

The Deity of Christ

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This handout is intended to demonstrate, via various Biblical passages, that Jesus was, is, and claimed to be the Son of God, Deity manifest in the flesh. It also presents a very brief synopsis of contradictory views (viz., Jehovah's Witnesses) to better equip the student of God's word to defend their faith.

Old Testament Prophecy

There are over 300 Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, all of which Christ has fulfilled (Matt. 5:17; cf. Jn. 19:30). The probability of someone fulfilling each one of these by chance is astronomical (1 in 10^{17} to fulfill just 8). Mentioned here are just a few noteworthy verses pertaining to His Deity.

1. The forerunner would prepare the way for the Lord (i.e., Jehovah; Isa. 40:3). This, of course, was John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus (Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4).
2. Isaiah prophesied of His birth, stating that the Child would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).
3. Micah also foretold of the One to be born in Bethlehem whose "goings forth are from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2; cf. Matt. 2:1).

New Testament Evidence

The New Testament is filled with passages pertaining to the Deity of Christ. Again, mentioned here are some of the more prominent.

1. Jesus is the Creator (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2,10) and Sustainer (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3) of the universe.
2. Jesus has power to forgive sins, a power belonging to God alone (Mk. 2:5-11), a fact confirmed by miracles (Acts 2:22).
3. Jesus accepted worship (Matt. 14:33; Jn. 9:38), which is due to God alone (Matt. 4:10). Never was worship accepted by good men (Acts 10:25-26) or good angels (Rev. 22:8-9).
4. Jesus spoke as being One with the Father (Jn. 10:30).
5. Jesus was referred to by John as "the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn. 5:20; cf. Jn. 14:6).
6. All wisdom is in Christ (Col. 2:3). God alone is wise (Rom. 16:27).
7. Jesus existed in the form of God (Phi. 2:5ff.) and is "the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature" (Heb. 1:3; cf. 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Jn. 1:14). He is the embodiment of Deity (Col. 2:9).
8. Jesus is the Word that became flesh (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16), which Word was God (Jn. 1:1).
9. Jesus existed before John the Baptist, though He was born six months later (Lk. 1:36, 57ff.; Lk. 2:1ff.). He also existed before Abraham (Jn. 8:58).
10. Jesus is the great I AM (Jn. 8:58; cf. Ex. 3:14). He is equal with God (Jn. 5:18).
11. Jesus was called God directly by Thomas (Jn. 20:28) and the Hebrew writer (Heb. 1:8).

Watch Tower View (Jehovah's Witnesses)

While there are certainly other religious groups that deny the Deity of Christ (e.g., Muslims), perhaps the most well-known is the group identifying themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. Here mentioned is a brief summary of their beliefs regarding His Deity. Much more information can be retrieved pertaining to their teachings on this, and other subjects, at their official website (<http://www.watchtower.org>).

1. Jesus never claimed to be God. He referred to “the only true God” (Jn. 17:3), thus negating Himself as such. He said no one was good but God (Mk. 10:18).

This statement by Jesus must be taken into consideration in light of the fact that He was praying on behalf of mankind, that they would come to know the only true God, as opposed to any idol that man may choose in His stead. In no way does this negate the very clear verses mentioned above declaring Jesus as God.

It is also worthy of note that God said that He was the only Savior (Isa. 43:11), yet we know Jesus as our Savior (Eph. 5:23; 2 Pet. 3:18). In fact, Jesus is referred to as our “God and Savior” (2 Pet. 1:1). Furthermore, Jesus is mentioned as being the only Lord (Jude 4), while it cannot be denied that the title belongs to God (Matt. 4:7; Matt. 11:25; Mk. 12:29; many others).

2. Jesus prayed to God (Lk. 22:42) and therefore cannot be God.

It certainly would not make any sense for Him to pray to Himself. We learn in Philippians 2:7 that He emptied Himself, that is, He voluntarily laid aside His privileges as God for the sake of showing man how he ought to live. After all, He is our perfect example (1 Pet. 2:21), being made like us that He may be a sympathetic High Priest (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15).

3. Jesus died, but God cannot die.

He died as a man (Phi. 2:5ff.; Heb. 2:9-18) but lives on (Rom. 6:4, 9).

4. God would never have to learn anything, but Jesus did (Heb. 5:8), and therefore cannot be God.

Though He is all-knowing, as a man He suffered for His obedience, and learned what was necessary for Him to become a merciful and sympathetic high priest (Heb. 2:17; 4:15). Once again refer to Philippians 2:5ff.

5. Jesus was a created “spirit person” (specifically, Michael the archangel, see “The Truth About Angels,” 1995; cf. Lyons, “Is Jesus Really...”, 2005 for refutation), the firstborn (Col. 1:15; Rev. 3:14), and therefore had a beginning (Rev. 22:13).

We often see the term “firstborn” referring not to birth order, but to a position of rank. For example, God called Israel his firstborn, though other nations no doubt had arisen prior. Of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim is referred to as the firstborn (Jer. 31:9) though Manasseh was by birth (Gen. 48:14ff.). Firstborn of creation refers to his supremacy over creation, being the “beginning” or active cause of all creation (see above; Rev. 3:14). Firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18) refers to his power over death (Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:26; 2 Tim. 1:10), and also the fact that he was indeed the first to rise, never to die again (Rom. 6:9).

- “In the beginning was the Word...” (Jn. 1:1). “Was” denotes a continuing action in the past. In the beginning, the Word was already in existence.
- If Revelation 22:13 implies He had a beginning, does that mean He will also have an end? Of course not (cf. Rev. 1:8; Isa. 48:12; Heb. 13:8).

- Jesus is better than the angels (Heb. 1:4ff) and was definitely not Michael (Jude 9; cf. Jesus' words in Matt. 4).
- Unable to argue around John 1:1 so they change the translation.
- “Why is it that the word ‘God’ is translated as ‘a god’ in John 1:1b and 18b of the New World Translation, and yet the identical construction is rendered as ‘God’ in verses 2, 6, 12, and 13 in the same context?” (Jackson, “What About That ‘a god’ Translation...”, 2004)
- Add word “other” in Col. 1:16 (“all [other] things created”) to prove that Jesus was Himself created, though this word is lacking in the original.

Conclusion: The Trilemma

Josh McDowell, in his book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, titled his first chapter “Trilemma – Lord, Liar, or Lunatic?” This idea was derived from a quotation by C.S. Lewis:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to (1952, pp. 40-41)

Jesus Christ is exactly who the prophets, the apostles, and He Himself claim Him to be, the Son of God, Deity manifest in the flesh. Sufficient evidence (Jn. 20:31) exists for us to arrive at the same conclusion as Peter (Matt. 16:15-16). Any attempts to obscure the clear facts to align with one’s own personal views is an eternally huge mistake.

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