

TTS Foundations – Session Seven: “We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God” – NOTES

Welcome to TTS!

- Thanks for coming.
- Thanks to Freedom Church for hosting.

Let’s get the boring stuff out the way first!

- **FIRST: About TTS itself.**
 - **Couple of practical commitments:**
 - To finish at 6.30pm. (Start at 4.30pm!)
 - To provide notes for each session – re: WEBSITE!
 - **This isn’t a university – Matt 11.**
 - Floor will always be open for questions / comments.
 - Suggestions will always be welcome.
- **SECOND: Looking ahead...**
 - **Sun 10th Feb 2019:**
 - Session Eight – meeting here at Freedom.
 - Looking at the Doctrine of the Incarnation, specifically.
 - **In February, generally:**
 - Re: surgery – do keep us in your prayers.
 - On 10th Feb I’ll tell you what’s happening next.

[1] TTS Foundations – How Far Have We Come So Far?

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

DISCUSS: What have we established so far at TTS Foundations?

- ***We've looked at the nature of doctrine itself.***
 - Theology as worship – “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind” [Matt 22].
 - Intellectual discipleship.
 - Following in God's footsteps.
- ***We've looked at the doctrine of God.***
 - God is God – and we are not!
 - The Creator / Creature distinction – re: Exo 3.
 - Unconditioned, not contingent – God is being itself.
 - For himself before all – “not to us, O LORD” [Ps 115]
 - The Goodness, Government, and Greatness of God.
 - Goodness – his personality, love, wisdom, justice, etc.
 - Government – his sovereignty over all things.
 - Greatness – his incommunicable attributes.
- ***We've looked at the doctrine of creation.***
 - Why has God created?
 - For joy / glory / relationship – and for Jesus.
 - What has God created?
 - God / Angels / Humans / Animals / Plants / Matter.
 - Invisible – angels + demons, heavenly host.
 - Visible – cosmos + terra, animals.
- ***We've looked at the doctrine of man.***
 - Prelapsarian Man:
 - Image Bearers / Viceroy / Stewards / Covenant Partners.
 - Postlapsarian Man:
 - Broken Mirrors / Rebels / Saboteurs / Covenant Breakers.
 - Christ the True Man:
 - Image of the Invisible God / True King / Perfect Son / The 'Yes' and 'Amen'.

We're about a ¼ of the way through Foundations.

We've finished Book One – on God and Creation.

Now we're opening Book Two – on Christ and salvation.

The one thing that unites all the 'parts' of Christian theology?

- **LOOK:** Col 1:15-20
 - *“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!”* [Rev 5:12]

In Colmar (NE France) – the Unterlinden Museum.

- There you can view a very famous altarpiece from 1512.
 - By Matthias Grünewald [c1470-1528]
 - A late German Renaissance painter.
- The altarpiece depicts Christ crucified.
 - *“Illum opertet crescere, me autem minui”* [John 3:30]
 - “It is necessary for that man to increase, but I to be made smaller!”

In that one outstretched index finger, we see the essence of all Christian theology - *“See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be made very high”* [Isa 52:13].

- “The name of Jesus is not only light but also food; it is also oil, without which all food of the soul is dry; it is salt, without whose seasoning whatever I set before us is insipid; finally, it is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, rejoicing in the heart, and at the same time medicine. Every discourse in which His name is not spoken is without savour” [Inst. II.16.1]
 - The **centrality** of Christ in all things.
 - The **worthiness** of Christ in all things.
 - The **exaltation** of Christ in all things.
 - The **supremacy** of Christ in all things.
 - The **majesty** of Christ in all things.
 - If you take anything away from TTS, let this be it!

This isn't just rhetoric – C. theology makes no sense without him.

“Why would God allow suffering?” – the cross is our guarantee.

“What do Christian ethics look like?” – delighting in Christ over all.

“How can we say Christianity is the only way?” – because he did first.

All Christian theology is done in his shadow.

All Christian theology is done with an outstretched finger.

