

# The Deity of Christ

**Lessons by Tim Bunting**

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# Lesson 1: Introduction

## Disclaimer

The deity of Christ is a very complicated topic in the Bible. If you think it's simple, you probably haven't taken much time to think about it. How can there be One God, and yet two or even three distinct persons that are all deity? If someone were to criticize Christianity for it's absurd contradictory teaching, the concept of Christ's deity would be the most reasonable place to begin. A comprehensive and objective investigation into the whole of scripture is necessary to establish any firm convictions regarding this issue. This is not a concept to be solved by any proof texts. Only careful comparison of many texts and ideas in scripture will reveal patterns and connections that will help us to combine all these different passages regarding the deity of Christ.

## Understanding the concept of deity

To understand the deity of Christ, first lets understand what deity is.

### Deity

- Deity, a deity:
  - The state of being God or a god or goddess
  - It can be an actual deity i.e. Yahweh
  - It can be a so called deity i.e. Zeus
- The discussion of the deity of Christ is determining whether or not Jesus...
  1. Is a god
  2. Is God
  3. Is no god at all

### Divinity

- Divine:
  - Of from or like God
- (a) Divinity:
  - State of being divine
  - A god or goddess

### Monotheism vs. Polytheism

The Bible is a book of monotheism that tells of a monotheistic God as opposed to polytheism which was the common belief and practice during ancient times.

- Monotheism: the doctrine or belief that there is only one God.
  - Only one God is deserving of and should be worshipped.
  - Only one God exists.
- Polytheism: the belief in or worship of one or more god
  - More than one god can be worshipped.
  - Multiple gods exist in either harmony or competition with one another.
- Here are some monotheistic passages of the Bible:
  - Ex 19:2-3: I am your God. Don't have any other gods. Don't worship any other gods.

- Isa 44:6: I am the only God. There are no other gods.
- I Cor 8:4-6: There is one God. There are other “so-called” gods, but only one “true” God.

So when it comes to determining the deity of Christ, only two of the three options are possible. Here are the three options again:

1. ~~Jesus is a god~~
2. Jesus is God
3. Jesus is no god at all

If there is only one God, then Jesus can't be one of two or more gods. Therefore Jesus must either be God, or no god at all. Jesus is either THE deity, or not deity at all.

## Three mainstream explanations of the deity of Christ

The discussion of the deity of Christ has been debated since the second century. There have been many different convictions over the years. Today the three most mainstream explanations of the deity of Christ are:

1. Jehovah's Witness belief: Jesus is not God. He is a “spirit creature” created by God before the foundation of the world.
2. Oneness belief: God is a single divine being with no distinction of persons who manifests Himself in different modes or way. The only God we will see in heaven is Jesus.
3. Trinitarian belief: God is three divine persons. One God in three persons, distinct, yet of the same substance, essence, and nature.

The first two of these beliefs will be clearly proven incorrect by scripture. The third belief is the least contradictory to scripture, but I wouldn't go as far as saying it's the right belief. We attempt to oversimplify the nature of the deity of Christ when it isn't a concept that is clearly explained. We need to be careful not to oversimplify a concept that isn't perfectly explained in scripture. The nature of the deity of Christ is not explained in scripture sufficiently for us to really understand it completely.

## Important Biblical terms of deity

Let's consider terms used to identify deity in the Bible.

### God:

- OT Hebrew: Elohim: God or gods (Ex 20:1-2)
- NT Greek: Theos: God or gods (I Cor 8:4-6)
  - This is a generic word used to identify something as being a “so-called” god, or the true God. It also can be used as a proper noun to identify the true God. It's like the word “coach”. Your coaches name isn't “coach”. Rather, that word is a generic term to describe what your coach is; however, the word coach can still be used as a proper noun when addressing your coach. For example: “Hey Coach! When is practice?”

[Eloah: singular: translated: a god (II Chron 32:15), or God (Deut 32:15). It is singular therefore is never translated “gods”. This word exists 60 times in the OT; the majority of the time referring to God.

Elohim: plural form of Eloah: translated gods (Ex 20:3) or God (Ex 20:1). It is plural so it is never translated “god/ a god”. This word exists 2598 times in the OT; the majority of the time referring to God. It is interesting that God refers to Himself in the plural form. We will look at this more later.

## **LORD:**

- OT Hebrew: YHWH (The Tetragram (tetragram generically refers to a word consisting of four letters))
  - From the text of Ex 3:13-14. I AM is the name God identifies Himself as. Then the actual words “I AM” in Hebrew are then adapted into the variant spelling “YHWH”. It’s a derivative of the words “I AM” transformed into a four letter proper noun the is the identifying name of the one true God.
  - The word “YHWH” is translated into “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”. Since the word is only four Hebrew consonants, nouns have been added to make it pronounceable. There is discussion of which pronunciation is most accurate, but that’s not relevant for this discussion. Personally, I prefer Yahweh.
  - This name a proper noun used to identify the one true God of the Bible. “God” is a word that can be used to describe the true God or false gods. Yahweh is only used as the name of the true God.

### *Other considerations:*

- If “YHWH” is translated into “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”, why don’t we see that name in most English Bibles?
- Since the genuine pronunciation of the word “YHWH” is uncertain, most English editors have taken the liberty to translate “YHWH” as “LORD” instead of Yahweh or Jehovah (Gen 2:4). The word “lord” conforms to a common identity of deity in the NT. The SMALL CAPS identify the word “LORD” as being God’s name “YHWH”.
- It would have, in my opinion, been far better if our English editors had chosen either pronunciation (Yahweh or Jehovah) and used that name instead of “LORD” when translating the OT. This will be discussed further later.
- The NT was written in Greek. The name “YHWH” doesn’t exist in the new testament writings. The NT writers instead use the word “Lord” in the place of the name “YHWH” when referring to God or quoting OT passages that use the name “YHWH” (Acts 2:21).
- If your English translation has the word “LORD”, it isn’t really the name “YHWH”. It’s actually the greek word “Lord”. English translations render it as “LORD” because it’s quoting an OT scripture that used the name “YHWH” in it’s original context.

## **Lord:**

- OT Hebrew: Adonai: master
  - A word used to describe deity/ God (Gen 15:2)
  - A word used to describe men (II Sam 15:15)
  - This word is a generic term to identify someone as being a master. It is sometimes used as a proper noun to identify Yahweh.
  - EX: Consider Psalm 110:1:
    - The LORD said to my lord (Yahweh said to my master)
    - Here David is stating that Yahweh is speaking to David’s master (The Christ).
- NT Greek: Kurios: master
  - A word used to describe deity/ God (Rom 10:12-13)
  - A word used to describe men (I Pet 3:6)
  - The NT uses this word “Kurios” in the place of “YHWH”. When OT passages are quoted, “Kurios” replaces the name “YHWH”.
  - The word “Lord” in the NT is commonly used as a proper noun to identify the true God and Jesus. We will see this more clearly later.

## New identifications for deity revealed in the NT

The NT starts using new terms to describe deity that weren't used commonly in the OT. This provides us with new understanding regarding the multiple distinct persons that are claimed to be deity in scripture.

These are:

1. The Father
2. The Son
3. The Spirit

### The Father

It is clear that "the Father" is the well known God of the OT. He is Yahweh (Jn 4:21, the Father identified as the one who has been worshipped in the temple). The only difference is that Jesus is calling this God His Father.

### The Son

"The Son of God" is an entirely new concept that God introduced to mankind in the NT. Typically known as Jesus, the Son "came forth from the Father and [has] come into the world". He would then leave the world and go back to the Father (Jn 16:26). It is this distinct "Son of God" (Mat 3:17, Mk1:1) is the one whose deity is currently under investigation (in this class). Is this "Son" who is "from the Father" deity or not?

### The Spirit

The Spirit is familiar as well. We see the Spirit of God doing plenty right from the beginning of the OT (Gen 1:2). The difference in the NT is that the Spirit of God is revealed to be a distinct person (Jn 14:26). Is the Spirit deity? Well, if the Son, distinct from the Father, is deity, then it will be easy to accept that the Spirit, also distinct, is deity just as Christ is. In short, if we can understand the deity of Christ, it will be simple to understand the deity of the Spirit. There is much more scripture regarding Christ, so we will focus on Him in this investigation.

### Passages of these three persons together

- Mat 3:16-17
- Mat 28:19
- Jn 14:16, 26
- Acts 1:4-5, 7-8

## Biblical use of these terms in reference to the Father, Son, and Spirit in the NT

Now that we've learned these many different terms, names, and identifications, let's consider how scripture uses them in reference to deity/ God

### LORD:

- The is used as the name for the one true God (Jer 10:10)
  - If Yahweh is the only true God, then for Jesus to be deity, He has to be Yahweh.
  - If Jesus is deity, but isn't Yahweh, then there are multiple gods.
  - Since the Bible claims that Yahweh is the only true God, Jesus is either that God, or no god at all. The same would apply to the Spirit.

- Since there is no use of the name Yahweh in the NT, it becomes challenging to determine whether or not the NT is identifying Jesus to in fact be Yahweh. We will consider this more closely later.

### **God: Theos**

- Used for the Father (Phi 4:20)
- Used for Jesus (Titus 2:13)
- Sometimes it's challenging to tell (I Tim 1:16-17, I Jn 5:20)

### **Lord: Kurios**

- Used for the Father (Acts 3:19-20)
- Used for Jesus (Rom 13:14)
- Sometimes it's challenging to tell (II Cor 2:12-14)

### **Common patterns:**

Even though there is a lot of interchangeability of these terms, I think it is very noteworthy to consider that obvious scriptural patterns of the use of these terms.

- God is almost always referring to the Father:
  - I Cor 15:24
  - Gal 1:4
  - Phi 4:20
  - Col 1:2
  - Jms 1:27
  - I Pet 1:2, 17
- Lord is almost always referring to Jesus:
  - Rom 1:4, 4:24, 5:21, 10:9
  - To help us see this, consider the use of the word "Lord" in the entire book of Romans:
    - 25 times the word Lord refers to Jesus (17 of those times the name Jesus is within a few words of "Lord").
    - 9 times the word Lord is used instead of "YHWH" when quoting OT scripture.
    - 2 times it is used in reference to the Father or God.
    - 12 times it doesn't have a specific designation (though according to the pattern, I think it's clear we are to have Jesus in mind).
- The pattern then is seen clearly in these verses:
  - Rom 1:7, 15:6
  - I Cor 1:3
  - II Cor 1:2-3, 11:31
  - Gal 1:3
  - Eph 1:2, 17
  - To help us get the point even more clearly, if we look of verses that refer to the Father as God, 7 of them talk about "God the Father" and either don't mention Jesus, or don't mention Jesus as Lord. In comparison, 32 times where God is said to be Father, it is immediately proceeded or succeeded or followed by Jesus declared to be Lord.

### **Conclusion**

In the book of John, Jesus is constantly referring to the Father. However, the rest of the NT authors typically refer to the Father as God. So when we read the word "God", the Biblical pattern shows that our minds should think of the Father. When the word "Lord" is used, most frequently it is referring to Jesus.

So when we read the word “Lord”, the Biblical pattern shows that our minds think of Jesus. To help us see that, consider these passages including all persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and notice how they are identified instead as God, Lord, and Spirit.

- Rom 15:30
- I Cor 6:11
- I Cor 12:4-6
- II Cor 13:14
- II Thess 2:13

These passages include all persons, Father, Son, and Spirit and are identified instead as God, Jesus Christ, and Spirit

- Rom 15:16
- I Cor 2:2-5
- II Cor 1:21
- I Thess 5:18-19
- Heb 9:14
- I Pet 1:2

The result then is we see the word God is really used to identify the Father. So when we read God and Jesus in the same verse, since God is a reference to the Father, it doesn't mean that Jesus isn't in fact deity.

This is why our English translations fail us when they translate “YHWH” into “LORD” throughout the OT. We should be accustomed to reading Yahweh and identifying our true God as Yahweh as we also read Him being identified as “God” and “lord”. Then, when we come to the NT we would see a clear distinction of the Father being identified as God, and Jesus being identified as Lord. But we are so accustomed to reading “LORD” and thinking of “God”, so when we read “Lord” in the NT our minds jump to God the Father rather than the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can consider this clearly in I Cor 8:6.



# Lesson 2: Jesus Is a Distinct Person

## Introduction

To understand the deity of Christ, we need to get a complete Biblical picture of Jesus. When reading through the NT, the first and most obvious thing we will notice about Jesus is that He is a distinct and unique person. It is also clearly established that He is distinct from the Father. Many passages speak of Him as being distinct from God, but as was established last class, the NT use of the term “God” is often simply the most common identification for the Father. There is one verse in particular that most concisely portrays the nature of Jesus, and the nature of His deity.

### Distinct, yet deity

One verse clearly states that Jesus is *distinct* from God, and yet, at the same time, He *is* God.

### Jn 1:1: The Word was with God, and the Word was God

- The Word is clearly seen to be Jesus (Jn 1:14)
- The Word was with God (distinct)
- The Word was God (deity)

To understand this, we will first consider what scripture reveals about the distinct nature of Jesus.

## Passages revealing the distinct person of Jesus

Let's look at some passages that show different ways in which Jesus is distinct from God/ Father.

### Jesus and God/ Father are not the same person:

- Mat 20:23: It is not Jesus' decision to determine who will sit on His right or left hand. That is the Father's decision.
- Mat 24:26: Jesus doesn't know the day of judgment. The Father does.
- Lk 2:52: Jesus grew in favor with God.
- Jn 14:1: Believe in God. Believe also in Jesus.
- Rom 6:10: The life Jesus lives, He lives to God.
- I Pet 2:4: Jesus is previous in God's sight.
- **Even in heaven there is still a clear distinction of persons:**
  - Jesus appears in the presence God: Heb 9:24
  - Jesus is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places: Eph 1:20

### Jesus belongs to God/ Father:

- Jesus is God's servant: Mat 12:18, Acts 3:13, 26, 4:26, 27, 30
- Jesus is God's Christ: Acts 4:26, Rev 11:15
- Jesus is God's mystery: Col 2:2
- God is Jesus' God: Jn 20:17, II Cor 1:3, Rev 3:12

### **God/ Father [Verbs] Jesus:**

- God sent Jesus: Jn 5:23, 36, 37, 6:44, 7:29, 8:29
- God raised Jesus: Acts 2:24, 3:13, 10:40, Rom 7:4, 10:9, I Cor 6:14, Col 2:12, I Thess 1:10, Heb 13:20-21, I Pet 1:21
- God didn't spare His Son: Rom 8:32
- God gave His Son: John 3:16
- God loves His Son: Jn 3:35, 5:20
- Father gives commandment to Son: Jn 12:49-50
- God brought about in, raised up, seated, and subjected all things to Christ: Eph 1:20-22

### **Jesus [Verbs] God/ Father:**

- Jesus knows the Father: Lk 10:22
- Jesus honors His Father: Jn 8:49
- Jesus goes to the Father: Jn 14:28
- Jesus obeys the Father: Jn 15:10
- Jesus offered Himself to God: Eph 5:2
- Jesus intercedes for us to God: Rom 8:34, Heb 7:25
- Jesus was faithful to God: Heb 3:2
- Jesus entrusted Himself to God: I Pet 2:23

### **Jesus addresses God/ Father:**

- Jesus prays to Father: Mat 26:39, 42; Lk 6:2; Heb 5:7
- "My God, why have you forsaken me?": Mat 27:46
- "Abba Father... remove this cup": Mk 14:36
- Jesus praises the Father: Lk 10:21
- "Father, into your hands I commit My Spirit": Lk 23:46

### **Jesus is subject to God/ Father:**

- Jesus does what Father has taught Him: Jn 8:28-29
- Jesus keeps Father's commandments: Jn 15:10
- God is Jesus' head: I Cor 11:3
- Jesus will hand kingdom over to God and Father: I Cor 15:24
- Jesus will be subject to the Father: I Cor 15:28

These passages make it quite clear that whether Jesus is deity or not, He is undeniably a unique and distinct person. This is the most obvious fact when considering the nature of Christ's deity. Now let's consider some more interesting and even challenging passages about Jesus' personhood.

## **Other noteworthy passages**

We have seen many passages that make it clear Jesus is a distinct person for God the Father. There are also many interesting and challenging verses that seem to make it clear that Jesus isn't God. These passages lead us to believe that Jesus is inferior to God the Father, and not God at all. When approaching the topic of the deity of Christ we need to take a very comprehensive approach, and balance all the ideas together for an accurate understanding.

### **God/ Father is greater than Jesus?**

- "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone": Mk 10:18
- "The Father is greater than I": Jn 14:28

## **Jesus is not God?**

- “The only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”: Jn 17:3
- “One God, one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus”: I Tim 2:5

## **Jesus is weak and dependent on God?**

- Jesus lives because of the Father: Jn 6:57
- “He was crucified because of weakness, yet lives because the power of God”: II Cor 13:4
- Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be grasped: Phi 2:6

We can't understand the nature of the deity of Christ, if we don't understand the nature of Christ. Next class we will look at passages that clearly identify Jesus as being deity. Later we can reconcile these challenging passages to one accurate conclusion.

## **Jesus came from God**

We know that Jesus is distinct from God/ Father, but John gives us some insight into how Jesus is distinct from God/ Father. It becomes clear that Jesus is from God. Not just a god who came from heaven, but a being who proceeded from God and will go back to God.

### **Jesus is from the Father:**

- Jn 1:14: The only begotten from the Father.
- Jn 6:46: No one has seen the Father, except the one who is from God.
- Jn 8:42: I have proceeded forth and have come from God.
- Jn 13:3: He had come forth from God and was going back to God.
- Jn 15:26: The Spirit of Truth proceeds from the Father as well.
- Jn 16:27-28: I have come forth from the Father, and have come into the world. I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.
- Jn 16:30: The apostles believe that Jesus came from God.

Jesus

Is a distinct person

Jesus is God

There is only one God

Jesus is that God

# Lesson 3: Jesus Is God

## Introduction

Last class we read many scriptures that clearly reveal Jesus to be a distinct person. This cannot be ignored when considering His nature and deity. Today we will look at passages that clearly reveal Him to be deity. This class will cover all passages (that I'm currently aware of) that explicitly or implicitly state that Jesus is God.

- We will look at passages that state Jesus to be "God" (Theos (NT Greek) or Elohim (OT Hebrew)). Statements of Jesus being referred to as God directly identify Him to be deity.
- These are not passages stating Him to be merely Lord (Kurios (Greek) or Adonia (Hebrew)). Jesus being referred to as Lord doesn't necessarily identify Him as deity.
- They are also not passages stating that He is YHWY, LORD, Yahweh, Jehovah. Since Yahweh is the one true God, Jesus being referred to as Yahweh would also identify Him as being deity, but we will look at those passages later.

## Explicit Statements of Jesus being referred to as God

Here are the passages that refer to Jesus as God. These are the passages that directly link Jesus to being Theos or Elohim. There are other passages that have implications of divinity, but first, let's just consider that passages that use that one identifying title of divinity, God.

- Remember, God is not really a proper noun. It is simply a noun that is used to describe something as being deity, or as being considered deity. "God" is not a name.
- However, "God" is used as a proper noun in the same way that "Dad" and "Coach" can be used as a proper noun when identifying someone of that title.

### **Jn 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God**

- Jn 1:14 makes it clear that the the "Word" is Jesus.
- So clearly, Jesus wasn't just "with" God "in the beginning". He "WAS" God.
- Jesus is God. Jesus is deity.

### **Jn 20:28: Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"**

- Here it is clear that Thomas is referring to Jesus as "God".
  - After seeing the resurrected Christ, Thomas believe Jesus to be deity.

### **Acts 20:28: ...To shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood**

- We know who's blood purchased the church. It was Jesus' (1 Pet1:19, Rev 5:9).
- Here the church is referred to as "the church of God". Therefore, the pronoun "His" refers to the antecedent God.
- Thus, Jesus is being referred to as God.

## **Titus 2:13: Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus**

- Here there are two titles to describe Jesus: God and Savior.
- Jesus is being called God.
- How do we know Paul isn't referring to God the Father and Jesus our Savior?
- We aren't looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the Father. We are looking forward to the appearing of Jesus at the end of time (II Thess 1:7, 2:8; I Tim 6:14; II Tim 1:10, 4:1, 8; I Pet 1:7, 13, 4:13).
- Also, nothing else grammatically gives the impression that Jesus is being referenced specifically from the Father.
- The entire context is about Jesus Christ who was the "grace of God" that "appeared".

## **II Pet 1:1: To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ**

- Once again, two titles are used to identify Jesus: God and Savior.
- How do we know there isn't a distinct identification of God the Father and Jesus?
- There is no grammatical necessity of that.
- The Biblical pattern is to say, "God the Father of/and our Lord Jesus Christ".
- "God and Savior, Jesus Christ" is not the pattern used when trying to identify distinctly the Father and Jesus.

### **Some grammar:**

To help us understand the grammar of the last two passages, compare the Biblical statements "of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ" with "Our God and Father of/and the Lord Jesus Christ".

- God and Savior, Jesus Christ
  - Titus 2:13 in Greek: "God of us and Savior Jesus Christ"
  - II Pet 1:1 in Greek: "God of us and Savior Jesus Christ"
    - God and Savior are connected by "and". "And" does not refer to Jesus. It's not "God and Jesus", but rather, "God and Savior".
    - "Of us" is the pronoun "our".
    - Also note that there are no definite articles for "Savior". It isn't "our God and THE Savior, Jesus Christ". It is "our God and Savior, Jesus Christ".
- God and Father of/ and our Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Rom 1:7 in Greek: "God and Father of us and [the] Lord Jesus Christ"
  - I Cor 1:3 in Greek: "God and Father of us and [the] Lord Jesus Christ"
  - II Cor 1:2, Gal 1:3 Phi 1:2, II Thess 1:2 are exactly the same. There are several more just like it.
    - Here "God" and "Father" are connected by "and", and "the Lord Jesus Christ" is connected by another "and". It does not read, "the God, Father, and Lord, Jesus Christ". Instead it reads, "The God AND Father of us AND the Lord Jesus Christ".
    - Since "and" comes before Jesus it shows the distinction between God and Jesus.
    - This proves that Titus 2:13 and II Pet 1:1 would have to read "God of us and Savior Jesus Christ" for it to be distinguishing God from Jesus.
    - Also note the included definite articles. "Lord" is read "kyriou" which is the form of "lord" including the definite article "the".
    - That is why it reads "God of us and THE Lord". The definite article is needed to distinguish God from Jesus. With the definite article it reads

Conclusion: There are two grammatical factors that make it clear Jesus is being referred to as God in Titus 2:13 and II Pet 1:1. "And" is placed between "God" and "Savior" instead of between "Savior" and "Jesus". And also, there is no definite article for "Savior".

For Titus and II Pet 1:1 to distinguish Jesus from God the Greek would read “God of us and [the] Savior Jesus Christ”. In English that would translate “our God and the Savior Jesus Christ”. With no definite article it would read “Our God and Savior Jesus Christ”. Since the “and” is placed between “God” and “Savior” it is making it clear that those two are connected and refer to Jesus Christ, instead of distinguishing God from Jesus.

**Isa 9:6: For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace**

- This is an undeniable messianic prophecy about Jesus.
- He is described as a “son born to us” i.e. the world.
- Even though He is being born unto the world, this messiah is identified as being several significant things.
- Besides the statement of eternal nature, He is also identified as being “mighty God”.
- This is a clear statement that the messiah would be deity.

## **Explicit Statements of Jesus being referred to as God that are questionable**

The previous passages undeniably refer to Jesus as God. The grammar is clear and the references are obviously pointing to Jesus. The next passages are also explicit, however, for various reasons, do not as certainly point to the deity of Christ.

**Jn 1:18: No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him**

- The only begotten God in the bosom of the Father who explains the Father is obviously Jesus. So it clearly calls Jesus the only begotten God.
- This passage is another explicit example of Jesus being referred to as God.
- What makes this passages questionable?
- Besides the strange theological concepts of “no one has seen God” and “begotten God”, the biggest reason this verse is questionable is because the Greek manuscripts that witness this reading are varied.
- If you read this verse in the KJV, it will read “the only begotten Son”. Other translations such as the NASB will read “the only begotten God”.
- This is because later Greek mss read “begotten son”, but earlier Greek mss found in the 1900’s read “begotten God”.
- Textual criticism weighs in the favor of “begotten God”.
- Still, the questionable nature of this reading makes it less potent as a “proof text” for the deity of Christ.

**I Tim 1:17: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen**

- Starting in verse 15, Paul speaks of Christ coming into the world to save sinners. Paul then tells of his own special story of salvation. He concludes by praising the King and only God.
- The context makes it clear that the only God being praised here is Jesus who was previously referenced for His amazing salvation.

- However, this passage is somewhat questionable because someone could say “Yes, Jesus was being talked about, but then Paul praises the only God, the Father”.
  - Jesus is the King eternal, but so is the Father.
  - The Father and Son are both clearly eternal.
  - The Father is more invisible than Jesus (Jn 6:46).
  - The only God is referred to distinct from Jesus (Jn 17:3). The term “only God” isn’t specifically used in reference to Jesus besides potentially this passage. However, Jesus would have to be the only God if He really is deity.

**Heb 1:8-9: But of the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You**

- Here Jesus is being addressed as “God”. That’s a clear identification of Jesus being God.
- What is questionable about this passage? The NASB reads “the scepter of HIS kingdom”. The NASB takes this reading because the earliest Greek mss read that way.
- If that is the case, then the address to God, would not be towards Jesus.
- Even though that reading is older, it contradicts the quote from Psalms so it seems a bit unlikely.
- The reading “Your kingdom” is attested well by early church Fathers so it is likely to be the accurate reading.
- Later it reads “God, your God”. This isn’t addressing God and referring to another God. This is just using “your God” as a parenthetical statement of emphasis regarding the same God.
- So if the first address is to Jesus as God, it later reads that God is anointing this God as king. This is exactly how Psalm 45 reads.
- To avoid that, one would have to say that verse one begins by addressing God, and then doesn’t refer to the Christ until verse 9 by changing whom the pronouns address without reason.

**I John 5:20: And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so 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**

- The pronouns in this verse are unclear by the time you get to the “true God”. Who exactly is being called the true God?
- Jesus has come and given us understanding about Him. Who is Him? Jesus or the Father?
- Later it says, “We are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus”. So here the “Him” refers to the Father who is identified as true.
- Then it says, “This is the true God”, which can also be rendered “He is the true God”.
- The last Proper noun is Jesus Christ before it speaks of “the true God”. So is it more likely that Jesus is being referred to as “the true God”? Or is it more likely that “Him who is true” previously mentioned is being identified as the “true God”?
- Perhaps the ambiguity is exactly the point. The true God is the Son and Father.
- The questionable nature of this verse is simply its ambiguity.

**Rev 1:8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “ who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty**

- Here God is speaking and referring to Himself in a number of exalting ways. Note that He refers to Himself as “the Alpha and Omega”.
- The title “alpha and omega” appears three times in Revelation. One is here in Rev 1:8. Another is Rev 21:6, where it clearly refers to the Father. The other is Rev 22:13 where it just as clearly refers

to Jesus. So when we read Rev 1:8, it could just as likely be referring to either the Father or Jesus as being the alpha and omega.

- Look at the context starting from verse 5. It's talking about Jesus and all that He has done for us. Verse six ends in praise and worship of Jesus. Then seven tells us that He is soon coming and all will mourn when He does. Then the voice speaks and says, "I am the alpha and omega".
- Who is likely to be speaking? It's more likely to be Jesus here because of the context. Jesus referring to Himself as "the alpha and omega" also supports that it's Jesus speaking. Therefore, God who is speaking is referring specifically to Jesus, not the Father.
- Even if it is the Father speaking in Rev 1:8, the fact that both Jesus and the Father are addressed as the alpha and omega emphasizes the deity of Jesus sufficiently.

## **Implicit Statements of Jesus being referred to as God**

Here are some verses where it is implied that Jesus is referred to as God.

### **Lk 1:78-79: Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace**

- This passage says that God will visit us to shine upon those who sit in darkness.
- That is a reference to Isa 9:2, which Mat 4:16 is said to be fulfilled in Jesus.
- Therefore, Jesus is the God that visited His people in darkness and shadow to shine upon them.

### **Heb 3:3-4: For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God**

- This passage says that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses in the same way that a builder has more glory than the house.
  - Moses is being likened to the house (creation), and Jesus is likened to the builder (creator).
- Then it says that every house is built by someone, and the One who builds all things is God.
  - Jesus is implicitly said to be God here because:
    - He was already compared to the builder in verse 3, and then we see that the builder of all things is God.
    - We know that Jesus is a builder elsewhere in scripture:
      - He is the creator of the universe just as much as His Father is (Jn 1:3, 10; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2).
      - He is the builder of the church (Mat 16:16). It is also clear the the house that was built in Heb 3:1-6 is referring to God's people which is His church. So the house built by God is said to be built by Jesus.
- The conclusion is that Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses because Moses is in the house, but Jesus is over the house, and the builder of the house. And since God is the builder of every house, Jesus is implicitly being referred to as God.



**I Jn 3:2, 5, 8: Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is...You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil**

- It says that we are children of God. It also says we don't know what we will be like, but when He APPEARS we will see Him...
- Who is it that appears?
  - I Jn 2:28: Let's not shrink away when He appears at His coming.
  - I Jn 2:5: He appeared to take away sin.
  - I Jn 2:8: The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil.
- Conclusion: We are children of God, and we will be like Him when He appears. The Son of God was the one who appeared and the one who will appear. Therefore when we are referred to as "children of God", God here is identified with Jesus.

**Isa 7:14, Mat 1:23: Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear A Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, " God with us**

- The passage that clearly prophesies the virgin birth of Jesus also prophetically calls Him Immanuel.
- That isn't to prophesy about His earthly name, but rather His nature.
- The Christ would be "God with us".
- It isn't uncommon for people to have "God" or "Yahweh" as part of their names, so that doesn't mean they are deity, but this name here describes God being with men.
- As we read passages that reveal Jesus to be identified as God, the description "God with us" takes a literal sense, and further reinforces the deity of Christ.

**Isa 40:3, Mat 3:3: Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God**

- John the Baptist says that He is fulfilling the passage that speaks of preparing the way for the LORD. The original passage in Isaiah speaks of preparing a highway for God.
- Who is the God that John the Baptist is making a highway for? It's clearly Jesus.
- This implication is that Jesus is the God referenced in Isaiah.

**Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17, 33: And it shall be in the last days, God says, That I will pour forth of MY Spirit on all mankind**

- In Joel, God is speaking promising to pour forth His Spirit.
- In Acts 2:17, Peter reminds the audience of that passage while claiming it's present fulfillment and stating God to be the one who said it.
- In Acts 2:33, Peter says that Jesus received the promise from the Father and "HE [Jesus] has poured forth that which you see and hear".
- Jesus then is referred to as God who poured forth His Spirit.

## **Other statements of Jesus' deity**

The previous passages have all been concerning Jesus being referred to as God. The next two passages are a bit different. They are not referring to Jesus as being God as a person, but rather God as a state of being. He is not being called God, but rather being said to be in the state of God.

**Phi 2:5-7: Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men**

- So here He is seen to have been in the form of deity, but then takes the form (same Greek word) of a servant a man and is made like man.
- This is describing the state, condition, and appearance of Jesus. He was in the form of being God, but then He becomes the form of a servant taking on the physical nature of man.
- This is a challenging verse to translate. The key word for the translation is “harpagmon” which is only used in the NT once and is translated:
  - Something to be grasped
  - Spoil, object of eager desire, prize
  - An act of seizing or a thing being seized i.e. robbery, plunder
- The point this verse is making is that Jesus was in the form of God being deity; however, His humility (which is the principle being taught in this context) wouldn't allow Him to keep that divine state as a selfish prize to be grabbed or taken while He knew His people were suffering and lost. So, in His humility, He let go of His divine state, and became like a man.
- So He was in form of deity, because He was deity, and then takes the form of a man. Does that mean He never was deity? Or He is deity no longer?
- Consider Jn 17:5: Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

**Col 1:19, 2:9: For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him... For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form**

- He we see that the “fullness of deity” dwelt in Jesus' bodily form. The Father was pleased for this “fullness to dwell in Jesus.
- The word that is translated here as “deity” is the Greek word “theótēs” which is a variation of the word “God” (theos in Greek).
- “Theos” is the noun form of God. It can be used as a title or a proper noun as discussed before.
- “Theótēs”, which is only used once in the NT, is also a noun, but isn't used to describe a specific God or to be used as a proper noun for God, but instead is used to describe the state of being God.
- That is why deity is a good translation. This verse isn't saying that Jesus is “the God”, but rather, while Jesus was on earth, everything relating to the nature of God was dwelling in Jesus physical body.
- That is to say, while He was in human form, as previously discussed in Philippians, He still maintained the complete state of being deity or God.

## Conclusion

Though the nature of Christ's deity is still very elusive, the concept of His deity is very clear. Repeatedly and numerous times on both Testaments Jesus is said to be either in the form of nature of deity, or is referred to as being deity, (God) Himself. He is both referred to as being God as a title and proper noun. We cannot deny that the Bible claims Jesus to be a divine being. If Jesus is not divine, or if somehow the Bible can't hold up His deity to correspond with all other Biblical statements, then the Bible itself falls apart as being contradictory and senseless.

Though Jesus is a distinct being, it is a fact that He is either a god, or the God. Since the Bible claims that Yahweh is the only God, Jesus is either that God Yahweh, or the Bible is a big contradiction. Next class we will establish that the Bible claims Yahweh to be the only God.

### **Exercise:**

Since the deity of Christ is a longtime debated topic, it shouldn't surprise us that scriptures have been tampered with to try to more clearly define this vague concept in the favor of certain preconceived beliefs. Read these passages from two different translations and consider how they've been tampered to conform to the translator's belief of the deity of Christ, whether in favor or not. Compare these translations to the NASB or ESV which are modern literal translations from an accurate text base. You can also refer to an interlinear Bible to read the original Greek to get a more accurate picture of what the translation should be. For instance, if words have been added by the translator, reading the Greek interlinear Bible will reveal that. I recommend this website: [www.biblehub.com/interlinear](http://www.biblehub.com/interlinear)

### **New World Translation:** Conforming to Jehovah's Witness doctrine denying Jesus' deity.

- Jn 1:1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. (NWT)
- Acts 20:28: Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. (NWT)
- Tit 2:13: While we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of our Savior, Jesus Christ. (NWT)
- Heb 1:8: But about the Son, he says: "God is your throne forever and ever, and the scepter of your Kingdom is the scepter of uprightness.
- II Pet 1:1: Simon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have acquired a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ. (NWT)
- I Jn 5:20: But we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us insight so that we may gain the knowledge of the one who is true. And we are in union with the one who is true, by means of his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and life everlasting. (NWT)

### **King James Version:** Conforming to Catholic doctrine of "the Trinity" and the deity of Christ

- Phi 2:6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (KJV)
- I Jn 5:7: For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (KJV)

# Lesson 4: Jesus Is the Son of God

## Introduction

Last class we considered passages that explicitly or implicitly identified Jesus as being God (Elohim or Theos). However, we didn't consider other passages that link Jesus to being God in a different way. Countless times in scripture Jesus is referred to as "the Son of God". It is clear that Jesus is identified as being deity when referred to as "God", but what about "the Son of God". Is that title a claim to deity? Is Jesus being referred to as God every time He is called the Son of God? Today we will look through scripture and try to determine if the title "the Son of God" is a reference to Him being deity or not.

## Who called Jesus the Son of God?

Let's quickly identify some of the people that claimed Jesus to be the Son of God.

- The disciples: Mat 14:33, 16:16,
- Other believers: Mat 27:54 John 1:49, 11:27
- Unbelievers quoted Jesus as having claimed to be the Son of God: Mat 27:43, Jn 19:7
- Demons: Mk 3:11-12, Mk 5:7, Lk 4:41, 8:28
- Angels: Lk 1:32
- God: Mat 3:17, 17:5, Lk 3:22, Lk 9:35
- Jesus: Mat 26:65, Jn 10:36

Jesus being identified as God isn't just a side thought. It's spoken of by all entities involved in the history of Jesus. Jesus being the Son of God is at the very heart of the issue of Jesus' true identity. Believer's believed Him to be the Son of God, unbelievers attributed Him to claiming to be the Son of God, spiritual creatures had insight into Jesus' being the Son of God, and deity himself, both God and Jesus, claimed that Jesus was in fact the Son of God.

## How is the term "son(s) of God" used throughout the Bible?

Jesus isn't the only being referred to as being a "son of God". This is a phrase we see numerous times, in numerous forms, used for numerous people. To understand what the title "the Son of God" means regarding Jesus, we need to get a good understanding what "son of God" means in all other contexts. First let's just consider the phrase "son of..."

### Uses for the phrase "son of..."

- Used literally to describe who someone is:
  - Of course the most common use of the phrase "son of..." is in reference to literal sonship, i.e. a child being born of his father and mother.
  - It can also be used literally but instead of being just from a literal father, it is used to describe literal ancestry:
    - Sons of Israel: Mat 27:9, Lk 1:16, Acts 5:21, many more...
    - Sons of Levi: Heb 7:5

- Sons of men: Eph 3:5

All these passages are used to describe a literal sonship or ancestry.

- Used figuratively to describe what someone is like:
  - Son of hell: Mat 23:15
  - Sons of thunder: Mk 3:17
  - Sons of Abraham or sons of the devil: John 8:39, 41, 44
  - Sons of light: Jn 12:36
  - Son of encouragement: Acts 4:36
  - Sons of disobedience: Eph 2:2, 5:6; Col 3:6; I Thes 5:5

All these passages are used to describe what a person is like.

- Used to both literally to describe who someone is, and figuratively to describe what someone is like:
  - Sons of those who murdered the prophets: Mat 23:31
    - They literally are the descendants of the Jewish people that murdered the prophets, but here Jesus is saying they are sons because they are acting like those ancestors.
  - Sons of this age: Lk 16:18
    - They literally are sons of the present age, because they were born in the present age, but they are also described as acting like the typical sinner of the present age, as opposed to those who are choosing to act like the light.
- Used figuratively to describe who someone is:
  - Sons of Abraham by faith: Gal 3:7
    - They aren't literal sons of Abraham, but because of their faith they aren't just "like" Abraham, they figuratively, but in a spiritual reality have become his true sons.

We have seen that the phrase "son of..." is used to:

1. Describe who someone is literally
2. Describe who someone is figuratively
3. Describe what someone is like figuratively

Now let's apply these ideas to the Bible's use of the phrase "son of God".

### **Uses for the phrase "son of God"**

- Is "son of God" used literally?
  - For the phrase "son of God" to be used literally, that would mean an individual was literally born of God by means of conception, pregnancy, and labor and delivery. This is clearly not the case, so "son of God" is never used to describe a literal origin. In this sense, there is no such thing as a literal son of God because God isn't the literal Father of anyone.
  - God isn't human like us, but He uses human ideas and realities to explain spiritual realities. "Son of God" won't describe someone's literal origin, but it will be used to describe someone's figurative origin.
  - We weren't literally born of God by means of pregnancy, but we are figuratively born of God in the sense that He is the origin of us all.
- Used figuratively to describe what someone is like:
  - Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God: Mat 5:9
  - Love your enemies so that you may be sons of your Father: Mat 5:44-45
  - Love your enemies and you will be sons of the Most High: Lk 6:35

In all these passages, humans are called to imitate characteristics of God (being a peacemaker and loving enemies) and we will be called His sons, or... we will be His sons. If we act like God, we will figuratively be His sons because we are like Him.

- Used figuratively to describe what someone is:
  - Adam the son of God: Lk 3:38
    - Adam isn't literally born of God, but figuratively he is God's son more than anyone because He was the first human to come from God. He was the only human (besides Jesus) to have no literal father.
    - However, is Adam more of a son of God than any other human? Does Adam come from God any more than than the rest of us? How different is Adam from every other human?
  - Those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God: Rom 8:14, 19
    - Again, if you are led by the Spirit, it doesn't mean you were physically born of God, but in a spiritual reality you are God's actual child, as opposed to the rest of creation that rejects their Father.
  - You are sons of God through faith in Christ: Gal 3:26
    - Faith in Christ is what brings us into the spiritual state of sonship with God.
  - Jesus was sent to adopt us as sons: Gal 4:4-7
  - They are like angels, sons of God, being sons of the resurrection: Lk 20:36
    - At the time of the resurrection, the "sons of the resurrection" (those who will receive the resurrection (similar to the concept of the "sons of the kingdom")) will then be like the angels because they are made into sons of God.
    - The phrase "sons of God" here refers to the transformation of the physical body into the spiritual body to be received at the resurrection (I Cor 15, II Cor 5, Phi 3:21).
    - They are said to be like angels because their spiritual body will apparently be similar to angelic bodies.

We see that many times humans are referred to as sons of God. So what do we make of this? If I am a son of God, then why is it so special that Jesus is called the son of God. If I am a son of God, and I'm fairly certain that I'm not deity, then why should Christ be considered deity because He is called the son of God?

Humans are figuratively referred to as potentially being called sons of God if they act like God does. Jesus certainly acts like the Father, so He certainly is the son of God in that sense? Is there anything more to Jesus being the Son of God?

Humans are figuratively referred to as sons of God when they are led by the Spirit, have faith in Christ, and are resurrected. How does this apply to Jesus? Well He certainly was led by the Spirit. He doesn't have faith in Himself, but He is faithful to Christ. He also has been resurrected. Is Christ's title of "the Son of God" like this? Does it mean that He has obeyed God? Or does it mean that He is God?

Let me point out something of great significance. All these passages show that man has the potential to become a son of God. It depends on His choices. He isn't the son of God already by his own nature, but rather can be made, or "adopted" as a son depending on His response to the calling. So, was Jesus made into a son of God by something that He did? Or by His own nature is He the son of God? That is a significant difference. Adam is the only made who is "the son of God" by nature, but that's not a reference to his deity, but rather to the fact he was the first created human. So what about Jesus?

- One more significant use of "sons of God":
  - Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7: In these passages, the "sons of God" are clearly the angels or spiritual creatures.

- Satan himself is thrown in with this category as being similar. He's not a son of God, but he's present before God with them lumping them all together as some form of spiritual creature as opposed to humans.
- Gen 6:1-4: In this passage, the same phrase "sons of God" is used, but it's application is more uncertain and debated.
- Some believe the sons of God to be spiritual creatures such as angels (like in Job). Others hold that the phrase "sons of God" refer to the more godly minded descendants of Seth (Gen 4:25-26) intermarrying with the ungodly descendants of Cain (Gen 4:16-24).

This is also significant, because now we see that sons of God refers to special spiritual creatures and angels. If Jesus is referred to as "the Son of God", perhaps it's just stating Him to be some spiritual creature like an angel, but not really signifying His deity. Or does Jesus being referred to as "the Son of God" mean that He is deity?

## Summary:

Here are the options of what is meant by Jesus being referred to as "the Son of God" that we've gathered from scripture so far:

- He is literally born of God
- He is very similar to God in character and behavior
- He is made into or adopted as a son of God by some decision or behavior
- He is a spiritual creature like an angel

Or perhaps... it's none of the above. We will have to investigate the passages referring to Jesus as "the Son of God" in order to find out for sure.

## The only begotten Son

We already considered some passages showing many different people referring to Jesus as "the Son of God" (including Jesus and the Father). However, we quickly need to point out that Jesus isn't called "a son of God". He is referred to as "the only begotten Son of God".

- Jn 1:14: We saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father
- Jn 1:18: No one has seen God. The only begotten God in the bosom of the Father has explained Him
  - Remember, the accurate reading of this passage is uncertain. It is rendered: 1) only begotten Son, 2) only begotten God, 3) only God. Since it is possible that the word "begotten" might not be in the original text we won't place too much emphasis on this passage. This is of no significance since Jesus' begotten state is clearly stated multiple times elsewhere.
- Jn 3:16: God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son
- Jn 3:18: He who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God
- I Jn 4:9: By this the love of God was manifested in us that God sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him

Jesus isn't just being declared as "a son of God", but rather "the only begotten Son of God". Already, this puts Jesus title of being "the Son of God" into a different category. Him being "the only begotten Son" isn't the same as being "a son". To help us understand these concepts, let's answer two questions:

1. What does it mean for Jesus to *be* the only begotten (adj)?
2. What does it mean for Jesus *to have been* begotten (verb)?

## What does it mean for Jesus to *be* “the only begotten?”

“Only begotten” certainly isn’t a common modern phrase. To understand what it means for Jesus to be God’s “only begotten”, we need to understand what “only begotten” means.

- Only begotten:
  - Mongenés (Greek adj): only, only begotten, unique
    - “Only begotten” is actually from one Greek word.
    - The Greek word is made up from two Greek words:
      - Monos: alone, solitary, without companion
        - This basically means “only”
      - Genos: offspring, family, race, kind
        - Typically refers to children or something of the same kind
  - So the combination ends up literally referring to an only child
    - These people had their only begotten/ their only child (Lk 7:12, 8:42, 9:38)
  - So in some sense, Jesus is God’s only Son.

### Only:

**Jesus being referred to as “the only begotten” signifies His uniqueness.** He is the only being of this status. All other references to “sons of God” are for multiple beings. “The only begotten” necessarily limits the amount of beings to the number one. That is the definition of “only”.

Jesus isn’t “a” Son of God, or “one of” the sons of God, but rather He is referred to as “THE” Son of God. The definite article signifies specificity, and exclusivity, i.e. He is the only Son of God as opposed to the other sons of God.

- We previously saw that the angels or spiritual creatures were referred to as “sons of God” in the book of Job (and possibly Genesis).
- Heb 1:5: “To which of the angels did He ever say, “You are my Son, Today I have begotten You”, and again, “I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me”.
- It is clear that the sonship of Jesus is unique and all together different from that of the angels.

The only other person referred to as “THE” son of God (with the definite article “the”) is Adam. He is also “the” son of God because his sonship, like Christ’s, is also exclusive. Adam alone was the first human ever created, so in a sense, he is “THE” son of God. But Jesus’ being the “only begotten Son of God” clearly doesn’t refer to being the first human created (since that position is already assumed by Adam). Jesus being “the only begotten Son of God must mean something else. What does it mean?

### Begotten:

We can understand that Jesus is a unique Son of God, but what does it mean for Jesus to be begotten? Let’s consider the Greek word “genos” and its use. Consider some different ways “genos” is translated (NASB):

- Race: Mat 7:26, Acts 7:19, I Pet 2:9
- Countrymen: II Cor 11:26
- By birth: Acts 4:36
- Native: Acts 18:2
- Descent: Acts 4:6
- Family: Acts 7:13
- It is translated in the NASB into all these words:



So in its literal sense, it refers to things being of the same kind and nature based on birth. We know Jesus wasn't born of God as a Son literally, so this word is saying that Jesus is of the same kind and nature as God. Consider how "genos" is translated in these passages:

- Mat 13:47: ...is like a dragnet cast into the sea, gathering fish of every **kind**
- Mk 9:29: And He said to them, "This **kind** cannot come out by anything but prayer."
- I Cor 12:10, 28, 14:10: **Kinds** of tongues/ languages

Here the word is being used to categorize things together for being of the same nature (but not because they are connected by a physical birth). Jesus being referred to as "begotten" is stating Him to be in the same category or kind as God is.

*EX: A man creates a table. Is that table then classified as a human? No. A man begets a child. Is that child considered to be of the same human nature? Yes.*

Jesus isn't created by God. Jesus is begotten of God. **Jesus being begotten of God means that He is own God's own nature, God's own kind.** Let's look at some passages that declare Christ to be of God's own nature/ kind.

### Jesus is the same kind as God

- Phi 2:6-7: Although He existed in the form of God...
  - Jesus existed in the form of God. Before Christ came to earth as a man, He existed in some divine nature.
- Col 1:19, 2:9: God was pleased for the fullness to dwell in Him... In Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.
  - While Jesus was in human form on the earth the fulness of deity dwelt in Him. Who else does this apply to? Who else was deity while human? This states Jesus, even while a man, was of the same kind as God.
- Lk 1:35: For that reason the child shall be called the Son of God
  - When Jesus was physically born on this earth, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary. Scripture says that's the reason the child will be called the Son of God.
  - This isn't Jesus being physically born of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, as a man, was physically born from Mary, but the Holy Spirit is responsible for bringing Jesus, who was in the form of God, into Mary to be born into the form of man. No other human was from the Holy Spirit in this manner.
  - Jesus is different. This explains how in Jesus' human form, He was still the nature of God by having the fulness of deity dwell in Him.
- Heb 1:3: He is the radiance of His glory, the exact representation of His nature
  - Jesus radiates the glory of God. Jesus as a human perfectly represented God's nature. What other son of God is said to have done that? Jesus is of the same kind as God.
- Jn 1:18: No one has seen God...[Jesus] has explained Him
  - Though the complete and full nature of God haven't been revealed to anyone, Jesus explains that nature because Jesus is of God's nature.
- Jn 14:7-11: He who has seen Me has seen the Father
  - Jesus says that they know the Father and have seen the Father because they have known and seen Jesus. Who else can that be said of? Who else is of God's nature and kind?
- Heb 7:3: Without father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning nor end, but made like the Son of God he remains a priest perpetually.

- Melchizedek here is described as being eternal. He isn't literally, but in the Bible, his origins and death are unknown, and thus his priesthood seemingly takes an eternal form. This is then compared to the nature of the Son of God as being eternal
- Of course we know God's nature to be eternal. This is putting the nature and kind of Jesus in the same category as God.

### Jesus is the image of God

Another way that Jesus is seen to be of the same nature or kind as God is that He is declared to be "the image of God". We know that man was *made* in God's image. Scripture reveals that isn't the case concerning Jesus. He wasn't created in the image of God. Jesus *is* the image of God.

- II Cor 4:4-6: ...the glory of Christ who is the image of God...the glory of God in the face of Christ
- Col 1:15: He is the image of God, the firstborn of all creation

Being God's begotten, Jesus is the same nature and kind as God. Jesus then is not *of* God's image, but *is* the image of God.

### What does it mean for Jesus to have been "begotten"?

So far we've been considering the word "begotten" as an adjective i.e. the "begotten Son", meaning, the Son that is begotten. Begotten is also used in the verb form "beget". The Greek word is "gennaó".

- Beget
  - Gennaó (Greek verb): bring forth, give birth to
    - It is translated in the NASB various ways:
      - Bear, bearing children, became the father of, have begotten, bore, born, child, conceived, father, Father, gave, gives, birth, produce

The definition of "beget" gives us the impression that Jesus was born from God. We know that it isn't literal, but perhaps it's using "beget" in a figurative sense to explain Jesus' origin. Was Jesus figuratively born of God? Did God "beget" Jesus by creating Him? The question needing to be answered is this: is the verb "beget" referring to the origin of Jesus? Or does Jesus being begotten refer to something else? Let's look at several ways the word "gennaó is used:

- Literal birth: Abraham begat Isaac (Mat 1:2)
- Figurative for producing or originating: .Refuse foolish speculations knowing that they produce quarrels (II Tim 2:23)
- Figurative for change of status, position, relationship
  - Jn 1:12-13: Those who believe in Jesus are begotten of God
  - Jn 3:3: We need to be begot of water and Spirit to enter the kingdom
  - Phi 1:10: I appeal to you for my son, Onesimus, whom I begot in my imprisonment.
    - Paul meets Onesimus in prison. Onesimus becomes a Christian. Paul describes Onesimus as his child that he begot in prison. Of course Paul didn't give birth to or create Onesimus. Rather, when Onesimus accepted Christ, he entered into a new family relationship with Paul.

So when we read passages of Jesus being begotten, what will we see? Will we see that Jesus:

1. Was literally born of God
2. Was originated, produced, or created by God
3. Changed His status, relationship, and position before God

### Today I have begotten you

God says of Jesus, "Today I have begotten you"

- Ps 2:7: I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord, He said to me, “You are My Son. Today I have begotten You”
  - This psalm is written by David, but twice in the New Testament it is confirmed to be speaking of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:25-26, 13:33)
  - The psalm speaks of all the nations raging against God and the Christ in order to thwart their plans, but God is undeterred. Instead God laughs and installs His King on the throne stating, “Today I have begotten You”.
  - What does this mean? What does it mean for God to have begotten His Christ? When did God beget the Christ?
- Acts 13:33: God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, “You are My Son. Today I have begotten You”
  - Paul says that God fulfilled the promise “Today I have begotten You” when He raised up Christ”
  - In this context, begetting Jesus was raising Jesus from the dead. God begot Jesus when He raised Him from the dead.
  - Rom 1:4 helps confirm this by stating that Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness”
    - The resurrection is what declares Jesus to have been begotten of God. This is according to what the Holy Spirit prophesied (“according to the Spirit of holiness”)
- Heb 5:5-6: So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Just as He says also in another passage, “You are A priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”
  - Here the author links Jesus being begotten to His calling as a priest.
  - He states another passage declaring Christ to be priest confirming that the former statement “Today I have begotten You” is in reference to Him being called and confirmed as priest.

Jesus having been “begotten” does not refer to the origin of Christ.

- Heb 7:3 states that Melchizedek is similar to the Son of God because he has no parents, no genealogy, no beginning, or end. This is saying that Jesus has no origin. Jesus is fatherless in the sense that there is no one who originated or produced Him. It doesn’t refer to Jesus being born or being created.

### **Jesus having been “begotten” It’s referring to a change of His position and status before God.**

- Before time, Jesus wasn’t always a priest before God, but he was begotten of God to be the mediator between God and man.
- Jesus wasn’t always “the Son of God”. “Son of God” is a human term to describe the nature of Jesus for men to be able to understand. Before time, there were no humans needing to understand that Jesus is the Son of God. When He created humans, He didn’t disclose Jesus to be His Son for a long time. When He was resurrected from the dead, it was officially proven for all mankind that Jesus is in fact the Son of God. Jesus then is then begotten as the Son of God in the sense that He is now available for mankind to believe in. That was a change in Jesus’ role, status, and position.

### **What is meant by Jesus being the “firstborn”?**

- Col 1:15: He is...the firstborn of all creation; Rev 3:14: [Jesus is]...the Beginning of the creation of God
  - If Jesus is the beginning of creation and the firstborn of creation, does that mean He is created by God? Some people teach that God made Jesus first, and God created everything else through His creation, Jesus. They use these passages to teach that Jesus is the first created thing in Yahweh’s entire creation. Is this true? Do these passages teach this?
    - First, keep in mind that Jesus is God, and there was no other god created before or after Jesus (Isa 43:10).

- So if Jesus is God, then He can't be a later creation of Yahweh.
- Jn 1:3: All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
  - All things came into being through Jesus. Therefore Jesus is not something that came into being. He is the source of all things that came into being.
- So how is Jesus called the firstborn?
  - There's the obvious literal meaning: the first child born of a Father.
    - No one thinks that Jesus was literally born out of the Father's womb, but people take this to figuratively mean that Jesus was firstborn in the sense of the first thing created by God. Is that what is meant by Jesus being called the firstborn?
  - Firstborn also has a figurative meaning: preeminent, or first.
    - The firstborn child would be considered preeminent and get an extra portion of the inheritance. So the term "firstborn" is a word used to describe a preeminence.
    - God uses "firstborn" in this sense several times:
      - Ex 4:22: Israel is my firstborn. Israel was not really the firstborn. Jacob was. God is using the term to describe His special preeminent people.
      - Jer 31:9: Ephraim, my firstborn. Again, Ephraim wasn't really the firstborn. Manasseh was. Ephraim received the blessing of the firstborn and was made preeminent, so God describes them as being His firstborn.
      - Job 18:13: leprosy is described as the firstborn of death (the preeminent killer)
      - Psalm 89:27: God makes David the firstborn. David wasn't the firstborn, but God made him preeminent over all other peoples. This is a messianic passage also describing how Christ would be preeminent over all creation.
- Since we know that Jesus wasn't created, we know that Him being described as the firstborn over all creation is meant that He is preeminent over all creation (which we know to be true).
  - Rom 8:29: Jesus is made the firstborn among His brethren. He is made preeminent, and we are to be like Him and follow Him.
  - Col 1:15: Jesus is the firstborn of creation. Then it describes how he made everything and rules over everything. The point is that Jesus is the most preeminent in creation.
  - Heb 1:6: God brings His firstborn into the world. This is just another statement of God's preeminent servant, Jesus.
  - Heb 12:23: The church belongs to this preeminent one.
  - Rev 1:5: Jesus is the firstborn of the dead. This could be another statement of His preeminence over all those who will resurrect, or perhaps it's being more literally by stating He is the first to resurrect.
- Statements of Jesus being the firstborn are not to describe His origins, but rather His preeminent status over all.

## Summary:

Here are the conclusions we've come to understand from Jesus being the only begotten Son of God:

- He is the unique Son of God
- He is the same nature/ kind as God
- He is not literally born from God nor is He isn't produced or created by God

## What does Jesus say about Himself being the Son of God?

We've investigated what it means for Jesus to be "the only begotten Son of God". Now let's consider what Jesus says about His own position of sonship.

