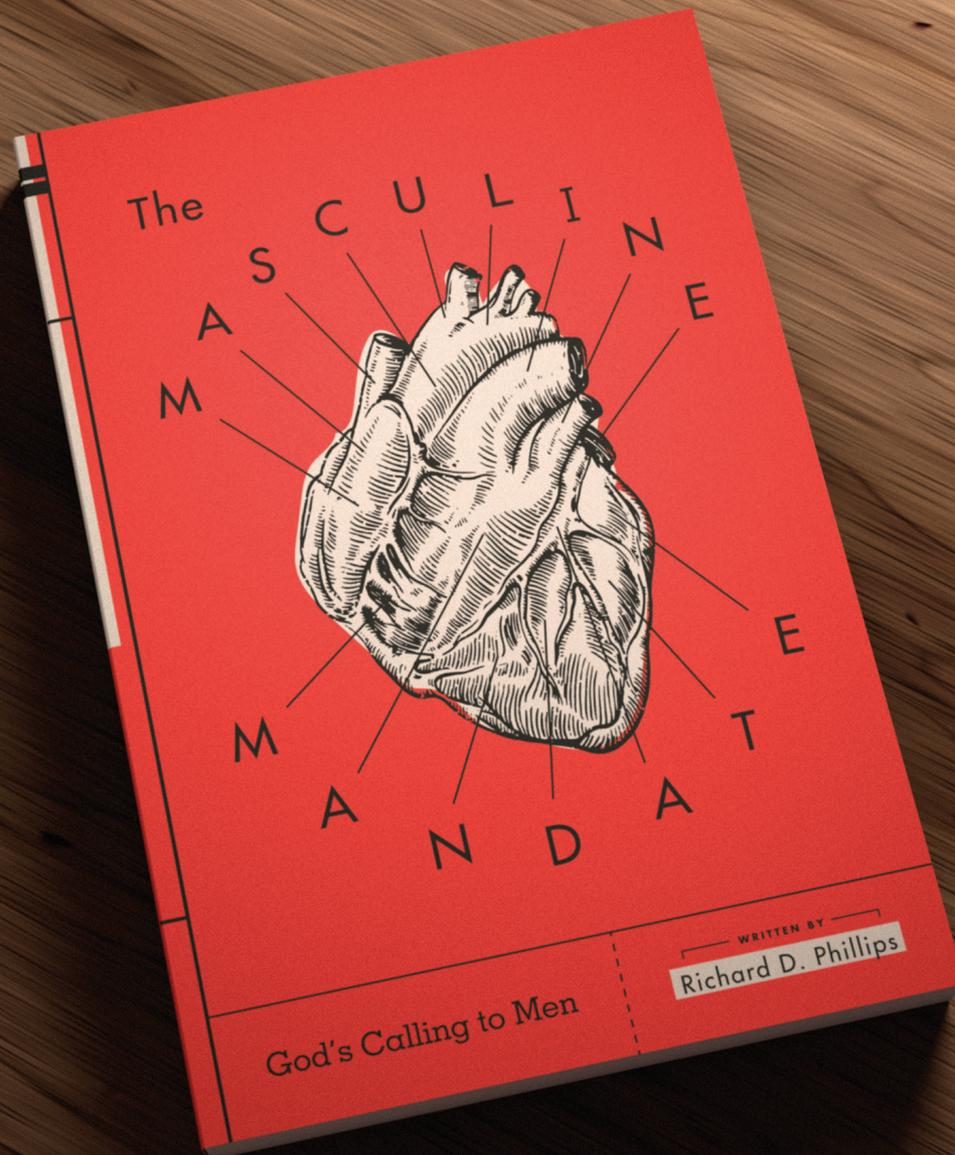


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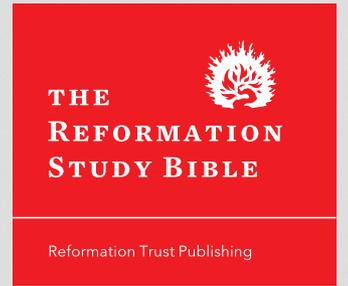
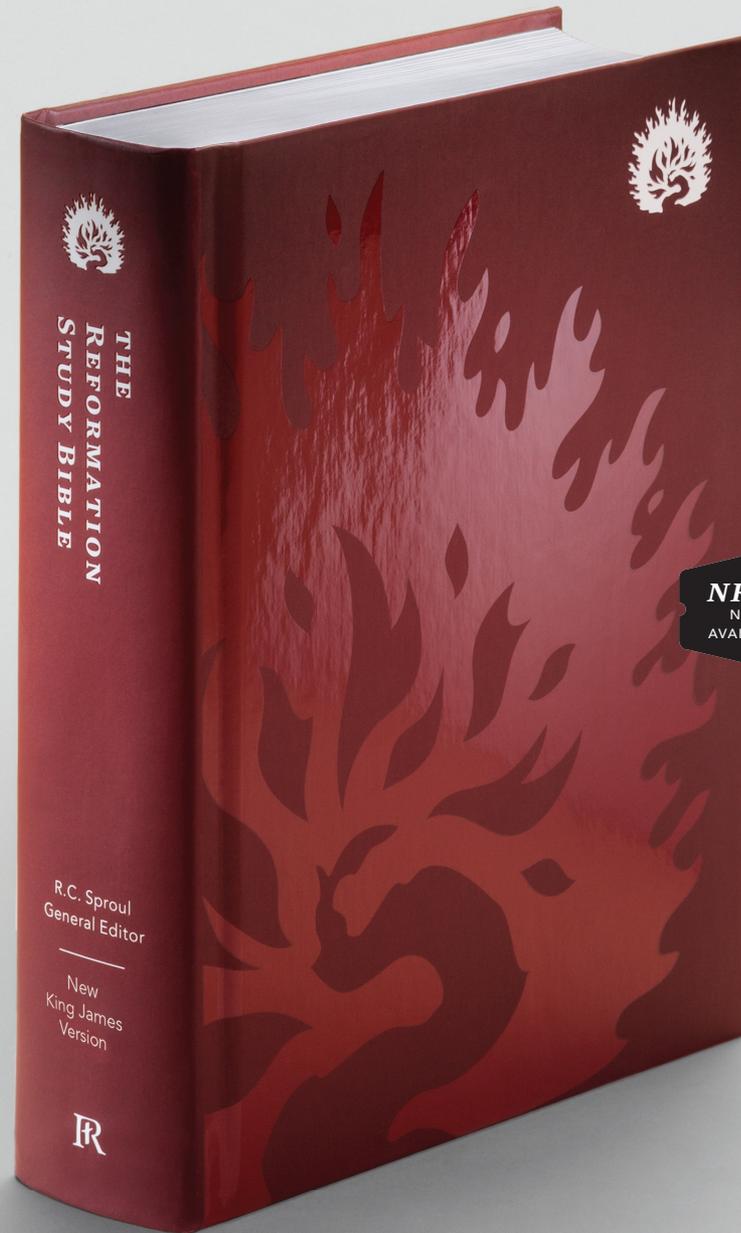
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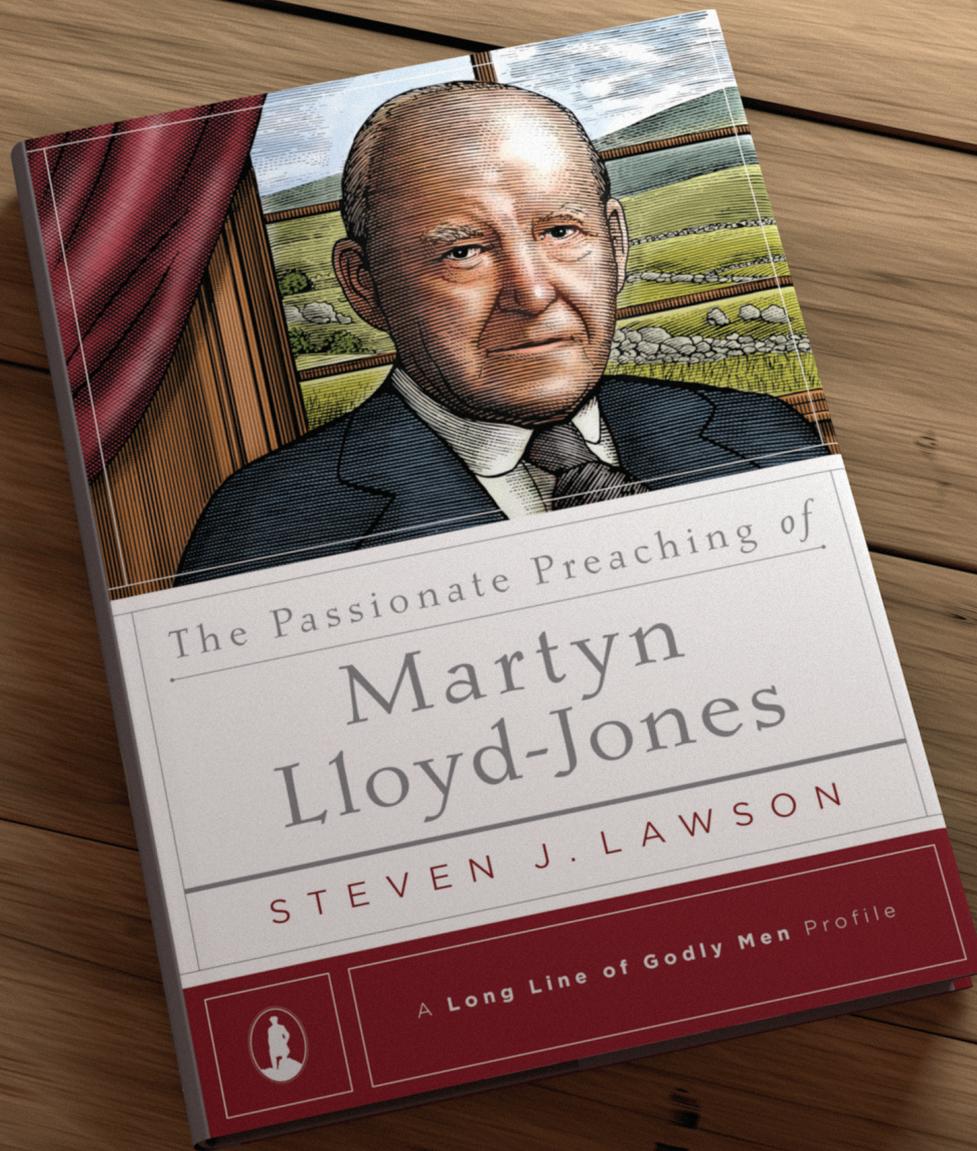
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A. W. Tozer once said that the most important thing about you is what comes into your mind when you think about God. I think the same could be said about Jesus. Who you think Jesus is and what you think Jesus did has major consequences for eternity. Jesus himself said this much in John's Gospel. Belief in him, he taught, results in eternal life; yet unbelief results in eternal condemnation (John 3:18). So what we think and believe about Jesus really matters. Eternity hangs in the balance.

For this reason alone it is critical that Christians spend time studying what the Bible says about Jesus, who he is and what he has done. One of the most fruitful ways to do this is to look at Jesus through the traditional categories of prophet, priest, and king. As we transition from Old Testament to New Testament we discover that these offices find their fulfillment in Christ. He is the long-awaited Davidic king who inaugurates the kingdom of God, reigning and ruling over God's covenant people. Yet this kingdom is announced, since Jesus is the prophet, the one who not only speaks the word of God but who is himself the Word, the Logos. Yet Jesus is not only a king and a prophet, but a priest. As Hebrews explains, he is our great high priest, the one who mediates between God and his people, interceding on their behalf by offering up himself as the perfect and sufficient sacrifice, the Lamb of God.

