

## What is Unique about Christ that People Should Follow Him?

1. Jesus is a real person, as opposed to a mythological (or imagined) figure or idols.
  - His history is recorded in the Bible.
  - Today's date points to the person whose birth date divides the calendar into BC and AD.
  - Sadhakar, an Indian Brahmin coming from a priestly background, became a Christian. He later became a pastor in Trivandrum because he realized that his gods have no history. He became convinced of the historicity of Jesus Christ by reading the first chapter of the New Testament, the genealogy of Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus is the holiest person.
  - The Scripture is explicit about His holiness. Heb 7:26; 1Pet 2:21
  - The five witness to His holiness at His trial:
    - 1) Judas the betrayer. Mt 27:3
    - 2) Pilate. The governor who judged Jesus. Lk 23:22
    - 3) Pilate's wife. Mt 27:19
    - 4) The centurion. Mt 27:57
    - 5) The thief on the cross. Lk 23:40
  - He challenged His enemies, the Pharisees, to point out any sin in His life.
  - The evil one, who knew Jesus himself, shouted, "Holy One of Israel"
  - Can we compare Christ with the guru one of whom was deported out of the United States because they were playing with girls and covered up their income to avoid income tax?
3. He is the most loving person.
  - His holiness is an attractive holiness, while a guru's holiness is very often repulsive.
  - He is called the friend of sinners. Mt 11:19
  - A loving person, He forgave the adulteress. Jn 8:1-11
  - His love is not to be measured in terms of healing, answered prayer, or material help. The real measurement of His love is the way He gave His very life. Rom 5:6-8; Jn 15:13
4. He is the only one who made provision for the human predicament of forgiveness of sin.
  - Sin can be atoned for by sacrificing life or by the shedding of blood. Heb 9:22
  - Blood sacrifice indicates that sin is a serious matter for God.
  - Sinless human blood or a sinless human being is the only solution for the forgiveness of sin.
  - For each person, one sinless one should die. For six billion people, six billion should be sinless and willing to give their lives!
  - What angels cannot do (since they have no body) and what humans could not do (since they are all sinners), Jesus did! He became that sacrifice for sin. Gal 3:13
  - Since He is God himself, His one sacrifice would do for all people of all ages of all nations.
  - What happened in Israel, the "center of the globe", is meant for the whole globe.
  - Many Hindu worshippers testify that they did not find this forgiveness anywhere else. Repetition of holy baths itself is an indicator that their consciences were not cleansed. Heb 9:14

5. He is the only one who rose again from the dead.

- He rose from the dead, not merely from death. His was a bodily resurrection.
- Paul who saw the resurrected Lord writes that, if Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain. 1 Cor 15. Paul gives several evidences of His resurrection.
- If Christ is not risen, how do we explain the empty tomb, the existence of the Church, the New Testament, and Sunday as the day on which Christians worship?
- Sir William Ramsay wanted to disprove the resurrection of Christ and the conversion of Paul as myths: He ended up as a Christian apologetic!
- If He were not risen, prayer would have no meaning, and our worship and service, too, would be meaningless.

6. He is the only one who can change people's lives.

- He changes sinners into saints.
- Because of Him, people quit smoking and drinking, stealing, and killing.
- He changes individuals, families, communities and nations. Here are just two examples:
- The Naga people in Northeastern India, who were headhunters, are now a developed people.
- The Western civilization is always preferred to the rest of the worlds, the Hindu world, the Moslem world, and the Communist world.

7. He made unique claims.

Read Mt 11:28; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 14:6 , 9; and Jn. 11:25. Either Jesus is a maniac, or He is a unique person. His teachings and His life are evidence to support the latter.

## 10 Common Sense Arguments in Favor of Creation

One need not be highly scientific and intelligent in order to opt for Creation. The following arguments are intended to be simple to any simple and logical mind. The power of these arguments lie in their simplicity.

### 1. Intelligent Design:

Intelligent Design in nature points to a purpose, which in turn points to a mind which in turn points to a person whom we call God. Innumerable examples could be offered as to describe nature's design.

### 2. Which Evolutionist to Believe?

We do not have a single theory of evolution. Evolutionists do not agree on one systematic theory. They disagree on a lot of issues. For example, according to some we are descendants of pigs rather than apes basing on the blood group.

### 3. Some Scientists Interpret the Evidence in Favor of Creation

If the scientists have evidence in favor of evolution, then we know that there are scientists, competent scientists who favor creation as well. Some of them are Christians and others are not.

### 4. Where is the Confusion Between the Species?

If evolution is right, then there should be confusion between the species because it takes billions of years for this transmutation. We should have intermediary stages between the species. We cannot know if an organism is really man or an ape! But in reality we do not see these stages in between these species and without confusion we identify the species.

### 5. It takes more faith to believe in evolution than to believe in creation.

a. How can there be life from non-life in the beginning. How can something come out of nothing unless we presuppose an eternal being that caused something to happen?

b. Eternal monkeys would take more than  $10$  to the power of  $1065$  years to type Psalm 23 – a lot longer than the age of the earth. Evolutionists assign 15 billion years as the age of the earth.

c. Imagine a bomb in printing press and all the keys got themselves composed into a dictionary! That is what is exactly the big bang theory would want us to believe.

