

## God and His Ways

Christ is not Jesus' last name. *Christ* represents the New Testament Greek form of the Old Testament Hebrew word *Messiah*.

### The Immaculate Conception

“The Roman Catholic Church maintains the doctrine of the Immaculate (pure or unstained) Conception of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. A common error by non-Catholics is to assume that the Immaculate Conception refers to the conceiving of Jesus by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb, but it is in fact the doctrine that Mary was conceived a sinless human being in her own mother's womb. There is no biblical basis for this idea. It is a systematic conclusion based on Catholic Maryology.”<sup>1</sup>

### The Work of Jesus Christ

Theologians classify Christ's work according to three offices: priest, king, and prophet.

1. The Pentateuch (Gen. – Deut.) shows the need for a perfect priest.
2. The History books (Joshua – Chronicles) show the need for a perfect king.
3. The Prophetic books (Isaiah – Malachi) show the need for a perfect prophet.

### The Extent of Atonement

The extent of atonement is not a clear teaching of Scripture. Did Christ die for the elect or for all men?

The problem is this: the atonement of Christ extends to the whole world (1 John 2:2), but many people will never be saved (Rev. 20). How is it possible for Christ to die in the place of sinners who never trust Him for salvation?

| Verses implying a universal atonement | Verses suggesting a limited atonement |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| John 1:29; 3:16-17                    | Matt. 26:28                           |
| John 6:33, 51                         | John 10:11, 15, 24-26                 |
| II Cor. 5:19                          | John 17:6, 9-10                       |
| Heb. 2:9                              | Acts 20:28                            |
| II Pet. 2:1                           | Eph. 5:25-27                          |
| 1 John 2:2; 4:14                      | Heb. 9:28                             |

There are three positions one may take to resolve this logical quandary:

1. Christ did not die for the sins of those who die unsaved.
2. Christ died for everyone's sins, but God's wrath remains on unbelievers.

3. Christ's atonement was sufficient for all, but efficient only for people who trust Christ. In other words, Christ's blood had unlimited potential to atone for sins, but it actually cleansed only those who had been or would be saved.

“Christ died for the sins of the whole world, the entire human race. Christ is not defeated in having died for all even though all are not ultimately saved, because personal faith is as necessary for salvation as the death of Christ. The death of Christ is unlimited in its value – it was for all men; but the death of Christ is effective only for the elect – it is applied only to those who believe.”<sup>2</sup>

Our job is not to reconcile to our logical satisfaction all the mysteries of God – in this case, to reconcile a universal atonement with a limited atonement. Our business is to accept honestly that what God says is so, and obey faithfully what God says to do.

### Christ's Eternality

Micah 5:2 is a well-known Christmas prophecy, foretelling that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah. What is often overlooked is the remainder of just who this coming “Ruler” was. The implication of the plural “*goings forth*” verb is that when Christ came forth in the incarnation at Bethlehem it was not the first time He appeared in human history. He had been going forth long before that, as the angel of the Lord.

### The Great Prophet

Despite all the prophet's faithful efforts, people remained obstinately sinful. The OT prophets helped to show the need for a perfect, or complete, revelation of God through a perfect prophet.

A prophet was both a foreteller (one who predicts the future) and a forthteller (one who proclaims presently applicable truth).

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 is a key prophecy predicting the role of Christ as Prophet. Moses was a type of Christ in his service and in his office as a prophet. The apostles quoted this scripture in Acts 3:22-26, declaring that Christ was the fulfillment of this prophecy.

### References

<sup>1</sup> *God and His Ways Teacher's Edition*, by Layton Talbert, Ph.D., BJU Press 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Ryrie Study Bible*, by Charles C. Ryrie, Moody Press 1995.

## *God and His Ways*

### Chapter Outline

I. The Person of Jesus Christ

II. The Work of Christ

In Matthew 16:20, Jesus warned the disciples that:

- They should tell no one that He was the Christ.

In Matthew 16:21, Jesus began to show his disciples that He must:

- Go to Jerusalem
- Suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes.
- Be killed.
- Be raised up on the third day.