In this issue of *Credo Magazine*, three theologians walk us through this three-fold distinction, helping us understand each office better in light of the coming of Christ. So we invite you to come, like Mary (Luke 10:38-42), and sit at the feet of Jesus in order to marvel at how these offices display the glory of Christ. ◀

**Matthew Barrett**  
Executive Editor



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## with Nick Needham

*Nick Needham (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh) is a Baptist minister from London. He has been a lecturer in church history at Highland Theological College since 1999 and has been the minister of Inverness Reformed Baptist Church since 2004. He is the author of the church history series entitled 2,000 Years of Christ's Power.*

### 1 **Have you always loved church history and if not, what sparked your interest to become a church historian?**

I disliked history at school. It was my conversion that made me a lover of church history. In becoming a Christian, I had a sense of joining a people that had a history, and I was very curious to know all about it.

### 2 **What is it that makes someone a great church historian?**

A blend of things, I suppose. Scholarship, imaginative sympathy with the past, ability to enable readers to see through the past's eyes, and discerning lessons for the present.

### 3 **What figures in church history do you find yourself continually drawn back to and why?**

Very difficult. Maybe three Johns and a Clive: John Calvin for his sane and humble commentaries, John Milton for his poetry, prose, and epic life, John Henry Newman for his crystal-pure Anglican sermons (before he went to Rome), and C. S. Lewis for almost anything – Lewis' under-

**I DISLIKED HISTORY AT SCHOOL. IT WAS MY CONVERSION THAT MADE ME A LOVER OF CHURCH HISTORY. IN BECOMING A CHRISTIAN, I HAD A SENSE OF JOINING A PEOPLE THAT HAD A HISTORY, AND I WAS VERY CURIOUS TO KNOW ALL ABOUT IT.**

standing of the relationship between Christianity and modern society was masterful, not to mention his *Narnia Chronicles* and *Cosmic Trilogy*.

#### **4 What are your three favorite church history books and why?**

*History of the Christian Church*, by Philip Schaff  
Not only immersed in the original sources, but informed by sound theology and vastly readable.

*The Protestant Tradition*, by James S. Whale  
Written in 1960, but still an unsurpassed introduction to the meaning of historic Protestantism.

*Golden Mouth*, by J.N.D.Kelly  
This biography of John Chrysostom brings him to full-blooded life, and transports the reader back into that whole colourful era when Christianity was becoming the grass-roots faith of the Roman Empire.

#### **5 If you could recommend just one church father to read on the person of Christ, who would it be?**

Athanasius! Especially his treatise *On the Incarnation of the Word*. There's a good modern(ish) translation with a great introduction by C.S.Lewis. This is the mind of the early church at its best: the person and work of Christ woven together into a seamless garment.

#### **6 Some churches today have an aversion to historic creeds. Should churches be afraid of creeds and can they serve an important role in the church?**

Creeds are interpretations of the Bible, and an uninterpreted Bible is nothing. The creeds of the early church (Apostles', Nicene, and Chalcedon) are the considered and collective judgment of our most ancient ancestors in the faith regarding what the Bible teaches. It would be foolhardy to reject them. Generally, when someone rejects the creeds, all he is doing is pitting his individual interpretation against the interpretation of the historic church. I know which I prefer. The Protestant Reformers were not enemies of the creeds, so even being a Protestant means being creedal. We just have to learn to read scripture from within the community of faith, and not as freelance lone-rangers.

#### **7 In your opinion, what are the top 5 turning points in the history of the church and why?**

1. The Gnostic controversy of the first two centuries. It determined the whole shape of Christianity, including the New Testament canon.

**GENERALLY, WHEN SOMEONE REJECTS THE CREEDS, ALL HE IS DOING IS PITTING HIS INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATION AGAINST THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORIC CHURCH. I KNOW WHICH I PREFER. THE PROTESTANT REFORMERS WERE NOT ENEMIES OF THE CREEDS, SO EVEN BEING A PROTESTANT MEANS BEING CREEDAL. WE JUST HAVE TO LEARN TO READ SCRIPTURE FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH, AND NOT AS FREELANCE LONE-RANGERS.**

2. The Arian controversy of the 4th century. Here the church fully hammered out its perspective on the Trinity.

3. The great East-West schism of 1054. The most destructive division, I think, in all of church history. I have learned a lot from Eastern theology (both before and after the schism).

4. The Protestant Reformation. The Reformation was virtually as defining as the East-West schism, but not as destructive. I think the Reformation was a basically wholesome movement, and half the trouble of today's "Evangelicalism," which is no longer really Protestant.

5. The French Revolution of 1789. It introduced

militant secular democracy (democracy as "gospel") to the world, and we've been reaping the fruits ever since.

**It's a rainy day and you have just sat down with a good book. What is your choice beverage while you read?**

Mocha coffee with cream

**What's your all-time favorite museum in the UK and why?**

The Natural History Museum. It conveys so atmospheric a sense of the "deep past." And it has a nice bookshop and café.

**What is your favorite TV program?**

Doctor Who. I even remember watching the first ever episode in 1963. It probably deranged my imagination, and everyone around me has to live with the consequences. ▶



## APOLLINARIANISM //

Apollinarianism is the view attributed to Apollinaris, bishop in Laodicea (315-392), who was a defender of the deity of Christ and Nicene orthodoxy. However, in his understanding of the incarnation, he went astray, especially in his understanding of Christ's human nature. His view was rejected at the Council of Constantinople (381).

Apollinarius rightly affirmed that God the Son was consubstantial with God the Father, thus fully God, yet in the incarnation the Son took to himself an incomplete human nature, i.e., a human body ("flesh") but not a human soul. In Christ, then,

there is a substantial union of one heavenly (Logos) and one earthly element (human body), with priority given to the divine Logos as that which directs and energizes the flesh. The end result is that Christ is a composite union, a "living unity" of the divine Logos and human flesh, whose human nature is unlike our own.

Why did the church strongly reject this view? If Christ does not have a complete human nature like us, he cannot serve as our representative covenantal head and substitute and thus redeem us. In rejecting Apollinarianism, the church drew a line in the sand: a proper Christology is necessary for

soteriology and to have a Redeemer who actually redeems, our Lord Jesus Christ must be fully God *and* fully man.

*Stephen J. Wellum*

*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

## ARIANISM //

Arianism is a movement that derives its name from Arius, a prominent minister in Alexandria, Egypt, during the early fourth century. Arius insisted that the divine persons of the Father and the Son were not coeternal and essentially coequal. He used the term uncaused or unoriginate as the most basic definition of what God is like, but reserved the term for the Father, who he insisted was alone inherently God. According to Arius, even though the Son has a unique and exceptional creaturely status—having been created before all other things and even taking part with the Father in the creation of everything brought into existence after him—nevertheless, the Son of God was created from nothing like all other creatures. The Son is unlike the Father, the Arians sloganeered, because “there was when (the Son) was not.” The Son’s deity, in

**WHY DID THE CHURCH STRONGLY REJECT THIS VIEW? IF CHRIST DOES NOT HAVE A COMPLETE HUMAN NATURE LIKE US, HE CANNOT SERVE AS OUR REPRESENTATIVE COVENANTAL HEAD AND SUBSTITUTE AND THUS REDEEM US.**

other words, is derived and non-eternal, rather than intrinsic and essential: Jesus Christ may indeed be the Son of God but he is not God the Son.

The early church, led by Athanasius, put a stop to Arius’s dangerous Christological confusion by insisting in the Nicene Creed that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is homoousios (“of one being”) with the Father. Jesus, in other words, is as fully and truly God as is the Father. This refutation of Arianism faithfully preserved crucial biblical truths foundational to the life and salvation of the church: (1) To be known, loved and forgiven by Jesus is to be known, loved and forgiven by God himself; (2) To know, love, and worship Christ is to know, love, and worship God himself. Against Arianism in any form, which dangerously severs Jesus Christ from the Father, the church proclaims that Jesus is the self-revelation—the way, truth and life—of God.

*John Clark and Marcus Johnson*

*Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL*

## EUTYCHIANISM //

Eutychianism takes its name from the fifth-century monastic leader, Eutyches, who maintained that divinity and humanity merge to form one nature in the incarnate Christ. The position arose in reaction to Nestorianism, the view that there are two persons in Christ: the divine Son and the man, Jesus. The Council of Ephesus (431) rejected Nestorianism by affirming the unity of Christ’s person, but Eutyches and his followers went further by denying any distinction between Christ’s two natures. As such, Eutychianism is a form of monophysitism—the view that Christ has only one nature. The Council of Chalcedon (451) strongly

**TO KNOW, LOVE, AND WORSHIP CHRIST IS TO KNOW, LOVE, AND WORSHIP GOD HIMSELF. AGAINST ARIANISM IN ANY FORM, WHICH DANGEROUSLY SEVERS JESUS CHRIST FROM THE FATHER, THE CHURCH PROCLAIMS THAT JESUS IS THE *SELF-REVELATION—THE WAY, TRUTH AND LIFE—OF GOD.***

rejected Eutychianism by asserting the distinction of Christ’s two natures “without confusion [and] without change.”

The great danger of Eutychianism is that it confuses the two natures of Christ, making him a kind of tertium quid (“third thing”), which is neither God nor man. On the divine side of the ledger, it posits a change in the Son’s divinity, which calls into question his immutability and thus his unity with the Father and the Spirit. On the human side, Eutychianism, like all monophysite Christologies, tends to elevate Christ’s divinity to the point of diminishing his humanity. If there is to be a fusion of natures, then quite clearly it will be the divine nature that takes precedence over and overwhelms the creaturely nature. The result of this belittling of Christ’s humanity is a belittling of his saving work as the Last Adam—the True Man—who renders willing obedience to God in and through our common humanity, thus securing righteousness and eternal life for his people.

*R. Lucas Stamps*

*California Baptist University*

**NESTORIANISM** //

Did God eat fish? Did God die on the cross? Was Mary the mother of God? Nestorius would’ve said “no” to each question because he believed such activities can only be attributed to the humanity of Jesus. The fifth century monk, driven by his concern to protect the genuine humanity of Jesus, essentially taught that Christ not only had two natures (divine and human) but that he was two persons.

The danger with this teaching is that it draws a thick line between the humanity and divinity of Christ that results in either (1) Christ going back and forth between divinity and humanity, or (2) his humanity overshadowing his divinity or vice versa. The creeds, however, rightly interpreted Scripture in teaching that Jesus is not only fully God and fully man, but that his two natures are united in one person (the hypostatic union). Jesus is the divine Word made flesh (John 1:14). The cross proves to be the crux of the matter, where Jesus’ humanity and divinity are both essential for salvation. If he was not man he could not die in our place. If he was not God he could not save. The God-man is one.

