

CHRISTOLOGY

Definitions of Theological Terms

- Arianism:** a false teaching stating that Jesus was not equal to God in power or authority.
- Athanasian Creed:** An ancient Christian statement of belief focused on Trinitarian doctrine and the Incarnation. About Jesus, it states, *“Our Lord Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man, not by conversion of the Godhead in the flesh, but by the taking up of the humanity into God.”*
- Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.
- Blood of Christ:** a phrase referring to Christ’s death in its saving aspects, since the blood he shed on the cross was the clear outward evidence that his lifeblood was poured out when he died a sacrificial death to pay for our redemption.
- Chalcedonian Definition:** a declaration of Christ’s nature adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. It maintained the two distinct natures of Christ- divine and human.
- Christology:** the study of the person and work of Jesus.
- Conversion:** our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.
- Covenant:** An unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.
- Covenant of grace:** the legal agreement between God and man, established by God after the fall of Adam, whereby man could be saved. Although the specific provisions of this covenant varied at different times during redemptive history, the essential condition of requiring faith in Christ the redeemer remained the same.
- Deconstruction:** Untangling the ideas and practices keeping one’s faith together and considering that some parts of one’s beliefs may need evaluation, adjustment, or even severing to get to a clearer and truer expression of faith.
- Docetism:** a false teaching that stated that Jesus only appeared to be human.
- Dying with Christ:** a phrase that describes a person’s break with his old way of life by virtue of his being united with Christ through faith.
- Exaltation of Christ:** one of the two “states” of Christ, the other being humiliation. The state of exaltation includes four aspects of his work: his resurrection, ascension into heaven, seated at the right hand of God, and return in glory and power.
- Grace:** God’s goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.
- Heresies:** false ideas about who Jesus is, his gospel message, and the Christian faith.
- Holiness:** the doctrine that God is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor.

Humiliation of Christ: one of the two “states of Christ, the other being exaltation. The state of humiliation includes four aspects of his work: his incarnation, suffering, death, and burial.

Hypostatic union: the union of Christ’s human and divine natures in one person (from the Greek *hypostasis*, “being”)

Immortality: a state or condition free from both death and decay. The Bible affirms that only God by nature has immortality. Humankind failed to obtain this state because of sin, but it is given by God to the righteous.

Immutability: another term for God’s unchangeableness.

Incarnation: the act of God the Son whereby he took to himself a human nature.

“In Christ”: a term referring to a variety of relationships between believers and Christ through which Christians receive the benefits of salvation.

“In Jesus’ name”: a term referring to prayer made on Jesus’ authorization and consistent with his character.

Intercession: Jesus’ ongoing act of standing in God’s presence and making petitions before him on our behalf as our great high priest.

Justification: an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and 2 declares us to be righteous in his sight.

Kenosis theory: the theory that Christ gave up some of his divine attributes while he was on earth as a man (from the Greek verb *kenōō*, which means “to empty”)

King: one of the three offices fulfilled by Christ in which he rules over the church and the universe.

King in the line of David:

Kingdom of God: This is the just rule and reign of God over the earth. It is also referred to as the Kingdom of Heaven. This kingdom is here now but it is also not yet.

Logos: the Greek term for “word” by which the apostle John refers to Jesus in John 1:1. As applied to Jesus, the term implies both the Old Testament concept of the powerful, creative word of God and the Greek idea of the organizing and unifying principle of the universe.

Lord: in the New Testament, a translation of the Greek word *kyrios* that is usually, but not always, used to refer to Christ. in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word is used to translate the Hebrew *YHWH*, the personal name of the omnipotent God.

Mediator: the role that Jesus plays in coming between God and us, enabling us to come into the presence of God.

Mercy: God’s goodness toward those in misery and distress.

- Messiah:** from the Hebrew “to anoint.” The Greek translation is *Cristos*. The Messiah is one anointed by God to lead his people. Jesus is the Christ, Messiah, the anointed one.
- Messianic Secret:** Jesus never denied that he was the Messiah, but he did not want to let very many people know that he was the promised “anointed one.” Throughout his ministry, Jesus was very guarded about how would know that He was the Messiah.
- Miracle:** a less common kind of God’s activity in which he arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself.
- Nestorianism:** a false teaching stating that Jesus’ humanity and divinity existed separately from each other.
- New Covenant:** The administration of the covenant of grace established after the death and resurrection of Christ, a covenant in which Christ’s atoning death covers all of the believer’s sins and the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to fulfill the righteous demands of the law.
- Omnipotence:** the doctrine that God is able to do all his holy will (from Latin *Omni*, “all,” and *potens*, “powerful.”)
- Omnipresence:** the doctrine that God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in different places.
- Omniscient:** the doctrine that God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.
- Parousia:** the second coming of Christ (from the Greek *Parousia*, “coming”).
- Passive Obedience:** a term referring to Christ’s suffering for us in which he took the penalty due for our sins and as a result died for our sins.
- Penal Substitution:** the view that Christ in his death bore the just penalty of God for our sins as a substitute for us.
- Priest:** a person appointed by God in the Old Testament to offer sacrifices, prayers, and praises to God on behalf of the people. This office was fulfilled by Christ, who has become the great high priest for all believers.
- Prophet:** one of the offices fulfilled by Christ, the office by which he most fully reveals God to us and speaks to us the words of God.
- Propitiation:** a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath toward us into favor.
- Protoevangelium:** the first gospel found in Genesis 3:15.
- Reconciliation:** the removal of enmity and the restoration of fellowship between two parties.
- Redemption:** Christ’s saving work viewed as an act of “buying back” sinners out of their bondage to sin and to Satan through the payment of a ransom.

- Repentance:** a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.
- Resurrection:** a rising from the dead into a new kind of life not subject to sickness, aging, deterioration, or death.
- Sacrifice:** Christ's death on the cross viewed from the standpoint that he paid the penalty that we deserved.
- Saving faith:** trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.
- Second coming of Christ:** the sudden, personal, visible, bodily return of Christ from heaven to earth.
- Slaughter of the innocents:** Herod's killing of all Hebrew children under 2 years of age following the wise men's visit.
- Son of God:** a title often used for Jesus to designate him as the heavenly, eternal Son who is equal in nature to God himself.
- Son of Man:** the term by which Jesus referred to himself most often, which had an Old Testament background, especially in the heavenly figure who was given eternal rule over the world in the vision in Daniel.
- Sovereignty:** God's exercise of power over his creation.
- Trinity:** the doctrine that God eternally exists as three persons- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit- and each person is fully God, and there is one God.
- Virgin Birth:** the biblical teaching that Jesus was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father.

Primary Resource: Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem