

# The Deity of Jesus Christ

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by **Michael Bremmer**

*"But who do YOU say that I am?" (Jesus Christ).*

This question, asked by Christ of His disciples, not only will determine the eternal destiny of His disciples, but will also, depending on our answer, determine ours. For the Scriptures plainly tell us that whoever trust in Christ will have eternal life. The question before us, as with the disciples, is "Who do YOU say that Christ is?"

There are only two positions one can take. Jesus Christ is either God incarnate, or a created being. If He is God, yet we deny this and believe He is merely a created being, then we have not trusted the Christ of Scripture and are condemned already (Jn. 3.18). But if He is merely a created being and we worship Him as true God, then we have committed idolatry, failed to trust in the Christ of Scripture, and are condemned. How we answer this question, therefore, will forever determine our eternal destiny--either in heaven with God, or in Hell with Satan and his demons.

This article's premise is that the Scriptures teach clearly, plainly, and unambiguously, that Jesus Christ is God; and that those who reject His divinity reject Him, and will be condemned.

## SCRIPTURE PROOF OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (Jn. 1.1-2). What could be clearer? John describes Jesus as both God and eternal, and existing with God. John here affirms both the deity of Christ and the Trinity. Walter Martin, in his classic, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, writes concerning the JW's deceptive translation of Jn. 1.1:

"Contrary to the translations of The Emphatic Diaglott and the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, the Greek grammatical construction leaves no doubt whatsoever that this is the only possible rendering of the text. The subject of the sentence is Word (Logos), the verb, was. There can be no direct object following was since according to grammatical usage intransitive verbs take no objects but take instead predicate nominatives which refer back to the subject, in this case, Word (Logos). In fact, the late New Testament Greek scholar, Colwell, formulated a rule which clearly states that a definite predicate nominative (in this case, theos--God) never takes an article when it precedes the verb (was) as we find in John 1:1. It is therefore easy to see that no article is needed for Theos (God) and to translate it a 'god' is both incorrect grammar and poor Greek since Theos is the predicate nominative of was in the third sentence-clause of the verse and must refer back to the subject, Word (Logos). Christ, then, if He is the 'Word made flesh' (John 1:14) can be no one else except God unless the Greek text and consequently God's Word be denied.

Jehovah's Witnesses in their New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, on the appendix pages 773-77, attempt to discredit the Greek text on this point, for they realize that if Jesus and Jehovah are 'One' in nature, their theology cannot stand since they deny the unity of nature. The refutation of their arguments on this point is conclusive.

The claim is that since the definite article is used with Theon in John 1.1c and not with

Theos in John 1.1d, therefore the omission is designed to show a difference; the alleged difference being that in the first case the One True God (Jehovah) is meant, while in the second 'a god,' other than, and inferior to, the first is meant, this latter 'god' being Jesus Christ.

On page 776b the claim is made that the rendering 'a god' is correct because '... all the doctrine of sacred Scriptures bears out the correctness of this rendering.' This remark focuses attention on the fact that the whole problem involved goes far beyond this text. Scripture does in fact teach the full and equal Deity of Christ. Why then is so much made of this one verse? It is probably because of the surprise effect derived from the show of pseudo scholarship in the use of a familiar text. Omission of the article with Theos does not mean that 'a god' other than the one true God is meant. Let one examine these passages where the article is not used with Theos and see if the rendering 'a god' makes sense: Matthew 5:9; 6:24; Luke 1:35, 78; 2:40; John 1:6, 12, 13, 18; 3:2, 21; 9:16, 33; Romans 1:7, 17, 18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 15:10; Philippians 2:11, 13; Titus 1:1 and many, many more. The 'a god' contention proves too weak and is inconsistent. To be consistent in this rendering of 'a god,' Jehovah's Witnesses would have to translate every instance where the article is absent as a god (nominative), of a god (genitive), to or for a god (dative), etc. This they do not do in Matthew 5:9; 6:24; Luke 1:35, 78; John 1:6, 12, 13, 18; Romans 1:7, 17, etc. (See the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures and The Emphatic Diaglott at above mentioned references.)

You cannot honestly render theos 'a god' In John 1:1, and then theou 'of God' (Jehovah), in Matthew 5:9, Luke 1:35, 78; John 1:6, etc., when theou is the genitive case of the same noun (second declension), without an article and must be rendered (following Jehovah's Witnesses' argument) 'of a god' not 'of God' as both The Emphatic Diaglott and New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures put it. We could list at great length, but suggest consultation of the Greek New Testament by either D. Erwin Nestle or Westcott & Hort, in conjunction with The Elements of Greek by Francis Kingsley Ball (New York: Macmillan, 1948, pp. 7, 14) on noun endings, etc. So then if Jehovah's Witnesses must persist in this fallacious 'a god' rendition they can at least be consistent, which they are not, and render every instance where the article is absent in the same manner. The truth of the matter is this, that Jehovah's Witnesses use and remove the articular emphasis whenever and wherever it suits their fancy regardless of grammatical laws to the contrary. In a translation as important as God's Word, every law must be observed. Jehovah's Witnesses have not been consistent in their observances of those laws.

The writers of the claim have exhibited another trait common to Jehovah's Witnesses, that of half quoting or misquoting a recognized authority to bolster their ungrammatical renditions. On page 776 of the appendix to the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures when quoting Dr. Robertson's words, 'among the ancient writers ho theos was used of the god of absolute religion in distinction from the mythological gods,' they fail to note that in the second sentence following, Dr. Robertson says, 'In the New Testament, however, while we have pros ton theon (John 1:1, 2) it is far more common to find simply theos, especially in the Epistles.'

In other words, the writers of the New Testament frequently do not use the article with theos and yet the meaning is perfectly clear in the context, namely that the One True God is intended. Let one examine the following references where in successive verses and even in the same sentence the article is used with one occurrence of theos and not with another form, and it will be absolutely clear that no such drastic inferences can be drawn from John's usage in John 1:1, 2 (Matthew 4:3, 4; 12:28; 28:43; Luke 20:37, 38; John 3:2; 13:3; Acts 5:29, 30; Romans 1:7, 8, 17-19; 2:16, 17; 3:5, 22, 23; 4:2, 3, etc.).

The doctrine of the article is important in Greek; it is not used indiscriminately. But we are not qualified to be sure in all cases what is intended. Dr. Robertson is careful to note that it is only of recent years that a really scientific study of the article has been made (p. 755, A. T. Robertson). The facts are not all known and no such drastic conclusion, as the writers of the appendix note, should be dogmatically affirmed.

It is nonsense to say that a simple noun can be rendered 'divine,' and that one without the article conveys merely the idea of quality (pp. 773, 774, appendix to the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures). The authors of this note themselves later render the same noun *theos* as 'a god' not as 'a quality.' This is a self-contradiction in the context.

In conclusion, the position of the writers of this note is made clear at page 774 of the appendix to the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures; according to them it is 'unreasonable' that the Word (Christ) should be the God with whom He was (John 1:1). Their own manifestly erring reason is made the criterion for determining Scriptural truth. One need only note the obvious misuse in their quotation from Dana and Mantey (the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, pp. 774, 775). Mantey clearly means that the Word was Deity in accord with the overwhelming testimony of Scripture, but the writers have dragged in the interpretation 'a god' to suit their own purpose, which purpose is the denial of Christ's Deity, and as a result a denial of the Word of God. The late Dr. Mantey publicly stated that he was quoted out of context and he personally wrote the Watchtower, declaring 'there is no statement in our grammar that was ever meant to imply that 'a god' was a permissible translation in John 1:1 and it is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 The Word was a god'(Michael Van Buskirk, *The Scholastic Dishonesty of the Watchtower*, P.O. Box 2067, Costa Mesa, CA 92626: CARIS, 1976, p. 11)." (*The Kingdom of the Cults*, P. 85-87)

"Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20.30-31). The apostle John wrote his gospel with the expressed intention of convincing his readers to believe in Jesus Christ. Part of this belief is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. On the phrase "Son of God" James Buswell writes: "Christ is called 'Son of God' scores of times in the New Testament. I take the key passage on this subject to be John 5.18, On this account rather the Judeans sought to kill him because he called himself equal with God (Jn. 5.18). In Jewish usage the term 'son of . . .' did not generally imply any subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature. Thus Bar Kokba, who led the Jewish revolt 132-135 A. D. in the reign of Hadrian, was called by a name which means 'Son of the star.' It is supposed that he took this name to identify himself as the very star predicted in Numbers 24:17. The name Son of Consolation (Acts 4.36) doubtless means 'The Consoler.' 'Sons of Thunder' (Mark 3.17) probably means 'Thunderous Men.' 'Son of Man' especially as applied to Christ in Daniel 7:13 and constantly in the New Testament, essentially means 'The Representative of Man.' Thus for Christ to say, 'I am the Son of God' (Jn. 10.36) was understood by His contemporaries as identifying Himself as God, equal with the Father, in an unqualified sense" (*Systematic Theology*, p. 105).

The expression "Son of God" is used in the NT as a description of Christ's deity. For example, in Jn. 5.17 Jesus says, "My Father is working until now and I Myself am working. For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath but also was call God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." The Jews understood that to be God's Son was to be equal to God. Notice Jesus does not correct their reasoning, but presents a stunning defense of His claim in verses 19-47. Likewise, in Jn. 10.30-39 there occurs a similar situation where the Jews to whom Jesus speaks with understand His claim to be the Son of God as a direct claim to deity, and, as before, Jesus does not try to correct their reasoning, but again presents a

defense of His claim.

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (Jn. 1.18). While this verse is one of the best proofs of Christ's deity, it is not without exegetical difficulties. First, some translations read: "Only begotten Son," or "one and only son" as in the King James, the New King James, the Revised Version, New English Bible, and the Living Bible. The difference is due to variations in the manuscripts, some having monogenes huios (only Son) and other manuscripts having monogenes theos (only God). Variances in the manuscripts are common and most are easily solved. The textual evidence for monogenes theos (P 75, P 66, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and others) is far greater than for monogenes huios, and Scribes were more likely to change "begotten God" to "begotten Son" rather than visa-versa. The second problem with this verse is the word "begotten." The term "only begotten" has caused much confusion thanks in no small part to the heretical teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They use the term in an attempt to prove that Jesus Christ is only a created being. In the Greek, however, the word does not lend it self very easily to such an interpretation. Monogenes in the Greek means, "Unique, one of a kind, one and only," (WSD 995) "Unique (in kind) of something that is the only example of its category." (A & G, p. 527) "Single of its kind" (Thayer, p. 417). The writings of an early Church father, Clement of Rome, (95 A. D.) furnishes an excellent example of this usage:

"Let us consider the marvelous sign which is seen in the regions of the east, that is, the parts of Arabia. There is a bird, which is name the Phoenix. This, being the only one of its kind liveth for five hundred years" (1 Cl. 25.3).

The phrase "only one of its kind" is the translation of the same Greek word monogenes. When John refers to Jesus as monogenes, he means nothing more than one and only, perhaps even as a title. We are therefore to understand Jn. 1.18 to mean: "The only one, God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

"Thomas answered Him and said, 'My Lord and my God' " (Jn. 20.28). Some vainly argue that Thomas became too emotional and blurted out something incorrect. Notice, however, that Jesus does not attempt to correct this supposed slip of the tongue, but says to Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are those who did not see, and yet believe."

"These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and spoke of Him" (Jn. 12.41). Since the immediate context makes Jesus the antecedent of the pronouns His and Him (vs. 36 and 37) one must ask, When did Isaiah see the Glory of Jesus? The answer is in Isaiah 6.1-13, for this is from where the apostle John quotes. Isa. 6.1-13 is a vision of Jehovah on His throne!

"Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Ti. 2.13). "The Granville Sharpe rule of Greek grammar states that when two nouns are join by kai (and) and the first noun has the article and the second does not, then the two nouns refer to the same thing, Hence, great God and Savior' both refer to Christ Jesus." (The Moody Handbook of Theology, p. 225).

"And He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible, and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1.15-17). Verses 15-17 are part of a larger section that runs to verse 20, and is a magnificent description of our Lord Jesus Christ. This passage may be an example of an early Christian hymn of praise as F. F. Bruce and many others suggest. The word image is the Greek word eikon and Paul uses it not merely to state the revelatory nature of the incarnation, but also to state who Christ is. F. F. Bruce remarks: "To say that Christ is the image of God is to say that in Him the nature and being of God has been perfectly revealed -- that in Him the invisible has become visible." (NCNT p. 57-8) "First born" does not mean that Jesus was created

since the passage states "by Him all things were created" and that He is "before all things," signifying that Jesus Christ is eternal; therefore, He cannot be part of creation. In this context, first born means that Christ is the heir (Heb. 1:2) of creation -- creation exists for Him.

"Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2.6). The English word "form" (Gk. *morphe*) is misleading because it gives the impression that Jesus is not of the same essence as God, or that Jesus is somehow a lesser, or subordinate deity. However, the Greek word *morphe* denotes, "The set of genuine characteristics which constitutes a thing what it is. It denotes the genuine nature of a thing" (*Christian Theology*, p.325). "Morphe means the essential attributes as shown by form. In his preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God and so appeared to those in heaven who saw him. Here is a clear statement by Paul of the Deity of Christ" (Robertson, vol. 4, p.444). "[Morphe] always signifies a form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it" (MM p. 417). The NIV, therefore, appropriately translates this verse, "Who being in the very nature God." What Paul goes on to say supports this view: "did not regard equality with God a thing," or lit., "the being equal with God" (Robertson). The definite article "to" in the phrase "to einai isa theo" "implies that the second expression [ the being equal with God] is closely connected with the first [ He existed in the form of God]", for the function of the definite article here is to point back to something already mention" (*Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 43, p.84). "Equal" is the Greek word "isos" and means "equal in number, size, quality . . . equal with someone" (A & G, p. 381).

"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1.3).

"But of the Son He says, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His Kingdom. Thou Hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Thy God hath anointed Thee . . ." (Heb. 1.8-9a).

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2.9). A perfect description of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God-man.

"I and the Father are one. The Jews took up stones again to stone Him" (Jn. 10.30-31). The Word "one" in the Greek is the neuter "hen" meaning one in essence (Robertson 5.186-87). That this is Jesus intended meaning is clear by the reaction of the Jews. Jesus is not saying He is one with God in purpose for this is hardly blasphemy and deserving death by stoning. Moreover, it cannot be reasonably maintained that the Jews merely misunderstood Jesus. Otherwise, Jesus surely would have clarified the misunderstanding, yet, rather than clarifying this supposed misunderstanding, Jesus responds by vindicating what He said (10.32). Note also "are" in the Greek is plural, lit., "I and the Father one we are." They are one in essence, yet separate persons.

And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9.6).

"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Phillip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, show us the father?' " (Jn. 14.9) Philip's desire to see the Father triggered Jesus' gentle rebuke. Jesus says in verse 7 that to know Him and to see Him is the same as knowing and seeing the Father. To this Philip says, "Lord show us the Father." Now, what mere man or created being, can say, "Knowing me and seeing me is the same as knowing and seeing God! This verse, perhaps more than any other, makes clear that Jesus was either who He claimed to be--God, or that He was insane. Note also that Jesus does not say He is the Father. Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus say He is the Father.

"Behold, the virgin shall be with Child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, God with us" (Mt. 1.23).

"Jesus said to them , 'Truly, truly I say, before Abraham was born, I Am.' Therefore the Jews picked up stones to throw at Him" (Jn.8.58-59). The phrase "I Am" is also found in Ex. 3.14, where God instructs Moses to go to the Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses replied to God, "Behold, I am going to the Sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, ' What is His name?' What shall I say to them? And God said to Moses, 'I Am who I Am'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the Sons of Israel, I Am has sent you.'" When Jesus uses the same phrase, "I Am" it is nothing less than a clear and concise declaration of His deity. While Arians like the Jehovah's Witnesses refuse to believe that this is what Jesus was claiming, the Jews did and again they try to stone Him for His supposedly blasphemous statement.