### 6. Who Can Deny the Evolutionary Process Within the Species?

The evidence of evolution would explain evolutionary process within the species and does not lead to an argument in favor of mega-transmutations from one species to another. To say in contrary terms, while denying transmutations from one species to another species, we should not deny evolution within the species.

7. A Follower of Jesus Will Follow What Jesus Believed About Creation:

The Bible describes how everything has been created. If the Bible has been trusted and proved in other areas, what it says about creation can be trusted as well. The description does not lend itself to any metaphorical interpretation. It is stated as a fact and that is how Jesus treated it. How could Jesus followers think different from Him on this foundational truth: God is the Creator?

8. The Author of the Bible and the Author of Science is One:

The Bible interpreted rightly and science viewed rightly they will not contradict with each other. God is the author of both of them. If they are interpreted as if they contradict, then we need to overhaul such an interpretation.

9. Wherever truth is found it is God's truth

Often we hear people say, "Whether it is found in the Bible or in science or in sociology, that truth, if it is truth, can only come from God". That cannot be denied. However, such a claim faces a problem: How do you know that it is truth in the first instance? The Bible claims that its worldview is truth since it is a revelation from God. However, the Bible does not provide answers for every problem. Nevertheless, it does provide a set of worldview or a mindset, which evaluates and judges other worldviews.

10. Theistic Evolution—will it Work?

Some intelligent people try to wed evolution with creation. Will it work? The question that these theistic evolutionists face is at what point in the evolutionary continuity an ape acquires the image of God and thereby assumes the status of "a responsible creature" that is accountable to God. This question pushes us to either of the two corners: Humans are not responsible creates. Or, God created us to be that way. Indeed, this is a distinctive quality given to humanity.

## Definition of Evangelism:

Evangelism is the activity of presenting the gospel to unbelievers in a way that is understood clearly whether or not they genuinely believe in Jesus Christ. It is presented with a view to believe and to become members of a local Christian community even if the result does not fulfill the intention—e.g. Isaiah's call (ch. 6) and the purpose of the Word coming into this world (Jn. 1). Only those who believe that Jesus is Christ is God's provision for salvation will ever be motivated to evangelize.

## 5 Reasons Why People Do Not Accept the Gospel or Christ

- a. When the evangelists have not gone out to preach or motivated to preach, Mt. 28:19-20, Rom. 10.
- b. When the evangelist has not presented the gospel clearly, 2 Tim. 3:15
- c. When Christians have not prayed for them to deliver them from the clutches of Satan, cf. 2 Cor 10:4
- d. When the people are afraid of the consequences viz. persecution, ostracism, resulting in insecurity.
- e. When the people love to live in sin--embrace the darkness of sin thereby rejecting the light of the gospel, Jn. 3:19.

## Some Suggested Methods and Experiences

The following 15 methods are not by any means exhaustive. However, these have been tested and are to be used with discernment in fitting with the context.

### Relational Methods

#### 1. Friendship

Concentrate on friendship. If you share the gospel with your friend, he might feel uncomfortable with your friendship and eventually you might lose him. Do not verbalize the gospel to him. Remain as a friend and expose him to the people or contexts where the gospel is preached. When he asks questions related to the gospel, answer to the point. Do not bore him with a lot of stuff.

#### 2. Hospitality

Make people feel at home with you. Take them for a cup of tea. Make friends through the mammon for the sake of the kingdom, Lk. 16. Hospitality does not always mean providing room and board, it could be sometimes be just kind and welcoming attitude and words.

#### 3. Evangelistic Caroling

During Christmas we sang carols to the families and non Christians alike in our colony where mostly non-Christians live. Hardly any one has rejected the invitation to sing carols, to explain the meaning of Christmas, and our prayer for God's blessing to them. Also develop a relationship.

#### 4. Church Growth

The church growth movement takes full advantages of the sociological groups as bridges of evangelism. How far is this biblical?

### Apologetic Methods

#### 5. Dialogue/ Comparative Religion

See the web page [www.karma2grace.org](http://www.karma2grace.org) for an example. They want people to know clearly about Hinduism and Christian faith. In the process they would understand the gospel and its superiority over faiths. This often clarifies the gospel and the people are confronted with the truth—to accept or to reject. Other illustrations are the *Sadhu Chellappa's Approach*, and the “*Similarities between the Vedas and the*

*Bible's Approach*. Another example is the outreach at the International Friends of Madison of International Students. After describing the Hindu world view, I asked them a question, "If this is not your world view, what is your world view?"

Gopalan spoke on Christianity and I on Hinduism in the class room setting. . Gopalan started reading the Bible. (International Students were given the same approach in Madison)

#### 6. Apologetic Tracts

Paul was involved in reasoning the gospel yet he says not to be involved in arguing about genealogies and the like. Ashram tracts on the Uniqueness of Christ, Deity of Christ, 10 Commonsense Arguments in Favor of Creation. Peter expects us to be equipped to giving an answer when people question us regarding our faith in Christ.

### Psychological Methods

#### 7. Adopting to One's Culture:

Posai villagers heard the gospel that way and 44 of them were baptized.

