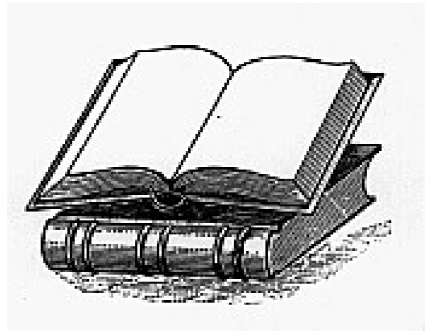


Mourne
Free Presbyterian Church

Bible Study



"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."
2 Timothy 2:15

**Articles of Faith of the
Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster**

STUDY 3

**The Eternal Sonship, Virgin Birth and Deity of our Lord and
Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Bible Study Notes

The Articles of Faith of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.

The Absolute Authority and Divine Verbal Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God.

There is but one living and true God, and in the Godhead, there are three Persons, equal in power and glory, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

The Eternal Sonship, Virgin Birth, and Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The personality of God the Holy Spirit, and the absolute necessity of His work in Regeneration and Sanctification, and His Infilling of the Indwelt Believer for power to live and witness for Christ.

The Substitutionary Death of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Resurrection as the only way of Salvation through Faith.

God has appointed besides the Word and Prayer, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism — The Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster, under Christ the Great King and Head of the Church, realizing that bitter controversy raging around the mode and proper subjects of the ordinance of Christian baptism has divided the Body of Christ when that Body should have been united in Christian love and Holy Ghost power to stem the onslaughts and hell-inspired assaults of modernism, hereby affirms that each member of the Free Presbyterian Church shall have liberty to decide for himself which course to adopt on these controverted issues, each member giving due honour in love to the views held by differing brethren, but none espousing the error of baptismal regeneration.

The Lord's Supper — The Lord's Supper has been appointed by our Lord for remembrance of Him in His work as Saviour. Its purpose to the child of God is for strengthening, and putting a visible difference between the redeemed and the unregenerate. This Sacrament will be observed once each month in every Free Presbyterian Congregation, or more or less frequently as each local congregation shall decide.

The visible and personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These *Articles*, together with the Larger Catechism, the Shorter Catechism, and The Westminster Confession of Faith, form the Subordinate Standards of the Free Presbyterian Church.

Article no. 3

The Eternal Sonship, Virgin Birth and Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A true understanding of the person of Christ is essential to a proper understanding of the work of redemption. Matthew 22:42 records the demanding question, “What think ye of Christ?” This is a question that cannot and should not be ignored as the answer reveals everything concerning our doctrinal position. This is further emphasised in the words of 1 John 4:1-3 *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”*

As John Newton so ably put it,

“What think ye of Christ?” is the test
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.
As Jesus appears in your view—
As He is beloved or not—
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath is your lot.

Many denominations have adopted erroneous views of the Lord Jesus Christ and this has in turn resulted in a wholesale departure from the truth. When an assembly is wrong on Christ, it goes wrong everywhere. The foundation has been destroyed. The basis of the atonement has been severely and fundamentally undermined and the church plunges into heresies and blasphemies. The person of Christ is unbreakably linked to the work of Christ. He can only be the redeemer of men, if He is both God and man in one person. This lies at the heart of the gospel and therefore is vitally important to clearly state a scriptural view on the wonderful person of Jesus Christ. In its third article of faith the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster is in agreement with the Larger and Shorter Catechism, the Westminster Confession of Faith, other reformed creeds and historical Protestant statements of faith and more importantly it is in agreement with the Word of God.

**SELECTED HISTORIC STATEMENTS OF FAITH CONCERNING
THE ETERNAL SONSHIP, VIRGIN BIRTH AND DEITY OF
CHRIST**

Shorter Catechism Question 21:

Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

“The only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.”

Larger Catechism Questions 36, 37

Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace?

The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire distinct natures, and one person, forever.

How did Christ being the Son of God become man?”

Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 8 Section II

The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

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These historic statements are in agreement with the testimony of both Old and New Testaments. It is important to remember that the Scriptures, in their entirety, testify of Christ (John 5:39).

THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

The consistent testimony of God's Word is that Christ is the eternal Son of God.

J.C.Philpot asserted, "All Trinitarians... allow the following truths:

- (i) The union of the two natures, the human and the divine, in the Person of the Lord Jesus.
- (ii) That the human nature of the Lord Jesus was formed of the flesh of the Virgin by the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost.
- (iii) That He who was born at Bethlehem was called the Son of God."

These statements are true, as far as they go. However it is important to note that Christ did not become the Son of God at some point in *time*. For example:

Christ did not become the Son of God by his birth in Bethlehem.

A key passage in this subject is Luke 1:35 "*And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*" Note carefully that this text does not state that Christ became the Son of God at his birth. His coming to earth did not mark the commencement of his Sonship. Rather the point being stressed is that he would be called the Son of God because he already was the Son of God.

Christ did not become the Son of God by baptism.

Proponents of this view point to the words of Matthew 3:16, 17 "*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" Again, it is clear that these words do not state that Christ became God's Son at his baptism, but that God announced the fact of his already existent Sonship. The words present a testimony concerning the Sonship of Christ.

