



## THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

November 5 / 6, 2025

Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 2:14-18

Gonzalez, chapters 19, 20

1. Read *Matthew 17:1–8*. What does it mean that the disciples “saw no one except Jesus only”? How does this moment on the mountain reflect the heart of the Church’s later debates about who Jesus really is?
2. Why was it necessary for Christ to be both *truly God* and *truly human* for our salvation? How does this truth deepen your understanding of what it means that “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14)?
3. The Alexandrian school emphasized *the unity* of Christ’s person (“the Word became flesh”), while the Antiochene school emphasized *the completeness* of His humanity (“Jesus grew in wisdom and stature”). How do both perspectives reveal something true about Jesus? Why was it so difficult for the early Church to hold both truths together?
4. Nestorius rejected the title *Theotokos* (“God-bearer”—“Mother of God” as opposed to “Mother of Christ”) for Mary. Why did this issue matter so much theologically — not just devotionally? What does calling Mary *Theotokos* affirm about who Jesus is?

5. Cyril of Alexandria taught that the divine Word united Himself to full human nature in one *hypostasis* (person). Why is this union — “without confusion, without division” — so central to the gospel message? What does it mean for our relationship with God that He truly entered into our humanity?

6. At the Council of Ephesus (431) and later at Chalcedon (451), the Church sought to express a mystery beyond full comprehension. What can we learn from their careful balance — refusing both to divide Christ (Nestorianism) and to blend His natures (Monophysitism)? How might this caution apply to the way we speak about divine mysteries today?

7. Pope Leo I wrote, “Each nature performs its own acts in communion with the other.” How does this statement help us understand Jesus’ life, suffering, and miracles? For example, how can we say that *God suffered* without saying that the divine nature itself changed?

8. Read Colossians 1:15–20; Hebrews 2:14–18. According to these passages, how does Jesus reveal the fullness of God and the fullness of humanity? What would be lost in our faith if either His divinity or His humanity was denied?

9. What does it mean to call Jesus Immanuel — “God with us?” Justo González writes that the Church’s struggle was “the labor of the mind and spirit to confess faithfully what the heart of the believer already knew.” What do you think he means by that? How might this encourage us when theological questions feel too complex?

10. When you think about the Transfiguration, or the Chalcedonian confession that Jesus is one person in two natures, how does it affect your worship, prayer, or sense of awe before Christ? What does it mean for us today to lift our eyes and see “no one but Jesus only”?