

# David's Son and David's Lord

Christology for Christ's People

Edited by

Ryan M. McGraw

and L. Michael Morales



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# Introduction

CHRISTOLOGY IS THE LIFEblood OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND practice. John Owen (1616–1683) noted that mediating on the glory of Christ was the key to becoming like Christ and that failing to do so was a sign of Christians becoming “carnal.” He wrote,

This is the principal cause of our unreadiness and incapacity to exercise our minds in and about the great mysteries of the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 3:1–3. And it is so with us, moreover, because we do not stir up ourselves with watchfulness and diligence in continual actings of faith on this blessed object. This is that which keeps many of us at so low an ebb, as unto the powers of a heavenly life and spiritual joys. Did we abound in this duty, in this exercise of faith, our life in walking before God would be more sweet and pleasant unto us — our spiritual light and strength would have a daily increase; we should more represent the glory of Christ in our ways and walking than usually we do, and death itself would be most welcome unto us.<sup>1</sup>

One of the greatest needs of the church in every age is to contemplate, know, and love the glory of Christ in order to promote the spread of the gospel and the holiness of God’s people.

Yet this all-encompassing vision of Jesus Christ in Christian

faith and life is not always common and it is often missing today. Sinclair Ferguson places his finger on the pulse of much contemporary preaching when he observes,

We must learn to avoid the contemporary plague of preaching the benefits of the gospel without proclaiming Christ himself as the benefactor in the gospel. We do not offer people abstract blessings (peace, forgiveness, new life) as commodities. Rather we preach and offer Christ crucified and risen, in whom these blessings become ours and not otherwise. We preach the person in the work, never the work and its blessings apart from the Saviour himself.<sup>2</sup>

For this reason, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary invited a team of excellent scholars and pastors to unfold the unsearchable riches of Christ for the edification of today's church at their 2018 Spring Theology Conference.

This book, which includes the addresses from this conference, attempts to provide a glimpse into the full breadth of Christology in a short space, and its authors aim at a broad audience. It includes a mature mix of biblical theology and systematic theology, as well as heart-oriented application. While some recent volumes, such as the excellent *Oxford Handbook of Christology*,<sup>3</sup> present comprehensive treatments of the person and work of Christ, fewer books seek to make such rich reflections accessible to pastors and church members. This present book seeks to provide this audience with a window into Christology that will stretch their thinking, bolster their faith, enrich their preaching, and warm their affections for the Savior. It is our aspiration that this work will also help spawn additional works on biblical theology and Christology that will cover the themes and subsets of the themes in much more depth.

The material is divided into eleven chapters. Ian Hamilton opens by treating Christ's prophetic office and his central place in

divine revelation for the salvation of sinners. Joel Beeke follows with an exposition of Christ's identity as the pre-existent Son of God. G. K. Beale builds on this picture by answering Anselm's famous question, "Why did God become man?" Richard Phillips next introduces the vital importance of Christ's sinlessness (impeccability). Michael Morales completes this picture by treating Christ's obedience in his role as the true Israel and the obedient Son of God. Ian Hamilton expands for readers the nature of Christ's resurrection, for himself and for his people. Ryan Speck then complements Christ's resurrection by highlighting the redemptive significance of his ascension into heaven. Michael Barrett helps readers understand the integral connection between Christ and his bride, which is the church. Joseph Pipa details what it means for Christ to be King. Jonathan Gibson illustrates Christ's priestly office under the theme of the Suffering Servant Songs from Isaiah. Ryan McGraw then concludes this sketch of the beauty of Christ by showing the biblical emphases related to Christ's return. He demonstrates that the primary emphasis in Scripture on this theme is a call to personal holiness in union with Christ as believers wait for him to appear from heaven.

These chapters together do not exhaust the riches of Christology. Neither are they a complete introduction to all that could be said. Instead, they provide pastors and church members with the key ideas surrounding the person of Christ. As the Puritan Isaac Ambrose (1604–1664) wrote, "The most excellent subject to discourse or write of, is Jesus Christ ... Indeed all we say is but unsavory, if it be not seasoned with this salt."<sup>4</sup> Jesus Christ is also the most excellent subject to read and to prayerfully savor and meditate on. Doing so is the true path to the blessedness of the world to come and of joy and personal holiness in this life. Every glimpse we have of Christ on earth brings heaven down to us so that we might long to appear in heaven where Christ is seated. The

editors hope that this book is a small but meaningful contribution to this end.

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