[[SONG: ALL GLORY BE TO CHRIST]]

[2] Introducing Christology – Jesus of History, Christ of Faith

TODAY: “*We Believe in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God*”

- An introduction to ‘Christology’.¹
 - **DISCUSS:** What do you think this involves?
 - Our understanding of (and approach to) the man, Christ Jesus.
 - **LOOK:** Matt 16:13-20

DISCUSS: [in 3 groups] Christ We Share Exercise.

- Group One: Images 1, 3-11
- Group Two: Images 12-21
- Group Three: Images 22-29, 31-32
 - Again – “*Who do people say that I am?*”
 - How do these images ‘describe’ Jesus?
 - Are they relying on any particular scripture or title?
 - What’s your reaction? Is it a good representation? (Why / Why not?)

As you’ve seen, there are as many ‘imaginings’ of Jesus as there are individuals doing the imagining!

- In popular culture:
 - Superstar [Andrew Lloyd Webber]
 - Buddy Jesus [*Dogma* (1999) – Kevin Smith]
 - Tortured soul in existential crisis [Scorsese]
 - Proto-feminist, family man, victim of the Church [D Brown]
 - Marxist radical type [Pasolini’s *St. Matthew* 1964]
 - Thug [Driscoll + muscular Christianity]
- What about New Testament scholarship?
 - The apostolic communities ‘modelled’ Jesus.
 - The early Church confessed Jesus.
 - For centuries, this was the Church’s inheritance.
 - The Enlightenment changed things:
 - H.S. Reimarus’ (1694-1768) history of Jesus’ life.
 - David Strauss’ (1808-1874) *Life of Jesus*.

¹ Though we don’t have the time to discuss this now, New Testament scholars and academic theologians have sometimes spoken of **four different ‘kinds’ of Christology**: [1] *A Low Christology* (focusing on Jesus as human); [2] *A High Christology* (focusing on Jesus as divine); [3] *A Christology from Below* (focusing on Jesus as a human amongst humans), and [4] *A Christology from Above* (focusing on Jesus within the context of Biblical Theology, from a ‘God’s-eye view’).

Now an absurd number of answers to the Q: “Who do you say...?”

- Won't go into all these now. (Check the notes!)²
 - E.g. Dying / Rising God [GA Wells] → Jewish eschatological prophet [EP Sanders] → Galilean holy man [Vermes] → Cynic philosopher [JS] → Non-Existent [Doherty], etc.
 - “They desired to strip Jesus of his medieval regalia, and to make him acceptable to a generation that had lost faith in the miraculous and in any conception of another life that was not merely a complement, sanction and justification of this life. ... With eyes thus preoccupied they could only find the German in the Jew; a moralist in the visionary; a professor in the prophet; the nineteenth century in the first; the natural in the supernatural. ... The Christ that Harnack sees, looking back through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness, is only the reflection of a Liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a great well” – George Tyrell (1861-1909) [*Christianity at the Cross-Roads* (1910), pp. 41-44]
- Am I saying that it's all pointless? Not at all!
 - Indeed, God has raised several full-throated conservative voices, for which we should be thankful.
 - E.g. Witherington III, Bauckham, Wright, Thiselton, etc.

Rather, the ‘Jesus of history’ + ‘Christ of faith’ come intertwined.

- ON THE ONE HAND: Jesus of the NT ≠ Jesus of Qur'an.
 - I.e. **he's not a walking argument**, he's a living person.
 - Interacts with real people – e.g. Pontius Pilate.
 - Interacts with real history – e.g. Jn 2:20, 46 years.
 - Interacts with real world – e.g. John 10:22-23.
 - Geography / Language / Politics / Culture, etc.
 - “*The fullness of time...*” [Gal 4:4] – providence.³
- ON THE OTHER: Jesus of the NT ≠ Jesus of Tacitus or Josephus.
 - I.e. **he's not a mere fact of history**, he demands an answer.⁴
 - **REFLECT**: What does ‘Jesus’ even mean?⁵
 - “Jesus never wished to be a ‘he’. As a condition for his being the truth, he must always remain an ‘I’. I am the truth, not *he* is the truth. If I wish to have the truth and to be the truth, Jesus must be for me an ‘I’” [Richard Wurmbrand – *Little Notes*]
 - **LOOK**: 1 Cor 12:3
 - This can't be produced from dry ink of history alone!
 - We approach Christ as one already given – TO + FOR.
 - Our delight, our treasure, our creed + confession.

