

The Deity of Christ

By Ben Webb

Some groups who call themselves "Christian" really aren't Christian at all, because they don't believe in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is because these groups don't really believe the Bible, which constantly affirms the fact that Jesus is God. Not once does the Bible ever state that Jesus is "not" God; yet that is the damnable doctrine they preach. Jehovah's Witnesses and Unitarian Universalists are probably the most well-known groups that deny the Deity of Christ, although there are others. And in a vain attempt to make scripture line up with their own human understanding, every group that denies the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ must change the way certain key passages read, since these passages fail to support their teaching.

Introduction

Although there are numerous scriptures which affirm the Deity of Christ, those who deny this doctrine will "rationalize" these same scriptures, based upon a false assumption: Since we cannot understand how Jesus can be God, they allow human understanding and reasoning to take precedence over any passage which affirms the Deity of Christ. In fact, these groups actually do believe the scriptures which state that there is only one God (Deut.6:4; Malachi 2:10; Mk.12:32; Ro.3:30; 1Cor.8:6; 1Tim.2:5; James 2:19; etc.), because these scriptures can be understood by human reasoning. Yet they either reject or re-translate every scripture which states that Jesus is God, and they try to justify their unbelief by claiming that our human reasoning cannot understand this concept.

There is a major fallacy with their argument, though: We are only finite beings; and as such, we will never be able to understand the infinite God, because His ways are higher than our ways, according to Isaiah 55:8-9 -

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

And those who reject the Deity of Jesus because they cannot understand it are only leaning upon their own understanding, which the scriptures themselves counsel against, in Prov.3:5 -

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."

In actuality, then, we need not understand the Deity of Christ in order to accept the fact that Jesus is God. After all, we cannot even understand how Jesus could walk on water, raise people from the dead, etc. Our human understanding tells us that He shouldn't have been able to do these things. So, because we don't need to understand how miracles occurred in order to believe them, then neither do we need to understand the Deity of Christ before we can believe it. We, as finite beings, cannot understand the infinite God.

To begin with, because these groups cannot find even one passage of scripture which states that Jesus is not God, they must redefine certain words in order to make their point. One of the most common practices is to redefine the word "greater" to mean "better", in John 14:28 -

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

But even though the Father is "greater" than the Son, this does not mean that Jesus was "inferior" to the Father. Nor does it mean that the Father was "better" than the Son in any way. It simply means what it says: The Father is greater, as in authority. One example from the human perspective can be found in the workplace, where the boss is also "greater" than the production workers. But this does not mean that the boss or manager is "better", or that the production workers are somehow "inferior". By the same token, neither does the fact that the Father is "greater" mean that He was "better", or that Jesus was inferior in any way.

Next, we will look at the fact that the scriptures clearly and unequivocally teach that Jesus is truly God, as witnessed by the following passages:

#1: In order to show that Jesus was not inferior to the Father, Paul states that it was Jesus Who made Himself "of no reputation", in Phil.2:5-7 -

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 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:"

It is important to note that according to the above passage, it was not the Father Who made Jesus "of no reputation". Rather, it was Jesus Himself Who did this. Yet the author of the book of Hebrews also states that it was GOD Who made Jesus "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death", in Heb.2:6-9 -

"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast

put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Jesus, then, AS GOD, made Himself "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death", when He "made himself of no reputation" (Phil.2:7)!

Although some who reject the Deity of Jesus may try to argue that He did not take "the form of a servant", and make Himself "of no reputation" (Phil.2:7) until He washed the feet of the disciples (John 12:13-16), scripture states otherwise. Two full years before He washed the disciples' feet, scripture refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as "my servant", in Mt.12:14-18 -

"Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles."

And the above passage is a fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1 -

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

In fact, God actually put His Spirit upon His "servant" Jesus (as the above passage states) when Jesus was baptized! (Mt.3:16; Mk.1:10; Lk.3:22). Thus, when Jesus made Himself "of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil.2:7), He did so long before He washed the feet of the disciples.

So again, Jesus - AS GOD - made Himself "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (Heb.2:9), when He "made himself of no reputation" (Phil.2:7). This occurred when He took "the form of a servant" (Phil.2:7; Is.42:1), and "was made in the likeness of men" (again, Phil.2:7)!

#2: In the New Testament book of Hebrews, the first chapter alone contains numerous references to the fact that Jesus is God. To set the stage, the author of the epistle is referring to the Son as being more than an angel, in Heb. 1:5 -

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

The author then states that all the angels of God are to "worship" the Son, in Heb.1:6-

"And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

Here, the author of the book of Hebrews is quoting an Old Testament passage, in which the Lord stated that "the gods" would even worship the Son, in Psalms 97:7-

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

It is interesting to note that in Hebrews 1:6, when the author quoted the above passage, he was Divinely inspired to use the word "angels" for "gods". So, because Psalms 97:7 states that all the "gods" are to worship God; yet the author of the book of Hebrews understands the passage to mean that all the angels are to worship the Son (Heb.1:6), it is clear that Jesus must be God.