#### 8. Transit

While traveling you may want to pack in your case John Stott's *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*. The book covers a lot of issues that a person might be interested to read a chapter of his choice. By the time he finishes reading it, he would have developed a respect for the Bible.

### 9. **Evangelism of the ears**

My travel experience with the two Hindu sadhus (wrongly called as gurus) as I traveled from Bangalore to Madras. Listening to people and their problems and needs often would win the right to share the gospel.

Five Psychological Steps of Winning an Argument; Ravi Zechariah's Approach will be good if you are good reader;

### 10. **Enthusiasm and Emotions**

Thiam Kumar, a Manipuri student in CTC, Nagaland regularly won people Christ because whenever he talked about his sin, repentance, and the death of Christ, he shed tears.

### **Intensive Methods**

**11. Power Encounter:** The church in India is growing fast when the believers fight the warfare with the powers of darkness, with the demonic powers through fasting and prayer. Many of the ECI churches are founded this way.

### 12. **Nameless Movement**

Identify the people with whom to share the gospel. We write letters with a reply paid postage asking them for an appointment to share the gospel for one hour. At the time of share the gospel one of us would pray at the door and take care of items that might otherwise distract the person from listening to the gospel. Dr. Masu Toyotomi brought this from Japan to South India and we tested it. We won 80 converts for Christ in a month.

### 13. **Prayer**

One kind of prayer is to teach God as if he does not know anything. The other kind is to pray in the way the Bible records them--prayers that have teaching value. Your friend will also understand that God is a person with whom we can converse and express our deepest needs and desires.

### 14. **Brahmastra**

A student of CTC, ended up in the hospital almost as a dead person. This was as a result of his mother's prayer: "Lord, lead my son through a traumatic experience--even if it means a major accident--so that he can open his eyes to see". He was my fellow patient in the hospital, then, I taught him for four years at CBC Calcutta and now a missionary to Thailand.

### **Developmental Methods**

#### 15. **Good Works or Social Work**

Social work will lead to relationships and contexts to share the gospel. In Calcutta while commuting in the crowded buses, I give seat to elderly persons or ladies in a way that people noticed it. Then I distributed tracts to some people around. They hardly refused them.

#### 16. **Transformational Factors Needed**

Hinduism has no answer to change the society. Four factors are essential: How do we know the right and wrong; How do we motivate people to do the right; Where is the power to do the right? How to handle the wrongs already committed?

# 16 Methods Of Sharing the Truth of the Gospel

*We preach: God Converts. We are obligated to share what we know to be true which truth transforms lives. This transformation is essential if we are to live joyfully a rich life in our community*

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**Old Testament as Prophecy and New Testament as its fulfillment, Mt 5:17-21, Jn. 4:24**

<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Fulfillment in the Messiah/the Messianic Community</b>
The Law	Adam	The Second Adam
Genesis	Gen 3:15: <i>proto evangelion</i>	Galatians
	10 Commandments	He fulfilled through his life, Mt. 5:19
	The Sabbath	Mt. 11:28; the salvation rest
	Moses	Greater than Moses
	The Law of Moses	The Greater Law, the gospel, Jn. 1:17-18
	The circumcision, Gen. 17	The new birth, not to baptism. Col. 2:11-12
Exodus	Exodus	Deliverance from sin
	Wilderness journey	Pointing to Christian life with sweetness-bitter experience
	Belief in Yahweh	Belief in Jesus Christ, Hebrews and Romans
	Tabernacle – Temple	Jesus as the real Temp
	Colors of the tabernacle	Redemptive colors
	Curtain	The body of Christ, Mt. 27
	Pot of Manna	Jesus as the living manna, eating him is necessary, Jn. 6
	The tablets of the Comm.	Mt. 5:17ff
	Rod of Aaron	The high priesthood of Jesus Christ, Heb.
Leviticus	Passover	The Lord’s Table, Mt. 26:26-27. I Cor 11
	Pentecost	The coming of the Spirit on Jews and Gentiles Ac 2, 10
	Atonement	Hebrews
	Tabernacles	Living Water Jn. 7: 37- (parenthesis) - Light Jn 8:12
	Cultus: Priest, sacrifices	Jesus as the Mediator, Heb. 5-10
	Worship through sacrifices, festivals:	Offering of our lives Rom 12:1-2; Heb. 13:15.
Numbers	The Rock that followed them	Christ, I Cor. 10:4
Prophets	The sufferings and glorification of Christ,	The death and the resurrection of Jesus in the gospels, 1 Pet 1:10-12
	Isaiah 53: the servant songs (removed in the Jewish Liturgy)	42:1-9; 49; 50; 52:13—53:12 Jesus as the obedient Son of God/God’s Servant
	Jeremiah, 31:31-33	Heb, The New Covenant Mt 26:26
	Ezekiel, 36:26	The Pentecost, Ac 2; Born Again, Jn. 3
	Zechariah, 9:9	The Triumphal Entry, Mt. 21
	Psalms	22:1; 40:69: 21;
	All of them point to Jesus and His Community (church)	But that does not mean that there is no purpose for Israel. They too will be saved and will be a great means of world evangelization, Rom. 11:25-26
Writings	Job: The Mediator, the Resurrection: Job: 19:25, 26 Psalms 16:10, Dan 12:2	Jesus: The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—the God of living

Summary: Personalities. Events: Festivals; Wilderness journeys, Babylonian Exile, Articles, Covenants with Adam, David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Promises, the whole of the religious life of Israel, the titles such as Stone, Messiah, Son of man, son of God, Lord, Emmanuel, the root, my son, Joshua—all are designed to point to Jesus of Nazareth—to His death, His resurrection; and to the result of His work by His first coming and His Second Coming. In other words, God is faithful to fulfill his promises (prophecies) which were fulfilled in Christ and the result of his work viz. the church and the individual believers.