"Thus says the LORD (Jehovah), the King of Israel and His Redeemer, the LORD (Jehovah) of Hosts: I am the first and the last and there is no God besides Me (Isa. 44.6). The "Redeemer, the LORD (Jehovah) of Hosts," and "the First and the Last" are OT references to Jesus Christ. Rev. 1.17-18 makes this clear: "And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me saying, Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. . . (Rev. 1.17-18). For those who content that the "First and the Last" is a title belonging to Jehovah God and not to Christ, I must ask the question, When did Jehovah God die and come alive again? For Isa. 44.6 plainly identifies the First and the Last as Jehovah, and Rev. 1.17-18 plainly says that the First and the Last died and rose again! The answer is obvious: Jesus Christ, who is truly God, the First and the Last, who is truly man, He died and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. Moreover, in Rev. 22.13 the First and the last, who is Christ, is also called the Alpha and Omega. In Rev. 1.8, we have a further description of the Alpha and Omega: "I am the Alpha and Omega,' says the Lord God, Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1.8). Almighty with a capital "G"!

"But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the High Priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, Are you the Christ, the Son of God of the blessed One?' And Jesus said, I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of Heaven.' And tearing his clothes the high priest said, What further need do we have of witnesses? You heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?' And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death" (Mt. 26.61-64). Clearly, those sitting in judgement of Jesus understood Jesus claimed equality with God. But because they saw Him only as a mere man, they considered his statement blasphemy.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28.19). B. B. Warfield comments:

"The peculiarly pregnant employment here of the terms 'Son' and 'Father' over against one another is explained to us in the other utterance (Mt. 28.19). It is the resurrected Lord's commission to His disciples. Claiming for Himself all authority in heaven and on earth -- which implies the possession of omnipotence -- and promising to be with His followers always, even to the end of the world' which adds the implications of omnipresence and omniscience -- He commands them to baptize their converts in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' The precise form of the formula must be carefully observed. It does not read: In the names' (plural)-- as if there were three beings enumerated, each with its distinguishing name. Nor yet: In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,' as if there were one person, going by a threefold name. It reads: In the name (singular) of the Father, and of the (article repeated) Son, and of the (article repeated) Holy Ghost,' carefully distinguishing three persons, though uniting them all under one name. The name of God was to the Jews Jehovah, and to name the name of Jehovah upon them was to make them His. What Jesus did in this great injunction was to command His followers to name the name of God upon their converts, and to announce the name of God which is to be named on their converts in the threefold enumeration of 'the Father' and 'the Son' and ' the Holy Ghost.' As it is

unquestionable that He intended Himself by the Son,' He here places Himself by the side of the Father and the Spirit, as together with them constituting the one God. It is, of course, the Trinity which He is describing; and that is as much as to say that He announces Himself as one of the persons of the Trinity. This is what Jesus, as reported by the synoptics, understood Himself to be" (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 204-205).

John the Baptist, when asked who he was, said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said" (Jn. 1.23). By "Lord" it must be admitted that John the Baptist was referring to Jesus Christ. And although many try to twist the meaning of kurios, "Lord," it clearly refers to Christ's Deity. For the passage John quotes in Isaiah reads: "A voice is calling, Clear the way for Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40.3).

"But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were crying out in the temple and saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they became indignant, and said to Him, 'Do you hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou Hast prepared praise for Thyself'" (Mt. 21.15-16). The scribes and chief priest were upset that the children were praising Jesus as the Messiah, and they expected Jesus to silence them. But rather than silencing the praise of the children, He quotes Ps. 8.2 to them applying the Psalm to Himself. That Jesus was claiming to be God, and worthy of the praise, could not be any clearer.

The Scripture presupposes that Jesus Christ is God, therefore, Scripture abounds with numerous implicit expressions of Christ's deity. By implicit I mean that while the subject matter of a particular passage of Scripture may not be Christ's deity, it is nevertheless understood; and if His deity is not understood, then the passage becomes ridiculous and unbelievable. I will cite only a few examples, but the reader is encouraged to search out other examples. (These examples are from *The Divine Glory of Christ*)

"He who loves who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Mt. 10.37. See also Lk. 14.25-26). If Jesus is a mere man, if he is nothing more than a created being, then these are the words of demented lunatic. They are the words of another Jim Jones or David Koresh. What right does any religious "teacher" have to demand that his followers love him more than their parents or children? This is absurd! Those who would have us believe that Jesus was a good teacher, but not God, are foolish for this "good" teacher demanded that His followers love Him more than their own family. Yet, if this good teacher is more than just a man, if He is God incarnate, as the Scriptures clearly teach, then this passage makes sense, since only God can demand unconditional allegiance.

