

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
CHRISTOLOGY: JESUS CHRIST
PART 6

This morning we are in part 6 of our study on Jesus Christ in our series called Foundation of Faith! Over the past several weeks we have looked at Jesus possessing the attributes of God. We looked at His humanity in the Incarnation. We looked at extra biblical resources that spoke of Christ. And this morning we are going to look at the deity of Jesus, does the Scriptures support this claim, does Jesus speak of this being true, what is the evidence.

Again, for most of you if not all of you, this is not a problem for you. There is no doubt in your mind that Jesus is God but let me say this. There are many out there that are denying this fact, they are being taught that Jesus never claimed to be God, that this is a made up doctrine that occurred later in church history and people believe these lies instead of the truth of God's Word. And thus, we need to know how to defend what we believe to be true!

Many of you may remember the popular book and the not so popular movie called The Da Vinci Code. The book was written by Dan Brown and the movie was directed by Ron Howard and in either case, it is a fairy tale, it is not the truth about Jesus. But let me show you how they discredit the Bible and they deny the deity of Jesus Christ. First of all listen to what they have to say in this book about the Bible.

According to Dan Brown in his book:

“The Bible is a product of *man*, my dear. Not of God,” says Sir Leigh Teabing in *The Da Vinci Code*. “The Bible did not fall magically from the clouds. Man created it as a historical record of tumultuous times, and it has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book.” (Page 231)

“But you told me the New Testament is based on fabrications.” Langdon smiled. “Sophie, every faith in the world is based on fabrication. That is the definition of faith – acceptance of that which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove.” (Page 341).

“Those who truly understand their faiths understand the stories are metaphorical. . . . Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality. And living in that reality helps millions of people cope and be better people.” (Page 342). [In other words, the stories of Jesus are not true, they are a lie, but it is helpful for living in this world to believe a lie. How foolish is that?]

Now, in regards to the deity of Jesus, listen to how the scholar Sir Leigh Teabing explains to Sophie Neveu what really happened at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D.

“At this gathering,” Teabing said, “many aspects of Christianity were debated and voted on – the date of Easter, the role of the bishops, the administration of sacraments, and, of course, the divinity of Jesus.”

“I don’t follow. His divinity?”

“My dear,” Teabing declared, “until that moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal.”

“Not the Son of God?”

“Right,” Teabing said. “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea.”

“Hold on. You’re saying Jesus’ divinity was the result of a vote?”

“A relatively close vote at that,” Teabing added.

- Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, p. 233

And this issue of Jesus not being God is far reaching, many believe this idea to be true and yet, it goes completely contrary to what the Scriptures are saying. It is amazing how many people have come up with their opinion of Jesus and that does say a lot when you think about it. It says that Jesus is a significant figure in the history of the world, so much so that people have to come up with ideas of who He is but in doing so, they negate the greatest resource to that question and that is the Word of God! Thus, Jesus is very controversial but He is only controversial because people do not want to believe that He is Almighty God and they are accountable to Him.

Philip Yancey wrote, “It occurs to me that all the contorted theories about Jesus that have been spontaneously generating since the day of his death merely confirm the awesome risk God took when he stretched himself out on the dissection table – a risk he seemed to welcome. Examine me. Test me. You decide.”

That is what I want you to do as we look at this topic of the deity of Jesus Christ, which will take us a few weeks to finish up. I want you to take a good look at Jesus, test Him to see if what He has said about Himself is true. And then, you decide and if you come to the conclusion that Jesus is not God by the time we are done, it is not because there is no evidence. The reason is as simple as this. You don't want to believe that He is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity and that is your decision, but also know that there are consequences to your decision, eternal ones.

Now some may say that this is not fair. How can a loving God send people to Hell? Folk's, God does not send us to Hell. God has provided a way out, a way back to Him and that is through Jesus Christ. Now you can reject that, you can refuse to ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, that is your choice, but then God did not send you to Hell, you went there on your own free will! So let's look at the evidence and you will see for yourself, that Jesus is God, He claimed to be God, the Father said that He is God, He was worshiped as God, Satan and the Demons knew that He is God, the angels declared that He is God, His life declared that He is God and-so-on.