**A. Important References for study:**

1. Jesus statements in the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. 5:17-19.
2. How does Paul apply the OT in his ministry says to I Cor. 9:19-23  
Like Paul we go by the law of Christ, i.e. the New Testament. teaching
3. Rom 9-11; Christ is the end of the law Rom 10:4 in what sense?  
Different Answers Paul gives to those who ask the question: If the Covenant promises to Israel are transferred to the Church then what is the use being a Jew, has God been unfaithful to them?  
Love is the fulfillment of the Law
4. Different views of Jewish Christians regarding the Old Covenant Gal. 2:10-11.

## **B. The Law and the Gospel: Different Positions among the Jews**

(This also helps us to understand why Paul rebuked Peter, Gal 2:11ff)

- a. Some Gentile Christians thought that the law had no claim whatsoever on their lives. Some examples: those who promoted some kind of libertinism, Marcion List of Canonical books, Dr. Thannikkal of New Life Bible College
- b. Like Pau, not under the law covenant though certainly now free from God's demands, I Cor. 9:19-23. As pastoral wisdom dictates, they are free to practice circumcision, kosher food laws.
- c. Some Jewish Christians chose to observe the stipulations of the Law though they were not thought to be necessary for salvation or for mature Christian life.
- d. Some Jewish Christians thought that they should observe the Mosaic Code even if that is not necessary for the Gentile Christians. They should remain in their traditions. The audience of Peter's defense belonged to this group or to group 3). Such position is in Jerusalem church but not in Antioch.
- e. Some Jews thought that the really spiritual Gentiles would want to obey the law even though their salvation depended on faith in Christ and repentance from sin, strictly speaking. Spiritual maturity was tied to the observance of the Mosaic covenant. Probably, the false apostles of 2 Cor. 10-13 belonged to this camp.
- f. Jewish Christians who believed that Jesus was the Messiah and by His death and resurrection restored God's people to faithfulness to Mosaic covenant. Jesus' work purified the Jews. New covenant was the renewal of the old. According to these Jews, Gentiles were welcome to accept Jesus as the Messiah, but first they should become Jews, i.e. submit to circumcision, kosher food laws, observe Sabbath, etc. They were Judaizers, who were disenfranchised and recognized to be incompatible with the gospel, Ac. 15:1-35; Tit. 1:10.
- g. Many devout Jews did not accept Jesus as the Messiah.

## **C. Concluding Remarks**

1. The New Testament interprets the Old Testament rightly.
2. The New Testament assumes that the reader is in touch with the Old Testament in order to understand, illustrate the law that guides Christians.
3. We need to read the NT repeatedly to get the feel of it.
4. An Excellent tool: D. A. Carson (ed). *A Commentary on The New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **If Jesus is God, why is he called the Son of God?**

Answer: Son of God is a Hebrew idiom for the divine Messiah, and the phrase meant "equal to God", *Jn 5:17, 18*. It is a Hebrew idiom which the Jews could understand well and that is how they understood it.

- **If Jesus is God, why did he claim subordination to the Father?** ("By myself I can do nothing.")

Answer: The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is analogous to the relationship between husband and wife. In essence they are equal; in function the husband is the head, and the wife is the subordinate. In other words, if the husband and the wife belong to mankind, then the Father and the Son belong to "Godkind".

The Son volunteered to subordinate Himself to suffer and die and, thereby, save mankind. Similarly, wives are to submit themselves to God voluntarily and happily without being forced by their husbands. *Phil 2:5-10; Eph 5:22 ff*

- **If Jesus is God, then we do not worship one God but several Gods.**

Answer: God is not a unit of one, but a unity of three, i.e., a tri-unity. In fact, God cannot be a unit of one for a couple of reasons: If we are created in His image and therefore we are gregarious it is a logical conclusion that God is gregarious in his very nature, i.e. in lives in a community! Looking at it from a different angle, John in his First letter is not merely saying that God loves when he writes, "God is love" 4:8, but that His very nature is love. If so whom did He love before there was any of His creatures were created? This leads us to the conclusion that if God is love in His very essence, then he should have company. In eternity, before the angels

and any others were created, God had to be more than one person to express his very nature. If God is what he is, he cannot be a unit of one, he has to be Trinity. If God is love, Trinity or plurality in the God head is a necessity!

**In Hebrew, *Echad* means one** and Yacheed means unity of one. In Gen 2:24, man and woman become one, yacheed, in the same sense that Deut 6:4, Israel was asked to believe that God is one, Yacheed.