*Jeremy Treat*

*Reality LA* 

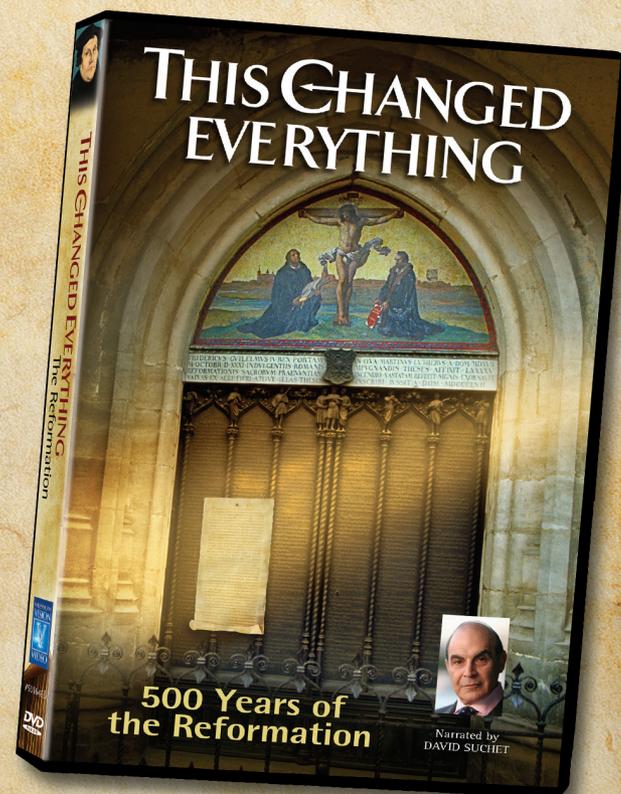
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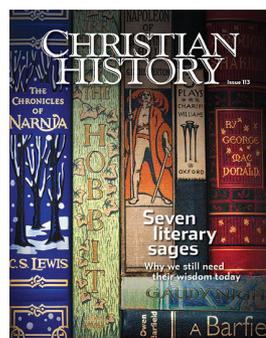
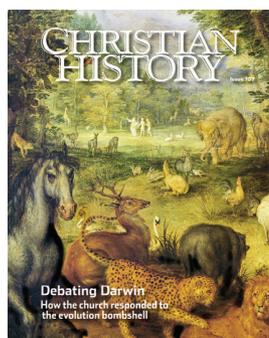
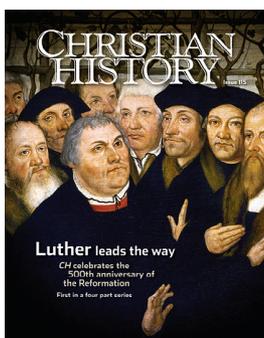
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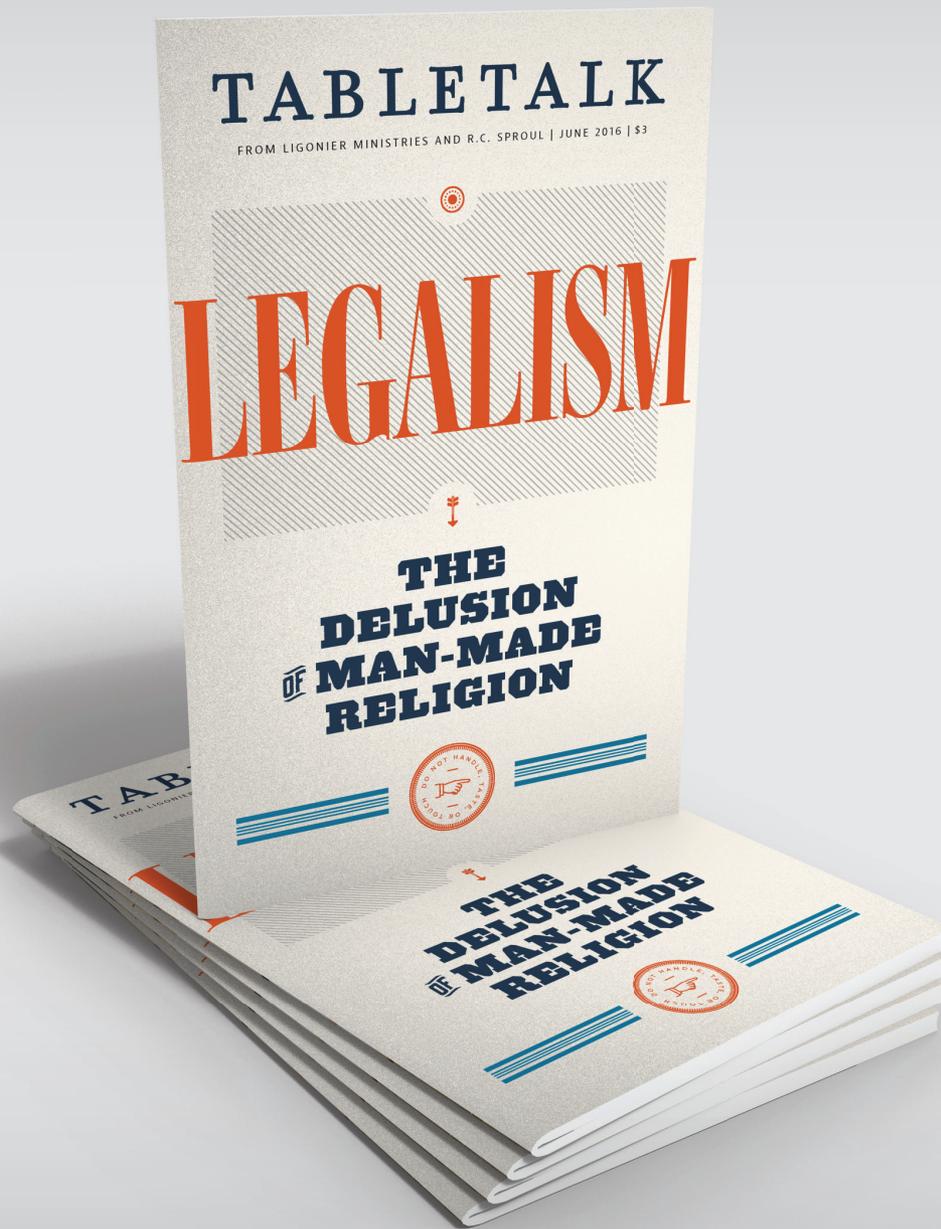
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OUR  
GREAT  
HIGH  
PRIEST

BY BRANDON D. CROWE

**F**rom the earliest centuries of the church, Christian theologians have articulated Jesus' person and work in terms of prophet, priest, and king. One of the clearest places we see the interplay of these three offices of Christ is in Hebrews. More specifically, one of the distinctive contributions of Hebrews is its teaching on Jesus as our great high priest. In fact, one could argue that the main point of Hebrews is to explain the significance of Jesus' high priesthood. In Hebrews 8:1 we read: "Now the [main] point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven."

Protestants today may not always see the practical value in priesthood, since we do not believe that the mediation of a special order of priests is necessary to assist in our approach to God (unlike, for example, Roman Catholicism). However, this does not mean that priesthood is somehow unimportant or unnecessary. In fact, Scripture teaches that we all require a priest to approach God. But Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus Christ himself is

**SCRIPTURE TEACHES THAT WE ALL REQUIRE A PRIEST TO APPROACH GOD. BUT HEBREWS EMPHASIZES THAT JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS OUR PRIEST—INDEED, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST—AND HE HAS NO RIVALS. THEREFORE, WE DO NOT NEED TO RELY ON ANY LESSER ORDER OF IMPERFECT PRIESTS TO APPROACH GOD.**

our priest—indeed, our great high priest—and he has no rivals. Therefore, we do not need to rely on any lesser order of imperfect priests to approach God. What, then, does it mean for Jesus to be our great high priest? We will consider three aspects from Hebrews, and then broaden our focus to consider some other New Testament passages as well.

## THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS IN HEBREWS

### 1. The Final Sacrifice

First, as our great high priest Jesus has offered the final sacrifice to atone for sins (Heb. 10:14). Because Jesus' sacrifice is perfect, no additional sacrifice is needed forever. This is the case because Jesus did not simply offer a sacrifice that was external to himself, but he offered himself as the perfect sacrifice. A key text in this regard is Hebrews 10:5–7, which quotes Psalm 40:6–8:

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'"

Hebrews 10:9 then adds: "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Jesus' sacrifice provides the solution to a problem that we often find in the Old Testament: even where sacrifices may be offered, people's hearts (including those of the priests) were often far from God.

## **JESUS NEVER SINNED, WHETHER BY DEEDS OF OMISSION OR COMMISSION, AND THEREFORE HE REALIZED THE PERFECTION IN HIMSELF THAT IS NECESSARY FOR TRUE REMISSION OF SINS. JESUS LIVED A PERFECT LIFE, WHICH ENABLED HIM TO SERVE HIMSELF AS THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.**

Jesus overcame the imperfection of previous offerings by offering the sacrifice of his own body. For in his body, Jesus was fully devoted to God in every way. Jesus never sinned, whether by deeds of omission or commission, and therefore he realized the perfection in himself that is necessary for true remission of sins. Jesus lived a perfect life, which enabled him to serve himself as the perfect sacrifice. As Hebrews says, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (9:22). However, the blood of bulls and goats can never suffice to take away sins (10:1, 4). That is why it is such wonderful news that Jesus himself is our final sacrifice. Jesus can actually bring true and lasting forgiveness of sins because of the value of his sacrifice.

### 2. Heavenly High Priest

Second, Jesus is our great high priest in a way that is superior to the high priesthood of the Old Testament because Jesus ministers in heaven itself. We see this in Hebrews 1:3, which states that Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when he had made purification for sins (see also 10:12). It is important to remember that Jesus' sacrifice is

effectual because he did not stay dead, but was raised to an indestructible life (7:16), and this resurrection life is the presupposition for the heavenly, priestly reign of Christ. His seat at the right hand of God is the seat of the victorious conqueror, who has conquered all his enemies, including sin and death (cf. 1:13; Ps. 110:1). There is no one who can provide closer access to the throne of God. He is our "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul," our "hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain" (Heb. 6:19).

Jesus thus reigns as our great high priest in heaven itself (Heb. 8:1; 9:11, 24). As our great high priest who makes final atonement for sins, Jesus is fully human. Yet the same verse at the beginning of Hebrews that tells us of his ascension to the right hand of God also emphasizes the divinity of the Son: "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (1:3a). The power of Jesus as our great high priest to forgive our sins is therefore keenly related to his divinity as well.

And as the risen-and-ascended, divine-and-human great high priest, Jesus is a priest forever. He never has to be renewed in his office. He

never takes a break or goes to sleep. Death will never prevent him from executing his office as priest. He is a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He is the royal priest-king whose priestly reign has no end. He therefore is able to save his people to the uttermost, because he always lives to intercede for us, and never ceases to provide access to God, blessing us with the benefits of salvation acquired by his high priestly work (see Heb. 7:23–25).

### 3. A High Priest Like Us

Third, lest we think that Jesus is far removed from us in the heavens, Hebrews teaches that Jesus is our great high priest because he is near to us. He is our brother, the one who goes before us. In Hebrews 2 we read that the Son of God was not ashamed to be known as our brother. In other words, Hebrews emphasizes the solidarity of Jesus' condition with our own, even to the point that he endured suffering in order to bring many sons to glory (2:10). In fact, Hebrews says that Jesus learned obedience by what he suffered, and was thus made perfect (5:8–9).

How are we to understand this perfection? It does not refer to any lack of perfection in the Son's essential character. Instead, it refers to the perfection of his priesthood. Jesus is the perfect priest for us. He was made like us in his humanity in every way, except for sin (4:15). He therefore understands what it means to live in this world with all its difficulties, not least the need to struggle against temptation (2:18). And this is key: because Jesus is made like his brothers in every respect, he is qualified to serve as a “merciful and faithful” high priest. Don't neglect to see his mercy.