It is as Thomas Schultz wrote, "Not one recognized religious leader, not Moses, Paul, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc., has ever claimed to be God; that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only religious leader who has ever claimed to be deity and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God."

Now here's the thing. There are those that do try to claim to be God today. There are those that even claim that we are all Gods and we have just forgotten our Godhood you might say. Folk's, I don't care who claims to be God, where is the evidence that they are God? You see, that is the bottom line. I can tell you that I am a great construction worker, I can build anything and some may believe it but only until they see my work and then they will know that I am not a great construction worker. You see, there is no evidence to that fact. That is true for those that claim to be God today or even in the past, there is no evidence to show that this is true, except for Jesus and we will see that as we look into the deity of Jesus Christ!

Think of it like this and then we will look at the claims of Jesus, that He is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity. We are told,

Buddha never claimed to be God. Moses never claimed to be Jehovah. Mohammed never claimed to be Allah. Yet Jesus Christ claimed to be the true and living God.

Buddha simply said, "I am a teacher in search of the truth."

Jesus said, "I am the Truth."

Confucius said, "I never claimed to be holy."

Jesus said, "Who convicts me of sin?"

Mohammed said, "Unless god throws his cloak of mercy over me, I have no hope."

Jesus said, "Unless you believe in me, you will die in your sins."

- Unknown Author

In other words, Jesus is God and I will show you that He claimed to be God even though people like to say that He never said those words.

4. THE DEITY OF JESUS

JESUS CLAIMED TO BE GOD

There are many places we can begin to look at this claim of Jesus stating that He was God and I would like to start in Luke chapter 4 as Jesus began His ministry, as He was in His hometown of Nazareth and we are told beginning in verse 16 of Luke chapter 4, **“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”** Luke 4:16-21.

Now let me give some information on these verses and then I will show you why I believe Jesus was speaking of His divinity here, that He is the Messiah. Jesus has been baptized in the Jordan River. Then He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit of God to be tempted. He went to Galilee and taught in the synagogues. And now Jesus returns home to Nazareth, the place where He grew up, and He enters the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was His custom, and read and taught the people the Word of God. It would seem that this style of worship in the Synagogue got its start when the Jews were taken captive to Babylon. They had no temple so they would gather and read and study the Scriptures. Then, when they were allowed to return home, they kept up this style and by the time of Jesus, it was a common practice. The order of the service went like this. They would open up with prayer and praise. Then someone would read from the Law. Then there would be a reading from the prophets. And then a teaching from what was read, usually by a visiting rabbi or teacher.

And think about the coincidence that on this day Jesus is handed the scroll of Isaiah to read from! Folk's, that was no coincidence and what Jesus read is very important, especially as He is beginning His public ministry. You see, He quoted out of Isaiah 61:1-2 and we might not see this as important, but this was a Messianic portion of Isaiah. The text here is speaking of the coming Messiah and notice what Jesus is saying here, listen to what He said, "**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**" In other words He is telling them that He is the Messiah, what the Old Testament prophets spoke of, He is God Almighty!

First of all let's look at what He claimed to do. You see, He claimed to rectify the devastation that sin has brought to our lives. First He is going to "**preach the gospel to the poor.**" In other words, sin has robbed us of what God has for us, it impoverishes us, it ruins us, and the Messiah has come to bring the good news to the poor, to all who are in sin. No longer will sin impoverish us because Jesus has set us free!

Next, He will "**heal the brokenhearted.**" And just think about that one for a minute. Look at the broken hearts that sin has caused, look at the devastation it brings to our lives and Jesus has come to heal those broken hearts!

He will also bring "**deliverance to the captives.**" We are slaves to sin, in bondage to sin and the Messiah has come to set us free from the bondage, to remove those chains that have us ensnared!