- **If Jesus is God how come he said that He did not know His second coming?**

Or, He said that He did not have the power to give the positions to the sons of Thaddeus in reply to their mother?

Answer: While Jesus was on earth, it was not the Father's will for him to have that knowledge or the power to assign position in the Kingdom. Jesus was committed to doing the will of the Father. However, now, after His resurrection, He is not limited in His power or knowledge.

**Application of this truth to our lives:** If God has to forgive our sins through the sacrifice of a man who is perfect, and that we need one human sacrifice for every human being in the world--humans who lived in the whole history of mankind, then Jesus has to be God as well in order that His sacrifice may transcend time and space. Indeed, His one sacrifice is sufficient. He is sacrificed once and for all so that the wrath of God against sinners might be averted and that they might enjoy fellowship with Him.

*(This is part of SramAshram study material) For further assistance write to: <SramAshram@verizon.net>*

**What do you think  
Is Jesus  
God?**

Contact: [SramAshram@gmail.com](mailto:SramAshram@gmail.com)

This discourse material is not intended to force any one to believe but it may provoke people to think. It is for the reader to come to conclusions related to the ultimate Truth. While this may convince the reader s of the Truth, it is God's work to convert.

## What do you think: Is Jesus God?

### 1. Jesus has the attributes of God.

God has both absolute and relative attributes.

Absolute attributes are his goodness (love, grace, mercy), his benevolence (care for his creation), his holiness (perfection in all his attributes and thereby totally different from all that exists), his righteousness, and his justice.

Relative attributes are his omnipotence, his omniscience, immutability (unchangeability), and his omnipresence.

All these are found in Jesus. However, by its very definition, incarnation means that he limited himself to be in one place when he assumed the body. During his earthly days, he was not omnipresent, but after his resurrection, he filled all things. *Eph 4:10*

### 2. Jesus does the work of God and has the offices of God.

God is the Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer. So is Jesus. *Jn 1:3; Heb 1:3; Eph 1:7*

### 3. Jesus has the names of God.

Immanuel (God with us). *Isa 7:14*

Son of God (One of the Jewish notions of the Messiah is that he is God himself).

Word. *Jn 1.1*

Son of Man. *Mk 10:45* (This title is a favorite of Jesus since it has three connotations - his divinity *Dan 7:13*; his humility *Ezk 2:1, 3:1, 4:1*, and his vocation to suffer *Isa 42, 53* (the suffering servant or suffering son))

I am. *Jn 8:58* (Whenever "ego emi" has no referent, it refers to his divinity)

### 4. Jesus has the prerogatives (exclusive claims) of God.

Only God receives worship. Note that Jesus did not receive worship in a Jewish context, where men or angels neither give worship nor receive worship. *Dan 3:12 ff; Ac 10, 14; Rev 22:9; Mt 2:2; Jn 9:38, 12:3*

Only God can forgive sin. Note that Jesus forgave sin. *Lk 5:20-21*

Only God can judge. Note that all judgment is committed to Jesus and, when he judges he will be recognized as Judge and King. *Jn 5:22*

### 5. Jesus fits the description of God

The Old Testament descriptions of God are ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament.

*Ps 68:18; cf. Eph 4:8; Isa 6; cf. Jn 12:41*

### 6. Jesus has the position of God.

The Baptismal Commission (*Mt 28:19-20*), the greetings (*Eph 1:3; Rev 1:1-5*), and the benediction (*2 Cor 13:14*) give equal positions to the Father, Son and the Spirit.

### 7. Jesus is directly called God.

The doubting Thomas addressed him as Lord and God when he was convinced that Jesus rose again from the dead. *Jn 20:28*

The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews compared Jesus with the angels and shows His superiority by citing a scriptural reference where He is called God. *Heb 1:8*

In Titus, Paul admonishes Christians to live holy lives "while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" *Tit 2:13*. Peter writes "to those whose righteousness of our God and Savior" *2 Pet 1:1*. By using the expression "our God and Savior", rather than "our God and our Savior", both Apostles make it clear that "God and Savior" are one and the same person.

Paul refers to Jesus as God in his systematic doctrinal treatment in Romans 9:5.

## Developing Biblical World View

What is Christian education/ art/ music/ song?

Biblical worldview Vs. Hindu worldview

- 
- B Basic Themes of the Bible
  - I Inspiration of Scripture
  - B Books include and books to exclude
  - L The Lord's View of Scripture
  - E Equivalentents or near equivalentents to Scripture
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Inspiration: Bible speaks to us to develop a biblical world view. At the same time, it speaks to us to guide us in our personal life.

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Six branches of Systematic Theology:

Study of God (theology) – Attributes – Moral and non moral; works of God

Study of Bible (Bibliology) BIBLE – see above

Study of Man (anthropology) Image of God, Constitution of Man Dichotomy and Tri.

