

## Christ (2)

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”  
(1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

## THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

### 1. Creator

Jesus existed before creation - Micah 5:2; John 8:58, 17:24; Hebrews 7:3; Revelation 22:13.

He was intimately involved in the creation of the world - John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1, 2

### 2. Prophet

OT prophets were God’s representatives (Hebrews 1:1-3). “Prophet” meant one who “spoke/told forth”; God’s spokesmen. Also foretold (ie predicted). ¼ of the Bible is prophecy.

*Jesus a “Prophet like Moses”*

Moses was the major OT prophet. He promised that God would raise up another prophet like him (Deuteronomy 18:15). The Jews of Jesus’ time were awaiting this prophet, who would come with God’s message (the scribes of Jesus’ day thought John the Baptist must be the promised prophet, however he pointed to Jesus, John 1:21; as did Philip after meeting Jesus for the first time, John 1:45). After the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, some believed Jesus was the fulfilment (John 6:14).

Jesus was very much like Moses:

- both were delivered from violent death as infants;
- both were recognised as prophets;
- both performed miracles;
- both were leaders;
- both were intermediaries between God and people;
- Moses “gave” the Israelites manna; Jesus gave them spiritual bread (John 6:31-33);
- Moses offered to die, if necessary, if God would forgive the sins of the people (Exodus 32:30-33),
- Jesus *did* die for our sins, so that we could enter the Kingdom of Heaven;
- Jesus spoke prophetically, but took Moses’ message to a new level (eg compare “old” and “new” in the Sermon on the Mount).

Peter declared that Moses’ prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:18-23).  
So did Stephen, before he was martyred (Acts 7:37-38)

Jesus was recognised as a prophet: Mark 1:27, 6:4; John 4:19, 6:14, 7:40, 9:17. He spoke with authority on God's behalf and confirmed His message with miraculous power and signs. His denunciation of sin and false religion, the authoritative way he challenged the establishment of His day, His uncompromising call to repentance, reminded the people of the OT prophets (Matthew 16:14).

Jesus challenged the leaders of His day: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me." (John 5:46, cf Luke 24:26).

(a) Proclaimed Salvation

God anointed Jesus (Christ = anointed) with the Holy Spirit, to preach the Gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18), to call sinners to repentance (Matthew 9:13; Luke 19:10). Jesus alluded to Himself as a prophet (Luke 4:24).

(b) Proclaimed the Kingdom of God

Jewish people were awaiting a Messiah, whom they assumed would establish a political kingdom. Some wanted to crown Him as their king, but Jesus would have none of it (John 6:15). Jesus did preach the coming of a Kingdom (Matthew 4:17, 6:33; Mark 1:15; Luke 9:11), but the Kingdom of God is a spiritual entity first and foremost (John 17:21). He was never going to raise an army or lead a political movement (cf John 18:36). See 3. below.

(c) Predicted the Future

Jesus foretold:

- His own betrayal and death - Matthew 16:21, 20:10 (even in the face of disbelief on the part of the disciples)
- the site of the last supper - Mark 14:13-15
- His resurrection - Matthew 12:40, 26:32; Mark 9:10; John 2:19, 21
- the fall of Jerusalem - Matthew 23:34-39
- conditions at the end of the world - Matthew 24, 25

### 3. Priest

Priests in the Old Testament were appointed to:

- stand between God and the people - Christ is our sole mediator (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25)
- go before the people - Hebrews 6:20
- represent the "humanness" of the people - Jesus experienced our humanity (warts and all), so that He could empathize and legitimately represent us - Hebrews 2:17, 3:1
- offer sacrifices - Hebrews 8:3; not for Himself (Hebrews 7:27); He was offered to take away our sin (Hebrews 9:14, 26)
- present the blood of the sacrifice to God - Hebrews 9:13, 14
- model the kind of behaviour God expected from His people

Jesus' sacrifice is good for all times, for all people (Hebrews 7:27). His priesthood is unchangeable (Hebrews 7:23, 28). He did away with the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament, that existed only as a "type" of His ministry. He was a priest "after the order of Melchizedek", who preceded Moses and the Law. Psalm 110:4 reflects this relationship.

The Levitical priesthood (restricted to the tribe of Levi) and High Priest role (confined to descendants of Aaron) established during Israel's wilderness wanderings were temporary.