Not only that but He will also bring "**recovery of sight to the blind.**" Again, one of the affects of sin is that it blinds us, we can't see that what we are doing is wrong and the Messiah has come to heal our spiritual and our moral blindness. He will open our eyes!

And lastly, He will "**set at liberty those who are oppressed.**" Again, sin oppresses us, it dominates our lives, it afflicts us and keeps us down and the Messiah has come to bring liberty, freedom, from that sin that is oppressing us!

Thus, we see here that the Messiah has come to bring a fivefold deliverance from the damage that sin brings. And keep this in mind; Jesus did not come just to preach deliverance from sin and its affects. He did not come to just bring deliverance from sin and its affects. Jesus came to **BE** deliverance for us from sin and the affects it has upon our lives! The Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world!

Now here's the thing. This verse here in Luke, who is quoting out of Isaiah chapter 61, was known by the Jews as Messianic or it was speaking of the Messiah. Now, how do I come to the conclusion that the Messiah was God and not just a man used by God? First of all I think most of us would agree that Jesus is our Savior, He came to redeem man from our sins. That is not in question; the part that is in question for some is His deity. Well, let me show you in Isaiah how the redeemer, the Savior is God Almighty, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ! Listen to what we are told in Isaiah 44:6-8, **“Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’”**

And we might miss the significance of this verse in the English, but the Hebrew speaks loud and clear. You see, this is a very interesting verse indeed. First of all when you see **“LORD”** in all capitals it is speaking of Yahweh. Also, this verse is spoken in the first person singular, and yet it speaks of Yahweh who is the King of Israel, **AND** His Redeemer, the Yahweh of hosts. I think this is very clear, don't you? We see Yahweh the King of Israel or God the Father. We see His Redeemer the Yahweh of hosts or Jesus. You see, He is our redeemer; the Scriptures speak clearly on that. And thus, what you see here is One God, manifested in 2 of the 3 persons of the Godhead.

Now the Jehovah witnesses like to tell you the Redeemer is not Jesus, but Jehovah, the Almighty God, for Jesus is only a mighty God. There are two big problems with that kind of thinking and it is not because I say so, it is what the Scriptures are teaching. First of all this verse tells us that there are no other God's, and that is repeated several times in chapters 44 & 45 of Isaiah. Thus, Jesus can't be "a god" for that would be contrary to the Scriptures!

Secondly, in Revelation 1:8 we read "**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'**" Now if you are still not sure this is speaking of Jesus, look at Revelation 1:17-18. These verses read like this, "**And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.'**"

Thus, when did Yahweh or Jehovah die? The Jehovah witnesses can't answer that question because they don't believe Jesus is equal with the Father. But it is very clear in this verse that Jesus was put to death on the cross of Calvary and rose on the third day. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is Yahweh or Jehovah our Redeemer, the second Person of the Holy Trinity!

So we have the Jehovah witnesses who believe Jesus is a god and not Almighty God. We have the Mormon's who believe you can become a god. And this has even crept into the church! But God says that He knows of no other God, not even one. And if God doesn't know of any, why do we think otherwise? In fact, for those that think this way, listen to what Jeremiah 10:11 say's of them. We read "**Thus you shall say to them: 'The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.'**" Don't be foolish thinking you are a god or will become a god, for if you do, you will perish!

You see, there are no "grades" or "degrees" to true deity. There are false gods, symbolic gods, and the true God - and the only true God is Yahweh, the LORD. And thus, since God is the only God, He is the only *solid ground* to build our life upon. Jesus is God and in His teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth He proclaimed that truth whether we accept it or not!

Another great Scripture reference regarding the claims that Jesus made about His deity is found in Matthew 22:41-46 where we are told, "**While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David.'** He said to them, '**How then does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'?" If David then calls Him "Lord," how is He his Son?' And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.**"

Now we need to understand here that Jesus has been grilled by the religious leaders throughout the day. Here we see the Pharisees and the Herodians, who did not get along but here they were willing to work together to catch Jesus, to mess Him up. You see, they were questioning Him regarding the paying of taxes trying to trip Jesus up and Jesus told them to give to Caesar that which belongs to him and give to God the things that are God's! He nailed them. And please understand that Jesus was not trying to trip them up, He was sharing the truth and the truth tripped them up.