## **JESUS CHRIST HAS CONQUERED DEATH AND IS THE TRAILBLAZER FOR ALL THOSE WHO SHARE IN THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.**

As one who understands our frailty and struggle with sin, he is gentle with us (cf. 5:2). And Jesus not only understands us better than any earthly priest, but because he never gave in to sin, he is actually able to help us in time of need. Indeed, as the one who has won final victory over sin, Jesus is the source of eternal salvation (5:9).

The importance of Jesus' priestly work in overcoming sin is seen most acutely in his conquering death. As our priest and brother, Jesus goes before us as the pioneer or trailblazer for where we are to follow. He has even gone before us in death, defeating, by his own sacrifice, the devil—the one who has the power of death and would confine us in fear to lifelong slavery (2:14–15). But sin had no power to keep our great high priest in the grave; therefore, sin has no final power over those who trust in Christ as great high priest. Jesus Christ has conquered death and is the trailblazer for all those who share in the faith of Abraham (2:10, 16–17).

## THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS ELSEWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Hebrews may have the most to say about Jesus as our great high priest, but by no means is the rest of the New Testament silent. In the Gospels, as Jesus moves deliberately toward the cross, he identifies his priestly mission in Matthew 20:28 / Mark 10:45: “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Similar to what we read in Hebrews, these passages teach that Jesus came to give his own life as a substitutionary ransom for his people.

We can also understand Jesus’ healing ministry as a function of his high priesthood, since even in his healing ministry Jesus is the one who bears our transgressions (Matt. 8:14–17; cf. Isa. 53:4–5). On this point the second-century church father Irenaeus remarked, in his book *Against Heresies*, that Jesus “did not make void, but fulfilled the law, by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for men, and cleansing the lepers, heal-

**THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL INCLUDES THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS’ HIGH PRIESTHOOD: BECAUSE OF HIS FINAL SACRIFICE, WE CAN BE RECONCILED TO GOD.**

ing the sick, and Himself suffering death, that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and might return without fear to his own inheritance” (4.8.2).

More broadly, in the Gospels Jesus performs the work of a priest by identifying with his people in their estate of sin, bearing the curse of sin throughout his life (cf. Matt. 3:13–15; Luke 3:15–22; 12:49–50). And when Jesus ascends into heaven, we see him with arms outstretched in a priestly benediction (Luke 24:50–51; cf. Num. 6:22–27). In the Gospel of John, Jesus is identified as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), whose blood brings about final cleansing (cf. 1 John 1:7). And who can forget the majesty of what is often known as the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17, where he intercedes for his disciples and for all those who will believe after them? The passages that speak of the sublime realities of Christ’s priestly ministry are too numerous to mention here. We could consider at length, for example, the theology of reconciliation we encounter in Paul’s letters (e.g., Rom. 5:10–11; 2 Cor. 5:17–21). The good news of the gospel includes the good news of Jesus’ high priesthood: because of his final sacrifice, we can be reconciled to God.

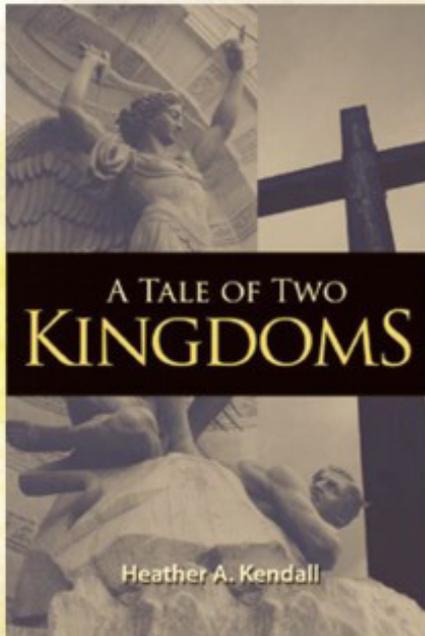
## THE ONLY PRIEST WE WILL EVER NEED

We all need a priest to make atonement for our sins and provide access to God. Hebrews—and the rest of the New Testament—teaches us that Jesus Christ is our great high priest. The priests and priestly institutions of the Old Testament prepare us to understand this important aspect of Jesus’ work as mediator. We have no need to revert to a purely human priesthood to mediate for us; Jesus

is the best and only priest we will ever need. He has perfectly atoned for our sins, provides intimate access to God, and is able to help us in times of weakness like no one else. Why would we look elsewhere? It is fitting to conclude with the encouraging exhortation of Hebrews 4:14–16: Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Brandon Crowe (PhD, Edinburgh) is associate professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary and book review editor for the Westminster Theological Journal. He is the author of *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude*. ■

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*Dr. Michael A.G. Haykin, Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.*

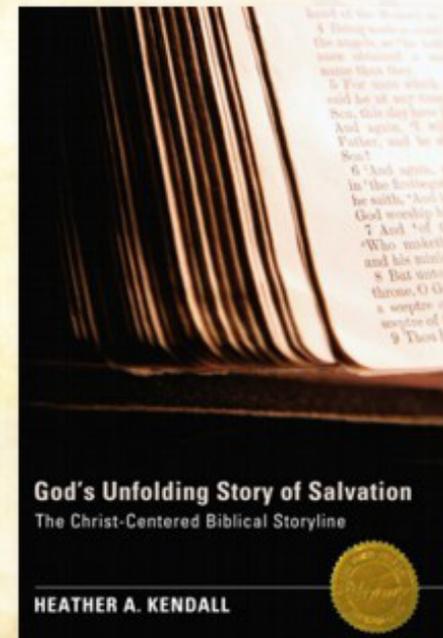
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# CHRISTUS REX:

Bowing the Knee  
*to*  
Christ the King

BY R. LUCAS STAMPS

“On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”  
—Revelation 19:16

The unruly human heart needs a king. Apart from God’s sovereign rule in Christ, we are all prone to spiritual anarchy. We all stand in much the same position as Israel in the twilight of the period of the Judges: “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6). And so it is that God’s reclamation of his fallen creation hinges upon the ascension of the rightful king.

For those of us who live in democratic nations, this is an especially difficult concept to grasp. The cosmos is not directed towards an egalitarian utopia but a divine right monarchy, in the truest sense of the phrase. We are destined for a Christocracy not a democracy, and the sooner we swear our fealty to the one true king the better it will go for us: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (Ps. 2:12).

Dating as far back as the fourth century, Christian theologians have conceived of Christ’s person and work in terms of what came to be known as the *munus triplex*, the threefold office of Christ. As the Messiah, Jesus fulfills what was typified in the three anointed offices of Old Testament Israel: prophet, priest, and king. As prophet, he functions as the final and definitive Word of God. As priest, he makes atonement and intercession for his people. And as king, he comes to rule and to reign, to conquer and to liberate, to save and to

subdue. In this article, we will consider the kingship of Christ and its implications for our understanding of his redeeming and reconciling work. We will first examine the Old Testament background to Christ’s kingdom and then explore how Jesus executes the office of king in each phase of his redeeming work.

## DEUS REX: GOD THE KING

Kingly themes run throughout the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, many have argued that the kingdom of God should be considered the central theme of the entire Bible, and it fairly clearly functioned as the central theme of Jesus’ own preaching (Mark 1:15; Luke 8:1). In Scripture, most fundamentally, God himself is presented as the king over his creation. He speaks all of created reality into being by royal fiat (Gen 1). After completing his creation, he declares it be “very good” (Gen. 1:31) and enters into regal repose on the seventh day, indicating not his weariness at the work but instead his sov-

**AS THE MESSIAH, JESUS FULFILLS WHAT WAS TYPIFIED IN THE THREE ANOINTED OFFICES OF OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL: PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING. AS PROPHET, HE FUNCTIONS AS THE FINAL AND DEFINITIVE WORD OF GOD. AS PRIEST, HE MAKES ATONEMENT AND INTERCESSION FOR HIS PEOPLE. AND AS KING, HE COMES TO RULE AND TO REIGN, TO CONQUER AND TO LIBERATE, TO SAVE AND TO SUBDUE.**

## **IN EVERY SCENE OF THE GOSPEL DRAMA, JESUS CHRIST TAKES CENTER STAGE AS THE LONG AWAITED, DIVINE-HUMAN KING—FROM HIS CONCEPTION AND BIRTH THROUGH HIS LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION ALL THE WAY TO HIS RETURN IN GLORY.**

ereign rule over all that he had made. Even after his initial creative act, God continues to uphold his handiwork, ensuring its permanence under his sovereign control (Ps. 93:1-2; 96:10). The world is, as Calvin put it, the theater of God's glory. God reveals his royal splendor and majesty precisely through the wonders of the created world (Ps. 104).

Because of God's creational and providential work, all of his creatures owe to him their ultimate allegiance. He has creator rights over all that he has made, including the crown of his creation, his image bearers. Both Israel and the nations must submit to his kingly rule and will be judged for swearing allegiance to any other authority. The fall into sin represents a rebellion of the highest, indeed, cosmic order. In the biblical economy, the king is also the judge, and all who oppose his rule will be banished from his kingdom. Yet, in his mercy, he promises to bring his chosen people back under his benevolent rule and authority. He is the gracious covenant Lord, who enters into relationship with his people and promises that he will be their God and that they will be his people (Lev. 26:12; Jer. 24:7; 31:1, 28, 33). The ultimate hope of Israel, and through her the ultimate hope of the nations, is the return of the Divine King, who is coming in glory to save and to judge (Is. 40).

## **DAVIDUS REX: THE DAVIDIC KING**

God is the ultimate king over his creation. But interestingly, God also appoints human beings as his vice-regents on earth with Adam serving as the original king-priest, exercising dominion over the garden sanctuary. Adam and Eve are imbued with the divine image precisely in order to equip them for this royal work. In other Ancient Near Eastern contexts, the image of the gods was often seen as the special preserve of the kingly class, who received it as a deposit, enabling them to exercise dominion over their kingdoms. But in the biblical account, all humanity ("male and female," Gen. 1:27) receive the image of God and thus function as rulers under God over the rest of the created order.

In addition to this general human kingship, kingly roles were also apportioned to specific persons and dynasties in the Old Testament. Various leaders in redemptive history functioned in quasi-regal ways, including Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and Samuel. But with the ascension of David, God's own replacement to the humanly-initiated and failed kingdom of Saul, we arrive at the prototypical human king. Despite his failings, David is described as a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), and he becomes the paradigm for the promised Messiah to come (2 Sam. 7; Isa. 11). But as this prophetic vision is unveiled, it becomes apparent that the coming king will not simply be another son of David; he will also be a greater David, indeed, David's Lord (Ps. 110:1; cf. Matt. 22:41-46). The rule of God will come precisely through the rule of the Davidic king. So extensive is this overlap that, at points, the Messianic king is spoken of in divine terms (Ps. 45:6; 110:1; Isa. 9:6). Somehow,

astonishingly, the coming anointed king is to be identified with God himself: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Ps. 45:6).