² Consult the appendix at the end of these notes for a brief survey of historical + academic responses.

³ For more on this argument, cf. Leslie Badham's *Verdict on Jesus* (Chapter Twenty).

⁴ “The brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was Jesus” [Josephus c.93AD]. “Christus ... suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate” [Tacitus c.116AD].

⁵ *Yeshua* – YHWH is salvation. (Cf. Matt 1:21.)

[3] The World of Jesus – Society, Culture, Politics & Religion

Two Aims:

(1) The Historical, Social, Political Context of Jesus' Ministry.

(2) How Jesus understood his own ministry, vocation, etc.

DISCUSS: What about Jesus' world? (History, politics, religion etc.)

[3A] FIRST: The United Kingdom of Israel Divided

- **A United Israel [c1050-930BC].**
 - Under Saul -> David -> Solomon.
- **Jeroboam revolts against Rehoboam (Solomon's son):**
 - **READ:** 1 Kings 12:16-19 – northern tribes rebel.
 - Northern K. of Israel / Southern K. of Judah.
- **The Northern Kingdom of Israel [c930-720BC]:**
 - 60 years conflict, 80 years of alliance, marital peace.
 - KoI threatens Jerusalem – KoJ asks Assyria to help.
 - **READ:** 2 Kings 17:5-6 – exiled, ten lost tribes.

[3B] SECOND: Babylonian Captivity of Kingdom of Judah

- **READ:** Jer 52:1-3 – Babylonian captivity.
 - Nebuchadnezzar tortures/ imprisons Zedekiah.
- **Cyrus the Great (Persian) conquers Babylon [c539BC].**
 - **READ:** Ezra 1:1-2
 - “I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world... As for the population of Babylon [who] as if without [divine intention] had endured a yoke not decreed for them, I soothed their weariness; I freed them from their bonds” [Cyrus Cylinder – Lines 1/20/25-26]

[3C] THIRD: Second Temple / Hellenistic Period

- **Second Temple built – c516BC.**
 - Yehud Medinata – province of Judah.
 - Client Kingdom of Achaemenid Empire.
- **Alexander the Great – conquers Persian provinces [c332BC].**
 - Dies 323BC → Diadochi Wars (Alexander's Generals).
 - Back and forward – Jerusalem + Judea change hands.
 - (Egyptian Ptolemy I Sator gains Jerusalem + Judea → Ptolemy V loses it to Seleucid Antiochus III in 200BC.)

[3D] FOURTH: Maccabean Revolt + Hasmonean Rule

- **The Jews resist Hellenistic influence:**
 - “[Jason the HP] took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel, and he induced the noblest of young men to wear the Greek hat” [2 Macc 4:12]
- **Judah the Maccabee leads Maccabean revolt [167-60BC]**
 - Captures Jerusalem in 164BC – Battle of Beth Zur.
 - Hasmonean family dynasty – Simon Maccabeus (bro).
 - Largely independent Israel between 164-63BC.

[3E] FIFTH: Roman Rule (and Herodian Puppets)

- **Civil war between Maccabean brothers / dynasty.⁶**
 - Pompey Great asked to arbitrate between brothers.
 - Decides to take Jerusalem instead!
- **Antipater, ambitious minister to one of the Macc brothers.**
 - Wins favour from Caesar after Pompey beaten.
 - Gains exemption from tax + military service, self-rule.
- **Herod the Great – Antipater’s son.**
 - Declared King of the Jews by Roman Senate [40BC].
 - Rebuilds parts of Jerusalem and Temple.
 - Herod Antipas (Son):
 - Given Galilee and East of Jordan in 4BC.

Religious groups at the time:

Sanhedrin – the Jerusalem senate.

Pharisees: a Maccabean lay movement, ritualized casuistry.

Sadducees: aristocratic, resisted ‘newer’ scribal traditions (e.g. res).

What to take away from all this?

FIRST: this was a people under the Roman thumb, with despot ‘king’.

SECOND: this was a people with some memory of independence.

THRD: this was a hotbed of discontent and expectation.

(Re: Essenes / Masada [73/74AD] / Bar Kokhba Revolt [132-36AD].)

It’s here – in this flurry of politics, culture and history – that Yeshua bar Yosef begins his ministry.

Insignificant in the worldly sense.

Didn’t address senate. Didn’t write anything. Didn’t create anything.

Didn’t lead an army. Didn’t attempt a revolt. Died a criminal’s death.

⁶ Civil war in the Hasmonean household – between Hyrcanus II + Aristobulus II.

[4] The Ministry of Jesus – Prophecy & Expectation

AND YET – this man changed the world.

- “It is interesting and significant that an historian like myself, with no theological bias whatsoever, cannot portray the progress of humanity honestly without giving him foremost place” [HG Wells]
- “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself have founded great empires. But our empires were founded on force. Jesus alone founded his empire on love, and to this day millions would die for him. I think I understand something of human nature, and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man. Jesus Christ was more than a man” [Napoleon]
- “I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. ... No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life” [Einstein]

“Who do you say that I am?” – how did Jesus answer this?

Five answers from Jesus’ own ministry – using Gospel of Matthew.

[4A] Jesus’ Ministry – The Mosaic Prophet

- **LOOK:** Matt 5:17-18
 - **DISCUSS:** How does Jesus present himself here?
- **Jesus as a Mosaic Prophet**
 - **LOOK:** Deut 18:15-18
 - The temptation of Jesus like Moses – Exo 34:27ff.
 - Also the transfiguration in Synoptics – Moses + Elijah.
- **AND YET – it’s so much more!**
 - Re: Matt 5 – “*You have heard it said... BUT I SAY to you...*”
 - “Jesus belongs to this world. Yet in the midst of it he is of unmistakable otherness. This is the secret of his influence and rejection. ... We become aware of this fact when we try to fit this figure into any of the descriptions and categories then prevalent in Judaism. He is a prophet of the coming kingdom of God. Indeed the title of prophet is occasionally used... Yet he is in no way completely contained in this category, and differs from the customary ways of a prophet. A prophet has to produce his credentials, somewhat as did the prophets of the old covenant in telling the story of their calling and in accompanying their message with the sacred prophetic saying: ‘Thus saith the Lord’. Jesus, on the other hand, never speaks of his calling, and nowhere does he use the ancient, prophetic formula” [Bornkamm – *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 56]

[4B] Jesus’ Ministry – The Bridegroom

- **LOOK:** Matt 9:14-15
 - **DISCUSS:** How does Jesus present himself here?
- **Jesus as Bridegroom, God’s people as Bride**
 - “*For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name... For the LORD has called you like a wife forsaken*” [Isa 54:5-6] – re: Hosea 2 + expectation of deliverance.

[4C] Jesus' Ministry – The Shepherd

- **LOOK:** Matt 18:12-13
 - **DISCUSS:** How does Jesus present himself here?
- **Jesus as the Good Shepherd of Israel**
 - **LOOK:** Ezek 34:10-17
 - [a] Shepherd against Shepherds – re: Matt 23.
 - [b] The Searching Shepherd – re: John 10, lost tribes.
 - [c] The Judging Shepherd – re: Matt 25.
 - **BUT ALSO:**
 - *“My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd”* [Ezek 37:24] – LEADS TO:

[4D] Jesus' Ministry – The Davidic Priest-King

- **LOOK:** Matt 22:41-46
 - **DISCUSS:** How does Jesus present himself here?
 - Quoting Psalm 110 – a **Davidic Priest/King**.⁷
 - The Lord's Prayer [Matt 5] – re: 1 Chron 29.
 - The appeal to David on sabbath [Mark 2].
 - A very common feature of Messianic expectation.⁸
 - *“I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people. I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; my arm also shall strengthen him. ... I will establish his line forever, and his throne as long as the heavens endure”* [Ps 89:19-21+29]
- **AND YET – it's more!**
 - *“If David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?”* [Mt 22:45]
 - Jesus **GREATER** than David? (Re: Matt 12 + Solomon.)
 - *“The Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath”* [Mk 2:28]
 - Appeals to David, but goes beyond.
 - He's not just the Son of David – he's the Son of Man.

⁷ With what we've already established (Christ as Prophet), now we add Christ as Priest and King. This is what theologians call the *munus triplex* – the 'three-fold office' of Prophet / Priest / King. Believers in Christ begin to operate in this capacity: representing Christ, proclaiming Christ, wielding his authority.

⁸ Consult Ps 89 + 110 / Ezek 37:24 / Jer 23:5-6 / Isa 33:21-22, etc.

[4E] Jesus' Ministry – The Son

- **LOOK:** Matt 26:62-65
 - **DISCUSS:** How does Jesus present himself here?
- **'Son of Man' + 'Son of God' – what do these mean?**
 - Often construed as former – human, latter – divine.
 - BUT – note the high priest's reaction to SoM in 26:65.
 - Son of Man \neq the son of a man.
 - Son of God \neq God the Son.
 - Jesus does indeed describe himself as both.
 - BUT – as SoM more explicitly + frequently than SoG.
- **Son of God:**
 - General use:
 - Isa 63 / Mal 2:10
 - Re: Dead Sea Scrolls [c100BC] – “He will be called the son of God, they will call him the son of the Most High” [DSS 4Q246]
 - Re: apocrypha – “I, Ezra, saw on Mount Zion a great multitude that I could not number... Then I said to the angel, ‘Who is that young man who is placing crowns on them and putting palms in their hands?’ He answered and said to me, ‘He is the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world’” [2 Esdras 2:42-47]
 - Referring to Israel as ‘Son of God’ / ‘God’s Son’: e.g. Jer 31
 - Re: Christ as Israel, 12 disciples, etc.
 - Recipient of Abraham’s promise, Jacob’s inheritance.
 - Davidic use: Ps 89
 - Only Begotten SoG – something distinct.
- **Son of Man:**
 - SoM is lord of the Sabbath [Matt 12].
 - SoM has authority to forgive sins [Mk 2].
 - SoM coming in glory [Matt 25].
 - SoM given authority to judge [John 5].
 - SoM glorified [John 13].
 - **LOOK:** Daniel 7:13-14

[5] Conclusion – “I AM COMING”

So what have we established?

Two overarching things:

FIRST: The supremacy and centrality of Christ in all things.

SECOND: The Son’s deliberate choice to minister in 1st Cent Judah.

Specific to Jesus’ own ministry:

FIRST: Jesus frames himself as a Mosaic prophet.

SECOND: Jesus comes as a Bridegroom to a Bride.

THIRD: Jesus presents as the prophetic Shepherd.

FOURTH: Jesus describes himself as the SoG + SoM.

BUT AS WE’VE SEEN – there’s more to every part of this story.
Jesus frames himself as a Mosaic prophet – but there’s more to it.
Jesus comes as a Bridegroom to a Bride – but there’s more to it.
Jesus presents as the prophetic Shepherd – but there’s more to it.
Jesus describes himself as the SoG + SoM – but there’s more to it.

Like all the best dramas, this one ends on a cliffhanger.
For Jesus is being VERY careful with the scriptures he’s evoking.
He’s being VERY selective. And the people DO notice.

*“For I know their works and their thoughts, **and I AM COMING** to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and **I will set a sign among them**” [Isa 66:18-19]*

NEXT TIME: the doctrine of the Incarnation!