#3: Isaiah also states that "every" knee shall bow to God, in Is.45:22-23 -

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

And in reference to Isaiah's above statement that every knee shall bow unto God, Paul - by divine inspiration - states that every knee shall bow at the name of JESUS, in Phil.2:10-11 -

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and 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."

Obviously, then, in Phil.2:10 above, "every knee" must even include the knees of the angels, who will also worship the Son, Who is God (compare Heb.1:6; see #2 above).

In addition, Paul also quotes Is.45:23 in Ro.14:10-11 -

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

So again, because Isaiah 45:23 states that every knee shall bow to God; yet Phil.2:10 states that every knee shall bow at the name of JESUS, then Jesus must be God.

#4: Continuing in Hebrews chapter 1, the author actually addresses the Son (Jesus) as "God", in Heb.1:8-9 -

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

In the above passage, in addressing Jesus as "God", the author of the Hebrew epistle is quoting from Psalms 45:6-8 -

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad."

Clearly, then, since the author of the book of Hebrews applies the above passage to the Lord Jesus Christ, and addresses Him as "God" by divine inspiration, then Jesus must indeed be God.

However, those who don't accept the Deity of Christ will try to twist the meaning of the above passage: Since the Father is referred to as "thy God" (i.e., the God of Jesus), they will try to portray the Lord Jesus Christ as the "lesser god". And in order to do this, they must again portray the Lord Jesus Christ as being "inferior" to the Father (just as they do with John 14:28). However, as we saw in the introduction, the fact that the Father is "greater" than Jesus does not mean that the Son is "inferior" to the Father. Rather, as God, it was Jesus Who made Himself "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" (Heb.2:9), when He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil.2:7).

In addition, in order to portray the Lord Jesus Christ as being a "lesser god" (i.e., a created being) in Heb.1:8-9, these groups must again use the erroneous argument that since there is only one God, we cannot understand how God can have a God (see the introduction to this study). But this is only a misleading argument, because neither can we understand how Jesus could perform the miracles that He did. Again, it is obvious that we, as finite beings, simply cannot understand the infinite God.

#5: Next, the author of the book of Hebrews also states that the Son (Jesus) "laid the foundation of the earth", and the heavens are the work of HIS hands, in Heb.1:10-12 -

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

Yet the Old Testament scriptures state that it was "GOD" Who "laid the foundation of the earth", in Psalms 102:24-27 -

"I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

Therefore, since Heb.1:10 states that Jesus laid the foundation of the earth; yet Psalms 102:25 states that God laid the foundation of the earth, then Jesus must be God.

#6: Paul also states that ALL things were created by Christ, in Col.1:16 -

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Yet the Bible also states that GOD created the heaven and the earth, in Gen.1:1

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

In addition, Paul also states that God created all things by Jesus Christ, in Eph.3:9 -

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Plus, John also states that all things were made by Him, in John 1:3 -

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

However, those who deny the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ will try to "explain away" most of the above passages, by erroneously claiming that they are references to the "new creation" (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10), rather than the original creation of Gen.1:1. They will claim (with no scriptural support) that God first created Jesus, and then Jesus created everything else.

This argument, though, proves to be unfounded, because Col.1:16 states that "ALL" things were created by Jesus. And if He created "all" things, this would include the original creation of Gen.1:1, as well as the "new creation".

In addition, if the Lord Jesus had been created by God, then He would have had a beginning. Yet it is clear that He actually had no beginning, according to Heb.6:20-7:3 -

"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

So just as Melchisedec had no "beginning of days, nor end of life", then neither did our Lord Jesus Christ have a beginning. Consequently, He could not have been created; but is in fact the Creator Himself!

Jesus, then, is the Creator God (Col.1:16; Eph.3:9; John 1:3), Who laid the foundation of the earth (Heb.1:10-12; Ps.102:24-27).

#7: John states that the Word was God, in John 1:1 -

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

John also states that Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, in John 1:14-15 -

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me."

But again, those who deny the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ may try to argue that John is simply using "personification" in the above passage (personification is a writer's method of applying human traits to an inanimate object). However, the passages which follow John's above statement clearly show that he is not using personification. Instead, he first states that the Word (God Himself, according to verse 1) was made flesh, and that John "bare witness" of "him" (i.e., the Word, according to John 1:15). And indeed, John "bare witness" of Jesus Christ Himself, according to John 3:26 -

"And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

The scriptures also state that John "bare witness" of Jesus, in John 5:32-36 -

"There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34: But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a

shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."

