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**THE DEITY OF CHRIST**

Ed Nichols

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## INTRODUCTION

### Deity Defined

Jesus asked His disciples the question "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Matt. 16.13. Today the same question is asked of men by the Holy Spirit of God. Men may differ in their opinion as to the deity of Christ and have an unwillingness to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ's deity to them but that will not change the fact that Christ is the Son of God and as such is fully God. The most important question which Jesus asked was not "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" but it was the question asked directly of Peter "But whom say ye that I am?" Jesus is asking that same question today of everyone. You will need to answer as Peter did "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Some of the evidence which declares the deity of Christ is ascribed to Him by merely defining His deity. Other evidence which asserts His deity is the attributes which are applied to Him. However, the greatest affirmation of His deity is found in the prerogatives possessed by Him.

### Names

Christ's deity is honored by many of the names which have been ascribed to Him. He is the Son of God, Lord, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Many other names have been given Him but they will not overshadow the name God.

God. It may seem to be a mystery to our minds that Jesus could be God. The mystery is revealed in Heb 1.2 that Jesus is God and has been since the beginning as God knows time. Hebrews 1.2 declares "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

Son of God. There are many great occurrences which are shared with us through God's word. One of these may very well be the revelation that God is a triune God. That He has three distinct personalities. Even more revealing is that He decreed that He would give a part of Himself for a sinless world that they might have eternal life. The Bible says that Jesus was in the form of God and took upon Himself the form or likeness of men. The manner in which Christ became man is equally incomprehensible. He was born to a virgin while heavenly host made His birth announcement. Philippians 2.6-7 reads,

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

God became man, and the heavenly declaration was "For unto you is born...a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And...ye shall find...the babe...lying in a manger." Luke 2.11-12.

Lord. Thomas gives us insight into Jesus as Lord when he refers to Him as "My Lord and my God." John 20.28. What makes this so emphatic is that it went unrebuked by Christ and therefore added to our knowledge of His deity. In Hebrews 1.8-10 it is written,

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever...therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee...and Thou, Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

Thomas was clearly on target when he combined God and Lord as names for Jesus. It is right that we call Him God and Lord.

King of Kings. Kingship is ascribed to Christ by Strong as he describes Christ sovereignty. He states that,

By virtue of this kingly office, Christ rules all things in heaven and earth, for the glory of God and the execution of God's purpose of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus is returning with His church triumphant and in Rev 19.16 it states "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Lord of Lords. Lord of Lords probably does not completely describe Christ quite as well as He is described in Daniel 2.47 "...Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings". To try to depict a Lord of Lords becomes easy when viewed in the light of God's grace. God having sent Jesus to die for the sins of mankind, sent the Lamb to be slain, and will send Him again as Lord of Lords.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him [are] called, and chosen, and faithful. Rev 17.14.

#### Image.

Christ deity is recognized by His image. This image is described as the image of the living God in Col 1.15. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature:". The first born of every creature certainly gives Him deity in that He was born from an invisible source. Hebrews 1.3 describes Him as the express image of God and as having power even to the taking of a seat at "the right hand of the Majesty on high". The scripture that

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<sup>1</sup>Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, (New Jersey: Revell, 1970)

describes Christ deity in its fullest seems to be Col. 2.9. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." This scripture ascribes to Jesus the completeness of the form of God.

### Resurrection

Death surrounds us, impinging on every side. If Jesus is not the Christ and if He does not possess deity then we are as Paul said "men most miserable." 1 Cor 15.19. Christ deity is proven by His resurrection. Romans 1.4 states that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:". The book of Acts aptly describes the process by which Christ was crucified and resurrected by God. These two verses in Acts 2.23-24 are extremely definitive.

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Numerous other scriptures point to Christ deity based on His resurrection, however those cited should be sufficient for a decision.

