

Chapter 2 - The Deity of Jesus

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him not anything was made that was made... He was in the world, and the world was made by him...No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, has declared him." John 1:1-3

Introduction

Of all the doctrines of the Bible none is so wonderfully powerful, so profoundly mysterious, and so totally awesome as the doctrine of the person of Christ. No other doctrine causes so many to stumble and to err from the truth, than this incontrovertible doctrine of the deity of Christ. Every Christian needs an unwavering understanding and deep conviction about who Jesus is. Based on the word of God as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was and is very God of very God.

Unfortunately, the average Christian in the church pew today is not sure what to think about the deity of Christ. When challenged by cultists they either cringe or run terrified not knowing what to answer or where to turn for the answers. Every cult that ever sprouted throughout church history has and will assault the character and person of Jesus Christ. Jews stumbled at it, disciples balked at it, Christians have been confused by it, theologians complicated it, but it remains indelibly and irrefutably etched in eternity - the Word was God.

It is not possible to be a Christian, a follower of Christ, and call him a liar. It is not possible to believe the scriptures and deny their unassailable witness that Jesus was God incarnate. It is not possible to call Jesus Lord (Kurios) while questioning whether he is, as Thomas confessed, "My Lord, and my God."

In this lesson we will examine the overwhelming evidence of scripture as to the true identity of the baby born in a manger. We will attempt to lead you down the biblical pathway, guided by God's signposts, led by "the light that lightens every man who comes into the world," and anchored to the eternal Rock of Ages so that when finished you, along with the apostles, can say with a full heart of assurance, "Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with us." We will guide you through the scriptures and bring you to that great trilema to decide for yourself whether Jesus Christ is "a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord." You have not known Jesus until you know him in his fullness of divine revelation as the eternal, changeless, Mighty God.

The great preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in a sermon on Malachi 3:6 titled "The Contemplation of God," profoundly states the case for deep contemplation of the nature of Jesus Christ.

"Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ and him crucified and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. The proper study of the Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the doings, and the existence of the Great God which he calls his Father... It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can comprehend and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and have our way with the thought, 'Behold I am wise.' But when we come to this master science, finding that our plummet cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought, 'I am but of yesterday and know nothing.'" (Pink, p82)

Theology of the Gospel of John

Though the Gospel of John was written last in the gospel chronology, we begin our study with his gospel witness to who Jesus is. If you will remember, John wrote the gospel late in life at the request of bishops in Asia, and after he and Andrew (who also was at Ephesus) had sought the Lord diligently in fasting and prayer. The purpose was to fill in the gaps concerning Jesus which the other gospel writers had omitted but also to combat the dangerous doctrines of his day that denied the deity of Jesus Christ, such as the Ebonites, Gnostics and later the Marcionites.

John does not deal with the birth of Christ for that had been clearly and precisely communicated by the other three gospels. He instead begins his gospel with the pre-incarnate Christ. John was tenacious about the identity of Christ. He minces no words, beats around no bushes, pulls no punches, but goes straight for the juggler on this one. It is extremely difficult to argue against the deity of Jesus Christ in the face of what John has to say about him. Despite such profoundly clear declarations concerning Jesus there are those who would still fight against God and wrestle with truth. Heresies will always wrestle with scripture to try to distort them by saying, "It doesn't mean that." Such was the case in John's day, and such is the case in ours.

Ebonites

John was disputing with the heretic Cerinthus and the Ebonites who asserted that Jesus Christ did not exist before he came to us in Mary's womb. They maintained that Jesus was just a man, a mere prophet, a spokesman for God. They taught that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary and that it was at his baptism that God descended on him to declare the Father, but that the Father withdrew before his suffering and death because God himself could not suffer and die. The Ebonites contradicted Paul declaring him an apostate, and as you could have guessed, they used only the Hebrew version of the gospel of Matthew.

