



Person & Work of Christ

Jesus in the New Testament

Initial thoughts

- Epistles can be an excellent resource for Christology
- Chronology can be very important – are the early church theologians developing a Christology as they go?
- Context is most important – who are they writing to, what are they saying, why are they saying it?
- Authorship can be important
- What do the writings of the NT tell us about Jesus?
- What do the writings of the NT tell us about their audience's understanding of Christology?

Pauline Epistles

Paul approaches Christology from his orthodox Jewish background; however, it is not always discussed but simply assumed.

‘It might be said that Jesus’ person and work in Paul’s early letters are like the foundation of a building: it might not be seen very often, but everything rests on it.’

Douglas J. Moo, ‘The Christology of the Early Pauline Letters’

Pauline Epistles

Paul approaches Christology from his orthodox Jewish background; however, it is not always discussed but simply assumed.

‘It might be said that Jesus’ person and work in Paul’s early **What are some explanations for this?** might not be seen very often, but everything rests on it.’

Douglas J. Moo, ‘The Christology of the Early Pauline Letters’



Paul the Apostle

What is Paul's foundational experience with Jesus?

It is suggested that three different ideas come out of that experience:

1. Jesus as the 'Seed of Abraham'
2. Jesus as the 'Climax of the Law'
3. Jesus as the 'Last Adam'

Pauline Epistles

Paul's Christological views:

- Jesus as fully human
- Jesus as pre-existing (fully divine)
- Jesus has a variety of titles (influenced by pre-existing Christology)
- Jesus' actions whilst living are important to Paul
- Christology does not vary, but his demonstration of it changes according to context

Hebrews

The Christology of Hebrews:

‘The necessity of the death of the Son of God explains the reason for his coming in the garb of full humanity. The goal is the deliverance of men and women from sin.’

Donald A. Hagner, ‘The Son of God as Unique High Priest’

Hebrews

Jesus the High Priest:

- Jesus must be human in order to be high priest
- Jesus must be divine to be a priest 'forever after the order of Melchizedek'
- Jesus is both human and divine
- Jesus is mediator between God and man forever
- His sacrifice is sufficient atonement for all, and fulfils the covenants made
- The forgiveness of sins is now possible for all

Catholic Epistles

‘Catholic’ meaning ‘general’

Each Catholic Epistle presents their Christology for a specific purpose:

James: ‘Lord’ship of Jesus is central to faith

1 Peter: Importance of Jesus to a community of suffering believers

2 Peter: Belief in Jesus produces knowledge, which produces virtue and right living until he returns

Jude: Jesus continues to save and keep his people

1, 2, 3 John: Belief in Jesus brings eternal life

Catholic Epistles

‘Catholic’ meaning ‘general’

Each Catholic Epistle presents their Christology for a specific purpose

“Taken together, the seven “Catholic letters” teach us that Jesus Christ is both our “Lord” for whom we live and our “Life” by whom we live.’

J. Ramsey Michaels, ‘Catholic Christologies in the Catholic Epistles’

virtue and right living until he returns

Jude: Jesus continues to save and keep his people

1, 2, 3 John: Belief in Jesus brings eternal life

Revelation

Revelation presents a totally different picture of Jesus to what is shown in the rest of the NT — heavily influenced by eschatology and prophetic literature.

Revelation presents a very high Christology with the purpose of eschatological judgment.

Revelation

Key titles for Jesus in Revelation:

- Faithful Witness
- Firstborn of the Dead
- Ruler of the Kings of the Earth
- One Like the Son of Man
- Etc... there are numerous titles and designations for Jesus just in the first chapter!



Revelation

What is John's purpose?

- To call Christians to faithful worship
- To bring hope into a dark situation
- To encourage Christians to stand strong against persecution

Challenges & Problems

A key problem that we sometimes face with our understanding of Christology (and indeed any aspect of theology) is that we have our own filters and ideas.

- What are some of the assumptions we bring to the texts?
- Where do these assumptions come from?
- How do they affect the way we view the text and therefore our Christology?