John, then, bare witness to the Word (logos) made flesh, according to John 1:1-15, Who was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who is God.

#8: Thomas called Jesus "My Lord and my God", and was never rebuked for doing so, in John 20:28 -

"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

By contrast, when John fell at the angel's feet, the angel told John not to worship him, by saying, "See thou do it not...worship God..." (Rev. 19:10). So, because Jesus never rebuked Thomas for calling Him God, then He must be God.

#9: Jesus, AS God, raised HIMSELF from the dead

In response to the Jews' request for a sign, Jesus prophesied that He would raise His body from the dead in three days, in John 2:19-22 -

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

Peter, however, stated that it was God Himself Who raised Jesus from the dead, in Acts 2:32 -

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

There are numerous other passages which also state that God raised Jesus from the dead (see Acts 10:40; Acts 13:30; Eph. 1:20; etc.). Therefore, since Jesus had already prophesied that He would raise the temple of His body from the dead in John 2:19, then either He spoke falsely, or He must be God.

Yet those who reject the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ will also try to change the meaning of the above passages, by claiming that the Lord was "really" prophesying about the body of Christ in John 2:19-22. However, this is easily proven to be a false argument, by the simple fact that in John 2:29, Jesus promised to raise up His body "in three days". Thus, if our Lord had been prophesying about the body of Christ, He would have been mistaken, because His "three days" has been extended to almost two thousand years (so far).

Plus, in view of John 2:19-22, Jesus also stated that He had the "power" to take back His life after His crucifixion, in John 10:17-18 -

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

So, according to the above passage, Jesus clearly had the power to take back His Own life after His crucifixion; and He even prophesied that He would raise the temple of His body "in three days". So, either Jesus was a deceiver; or Jesus was Himself deceived; or Jesus really must be God.

The above passages are a powerful testimony to the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they can be found in almost any version of the Bible. There are, however, additional passages which also affirm the Deity of our Lord, but these are found only in the King James Bible (and most of them in the New King James, as well). And since it is my own personal belief (based upon my understanding of the manuscript evidence) that the King James Bible is the inerrant word of God, I will present these passages here, as well:

#10: John explains the concept of one God in three Persons (i.e., the Trinity), in the Johannine Comma, or 1 John 5:7 -

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

The above passage, though, is not found in most versions of the Bible, because it is not found in the earlier Greek manuscripts. However, it should also be noted that there are not very many Greek manuscripts that even contain the book of 1 John, either! And many of the manuscripts that delete this passage also delete other, more accepted passages, as well. The passage, though, IS contained in the Old Latin.

However, those who reject the Johannine Comma claim that it was supposedly fabricated sometime in the Fifth Century. The problem here, though, is that some time around 250 A.D (200 years before the passage was supposedly fabricated), Cyprian actually made a direct reference to 1 John 5:7, as it now appears in the King James Bible! In his *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate* 6, Cyprian writes, 'The Lord says, "I and the Father are One," and again, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost it is written: "And the three are One." '.

There is therefore abundant evidence for the Johannine Comma, and one reason for rejecting the passage is simply due to a Theological bias. My question, then, for those who reject it, is:

How could the passage have been fabricated sometime in the Fifth Century, when Cyprian quoted it 200 years earlier?

Therefore, since the above scriptures refer to the Word as God (1 John 5:7; compare John 1:1-14), and they refer to Jesus as God (John 20:28; Heb.1:8), then Jesus must be God.

#11. Paul states that GOD purchased the church with His Own blood, in Acts 20:28 -

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

God, then, has blood. Acts 20:28 says that He does.

Yet Paul states that we have redemption through the blood of JESUS, in Eph.1:7 -

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

Paul also states that we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, in Col.1:14 -

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Therefore, since God purchased the church with His Own blood (Acts 20:28); yet our redemption is through the blood of Jesus, then Jesus must be God.

#12: Paul also states that God was manifest in the flesh, in 1Tim.3:16 -

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

God, then, was manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory, AS the Lord Jesus Christ.

#13: Paul even refers to the glorious appearing of "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ", in Titus 2:13 -

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

The great God, then, is our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who is God Himself.

#14: Peter also refers to the righteousness of "God and our Saviour Jesus Christ", in 2Pet.1:1 -

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"

Our Saviour Jesus Christ, then, is God.

#15: In addition, Paul states that Christ is "over all, God blessed for ever", in Ro.9:5 -

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen"

Christ, then, is over all, God. Ro.9:5 says He is.

In conclusion, the scriptures repeatedly state that Jesus is God, and they never once state that He is not God. Consequently, if one fails to believe in the Jesus of the scriptures, Who is God Himself, he is only believing in "another Jesus" (2Cor.11:4; compare verse 13).