Gnosticism

The other heresy that John had to contend with was that of gnosticism which came along in the second century but was most certainly evident in John's day. Gnosticism, from gno="to know," was highly syncretistic combining elements of Greek philosophies and beliefs of other religions into Christianity. One of the names historically associated with gnosticism was Simon Magus, the magician of Acts, who sought to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Gnosticism attacked the very core of Christianity - Jesus Christ. Among its varied doctrines was the belief that God the Father created other beings called "aeons" which together constitute the "Fullness" or true reality. From this spirit world our present world was born when one of the prideful "aeons" wished to do what the Father had done and created something on her own. They conclude then that this world of matter is evil. Salvation involves freeing oneself from the corruption of matter and its associated evils. This involved revelation of secret knowledge, or gnosis, by which one escaped the corruption of the flesh. Christ therefore could not have been composed of flesh, since flesh is matter and matter is evil. Jesus only appeared to be a man but was really pure spirit. They so badly distorted Jesus as to make him wholly other than the historical Jesus of the gospels.

Marcionism

A third doctrine that appeared shortly after John's death was just as deadly as Ebonitism and Gnosticism. It is called Marcionism. Marcion was a rich roman citizen who arrived in Rome about AD 138, joined the church and made a generous gift to it. He became a teacher and began to disseminate his distorted views of Christianity until he was declared a heretic and cut off from the church in AD 144. He took with him a number of members and started his own church. (Does that sound familiar?) Marcion's doctrines were influenced by gnosticism but took on a whole new character. He saw the world as evil containing suffering and cruelty which he concluded could not have been the work of a good God. He concluded that the God of the old Testament was an evil God commanding blood sacrifices, doing violence, destroying his enemies, etc. There was a second God who was unknown until Christ. This was the God of love and mercy. This God had mercy on the plight of evil men and decided to rescue them from the hand of the evil God called Demiurge. Christ was not part of the human race but was a phantom who appeared as a man. It was this phantom that was crucified to redeem men from the hand of the evil God of the Old Testament. All that this good God asks of men in order to escape the Demiurge is to believe and love him thus they will escape the commandments and legalistic requirements of the evil God of Judaism.

It is in this context that John's gospel is written. Understanding this will help you to grasp the urgency of John's gospel being added to the gospel record.(John's being a theological gospel.) It is a proof of who Jesus really is, not a phantom, not a created aeon, not an angel, not a second benevolent God, but God incarnate- as theologians put it - "Very God of very God." You cannot read the gospel of John and believe otherwise. Jesus Christ was God himself manifest in the flesh as is proved by his character, his works, his own claims, and by the names given to him. If John's gospel were the only recorded evidence of the

deity of Jesus we would have no cause to question this fact. Yet John's gospel is only a part of the record of Christ's deity. In this lesson we will see from the Old Testament, from other gospels, and from the epistles that Jesus is God incarnate! With this volume of evidence of who Jesus is, it is incredible that men continue to strive with God and distort the scriptures over this issue. Cults today, as in John's day, continue to contradict the scriptural record and distort the historical Jesus.

Beginning with John's gospel we have overwhelming evidence of the deity of Jesus - not the least among these, is most specifically, evidence of his pre-existence. The first paragraph of John's gospel sets the stage for all that follows. John minces no words but gets right to the point as bluntly as possible in verses 1 to 18 proclaiming Jesus is God. We will follow John's immutable outline. It is not possible in this short lesson to be exhaustive on every reference to the deity of Jesus. Ours is but to give the evidence that proves beyond any reasonable doubt the deity of Jesus.

John was the beloved disciple of Jesus and perhaps the best loved of all the disciples. In his gospel, as in his epistles, he constantly affirms his eyewitness testimony of Jesus Christ, (I John 1:3) and the affirmation of the truthfulness of his testimony. We would do well to listen.

Beginning with the gospel through the Revelation John gives ample witness to the deity of Jesus - his name, his pre-existence, his works, his glory, and his self declaration prove his deity beyond any shadow of doubt.