The Fall and Total Depravity

Study of Salvation (soteriology)- Savior Jesus Christ – Person and work of

Christ.--Salvation in its three phases

Study of Church (ecclesiology): Origin of the church, or Organization of the Church

Ordinances of the church – baptism and the Lord’s Table

Study of End Times (Eschatology) Signs of the End Times, New Heaven and New

Earth, Hell is it a reality, The Millennial Kingdom – the four views:

Dispensationalism, Historical Premillennarianism, A millenarianism and Post  
millenarianism

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### Basic Themes of the Bible

- A. Creation
  - B. Fall
  - C. Redemption[
  - D. New Creation
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#### A. Creation

1. Creation Vs. evolution: 10 common sense arguments in favor of creation
2. Man and woman – a complementary view vs. egalitarian.
3. Husband and wife reflecting the Father and Son relationship -- church and Christ, Eph. 5
4. Work ethics – God is the creator and we are the creative creatures made in the image of God.
5. Worship of the one God – with one heart
6. Creation story rules out so many isms – pantheism, polytheism, henotheism, Gnosticism, etc.

#### B. The Fall

1. Origin of Satan, do not know
2. Origin of sin – human selfishness, wanting to be like God, revolt against Him, Vs. Hindu view – sin is eternal
3. Total depravity
4. Sin and sins
5. Sin and evil: moral evil is sin. Evil includes natural catastrophes.

C. Redemption:

1. Relational and Judicial

2. Three Phases of Redemption

a. Justification

b. Sanctification-- growing in the likeness of Jesus and separation from the world for God's use.

c. Glorification

3. Assurance of Salvation and Eternal security

a. God's eternal plan

b. Based on the work of Jesus Christ

c. Depends upon God's ability to keep – perseverance of God and man

d. The eternal nature of salvation, eternal life

4. Mission: Evangelism and Social work

a. Involvement and Detachment

b. Relief, Developmental and Social Action

c. Pastor and Members of the Church – limitations to  
involvement in politics

D. New Heaven and New Earth

1. Perfection

2. Restoration of all things – Eden – working on the new earth? No marriage – Joy surpasses the best marriage on earth

3. Signs of the End Times, New Heaven and New Earth,

4. Reality of Hell

5. The Millennial Kingdom – the four views:

a. Dispensational view

b. Historical Pre-millinnarian view

c. A millenarian view

d. Post millenarian view

Other Issues

1. Compatibilism: Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility
2. Important and unimportant issues, I Cor. 9: 15-21
3. Reductionism vs. complexity, e.g. judgment at three levels
4. Prosperity theology – Always prosperous in material benefits, Cross less gospel, Old testament promises to the nation of Israel vs. individual promise.

**Truth about the Bible**

Basic themes of the Bible: Four themes:

:Creation

:Fall

:Redemption

:New Creation

Revelation:

General and Special

Propositional Revelation

Action + Interpretation = Revelation

Inspiration and Interpretation

Inspiration:

Two Important Scriptures: 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired

2 Pet 1:21 holy men

Dictation: Obj.

The style of all the books is not the same;

it differs from author to author.

## Verbal Inspiration

Words as opposed to word (message)

Plenary Inspiration: With that meaning in its context

“Purging all food clean”, Mk. 7:19

Whoever finds a wife finds a good thing, “what is good,

Likewise, blood can mean just death so we can use death in place of blood.

“Flesh” means human nature, sinful nature, flesh and bone. Out of the three human nature at Rom 8:3

Which version is the best? Question is which version is better? For what purpose?

Interpretation of man can be faulty, Translations are not flawless

**Books to include and to exclude: What is the basis of qualifying the 66 books?**

Factors that guided the church to acknowledge these books

Written by the apostles or those who worked with them

Accepted by the Eastern Church and Western church

Simplicity

What is wrong with the apocrypha and with the scriptures of the cults?

Jesus or the apostles did not use them or referred to any other book as Scripture.

Don't match with the message; e. g. Book of Mormonism;

2 Maccabees 12 praying for the dead.

## the Lord's View of Scripture

The Scripture is history

The Scripture as one unit

The Scripture must be read and understood

The centre of Scripture is Himself, Lk. 24: 27

What the Scripture says is what God says

The Scripture has the final authority

Jesus obeyed the Scripture

In His death, burial and Resurrection

## Equivalents, near equivalents

Statues-emphasizing its binding force

Word-comprehensive word for God's self disclosed truth

Commandments-Predicated on His authority to tell His creatures what to do

Law-Instruction or revelation

Testimonies- to bear witness to the truth against all that is false

Promise-derived from say, promise

Precepts-superintending the details

Decrees-decisions of the supreme all wise Judge



# Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

## Questions in Bibliology

- **How did Jesus look at Scriptures?**

- As events occurred in history
- As One unit
- As important to read and to understand properly
- Himself as their center
- As if that is what God is saying
- As if there is no appeal against them
- He obeyed them in his life, death, resurrection, etc.

- What are the basic themes of Scripture?

Creation, the Fall, Redemption and New Creation

- What is Plenary Inspiration?

Every word with a particular meaning that makes sense in its context is inspired

- How do you define Inspiration?

Unexplainable power of the Spirit which comes upon the human authors to write sinless words of God without nullifying their background or overruling their mind even though they are weak and sinful human beings.

- What arguments can you provide for the 66 books as Cannon? What are the practical implications of this "Canonicity?"