Christians are part of a new "priesthood of believers", who have the privilege of entering the presence of God unimpeded, offering sacrifices of worship and representing Him to the world.

Jesus is our "Great High Priest", who has gone before us.

## 4. King

The Kingdom He proclaimed would be ruled by Him.

- Melchizedek = King of Salem (Peace) and Priest of the Most High God - Genesis 14:18, 19; Hebrews 7:1-3, cf Psalm 110:1-4; Hebrews 1:8
- King of Israel (Acts 2:30)
- Jesus was *the* descendent of King David, whose throne would last forever. This king would usher in a period of peace, prosperity and righteousness (Isaiah 11:1-9; Psalm 72).

Jesus was first recognised as King by:

- the wise men - Matthew 2:2
- Nathanael - John 1:49
- ordinary people who met Jesus - Matthew 21:5 (prophesied by Zechariah 9:9)
- the dying thief on the cross next to Him during the crucifixion - Luke 23:42

Jesus declared to Pontius Pilate that He was born to be king. Pilate misunderstood, thinking He was referring to an earthly kingdom - John 18:36.

He spoke of Himself as King - Matthew 25:34 (predicted a period when He would come as king - Matthew 25:31). Now He has all power in heaven and on earth - Matthew 28:18. He has been crowned in heaven - Ephesians 1:20-22; Revelation 3:21. One of the central themes of the Revelation is "the King and His Kingdom" (11:5, 12:10, 19:16).

Not an earthly Kingdom (cf Rousas John Rushdoony, April 25, 1916 - February 8, 2001, Calvinist philosopher, historian, and theologian, father of Christian Reconstructionism) and other theocrats.

**ALSO: healer & baptiser in the Holy Spirit**

## THE WORK OF CHRIST

### 1. His Earthly Ministry

See notes for Christology (1)

### 2. His Death

#### *Its Importance*

Jesus was born to be our Saviour - Matthew 1:21

To take away the sins of the world - John 1:29

The cross is central to God's plan. Isaiah spoke of the Suffering Servant who would make many righteous. The Messianic Psalms also pointed to the suffering of Christ, eg Psalm 22.

The cross is foolish to the world (1 Corinthians 1:18), but Jesus said that taking up our cross and following Him is central to Christian discipleship.

See "Counting the True Cost of Discipleship" at [Relevant-Christianity.com](http://Relevant-Christianity.com) for a message about the application of Luke 14:25-35

The cross is the legal basis for:

- Jesus' victory over Satan - Colossians 2:15
- cancellation of the codified regulations that were set against us - Colossians 2:14
- victory in the Christian life, as we "reckon" (count, calculate) ourselves and our desires dead with Christ - Romans 6:11; Galatians 2:20, 24. Sin and Satan cannot exercise power over someone who is dead. The Devil's condemnation has no basis.
  - typified in baptism - Romans 6:1-10

God has taken the initiative. Christ died for us, when we did not know about, did not deserve it, did not ask for it. To bring us back into full fellowship with God and give us eternal life. Jesus took our sins in His body - 1 Peter 2:24. He was "made sin for us" = 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- Being made sin for us and experiencing separation from the Father were worse than the physical sufferings, which is often emphasised instead.

These themes will be dealt with in greater detail under "Soteriology" (Salvation)

### 3. His Resurrection

#### (a) Fact of the Resurrection

The resurrection was written/reported by eyewitnesses (read 1 Corinthians 15). The earliest documentary evidences of those statements have been dated to within 20 years of the events.

If the resurrection had not occurred (Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 15:12-29):

- our preaching is pointless
- the faith of all Christians is in vain
- God's ministers are liars
- we are still in the legal and actual clutches of sin
- Christians who have already died are "lost" for eternity - the salvation they hoped (and often suffered) for was not true
- we should give up living right and abandon ourselves to sin as there is no "tomorrow"
  - it is all a figment of our imagination and there is no rationale for "living right"
- we are to be pitied more than everyone else

"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.  
I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!  
And I hold the keys of death and Hades." (Revelation 1:17, 18)

(b) Evidences of the Resurrection

Six theories used to “explain away” the resurrection.

