

Defending the Faith

Session 4: The Deity of Christ

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Does God Exist?



**Is the Bible
Accurate?**



Did Christ Rise?



Who is Christ?

Outline:

- Deity of Christ in History
- Deity of Christ in the Bible
- Problem Passages

“Who do men say that I am?”

Matthew 16:13-17

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

Jehovah's Witnesses: "You are the first creation of God through whom he created all things."

Mormons: "You are the son of God, the offspring of God and his wife and the brother of Lucifer."

Jews: "You are a false prophet."

Islam: "You are a great prophet, second only to Muhammad."

Liberal Theology: "You are a man who inspires us to love others."

Orthodox Christianity: Christ is the Son of God, the second Person of the eternal Trinity, fully God and fully man.

Deity of Christ in History

Two Early Heresies:

- Docetism
- Arianism

Docetism:

Christ was God, but he was not man. God would not lower himself by having a physical body. Therefore it only "seemed" like Christ was man.

1 John 4:2-3

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

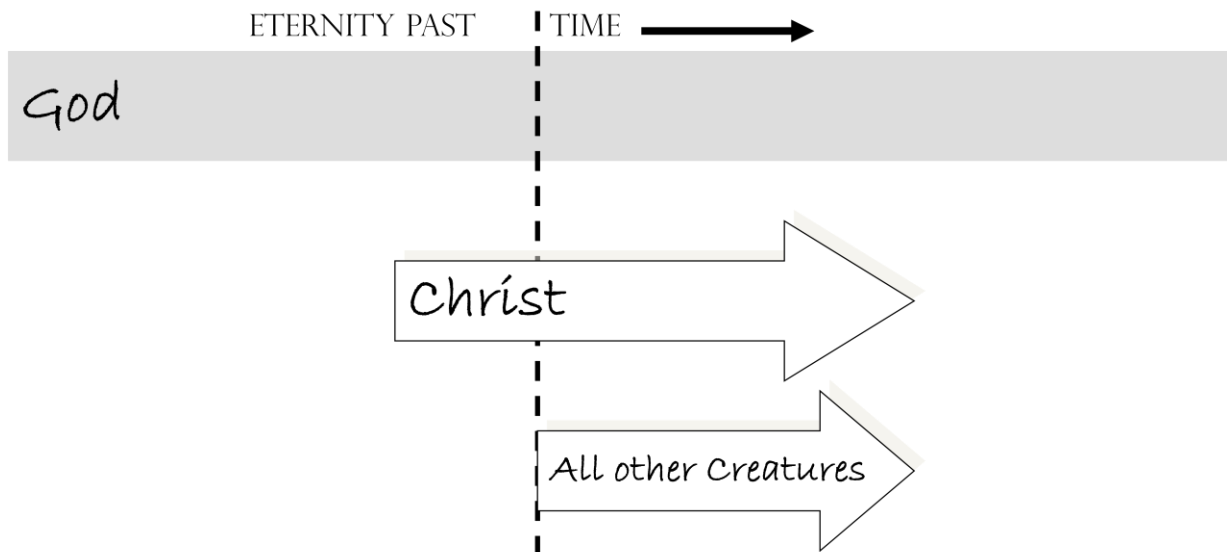




Arianism:
(Arius: 256 – 336)

Christ was the first creation of God through whom God created all things.
He is god, but not God.

“Since there was a time when Christ was begotten, there was a time when Christ was not.”



Council of Nicea (A.D. 325)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty [pantokratora], creator of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten [pro panton ton aionon] of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same essence [homoousion] with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Deity of Christ in the Bible

Divine names:

- Emanuel (“God with us” Matt. 1:23)
- Son of God (John 5:18)
- I AM (John 8:58)
- Son of Man (Dan. 7:13–14, John 5:27)
- Eternal Father, Mighty God (Isa. 9:6)

Jesus is worshiped:

Matt. 2:11

“After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him.”

Matt. 14:33

“And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, ‘You are certainly God’s Son!’”

Matt. 28:9

“And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.”

Explicit statements to Christ’s deity:

John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”



John 20:28

“Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’”

Titus 2:13

“Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

2 Peter 1:1

“To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

John 1:18

“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”

Romans 9:5

“To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever! Amen.”

Col. 1:15–17a

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

Jesus claims to be God:

John 8:58–59a

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him.”

John 10:30–33

“‘I and the Father are one.’ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’ The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.’”

N.T. passages that directly refer to Christ's deity

Jn. 1:1, 18, 8:58–59, 10:30–33, 20:28	2 Thes. 1:12
Acts 20:28	Tit. 2:13
Rom. 9:5	2 Pet. 1:1
1 Tim. 3:15–16	Heb. 1:8
	Phil. 2:6
	Col. 1:15–17, 2:9

New Testament Quotation: Lord=Christ	Old Testament Source: Yahweh
Matt. 3:3 “prepare the way for the Lord”	Isa. 40:3
Lk. 1:76 “go before the Lord”	Mal. 3:1
Rom. 10:9–13 “call upon the name of the Lord”	Joel 2:32
Rom. 14:9–12 “every knee will bow”	Isa. 45:23
1 Cor. 1:31 “boast in the Lord”	Jer. 9:24
1 Cor. 2:13 “mind of the Lord”	Isa. 40:13
Heb. 1:10 “Lord, you founded the earth”	Ps. 102:25–27

Arrogance of a madman? Christ's implied deity in Matthew:

- Blessings for those who are persecuted because of Him (Matt. 5:11).
- “I have not come to abolish the Law and Prophets” (Matt. 5:17).
- He will say who enters the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 7:21–23).
- We are to give up our lives to follow Him (Matt. 16:25).
- He will repay each person for what they have done (Matt. 16:27–28).
- The basis of the judgment will be man's relationship to Christ (Matt. 25:31–46).
- He speaks of “his angels” (Matt. 13:41; 16:27; 24:31).
- The only thing the rich young ruler lacks for eternal life is to follow Christ (Matt. 19:16–21).
- People are commanded to love Christ more than their own families (Matt. 10:37).
- Eternal life depends on belief in Him and the Father (Jn. 17:3).

Problem Passages

“First born of all creation”

Col 1:15

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”

Answer:

“First born” (prototokos) does not mean that Christ was created. In Scripture it could either mean, “The first born Child,” or it often meant, “one who possessed priority.”

“Only Begotten” (monogenes)

Used five times in N.T. to refer to Christ (Jn. 1:18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9)

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Answer:

Recent linguistic studies have shown that the Greek word monogenes (“only-begotten”) does not come from gennao, “to bear, beget,” but from genos, “kind, class.” Therefore, monogenes would be better translated, “one-of-a-kind” or “unique.” This explains why Isaac is referred to as the monogenes of Abraham when Abraham did have another son, Ishmael (Heb. 11:17).

“Beginning of creation”

Rev. 3:14

“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this.”

Answer:

“Beginning of Creation” simply means that Christ is the origin of all things created.

Problem Passages

“The Father is greater than I”

John 14:28

“You heard that I said to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”

Answer:

A king may be greater than his servant, but that does not mean that his actual being is greater. Just his current position is greater. This passage speaks of functional, no