

An Attempt To Listen To God

The Trinity
The Deity of Our Lord
Part 1

By

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Introduction

The meditation on the glory of the deity of Jesus of Nazareth is a contemplation that is infinite and beyond comprehension. Man can, to some degree, measure the distance of the universe in light years, but to grasp and be grasped by the declaration that Jesus was “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16), is a truth that no mind, celestial, terrestrial, or infernal, can fully enter into. As J.N. Darby wrote: “The Father only, glorious claim, the Son can comprehend”. There are many wonderful manifestations of God, but there had never been, and never will be, a manifestation as superlative as the Lord. He stands unique as the “Oracle and Word of God”.

It is not sufficient to acknowledge that Jesus was divine. He is deity, for there is a distinction. The word “Godhead” is used twice in the New Testament (Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9), but there are two different Greek words used. The word in Romans 1:20 is “divinity”, whereas in Colossians 2:9 it is “deity”. Divine things are primarily an evidence of God and only secondarily do they indicate deity. Deity is not just an evidence of God, it is what God is essentially, His very nature or being. When this paper speaks of the deity of the man Jesus, it is not indicating that He was an evidence by His life that God is, but He was essentially God in all His fulness.

When the books of the New Testament were written, things had changed in the ancient world. It had been some sixty years since the Lord had been crucified, risen, and ascended, and Pentecost was for many a distant memory or that which they had heard about. The Christian church was now in its second and third generation (Heb. 2:3). False Christs had arisen and false doctrines concerning the Lord. One of them was the denial of either His deity or humanity.

The questions were:

- 1) Was Jesus simply a good man or was He the Son of God?
- 2) Did He display, as far as man could, the lovely characteristics of God or was He God without reservation?
- 3) Was He the absolute God or a higher development of a spiritual order?

Such questions had to be faced and answered.

- 1) The many volumes that have been written on this theme indicates the depths of the truth, consequently, a paper such as this can only touch the edge of this immeasurable ocean. As we consider the sacred record it is evident that Jesus is the fulness of deity. He is God.
- 2) Of course the enemy could not let such a truth go unchallenged, and the following are some of the cults and their false teachings about the Lord.
 - a) The Baha’i faith teaches Christ as one of the nine great manifestations of divinity.
 - b) Buddhism teaches Christ is not recognized as Deity.
 - c) Christadelphians teaches Jesus did not exist before his birth to Mary, He is not God.
 - d) Christian Science teaches that Christ is a divine idea and His blood doesn't cleanse us.
 - e) Cooneyites (the Two-by-Twos) teach Jesus inherited Adam's fallen sin nature and was not God.
 - f) Free Masons teach Jesus is a man like us.
 - g) Iglesias ni Cristo teaches that Jesus is a great Savior, but not true God.
 - h) Mormons teach that Jesus was born in heaven as the spirit child of Elohim (Heavenly Father) by one of his wives, and Jesus' brother was Lucifer, who became Satan.
 - i) Seventh Day Adventists teach Jesus is God but also that he is Michael. Christ did not complete salvation, we have to do our bit.
- 3) Who then was and is Jesus of Nazareth? This was the question the Lord presented to the disciples when He asked two questions: “Whom do men say that I am” and “Whom say ye that I am”? (Matt. 16:13-15). There has been and is one of three answers:
 - a) The Ebonite and Socinian answer:
 - i) These ancient and modern day teachers say that Jesus Christ was merely a man, supernaturally born of a virgin, but worthy of admiration. He is presented as the perfect revelation of God but deny His essential deity.

b) The Arian answer:

- i) This answer teaches that the Lord had a beginning and is not eternal. He is presented as the most eminent but was a created Being.

This paper will deal with the Biblical answer, therefore, what are some of the evidences that Jesus of Nazareth was not just a real man, was not just divine, but was unquestionably deity?

It has often been said that Christ never claimed deity, and at its core it is perfectly true, for that which He did was make truthful declarations. There is a difference between a claim and a declaration. I may claim to have "x" number of dollars but that may be a bogus claim, but a truthful declaration can be verified. It is this verification that this paper deals with.

