

**CHRISTIANITY:
THE MIND OF CHRIST
AND CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES
-ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL EVIDENCE-**

by

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INTRODUCTION

In order to develop a good understanding of Christianity one should know about the doctrine of Christ (Christology). This doctrine proclaims the pre-existence and eternality of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Christology explicates the incarnation of Christ, the humanity of Christ, the deity of Christ, and the earthly life of Christ. His earthly life includes His birth, ministry of healing and teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christology also seeks to define the offices, present ministry and future work of Jesus.¹

However, knowing the doctrine of Christ does not necessarily make one a Christian. It is the belief and practice of this doctrine that identifies the Christian as opposed to one who knows about Christianity.

This very brief and simplified study will use two verses of New Testament scripture to focus some light on Christianity.” The texts of 1 Corinthians 2:16 and Philippians 2:5 help toward understanding the real meaning of Christianity. The writers of the texts within the context of the discourses of which the texts are integral reinforce the idea that Christ is the Christian’s prototype. They suggest that knowing His ways and following them is the essence of Christianity.

¹ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, MI: Moody Publishers, 1989), 215-240.

The noun νοῦς (Greek for understanding and intellect) is used in 1 Corinthians. 2 to signify emotional and spiritual activity; it refers also to cognitive abilities. The verb φρονέω (which means to have in mind; to think the thoughts of, or have one's mind controlled by) is used in Philippians 2. It is in the “mind of Christ” that the expiatory death of Christ should be understood. Both texts find common ground in 1 Corinthians 2:2: “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

This short exegesis of these texts that look at them in Koine Greek, in different translations, commentaries, and contemporary application, should lead to a better understanding of Christianity.

As well as these two verses of scripture, the study will take a concise look and present observations on the Christian’s marriage which is viewed by many as a very demonstrative application of Christianity.

**TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR DEFINITION
AND
THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GREEK TEXTS**

1 Corinthians 2:16

τίς γὰρ ἔγνω νοῦν κυρίου, ὃς συμβιβάσει αὐτόν; ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν (UBS, GNT)².

The eclectic text of 1 Corinthians in the United Bible Society's Greek New Testament has been assembled from eighty eight ancient manuscript sources which include two papyri, sixteen uncials, sixty-five minuscules, one Church Father, and four editions.³

The autographs (original manuscripts) of the Bible have long been lost, but numerous Koine Greek copies have existed since the 1st century and these were continuously copied over the centuries. When biblical texts are used to support answers to fundamental questions about Christianity, it is worthwhile to strictly investigate not just the interpretation of the text but also its history and authenticity. The encyclopedia of the Bible informs that the Greek text of First Corinthians is the second longest of the thirteen letters in the NT which bear the

² Kurt Aland, et al., *The Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: C.H. Beck, Nordlingen, 2003), 572.

³ Reuben Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts – 1 Corinthians* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers Inc., 2003), xiii.

name of Paul of Tarsus; his authorship of the letter is generally uncontested. This epistle is one of the four “capital” epistles which provide the foundation of Pauline theology.

The encyclopedia further declares that, the text itself raises no major problems and the addressees are clearly the members of “the church of God which is at Corinth.” The canonicity of 1 Corinthians was never an issue in the Church and its place in the New Testament is a confirmed fact among Bible scholars not only in the Catholic church but also in such heretical bodies as the Valentinians and Marcionites.⁴

Philippians 2:5

τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (GNT).

Research indicates that the book of Philippians was written by Paul of Tarsus. Stephen Harris notes that it was written in 62 C.E. about 10 years after Paul's first visit to Philippi.⁵

This 11th book of the accepted canon of the New Testament has wide-ranging manuscript evidence, and as such its text is considered to be “certain” by the strictest standards. Thus this verse of the eclectic USB GNT is considered to

⁴ Merrill Tenney and Moisés Silva, “First Epistle to the Corinthians,” *Encyclopedia of the Bible* (New York, NY: Zondervan Corporation - HarperCollins Publishers, 2016); <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/First-Epistle-Corinthians>; accessed Nov 4 2016.

⁵ Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, (New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education, 1985)

be very authentic New Testament scripture that has had a place in the catalogue of books from the earliest dates of canonization.