Next there was the question of the resurrection, if there really was a resurrection. And here we see the Sadducees, who don't believe in the resurrection of the body and thus, they were sad, you see, and they try to trip Jesus up with this unbelievable story, but they felt it would trap Him. The story went like this. If a man who is married to a woman dies, and his brother marries her to keep the dead brother's name, and he dies, and all eight brothers end up marrying her and they die, in the resurrection whose wife will she be? Hey, that is not my question. I want to know what she put in the Matzo ball soup! But Jesus answered them by saying, **“... ‘Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken.”** Mark 12:24-27.

In other words, these religious leaders did not know what they were talking about. They spoke as fools and because of their preconceived ideas, they refused to see the truth that Jesus gave to them!

It doesn't end there, one of the Scribes came up to Him, testing Him, and asked what the greatest commandment was and Jesus answered them out of both tables of the Law, to honor God and your fellow man. Now this man and those who were listening were blown away, so much so they did not question Him anymore. Was it that they had no more questions? No, it was that their attempts in catching Jesus in what He would say failed!

Now, since they are not asking Jesus anymore questions, Jesus asks them this fascinating question, speaking to the Pharisees who had gathered around Him, “**What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?**” Now that is a great question! Why was this such a great question you may wonder? Listen carefully. The religious leaders, including the Pharisees believed that the Messiah was going to be a man like Moses and not God! Thus, they said that He would be the Son of David, which Jesus was and is but it goes way beyond that and Jesus is trying to get them to think outside their preconceived ideas about the Messiah and look at what the Scriptures are teaching instead of what they have been taught, which was wrong!

And Jesus will quote out of Psalm 110:1, a Psalm of David who wrote by the power, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And in that Psalm David calls his son, “**Lord**” which is not kosher! You see, a father would never call his son lord, but a son would call his father lord or Adonai. And David says that Yahweh has said the David's son, calling Him Lord that He will rule and reign one day.

Now here's the thing. Jesus is stretching them, getting them to think about what they just said and what the Scriptures are saying. Again, the religious leaders knew that in the patriarchal society that they were living in, a father would always be treated with respect and honor, no matter how old the son was, the father would never, ever call the son lord or Adonai. Thus, as they listened, Jesus asked them, "How can this be? How can David call his son Lord?"

What a great question that is and what Jesus wanted them to see is that the Messiah, the Son of David was to be much more than just the Son of David, He was to be the Son of God. Remember what Paul said in Romans 1:3-4, "**concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**" The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, "**[The Gospel] regarding His Son, Who as to the flesh (His human nature) was descended from David, And [as to His divine nature] according to the Spirit of holiness was openly designated the Son of God in power [in a striking, triumphant and miraculous manner] by His resurrection from the dead, even Jesus Christ our Lord (the Messiah, the Anointed One).**"

You see, not only the Son of David but the Son of God and thus, David rightly called Him Lord, called the Messiah Lord because He was more than just his son, He is Almighty God! There are the facts, the truth is right before them and all they have to do is look at what their own Scriptures had said and they would see this truth about the Messiah, about Jesus.

But instead of hearing and thinking about what Jesus had said to them, they were silent! Why were they silent? Because it went against what they believed to be true, even though their own Scriptures clearly spoke this truth. And I always find it amazing and sad that when people are confronted with the truth, when they are being challenged to examine what they believe, they become silent and negate what has been said. They are no longer interested because it goes against what they have believed to be true, even though the evidence for what they believe has been shown as wrong to them.