"Logos" - The Word

John 1:1-18 stands out as the great "proof text" of Jesus' true identity and deity. In this short passage John uses six specific references to the deity of Christ.

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word." Without going into depth on the meaning of the Greek word "logos," translated "the Word," it is sufficient to say that one need not be a Greek scholar to decipher who this Word is. It was not John's intent to cloak his identity but to reveal him through one of his hundreds of appellations - in this case, The Word.

Let there be no doubt, the identity of the Word is revealed in Revelation 19:11-13:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse... Faithful and True... 12) Name which no man knew... vesture dipped in blood... his name is called THE WORD OF GOD."

In this same gospel prologue John fingers the identity of this one he calls "Logos" as (v14) "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us..." There is no room for any speculation about the identity of the Logos - It is Jesus!

Listen now to the description of the Logos, Jesus:

"He was in the beginning...he was with God... he was God... all things were made by him... he has life in himself... he lightens, or gives life, to every man who enters the world... he was in the world, which was made by him... he was made flesh and dwelt among us... he had the glory of the Father as the only begotten of the Father... he is the revelation and visual representation of the Father."

Every one of these descriptions can be backed by other New Testament witnesses as well. It is necessary to note here that the foremost antagonists to calling Jesus God have gone through extreme gyrations and verbal gymnastics to twist this text into not saying that Jesus Christ is God with us. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Christ. To do so they must distort the scriptures or eliminate them altogether. Their means of dealing with John 1:1, which is so clear as to be offensive to their ears, they insert an article "a" to make the passage say, "and the Word was a god ." Every Greek scholar, bar none, whether Christian or non-Christian, has examined the passage independently and concluded there is no "a" in the passage nor would it be possible in the Greek. The founder of the Jehovah's Witness, in a court of law, also under oath, admitted knowing no Greek at all. (Martin, p38-39, 75-76)

"Was the Word," now that is a strange statement. It is kind of like a Star Trek episode in which a new entity is discovered that needs a name. We have used Forengi, Klingons, Shapeshifters, and etc. What do we call the next one? So a word is invented or adopted to define this new entity.

Story of Heraclitus and Plato But this was no unfamiliar term to the Jews. In their writings long before a Greek philosopher named Heraclitus used the term Logos around 600 B.C. to designate the divine reason or plan which coordinates a changing universe. This word was well suited to John's purpose in John 1. Heraclitus taught that life was moving onward, like time, always changing. If you put a foot into a stream the stream would pass over it so the next step would not actually be in the same water at all. Life was flowing like that. Always changing, rushing on. (ie) Like the cartoon character B.C. who made water balls - it cannot be done, water flows chaotically, until contained inside something.) But the philosopher asked the question then, "Why then is not life perpetual chaos? What keeps it from flowing away and disappearing?" Heraclitus' answer was that life is not chaos but purposefully changed because of Divine Reason, which he called "the Logos."

Other philosophers built on this concept of "the Logos." The Logos made life make sense. It held all things together. Plato said to a group of philosophers that surrounded him, "It may be that some day there will come forth from God a Word, a Logos, who will reveal all mysteries and make everything plain." It is to this "Unknown God" that the philosophers and religionists of Athens built a statue, which Paul used to preach that Christ is that "Unknown God," the Logos. *

Equal With God

John 5:18-23 is a classic passage (attested to by each of the other gospel writers as well in which the Jews witnessed the comments of Jesus and concluded that he was making himself equal with God. (Matthew 9:6, Mark 2:16, Luke 5:27, Luke 7:48) Because of this, on several occasions they picked up stones to kill him for blasphemy. There was obviously no doubt on the part of the Jews concerning Jesus' intended meaning. There are four important characteristics that Jesus attributed to himself:

1. Jesus declared himself to be the only begotten Son of God - thus being equal with God.
2. Jesus declared to do the works of the Father with the same self power (i.e. to raise the dead at will) that is affirmed with verse 26, that as the Father has life in himself so does the Son.
3. Jesus declared that he is to be given honor as the Father, that is, to not honor him is to not honor the Father.
4. Jesus declared that all judgement was given to the Son and now the Father judges no man.

