

LEAD 360  
*Christian Theology*

Study Guide for Session 3  
Part I: “The Christian Belief in Jesus the Christ”

1. Questions to prompt thought and discussion:

- (1) What is Christ’s significance to Christianity according to McGrath? Do you think he overstates it? Why or why not?
- (2) What were several misunderstanding (heretical distortions) of Christ’s nature during the first five centuries of Christianity?
- (3) Why was the heresy of adoptionism so dangerous for a true understanding of Christ’s deity?
- (4) What was the specific heresy which saw Jesus only as a good man?
- (5) What was Apollinarius reluctant to affirm Jesus as having a human soul?
- (6) What does it mean for us as His followers that Jesus was and is fully human?
- (7) Do you think it was possible for Jesus to sin? How real were his temptations?
- (8) Why was the Council at Chalcedon so significant? Identify the four adverbs which stated what the unity of Jesus’ person did *not* mean.
- (9) What are the four theological “non-negotiables” regarding Jesus’ identity?
- (10) What is the “theological necessity” regarding who Jesus is if He is to provide salvation for us?
- (11) Why are there so many biblical images of the meaning of the cross in the N.T.?
- (12) Why is it important to know a person’s worldview perspective when witnessing to him or her about Jesus’ death on the cross?
- (13) Explain the relationship of Jesus’ death on the cross to the resurrection and vice versa.
- (14) Why is it necessary to keep Jesus’ identity and mission in a biblical balance?

## 2. Recommended resources for further study:

### (1) Basic level resources:

- Bowie, Walter Russell. *Jesus and the Trinity: A Key to a Deeper Religious Experience*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960.
- Garner, Larry & Ivan Parke. *Reclaiming the Real Jesus*. Madison, Ms.: CMD Publishing, 2004.
- Hendricks, William L. *Layman's Library of Christian Doctrine: Who Is Jesus Christ?* Broadman Press, 1985.
- Hession, Roy & Revel. *We Would See Jesus*. Ft. Washington, Penn.: Christian Literature Crusade, 1958.
- Humphreys, Fisher. *The Death of Christ*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Understanding Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic Books, 1987.
- Patterson, Bob E. *Who Is Jesus Christ?* Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 1996.

### (2) More advanced resources:

- Bloesch, Donald G. *Jesus Christ: Savior & Lord*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Culpepper, Robert H. *Interpreting the Atonement*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966.
- Karkkainen, Veli-Matti. *Christology: A Global Introduction, An Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Jesus—God and Man*. Trans. by Lewis Wilkins & Duane Priebe from the second German edition. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968.
- Sanders, Fred & Klaus Issler. *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007.
- Stott, John R. W. *The Cross of Christ*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

## 3. Personal & Group activities:

- (1) Centre a group discussion around the question: “What would it mean for Christianity if Jesus had not come to earth?”
- (2) Centre a group discussion around the question: “How can the death of someone over 2,000 years ago make a difference in our lives today?”
- (3) Survey other world religions besides Christianity to see if any of them contain a belief of a living, dying, resurrected Saviour. Log in your journal the reasons why it is important to understand the cross in the light of the resurrection.
- (4) Discuss ways Christians can hold to the uniqueness of Christ and still respect (though not necessarily agree with) the truth claims of other believers (non-Christians). Notice how all religious perspectives to some extent make exclusive claims. Log in your journal the main truth claims of Christianity.

- (5) Explore the Greek Orthodox view of accepting the mystery of Christ's identity without having to logically explain it. How do we balance proper belief in Christology with adoration of and submission to his Lordship?
- (6) Do a comparative study of Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20 and Hebrews 1:1-4. List the ways that God the Father and Jesus the Son relate.
- (7) Do a hymnal or chorus book search for songs about Christ's identity and His atonement. Identify the top three you are convinced best represent biblical teaching about Christ's identity and mission.
- (8) Read the story of the "rich young ruler" in Matthew 19:16-30. In your journal write a page long letter to this man giving the reasons he should have accepted Christ.
- (9) Read the *Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. What does he mean by the words "cheap grace"?