Mark does tell us regarding this same event that “**. . . the common people heard Him gladly.**” Mark 12:37. You see, the common people were excited, they were happy to hear that good news and they received it with joy. How about you? Are you ignoring God because He is stretching you, because what you are hearing goes against what you thought was true? Are you becoming silent because you are being challenged and you don't like it, you are comfortable where you are at even though it is a lie? Don't be like these religious leaders but be open to what God is showing you in His Word, be open to the truth even if it goes against what you have been taught by the traditions of men!

And so we see here that Jesus shows these religious leaders and us that the Messiah was not just a prophet, not just a man, but the Son of God, He is God Almighty!

Now for those who deny that the Scriptures speak of the deity of Jesus Christ, what planet are you on? The Gospel of John is written showing us the deity of Jesus Christ from the opening verse to the closing verse. So to say that the Scriptures never say that Jesus is God is a lie! In John 20:30-31 John tells us, “**And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**” The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, “**There are also many other signs and miracles which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written (recorded) in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of God, and that through believing and cleaving to and trusting and relying upon Him you may have life through (in) His name [through Who He is]. [Ps 2:7, 12.]**”

Think about what John is saying here. The reason he wrote this gospel, this good news is to show that Jesus is God and by believing in Him, by asking Him to be your Lord and Savior you will have life, everlasting life. Isn't that interesting? This idea of Jesus being God did not come into play in the third or fourth century's A. D. but it is what the disciples of Jesus believed to be true and Jesus did not correct them because it was the truth, He is God! So if you read the Gospel of John, the conclusion you will come to is that Jesus is God, that is the focus of this gospel! I will share with you some of the passages that speak of this truth, because there is many more we need to look at.

In John 10:22-30 we are told, **“Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, ‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.’”**

At this point in the earthly ministry of Jesus we are only some four months away from the cross of Calvary. Now John tells us that there is a feast in Israel that was in the winter and that may be confusing since all the feasts were in the spring and summer and fall. So what’s this feast all about? The Feast of Dedication or the Feast of Lights we call today Hanukkah and this feast began on December 25th and it commemorated the rededication of the temple by the Maccabees in 165 B. C. after the temple was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes several years earlier.

The story goes that as they began to light the lamps of the seven-branched oil burning lamp they only had enough oil to last one day and it would take several days to make this pure oil for the lamps. Also, once the lamps were lit they were not to go out. But a miracle took place and the lamps burned for eight days and thus, they celebrated this feast as a memorial of that day - the Feast of Lights!

Now the Jews “**surrounded**” Jesus and the idea here is they closed in around Him, He was pinned in you might say. Now why did they do this, did they come seeking the truth? Absolutely not! How do I know that? Because of the question that they ask Jesus, “**How long do you keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ tell us plainly?**”

You might think I am being too critical here but how much more did they need to see and hear before they believed that Jesus is the Messiah, if He is the Christ? Think about this, only some 4 months from the cross and thus some 3 years of ministry and His life showed that He was the Messiah, healing the sick, raising the dead, comforting the broken hearted. His actions were the fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets spoke regarding the Messiah! So they were not interested in the truth.

Remember what we are told in Isaiah 35:5-6 of the coming Messiah, “**Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.**” His works are the evidence of who He is! And then, when John the Baptist was in prison he was questioning who Jesus was or if they should look for another and he sent his disciples back to Jesus to find out and this is what Jesus said to them, “**. . . ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.’**” Matthew 11:4-6. In other words, Jesus is saying that He is the fulfillment of what the Old Testament prophets said of the Messiah! Thus, Jesus tells them that they do not follow Him because they are not His sheep; they don’t hear His voice because they don’t believe!

Jesus then makes this glorious promise to us regarding what our Great Shepherd does for us, how He cares for us. He will not allow anyone to come and take us away from Him. Not only that, but the Father has us in His hand also, and no one can snatch us out of His hand. Thus, in saying that, do you really believe the Devil or anyone else can come and snatch us away, that we can lose our salvation, our eternal life? No way! Think of it like this. Place one hand out, then your other hand on top of it. This is the hand of Jesus and the hand of the Father brought down around our lives and we are in the middle. You see, no one can snatch us out of their hands! This to me is one of the clearest passages on the security of our salvation, eternal security!