Christ did not become the Son of God at his resurrection.

Some argue this point from Acts 13:33, 34 “*God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.*” Again, it should be noted that Christ’s Sonship was manifested at His resurrection – it did not commence then.

Christ did not become the Son of God by his exaltation.

Some cite Hebrews 1:1, 2 “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds*”, in support of this view. However the text teaches that Christ, the Son of God was made heir to all things. He was appointed heir because He was the Son of God.

Christ did not become the Son of God by being our Mediator.

The title “Son of God” is not merely a mediatorial title – i.e. a title of Christ as our Mediator - it is a title concerning Christ’s eternal position.

In considering these facts we are shut into the truth that Christ did not become the Son of God in time: he is the Son of God from eternity i.e the Eternal Son.

1 John 4:9 is an important text on this subject: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” The word *sent* indicates that God sent His Son. He did not send one who would become His Son – but His only begotten Son. This phrase ‘*only begotten*’ - (*monogenes*) denotes that the Son is the same eternal essence as the Father. It has no idea of subordination or inferiority. In the Godhead *Son* indicates equality.

Bible Study Notes

This truth receives further treatment in John 1:1-14, Romans 1:3 and Isaiah 9:6. From John 1:1-14 we can assert the following unshakeable facts:

1. The Word (Christ) existed from all eternity. He was God and was in the beginning with God.
2. The Word became flesh (the incarnation)
3. That the Word who became flesh was none other than God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:3)
4. The strong, unequivocal conclusion is that the Sonship of Christ preceded His coming into this world.

Isaiah 9:6 *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* This text of scripture is self-explanatory on the subject of the Eternal Sonship of Christ. He was the child born, but the Son given. Micah 5:2 further establishes this truth: *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."*

It has been said that J. C. Philpot, puts the "issue as clearly as anyone" when he said,

"Jesus is the only begotten of the Father; this is the first step. As the only begotten of the Father He has a peculiar glory; this is the second step. This glory He had with the Father before the world was; this is the third step. As He could only possess this glory in His Divine nature, for His human did not then exist, He is the only begotten Son of God as God; this is the fourth step and establishes the conclusion that He is the eternal Son of the Father, and that by eternal generation."

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST.

When Scripture speaks of the incarnation of Christ it emphasizes that the humanity of Christ was produced in the womb of the virgin Mary by the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit. It has been noted that the, "virgin birth was a special miracle wrought by the Third Person of the Trinity whereby the Second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God, took to Himself a genuine and complete human nature and was born as a man, without surrendering in any way His complete divine nature."

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Dr. Ian Paisley in his book 'Christian Foundations' noted: "In many quarters, ecclesiastical as well as secular, belief in the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ is scouted as unworthy of twentieth-century intelligence. Biologically, it is vehemently asserted, such a birth is impossible. Science with pontifical authority has pronounced against it." He added, "Rejection of the Virgin Birth is an attack on the supernaturalness of Christ Of Christ's wondrous birth, human incredulity questionsd, "How shall this be Divine inspiration answers, "With God all things are possible." He who questions the Virgin Birth challenges the almightiness of God. To discredit the Virgin Birth is not only to strike at the nature of Christ but at the very power of God."

(Christian Foundations page 33, 34)

There are certain fundamental and foundational texts which teach the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

Genesis 3:15 *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Commenting on this text, **Henry Cooke**, the famous champion of Irish Presbyterianism noted, *"The principal part of Satan's curse lay in the ruin brought on him by Jesus Christ, the eminent 'seed of the woman,' in his redemption of mankind. Jesus Christ is called the 'seed of the woman' not only to import the reality of his manhood...but chiefly to signify that he was none of Adam's natural posterity represented in the covenant of works, and that he would be born of a virgin."*

The term 'seed of the woman' and 'made of a woman' (Galatians 4:4) are important, as they denote something unique about Christ's birth. His conception was not the result of any union between his mother and a man, or the product of the Holy Spirit's implantation of a divine seed in the womb of his mother. The *seed* from which his humanity arises belongs to his mother. "Some evangelicals have imagined a kind of heavenly humanity for Christ. Some describe the virgin birth in terms that make the Holy Spirit "the father of Christ's humanity." There is nothing of this in Scripture. The Holy Spirit did not supply the place of a man to impregnate Mary."

Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* These words are referred to in Matthew 1:23 and therefore it is clear that they refer to Jesus Christ. This text has become the center of an intense and at times increasing controversy.

Bible Study Notes

Dr. Alan Cairns in his 'Dictionary of Theological Terms' treats this subject at some considerable length. He has noted concerning the meaning of 'virgin' in Isaiah 7:14.

"Rationalists' first argument is based on the Hebrew word translated 'virgin' It is '*almah*, not *bethulah*, the word they claim to be the technical term for virgin. They argue that '*almah* merely denotes a young woman, not necessarily a virgin. Thus Isaiah's statement is that a young woman would bear a son conceived in a perfectly natural and normal way. There are strong arguments against this view. Arguments which show that '*almah* not *bethulah*, is the technical term for virgin. The following points indicate that it is at least, the only word that without any qualification means 'virgin.'