### Reconciling

When one recognizes Christ deity, one can then recognize the necessity for being reconciled unto God as expressed in 2 Cor 5.20. This reconciliation with an almighty God is not possible unless some provision is made for that reconciliation. Christ deity is again expressed in that 2 Cor 5.19 states,

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

## ATTRIBUTES

### Omniscience

The scriptures indicate that Christ had not been trained as others had been trained. The Jews asked the question "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7.15. Christ replied "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." John 7.16. Omniscience is defined as knowing all things. This can be said of Christ as we read in the scripture all of the many occurrences where it was evident that Christ had foreknowledge or future knowledge and could only possess this ability by being deity. In John 10.15 Jesus proclaims "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father:" Isa 40.14 aptly describes Christ's omniscience.

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

The answer is no one taught him. He was already omniscience, He is God.

#### Omnipotence

God has been given the attribute of omnipotence. Paul affirms that Christ according to Phil 3.21 is "able even to subdue all things unto himself." and thus has equal power with God. Jesus said in Matt 28:18 "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

#### Omnipresence

The scripture offers many occurrences where Christ deity is confirmed by His omnipresence. One such occurrence is His having been with Nathanael under a fig tree when His physical body was in another location. As deity the scriptures affirm many statements of his omnipresence. He has said he will never leave us, nor forsake us. He said that where two or more are gathered He will be in the midst. Of all the assurances of His eternal presence Matt 28:20 declares "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

#### Divine Immutability

No greater proof of Christ immutability exist than that which is stated in Hebrews 13.8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Heb 7.24 states that "But this man, (Jesus) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Parenthesis added from Heb 7.22. Malachi's confirmation of Christ deity is "For I am the Lord, I change not;" Mal 3.6.

#### Eternal

There can be no greater proof of Christ deity than that of the multitude of clearly enunciated statements which start with or stand alone as "I AM" The Bible abounds with these words of God and words of Jesus Christ. One such occurrence is found in John 8:58.

#### Others

Chafer list other attributes to affirm Christ deity as "life, truth, holiness and love".<sup>2</sup> Hobbs adds two more attributes to the many already listed. He adds "self-existent and immense".<sup>3</sup> Strong list a combination of those attributes sighted and list some as others.<sup>4</sup> What is clear in the study of attributes as descriptive for Christ deity is that man has no concept of all of God's attributes nor complete knowledge of His deity.

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<sup>2</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, Chafer Systematic Theology, 2 Vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 1:211

<sup>3</sup>Herschel H. Hobbs, Fundamentals of Our Faith, (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1960), 31-32.

<sup>4</sup>Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology, (New Jersey: Revell, 1970), 243-303.

## PREROGATIVES

### Forgive Sin

Christ's deity is supported in that he acted directly to demonstrate his power to forgive sin. He had no difficulty with assuming a prerogative that belongs to God. He was able to forgive sin because He is God. One of Christ's confrontations with the scribes was used by Him to demonstrate His authority over sickness but was expressly used to assert his authority over sin.

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,...I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. Mark 2.10-11. Another such incident is found in the book of Luke. "He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." Luke 7.48

### Raise the Dead

If Christ had not been raised from the dead, He could not raise mankind from the dead. Clearly, He is alive and has proclaimed of Himself that "I am the resurrection and the Life." He further affirms that "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" John 11.25.

### Execute Judgment

Of all the assertions of Christ's authority over judgment none seems as strong as that which appears most frequently in the literature of systematic theology. The scripture which clearly defines Christ's judgments is John 5.22. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:".

## OBJECTIONS

Any objection to Christ's deity rest first in the conflict as to whether or not the Bible is without error and if it is the Word of God. One who has had the spirit reveal to them that the Bible is inerrant has no difficulty honoring Christ as deity.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Worship Given

Having come to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is divine and in Him is the fullness of God, then we must give to Him all that is rightfully due Him as deity. We should do as He commands "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." John 5.23. He has been worshiped by angels and men and we should all worship Him as declared in Phil 2.10-11

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



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Ed Nichols a retired university administrator, is an author, teacher and pastor. Nichols holds two earned doctorates. His degrees include a Doctor of Ministry from Luther Rice Seminary, Doctor of Philosophy from Saint Louis University, Master of Education and Bachelor of Arts from University of Missouri at St. Louis

Other writings;

Discipleship: An Evangelistic Approach.

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