"Simon, I have something to say to you" (Lk. 7.40). As was Jesus custom, He accepted a dinner invitation from a pharisee, and during this affair a woman who the Scriptures describe as a sinner came to Jesus and with her tears washed Jesus' feet. Simon, the Pharisee who invited Jesus, thought to himself that if Jesus was truly a Prophet, then He would surely have known what sort of woman this was touching Him. Jesus, knowing what Simon was thinking, turns to him and says, "Simon, I have something to say to you." Jesus then tells Simon a parable about a money lender who lent money to two individuals, one 500 denarii the other 50. When both debtors were unable to pay off their loans, the lender forgave both debtors. "Which of them," Jesus asks Simon, "Would love the money lender more?" Simon perceptively answers, "I suppose the one who owed the more." Jesus then applies His parable. Jesus says to Simon, "I entered your house . . ." Jesus sets himself up as the money lender of the parable and Simon and the woman the two debtors. Jesus says to the woman, who represented the debtor owing the 500 denarii, "Your sins are forgiven." The point is, only the one owed the debt can forgive that debt. Only God can forgive sin, since sin is a debt against God. The only way the parable and the following events make sense is if Jesus Christ is truly God and therefore able to forgive sin.

"For the love of Christ constrains us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; And He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor. 5.14-15). The Scriptures declare that we are to only worship God. If one is to live for Christ, as the apostle Paul instructed, and Jesus is not God, then what does one worship God with? What more can the creature do then to live for the Creator? What higher or more majestic form of worship is there other than what Paul says: "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain"? If Christ is not God, then Paul is an idolater. John Stott has well said: "Nobody can call himself a Christian who does not worship Jesus. To worship Him, if he were not God, is idolatry; to withhold worship from Him, if He is, is apostasy."

### **OBJECTIONS:**

There are a few verses that those who deny the deity of our Lord like to use to prove their heretical belief. And indeed few they are. That these verses do cause a difficulty for those who hold to the orthodox belief of Christ deity we do not deny. But given the substantial amount of proof for Christ's deity, it is reasonable, and correct, to interpret these few verses in light of the vast revelation given concerning the Deity of Christ. So, when someone says, "Well, if Jesus was God how come He did not know the time of His return," or, "if Jesus is God, why did He say Jesus was greater than He? Or, "If Jesus is God, why did He say to the rich young ruler, "Why do you call Me good, there is none good but God, should we discard the vast Scripture revelation supporting the deity of Christ because of a few difficult verses, or should we try to understand the difficult verses in light of the vast Scriptural evidence for His Deity? How you decide this question will determine your eternal destiny.

Those who hold to the true Christian faith not only recognize that the Scriptures clearly, plainly, and unambiguously teach that Jesus Christ is truly God, but recognize that the Scriptures also teach clearly, plainly and unambiguously that Jesus Christ is truly man. In other words, whatever can be predicted of true divinity can be predicated of Jesus Christ, and whatever can be predicted of true humanity (except sin) can be predicted of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the God-man. It is this fact that accounts for Jesus saying that the Father was greater than He, or of His not knowing the time of His return and even Jesus' remark to the rich young ruler.

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST**

On this subject Boettner has well summarized: "The Deity of Christ is thus taught in Scripture so explicitly and repeatedly that the question is settled for all those who accept the Bible as the word of God. There can be no question but that Jesus Himself as He is portrayed in the New Testament records presented Himself as God incarnate. Nor is there any doubt but that the writers of the New Testament personally held this same high estimate of Him and worshiped Him as God, or that the Church in all ages in all its great branches, whether Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, or Congregational, as its faith has been expressed through its creeds and hymns and devotional writings, has likewise conceived of Him. And throughout the ages the great mass of those who have read the New Testament have come to the same conclusion.

In view of this great mass of evidence we are completely unable to understand how any fair-minded person can rise up and say, as do the Unitarians and Modernists, that Christ was not Deity, or that He did not claim Deity. In fact, we must go farther and say that such opposition appears to be based on nothing other than blind opposition and a determination not to accept that evidence no matter how clear and strong it may be. Any denial of the Deity of Christ, together with the implication that He was merely a great teacher or prophet, gives one a viewpoint other than that from which the Scriptures are written and makes it impossible for him to comprehend the system of truth that is revealed in Scripture. Such denial throws one out of harmony with the great Source of wisdom and truth, which is God, and causes him to attempt to explain intellectually that which can only be discerned spiritually.