## CHRISTUS REX: CHRIST THE KING

In the perspective of the New Testament, as D.A. Carson has pointed out, these twin strands of Old Testament prophecy—the coming of God and the coming of God’s Anointed King—are woven together in a single person. In every scene of the gospel drama, Jesus Christ takes center stage as the long awaited, divine-human king—from his conception and birth through his life, death, and resurrection all the way to his return in glory. We might be tempted to divvy out Christ’s threefold office to the various stages of his incarnational work: his prophetic earthly ministry, his priestly atoning death, and his kingly resurrection and ascension. But this would be a mistake. Jesus executes all three offices in every phase of his redeeming work (see Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 23). For example, his priestly work of atonement (reconciliation) begins from the moment he assumes human nature in the incarnation and continues even after his sacrificial death through his ongoing intercession in the

**AS HIS SERMON CORPUS SHOWS, EDWARDS VALUED THEOLOGY IN THE PULPIT. HIS SERMONS DIFFERED IN STYLE FROM HIS TREATISES, LIKE *FREEDOM OF THE WILL*, BECAUSE HE WAS COMMUNICATING TO LAYPEOPLE, BUT AS HE DID SO, HE INTENTIONALLY TAUGHT THEM THE CONTOURS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.**

heavenly sanctuary. Likewise, his prophetic office encompasses not only his verbal utterances during his earthly ministry but also his ongoing speech to the church through the Holy Scriptures. And so too, Christ’s kingly work spans from his embryonic to his exalted state, from his conception all the way to the consummation of his kingdom on the last day.

Too often we evangelicals have a truncated understanding of the work of Christ, conceiving of redemption almost exclusively in terms of the cross. While we should never seek to displace the centrality of the cross in the New Testament vision of salvation, neither should we isolate the cross from the broader Christological context that determines its saving significance. We should emphasize with the New Testament what Calvin referred to as “the whole course” of Christ’s obedience. In terms of his kingly office, Jesus Christ reigns as king in his incarnation and birth (Luke 1:32-33), in his teaching and healing ministry (Matt. 4:23), in his sacrificial death (John 12:31-32; see also the irony of Matt. 27:29), in his resurrection from the dead (Matt. 28:18), in his ascension to and session at the Father’s right hand (Heb. 1:3), in his ongoing governance of world history (Rev. 1:5), and in his triumphant return to judge the living and the dead (Matt. 26:64). In short, as both Divine and Davidic King, Jesus Christ is the summation of all of God’s plans and purposes in creation and redemption.

**AS SERVANTS OF THE KING, WE WAGE WAR AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF HIS KINGDOM—OUR OWN INDWELLING SIN AND THE DEMONIC POWERS THAT SET THEMSELVES AGAINST HIS RULE—ASSURED OF FINAL VICTORY AT HIS RETURN.**

## SERVANTS OF THE KING

So what are the implications of the kingship of Christ for Christian faith and practice? It is difficult to improve upon the succinct answer to this question provided in the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Q. 26. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

**WILL WE SEEK REFUGE IN CHRIST NOW OR WILL WE FACE HIS WRATH LATER [REV. 6:15-17]? THE GREAT GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT FULL AND UNCONDITIONAL PARDON IS GRANTED TO ALL WHO BOW THE KNEE TO CHRIST THE KING.**

Christ's kingly work, then, has implications for our past, our present, and our future. For those of us who belong to Christ, we have already been subdued by King Jesus. His sovereign rule has invaded the enemy territory of our sinful hearts and has lovingly brought us into submission, restoring and rebuilding the ruins left by sin and guilt (Acts 15:14-16). As we seek to share the good news of salvation with others, we do so with confidence, knowing that Jesus has the power and authority to subdue even the most unruly human heart. He has a people over whom he will reign in mercy and grace (Acts 18:10; Rev. 5:9).

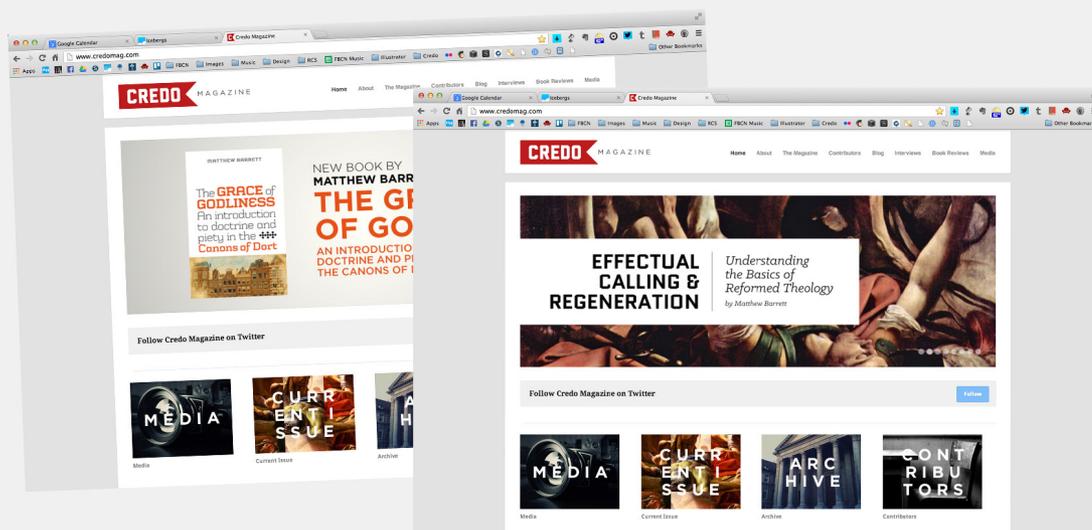
Furthermore, Jesus continues to rule and defend us in the midst of this present evil age. By virtue of his obedient work as the Messianic King, Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. As such, he has commissioned us to be his ambassadors and has promised to be with us to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20). He calls us to realize in the present what will be universalized at the end: bowing the knee to his sovereign lordship for the glory of his heavenly Father (Phil. 2:10). The Christian life can be conceived of as a grace-enabled oath of fealty we swear to

our Sovereign Lord—an oath solemnized in our baptism and constantly renewed through the Word, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and the fellowship of the saints. As servants of the king, we wage war against the enemies of his kingdom—our own indwelling sin and the demonic powers that set themselves against his rule—assured of final victory at his return.

So, in the end, Christ will utterly defeat all his and our enemies. He came the first time to rule in salvation. He is coming again to rule in judgment. When he returns, he will banish all rebels to outer darkness and will bring his redeemed people into a kingdom that has no end. What we do now with the kingship of Jesus will determine our fate when he comes again. He has granted a temporary stay of judgment in the present age, offering clemency to all who submit to his gracious rule. The question remains for each of us to answer and to press upon those we love: Will we seek refuge in Christ now or will we face his wrath later (Rev. 6:15-17)? The great good news of the gospel is that full and unconditional pardon is granted to all who bow the knee to Christ the King.

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# HEAR HIM!

THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF CHRIST

By Daniel R. Hyde

**W**e need to know Jesus better. One of the most helpful ways of knowing him better is to consider what he did in fulfillment of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there are three great “offices” that the Lord gave to his people to serve them: prophet, priest, and king. The priestly office we grasp quickly: Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins and he now ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). The kingly office we get: he came in the line of King David, he rose again triumphant over the powers of evil, and he will come again. But his prophetic office is the one that is least understood, appreciated, and applied to our lives.

To understand what it means for Jesus to be a prophet, think about what Adam damaged and destroyed by his fall into sin and then what Jesus did to reverse the effects of the curse on sin. The old Rotterdam pastor, Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635–1711), wrote that Jesus Christ restores three lost aspects of our relationship to God. As a prophet he removes the blindness of sin, as a priest he removes our enmity with God, and as a king he removes our inability to serve the Lord (The Christian’s Reasonable Service, 1:518). Because of Adam, we are all born blinded by sin and manifest that blindness in an unholy relationship with our Creator by suppressing his truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

**GOD’S SON, OUR LORD JESUS, IS THE CHURCH’S GREAT PROPHET WHO REVEALS TO US THE WHOLE WILL OF GOD IN ALL THINGS CONCERNING OUR SALVATION AND EDIFICATION, AND WHOM WE ARE TO HEAR INTENTLY.**

## HEAR HIM

A foundational passage for Jesus’ prophetic role is Matthew 17:1–13. This passage describes what we call the “transfiguration.” The word *metemorphōthē* speaks of change or transformation. It can speak of an inward and invisible change, such as our transformation into the image of Jesus by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). But here it speaks of an outward and visible transformation, when Jesus “was transfigured before” his disciples as “his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light” (v. 2). Jesus was transfigured into glory. Which glory? His pre-existent glory or the glory he would receive after the resurrection? I believe it was his post-resurrection state of glory. Jesus’ own words point us in this direction: “as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, ‘Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead’” (v. 9). The transfiguration was meant to give Jesus a foretaste of the glory to follow after his sufferings.

What is most important for us, though, is the heavenly word from the Father concerning his Son: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him,” or, as the traditional language of the Geneva Bible (1599) and King James Bible (1611) says, “Hear him” (Matt. 17:5). What we learn from this text is that God’s Son, our Lord

Jesus, is the church's great prophet who reveals to us the whole will of God in all things concerning our salvation and edification, and whom we are to hear intently.

## HIM WHOM WE ARE TO HEAR

"Hear him." Who is this "him" whom we are to hear? It's important to ask this question. Imagine your favorite cable news show, talk radio show, or even a group conversation you've been involved in recently. There were lots of voices. When there are two or more talking at the same time, it sounds like a buzz of sound, with no single voice distinguishable from the chatter. It's the same thing in the world of philosophy and religiosity. There are so many voices, so many speakers, so many self-proclaimed gurus and prophets. Jesus himself warned us of this:

Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "There he is!" do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. So, if they say to you, "Look, he is in the wilderness," do not go out. If they say, "Look, he is in the inner rooms," do not believe it (Matt. 24:23–26).

In other words, we need to discern him whom we are to hear from amid the chatter of religion. What do we need to know about our Lord in order to distinguish his voice? First, we need to know the dignity of him whom we are to hear. He is the Son of God: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5). Not only does the Father testify to this, but the disciples saw it in Christ's transfiguration.

**WHILE THE LORD SPOKE WITH MOSES FACE TO FACE AS A FRIEND (EX. 33:11), ONLY THE SON HAS SEEN THE FACE OF THE FATHER (JOHN 1:18).**

Second, we also need to know the dearness of him whom we are to hear. Listen to how the Father describes his relationship with his Son: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Third, we need to know the distinctness of him whom we are to hear. He is the culmination of all that the law and the prophets spoke. Notice that Moses and Elijah appeared on the mountain: Moses the giver of the law, and Elijah the great prophet of Israel. Why is this significant? The Lord said in his law that on the testimony of two or three witnesses everything was established. Here are two testimonies while the third is the voice of the Lord himself (cf. Deut. 18). While the Lord spoke with Moses face to face as a friend (Ex. 33:11), only the Son has seen the face of the Father (John 1:18). While Isaiah saw the Lord of Hosts veiled in cloud in the temple, John says what Isaiah truly saw was Jesus before the incarnation (John 12:36–40).

## HEARING HIM WHO SPEAKS

"Hear him." Because the Son has unique dignity, dearness to the Father, and distinctness from the ancient prophets, the Father exhorts the disciples—and us—to hear him. What is his message that is so urgent for us to hear? Here's how the Westminster Larger Catechism (Q&A 43) an-

swers this question:

How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

“The whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.” That’s Jesus’ message.

But how sure should we be of everything Jesus said? Peter reflects upon the Transfiguration and says, “we did not follow cleverly devised myths... but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.” Peter goes on to quote the Father’s own words to the Son, saying, “we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention” (2 Pet. 1:16–19).

