

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Cliff Sabroe

Most Christians have never even sat down and contemplated the Deity of Christ. It is something that is presented as fact in most lessons and often it is assumed that all in the audience hold the Godhood of Jesus. It is only when a Christian is challenged by one who does not hold to this doctrine, that this topic is even researched or thought out in its entirety. Does the Bible teach that Jesus is God? Are there verses that make this claim? If not, are there at least characteristics that Jesus bears that give evidence to Him being divine? This article seeks to answer these questions and others. Not with quotations from scholars and theologians, but from the words of Christ and other inspired writers as found in the pages of our Bibles. This writing will examine the very attributes of Christ, the claims of Christ, as well as the actions of Christ in heaven and on earth. These three areas should give the reader insight into whether or not Jesus is God.

The Attributes of Christ

Christ is Eternal and Infinite

In many places throughout Scripture the Messiah is presented as being eternal and infinite. Both of these characteristics can only be attributed to God. The prophet Micah declares about the coming Messiah "...The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting"¹ (Micah 5:2). We know that this everlasting one who was to come is Christ, for Matthew quotes this very passage in (Matt. 2:5f).

John also records for his readers the pre-existent state of Christ. In the first verse of his gospel he writes "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3). What is John declaring about Jesus? He is declaring that not only did Jesus pre-exist with God, He also pre-existed as God.

Christ is Omnipotent

Omnipotence is the characteristic of having unlimited power that can only be attributed to God. This characteristic of omnipotence is often observed in Jesus. In Philippians 3:20-21 Paul explains that Jesus has the power to "subject all things to Himself". The only way that Jesus could have the power to "subject all things to Himself" is if He had the full power of God. The only way that Jesus could have the full power of God, was for He Himself to be God.

Christ is Omniscient

In many places in the New Testament, Jesus is shown as having all knowledge. This is a characteristic of Deity and is often referred to as omniscience. If Scripture shows Jesus as being omniscient, then Scripture is showing Jesus as God. In John 2:24-25 the text reads "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man". John 6:64 reads "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him". Christ had ultimate knowledge, thus, he must be divine

The Claims of Christ

Christ Claimed to be Eternal and Infinite

Jesus, in several places also preached His eternal existence. In John 8:58 "Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM'". In this passage Jesus could not have been merely saying that He existed as the first created being, because in the very next verse the Jews were taking up stones and wanted to stone Him for claiming to be God. Jesus later

¹ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version.

speaks to the apostle John in the Revelation letter declaring “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last” (Rev. 22:13, cf. Rev. 1:8).

Christ Claimed to be Omnipotent

Not only did Jesus preach His eternal existence, He also declared the great power He possessed. Jesus wanted those in His presence to understand that He had the equal power to the Father. He once stated “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will” (John 5:20-21)

Christ Claimed to be Omniscient

Jesus claimed His own omniscience in the several instances where He prophesied about what was going to take place before it happened. In Matthew 17:25ff Jesus “anticipated” the thoughts of Peter. In Luke 5:22 Jesus told His audience was “on their hearts” before they could say it. In John 21:6 Jesus told His followers that they would catch fish even before they cast their nets into the water. Jesus expressed His omniscient abilities in several places and thus expressed His divinity.

The Actions of the Christ

Many of the actions of Jesus show Him to be God. If actions of Christ are actions that can only be done by God, then one must conclude that Jesus is God.

Christ Created All Things

One of the clearest claims for Deity in the case of Christ is the many passages that declare Him to be the Creator. Hebrews 3:4 states “...He who built all things is God”. If it can be shown through Scripture that Jesus built/created all things, then Jesus must be divine. John 1:2-3 declares “He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made”. Later on in that same chapter John writes “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not” (John 1:10).

Paul was another inspired writer who presented Jesus as the great Creator. In 1 Corinthians 8:6 he writes “yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live”. The book of Colossians, also penned by Paul is a wonderful discourse on the Supremacy and Deity of Christ. It states “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Col. 1:16-17).

The book of Hebrews is another New Testament book which calls Jesus the Creator. Proving His Divine Nature it says that God “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...” (Heb.1:2-3).

Christ Welcomed and Received Worship

One of the clearest teachings in the entire Bible is the fact that only God is deserving of worship. In the Ten Commandments it reads “You shall have no other Gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3). Jesus reiterated a similar point to Satan when He answered him in Matthew 4:10 saying “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve”. God is the only one

worthy of being worshiped, so if anywhere in Scripture we find Jesus being worshiped, then He is either a sinner (which violates Heb. 4:15) or He is God.

In several places in the gospel accounts we find Jesus openly receiving worship from His followers. After His resurrection we find in Matthew 28:9 “And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him”. It is recorded that He was worshiped following His ascension in Luke 24:51-53 “Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God”.

There are instances outside of the gospel accounts where Jesus is worshiped as well. These records show that worship of Jesus transcends the physical realm and even take place in the spiritual. Hebrews 1:6 states: “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him’”. In the Revelation letter we find Jesus being worshiped in heaven by the twenty-four elders as they sang the song of Moses and the Lamb.

...saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. (Rev. 5:12-14)

Conclusion

One of the clearest teachings in Scripture is the Deity of Christ. Countless pages could be penned to expound upon the innumerable verses that express this teaching. One needs to be prepared to teach people about the Divine nature of Jesus, for it is necessary to understand in order to be saved. Jesus plainly taught in John 8:24 “Unless you believe that I am *he*, you will die in your sins”.

Jesus is God. Colossians 2:9 states: “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”. In fact, God even calls His own Son God in Hebrews 1:8 “But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom’”. Jesus is fully Divine and we must worship and serve Him as such. To conclude in the same manner that John concluded his first epistle: “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

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