Now if you were standing in a crowd hearing Jesus say these things what would you think? He is either a liar, a lunatic, or he is the Lord. We would probably have done as the Jews did. No man ever spoke this way. He either has to be crazy, delusional, or maybe, just maybe - (is it possible?) he is the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us.

Light

John 8:52-59 is another stoning passage proving that the Jews heard and understood him correctly. Jesus has just proclaimed himself the Light of the World, the Judge, the Truth, and the Liberator and Forgiver of men's sins. The Jews challenge him on these statements saying they are not slaves to sin but children of Abraham and that he claimed that those who believe in him will not die. They argued that Abraham and the prophets all died so who does he think he is? Is he greater than Abraham?

Jesus' response is a short and powerful declaration of his true identity. Verse 58 says, "Before Abraham was I AM." The Jews immediately got the message and picked up stones to kill him. Why? Jesus did not say, "I was before Abraham," which would have been bad enough, and true enough. He did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was." No, he said it deliberately giving himself a title, a name above all names, the name of God. When God introduced himself to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14) He responded with the name by which all Israel would know Him - I AM. Jesus powerfully revealed that he was the great I AM who spoke to Abraham in the burning bush. Who is Jesus? He would have to be a pathological liar, a raving maniac, or (could he be?) might he be, by some slim miraculous chance, God incarnate? (See Theophanies)

One With the Father

John 10:30-33 In this passage the Jews beg Jesus to declare plainly whether he was the Christ. (It is interesting to explore the Old Testament identity of who Christ would be. [Isaiah 9:6] Had they been listening to the witness of the Old Theological prophets they would not have missed him.) So Jesus obliges them and declares, "I and my Father are one." (i.e. One and the same.)

Some have attempted to explain this away as meaning only that the Father and Son are one in purpose, yet the context belies that understanding. Certainly the prophets, many priests, even godly Jews could benignly say they were one in purpose with the Father with impunity. But the Jews immediately take up stones to kill him and declare why they are doing it (verse 33), "Because you, being a man, make yourself God." So the Jews understood perfectly well what he meant by, "I and my Father are one."

"Kurios" - Lord

John 14:-11 This time we find Jesus with his disciples in the upper room celebrating the Passover, the last supper. Thomas and Phillip had heard Jesus declare before that he was God. But this time in a more succinct form, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6) He follows that declaration with the comment, "If you have known me you should have known the Father also; and from hereon you will know him, and have seen him." The disciples still don't get it and Phillip retorts, "Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied." Jesus sighs deeply and laments, "Don't you even know me? Even after I have been with you so long? (Pause for effect and let that sink in.) "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say, 'Show us the Father.'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I say unto you they are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." (John 14:9-11)

I am not sure the disciples believed in him, in fact, the scripture says they didn't. Who could? That declaration is a real stretch for the heart and the imagination - God in flesh and blood? It wouldn't be until after the resurrection that the disciples fully realized the truth of this revelation.

Lord and God

John 20:28 expresses Thomas' own astonishment when the truth of this Passover dedication dawns on him. He has doubted. He swears on his own disbelief and draws up a bogus scenario of what it would take to convince him otherwise. (John 20:24-25) Then suddenly the resurrected, glorified Jesus in whom all the fullness of the Father dwells appears behind closed doors (only God or a ghost can do that) and challenges Thomas' doubting heart. He is no ghost as Jesus plainly demonstrates with his very real nail-pierced

hands, and pierced side. So what is your verdict Thomas? Here it is..."My Lord, and my God." This was not a hastily devised idiomatic expression or hyperbole. It was a declaration of recognition of who Jesus is, Lord (Kurios) and God (Theos). Had he been in error Jesus would have corrected him. He did not, but rather blesses him and all those who though not seeing still believe that he is, indeed, Lord and God.