Peter was certain because of his certain and peculiar experience as an apostle in seeing and hearing on the mountain. But amazingly he says that for us who were not there, there is something more fully confirmed: Jesus’ ministry fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures. The term “more fully confirmed” or “more sure” (*bebaioteron*) is a vivid one. The prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament that pointed forward to Jesus Christ are more certain than the “cleverly devised myths,” Peter’s apostolic eyewitness, and even the testimony of God himself on the Mount of Transfiguration. In comparison with the prophetic words in the Old

Testament, we now have the total certainty and confidence that those prophecies have been fulfilled in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is our method for hearing him? Thomas Manton (1620–1677) made the distinction between hearing sounds in the ear, which animals can do, understanding the meaning of words, which humans can do, and assenting to what the words mean, which is what disciples alone can do (*Works* 1:395). In other words, like sitting in an exit row on a plane, it’s not enough just to hear the words of the flight attendant and even to understand them; you need to give a verbal assent to them. God our Father desires that we hear his beloved Son as his disciples, not as mere animals; as his friends, not as his enemies.

And yet, Jesus is now in heaven. So how can we hear his voice? Our method for hearing him is to listen to his Word written and especially his Word preached. This is brought out in Hebrews 2:1–3. Here we learn from the author, who was a second generation Christian, that the Lord spoke his word to his apostles who then spoke that same word of Christ to the next generation. The inspired author can say, “we must pay closer attention to what we

**JESUS IS NOW IN HEAVEN. SO HOW CAN WE HEAR HIS VOICE? OUR METHOD FOR HEARING HIM IS TO LISTEN TO HIS WORD WRITTEN AND ESPECIALLY HIS WORD PREACHED.**

**IN THE MIDST OF THE CHATTER AND NOISE IN OUR TIME, WE URGENTLY NEED TO GATHER TO OURSELVES NOT TEACHERS TO TICKLE OUR EARS, BUT TEACHERS TO TELL US THE TRUTH.**

have heard,” because this word comes through the means of ministers of the gospel. This is why Paul could say in 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us.”

This also means that our method for hearing him is with a sense of urgency, as the imperative mood implies: “Hear him!” Recall what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4. We know the famous line, “Preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2), but we are less familiar with what he goes on to say: “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Tim. 4:3–4). In the midst of the chatter and noise in our time, we urgently need to gather to ourselves not teachers to tickle our ears, but teachers to tell us the truth.

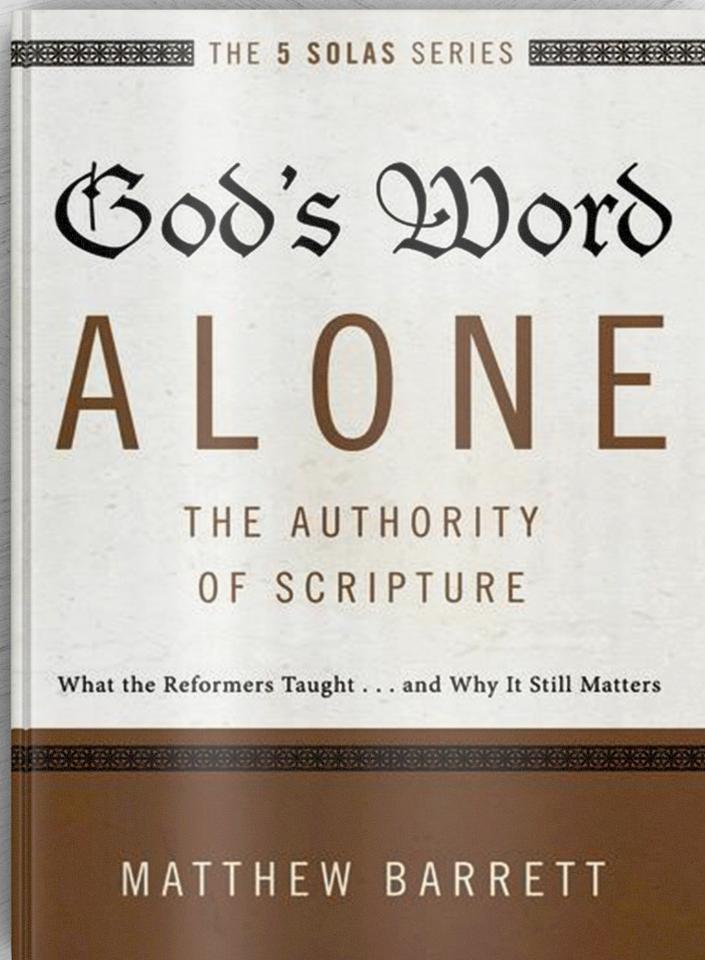
This means that our method for hearing him is with heartfelt devotion. Having learned of him whom we are to hear, we must not gather to ourselves teachers like those in the last days, but instead gather ourselves around the Lord. Our Lord

asks us, “Do you want to go away as well?” (John 6:67). Do you want to follow what pleases you or what pleases God? Do you want to leave a suffering Savior and a pilgrim life in this age for the promise of glory and success now? Like Peter and the apostles we must devote ourselves to the Lord, saying, “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:63).

Such urgency and devotion must lead us to hear him with obedience: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jas. 1:22). Is this true of you? Is your Bible gathering dust? Is your mind filled with the images and self-gratification of the internet, Facebook, and Twitter? Do you spend more time in front of video games than in front of the face of the Lord? Is your attention easily grabbed by the Super Bowl, by birthday parties, by weddings, by social events, by the lure of money in working on the Lord’s Day? How quickly we hear the world’s promises and believe. How easily we are seduced by the devil. How weakly we put up a fight with our sin natures.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophets. In knowing this, you will know Jesus better.

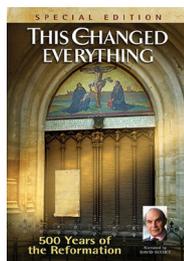
*Daniel R. Hyde is pastor of Oceanside United Reformed Church in Carlsbad/Oceanside, CA. He is the author of many books, including Welcome to a Reformed Church: A Guide for Pilgrims, God in Our Midst: The Tabernacle and Our Relationship with God, and his latest From the Pen of Pastor Paul: 1–2 Thessalonians (EP Books). ◀*



**500 YEARS AFTER THE REFORMATION,  
WE NEED TO RECOVER THE 5 SOLAS  
AND RESTATE THEM FOR A NEW GENERATION**

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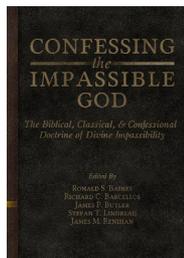
## UNDER REVIEW



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### THE REFORMATION MEETS VIDEOGRAPHY

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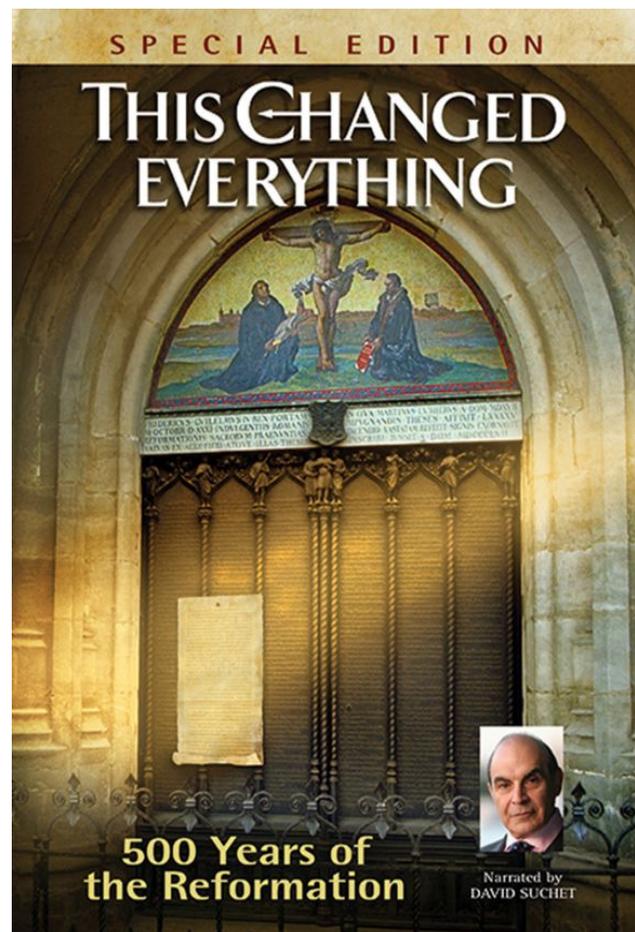
# The Reformation meets videography

*A three hour documentary strives to picture the Reformation*

by David V. Dupee

*This Changed Everything* is a three hour documentary series designed by ACT3 together with Christian History Institute to commemorate the Reformation in 2017 while encouraging Christian unity for the sake of evangelism. The initial theses are that the Reformation's impact was far wider than its theological implications and that the Reformers, while desiring to reform and not split the church, brought to pass a denominational splintering harmful for Christian missions.

There are many outstanding strengths to this video series. Some include the excellent videography merging great art and scenic materi-



al without blocking the narrative, interesting quotes ranging from the obligatory, “When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs”, to Luther’s report of Johann von Staupitz’s, “Wait until you’ve committed some real sin, and then come back to me”, and an expansion of issues arising from indulgences, including the role of good works in salvation and the role of scripture versus tradition.

Another significant strength is the careful presentation of the sixteenth-century context to the Reformation. Historical issues are effectively dealt with, including the symbiotic and closely

interrelated nature of church and government, the strongly taught and firmly held belief that salvation required balancing sins with good works, and the reality that Luther did not simply hit upon Romans 1:17 in a eureka moment, but came to it within the context of intense Scripture study and strong emotional need.

Weaknesses in content are largely, but not entirely, a matter of limited time which, of necessity, leave much unstated. At least a limited mention of Wycliffe and a bit more on the impact of Jan Hus might have been included. Calvin is generously dealt with as are the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, but there is neither detail nor is there commentary on the impact of the *Institutes* in the political world.

Two major questions that arise from this production are: First, “What use do the editors foresee for their effort?”, and, second, “What is their theological view point?”. In fact, they had no one theology, but incorporate a very broad theological range including Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Arminian, and even Reformed. Their work is not aimed at any particular audience or for any particular use such as Christian School classrooms or church schools, but is meant to encourage unification of all who call themselves by the name of Christ in accord with John 13:34, 35.

The point of seeking some form of unification is to ease the missionary task and demonstrate Christian love to the watching world. This raises several questions: “On what basis is this union to be achieved?”, and, “What, if any, structural unity is to be sought? Intending to forward the

thesis that Christianity today is far too fractured and that some form of renewed unification is called for, *This Changed Everything* begins with Christ’s command to spread the gospel, as well as Jesus’ words in John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

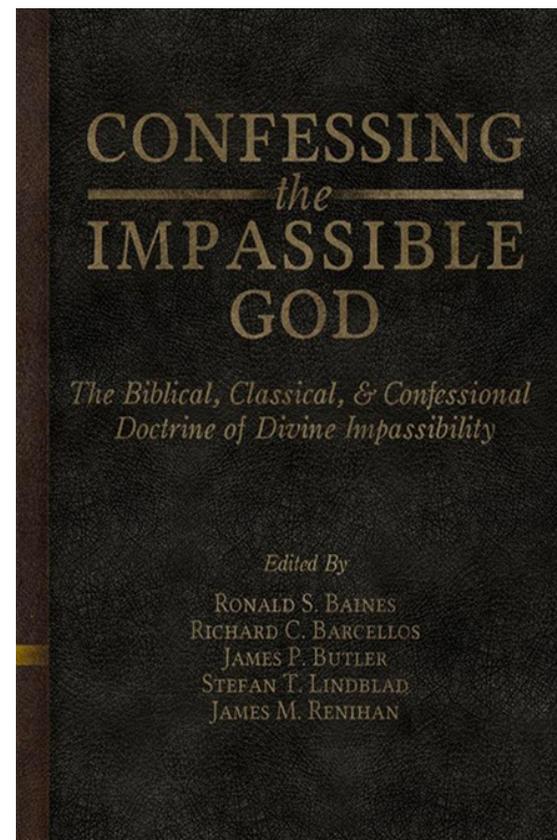
Yet, there should be balance. We should not stress unity and evade the questions of biblical doctrine. Documentaries like *This Changed Everything* should motivate us to answer the difficult question: If one crosses certain doctrinal boundaries, is one not in fact a Christian? If so, what are those boundaries? Paul did consider that there were certain boundaries (cf. Gal. 1:6-9, et.al.), as did Christ Himself (cf. Matt. 7:21, 22), as well as the early fathers (consider their engagement with the Gnostics). *This Changed Everything* leaves us wrestling with this complex issue in order to seek answers which may be clear in points of doctrine, but difficult in determining when, how, with whom, and to what extent cooperation is called for.