According to the Anchor Bible Dictionary:

The text of Philippians is preserved in three fragmentary papyri, 18 parchment uncials (of which nine contain the entire text, three are fragmentary, and six are accompanied by commentary), and more than 625 minuscules (cf. Gnilka, 25–27). The earliest is P46, one of the three Chester Beatty papyri of the NT. It dates from about C.E. 200 and contains 1:1, 5–15, 17–28, 30–2:12, 14–27, 29–3:8, 10–21; 4:2–12, 14–23. A second early papyrus is P16, which dates from the 3d or 4th century and contains 3:10–17 and 4:2–8. The three earliest parchment uncials that contain the entire text of Philippians are Codex Sinaiticus (01), Codex Vaticanus (03), and Codex Alexandrinus (02). These five manuscripts, plus three minuscules containing Philippians (33, 1739, and 2427), belong to the text critical “Category I,” which indicates that they are “of a very special quality” and “should always be considered in establishing the original text” (Aland and Aland 1987: 105). There are ten additional manuscripts of Philippians that are of generally high quality and belong to the next class, “Category II” (Schenk 1984: 331). They include three 5th-century fragmentary uncials (04, 016, 048), the bilingual Codex Claromontanus (06, 6th century), P61 (ca. C.E. 700) and 5 minuscules (81, 1175, 1881, 2127, and 2464). On the basis of these and other witnesses, a fairly reliable text of Philippians which involves no major textual problems can be reconstructed.⁶

⁶David Noel Freedman et al., eds. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Volume 5* (Yale University Press, 2007).

ENGLISH AND OTHER LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS OF THE TEXTS

The translations of both texts used have been chosen to represent interpretations in different languages, from different regions (hence cultures), and of different generations of translators. They appear here in: contemporary English (NIV), Spanish (SRV), Latin (Vulgate), Vietnamese/Oriental (VIE), and a literal English translation that borders on transliteration (YLT).

The translations for the Greek noun $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ appear as: English – mind; Spanish – la mente; Latin – sensum; and Vietnamese – ñaëng. Despite the difference in language and culture the word has the same meaning within the context of usage here.

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ (NIV).

¿Quién conoció la mente del Señor? ¿Quién lo instruirá? Pues bien, nosotros tenemos la mente de Cristo (SRV - Spanish).

quis enim cognovit sensum Domini qui instruat eum nos autem sensum Christi habemus (VUL – Latin Vulgate)

Vì ai ñãõ bieát yù Chuà, ñãëng daïy doã Ngaøi? Nhöng phaàn chuùng ta, thì coù yù cuûa Ñãáng Christ (VIE – Vietnamese).

For who did know the mind of the Lord that he shall instruct Him? and we -- we have the mind of Christ (YLT – Youngs Literal Translation).

Philippians 2:5

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus (NIV).

Haya, pues, en vosotros este sentir que hubo también en Cristo Jesús (SRV).

hoc enim sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Iesu (VUL).

Haõy coù ñoàng moät taâm tình nhö Ñãáng Christ ñãõ coù (VIE)

For, let this mind be in you that *is* also in Christ Jesus (YLT).

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (ASV)

COMMENTARIES

The commentaries of Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke offer deep insights into these texts.

1 Corinthians 2:16

Mathew Henry's Commentary

Considering Matthew Henry's exposition, he rephrases the question, and posits an explanation:

“Who can enter so far into the mind of God as to instruct him? Who has the Spirit of God, and is under his inspiration? He (Jesus) only is the person to whom God immediately communicates the knowledge of his will. And who can inform or instruct him in the mind of God who is so immediately under the conduct of his own Spirit? Very few have known anything of the mind of God by a natural power. *But*, adds the apostle, *we have the mind of Christ*; and the mind of Christ is the mind of God. He is God, and the principal messenger and prophet of God. And the apostles were empowered by his Spirit to make known his mind to us. And in the Holy Scriptures the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, are fully revealed to us. Observe, It is the great privilege of Christians that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by his Spirit.”

This verse, (16) is a sequel that adds impetus to verse 14, ‘But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.’ Henry comments that:

Men unsanctified receive not the things of God. The understanding, through the corruption of nature by the fall, and through the confirmation of this disorder by customary sin, is utterly unapt to receive the rays of divine light; it is prejudiced against them. The truths of God are foolishness to such a mind. The man looks on them as trifling and impertinent things, not worth his minding. Not that the natural faculty of discerning is lost, but evil inclinations and wicked principles render the man unwilling to enter

into the mind of God, in the spiritual matters of his kingdom, and yield to their force and power. It is the quickening beams of the Spirit of truth and holiness that must help the mind to discern their excellency, and to so thorough a conviction of their truth as heartily to receive and embrace them.”⁷

Adam Clarke’s Commentary

On the other hand, Adam Clarke does comparative analysis of levels of cognition of man (animal) and God, while looking at the interpretation of a key verb συμβιβάζω. He also looks at the possible source of this rhetoric as being Isaiah 43.

