

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
CHRISTOLOGY: JESUS CHRIST
PART 11

This morning we are in part 11 of our study on Jesus Christ as we continue in our series Foundation of Faith. And I do realize some of you have been Christians for a long time and you wonder why we are spending so much time on this subject of faith. The reason is simple, if the foundation is not strong, if the foundation is not level, then the rest of the structure is in danger.

Let me share with you a few things and you will see what I mean when I say that the church in general has become Biblically illiterate. George Lindbeck, a Yale theologian, made these remarks regarding the decreasing knowledge of Scripture and this is from a professor's perspective, what he has seen over the years. "When I first arrived at Yale, even those who came from nonreligious backgrounds knew the Bible better than most of those now who come from churchgoing families." (George A. Lindbeck, *The Church's Mission to a Postmodern Culture*, p. 45).

What a sad statement to make, even though it is true. Over the years we have become Biblically illiterate to the point that Christians know less now about the Bible and the Christian faith than those who were non-Christians years ago. Now the response by some is, “We are just too busy to take that kind of time to study. We have work, family, there is after school sports, there is dance, there is music, there is this and there is that. My family is just way too busy!” That sounds about right for us in this country but think about the time we put into watching television shows, playing or watching sporting events, doing this and doing that and what gets pushed aside is our time in the Word of God and our fellowship with other believers, the gathering together to worship and study about the Lord. And because of that not only have we become Biblically illiterate, but so have our children, there is just no time is the reason and it is not a good one!

George Barna puts this into perspective for us when he said, “Literally millions of Americans who declare themselves to be Christians contend that Jesus was just like the rest of us when it comes to temptation – fallen, guilty, impure, and Himself in need of a savior.” (George Barna, Barna Research OnLine, “Religious Beliefs Vary Widely by Denomination.”). And please understand what they believe. If Jesus was a sinner in need of a Savior, then He is not Almighty God and thus, He must be a good teacher, or prophet, but just a man and not God!

Let me share these words from Gary Burge who wrote,

In short, the spiritual life has become less a matter of learning than it is a matter of experiencing. This has resulted in Christian ministries that put less premium on education than they do on personal development and therapeutic wholeness.

Thus sermons become more therapeutic and less instructional; and the validity of what we do on Sunday morning is grounded in what we feel, not in what we think.

Rather than explaining the historical setting of a passage, texts become springboards for devotional reflection. Biblical passages are taken out of context as the preacher searches for those stories that evoke the responses or attitudes desired.

The heart of a ‘good’ sermon is fast becoming the ‘emotional work’ that can be done in 20 minutes preaching time.

That is it in a nutshell. Christian faith is not being built on the firm foundation of hard-won thoughts, ideas, history, or theology. Spirituality is being built on private emotional attachments.

- Gary M. Burge, “The Greatest Story Never Read: Recovering biblical literacy in the church,”
www.christianitytoday.com/ct/9t9/9t9045.html

Now that is it in a nutshell! We want to experience God and negate what the Scriptures have to say. We feel our experience speaks to us more about God than God does in His Word! We want the blessings of God, the good life apart from God and that will not work! And isn’t it true that our sermons are more therapeutic and less dealing with the doctrine of God’s Word! And yes, God’s Word ministers to us but we take things out of context to make it fit what we want to teach and thus, that will not help us in the end! Again, listen to what George Barna said regarding Christians in America today and their knowledge of the Scriptures. He wrote,

- The most widely known Bible verse among adult and teen believers is “God helps those who help themselves”—which is not actually in the Bible and actually conflicts with the basic message of Scripture.

- Less than one out of every ten believers possess a biblical worldview as the basis for his or her decision-making or behavior.
- When given thirteen basic teachings from the Bible, only 1% of adult believers firmly embraced all thirteen as being biblical perspectives.

How sad is that and yet it continues to get worse because we have become apathetic to God's Word and if you don't exercise your mind with the Word of God, you will lose that Biblical worldview and have a secular worldview. Think of faith like a muscle and if you don't exercise what happens to that muscle? It gets weak, it gets flabby and for some that don't use a muscle at all, it atrophies! And the end result of that kind of faith and it is what we see happening in America is that Christians are mixing their faith with the faith of other religions, combining them together and coming up with their own faith ideas and this is obviously not Biblically accurate or helpful but dangerous. You doubt this? Then again listen to what George Barna and Mark Hatch have observed,

The average born-again, baptized, churchgoing person has embraced elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, Scientology, Unitarianism and Christian Science - without any idea they have just created their own faith.