His Glory

John 17:1-18

Finally, our Lord's high priestly prayer for his disciples reaffirms his eternal existence with the Father when he cries, (verse 5) "And now Father glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." As the prayer continues he reveals the same knowledge of himself that at great personal risk he revealed to the Jews at large, and to his disciples in particular. Here are his assertions to the Father:

v 10 "All I have is yours, and all you have is mine."

v 21 "That they all may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in you."

v 24 "Father I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."

What a profound and emotional appeal. The Son and the Father are One! Though often this concept is un-understandable to our finite minds, it is nonetheless declared to be the way it is.

Only in heaven will the full import of Jesus' divine declaration be fully known when before the throne we know fully even as we are known, and we will fall down before him in awe for who he is.

Book of Revelation

John's revelation of Jesus goes beyond the gospel record and into his epistles and on into the book of Revelation. Let us take a look at the revelation of Jesus' divinity in the book of Revelation. This book is the record of John's vision of Jesus Christ and things to come which he received while a prisoner on the island of Patmos. It is a picture book of divine glimpses into heaven. Catch the vision of Jesus!

Revelation 1:8,11-18 Jesus speaks. His first words, our first glimpse of the glorified Lord, and his summation statements declare his divinity.

v 8 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...the Almighty."

v 11 "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

v 17 "Fear not, I am the first and the last."

v 18 "I am he that lives and was dead, and have the keys of hell and death."

Isaiah 41:4 declares who has the title, "I am the Lord, the first and last; I am he."

Revelation 22:13 repeats it as "I am the Alpha and Omega." Out of Jesus' own mouth as resurrected, ascended, glorified, and enthroned, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" he declares his own identity as that of the Old Testament Jehovah, First and Last.

Revelation 4:11 follows immediately on the heels of Jesus' message to the seven churches. The door of heaven is open and we see a throne and "one sat on the throne." And we read his description:

(v 3-5) "Before the throne is a sea of glass like crystal and around the throne are four creatures full of eyes... and they rest not day and night saying,

(v 8) 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, is, and is to come...' and they gave glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who lives forever and ever. (v 9) And twenty-four elders who also

(v 10) Worship him who lives forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying,"

(v 11) 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor and power; For you have created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'"

In chapter 5 a book was in his right hand which no man could open but the Lamb who is identified as "in the midst of the throne," not next to the throne but in the middle of it. The twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb and worshiped him, (v8) and the angels with an innumerable host. (v12-13)

Theophanies (or Christophanies)

It is upon this declaration the theologians have gone back to the Old Testament to search for appearances of the pre-incarnate Jesus. They are scattered throughout the Old Testament. Jesus said, "No man has seen God at anytime, but the son declares or reveals Him. (John 1:15)

This agrees with Jewish theology that no man has seen God and lived. It also agrees with many other New Testament passages. (Hebrews 1:3, I Timothy 3:16) These pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus before his birth are known as "Theophanies" or "Christophanies." They are not angelic appearances but special manifestations of God in human form - a God appearance, a Theophany.

Micah 5:2 "But you Bethlehem Ephrata, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth have been from old, from everlasting."

THEOPHANIES (appearances of Christ in O.T.)

1. In Eden Gen 3:15/ 3:22-24/ Ex 6:3,5/ Jude 14,15/ 2Thes1:7-8

2. To Hagar Gen 16:7-14

3. To Moses Exodus :2,6,14/ 23:20-21 Acts 7:38

4. To Abraham Gen 18:1/ 22:11-13/ 26:2,5,2,,25

5. To Jacob Gen 28:/ 32:24-32/ 48:15-16/ Hos 12:4-5

6. To Joshua Jos 5:13-15 Captain of the host of the Lord

7. To Manoah Jud 14:15-23 Is 9:6

8. To Isaiah Is 6:1-13/ John 12:39-41/ Ez 1:1-28/ Is 63:8-10

9. To Zechariah Zec 1:8-13/ 2:8-11

10. To Shadrach, Meshach, Abedigo Dan 3:24-25

Can you think of any others? Please look up each of these passages. (From Thompson's Chain Reference Bible.)

