

Theology & the Person of Christ

The divine, revelation, and the historical Jesus — studied with rigor

A Christian-centered study of the nature of God, revelation and authority, and the historical and theological significance of Jesus Christ. Sources are weighed by type — scripture, early-church writings, historical records, and modern scholarship — with theology clearly distinguished from historical analysis.

Focus areas: Nature and attributes of God; Revelation, authority, and truth claims; Historical context of Jesus of Nazareth; Christology and the development of doctrine; Canon formation and textual transmission

Who Was Jesus? History and Confession

Separating the historical Jesus from the Christ of faith — and honoring both (Foundational · 45 min)

This module models the platform's core discipline: distinguishing what historical methods can establish from what is received by faith. We work from hostile and neutral sources inward, then name where the theological claim begins.

The Minimal Historical Core [historical]

We begin with what even non-Christian sources support: a Galilean Jew named Jesus, executed under Pilate, whose followers rapidly proclaimed him risen. Tacitus and Josephus anchor this outside the Gospels.

From History to Confession [theological]

The move from 'his followers believed he rose' to 'he is the divine Son of God' is a theological confession, crystallized later in the Nicene Creed. We label it as such — not to diminish it, but to keep categories honest.

Why the Distinction Matters [scholarly]

Conflating history and theology produces bad history and shallow faith. Truth-first study holds them together without blurring them, and presents the strongest skeptical and traditional readings side by side.

How We Got the New Testament

Transmission, variants, and canon — without myth or conspiracy (Intermediate · 50 min)

A sober look at how the New Testament was copied, debated, and recognized — engaging both skeptical (Ehrman) and confident (Bauckham) scholarship.

Copying and Variants [scholarly]

Thousands of manuscripts contain many variants — mostly trivial. Textual criticism reconstructs early readings with confidence. We weigh Ehrman's caution against the broader consensus on textual stability.

Eyewitness Testimony? [scholarly]

Bauckham argues the Gospels stay close to named eyewitnesses. This is contested; we present it as one strong position within a live debate, not as settled fact.

Recognizing the Canon [historical]

The canon emerged through use and confirmation over centuries, listed in full by Athanasius in 367 CE — neither invented at one council nor dropped from heaven.

How Early Was 'High' Christology?

Tracing devotion to Jesus from the 50s CE to Nicaea (Intermediate · 50 min)

Follows the evidence that worship of Jesus as divine was strikingly early, weighing Hurtado and Bauckham against the 'late invention' thesis — and labeling where history ends and theology begins.

The Earliest Witnesses [scholarly]

The Philippians 2 hymn and 1 Corinthians 15 creed, embedded in 50s–60s letters, already exalt Jesus in divine terms — within a generation of his death.

Outside the New Testament [historical]

Ignatius (c. 107) calls Christ 'God in man'; Pliny (c. 112) reports Christians singing to Christ 'as to a god.' The belief predates Nicaea by two centuries.

What This Does and Doesn't Prove [theological]

Early, intense devotion is a historical fact. Whether the devotion is *warranted* — whether Jesus is in fact divine — is a theological claim, and we keep the categories distinct.

The Passion of the Christ

From Gethsemane to the empty tomb — history, suffering, and meaning (Intermediate · 60 min)

A guided walk through the tribulation of Jesus — the agony, the trials, the crucifixion, and the seven last words — holding the historical reality and the theological meaning together without blurring them.

The Agony and the Arrest [theological]

Gethsemane shows a fully human Jesus dreading the 'cup' yet choosing obedience. The surrender is real because the dread is real.

The Trials and the Cross [historical]

Religious then Roman hearings, scourging, and crucifixion — Rome's most shameful execution. Pilate and the practice are historically attested; archaeology (Yehohanan's heel bone) confirms the method.

The Seven Words and the Meaning [theological]

The sayings from the cross — forgiveness, dereliction (Psalm 22), 'It is finished' — gather the church's reading of why this death is called good news. Labeled as theological interpretation.