Now verse 30 is like the pinnacle or the top of the mountain. And for all those who continue to try to deny the deity of Jesus, this verse just blows you out of the water! The word that Jesus used here for “one” (HEN in the Greek) does not suggest that the Father and the Son are the same identical person. It speaks of them being one in essence. You see, the Father is God, the Son is God, but don’t make the mistake as some do and say that then the Father is the Son and the Son is the Father as the Jesus Only people do. That is not what is being said here.

Spiros Zodhiates put it this way in his book *The Complete Word Study New Testament*: “Heis means one numerically while hen means one in essence, as in John 10:30; “I and my Father are one (hen)” (i.e., one in essence although two different personalities). Had it said heis, it would have meant one person.” You see, He is speaking of unity not identity! And thus, the only way that Jesus could say this; this could only be true if He was as much deity as the Father and He is!

Again, maybe you think I am making too much of this, that I am going overboard trying to prove that Jesus is God from this verse. Folk's, you don't have to know Greek to get this point, that is how clear it is. You see, just read the next two verses and you will see the Jews knew exactly what He was saying and they were ready to respond appropriately, at least in their own minds!

In John 10:31-33 we are told, **“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’”** Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts verse 33, **“The Jews replied, We are not going to stone You for a good act, but for blasphemy, because You, a mere Man, make Yourself [out to be] God.”** And The Living Bible, **“They replied, ‘Not for any good work, but for blasphemy; you, a mere man, have declared yourself to be God.’”** And lastly, The New Living Translation says, **“They replied, ‘We’re stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God.’”**

Let's look at what transpired here a little closer. Now, why in the world did these Jews pick-up stones to stone Him, to stone Jesus? Because they understood what Jesus said, not like the Jehovah Witnesses and other cults do today who try to deny the deity of Jesus. He claimed to be God, one in essence with the Father! At least the Jews were honest. And here is another thing. How in the world can anyone say that Jesus never claimed to be God? How can they say that His followers or those much later in history made Him into a God? These are Christ's own words, that He and the Father are one; they are God, one God manifested in three distinct persons. All you can say is that either what Jesus has said is true or He is a liar and the only reason you will say that He is a liar is that you don't agree with His words, but that does not make you right!

Again, why were they going to stone Him? Because Jesus, being just a man in their minds, also claimed to be God, equal in essence to the Father, and He is! And why were they going to stone Him to death? Because blasphemy against the living God was punishable by stoning! You see, it doesn't get any clearer than that!

Now here's the thing. Those listeners of Jesus day had only two options to what they heard regarding Jesus being God. They could either accept His deity or reject it and unfortunately they rejected it and were prepared to stone Him!

Now some cults, like the Jehovah Witnesses claim that they just misunderstood Jesus, that He never claimed to be God. I am not sure if they even think about what they believe, because that makes no sense. If you were going to kill me because you thought I claimed to be God and yet I never said that, what do you think I would do? I would try to correct your misunderstanding of what I said, right? Absolutely that is what I would do and you would do it too! Now again the Jehovah Witnesses have a response to this, they told me, “Like a lamb before his shearer is silent, so was Jesus!”

It sounds good but it makes no sense. Jesus was not a quiet man but spoke boldly the truths of God and condemned those that were wrong, that were teaching false doctrine. He called the religious leaders brood of vipers. He spoke before the High Priest. It may have sounded good at first but it does not fit the picture we have of Jesus in the New Testament. At least the Jews were honest about what Jesus said, that He was God and that is why they were going to stone Him to death!

Let me give you one more before I close this morning and we will continue looking at the deity of Jesus next time. In John 5:16-23, after Jesus healed the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda, we are told, **“For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.’”**

When you think about what they want to do with Jesus, it is almost funny. They accuse Jesus of healing on the Sabbath, which was not kosher. You could not heal a man because it was a day of rest. You could bandage his wounds but no further. And yet Jesus steps in and heals this man who was paralyzed and they are so upset that He did this on the Sabbath that they want to stone Him to death, they wanted to kill Him! I thought it was the Sabbath? It was but it was okay for them to kill a man but not for Jesus to heal a man on the Sabbath!