OK, take a deep breath. Go get a cup of coffee, take a nap, or go for a walk before continuing.

Chart of Deity Passages

John was not alone in his declarations that Jesus Christ was God incarnate. Both the Old and New Testaments contain so many witnesses to the deity of Christ that it makes it virtually impossible to read the scriptures and miss this important truth. The following is a chart that organizes and tracks the biblical references to the deity of Christ. It is certainly not exhaustive but is ample enough to back any arguments for the deity of Christ. Since many of these passages are repeated in the topical headings we will also include at the end a list of all the relevant passages dealing with the deity of Christ.

Creator

John 1:3 All things were made by him, without him not anything was made ...
I Corinthians 8:6 Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things.
Ephesians 3:9 God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.
Colossians 1:16 By him were all things created...by him all things consist.
Hebrews 1:2 By whom also He made the worlds.
Hebrews 1:10 You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth.

God Incarnate

Matthew 1:23 Call his name Immanuel, which means, God with us.
Acts 20:28 Feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood.
Romans 9:5 Who is over all, God blessed forever.
Philippians 2:6-8 Being in the form of God.
Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of God.
Colossians 2:9 In him dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily.
I Timothy 3:16 God was manifest in the flesh.
I Timothy 6:15 Blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords.
Titus 2:13 Looking for...glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.
Hebrews 1:8 Unto the Son he says, Your throne O God is forever and ever.
I John 5:20 This is his Son Jesus Christ, the true God, and eternal life.
Jude 25 To the only wise God our Savior.

Eternal

Colossians 1:17 Who is before all things.
II Timothy 1:9 Our calling...given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.
I Peter 1:20 Who was foreordained before the foundation of the world.
I John 1:1 That which was from the beginning.
I John 2:13 You have known him that is from the beginning.

Exalted Position

Philippians 2:9-11 Highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name.

Preexistence

Ephesians 1:4 Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.

Philippians 2:5-8 Made himself of no reputation...Being found in fashion as a man.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things.

2 Timothy 1:9 Called us...before the world began.

Hebrews 1:2 By whom also He made the worlds.

Power to Forgive

Matthew 9:2-8 Jesus heals sickness and forgives sins.

Mark 2:10 Son has power on earth to forgive sins.

Luke 5:24 Son has power on earth to forgive sins.

Luke 7:49 They asked, Who is this that forgives sins also?

Worshipped

Matthew 2:11 The Magi worshipped him.

Matthew 14:33 The disciples worshipped him after he stilled the sea.

Matthew 28:9, 17 The disciples worshipped him after the resurrection

Luke 24:52 The disciples worshipped him after the resurrection.

John 20:28 Thomas calls him "My Lord and my God."

Hebrews 1:6 "All the angels of God worship him."

Philippians 2:9-11 "Every knee shall bow."

Power over nature

Matthew 28:18 All power is given unto me in heaven and earth

Colossians 1:17 By him all things consist

Ephesians 3:20-21 Exceeding greatness of his power

Names of Christ

1. Alpha and Omega - Rev. 1:8
2. Almighty - Rev. 1:8
3. Blessed and Only Potentate - 1 Tim. 6:15
4. Brightness of His Glory - Hebrews 1:3
5. Emmanuel - Matthew 1:23, Is 9:6
6. Everlasting Father - Is 9:6
7. First and Last - Rev 1:7, Is 41:4
8. God manifest in flesh - 1 Tim. 3:16
9. God our Savior - 1 Tim. 2:3
10. God with us - Matthew 1:23
11. I Am - John 8:58
12. Image of His Person - Hebrews 1:3
13. King of kings - 1 Tim. 6:15, Rev 17:14
14. Lord of lords - Rev. 17:14, 19:16
15. Lord God Almighty - Rev. 15:3, Is 9:6
16. Lord of the Sabbath - Mark 2:28
17. Mighty God - Is. 9:6
18. Only Wise God - Jude 25
19. Only Potentate - 1 Tim 6:15
20. Word of God - John 1:1, Rev 19:13