The pre-eminent importance of the doctrine of the Deity of Christ in the Christian system is shown by the fact that this is the test by which we are to distinguish between true and false prophets, between spirits which are of God and spirits which are not of God. The Apostle John, after giving the warning, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world,' adds these words: 'Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof we have heard that it cometh, and now it is in the world already,' 1 John 4:1-3. Here we are plainly told that every one who acknowledges that Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and that every one who denies the Deity of Christ is antichrist. Regardless of how eloquent the speaker may be, how pleasing or magnetic his personality, how widespread his influence, or even how sincere his motives, the prophet or preacher or teacher who denies the Deity of Christ is branded in Scripture as a false prophet or preacher or teacher. And to the same effect Paul says: 'No man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit,' 1 Cor. 12:3. Here Paul declares that only by the spiritual insight which the Holy Spirit gives as He regenerates a soul can that soul form a true judgment of the Deity of Christ. No one recognizes Christ as Lord and as his Lord unless he has been born again. The man who looks at Jesus only with his own unenlightened eyes sees in Him only a man, perhaps a great man with many lofty principles and ideals, yet a man who has claimed too much for Himself and who has committed blasphemy by calling himself the Son of God. But when the Holy Spirit comes into his life, renewing and enlightening him spiritually, he then sees himself a guilty, condemned sinner who merits nothing but God's wrath and punishment. But he is also given to see, by the eye of faith, that Jesus is the Son of God, that He lived on this earth, that He was crucified for the sins of His people, that He arose from the grave, and that He now reigns from heaven. Never does a mortal man see the Lord Jesus thus, and never does he accept Him as his Lord, unless it is given him by the Holy Spirit. Thus Paul says that no person can acknowledge Jesus as Lord unless he has been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. And, incidentally, in these words he also tells us that the person who does thus acknowledge Jesus as Lord has been regenerated and is therefore assured of salvation.

In concluding our discussion of this great basic doctrine of the Deity of Christ we can do no better than to quote the words of Dr. Charles Hodge. He says:

"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God, I. e., whoever believes that Jesus of Nazareth is God manifested in the flesh, and loves and obeys Him as such, is declared to be born of God. Any one who denies that truth, is declared to be antichrist, denying both the Father and the Son, for the denial of the one is the denial of the other. The same truth is expressed by another Apostle, who says, 'If our gospel is hid it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest they should see the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ.' They are lost, according to this Apostle, who do not see, as well as believe, Jesus to be God dwelling in the flesh. Hence such effects are ascribed to the knowledge of Christ, and to faith in Him; such hopes are entertained of the glory and blessedness of being with Him, as would be impossible or irrational if Christ were not the true God. He is our life. He that hath the Son hath life. He that believes on Him shall live forever. It is not we that live, but Christ that liveth in us. Our life is hid with Christ in God. We are complete in Him, wanting nothing. Though we have not seen Him, yet believing in Him, we rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable. It is because Christ is God, because He is possessed of all divine perfections, and because He loved us and gave Himself for us, and hath redeemed us and made us kings and priests unto God that the Spirit of God says, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.' The denial of the divinity of the Son of God, the refusal to receive, love, trust, worship, and serve Him as such, is the ground of the hopeless condemnation of all who hear and reject the Gospel. And to the justice of this condemnation all rational creatures, holy and unholy, justified and condemned, will say, Amen. The divinity of Christ is too plain a fact, and too momentous a truth, to be innocently rejected. Those are saved who truly believe it, and those are already lost who

have not eyes to see it. He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. It is the doctrine of the New Testament, therefore, that the spiritual apprehension and the sincere recognition of the Godhead of the Redeemer constitutes the life of the soul. It is in its own nature eternal life; and the absence or want of this faith and knowledge is spiritual and eternal death. Christ is our life; and therefore he that hath not the Son hath not life'" (*Studies in Theology*, p. 179-182. Hodge's quote is found in *Systematic Theology*, 1. 498).

Those of who reject Christ's Divinity, in light of the clear, plain, unambiguous teaching of Scripture, will spent eternity in hell, unless they repent an acknowledge that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, God-man.

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