His Deity Is Evidenced By Direct Passages Bearing On The Deity of The Lord

Some of the passages in the New Testament are:

- 1) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). Of particular notice is the tense and the word "was". In verses 1, 2, 4, and 8, "was" is the translation of the preposition "en", imperfect tense indicating no origin.
- 2) In verses 3, 6, and 10 of John chapter 1 is the clause: "was made" a translation of the Greek word "ginomai" which means "to cause to be" and is translated "It came to pass" (Mk. 4:4); "was made" (Jn. 5:4); and in contrast to the Lord Abraham "ginomai" (Jn. 8:58).
- 3) "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). In this verse the Lord is "marked out as being" the Son of God by the spirit of Holiness. Whither this is the Holy Spirit or the characteristic of holiness is irrelevant, the emphasis is that he was not marked out as such by falsehood, but in holiness. If it is the Holy Spirit, then to deny Him as being such is to accuse the Holy Spirit of being a deceiver. If it is the characteristic of holiness then it accuses God of deception, for it was God who raised Him from the dead.
- 4) When Paul wrote to the Colossians he penned the magnificent words: "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19). It is a stupendous expression, for Paul is, by the Holy Spirit, teaching that it was the will of God not only that "all things were created by Him" (Col. 1:16), that "by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:17), that he should be "the Head of the Body . . . the firstborn from the dead", in "all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). In this passage Paul is speaking of the man who is "His dear Son" (v. 13), through "Whom we have redemption through His blood" (v. 14). That which is being emphasized is, as a man, nothing of deity was detracted from Him.

Two of the words that must be noted are:

- a) Fulness: The truths being taught are:
 - i) That every qualification needed for the fulfillment of the already mentioned things is found in its fulness in Christ.
 - ii) That all that God is in His fulness, His every attribute is found in the man Jesus. All that God is in Himself and characteristic, is in Christ.
 - b) Dwelleth: The word means to have permanent residence, to be at home.
 - i) This truth is presented again when Paul writes: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily". (Col. 2:9)
- 5) The writer to the Hebrews wrote: "Who being the brightness of glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power". (Heb. 1:3)
- a) There can be no doubt as to the "who" in this verse. It is evidently the Son, and indeed, the NIV translates it as "The Son".

- b) "Being" - The indication in Greek is present continuous and indicates absolute and timeless existence". The "brightness of glory, the express image of His person, the upholder of all things by the Word of His power" was never something He became or was given, it is that which He always was and did.
- c) "Brightness" - the word indicates not reflection as the light of the sun is reflected by the moon, but the radiance of His own moral glory. The disciples were granted a glimpse of this when on the Holy Mount (2 Pet. 1:18; Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2-3; Lk. 9:29).
- d) The express image of His person". Clearly this could be said of none but one who is fully equal with God. "Express image" is only used here in the New Testament and indicates several truths:
 - i) Being used of a mark made by a die, it was used of the impression made on coins of an individual. However, the image on a coin is not the exact image because it is the likeness of an individual or place, but not its identicalness. It could be said that I am the image of my father, but it could never be said I am the exact image of him. He and I had our own interests, characteristics, and features, and were certainly not identical. Even so called "identical twins" are not absolutely identical.
- e) "Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). This goes beyond that which Paul wrote to the Colossians when he penned the words: "By Him all things consist" (Col. 1:17), that is, are held together. In describing the unseen force that holds the three particles of the atom together (proton, neutron and electron), it is called "electromagnetic force". However, when man denies divine persons, he has no answer what causes the electromagnetic force. Colossians tells us that it is not a "what", but "Who?". The "who" is Christ, who uses the electromagnetic forces He has created to stop them from flying apart. But this goes beyond that. In this passage the Lord is seen as the One who is conveying the ages along. It is not like Atlas holding up the universe (while He does hold it in its place in space), but whether it is dispensations or permission of characteristics, or development of the purposes of God, He is the one who is in complete control.

Statements such as these could never be said of any created being who is not in full equality with deity.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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