*Rev. David V. Dupee*  
*Former pastor, Providence Presbyterian*  
*Church in Fort Wayne IN* ■

# Still Impassible

*Why a new book on impassibility really matters*

by Graham Shearer



In *How Long O Lord*, D.A. Carson writes, “the biblical evidence, in both Testaments, pictures God as a being who can suffer.” Carson is rejecting the classical doctrine of divine impassibility, the idea that God does not, and cannot, suffer. Carson is not alone in his conclusion: evangelical luminaries such as Tim Keller and John Stott have also denied the doctrine. In addition, heavyweight Reformed theologians like Bruce Ware, K. Scott Oliphint, and John Frame have proposed revised formulations of God’s immutability and, consequently, impassibility. Many feel that the classic doctrine of impassibility flies in the face of so many clear scriptural attestations to divine suffer-

ing and emotional change. Others even object that the classical understanding of God is more the product of Greek philosophy than the Bible. For many evangelicals, the kind of strong affirmation of divine impassibility that was characteristic of previous generations seems untenable today.

*Confessing the Impassible God: The Biblical, Classical, & Confessional Doctrine of Divine Impassibility* (RBAP, 2015) stands athwart these developments yelling “stop.” Edited by a group of pastors and academics all committed to the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession, *CIG* sets out the case for the classical, Reformed doctrine of

divine impassibility: God is “without body, parts, or passions.” In doing so the book marshals historical, exegetical, philosophical and theological arguments to make its case.

The volume begins with two chapters on theological and hermeneutical method, moves through several chapters of exegesis of the relevant biblical texts, a historical survey that stretches from the patristic era to the latest evangelical publications, and three chapters on systematic theology addressing God’s being, divine affections and Christology. It concludes with chapters on the way impassibility fits within the theology of the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession, reflections on the use of the doctrine practically, and some closing affirmations and denials. Attached as appendices are reviews of two of the recent books that the rest of the volume critiques, *God with Us* by K. Scott Oliphint and *God: Impassible and Impassioned* by Rob Lister. *CIG* stands as an impressive contribution of the debate, the book engages widely in contemporary scholarship while being rooted in a Reformed Baptist perspective. Most significantly, it raises important questions about whether the current evangelical hesitation about impassibility, and classical theism as a whole, is as reasonable as many assume.

Since much of the evangelical critique of impassibility and immutability is driven by biblical texts that speak of God’s emotional change, a key question is one of hermeneutics: how do we understand the biblical text properly? The two most helpful chapters in *CIG* are those at the beginning by Charles Rennie and Ronald Baines on theological method. In their respective chapters, Rennie and Baines follow the lead of Herman Bavinck

who argues that since God is the divine author of Scripture, the Creator speaking to his creatures, “it follows that Scripture does not just contain a few scattered anthropomorphisms but is anthropomorphic through and through” (*Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:99). This presupposition shapes the way that we understand all descriptions of God’s being and action in the Scriptures. As Calvin puts it, “because our weakness does not attain to his exalted state, the description of him that is given to us must be accommodated to our capacity so that we may understand it” (*Institutes* 1.17.13).

Many modern evangelicals, uncomfortable with metaphysical commitments prior to the text, and strongly committed to a historico-grammatical method of interpretation, fear that this is imposing a philosophical or theological grid over the text. However, as Charles Rennie points out, “it needs to be stressed that those who reject the classical understanding of impassibility on the grounds that it is too philosophical and instead adopt a biblicalist approach in the name of *Sola Scriptura* do not escape their own philosophical and metaphysical presuppositions, whether stated explicitly or implied” (49).

The other motivation for evangelical rejection of impassibility is that it, and its corollaries (immutability, aseity and simplicity), seem to rule out real relationship between God and his creatures. That is to say, the modern assumption is that real relationship with creatures requires that God be able to both change and suffer. This assumption is seen in Oliphint’s question, “How, then, does God remain altogether independent and immutable, while also interacting meaningfully with creation and with us?” The implication being that God’s

independence and immutability is an obstacle to meaningful interaction with his creatures. *CIG* patiently and thoroughly rebuts this presupposition. As Rennie argues, “(God) does not need to overcome his transcendence. It is precisely as the one who transcends the created order that he relates the creature to himself” (303).

God’s transcendence, in his infinite, unchanging perfection, is not an obstacle to his immanence but the foundation of it, as passages like Psalm 139 demonstrate. In Christ, God took on the ability to change and suffer not to be able to relate to humanity but in order to redeem it. The irony of the evangelical discomfort with impassibility is that it minimizes the need for the incarnation. As Lindblad and Rennie explain, “those who predicate sympathetic suffering of God, as God, rob the Son of God of the unique and gracious design of his coming in the flesh” (352). Readers will find in *CIG* a theologically rich exposition of Christ’s incarnation that sets his sufferings, according to his human nature, in full redemptive glory because it ties them to God’s unchanging, impassible, and perfect divine nature.

*CIG* is not perfect. While the expositions of the chosen texts are careful and thorough, the approach of choosing to discuss single verses may reinforce for some readers the stereotype of systematic theology being driven by proof texts. The exegetical section would have benefitted from the addition of an integrated discussion of the entire biblical storyline demonstrating that the biblical drama only makes sense when the central *dramatis personae* is the impassible God of creedal tradition.

Likewise, while impassibility is primarily a negative statement about God, that he does not suffer or experience emotional change, it also carries with it the idea that God’s emotional state is infinitely, intensely, perfectly joyful. It is an affirmation that God lives in an unchanging state of ecstatic rejoicing untouched by suffering or sorrow which guarantees love’s victory over evil. While *CIG* does a good job at defending the negative side of the doctrine, the book could have benefitted from reflecting on this positive, festive, aspect of classical theism more often.

*CIG* does a great service to the church in setting forward a cogent, thorough defense of the classical doctrine. While its authors all write from a Reformed Baptist perspective, any Christian interested in understanding the way in which orthodox theology has understood the God we worship in Christ will benefit from its arguments. Much of the book is taken up with critiquing the writings of thinkers such as Kevin Vanhoozer, Michael Horton, John Frame, K. Scott Oliphint, D. A. Carson and others. Many readers will be unused to reading criticism of those they consider, like me, to be theological heroes. However, the critique is offered respectfully and it is to be hoped that the book will spark a further conversation within Reformed evangelicalism about both impassibility and the doctrine of God more widely.

*Graham Shearer*  
*Oak Hill Theological College* 

# Do you love the Old Testament?

*Alec Moyter, the evangelical Gandalf*

by Timothy Raymond

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I knew I was going to be reviewing Alec Moyter's *Loving the Old Testament* (Christian Focus, 2015) before I began reading it, so upon commencing this book I started scribbling down points in the very back which I considered "particularly helpful parts." I wasn't far into the book before I realized that I would have to essentially jot down every major point as particularly helpful. In nearly every conceivable way this little book is outstanding to the point that I can hardly believe so much useful content is concentrated into so few pages. If your typical book is coffee, *Loving the Old Testament* is expresso.



*Loving the Old Testament* is a bit difficult to describe. Try imagining a miniature overview of the Old Testament. Now blend it with a brief biblical theology in the tradition of Vos or Clowney. Now add several asides inserted at helpful points where Moyter devotes special attention to exegeting selected texts. Round it off with a hearty dose of practical pastoral applications peppered throughout and add a forward by Tim Keller and an afterward by D. A. Carson. If you could imagine all of this in 130 pages, you've got *Loving the Old Testament*.

As far as the strengths of this book, they are le-

gion. It's clearly written, interesting, supported by meticulous and creative scholarship, not infrequently humorous, reverent and pious (in the best sense), and very practically applicable especially to a local church context. Furthermore, if you know anything about biblical studies from the last 100 years, you'll know that Moyter is essentially the evangelical Gandalf. (And anybody who is still living who used to hang out with Martyn Lloyd-Jones must be as old as Gandalf.) I can enthusiastically recommend *Loving the Old Testament* as an ideal book to give to an interested layman or to use in a discipleship course. It also might make a useful tool for Sunday school classes, Wednesday night Bible studies, or even a sharp youth group.

Since all proper book reviews comment on a book's weaknesses, here are three, purely because they're compulsory. First, the book includes a small handful of curious typographical errors. These obviously don't detract from the overall message or content, but might make you smirk occasionally.

Second, the book is remarkably brief, really more in the booklet category. There's obviously nothing wrong with brevity, but you may feel as if you want "more for your money." Lastly, Moyter does assume a fairly traditional covenant theology and amillennial hermeneutic of the Old Testament prophets, which will delight some of our readers while irritating others.

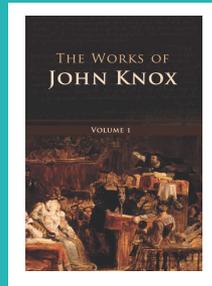
These perfunctory weaknesses out of the way, I don't think I could recommend *Loving the Old Testament* highly enough. In a day when the vast majority of our teaching and preaching almost completely neglects the first 77.2% of the Bible,

this book could result in a revival of learning the whole counsel of God, and even a revival of the spiritual life of the church. *Loving the Old Testament* is really a delightful little book in every way. If you're a pastor, I'd encourage you to buy a couple dozen copies and keep them on your free book table or stocked in your bookstore.

*Timothy Raymond*  
*Pastor, Trinity Baptist Church,*  
*Muncie, Indiana* 

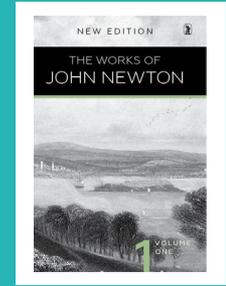
# BARRET'S BOOK NOTES

*The Works of John Knox*  
6 volumes  
Banner of Truth, 2014



If you want to understand the history of the Reformation in Scotland, then read through these six beautifully designed volumes. Unfortunately, Knox and the Scottish Reformation are often overlooked. He sits in the shadows of Luther and Calvin. Yet, Knox was key to the spread of the Reformation. He needs to be read more today.

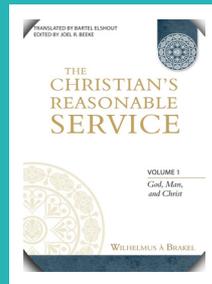
*The Works of John Newton*  
4 volumes  
Banner of Truth, reprinted 2015



The great London preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, once wrote, “In few writers are Christian doctrine, experience and practice more happily balanced than in the author of these letters, and few write with more simplicity, piety and force.” Spurgeon was talking about John Newton. Most know Newton today through his hymns (e.g., “Amazing Grace”). But there is so much more to Newton. Read his letters, for example, and there you will find tremendous spiritual and theological insight.

