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STUDYING THE CHRIST ✠ CHRISTOLOGY & EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

SYS 502 – Description, Rationale & Background

GOSPEL CONTEXT

When the Christ came to earth as Jesus of Nazareth, times were tough. Believers felt abandoned; Rome was the ultimate sovereign, not the Lord God Almighty. People looked for a leader, a messiah, someone to break off the chains of civil and spiritual slavery. Many claimed to be this leader. Many died in these leaders' uprisings. Many were fooled. But then Yeshua came. This leader was different—He spoke with authority. He fed the hungry. He healed the ill. He raised the dead. And, He taught the weirdest things: love your enemies, the poor are blessed, the teachers of the Law were not always correct, and most odd—He was the way, and the truth, and the life. Was this Yeshua from Nazareth God? A resounding “Yes” floated among and beyond believers and unbelievers alike. A new narrative indeed.



From the earliest days, the prospect of the Lord God coming to earth—actually being among us (*Immanuel*)—was shouted loudly. This good news was spoken with excitement, fervor and passion. In those days, people would gather in the market during the day, sharing the latest gossip. In the evening, people would gather in the cool of the evening, on their rooftop sharing family aspiration and angst. It was from those rooftops that the Christ called followers to “shout” what was whispered in their ears, what was told in the dark. What was to be shouted? The gospel.

BUT how do we come to grips with the full nature of this Yeshua, this Jesus of Nazareth, this Christ, this Son of God? When on earth, to what extent was the Christ human? Deity? Why do we sing “Christ was born on Christmas day?” Was He actually sinless? Lying (Luke 18:19; Mark 10:18; Matthew 19:17; John 7:1-10)?¹ What about allowing people to go to heaven without understanding Him?² Did the Christ submit to the Father, and if so, how could He be truly Deity? And when He left earth, He sent another in His place. So who's to be followed: the Christ or He who was sent; i.e., Holy Spirit? Or He who sent? On whom do we place our theological focus?

These questions, when honestly asked, and when fervently researched constitute the *raison d'être* of SYS 502. Unless we know how to ask (epistemology), and why to ask (rationale), and understand context (background), our understanding of the Christ is delimited, immature, and less than provocative. A dull gospel indeed.

¹One response to the issue: DiggingDeeper.Life/answersDidJesusLiePorter.htm

²See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=400OppOuzpM>

JUST WHAT IS SYS 502

This 3 hour graduate course is focused on the nature and work of Jesus the Christ, primarily His human and divine natures and their relationship. With this emphasis, the course focuses on Jesus' humanity, His deity and who He truly is as both human and God and the doctrine of the Christ and its impact on the church. This course will further examine the Hebrew Scriptures history, typology and prophecy of the Christ and the fulfillment in His life in the New Testament.

CLASS TEXTS

Although other reading assignments will be made as requested and needed, these two textbooks will serve as the core of SYS 502 –

- ℵ Maachia, Frank D. Jesus the Spirit Baptizer – Christology in Light of Pentecost. William & Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2018. ISBN: 0802879790 (WW879790 – both [hard copy](#) and [eBook available](#))
- ℵ Walvoord, John F. Jesus Christ Our Lord. Chicago, Moody Publishers, 1969. ISBN: 0802443265 (WW43265 – both [hard copy](#) and [eBook available](#)).
- ℵ Key Website for Accessing Additional Readings: <https://DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies/SYS502>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. Read all textbooks and required reading to meet the minimum 675-page reading requirement and submit a signed affidavit concerning the completion of this requirement (to be provided).
- B. Attendance in all classes is required; the [final exam](#) is posed on the last class will be given then unless previous arrangements have been made with me.
- C. Complete a high-quality research paper that reflects the content of the textbooks as well as incorporating any insights from the reading assignment and may focus on a major topic of your choice on the course subject. The paper needs to be submitted one 168 hours (1 week) after the last class session (lateness will cause a grade deduction).
 - 1. Paper must be a minimum of ten (10) content pages in length, not including the title page and bibliography.
 - 2. Grammar, spelling, composition, neatness of presentation and depth of research are considered points of importance.
 - 3. Paper must be one-sided, double-spaced and no larger than 11 or 12pt Times New Roman font on a computer; 1 inch top & bottom, left & right margins.
 - 4. Suggested topics that could be used are:
 - a. Evidence of the Historical Jesus and His Resurrection
 - b. Announcing the Kingdom of God
 - c. For This Cause Jesus was Born
 - d. Fully God and Fully Man
 - e. The Relevance of Jesus Today
 - f. In All Points Such As We Are
 - g. Christ in Eternity Past
 - h. Critical Problems in Studying the Christ (e.g., cultural influences, evidence of His resurrection, or His requirement for absolute faithfulness, etc.).
- D. Because this is a Master's level program of study, the student is expected to demonstrate a high level of insight and creativity in their work. Professionalism and original thought is highly desirable. Generic and vague papers will not be accepted. Expectations of the Master's student are greater than those of the undergraduate student.