The Gospel, Plainly

The earliest creed, the core message, and the commission (Foundational · 40 min)

States the Christian gospel at full strength from its earliest sources, distinguishes its historically anchored core from the faith it proclaims, and traces how it became a global mission.

The Earliest Summary [scholarly]

1 Corinthians 15:3–5 preserves a creed dated to within a few years of the events: died, buried, raised, appeared. The message is early, not a late legend.

The Shape of the Good News [theological]

Holy God, human sin, the Son given in love, atonement and resurrection, received by grace through faith — not earned. Stated as theological confession.

Sent to Teach [theological]

The Great Commission turns frightened followers into bold witnesses. The transformation is historical; that the risen Christ caused it is theological interpretation.

Key Topics

What Can History Establish About Jesus? [historical]

The minimal facts most historians — across belief systems — accept about Jesus of Nazareth, and where history ends and theology begins.

The Resurrection: Claim, Evidence, and Interpretation [theological]

Separating the historical data (early testimony, the empty-tomb tradition) from the theological conclusion that it was a divine act.

How the New Testament Canon Formed [historical]

The canon was recognized over centuries through use, apostolic association, and conciliar confirmation — not invented at a single meeting.

How Early Did People Worship Jesus as Divine? [scholarly]

The evidence that devotion to Jesus as divine is strikingly early — and what that does and doesn't prove.

What Actually Happened at Nicaea? [historical]

Separating the popular myth of Nicaea (319 CE) from the documented history of the 325 council.

Liar, Lunatic, or Lord — Is the Trilemma Valid? [theological]

Steelmanning and stress-testing C.S. Lewis's famous argument about who Jesus claimed to be.

Old Testament Hope and the Suffering Servant [theological]

How texts like Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Daniel 7 are read messianically — and why the reading is contested.

The Problem of Evil — The Hardest Question [theological]

The strongest objection to belief in a good, all-powerful God — and the major responses, honestly weighed.

Faith and Reason — Enemies or Partners? [theological]

Whether faith is belief without evidence, or trust calibrated to evidence — and why the definition matters.

The Passion: The Tribulation of Jesus Christ [theological]

An overview of the suffering and death of Jesus across Passion Week — what the Gospels narrate and how the four accounts relate.

Gethsemane — The Agony in the Garden [theological]

Jesus' anguished prayer before arrest — and what it reveals about his humanity and his obedience.

The Trials of Jesus: Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod [historical]

The sequence of religious and Roman hearings — what each court charged, and what history can and cannot confirm.

Scourging and Roman Crucifixion [historical]

What Roman flogging and crucifixion actually involved — the physical reality behind the word 'cross.'

The Seven Last Words from the Cross [theological]

The seven sayings of the crucified Jesus, harmonized from the four Gospels, and their meaning.

The Atonement: Why the Cross? [theological]

The major theories of how Jesus' death 'saves' — and the fact that the church never dogmatized just one.

The Gospel, Plainly Stated [theological]

What the word 'gospel' (good news) actually claims — its earliest summary and its core movements.

The Great Commission and the Birth of Mission [theological]

The risen Christ's charge to make disciples — and why it shaped a global movement.

The 'I AM' Sayings of John [theological]

John's distinctive 'I am' statements — metaphors of identity and an echo of the divine name.

Prophecy and Fulfillment — Reading It Honestly [theological]

How the Gospels claim Jesus fulfills Hebrew scripture — and how to weigh such claims without special pleading.

The Tribulation: Competing Views of the End [theological]

What 'the great tribulation' means across the major interpretive schools — preterist, historicist, futurist, idealist.

The Empty Tomb: Data and Debate [historical]

What historical arguments are actually made about the empty tomb — for and against — kept distinct from the faith claim.

Alien Myths and Demon Truths: A Discernment Field Guide [theological]

The UFO/'alien' phenomenon examined through evidence, naturalistic explanation, and the historic Christian lens of spiritual deception — each kept distinct.

Sources & Citations (Chicago)

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