In the case of 39 books of the Old Testament:

Jesus/the apostles/NT did not quote or cite from the OT apocryphal books as if they are Scriptures or the voice of God or of the Spirit

In the case of New Testament books:

Peter acknowledged the Pauline Corpus as the scripture, 2 Pet. 3:10

*Note: The church only acknowledged these 66 books as having the authenticity as the word of God or words of God. No council gave authority as such to these books to be considered as the word of God.*

The factors that helped in the process of this recognition include these factors: 1. the simplicity in the style as opposed to the advertizing language, 2). Acceptance of these books by both the segments of the church, the Eastern and the Western, 3). the apostolic authorship (the apostles and those who worked with these apostles), and 4) the readability for public and private reading.

# Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

- Which English Version is preferable?
- To start with it is not a complete question. It should include the purpose for which the version is intended. For evangelism in the market place needs a different version when compared to the evangelism among the pundits.

The versions which follow the following principles are to be preferred.

When there are variant readings of different texts in different mss, the following scientific principles are kept in mind in the selection of these texts. This is called textual criticism.

1. The texts of the earliest manuscripts available are preferable. The DSS discovered in 1948 shed a lot of light on the biblical texts. Earlier English Versions did not have this advantage.
2. The more difficult text is preferable
3. The shorter text is preferable
4. The text that has wider geographical representation is preferable
5. The text that fits the context better is preferable
6. The text that not indicate any theological bent is preferable

## Questions in Theology

- What is the Essence of God? Implications?
  - He is Spiritual, i. e. immaterial, invisible, alive, and personal. He is self existing, eternal and immense.
- What are the attributes of God Implications?
  - Non-moral attributes: Omnipresence, Omniscience, omnipotence, immutability.
  - Moral attributes: Holiness, righteousness and Justice, Goodness (love, mercy, grace) Truth (trustworthy)
- What arguments can you provide to favor Creation? How do you handle the “scientific evidence” that favors the Theory of Evolution?
  - See the handout on *The Commonsense Arguments in favor of Creation*
- How do you interpret the Seven days of creation narrative?
- God created heaven and earth and then filled it. It is a historical truth cast in a poetical form? Did God create in seven literal days or seven epochs? Is the description in poetry or history? Were there two creations, the first described in v.1.
  - Certain truths stand out by the creation narrative in Gen. 1 - 2.
  - God is the absolute owner and sovereign and so His creation has to acknowledge this truth and is to obey and worship Him.

## Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

All kinds of isms such as atheism, polytheism, pantheism and dualism cannot compete with this theistic belief.

The creation account lays the foundation for the complementary view of male and female display the perfect “one-in- three” relationship in the godhead.

- How do you show that Jesus is God?

Jesus has the attributes of God

Jesus does the works of God

Jesus has the names of God

Jesus has the prerogatives of God

Jesus is given the description of God

Jesus is given the status of God

Jesus is directly called as God

Objections and how they are overruled

Obj. 1: Are there three gods?

Ans: Just like the father and mother in the family, they are one unity and at the same time two persons

Obj. 2: How come Jesus did not have the authority to give the placing to the two of his disciples in the kingdom nor his knowledge about his second coming?

Ans: It is true that there is a “dent” in his divinity due to his incarnation. That is how the Father intended for His son in His incarnate state and Jesus as the obedient Son was subject to the will of the Father.

Counter Obj.: If God is love, plurality is necessitated. Who is the possible candidate to be the Partner to share the love of the Father in the beginning when there was no creation? Secondly, if God is a unity, love of God is unconceivable. Or, if God is power and not a person, such love is not possible either.

### **Pneumatology (Holy Spirit)**

Holy Spirit is a person: What evidence is there to show this truth?

Personal pronouns are used for him. He is called helper, and personal characteristics are ascribed to him (such as actions, speech, intellect, emotion, and will)

The Spirit is God, how?

# Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

1. Attributes of deity are ascribed to him, i.e. He is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent
2. Works of deity are ascribed to him. i.e. creation, regeneration, inspiration of the Scriptures, raising the dead.
3. He is given the same position of the Father and the Son as in the baptismal formulas and the benediction formula.
4. The words of the Spirit are considered the words of God
5. Just as the Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Spirit proceeded both from the Father and the Son—Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ.

## Angelology

What is the traditional view of the fall of the angels?

If God made everything perfect, how did sin enter into the world? Probably, Ezk. 28:15 refers to the fall of Satan. The evil angels also followed the apostasy of Satan, Ps. 78:15; Ps. 78:49; Mt. 25:41; Rev. 9:11; 12:7-9; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6.

When did this happen and how?

Traditionally, before Gen. 1 or between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2

Their fall is due to their deliberate, self-determined revolt against God. If Ezk. 28:11-19 gives any hint, it is the undue ambition and desire to surpass God. Isa. 14:13, 14. It was their selfishness, discontentment and the craving to get what rightfully belonged to God. We need to remember that the primary referent of Ezk. is the king of Tyre and the referent of Isa. is the king of Babylon.

The Classification of Angels (messengers)

Who are the good angels

Cherubim (plural for cherub) are the guardian angels, Seraphim are the angels in worship and adoration. The living creatures in Rev. 4:6-9 are of a different category of higher rank. The archangels, Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Zariel and Gabriel are mentioned in the apocryphal book of Enoch (20:1-7) while Michael and Gabriel are mentioned in the canonical books.