<p>Theory of Reimarus:</p> <p>The entire affair centred on the theft of the body of Jesus and a made-up story on the part of Jesus and His friends</p>	<p>This theory is not plausible.</p> <p>The central characters are the same men and women who scattered when Jesus was arrested. They were disillusioned and depressed. They would have put themselves at too great a risk to steal the body of Jesus, let alone construct an elaborate hoax along the lines of the resurrection account.</p> <p>The theory suggests the disciples agreed on a course of deception, lived the rest of their lives as hypocrites, preaching a lie, without letting the story out.</p> <p>Plenty of other religious followers have died for their faith (many, arguably, in worse physical circumstances than crucifixion), but the crucial point of Reimarus proposition is that the disciples would have known it was a lie, if they had stolen the body or made up the story. They all would have died for what they <i>knew</i> was a lie.</p> <p>Suggests they went to their deaths proclaiming comfort in the risen Christ, in spite of the fact they knew the story to be false.</p> <p>Why did they not admit the fraud.</p> <p><i>Moral issues:</i> Presupposes that a group of liars committed themselves to spreading a religion based on love, fear of God, righteousness, morality, insisting absolute truth (in the face of judgement for sin) and in so doing established a world-wide network of moral, ethical teaching based on a deliberate falsehood.</p> <p><i>Legal issues:</i> why did the Jewish leaders or Roman authorities (who had major stakes in the outcome) not produce the body to debunk the claims of the disciples? If the body was stolen, as they claimed, why were the soldiers not punished (they reported that they had been asleep at the time)?</p> <p><i>Logical issues:</i> why would the disciples do it, in the face of obstacles, every indication was that they usually vacillated, so why not abandon the quest after the final defeat (Jesus’ death). Why were the leading priests (and later Paul, a member of the powerful Sanhedrin) converted to Christ, if they knew the story was a hoax? Why was a search for the missing body not organised? Even Josephus acknowledges Christians believed Christ had risen from the dead, but did not suggest he had any evidence to the contrary. Why were the disciples transformed from fear to boldness?</p>
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<p><b>Swoon Theory:</b> Jesus did not die, but merely swooned (fainted) on the cross; he revived in the cool of the tomb, made his exit and was seen by a few friends (including Paul) before he died in obscurity and his body was quietly disposed of.</p>	<p>Presupposes that a person exhausted, half-dead, with wounded head, hands, feet and penetrated side (probably pericardium) managed to escape from his role of grave clothes, roll away the stone, overpower the Roman guards posted outside the tomb, evade his enemies, walk to where the disciples were (in hiding), convince them that he was an “overcomer” (victor over death). If He was dying (or even badly wounded) his image would have been one of defeat. Also presupposes that the Roman soldiers (who were accomplished executioners) did not do their job during the crucifixion (given serious pressures from the religious leaders to ensure his death). He was certified as dead. Furthermore, the lie would be at odds with the character of Christ.</p>
<p><b>Fantasma Theory:</b>  From Renan, a French writer.  The appearances of Christ were purely subjective; they were not real. The disciples were distraught over Jesus’ death. They were desperate to see Him again and believe in His mission, so they “saw” Him, or believed they did. All they experienced were hallucinations.</p>	<p>The problem is how the disciples managed to maintain the illusion years after the event. The theory reduces the disciples to a company of gullible, emotionally unreliable men and women, not moral leaders.</p> <p>In fact, the initial reaction of the disciples was one of disbelief.</p> <p>The “hallucinations” did not continue, however there were a few unique appearances (eg Paul in prison and en route to Roma). Paul records that more than five hundred people saw Jesus on one occasion. He ate in front of the disciples, specifically to demonstrate that He was not an illusion. He had flesh and bones and ate real food. (Luke 24:37-43).</p> <p>Large groups of people do not experience group hallucinations in the manner described.</p>
<p><b>Visional Theory:</b>  From Holsten.  Jesus’ appearance to the Apostle Paul was a vision, an illusion. Paul may have had epilepsy. The record indicates he was probably prone to visions.</p>	<p>Paul started out violently opposed to the Gospel. He was a well educated, influential man, but he did not tolerate the Christians or their beliefs.</p> <p>Also, the appearances of Jesus were not to Paul alone.</p>
<p><b>Survival Theory</b>  What the disciples saw was not Jesus’ body, but His glorified spirit, sending them a message of comfort (like an email from “beyond”, letting them know that all was well).</p>	<p>See above responses.</p> <p>Apart from anything else, those who put forward this theory, and others like it, do not address one simple question. Why did Jesus’ enemies not simply produce His body and put an end to all discussions about resurrection.</p>