- George Barna and Mark Hatch, *Boiling Point: It Only Takes One Degree*, 187

We will deal more with this when we study the topic of the Bible, but what I want you to see here is that there is a problem in the church today and that is why we are taking our time as we look at our Foundations of Faith. It is that important in the days that we are living in to know what we believe and not only know what we believe but why we believe it and where we can find it in the Scriptures.

This morning we are continuing to look at the deity of Jesus Christ, that He is Almighty God. And we have dug deep into this subject because it is a matter of life and death, spiritual life that is. Thus, we have looked at Jesus possessing the attributes of God the Father and since these are attributes that only God has, Jesus must be God, the second person of the Holy Trinity!

We have also looked at the humanity of Jesus in the Incarnation and we have seen that Jesus was fully God and fully man in the Incarnation and yet, He was without sin. You see, if Jesus did sin He would need a Savior, but He was without sin and thus, as John said, He is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world, that perfect sacrifice for us!

We then looked at the extra Biblical accounts that speak of Jesus because there are those out there that say there is no historical evidence for Jesus outside of the Scriptures. And we have seen that this is a false statement, there are extra Biblical accounts spoken of Jesus and the things He did!

We have heard people say that Jesus never claimed to be God and yet, when we looked at the Scriptures we saw that this was a false statement. Jesus did claim to be God and the Jews were so upset by that fact, by Him being a man and making Himself equal with God that they wanted to stone Him to death! So that is easy to see, you don't need to know Greek or any Biblical language, it comes shinning through in the English language unless you want to reject what is right there before you.

And over the past three weeks we have been looking at the seven “*I AM*” statements that are recorded for us in the Gospel of John. And please understand that when Jesus says that He is the “*I AM*” He is saying that He is the voice from the burning bush in Exodus chapter three, He is God Almighty! And as I have said, John wrote his Gospel specifically to show that Jesus is God, to prove His deity to us as he said in John 20:30-31, and this is from The Amplified Bible, “**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.]**”

Now you can accept that fact, the deity of Jesus Christ or reject it, but you cannot deny what John and the rest of the Scriptures are saying about Jesus, that He is Almighty God! This morning we are going to continue to tackle this subject on the deity of Jesus and we are going to look at what other disciples said of this man named Jesus, who they claimed Him to be, how they spoke of Him and what others said of Jesus, who He is and as you will see, they all spoke of Him being God! Again, you can accept this or reject it but you cannot deny what these Scriptures are saying, they are very clear!

4. THE DEITY OF JESUS

WHAT OTHERS SAID OF JESUS

As we look at what others have said regarding Jesus in the Scriptures it is once again hard to deny the fact that they saw Him as Almighty God. So let's dig into the Scriptures and look at what others have said about Jesus.

In Matthew 16:15-17, listen to what Peter says of Jesus in one of the most famous affirmations of who Jesus is in all of the Scriptures. We are told as Jesus speaks to His disciples, **“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’”**

Notice that Peter gets it right and not because he was so smart, but because God the Father revealed this to him, that Jesus is Almighty God, the Messiah, the Savior! Now some may argue that Peter got this wrong, but if he did why do we not see Jesus rebuke him? Because he did not get it wrong. In fact, “instead of rebuking for his brashness (as Jesus always did when confronted by error), Jesus blesses Peter for his confession of faith. Throughout His ministry Jesus accepted prayers and worship as rightfully belonging to Himself.” (Karl Scheffrahn and Henry Kreyssler, *Jesus of Nazareth: Who Did He Claim to Be?*, p. 10).

That is important for us to understand, that Jesus corrected people's errors, He did not just let them go and thus, because He did not correct Peter's statement, it must be true, He is the Christ, the Son of the living God!

If you doubt that listen to what we are told in this same section, in Matthew 16:21-23, **“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”**

Peter went from saint to Satan in just a few verses and we see Jesus rebuke him, but why? Because Peter was wrong in what he was saying here. And you can clearly see that when Peter got it wrong he was rebuked by Jesus, which tells me that when Peter called Jesus God he was right and thus, Jesus did not rebuke Him! I hope you can see that and this is just one example of Jesus rebuke the error of others, not just letting it go!

