

D. Thomas Felt

SESSION ONE ✠ CHRISTOLOGY & EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS



SYS 502 – Professorial Nuance/Nuisance & Opening Salvos

MY BIASES

1. I suffer from cultural toxicity sensitivity. To wit, I am easily disturbed, if not obsessed, with how our culture as manifested in—

- A. language (e.g., “Jesus Christ”),
- B. clothing (e.g., “bare ankles”),¹
- C. art (e.g., Holy Spirit as a “dove”),
- D. values (e.g., denominational hubris),² and/or
- E. behavior (e.g., “Sunday as the ‘LORD’s Day’ “)

Three statements, one lie exercise?

COLORS, IF NOT POISONS, THE TRUTH!

2. I do indeed believe there is TTruth. But, I also believe there is ttruth; i.e., little-t truth exists. Little-t truth is manifested by Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior—

Human beings see, hear, remember, understand, and do what they want to see, hear, remember, understand, and do. Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior—Simplified: People believe what is useful to them.

Thus, little-t truth explains *why* people do what they do, and is thus invaluable for understanding *how* and *why* people understand, but does little to help us understand capital-T Truth. Capital-T Truth is manifested by:

Reasoned dependence on evidence independent from cultural bias. That’s why we:

- A. Insist on placebo treatments in medicine.
- B. Use a yardstick, instead of our elbow.
- C. Deploy clocks instead of our perception of the earth’s rotation.
- D. Study the Scriptures as Truth from the LORD God, and not just how men and women understand the LORD God Almighty, or translate the Scriptures for that matter.



3. What do **you** want from SYS 502; i.e., beyond "credit for the degree," what particular value do you expect to find in studying how we should study the Christ (Christology)?

¹There is an interesting, negative correlation between a church group’s rules regarding “mixed swimming” and the church building’s distance from the beach. In the early 20th century, a woman was escorted from the downtown square of my hometown, Springfield Missouri, for wearing a dress which showed her ankles.

²Roman Catholics are wrong because... Baptists are wrong because... Pentecostals are just wrong because... Muslims are wrong because...

4. So, **how** do we distinguish between swine and non-swine, between pearls and non-pearls.³

5. So, what are your obsessions regarding studying the Bible in general and the Christ in particular? What bugs you, making you wonder whether you want to open up that can of worms or not?

6. What are **your** questions about the syllabus and course expectations?

³Matthew 7:6; Jesus the Christ is quoted as saying: ""Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.""

OPENING SALVO—KEY QUESTIONS FROM WALVOORD, PAGES 7-10 AND
“CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY” TO “OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY” PAGES 11-95

1. To what extent would Walvoord agree with the statement “Christianity is Jesus [the] Christ” versus “Christianity is an attempt to emulate Jesus the Christ?” What are the implications of each declaration? Sacred: the person or the followers?

2. Why does Walvoord spell “Savior” “Saviour?” Why does Walvoord call the Hebrew Scriptures the “Old Testament?” Hints: Brits are superior; dispensationalism.

3. Why is a comprehensive understanding of the construct “Trinity” critical to Christology? Page 11ff

4. So, where do you stand? To what extent is the Scripture historical versus metaphorical? Forces which support interpreting Scripture as metaphor? What is the danger, if any, of insisting Scripture is strictly historical/factual? Page 12ff

5. What do you find particularly attractive or denigrating about Bultmann’s approach to the Christ in Scripture and associated practices and beliefs? Page 15ff

6. To what extent should we depend on the gospels for our Christology versus that written later? What problems flow from focusing on the gospels versus the remainder of the New Testament? Page 20-21?

7. On what key issue did Walvoord focus regarding chapter 1 entitled “Christ in Contemporary Theology?”

8. What English word usage denies the eternality of the Christ? What Christmas song denies the eternality of the Christ? Just who created the heaven (s) and the earth? How could the Christ be eternal if He were “begotten?”⁴ Hints: “God;” Walvoord, pg 32, line 4; John Mason Neale; Arianism; John 3:16 vs. Colossians 1:15; Pages 22-35.

9. Which Deity attribute is most problematic to attribute to the Christ? Eternality, self-existence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, or sovereignty? To what extent is monotheism a problem with affirming Christ’s deity? To what extent is monotheism a problem with affirming Holy Spirit’s deity? Page 27ff

10. Why is it useful to deny, or downplay, the eternality of the Christ? Little t-truth. Pages 22-35.

11. What problems arise when we compulsively characterize Jesus the Christ as “the Son of God?” What was His favorite descriptor? So? A matter of humility, or a matter of Deity assertion? Pages 32-35

12. What is the spiritually pragmatic value of also asserting Holy Spirit’s and the Christ’s role in creation, and not just salvation? Hint: Romans 3:25-26; Pages 32-35

⁴See [https://DiggingDeeper.Life/content/monogenei%20\(begotten\).pdf](https://DiggingDeeper.Life/content/monogenei%20(begotten).pdf)

SESSION TWO ✠ CHRISTOLOGY & EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

SYS 502 – The Christ in Hebrew Scripture History, Typology, and Prophecy

REMEMBER: THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES ARE THE SCRIPTURES TO JESUS ERA BELIEVERS

1. Which of the titles for the Lord God Almighty do you find to be the best descriptor of Yeshua, the Anointed One? Jehovah (Yahweh), Elohim, Adonai, Son of God, Son of Man, First Begotten, Only Begotten, Angel of Yahweh (Jehovah)? Why? Which favorite of Christians did Walvoord leave out? So? Pages 35-46

2. What is the most important theophany in the Hebrew Scriptures for the descendants of Jacob? Pages 47ff

3. Why is it useful for Walvoord to assume that all bodily manifestations of Jehovah were the Christ? Page 54

4. Walvoord frequently refers to evolution as a threat to a correct understanding of the Christ? How do you see evolution as a threat to Christianity? Hint: rarely articulated assumption of evolutionary movement:

5. How does salvation differ as revealed in Christ's work before He came to earth, through the Hebrew Scriptures, and after He ascended back to heaven? Just what does save humans from eternal separation from the Lord God Almighty? Faith, or our faith as manifested by works, or ...? Pages 57-61

The Christ in Hebrew Scripture Typology: Chapter 4 Pages 62-78

1. Given Walvoord's warning about typological extremism, which **person** typology in the Hebrew Scriptures have you found the most useful spiritually? Evangelistically? Didactively? Pages 64-69

2. Which **event** typology in the Hebrew Scriptures have you found the most useful spiritually? Evangelistically? Didactively? Pages 69-71

3. Which typologies of **things, institutions, or ceremonies** in the Hebrew Scriptures have you found the most useful spiritually? Evangelistically? Didactively? Pages 71-78

4. Why do you suppose the typology of baptism was not discussed by Walvoord? Passover was. Hint: consider the reason Jesus gave for needing "to be baptized" or Peter's response to the Pentecost crowd's question: "Brothers, what shall we do?"

The Christ in Hebrew Scripture Prophecy: Chapter 5 Pages 79-95

1. Why has it been useful for 20th and 21st Christians to ignore Hebrew Scripture prophecies regarding the Christ coming to earth as Jesus of Nazareth?⁵ Pages 79-95

2. What would **you** conclude from Luke's description of Jesus' Bible study content with Cleopas and his friend as they were going back home to Emmaus? Hint: Luke 24:13-32

⁵For a paradigm shifting, mind bending addition to your understanding of Christianity, consider its roots. A 21st century scholar has created a work you will find illuminating, if not life changing. Read Skarsaune, Oskar. [*In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity*](#), Inter-Varsity Press (Downers Grove, IL), 2002.

3. Which characteristic of Messianic prophecy do you feel is the most problematic for understanding? Why? How does such prophecy contradict “modern western” thought? Pages 81-83

4. How does the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth support both the royal seat of David and the seed of David, given Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 36:3-31) elimination from the royal line? Page 85

5. Of all the Messianic prophecies, which one in the Hebrew Scriptures have you found the most useful spiritually? Evangelistically? Didactively? Why? Pages 83-95

TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE YOU FOUND THE PROPHECY IN
QUESTION USEFUL — CIRCLE ONE

Prophecy:	Spiritually	Evangelistically	Didactively
⌘ The Christ’s birth as the human: Jesus of Nazareth	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ The virginity of His mother, Miriam	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ He will die/be killed while on earth	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ He will overcome the enemies of believers	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ The Christ will arrive in Jerusalem on a donkey	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes
⌘ He will be resurrected from the grave	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes	Yes No Never Sometimes