

CHRISTOLOGY NOTES 1

Discipleship Hour, 7/17/2020

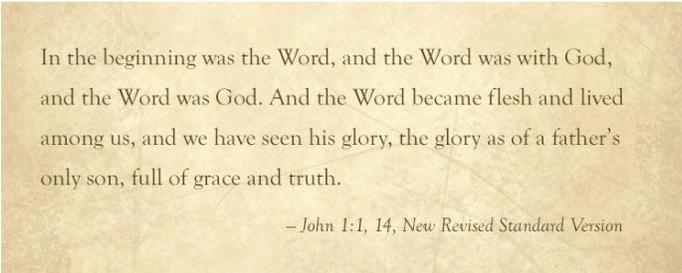
CHRISTOLOGY : the branch of Christian theology relating to the person, nature, and role of Christ.

In Christianity, Christology, translated literally from Greek as "the study of Christ", is a branch of theology that concerns Jesus. Different denominations have different opinions on questions like whether Jesus was human, divine, or both, and as a messiah what his role would be in the freeing of the Jewish people from foreign rulers or in the prophesied Kingdom of God, and in the salvation from what would otherwise be the consequences of sin.

Your view of Jesus Christ will impact every area of your life. Many today want only practical instruction and helps for living, eschewing "esoteric" topics such as doctrine and theology because they seem to be out of touch with their day-to-day reality. Paul's view was different. He saw that the christological problems in the Colossian church had practical importance as well. Believers have died with Christ; therefore, we need to die to our sins. We have also been raised with Christ; therefore, we must live well in Him and put on qualities that are motivated by Christian love. And because He is Lord over all, the life of the Christian is a life of submission to Jesus. Are you following after Jesus as you should? Our faith in Jesus Christ should transform the relationships we have in every area of our lives—in our homes, our churches, and our world.

WHO DO THE PEOPLE SAY I AM?

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" MATTHEW 16



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

— John 1:1, 14, New Revised Standard Version

Colossians — Christ the Head of the body, everything else is secondary. (Colossians 1:18)

WRITER: PAUL was in Ephesus for about two years where he had his most fruitful ministry (Acts 19:8-19). Colosse was 75 to 100 miles east of Ephesus, and visitors from Colosse had heard Paul and had come to know Christ. Apparently Philemon was one of these. A church came into existence in Colosse (Philemon 2), and Epaphras was the minister (Colossians 1:4-8; 4:12, 13). Paul intended to visit there when he was released from prison (Philemon 22). Paul wrote to this church as though it were his own.

PROBLEM AT COLOSSE: Colosse, located in southwest Phrygia in Asia Minor near Laodicea, was beset with oriental mysticism. Gnosticism had evidently intruded with its Greek pantheistic philosophy of the demiurge.

GNOSTICISM : a prominent heretical movement of the 2nd-century Christian Church, partly of pre-Christian origin. Gnostic doctrine taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity THE demiurge, and that Christ was an emissary of the remote supreme divine being, esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of whom enabled the redemption of the human spirit. Gnosticism is considered heresy for three basic reasons: It maintains that creation is evil, or at least less than good, and that salvation consists in freeing the good spirit from the evil world. This is direct contradiction of the Christian belief that, as the Book of Genesis says, God saw that what he created was good.

- (1) They had an exclusive spirit (were aristocrat)
- (2) They held speculative tenets on creation — that God did not create the universe directly, but created a creature who in turn created another creature, until one finally created the physical universe. Christ was considered a creature in this long series of creations.
- (3) Their ethical practice was asceticism (influenced by Greek Stoicism) and unrestrained licentiousness (from Greek Epicureanism).

Question: "What is Stoicism? What did the Greek Stoics teach?"

Answer: Stoicism is one of many ancient Greek philosophies. While Paul was in Athens, a group of Stoics met him and engaged him in a debate (Acts 17:18) that started in the marketplace and continued in the Areopagus. In speaking to the Stoics and other philosophers gathered on Mars Hill, Paul gave a presentation of the gospel and made a point of mentioning the Athenian altar to the "unknown god" as proof of their spiritual ignorance.

Stoicism, which emphasizes rationalism and logic, is commonly considered to be the opposite of Epicureanism, which is seen as promoting feeling and comfort. Many people think Epicureanism is all about pleasure in life while Stoicism is all about rejecting pleasure. This view is over-simplified to the point of inaccuracy. In reality, Epicureanism teaches to arrange one's life in such a way that it is completely free of stress—including the stress brought about by over-indulgence and pleasure-seeking. True Stoicism says to align one's expectations with the *logos*—the natural law of the cosmos—and not to worry about the rest.

Paul's Answers

Colossians 1:15-28, Colossians 2:16-23, and Colossians 3:5-9