The watchers, in Dan 4:13, are a different category? Not certain.

Sons of God, Jn. 1:6; 2:1 and 38:7; Ps. 8:5 cf. He. 2:7

Is there hierarchy among the angels?

Col. 1:1-16 seems to suggest that- thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities.

Who are the evil angels

# Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

The angels that are kept in prison, Dt. 32:8; cf. Dn. 10:13. They have their allotted areas in which to operate.

Angels that are free. Mt. 25:41; rev. 12:7-9 Ps. 78:49; Rom. 8:38; I cor. 6:3; Rev. 9: 14. Eph. 1:21. These may be supporting Satan in his warfare against the good angels. Demons, Mk. 9:35; Unclean spirits, Mk. 9: 25.

Satan: Gen. 3:1-15; I Chr. 21:1; UJ. 1:6-12; 2:1-7. Zech. 3:1,2

He is a person, Mt. 4:10;

He is called by different names: adversary I Pet 5:8, the devil, (slanderer) Mt. 13:39, the dragon, Rev. 12:3, serpent, Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9; Beelzebub (the lord of the house?) Mt. 10:25; belial (worthless), 2 Cor. 6:15; Lucifer (light bearer) the evil one Mt. 13:19, 38; the tempter Mt. 4:3;; I Thes. 3:5; the god of this world, 2 Cor. 4:4; the prince of the power of the air, Eph. 2:2; the ruler of this world, Jn. 12:31; 14:30.

The Destiny of the angels:

The destiny of the good angels is they will continue forever along with the new heaven and the new earth, Rev. 21:1f; at the twelve gates of the city, v. 12. The destiny of the evil angels: They will have their part in the lake of fire, Mt. 25:41. The believers judge the evil angels, I Cor. 6:3.

Destiny of Satan: He will be cast into the abyss, Rev. 20:1-3.

## Questions in Anthropology

- Man is made in the Image of God, what does that mean?
  - Not physical image, but moral, mental, and social. Also in the domains of his dominion over the creation and in the nature of the creativity in all that the humans do. In other words, He is uniquely placed to know God and to enjoy Him forever.
- How did Sin/sin begin in humanity?
  - In his volition act of wanting to be like God, to be in the place of God. This act is seen essentially as self centeredness by making “de-goding” god.
  - How did Satan become Satan? This question is philosophical and the bible is interested dealing with sin and Satan in practical terms.
  -
- What are the consequences of sin?
  - Man is cursed by being thrown away from God’s presence. His guilt introduced death to mankind. His nature is polluted thereby committing acts, “sins”.
- Are the humans made of two or three parts? Why?

# Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

- See the handout on dichotomy and trichotomy

## Questions in Christology and Soteriology

- How do you show that Jesus is both God and Man?
  - Jesus is God since he has the attributes (both moral and a-moral attributes of God; He did the works of God; He has the names and the prerogatives (exclusive claims (forgiving sin, authority to judge, and the prerogative to receive worship); He was given the position ( in the greetings, benediction, baptismal commission) and the description of God (Yahweh's description of the OT given to Jesus in the NT). He was directly called as God, Heb. 1:8; Tit. 2:13; Jn. 20:28; and especially in Rom. 9:5).
  - Jesus also was human because he had the essentials of human nature (without sin) such as human birth though miraculous; human development; human personality having body, emotions, will and human soul/spirit. He also had human limitations such as hunger, sleep, temptations.
- What are the theories related to his personality to explain both his human nature and divine nature?
- What are the theories related to the meaning of Jesus' death?
- What "proof" can you provide for the Resurrection?
- What is the meaning and Implications of the Ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ?

## Ecclesiology

Did the church begin with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? If so what do you call the believers of Old Testament period?

The Dispensationalists hold that the Church began with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Rightly so since Jesus said that He will build His Church. While we admit that there is progression among the people of God and that the coming of the Spirit inaugurates a different phase of the Church, the Old Testament believers should be included among the people of God.

Present in a chart form the experience of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

Note: This is an assignment

The chart should include the following elements: what happened (in terms of faith, repentance, water baptism, speaking tongues) before, during and after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the believers?

# Test Questions on the Theological Foundations: K. Clement

Explain the difference in the/functions/offices between Bishop, Pastor, Elder, and Deacon/ deaconess.

## **Eschatology:**

What are the major views expressed regarding the millennial period?

Dispensationalism, A Mill, Post Mill, Historic Premill.

What are their strengths and weaknesses? What system do you espouse?

## **General Question:**

Is Systematic Theology possible? What are the problems related to the study of Systematic Theology?

## **Questions in Bibliology**

- How did Jesus look at Scriptures?
- What are the themes of Scripture?
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## General Question:

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How is Systematic theology different from Biblical Theology and Historical Theology?

Systematic theology organizes biblical truths under different topics. The danger is that biblical references may be used as proof texts without using them in the context of each of the authors.

Once this concern is kept in mind, we can still organize theology in a systematic manner.

Biblical theology is the view presented by each of the biblical authors.

Historical Theology deals with the way the church in the past dealt with different theological issues