And please understand that this was not just a one time statement by Peter of Jesus being God. Look and listen to what Peter tells us in II Peter 1:1, **“Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.”** Do you see what Peter is saying here? When Peter speaks **“of our God and Savior Jesus Christ”** what does he mean? Really, do we have to try to figure it out or can we just let the Scriptures speak for themselves. Peter is saying that Jesus Christ is God and thus, here is another Scripture that links Jesus to being God, not “a god” or a lesser God than the Father. He is the second person of the Holy Trinity who is fully God and became fully man in the Incarnation, but He was also fully God and still is!

Wuest tells us: “The expression God and our Saviour is in a construction in the Greek text which demands that we translate, our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, the expression thus showing that Jesus Christ is the Christian’s God.” And Blum said, “The grammar leaves little doubt in these words Peter is calling Jesus Christ both God and Savior.” I am not sure how much clearer that can be but if you don’t want to see the truth, you won’t! The title given to Jesus is that of God and Savior, end of story! You see, you can’t say that Peter is speaking of God and then another person, Jesus Christ who is the Savior. The Greek will not allow it and that is not how it is coming through even in our English translation!

And so we can clearly see that Peter spoke of the deity of Jesus Christ, he believed that Jesus was God!

Here is another verse that we are familiar with and that is the one where we see Thomas call Jesus God in John 20:28, and let's just pick up the story in verse 24 to get a better idea of what is going on here. John tells us, **“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”** John 20:24-29.

As the other disciples saw the risen Lord, Thomas was not there the first time, and as Thomas heard of this great news he doubted it, he wanted proof, he wanted to see and touch the risen Lord before he would believe! Now we may be hard on Thomas, but don't we like to see proof before we believe something? Sure we do and this was an unbelievable thing to say, that they had seen the risen Christ and Thomas wanted evidence for that.

And so we see Jesus appear to His men again and this time Thomas is present. Jesus, knowing the heart of Thomas, encourages him to reach out and touch His wounds, which tells me Jesus was not some kind of ghost; you could touch Him in His resurrection body. And when Thomas did this what was his response to Jesus? Thomas affirms the deity of Jesus calling Him both “Lord” and “God,” not “a” god! Thomas said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

Of this John Stott wrote, “The Sunday following Easter Day, incredulous Thomas is with the other disciples in the upper room when Jesus appears. He invites Thomas to feel His wounds, and Thomas, overwhelmed with wonder, cries out, ‘My Lord and my God!’ (John 20:26-29). Jesus accepted the designation. He rebukes Thomas for his unbelief, but not for his worship.” (John Stott, Basic Christianity, p. 28).

Now that is a very important point because there are those that say Jesus was silent even when people said things wrong about Him. That is just foolish and we see here that Jesus did rebuke Thomas, not for calling Him God or worshipping Him, but for his unbelief. That is important once again for us to see! Thomas worshiped Jesus as both Lord and God and Jesus did not rebuke him for that because it is true! If Jesus was not God then Thomas should not be worshipping Him nor should He call Him Lord and God!

Another verse that speaks of the deity of Jesus is found in Titus where Paul tells us in Titus 2:13, “**Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**” Now some would like to argue that this verse is speaking of two different people. It is speaking of God and then the Savior Jesus Christ and it may come across that way in our English translations, but that is not what it is saying in the Greek. And I think the only reason people say that it is speaking of two different people in the English translation of this verse is because they don’t want to believe that Jesus is God. But let’s look at this in the original language, Greek. You see, in the Greek those two titles, “**God**” and “**Savior**” are speaking of one person and the only person that is mentioned here is Jesus and thus, Paul is saying that Jesus Christ is both God and Savior! Again, listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, “. . . **the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One).**” Again, very clear and it is hard to imagine why so many people have such a hard time believing that Jesus is God. Well, I guess it is not difficult to understand. You see, they reject the deity of Jesus because they want to not because the evidence speaks differently.

Paul also said in Colossians 1:15-17, “**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**”

First of all Paul tells us that Jesus is **“the image of the invisible God”** and the word **“image”** in the Greek is EIKON, (i-kone’) and it speaks of a statue or representation. In other words, it is as we are told in John 14:8-9, **“Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?”**” Thus, the invisible God became visible to us in Jesus Christ when He became flesh and blood, when He dwelt among us, **“... the Word became 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 1:14. Clearly Paul’s point is that Jesus is God!