<p>Talk about “resurrection” was the disciples’ way of describing His ongoing influence in their lives.</p> <p>Misinterpreted as Christophanies (appearances of Christ).</p>	<p>See above responses.</p> <p>The New Testament writers recorded the resurrection as a literal, observable, historical event, involving the same body that was placed in the tomb (now “glorified”). The faith of the first Christians was predominantly one anchored in the reality of the resurrection.</p>
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People devise elaborate theories to explain away the account of the resurrection rather than submit to Christ.

## New Testament Witnesses

Jesus was seen alive after His death by:

- Mary Magdalene - John 20:11-18
- other women - Matthew 28:9, 10
- Peter - Luke 24:33-35
- two disciples on the road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-32
- ten disciples on the evening of the resurrection - John 20:19-23
- eleven disciples the following week - John 20:26-28
- seven disciples in Galilee - John 21:1-15
- apostles and others in Galilee - Matthew 28:16-20
- more than five hundred Christians at the same time - 1 Corinthians 15:6
- James, His brother - 1 Corinthians 15:7
- Paul, in subsequent experiences - 1 Corinthians 15:8, etc.
- John, on the Island of Patmos (Revelation 1)

### (c) Meaning of the Resurrection

The resurrection:

- gave the disciples joy, confidence, because it confirmed the reality of all Jesus said; gave them hope for eternity, for which they were prepared to die (and many did)
- made them bold in declaring the message, because Jesus was alive - Acts 2:22-24
- confirmed the Lordship and deity of Jesus Christ
- confirmed the effect of the death of Christ for sinners - Romans 4:25; 10:9, 10; Acts 5:30, 31 - we cannot be genuine Christians without believing in the resurrection - Romans 8:11
- Christ offers us “resurrection” power beyond ourselves, that is able to make us “alive” now, as well as prepared for eternity - Romans 8:11
- confirmed there is life beyond the grave
  - superior to the resurrections Jesus carried out (and those elsewhere in the Bible), where all who were raised from the dead went on to die again
- gives hope of a personal resurrection for Christians - 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 14:19; 1 Peter 1:3
- sets Jesus Christ apart from every other human religious founder - Buddha, Mohammed and others are all dead; the grave of Jesus is empty
- “Because He lives, we will live also” - John 14:19; 1 Corinthians 6:14
- evidence that there will one day be a resurrection for all men and women - Acts 17:31

## 4. His Ascension and Present Ministry

### (a) Christ in Heaven

Jesus ascended to heaven in front of His disciples - Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9. Scripture says that He entered heaven (Hebrews 9:4), “led captivity captive and gave gifts to men” - Psalm 68:18; Ephesians 4:8

Too often we see Jesus in terms of His earthly ministry. However, this was only a brief interlude in history. Jesus is eternal, the Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End. He is not limited to His bodily shape (read Revelation Chapter One). After the resurrection He had a spiritual body (cf 1 Corinthians 15:44). This is how He was able to appear/disappear, pass through closed doors, etc. Just because we cannot see Him does not mean He is not with us.

### (b) He has been Exalted

And given all power in Heaven and on earth - Matthew 28:18.

### (c) He is Sovereign

- He is seated in heavenly places, far above all principalities, powers, might and dominion - Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 2:10; Revelation 5:12
- He is the head of every man - 1 Corinthians 11:3
- seated at the right hand of the Father - Colossians 3:1
- angels, principalities and powers are subject to Him - 1 Peter 3:22; Romans 14:9
- He has been given a name that is above every name; at His name every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord - Philippians 20, 11
- we are seated together with Him - Ephesians 2:6
- we are subject / submitted to Him - Ephesians 5:22-33 (marriage analogy)

### (d) He is preparing the Way for Us

He has gone ahead of us - Hebrews 6:19, 20  
so that we will be with Him - John 12:26  
He is preparing a place for us - John 14:2, 3

### (e) He is Our Intercessor

Jesus mediates/intercedes for us (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34). John tells us that He is our “advocate” (lawyer) when we sin (1 John 2:1). John 17 contains some key elements of Jesus’ intercession for the church.