And the Jews knew exactly where Jesus was going with this. By the words that He spoke He was claiming to be equal with God, He was claiming to be God! Again, to say that Jesus never claimed to be God goes against what the Scriptures are teaching us! And then, in verses 19-23 we see Jesus use these words, “**Most assuredly**” or “**Verily, verily**” and we may miss the point that Jesus is making here but we can translate this into our vernacular like this, “Listen carefully and get this straight” or “Pay attention!”

What is Jesus speaking about? First of all He freely has submitted Himself to do the Father’s will. The relationship between the Father and the Son is not a master, slave relationship but one based in love. The Father has given judgment into the hands of His Son. And here is the kicker for all those who reject the deity of Jesus, if you don’t love the Son then you don’t love the Father! In other words, if you are hurling abuse at Jesus, you are actually hurling it at God, and that it is God who is outraged by their actions, by their treatment of Jesus! The Jewish religious leaders had this problem and so do the so-called Christian cults as well as others who see Jesus as “a god” or the brother of Lucifer or just a great prophet a great teacher and not God! I didn’t say that, God did!

Of these verses here in John chapter 5, Merrill C. Tenny, a respected biblical scholar wrote, “The Jews were angry because of Jesus’ violation of the Sabbath, but they were furious when he was so presumptuous as to claim equality with the Father. This claim of Jesus widened the breach between his critics and himself, for they understood that by it he was asserting his deity. His explanation shows that he did not claim identity with the Father as one person, but he asserted his unity with the Father in a relationship that could be described as son-ship.” (Merrill C. Tenny, *The Gospel According to John*, p. 64).

One other point from A. T. Robertson, who wrote, “Jesus distinctly says, ‘My Father’ (ho pater mou). Not ‘our Father’, a claim to a peculiar relation to the Father. Worketh even until now (hoes arti ergazetai). . . . Jesus put himself on a par with God’s activity and thus justifies his healing on the Sabbath.” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, pp. 82-83).

Folk’s, our salvation is found in no one else but Jesus and thus, it is very important that we determine, biblically speaking who Jesus Christ is. And I think it has been very clear from what we have seen so far that Jesus is God, we have seen His deity, the second Person of the Holy Trinity! If you deny this fact, then you are lost in your sins because apart from recognizing the deity of Jesus, you can’t be saved!

As I begin to close this morning, listen to this story. We are told,

[The late] Pastor D. James Kennedy said in a sermon, “I remember years ago talking to a man in his home about Christ and asking him who he thought Jesus was. He said, ‘Oh, He’s a wonderful man. He was the greatest man who ever lived, the most loving and gracious person who ever walked upon this earth.’

“I said, ‘Let me tell you something I believe will startle you. According to the Scriptures, and the historic Christian faith, Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter of Galilee was and is the eternal Creator of the universe, the omnipotent, omniscient, and Almighty God.’

“Instantly, his eyes filled with tears and this man of about fifty-five or sixty said, ‘I have been in church all of my life and I never heard that before. But I have always thought this is the way it out to be – that God ought to be like Jesus.’”

- D. James Kennedy, *Is Jesus God*

My prayer as I close this morning is that you would leave here without a doubt who Jesus is, that He is Almighty God, our Savior and apart from asking Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives, apart from recognizing who He, we will die in our sins. If there are any out there that are questioning this about Jesus, talk with me after study this morning. If you are listening on the radio or Internet call me on the church line or e-mail me. You see, it is the most important decision you will ever make in your life, it has eternal consequences attached to it!

And for those of you who know the truth, those of you who are saved, may you know and understand these Scriptures so you can defend your faith, so you can give a defense to people of what you believe; that Jesus is Almighty God, the second person of the Holy Trinity!