In regards to Jesus being the image of God, Peter Lewis wrote, “What He images He must also possess; He images God’s real being precisely because He shares that real being. As the image of God, Jesus Christ is God’s equivalent in the world.” (Peter Lewis, The Glory of Christ, pp. 259-260). In other words, Jesus could not express the image of God if He Himself did not possess that image. Thus, He must be God to give us that picture of God, an exact representation of the Father!

F. F. Bruce put it like this regarding what Paul said here, “the words he spoke, the works he performed, the life he led, the person he was – all disclosed the unseen Father. He is, in Paul’s words, the visible ‘image of the invisible God’” (F. F. Bruce, The Real Jesus: Who Is He?, p. 158). Again, it is as Jesus said to Philip, **“... ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?”**”

And here's the thing. Jesus is not part of creation, He is not a creation, but the Creator and He not only created *ALL* things but by Him all things "**consist**" or are held together by Him. What does that mean? It means that He is Almighty God!

We are also told in Colossians 2:9, "**For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.**" The Amplified Bible puts it like this, "**For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete expression of the divine nature].**" And The Living Bible says, "**For in Christ there is all of God in a human body.**" That is pretty clear, that in Christ God dwells because He is God! Think about that for a minute. You see, Paul is telling us if the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ, then Jesus can't be "a god" or a "junior god" or "almost god" but He is fully God; always has been and always will be!

We see this same idea in Hebrews 1:3 where Paul tells us as he is speaking of Jesus, "**who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.**"

Here's the thing. If you want to know what the Godhead is all about, who are you going to look to? You are going to look to Jesus! Why are you going to look to Jesus? You are going to look to Jesus because Jesus is the express image of God. Remember what Jesus said in John 10:30, "**I and My Father are one.**" The word that Jesus uses here for "**one**" is Hen in the Greek and please understand that it is not saying that they are they exact same person but one in essence, thus, by seeing Jesus they have also seen the Father! And remember what we just read in Colossians 1:15 where we see this truth once again, "**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.**" So again we see that Paul speaks of Jesus being God, make no mistake about that.

The apostle John wrote in I John 5:20, "**And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**" Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, "**And we [have seen and] know [positively] that the Son of God has [actually] come to this world and has given us understanding and insight [progressively] to perceive (recognize) and come to know better and more clearly Him Who is true; and we are in Him Who is true - in His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah). This [Man] is the true God and Life eternal.**"

Is Jesus God? Of course He is, the Scriptures teach us that very clearly and John tells us that He is “**the true God.**” And God has come in the flesh and by His atoning work He has given to us life, we know this and as you read this you see the theme is fellowship with Jesus, with our God and to know Him by experience, as we live out our faith, as we walk with Him! John makes it very clear that he believed that Jesus is God and John was an eyewitness of the things that Jesus did and thus, he can speak with authority on this subject!

What about the Old Testament, are there prophets that speak of the Messiah being God? You bet there are. In Isaiah 9:6 we are told, “**For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**”

Now some like to argue, like the Jehovah Witnesses that Jesus is not Almighty God like the Father but is just a “**mighty God**” as Isaiah tells us. He thus must be not equal with the Father, a lesser God you might say even though the Scriptures tell us there are no other God’s out there! But it does say “**mighty God**” in speaking of Jesus, so do they have a point here?

Absolutely not because in Isaiah 10:21 we are told, “**The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God.**” You see, here we have God the Father spoken of as “**the Mighty God**” and thus, to say that Jesus is a lesser God is just foolish. If you want to do that then you have to say that God the Father is a lesser God also and then who is the top God?

That just makes no sense and the reality is, the Father is God and Jesus is God, you can accept it or reject it but you can't deny that this is what the Scriptures are teaching! It is very clear, Jesus is Almighty God and Isaiah is telling us that God will become flesh; He will inhabit a body of flesh and dwell among us. There is no difference between the title of "**Mighty God**" and "**Almighty God,**" I hope you can see that!

Look at what Paul said in Romans 9:5 about Jesus, who He is, "**of whom [the Jewish people] are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.**"

Notice what Paul is saying here. Paul is not only saying that the Messiah was born of Israel, of Jewish descent. But he is saying that this Jewish Messiah, the one who was born a Jew according to the flesh, is in fact God!

Now some liberals like to deny what Paul is saying here, that Jesus is God Incarnate. Morris makes these comments, "The grammatical arguments almost all favor the first position [that it says that Christ is God], but most recent scholars accept the second [that God here refers to the Father] on the grounds that Paul nowhere else says explicitly that Christ is God."

