The Doctrine of Christ

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*Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have* [*lit*. “hold fast to” or “acknowledge with love and devotion”] *God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son*. ([2 John 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2John+1.9&t=NKJV))

The expression “*doctrine* [using the Greek word, *didache*, ‘that which is taught’] *of Christ*” is used only in 2 John in the Bible (NKJV). And this expression commands center stage in the instruction that the “*elder*” (the apostle John) gives to the “*elect lady and her children*.” It suggests the basic meaning or teaching concerning Jesus Christ, that which accurately represents the essentials concerning the Son of God.

And the concern of John regarding this “*doctrine*” is expressed in [2 John 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2John+1.7&t=NKJV),

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

On the other hand, the evidence that one adheres to this “*doctrine*” is found in [2 John 1:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2John+1.4-6&t=NKJV),

*I rejoiced greatly that I have found some of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. And now I plead with you, lady . . . that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.*

It is interesting to note that a proper belief in the “*doctrine of Christ*” (*i.e.* “walking in truth”) will naturally be expressed or evidenced by adherence to His commandment to “*love* [Gk. *agapao*,” representing God’s selfless love within the hearts of Christians] *one another.*” Love of one another is the expression of self-sacrificial service to others for their benefit. To do otherwise, is to deny that Christ has come in the flesh, which position reflects “*a deceiver and an antichrist*.”

It appears that the critical element embodied in “*the doctrine of Christ*” is that the *Deity* (God) *came in human flesh*, and this, for *a purpose*. This in fact is the truth expressed in the opening verses of the gospel of John, as follows:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. . . . The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! . . . this is the Son of God. . . . For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* ([John 1:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.1&t=NKJV), [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.14&t=NKJV), [17b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.17b&t=NKJV), [29b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.29b&t=NKJV), [34b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.34b&t=NKJV); [3:16-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16-18&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Revelation 19:13b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.13b&t=NKJV))

And for a Christian to teach otherwise can only reflect an absence of love toward and for others, a spiritual condition outside the “*doctrine of Christ,*” which is to say reflecting the position of “*a deceiver and an antichrist*.”

Central and absolutely crucial to the “*doctrine of Christ*” is expressed in the first few words of verse 1 in the gospel of John ([John 1:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.1&t=NKJV)), *i.e.*, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*.” A meticulous study of God’s Word clearly reveals that not only is God Almighty a composite Trinity, able to function as One or individually, but that each is equal in essence, *i.e.*, Deity. Should anyone wish to further confirm this fact, the following link is suggested, [Bible One - The Trinity](http://bibleone.net/print_tbs10.html), at which it is concluded:

The bottom line is that God’s Word clearly teaches that God is God, Jesus Christ is God and the Holy Spirit is God. God is one in essence (nature), yet three distinct Persons, in revelation and in the performance of His will. God the Father orchestrated His plan, Jesus Christ enabled His plan and the Holy Spirit executes His plan. This of course is over simplification, since any of the three Persons of the Godhead also performed all three functions. In any case the doctrine of the Trinity is fundamental to Christianity. A diligent study of the Bible shows it to be accurate, factual, irrefutable, incontrovertible, incontestable, undeniable, indubitable and unassailable….and any other similar adjective of like kind the reader of this study may wish to apply.

Additionally, it is suggested that one access [Bible One - Deity of Jesus Christ](http://bibleone.net/deity0fJC.htm), which is a specific study on the deity of Jesus Christ.

Nevertheless, to deny or avoid this fundamental truth regarding Jesus Christ is to in fact *transgress and not abide in the doctrine of Christ*, the position of a “*deceiver and an antichrist.*”

Another fundamental aspect (truth) of the “*doctrine of Christ*” is that *God alone* was able to pay the *penalty price* of mankind’s sin in order that a efficacious means could exist that would allow man to be eternally delivered (saved) from his fallen (sinful) condition. The fall (initial act of sin) of man within the Garden of Eden brought about his *spiritual death*, a condition that henceforth would pass on through his progeny (offspring) throughout history ([Romans 5:14-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+5.14-19&t=NKJV)). And this spiritual death could only assure him a continued life apart from God throughout eternity.

Yet, because “*God is love*” ([1 John 4:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.8&t=NKJV)) and because God so loved man, which God had fashioned in His own triune image and likeness ([Genesis 1:26-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26-27&t=NKJV); [John 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.16&t=NKJV)), and knowing that within man, after “the Fall,” there was “*no good thing*” ([Matthew 19:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+19.17&t=NKJV); [Romans 7:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+7.18&t=NKJV)) and who now was “*dead in trespasses and sins*,” and “*by nature* [a child] *of wrath*” ([Ephesians 2:1-3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1-3&t=NKJV)); God became flesh by means of His only begotten Son (2nd Person of the Trinity) in order to pay the penalty for man’s sin, which is to say that Christ became (took upon Himself) man’s sin and His spiritual death (*i.e.*, separation from the Father for 3 hours upon the cross of Calvary [[Matthew 27:45-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+27.45-46&t=NKJV)]) was the “*propitiation*” (that which satisfied God’s sense of justice) for man’s sin.