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord - Who that is still an animal man can know the mind of God? so as to instruct him, viz. the spiritual man, the same that is spoken of, 1Co_2:15. But the words may be better understood thus: How can the animal man know the mind of the Lord? and how can any man communicate that knowledge which he has never acquired, and which is foolishness to him, because it is spiritual, and he is animal? This quotation is made from Isa_40:13. ‘Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?’ The words, that he may instruct him, ὅς συμβιβασει αυτον, should be translated that he may teach It: that is, the mind of God; not instruct God, but teach his mind to others. And this interpretation the Hebrew will also bear.

Pearce observes: “The principal questions here are,, what συμβιβασει signifies, and what αυτον is relative to. The Hebrew word which the Septuagint translate by these two is יָדִיעַנִּי yodiennu: now, since יָדִיעַ yodia signifies as well to make known as to know, (and indeed this is the most frequent sense of it in the Old Testament), the suffix (postfix) יָנִי nu, may relate to a thing, as well as to a person; and therefore it may be rendered not by him, but by it, i.e. the mind of the Lord.

⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Entire Bible* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

In this sense the apostle seems to have used the words of the Seventy; for, if we understand αυτον here to be the relative to Κυριου, Lord, this verse contains no reason for what went before; whereas, if it be a relative to νοου, mind, it affords a reason for what had been said before, 1Co_2:14.” The true translation of the passage, as used by the apostle, appears to be this: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should Teach It? And this translation agrees with every part of the context, and particularly with what follows.”⁸

Adam Clarke further adds that:

“This chapter might be considered a good model for a Christian minister to regulate his conduct by, or his public ministry; because it points out the mode of preaching used by St. Paul and the apostles in general. This great apostle came not to the people with excellency of speech and of wisdom, when he declared unto them the counsel of God. They know little, either of the spirit of St. Paul or the design of the Gospel, who make the chief excellence of their preaching to consist in the eloquence of language, or depth of human reasoning. That may be their testimony, but it is not God’s. The enticing words of man’s wisdom are seldom accompanied by the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit.

One justly remarks, that “the foolishness of preaching has its wisdom, loftiness, and eloquence; but this consists in the sublimity of its truths, the depth of its mysteries, and the ardour of the Spirit of God.” In this respect Paul may be said to have preached wisdom among those which were perfect. The wisest and most learned men in the world, who have seriously read the Bible, have acknowledged that there is a depth and height of wisdom and knowledge in that book of God which are sought in vain anywhere else: and indeed it would not be a revelation from God were it not so.

The men who can despise and ridicule this sacred book are those who are too blind to discover the objects presented to them by this brilliant light, and are too sensual to feel and relish spiritual things. They, above all others, are incapable of judging, and should be no more regarded when employed in talking against the sacred writings than an ignorant peasant

⁸ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible* (e-sword 7.6.1 CD-ROM, 2005).

should be, who, not knowing his alphabet, pretends to decry mathematical learning.

A new mode of preaching has been diligently recommended, - "Scriptural phraseology should be generally avoided where it is antiquated, or conveys ideas inconsistent with modern delicacy." St. Paul did not preach in the words which man's wisdom teacheth- such words are too mean and too low for a religion so Divine. That which the Holy Spirit alone can discover, he alone can explain. Let no man dare to speak of God in any other way than he speaks of himself in his word. Let us take care not to profane his truths and mysteries, either by such low and abject ideas as are merely human, or by new and worldly expressions altogether unworthy of the Spirit of God."⁹

Philippians 2:5

Ralph Martin presents arguments that Philippians 2 may be considered the beginning of the field of Christology, specifically referring to the rich analysis that Apostle Paul began in Philippians 2:5–6.¹⁰

Philippians 2:5-11 is known as the Kenosis Hymn. This passage is critical I to a deeper understanding of the person and work of Christ.¹¹

Barry Robinson points out that a bona-fide relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ results in experiencing the mind of Christ which brings about unity and love for one another. This epistle, he says, is timeless; it relates to the needs

⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* (e-sword 7.6.1 CD-ROM, 2005).

¹⁰ Ralph P. Martin and Brian J. Dodd, *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1998), 1-3.

¹¹ Ralph P. Martin and Carmen Christi, *Philippians 2: 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Early Christian Worship, 2nd ed.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

of Christians diachronically. Paul had a close connection to this church and visited many times (2 Cor. 1:16; Acts 19:21; 20:1-3).¹²

Mathew Henry's Commentary

Matthew Henry is rather explicit in his exposition of this text:

“Observe, Christians must be of Christ's mind. We must bear a resemblance to his life, if we would have the benefit of his death. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his (Rom 8:9: ‘Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’) Now what was the mind of Christ? He was eminently humble, and this is what we are peculiarly to learn of him. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart (Matt 11:29). If we were lowly-minded, we should be like-minded; and, if we were like Christ, we should be lowly-minded.