1. '*almah* is never used in Scripture of a young woman who is married or of one who is demonstrably not a virgin.
2. '*almah* never needs any explanatory statement to denote virginity.
3. In Genesis 24:6 the term '*bethulah*' is used with the additional information, 'neither had any man known her'
4. The term '*bethulah*' is used in Joel 1:8 of one who had lost 'the husband of her youth' The term is employed of a married woman.

J. A. Alexander noted of the word '*almah*, "A virgin or unmarried woman is designated here as distinctly as she could be by a single word...."

Martin Luther once said, "If a Jew or Christian can prove to me that in any passage of Scripture '*almah*' means a married woman I will give him one hundred florins, although God knows where I will find them."

Matthew 1:23. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

According to Matthew 's record Mary was a 'parthenos' - "virgin" when she gave birth to Jesus. The term 'parthenos' indisputably means 'virgin'. Before Mary and her espoused husband Joseph came together Mary was 'found with child of the Holy Ghost.'

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Luke 1:27-35

The angelic announcement to Mary of the conception of Christ clearly indicates that Mary was a virgin. Why else was she perplexed and why would she reply by saying, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (v. 34)

Galatians 4:4 "*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.*" The phrase 'made of a woman' denotes more than the separation from the womb, it includes the entire human nature of the Son as this was derived from his human mother.

We do not know the exact nature of the miracle performed on the substance of the virgin Mary, but it was sufficient to produce the supernatural result, a virgin born Saviour (Luke 1:35). The Virgin Birth of Christ is the miracle of all miracles!

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Many modernists have set about to deny the essential deity of Jesus Christ. There is nothing new in their attacks and flowing from their denial of the deity of Christ, runs a plethora of false doctrines and damnable heresies. The distinguishing marks of most, if not all, cults is their denial of this fundamental doctrine.

The deity of Christ is established when we consider the following four great truths:

1. Divine names/ titles are given to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the following texts of scripture:

John 1:1, 14-18. The Word of v. 1 is clearly identified in vv. 14-18 as Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:5 Christ is identified as "God over all blessed forever."

Isaiah 9:6 Christ is the 'mighty God'

Jeremiah 23:5, 6 Christ is Jehovah Tsidkenu – thus establishing his essential deity.

Revelation 1:8, 11, 12. The speaker is Christ – The Almighty.

For further study consider the parallels between the following texts:

Psalm 45:6 – Hebrews 1:8, 9*

Numbers 14:20-22, Psalm 95:6 – 1 Corinthians 10:9

Psalm 102:25, 36 – Hebrews 1:10-12

2. Divine attributes are ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the following truths: (with selected proof texts)

- i. Christ is eternal – Micah 5:2
- ii. Christ is unchangeable – Hebrews 13:5
- iii. Christ is infinite – John 8:58
- iv. Christ has life in Himself – John 5:26
- v. Christ has wisdom – 1 Corinthians 1:24
- vi. Christ has power – Matthew 28:18
- vii. Christ is holy – Luke 1:35
- viii. Christ is just – Acts 3:14
- ix. Christ is goodness – John 10:32
- x. Christ is truth – John 14:6

3. Divine works are ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider the following truths: (with selected proof texts)

- i. Christ and creation – John 1:3
- ii. Christ and preservation – Hebrews 1:3
- iii. Christ and miracle – John 5:36
- iv. Christ and salvation

All the parts of salvation are ascribed to Christ.

Redemption – Acts 20:28
Election – John 13:18
Effectual calling – John 10:16
Sanctification – Ephesians 5:26

Sending the Spirit – John 15:26
Power to bestow eternal life – John 10:28
Resurrection of the body – John 5:21
Judgment – John 5:22

4. Religious worship is rendered to Christ.

Worship is due to God alone and Scripture commands that it be given to Christ – therefore Christ must be God.

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Faith – John 14:1
Adoration – Hebrews 1:6
Prayer – Acts 7:59

The deity of Christ is an essential doctrine of Scripture. If we are wrong on Christ's person we will be wrong on Christ's work and the entire gospel is undermined.

The importance of the unique person of Christ is underscored in many places in Scripture: consider as a sample:

Hebrews 2:7-18
Hebrews 4:14-16
1 Timothy 2:5

In conclusion:

The study of Christ's person is foundational to understanding the wonder and worth of Christ's work. Satan has constantly sought to attack and undermine the glorious person of Jesus Christ. Men have repeatedly attacked his deity and argued that he was and is not truly God. They have also attacked his humanity and claimed that he was not truly man. His virgin birth, perfect life, vicarious death and bodily resurrection especially have been targeted. However these truths are essential to the gospel. Christ is both God and man in one person for ever. It is essential that this is so - otherwise we could never be reconciled to God through Him. We must never move an hair's breadth from the scriptural doctrine of Christ. As Charles Haddon Spurgeon said to his son Thomas, at his ordination: "Preach up Christ." The Christian must strive to hold the highest views of the Lord Jesus.