The problem with a statement like that is it is untrue. You see, Paul makes this statement about Jesus being fully man and fully God as he opened up this letter. In Romans 1:3-4 Paul tells us, "**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.**"

And, as one commentator wrote, “[This is a] ‘clear statement of the deity of Christ following the remark about His humanity. This is the natural and obvious way of punctuating the sentence. To make a full stop after *flesh* and start a new sentence for the doxology is very abrupt and awkward.’” (Wuest, quoting Robertson).

Thus, Paul is saying this, “Jesus who is the eternally blessed God, over all. Amen.” Jesus is the Most High God, I don’t have any doubt about that, it is what the Scriptures teach. And thus, it is from Israel that God came and took on a body of flesh. No other nation could say that!

Listen to what Charles Hodge had to say about this verse here in Romans chapter 9, “Paul . . . declares that Christ, who, he had just said, was, as to his human nature, or as a man, descended from the Israelites, is, in another respect, the supreme God, or God over all, and blessed for ever . . . This passage, therefore, shows that Christ is God in the highest sense of the word.” (Charles Hodge, A Commentary on Romans, p. 300).

And if you are still not sure, listen to what John MacArthur had to say regarding this issue. He wrote:

In closing this abbreviated but comprehensive account of Israel’s special blessings, Paul declares that Jesus Christ - by far their greatest blessing, the blessing in whom all the others find their full meaning - is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Those words are not so much a benediction as an affirmation of Christ's divine majesty and lordship. Without exception in Scripture, both in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, a doxology always places the word "blessed" before the name of God. Here, Paul uses the reverse form, God blessed, indicating beyond doubt that the apostle intentionally equates Christ with God. The antecedent [precursor] of God is who, and the antecedent [precursor] of who is Christ.

He was the supreme blessing, yet they rejected Him! Tragic unbelief that grieved the heart of Paul and grieves the heart of God Himself.

- John MacArthur, Romans

You see, there is no denying it; Paul is very clear on this point that Jesus is the eternally blessed God with an exclamation point! That "Amen" means, "so be it" or "let it be" and Paul wants them to understand that Jesus is God, end of story!

In Mark 14:61-64 we see the High Priest, Caiaphas not accept the fact that Jesus is God but he recognized what Jesus was saying. Listen to what transpired here at this religious court proceeding with Jesus and the High Priest. We are told, "**But He [Jesus] kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' Jesus said, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'** Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, '**What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?' And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.**"

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and that He was going to be raised in glory and seated at the right hand of God, making Him equal with God and that blew the socks off of Caiaphas, if he was wearing any! The High Priest rejected what Jesus was saying but he recognized that Jesus, being a man, made Himself equal with God and thus, it was blasphemy and deserving of death. The only problem is that Jesus is God, but they just rejected that fact!

Some would say that Caiaphas misunderstood what Jesus was saying, which is just ridiculous when you think about it. Say you are on trial and they ask you if you stole that bike and you mistakenly answer the question “Yes!” Now, as they are getting ready to sentence you, if you did not steal the bike are you going to keep silent? Absolutely not and thus, if they mistakenly heard that Jesus was saying that He was God and He wasn’t, don’t you think Jesus would have corrected them? Absolutely! But He didn’t because He is God!

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane listen to what transpired in John 18:4-6, **“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ They answered Him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am He.’ And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground.”**

Now please understand that the word “He” does not appear in the original Greek. It was added for clarity but it loses the punch if you do add that word. It takes away from the significance of what Jesus was saying and if you miss that you may be wondering why these guards were knocked off their feet! What Jesus said, literally is, “I am right now God!” And when He said those words we see the effect of those words on those that were asking the question. They did not just drop to the ground, but they drew back and fell down, why? Because they were before Almighty God and Jesus claimed that fact and these soldiers felt the effect of that!

We also see the Demons recognize who Jesus is, Almighty God. In Mark 1:23-24 we are told of what happened when a man in the synagogue in Capernaum had this problem, as we read, “**Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, ‘Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are - the Holy One of God!’**”

Did you see that? Even this Demon recognized who Jesus is, the Holy One of God and how sad that man refuses to see that. It is not that this or any other Demon is saved, they just know who Jesus is, God Almighty!

