
A Biblical Argument for the True Deity of Christ

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Introduction

The deity of Christ is one of the major discourses in Christian theology and more specifically in Christological²³¹ study. Arguments abound on the possibility of Christ hypostatic²³² union and in this union is the discourse on his Deity. What does this Deity really suggest? It implies that He is God. This appears puzzling because God is infinite and man is finite. How then can an infinite God become finite (becoming man)?

Bragg avers that “it is necessary, to emphasize the great truth, that in becoming human, Christ did not cease to be Divine, or God. The assumption of humanity did not mean the cessation of His Divine nature, but only the addition of a new nature.²³³ Some have argue that kenosis is a negation of his true deity but Bragg opposed it by positing that;

To empty oneself of His essential nature would be a cessation of that personality entirely. In laying aside His glory, He is no sense laid aside His Deity. This emptying of His glory was the laying aside of the expression of Himself through His Divine Nature and the expression now through His human nature.²³⁴

²³¹ The Doctrine of Christ.

²³² Fully God, Fully man.

²³³ E. C. Bragg, *Systematic Theology Christology* (African Nazarene University, ND), 10.

²³⁴ Ibid. 11.

The researcher observes that the concept of Christ as a Deity began exclusively with the gospel of John (1:1). A critical question that one needs to ask is this; “Is the deity of Christ really biblical”? Are there obvious scriptures to substantiate the concept? These and other things are the foci of this paper. The researcher however expounds the concept of The True Deity of Christ following the variables below.

SITUATING THE DEITY OF CHRIST IN BIBLICAL CONTEXT

In the work of Stephen Wellum, it was noted that in addition to Jesus’ specific claims about Himself, His disciples also acknowledged the deity of Christ.²³⁵ They claimed that Jesus had the right to forgive sins—something only God can do—as it is God who is offended by sin (Acts 5:31; Colossians 3:13; Psalm 130:4; Jeremiah 31:34). In close connection with this last claim, Jesus is also said to be the one who will “judge the living and the dead” (2 Timothy 4:1). Thomas cried out to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Paul calls Jesus “great God and Savior” (Titus 2:13) and points out that prior to His incarnation Jesus existed in the “form of God” (Philippians 2:5-8). God the Father says regarding Jesus: “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever” (Hebrews 1:8).

John states that “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word (Jesus) was God” (John 1:1). This is very categorical establishing the true deity of Christ. Examples of Scriptures that teach the deity of Christ are many (Revelation 1:17, 2:8, 22:13; 1 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Peter 2:6-8; Psalm 18:2, 95:1; 1 Peter 5:4; Hebrews 13:20), but even one of these is enough to show that Christ was considered to be God by His followers.

²³⁵ Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2009), 47.

Argument from Title

In congruent with the above, Jesus is also given titles that are unique to YHWH (the formal name of God) in the Old Testament. The Old Testament title “redeemer” (Psalm 130:7; Hosea 13:14) is used of Jesus in the New Testament (Titus 2:13; Revelation 5:9). Jesus is called Immanuel—“God with us”—in Matthew 1. In Zechariah 12:10, it is YHWH who says, “They will look on me, the one they have pierced.” But the New Testament applies this to Jesus’ crucifixion (John 19:37; Revelation 1:7). If it is YHWH who is pierced and looked upon, and Jesus was the one pierced and looked upon, then Jesus is YHWH.

Paul interprets Isaiah 45:22-23 as applying to Jesus in Philippians 2:10-11. Further, Jesus’ name is used alongside God’s in prayer “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2). In Judaistic context, this would be tantamount to blasphemy if Christ were not deity. The name of Jesus appears with God’s in Jesus’ commanded to baptize “in the name (singular) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).²³⁶

Argument from Actions or Duties

There are actions that can be accomplished only by God which are credited to Jesus. Jesus not only raised the dead (John 5:21, 11:38-44) and forgave sins (Acts 5:31, 13:38), He created and sustains the universe (John 1:2; Colossians 1:16-17). This becomes even clearer when one considers YHWH said He was alone during creation (Isaiah 44:24). Further, Christ possesses attributes that only deity can have: eternity (John 8:58), omnipresence (Matthew 18:20, 28:20), omniscience (Matthew 16:21), and omnipotence (John 11:38-44).

²³⁶ F. F. Bruce & W.J. Martins, *The Deity of Christ* (Manchester: North of England Evangelical Trust, 1964), 24.

Now, it is one thing to claim to be God or to fool someone into believing it is true, and something else entirely to prove it to be so. Christ offered many miracles as proof of His claim to deity. Just a few of Jesus' miracles include turning water to wine (John 2:7), walking on water (Matthew 14:25), multiplying physical objects (John 6:11), healing the blind (John 9:7), the lame (Mark 2:3), and the sick (Matthew 9:35; Mark 1:40-42), and even raising people from the dead (John 11:43-44; Luke 7:11-15; Mark 5:35). Moreover, Christ Himself rose from the dead. Far from the so-called dying and rising gods of pagan mythology, nothing like the resurrection is seriously claimed by other religions, and no other claim has as much extra-scriptural confirmation. This is a pointer to the true deity of Christ.

Historical Facts about Jesus Pointing to His Deity

There are at least twelve historical facts about Jesus that even non-Christian critical-thinking scholars will admit:²³⁷

1. Jesus died by crucifixion;
2. He was buried;
3. His death caused the disciples to despair and lose hope;
4. Jesus' tomb was discovered (or was claimed to be discovered) to be empty a few days later;
5. The disciples believed they experienced appearances of the risen Jesus;
6. After this, the disciples were transformed from doubters into bold believers;

²³⁷ Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, 47-50.

7. This message was the center of preaching in the early Church;
8. This message was preached in Jerusalem;
9. As a result of this preaching, the Church was born and it grew;
10. Resurrection day, Sunday, replaced the Sabbath (Saturday) as the primary day of worship;
11. James, a skeptic, was converted when he also saw the resurrected Jesus;
12. Paul, an enemy of Christianity, was converted by an experience that he believed to be an appearance of the risen Jesus.

Even if someone were to object to this specific list, only a few are needed to prove the resurrection and establish the gospel: Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and appearances (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). While there may be some theories to explain one or two of the above facts, only the resurrection explains and accounts for them all.²³⁸

Critics admit that the disciples claimed they saw the risen Jesus. Neither lies nor hallucinations can transform people the way the resurrection did.

First, what would they have had to gain? Christianity was not popular and it certainly did not make them any money.

Second, liars do not make good martyrs. There is no better explanation than the resurrection for the disciples' willingness to die horrible deaths for their faith.²³⁹ Yes, many people die for

²³⁸Stephen Wellum *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, 47-50.

²³⁹Lee Strobel, *Case For Christ* (Grand Rapids: Bakker Books, 1998), 139ff.

lies that they think are true, but people do not die for what they know is untrue.

Conclusion

It is discovered that Christ claimed He was YHWH, that He was deity (not just “a god” but the one true God); His followers (Jews who would have been terrified of idolatry) believed Him and referred to Him as God. Christ proved His claims to deity through miracles, including the world-altering resurrection. In fact, no other hypothesis can explain these facts. If the Bible is inerrant and infallible which most of us who are conservative believes in, the researcher wants to agree with all internal evidences pointing to the fact that the deity of Christ is biblical. His true deity is expressed beyond his humanity; it is displayed in most miraculous deeds we can allude to today.

Sources

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