### (f) He is Omnipresent

- He is not geographically bound “I am with you always” - Matthew 28:18
- He is with believers when we gather in His name - Matthew 18:20
- He lives in our heart by faith” (Ephesians 3:17)

*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. (John 14:12-14, NIV)*

## Seeing Jesus as He really is

In Genesis, He is the Seed of the Woman.

In Exodus, He is Passover Lamb.

In Leviticus, He is our High Priest.

In Numbers' He is our Pillar of Cloud by day and our Pillar of Fire by night.

In Deuteronomy, He is the Prophet like Moses.

In Joshua, He is the Captain of our salvation.

In Judges, He is our Lawgiver.

In Ruth, He is our Kinsman Redeemer.

In First and Second Samuel, He is our Trusted Prophet.

In Kings and Chronicles, He is our Reigning King.

In Ezra, He is our Advocate.

In Job, He's our Ever-Living Redeemer.

In Psalms, He is the Lord, our Shepherd, so we shall not want.

In Proverbs, He is our Wisdom.

In Ecclesiastes, He is our Goal!

In Song of Solomon, He is our Lover and our Bridegroom.

In Isaiah, He is the Prince of Peace.

In Jeremiah and Lamentations, He is the Weeping Prophet.

In Ezekiel, He is the Wonderful Four-faced Man.

In Daniel, He is the 4<sup>th</sup> Man in the burning, fiery furnace.

In Hosea, He is the Eternal Husband, forever married to the backslider.

In Joel, He is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

In Amos, He is our Burden-bearer.

In Obadiah, He is our Savior.

In Jonah, He is the Great Foreign Missionary.

In Micah, He is the Messenger with beautiful feet.

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In Nahum, He is our Avenger.

In Habakkuk, He is the Evangelist pleading for revival.

In Zephaniah, He is the Lord, mighty to save.

In Haggai, He is the Restorer of the lost heritage.

In Zechariah, He is the Fountain springing up with everlasting life.

In Malachi, He is the Son of Righteousness, rising with healing in His Wings.

In Matthew, He is the Messiah.

In Mark, He is the Wonder Worker.

In Luke, He is the Son of Man.

In John, He is the Son of God.

In Acts, He is the giver of the Holy Ghost, moving among men.

In Romans, He is the Justifier.

In 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, He is the Sanctifier.

In Galatians, He is the Redeemer from the curse of the law.

In Ephesians, He is the Christ of unsearchable riches.

In Philippians, He is the God who supplies ALL of our needs.

In Colossians, He is the fullness of the godhead bodily.

In 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, He is our Soon-coming King.

In 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, He is the Mediator between God and man.

In Titus, He is the Faithful Pastor.

In Philemon, He is the Friend of the oppressed.

In Hebrews, He is the Blood of the everlasting covenant.

In James, He is the Lord who raises the sick.

In 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, He is the Chief Shepherd, who shall soon appear.

In 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> John, He is Love.

In Jude, He is the Lord coming with ten thousand of His saints.

In Revelation, He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He is Abel's sacrifice and Noah's rainbow. He is Abraham's ram and Isaac's well. He is Jacob's ladder and Ezekiel's burden. He is Judah's scepter, Moses' rod, David's slingshot, and Hezekiah's sundial. He is the Church's Head and is risen from the dead. He is Husband to the widow and a Father to the orphan.

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To those travelling by night, He is the Bright and the Morning Star. To those in the lonely valley, He is the Lily of the Valley, the Rose of Sharon, the Honey in the Rock and the Staff of Life. He is the Pearl of Great Price. He is the Rock in the weary land. He is the Counselor. He is the Everlasting Father. The government is upon His shoulders. He is Peter's shadow, John's pearly white city. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the Living God.

He is the one who owns the cattle on a thousand hills. He is the One who split the Red Sea. He is the One who took the children of Israel out of Egypt in to the Promised Land. He is the One who humbled Himself, came to earth, healed the sick, raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, opened the eyes of the blind, and turned the water into wine.

He is the One who fed the 5,000, walked on water, and cast out devils. He is the One who humbled Himself, once again, and became obedient to death - even the death of the cross. He is the One who died on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for us. And He is coming back very, very soon. He is Jesus Christ of Nazareth, King of kings and Lord of lords.

(From *The Fourth Man*, by US Evangelist Oral Roberts)