

6 – JESUS CHRIST: THE HISTORICAL VIEWS

I. Common Thoughts about Jesus Christ

- All that really matters is that you believe in Jesus Christ.
- There is a tendency to accept anyone as Christian based on non-biblical standards.
- The problem emerges that what you believe about Jesus has implications concerning the salvation that he offers.

II. Views within Christianity

A. The Ebionites

- The Ebionites were a remnant of extreme Judaizing Christianity.
- They taught the Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph, so fulfilled the Mosaic law, that God choose him to be the Messiah.
- God choose Jesus to be the Messiah at his baptism by John the Baptist.
- At his baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit.
- The Ebionites denied the virgin birth of Jesus and his deity.

B. The Gnostics

- The Gnostics present the Gentile perversion of the truth concerning Jesus Christ.
- The Gnostic system was based on a dualism, the spirit and the flesh.
- The flesh was considered evil; therefore, God could not become flesh.
- Gnostics viewed the person of Jesus in two ways.
- First, the divine Christ came upon the human Jesus at his baptism and departed from him shortly before his death,
- Second, some Gnostics held that Jesus was actually a kind of phantom, who only had the appearance of flesh.

C. The Arians

- The fourth century, the Arians held that though Jesus may be called God, he is not true God.
- They held that Jesus was in no way equal to God in his essence and eternity.

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- Before time, Jesus was created as the logos of God, who entered a human body at the incarnation.
- Therefore, they held that he was neither fully God or fully human.

D. The Apollinarians

- The Apollinarians argued that Jesus had a true body and animal soul, but not a rational spirit or mind.
- The Logos filled the place of human intelligence.
- This view did honor the deity of Jesus, but it also had the effect of destroying his full humanity.

E. The Nestorians

- The Nestorians denied the union of Jesus' deity and humanity into one person.
- The Logos dwelt in the man Jesus, so that the union was similar to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- This view endangered the deity of Jesus Christ.

F. The Eutychians

- The Eutychians held that there were not two natures in Christ but only one.
- They held that all of Christ was divine, including his body.
- The divine and human were mingled into one, which constituted a third nature.

G. The Orthodox View

- The word orthodox means what is generally or traditionally accepted as right or true.
- There is one Jesus Christ, but he has two natures: human and divine.
- Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human.

III. Views within Other Religions

A. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

- Mormons believe Jesus was the spirit child of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother.
- Mormons believe Jesus became the Redeemer because he had a better strategy than Lucifer.
- Mormons believe Jesus's greatest atoning work was in Gethsemane, not on the cross.

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- Mormons believe in a historical Jesus, but not the biblical Jesus.

B. Judaism

- Judaism rejects that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.
- Judaism can admire his life and teaching.

C. Islam

- The Quran emphasizes Jesus as a prophet.
- The Quran emphasizes that he is unique in creation, born out of a virgin, and messenger from God.
- Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and find this highly offensive.

D. Hinduism

- Jesus Christ is generally revered as a great spiritual teacher.
- He is also seen as a divine manifestation (avatar), or a realized saint.
- He would fit into the broader Hindu understanding of divine incarnations or enlightened beings, rather than a singular, exclusive savior.

E. Buddhism

- Buddhists generally viewed Jesus as a highly compassionate, awakened spiritual teacher.
- He exemplified love, sacrifice, and ethical living, though not as a divine Son of God or the sole savior.