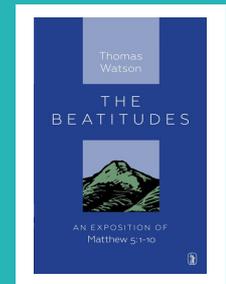


*The Christian's Reasonable Service*  
4 volumes  
by *Wilhelmus a' Brakel*



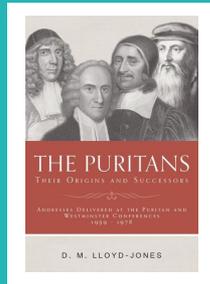
If you love Reformed, Puritan systematic theology, then you will love these four volumes by Wilhelmus a' Brakel (1635-1711) who lived during the Dutch Further Reformation, a reform movement that drew some of the best Dutch theologians, such as Herman Witsius and Gisbertus Voetius. The Christian's Reasonable Service, whose title is drawn from Romans 12:1, was first released in 1700 in Dutch (*De Redelijke Godsdienst*). Here is a wealth of dogmatic gold now in English.

*The Beatitudes: An Exposition of Matthew 5:1-10*  
by *Thomas Watson*  
Banner of Truth, reprinted 2014



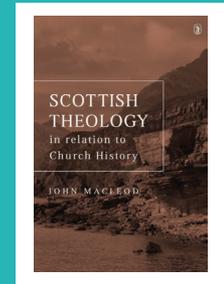
Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686) is well-known for his *A Body of Divinity*. Puritans readers should also review this valuable exposition of Matthew 5. Like other Puritans, Watson weds theology to piety in his preaching. His focus on application will reward his readers. The *Beatitudes* was first released in 1660. In 2016 it is still worth your time.

*The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*  
by D. M. Lloyd-Jones  
*Banner of Truth, reprinted 2014*



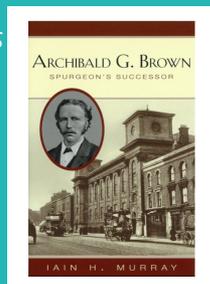
Lloyd-Jones is famously remembered for his expositional preaching. Yet this preacher was also a student of church history and historical theology. This volume collects the papers Lloyd-Jones gave at the Puritan Studies and Westminster Conferences between the years 1959 and 1978. John Owen, John Calvin, George Whitefield, John Knox, and many others receive attention in these addresses. The doctor also discusses specific topics, such as revival, from a historical standpoint.

*Scottish Theology: In Relation to Church History Since the Reformation*  
by John Macleod  
*Banner of Truth, reprinted 2015*



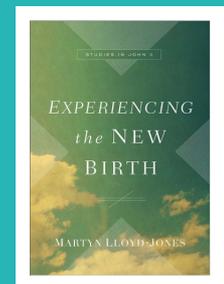
John Macleod (1872-1948) was a twentieth-century pastor and theologian in the Free Church of Scotland College, as well as a Professor of Greek and New Testament Exegesis. He is a helpful guide to the history of theology in Scotland. In this book he begins with John Knox and works his way to the present day. He covers the “Second Reformation,” the “Marrow Controversy,” the “New Light” movement, and much more.

*Archibald G. Brown: Spurgeon's Successor*  
by Iain H. Murray  
*Banner of Truth, 2011*

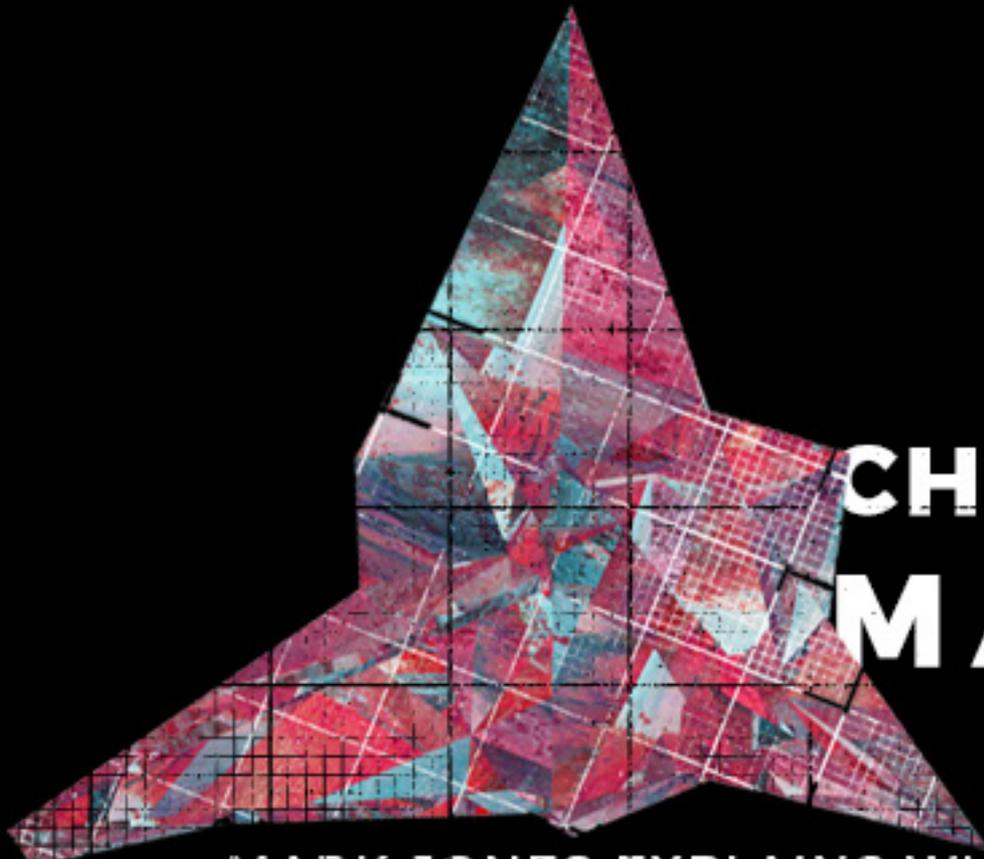


So you've heard of Charles Spurgeon, but have you heard of Archibald Brown (1844-1922). He pastored in East End, London, for thirty years and attracted a very large congregation. He was a friend to Spurgeon and was a prophet of sorts, warning against the temptation to apostasy. This new biography by Iain Murray sets Brown in context, labeling him “Spurgeon's successor.”

*Experiencing the New Birth: Studies in John 3*  
by Martyn Lloyd-Jones  
*Crossway, 2015*



How many sermons can you preach just on John 3? Lloyd-Jones preached 28! Amazing. Crossway has now made these sermons available in one attractive looking volume. In this book one of the great expositors encounters Jesus who explains to Nicodemus what it means to be born again and enter into the kingdom.



# CHRISTOLOGY MATTERS

MARK JONES EXPLAINS WHY CHRISTOLOGY  
IS GOOD FOR YOUR SOUL



**What theologian in church history has made the most profound contribution to the study of Christology and why?**

Probably John Owen because of his ability to give me the tools to formulate a coherent account of Christ and the Spirit. Owen, I think, has taught me more about the person of Christ than any other theologian. His teaching on the beatific vision was also revolutionary for me.

**Many churchgoers hear words and phrases like “hypostatic union” and “homoousios” and run for the hills. Christology, they figure, is best left to the theologians in their ivory towers. What encouragement and advice can you give to churchgoers who want to learn Christology but just feel intimidated?**

No other theological topic has done as much for my soul, confidence in the Lord, hope in Christ, and joy in the Spirit, than the study of Christology. The more I have studied the great theologians on the person of Christ the more I have enjoyed my Christian life.

**NO OTHER THEOLOGICAL TOPIC HAS DONE AS MUCH FOR MY SOUL, CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD, HOPE IN CHRIST, AND JOY IN THE SPIRIT, THAN THE STUDY OF CHRISTOLOGY. THE MORE I HAVE STUDIED THE GREAT THEOLOGIANS ON THE PERSON OF CHRIST THE MORE I HAVE ENJOYED MY CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

My advice would be to read a book that aims to be pastoral and theological. I attempted to write such a book as that in *Knowing Christ* so that readers could see the richness of Reformed Christology not only for their minds but also for their hearts. Good Christology should inspire devotion and praise; if it doesn't do that, I don't want to know about it! That is why John Owen and Thomas Goodwin are must-read authors on the topic.

**What Christological heresy do you see evangelical churches the most prone to today?**

There are a few. Definitely Docetism, which is a word derived from the Greek word, *dokesis*, which means to seem/appear. This heresy views Christ's flesh as “spiritual.” In other words, this early heresy (2nd century) suggests that Christ only seemed to have human flesh and therefore only seemed to suffer and be tempted. On this view, Christ was only a spirit who emitted a fleshly appearance on earth.

The more and more I teach the more and more I realize that a lot of Christians don't have an adequate understanding of Christ's humanity and all that meant for him while he was on earth. A lot of people are surprised even to know that Christ retains his humanity forever, even after his ascension. Others are amazed that he has a truly human mind and will.

**Is there such a thing as “Reformed Christology” and what kind of contribution has the Reformed tradition made to the study of Christology?**

Yes and No. It depends. I think a Reformed Christology emphasizes the old dictum, the finite cannot

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comprehend the infinite. That has important implications for how we understand the relationship between the two natures.

I'd like to think that a Reformed Christology affirms that the relationship between the two natures in Christ are voluntary, not forced. This protects the integrity of the human nature. If John Owen is correct, then I think we also need to have a robust account of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. In my view, a Reformed Christology does the most justice to the role of the Spirit in Christ's ministry on earth and in heaven.

We do, however, share many things in common

with other traditions, which is why we can all "sign on" to the Chalcedonian Creed (AD 451). But how we interpret this Creed is where we start to have our differences with Catholics and Lutherans, for example.

**All right, shotgun questions...**

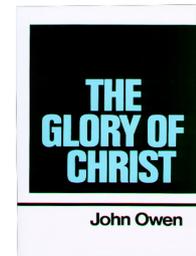
- Does Christ have one will or two? Two, for sure
- Does the Son have a human mind? Yes, the best one
- Is the Son eternally begotten from the Father? Yes, but not eternally subordinate
- Are the Son's attributes communicated at the level of nature or person? Person
- Is the Son consubstantial with the Father in deity? Yes, and the Spirit
- Best Puritan to read on Christology is... Johnny Owen (then Tommy Goodwin)

*Mark Jones has been the Minister at Faith Vancouver since 2007. He is the author of Knowing Christ. ■*

WHAT BOOKS ON  
**THE PERSON OF CHRIST**  
SHOULD EVERY CHRISTIAN READ?

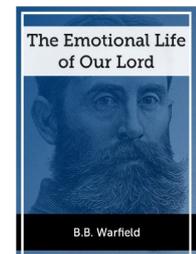
Mark Jones lists his top 5

1 **John Owen,**  
*Christologia*



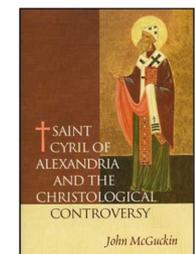
2 **Thomas Goodwin,**  
*Christ Set Forth & The Heart of Christ in Heaven Towards Sinners on Earth*

3 **B.B. Warfield,**  
*"The Emotional Life of Our Lord"*



4 **Anselm,**  
*Cur Deus Homo? (Why Did God Become Man)*

5 **John McGuckin,**  
*St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*



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