*For He* [God the Father] *made Him* [Jesus Christ] *who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*. ([2 Corinthians 5:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.21&t=NKJV))

*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*. ([1 John 4:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.9&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.10&t=NKJV))

*For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* ([Romans 5:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+5.6&t=NKJV), [8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+5.8-9&t=NKJV))

Love is to be a reciprocal relationship. Jesus taught that our love for God is obedience to His commands, His words, ([John 14:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+14.21&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+14.23&t=NKJV)). He taught (also by His example) that love for our neighbor is our self-sacrificial service to them for their benefit.

This study would be remiss should it not also cover in some detail the proper effect of one who correctly and tenaciously adheres to the “*doctrine of Christ*,” as is reflected by the following descriptions within the book of 2 John, as follows:

. . . *walking in truth* . . . . ([2 John 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2John+1.4&t=NKJV))

. . . *walk according to His commandments* . . . . ([2 John 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2John+1.6&t=NKJV))

*Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward* . . . . ([2 John 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2John+1.8&t=NKJV))

For the serious “student of the Word,” it is rather mindboggling that so many Christians are ignorant concerning what Scripture clearly conveys regarding the proper and effectual Christian life, including its consequences upon the termination of one’s temporal life. And although this brief commentary on the book of 2 John will not go into extensive detail concerning this fundamental truth of the Christian life, it will attempt to cover its principal, germane facts.

But to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this central, predominate teaching within Scripture, it is suggested that the reader should review the Arlen L. Chitwood’s [Salvation of the Soul BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php), in this site.

**The Principal, Germane Facts of God’s Redemption (Salvation) for Man**

1. Man is a tripartite being, composed of Spirit, Soul, and Body, all of which are individually saved or redeemed at different periods of time.

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. ([1 Thessalonians 5:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+5.23&t=NKJV) [*cf*. [Hebrews 4:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.12&t=NKJV)])

Salvation of the spirit is a *past, completed act* — *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast*. ([Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV))

Salvation of the soul is a present, continuous work — *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*. ([1 Corinthians 1:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+1.18&t=NKJV))

Salvation of the body is a future, inherited possession — *Are they* [angels] *not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation* [*lit*., “for the sake of the one about to inherit salvation”]*?* ([Hebrews 1:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.14&t=NKJV))

2. Spirit-salvation, that which is a product of the “gospel of grace,” is solely accomplished by the work of Another, that is, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross. It is obtained solely by one’s faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. It is entirely permanent — never (impossible) to be withdrawn or overturned by God or man. It is eternal, which is to say it can never end.

Man’s sin in the garden in Eden produced *death*. Man *died* the day he ate of the forbidden fruit. Since *his body* continued to live, revealing that *his soul* — the life-giving principle in the blood ([Leviticus 17:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Leviticus+17.11&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Genesis 9:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+9.4&t=NKJV)) — remained unchanged with respect to life (natural life), it is evident that it was *his spirit* that died.

*The spiritual nature is that part of man that links him directly with God*. “*God is spirit*,” and man’s worship of God must be “*in spirit and truth*” ([John 4:24 NASB95](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+4.24&t=NASB95)). The death of Adam’s spirit separated him from God (establishing the primary meaning of “death” in Scripture — *separation from God*), and this *death* (this separation from God) “*spread to all men*” ([Romans 5:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+5.12&t=NKJV)).

Scripture speaks of an unsaved person as being “*dead in trespasses and sins*” ([Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)). With an unredeemed, inanimate spirit (*spiritually dead*), he is *alienated from God, separated from God* ([Ephesians 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.12&t=NKJV)).

But once the person has been born from above, he is then spoken of as *having passed “from death into life,”* as *having been “quickened* [NKJV: ‘made us alive’]” ([John 5:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+5.24&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV)). Possessing an animate spirit, possessing spiritual life (having been made alive spiritually), he is *no longer separated* from the One who Himself is “Spirit” ([John 4:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+4.24&t=NKJV)).

This aspect of salvation is brought to pass by the Spirit of God breathing life into the one having no life, based on Christ’s finished work at Calvary; and once this has been accomplished, everything surrounding the work effecting this aspect of salvation has been completed, with this work existing in a finished state (as previously seen through the use of the perfect tense in [Ephesians 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8&t=NKJV).

