms, just like Jesus did)

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58)

John 8:58 shows us that *Jesus is Yahweh* (Exod 3:14).

J. Gresham Machen on the “deity of Christ”:

Now the Christian meaning of the term “deity of Christ” is fairly clear. The Christian believes that there is a personal God, Creator and Ruler of the universe, a God who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. So when the Christian says that Jesus Christ is God, or when he says that he believes in the deity of Christ, he means that the same person who is known to history as Jesus of Nazareth existed, before he became man, from all eternity as infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God, the second person of the holy Trinity.

J. Gresham Machen, *The Person of Jesus*⁴⁰

C. Fully Man

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” (Matt 24:36)

Augustine provides a helpful principle. When the Bible speaks of Jesus

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)

⁴⁰ Machen, *The Person of Jesus* (Westminster Seminary, 2017), 18.

D. Why Must He Be Both God and Man to be the Promised Redeemer?

We get a really helpful answer from Anselm (1033–1109) in his book, *Cur Deus homo?*, Latin for, “Why the God-man?”⁴¹

He framed the work of Christ as a debt humanity owes to God because of our sins. In fact, we owe him (1) obedience that we failed to give him; (2) payment for our sins; and (3) additional payment for our sins, because of the infinite offense we have committed.

Since all men owe this same debt, no man can pay it. And since a payment is required that will cover *all men*, no typical man can pay it.

Man owes the debt, but God alone can pay it. That is his answer to the question of “Why the God-man?”

V. Two States: Humiliation and Exaltation

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:5–11)

Jesus lives in his humiliation from his conception until his death and burial.

Beginning with his resurrection, he enters into his state of exaltation. With his resurrection he is living in his glorified state. This continues to his ascension and return.

***What will Jesus be like after he completes his work as the Redeemer, restoring the kingdom back to the Father and then “God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:28)? There’s some question about this. I’m not sure.*

⁴¹ A good summary of the argument is at Sam Storms’ blog, <https://www.samstorms.org/all-articles/post/article-10-things-you-should-know-about-the-satisfaction-theory-of-the-atonement>.

Question: What are some wrong views people can have about Jesus Christ?

VI. Three Offices of Christ: Prophet, Priest, and King

A. Prophet

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.... 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.” (Deut 18:15, 18–19)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” (Matt 5:21-22)

B. Priest

Two sides to Christ’s work as priest, his offering of sacrifices and his intercession on our behalf.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph 1:7)

33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (Rom 8:33–34)

C. King

12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (2 Sam 7:12-13)

“They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” (Rev 17:14)

To be God’s people is to be part of a kingdom with Christ as your King!

A kingdom that is here now (Rom 14:17)—and a kingdom that is coming (Matt 6:10).

D. Why We Love that Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King

The Trinity Confession of Faith:

9. This office of mediator between God and man is exclusively Christ's and is threefold: He is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God. This may not be either in whole or any part, transferred from him to any other.

10. This number and order of offices are necessary. For with respect to our ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office. With respect to our alienation from God and imperfection of the best of our service, we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable to God. With respect to our opposition to and utter inability to return to God and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom. (TCOF 9.9–10)

VII. Conclusion

Believe:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. (1 John 4:2)

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:15)

J. Gresham Machen:

Jesus does not present himself merely as an example for faith but presents himself as the object of faith....He did not say merely: “Have faith in God like the faith that I have in God,” but he said: “Have faith *in me*.”

J. Gresham Machen, *The Person of Jesus*⁴²

VIII. Next Class: “The Holy Spirit and the Application of Redemption”

⁴² Machen, *The Person of Jesus*, 40.