CULT TEACHINGS

FALSE TEACHINGS ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST

In our day there are no less dangerous doctrines afloat in the stream of so-called Christian cults. Two of those need special mention since they have so affected millions by distorting the scriptures and the truth of the deity of Jesus Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses:

The Jehovah's Witnesses appear as harmless, perhaps over-zealous, do-gooders to many evangelical Christians. Yet most Christians are unaware of the realities of JW teachings concerning Jesus Christ. Here are just a few as they apply to the deity of Christ:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ is a god..." Studies in the Scriptures. Vol. V. p.55

Teaching: Jesus was a god, not 'the Almighty God, who is Jehovah'.

"Our Redeemer existed as a spirit being before he was made flesh, and dwelt amongst men. At that time as well as subsequently, he was properly known as 'a god' - a mighty one." Ibid. Vol. V, p 84

Teaching: At the beginning Jesus was created by God without the instrumentality of any mother. He was not an incarnation in flesh but was flesh, a human Son of God, a perfect man, no longer a spirit, although having a spiritual heavenly past and background.

"...the Logos [Christ] himself was 'the beginning of the creation of God.'" Ibid. Vol. V, p.86 Teaching: This One is not Jehovah God, but was existing in the form of God... he was a spirit person... he was a mighty one although not Almighty God. He was a god, not Almighty God.

"As chief of the angels and next to the Father, he [Christ] was known as the Archangel (highest angel or messenger), whose name, Michael, signifies, 'Who as God' or 'God's Representative.'" Ibid. Vol V. p. 84

Teaching: Jesus was a prince among other creatures. He bore another name in heaven, that of Michael the archangel. Other names were given to him in the course of time. (see Martin p. 51)

Mormons:

(We need no commentary here!)

"God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man."

"The Father has a body of flesh and bone as tangible as man's."

"When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body and brought Eve, one of his celestial wives, with him...He is our father and our God and the only God with whom we have to do."

"As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become."

"Remember that God our Heavenly Father was perhaps once a child and mortal like we are, and rose step by step in the scale of progress, in the school of advancement...until He has arrived at the point where He now is." (Martin, p.178)

What Should You Know?

Remember the purpose of this course is to build your knowledge for ministry, not just to get a good grade. Most people are minimalists, learning only what is necessary for a test, but that is not good stewardship of our minds or our resources. We should seek to show ourselves approved UNTO GOD as workmen that never will be ashamed of our ability to rightly divide the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

That being the case, we should seek to thoroughly understand and be able to effectively defend the deity of Jesus as we would in a court of law. So then, what we need to know is how to earnestly contend for the faith (Jude 3) once delivered to the saints. Be able to biblically defend the deity of Jesus Christ. If we were using essay questions I would give one of the many deity passages and ask you to argue the deity of Christ based on that passage. Another way to test your knowledge would be to pose a challenge to the deity of Christ based on a Jehovah's Witness argument and ask you to defend the faith. Another test would be to defend the deity of Christ from the Old Testament, or the gospels only, or from the Pauline epistles.

The real test of whether you have profited by this lesson is to ask yourself whether you could answer any of the previous challenges.

Sources and Recommended Reading: (It is not necessary to buy these books.)

Authur W. Pink, Gleanings In The Godhead, Moody Press, Chicago, 1975

Hurbert Lockyer, All the Doctrines of the Bible, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1964

L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, 1939

Orville J. Nave, Nave's Topical Bible, Southwestern Co. Nashville, 1962

Walter Martin, Kingdom of the Cults,

Kenneth Scott LaTourett, A History of Christianity, Vol. 1, Harper and Row, New York, 1953

William Steuart McBirnie, The Search for the Twelve Apostles, Living Books/Tyndale, 1973