Thus, the salvation experience that man enters into at the time of the birth from above is a work of the Spirit, based on a previous work of the Son. It is *a spiritual birth* and has to do with man’s *spirit* alone: “. . . *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*” ([John 3:6b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.6b&t=NKJV)).

[Taken from Chapter 1 of [Salvation of the Soul BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php) by Arlen L. Chitwood]

3. Soul-salvation, that which is a product of the “gospel of glory,” is solely accomplished by the works of the Christian that emanate from a position of faithfulness during his temporal life.

But once an individual has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and has been dealt with on the basis of Christ’s finished work, realizing the birth from above — the salvation of his spirit — the salvation issue then shifts *from* the salvation of his spirit, *to* the salvation of his soul. The salvation of the spirit becomes a past, completed work and is *never* dealt with as an issue beyond this point. The Spirit of God, from this point forward, deals with the individual *solely on the basis of present and future aspects of salvation*. The individual, from this point forward, is dealt with in relation to *the salvation of his soul*.

Thus, all Scriptures dealing with carnality or unfaithfulness of Christians, resulting in forfeiture or loss, MUST pertain to issues surrounding the salvation of the soul, NEVER to issues surrounding the salvation of the spirit.

Once the salvation of the spirit has been effected, making it possible for the indwelling Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control an individual’s life through his own spirit, then man’s unredeemed soul occupies the center of attention. And salvation now (in relation to the soul, not the spirit) becomes dependent on the actions of the individual.

Salvation now becomes dependent on the life one lives after his spirit has been saved. Salvation now becomes dependent on the individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control his life through his own spirit.

An individual allowing the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control his life through his own spirit progressively grows from immaturity to maturity. He progressively grows into a spiritually mature Christian. Growing in this manner, he exerts control over his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. And, by this means, he will ultimately come into a realization of *the salvation of his soul* (life).

On the other hand, an individual who refuses to allow the Spirit of God to impart spiritual truth into and control his life in the preceding manner can only remain a carnally immature Christian. Apart from the assimilation of spiritual truth, resulting in spiritual growth, he cannot help but be controlled by his emotions, feelings, and desires pertaining to his man-conscious (soulical) existence. And, accordingly, such a person will ultimately suffer *the loss of his soul* (life), which can have no bearing whatsoever on his eternal salvation (for that is a past, finished matter which has already been dealt with).

[Taken from Chapter 1 of [Salvation of the Soul BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php) by Arlen L. Chitwood]

4. Body-salvation, which is the result of both the “gospel of grace” *(i.e.,* spirit-salvation) and the “gospel of glory” *(i.e.*, soul-salvation), is obtained when the person is “*glorified together*” with Christ at the “*revealing of the sons of God*” ([Romans 8:14-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.14-23&t=NKJV)).

[For a comprehensive discussion of this, it is recommended that one access [God’s Firstborn Sons BOOK](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#God%E2%80%99s%20Firstborn%20Sons%20BOOK), Appendix “[Adoption, Redemption of the Body](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-six.php#Adoption,%20Redemption%20of%20the%20Body),” by Arlen L. Chitwood, in this site].

5. While spirit-salvation is achieved and finalized once an individual makes the willful decision to place his faith in Christ, soul-salvation is a process throughout one’s temporal life, which is either achieved or not achieved due to one’s faithfulness (or lack thereof) pertaining to works ([Ephesians 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.10&t=NKJV)), which will be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.* ([2 Corinthians 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.10&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Romans 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+2.6&t=NKJV); [14:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+14.10&t=NKJV); [Galatians 6:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+6.7&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 6:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+6.8&t=NKJV); [Colossians 3:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.24-25&t=NKJV); [Revelation 22:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+22.12&t=NKJV))

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.* ([1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV); *cf*. [1 Corinthians 4:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+4.5&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 1:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.7&t=NKJV))

6. Spirit-salvation is eternal while soul-salvation only affects one’s position during the Millennial (1,000 year) kingdom that will be established by Christ upon His return to earth at the end of its 7 year Tribulation Period. ([Revelation 20:4ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4ff&t=NKJV)).

In closing, it should be noted that in agreement with the book of 2 John, the evidence that one is in harmony with the “*doctrine of Christ*” is seen not in one’s display of emotional behavior, or one’s strict adherence to a set of denominational procedures, or one’s continued emphasis on the Third Person of the Trinity (Holy Spirit) over the Second (Jesus Christ); but the evidence *is seen* when a Christian displays genuine love for others as he lives his life in accordance with a mature understanding of God’s Word.

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*. ([1 John 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.7&t=NKJV), [11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+4.11&t=NKJV))

*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*. ([Hebrews 10:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.24-25&t=NKJV))