We must walk in the same spirit and in the same steps with the Lord Jesus, who humbled himself to sufferings and death for us; not only to satisfy God's justice, and pay the price of our redemption, but to set us an example, and that we might follow his steps. Now here we have the two natures and the two states of our Lord Jesus. It is observable that the apostle, having occasion to mention the Lord Jesus, and the mind which was in him, takes the hint to enlarge upon his person, and to give a particular description of him. It is a pleasing subject, and a gospel minister needs not think himself out of the way when he is upon it; any fit occasion should be readily taken.”¹³

Adam Clarke's Commentary

Similarly, Adam Clarke's economy with words is evident as he elucidates that:

¹² Barry Robinson, “Philippians Bible Study,” *WCG PDF Sermons* (London, UK: WCG Camberwell Resources, 2010); <http://www.wcgcamberwell.org.uk/sermons/philippians.pdf>; accessed Nov 4 2016.

¹³ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Entire Bible* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).

“Christ labored to promote no separate interest; as man he studied to promote the glory of God, and the welfare and salvation of the human race. See then that ye have the same disposition that was in Jesus: he was ever humble, loving, patient, and laborious; his meat and drink was to do the will of his Father, and to finish his work.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* (e-sword 7.6.1 CD-ROM, 2005).

**APPLICATION:
CHRISTIANITY AND MARRIAGE**

The texts are instructional in the knowledge that the essence of Christianity is Jesus Christ himself. Having the mind of Christ is being related to Christ through the understanding of God's purpose in Him. The author demands that Christians have a metamorphosis of the mind, a regeneration, that gives one the capacity to have the urges, the desires, the mood, and the logic of one who has the spirit of God. The contemporary Christian must be governed by this mind that suppresses the natural will or personal propensities and submits to the will of God.

It is a private admonition that holds true for all Christians. Some people pride in the fact that they do not make decisions on the basis of feeling. They think of themselves as logical people who are rational. However, their reasoning power is strictly limited to this life. The exemplar of marriage demonstrates this very well.

According to Ray C. Steadman:

The natural man does not see marriage as a union designed to take two very different types of people and blend them together through a long process, sometimes involving much struggle and much heartache, until a whole new being is formed that is to the glory and honor of God. To the worldly man, the natural view of marriage is that it is for his personal

pleasure, so that another person might satisfy his needs. When that no longer happens, there is no reason to maintain the marriage. Many Christians are falling heir to this kind of thinking and even breaking up their marriages because they have allowed themselves to be seduced by the natural view of marriage. That is why we have the rising divorce rates on every side today.¹⁵

Michael and Wanda Collins compare marriage to a heart transplant; God uses your spouse to help form the heart of Christ inside of you. It is painful and uncomfortable at times and the body wants to reject it. When self is not being accommodated in marriage it will rebel. This means that individuals in marriage must die to self and consider their partner. This is never easy but it is the way of Christ; even when you don't deserve it, Christ still loves you and He never ceases to care for you.¹⁶

The husband and wife in a Christian marriage must be committed to Christ before everything else. Bill Cunningham stresses that each person is striving to fulfill God's desire for marriage that is prescribed in both Testaments of the Bible. The husband and the wife will rely on a divine force outside of them to sustain them in their marriage. Marriage is a Christian ministry by itself. It demonstrates the meaning of Christianity most profoundly.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ray C. Steadman, "The Mind of Christ", *Studies in First Corinthians* (Logo Library, Message No: 7 Catalog No: 3577, May 21, 1978).

¹⁶ Michael and Wanda Collins, "What is Christian Marriage?" *Christian Marriage Today.com* (Peach State, Georgia: Wordpress, 2016); <http://www.christian-marriage-today.com/what-is-christian-marriage.html>; accessed Nov 4 2016

¹⁷ William R. Cunningham, "The Christian Marriage Part 1: The Definition"

SUMMARY

This terse analysis of Christianity may help to provide a basis for understanding its true meaning and application. The authentic and foundational texts of 1 Corinthians 2:16, and Philippians 2:5 as well as Biblical Christian marriages are used here as exemplars that illustrate the definitive elements of the phenomena and its practice.

The person who has no perception beyond the physical realm cannot truly know the Christian's experience. Christianity is not natural or logical; it must be understood within a divine perspective. Jesus, who is the prototype Christian, saw everything in perpetual relationship to His divine Father.

An individual is a Christian when the will of that person become submissive to the will of God, even unto death, as demonstrated by Jesus at Calvary. This is true Christianity.

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