Then there are the angels who know who Jesus is. Joseph, deciding what to do with his betrothed wife Mary being pregnant out of wedlock sees an angel and we are told in Matthew 1:20-23, **“But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”**

Clearly the angels in heaven know who Jesus is for they have been worshiping Him and they tell Joseph that this Son that he will have will actually be God Incarnate! Again, an amazing statement and how sad once again that man does not see this or accept this fact that Jesus is God!

In the book of Daniel we see Daniel tell us, **“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.”** Daniel 7:13-14.

The title "**Son of Man**" is used of Jesus some 80 times in the New Testament. And in Hebrews chapter 10, speaking of Jesus, Paul tells us "**But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.**" Hebrews 10:12-13. Jesus Christ is the stone not cut with hands of Daniel chapter 2, that struck the mighty image, the Gentile kingdoms, to the ground and crushed them to pieces and they were blown away like the chaff from the summer threshing floor. Then this stone grew into a mighty mountain filling the whole earth. It is Jesus Christ who then will rule and reign with righteousness. All the previous world governments will be destroyed by the Son of Man, and His kingdom will last forever!

And please understand what Daniel is saying here. He is claiming that the Messiah is to be God Himself and Jesus illustrated that point from the book of Daniel for us. In Mark 14:62 we are told, "**Jesus said, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'**" Jesus is saying that what Daniel was speaking about was Him, he was speaking of Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders picked up on that for we are told, "**Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?'**" **And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, 'Prophecy!' And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.**" Mark 14:63-65. So we see that Daniel spoke of the Messiah being God Incarnate!

The next one should be the clincher if you still don't get it. You see, we are now going to look at God the Father and He will tell us that Jesus is God! I know, some of you may not believe that the Father speaks of Jesus being God, but He does. Notice what we are told in Hebrews 1:8-9 as God the Father is speaking, **“But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’”**

If you want a proof text that Jesus is God, here it is! Father God is calling the Son – ***GOD!*** That Jesus is eternal, sovereign; He manifests the attributes of God! As Jesus returns in His second coming He will establish His kingdom on this earth and rule and reign for 1,000 years and then He will create a new heavens and a new earth and His kingdom will be forever! Thus, those who claim that Jesus was just a man, or maybe just like one of the angels, or like one of the prophets of God but is not Almighty God have a big problem here. They are denying what God the Father has said of Jesus! To me this is the clearest and probably one of the most powerful verses that speak of the deity of Jesus Christ because this one comes from God the Father Himself!

Again, you can accept this or reject it but you cannot deny what the Scriptures are telling us, that Jesus Christ is God Almighty, the second person of the Holy Trinity! We have looked at 15 portions of Scripture that attest to this fact and to me, that is plenty of proof to show that Jesus is God! And to have people say that Jesus never said that He is God or the Scriptures never speak of Jesus being God is just plain foolishness on their part!

In fact, William Biederwolf comes to this conclusion regarding the New Testament and what they say of Jesus. He wrote, “A man who can read the New Testament and not see that Christ claims to be more than a man, can look all over the sky at high noon on a cloudless day and not see the sun.” You see, it has nothing to do with the evidence, but it does have everything to do with the heart. It is a willful rejection of who Jesus is! My prayer is that you will receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, that you recognize Him as Almighty God, the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world!

We started out this morning speaking of the importance of knowing the Scriptures and I would like to end with that thought, to kind of put things in perspective for you. It is not important to have just faith because unless the object of your faith is real, then your faith is empty. That just makes sense. Thus, you must know the real Jesus and not one made up in the imaginations of your minds.

Some of you may remember the tragedy that took place almost 30 years ago, back in 1982 with the Tylenol that was laced with Cyanide. There were several people that took this medicine and they died from it. They believed that the medication they were taking was what it was suppose to be, as it was advertised, a pain reliever. They honestly trusted in the medication but they trusted the wrong thing!

The point is this. Sincerity that is based on an erroneous belief is totally meaningless. In fact, it could be deadly. Thus, if you put your faith in something or someone apart from Jesus Christ, I don't care how sincere you are, you are spiritually dead right now and you will be eternally separated from God.

But, if the object of your faith is Jesus Christ, believing that He is Almighty God, the Savior of the world, such trust and sincerity has a very different effect. This kind of faith, this kind of sincerity brings forth life here and now and for eternity with the Lord! Remember what Jesus said, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”** John 3:16-21.

There is the promise of Jesus to all who come to Him, believe in Him, give their life to Him, all who receive the free gift of life that is only found in Him! May we not lose sight of what God has done and may we not take away His deity for Jesus is Almighty God!