### The Son of God is equal to the Father

Jesus declares that being the Son of God means He is equal to the Father

- Jn 5:15-18:
  - Jesus heals on the Sabbath.
  - The priests get mad at Him for working on the Sabbath.
  - Jesus justifies His actions by saying, "My Father is working until now, and I myself am working". Jesus puts Himself in the same category as God by
    1. Calling God His Father
    2. Classifying Himself as doing the same work
  - The Jews get the message and want to stone Him for "making Himself equal with God".
    - How does the text state that Jesus made Himself equal with God? By calling God His Father (especially in this context where He is claiming to do the same work as the Father)
    - Keep in mind, the text doesn't state that the Jews claimed Jesus was making Himself equal to the Father. Instead, the author John himself is stating that Jesus was making Himself equal to God by calling God His Father.
    - However, John also states the Jesus was breaking the Sabbath even though He wasn't. So perhaps it's best to read "making Himself equal with God" as the Jews' accusation against Him.
  - However, when Jesus is accused as making Himself equal to God, look at what He then does:
    - Says that they are both working (17)
    - Says that He does what the Father does (19)
    - Says that they both give life (21)
    - Says that the Father and Son will receive equal honor (23)
    - Says that failing to honor the Son is failing to honor the Father (23)
    - Then He backs up His claims by saying He is witnessed by:
      1. John the Baptist (33-35)
      2. Miracles (36)
      3. The Father (37-38)
      4. Scripture (39-47)
  - Does it seem like Jesus is trying to clarify that He isn't equal to God? Or does it sound more like Jesus is trying to confirm and back up His equality with God?
  - This passages here makes it clear that Jesus being the Son of God means that He is equal to God.

### The Son of God is God

We saw that the Son of God is equal with God. This passage says that the Son of God is God.

- Jn 5:27-39:
  - Jesus claims to have sheep that follow Him.
  - He claims to give them eternal life.
  - He claims that no one can snatch them out of His hand.
  - Then He states that the sheep are given to Him by the Father, who also holds them and can prevent them from being snatched from His hand.
  - Then He claims that He and the Father are one (united).

- The Jews got the message. They wanted to stone Jesus.
  - They say they want to stone Him because He made “Himself out to be God”.
  - Keep in mind, in chapter five they wanted to kill Him for making Himself *equal* to God. Now they want to kill Him for making Himself out to *be* God.
- When Jesus was accused of making Himself equal to God, notice how He responds:
  - He justifies Himself
    - He says, “If God calls you gods, why am I blaspheming if I say I am the Son of God.
    - He attributes making Himself out to be God to His claim to be the Son of God.
  - It is clear that Jesus equates His claim to be the Son of God as being God.
- Jesus justification includes this:
  - “If God called you gods, then why am I blaspheming for saying that I am the Son of God?”
    - Does this mean Jesus’ claim to being the Son of God isn’t a claim to deity after all? Is Jesus equating the figurative statement of us being gods with Him figuratively claiming to be the Son of God?
    - To understand what is meant by “you are gods”, let’s look at the original context of Ps 82.
      - 82:1: God is the judge of the world
      - 82:2: How long will His people be wicked judges?
      - 82:3-4: This is how their judgement should be.
      - 82:5: They are wicked foolish judges
      - 82:6-7: “I said you are gods, but you will die like princes”. God made man to be the gods of their world by ruling over creation and acting as a judge (Gen 1:27-28). We aren’t really gods, but He’s let us serve as gods of this world. But here, man is failing to execute His righteous judgment, therefore God is going bring justice on them.
    - Jesus’ point is that if God is willing to give humans special godly responsibilities, is it to hard to understand that God will come to the earth to carry out His will more perfectly on His own?
      - Jesus isn’t stating that He is normal or not claiming to be God. This is evident because He states that He has been sanctified and sent by the Father (35) (that’s not normal), and backs up His claim with the miracles that God’s given Him (38).
    - He finishes the discourse by explaining His claim to be one with the Father as being in the Father, and the Father being in Him.
    - Jesus equates His claim to be the Son of God as being God.

## The significance of claiming to be the Son of God

Based on what we’ve read so far, here is what Jesus is claiming when He refers to Himself as being “the Son of God”:

- He is the unique Son of God
- He is the same nature/ kind as God
- He is not literally born from God nor is He isn’t produced or created by God
- He is equal to God
- He is God

This is a bold claim. Therefore, we should see lots of emphasis put on the claim, statement, and belief that Jesus is the Son of God.

### Seen as blasphemy by unbelievers:

The Jews were not confused by Jesus claim. They understood that He was claiming to be deity by calling Himself the Son of God. Since they didn’t believe Him, naturally they considered it to be blasphemy.

- Mat 26:63-64
- Mk 14:63

- Jn 5:18
- Jn 10:33
- Jn 19:7

### **Seen as something significant by evil spiritual creatures:**

The spiritual creatures have special insight being in the heavenly realms apparently. Satan and the demons knew Jesus to be the Son of God, and they put special attention on that as well.

- Mat 3:3, 6: Satan cleverly challenges Jesus to prove that He is the Son of God. Satan knows how significant that truth is.
- Mat 8:29; Mk 3:11-12: The demons recognize Jesus to be the Son of God immediately. They fear Him because of this. Jesus silences them and keeps them from proclaiming this because it's too important information to be presented in the wrong way at the wrong time.

### **Believers acknowledge the significance of believing Jesus to be the Son of God:**

Those who knew Jesus knew the significance of confessing Jesus to be the Son of God. They didn't say it lightly as something normal. They understood the vast implications of the words "you are the Son of God".

- Mat 14:33: After they saw Jesus control the weather they declared that He truly is the Son of God.
- Mat 16:16: Who do you say that I am? The Christ and Son of God. This confession is the foundation of the church.
- Mat 27:54: After seeing all these things, the centurion was finally convinced that Jesus really was the Son of God.
- Jn 1:49: After hearing Jesus reveal His divine understanding, Nathaniel confessed Jesus to be the Son of God.
- Acts 9:20: After Paul was converted, He began telling the world that Jesus really was the Son of God.

### **The necessity of believing Jesus to be the Son of God:**

The claim that Jesus is the Son of God is so important that it's essential for our salvation.

- Jn 3:17: He who believes in the Son is not judged. He who does not believe is judged already.
- Jn 6:40: The Father's desire is that all who believe in the Son have eternal life.
- Jn 20:31: These things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God.
- I Jn 3:23: This is His commandment, that we believe in His Son.
- I Jn 5:5: Who is the one who overcomes the world? The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.
- I Jn 5:10: The one that believes in the Son of God is the one that has the testimony in Himself.

Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was no less than claiming to be God. We see this is backed up by the emphasis of this claim and responses to this claim. It is made obvious in this manner:

- If Jesus being the Son of God was no difference than us being the sons of God then:
  - Why would people consider Him to be blaspheming?
  - Why would it be so significant for believers to confess Jesus to be the Son of God?
  - Why would it be essential for us to believe in Him as the Son of God?
- If Jesus being the Son of God was just claiming to be some spiritual creature like an angel then:
  - Why would people consider Him to be blaspheming?
    - It's not blasphemy to claim to be an angel; just crazy.
  - Why would it be so significant for believers to confess Jesus to be the Son of God?
    - Has it ever been significant for people to confess in angels to be spiritual creatures? Isn't it usually obvious from the beginning? Is there any special emphasis of them believing the angels to be spiritual beings?
  - Why would it be essential for us to believe in Him as the Son of God?
    - Why would it be so significant to believe that Jesus was a spiritual creature?

- How would He be different than any other angel, and why would it be so significant to believe Him to be an angel?

## **Conclusion:**

Jesus claiming to be the Son of God is a claim to being deity. The Bible makes that very clear, and when we read about Jesus being the Son of God, we need to keep these conclusions in mind:

- He is the unique Son of God
- He is the same nature/ kind as God
- He is not literally born from God nor is He isn't produced or created by God
- He is equal to God
- He is God
- It is essential that we believe He is the Son of God



# Lesson 5: Yahweh is the One True God

## Introduction

Remember that the discussion of the deity of Christ is about determining whether or not Jesus is God. This means either:

1. Jesus is a god
2. Jesus is God
3. Jesus is not God.

First, we saw that Jesus is distinct from the Father whom we know to be Yahweh. Second, we saw that there are numerous passages stating that Jesus is God. We then determined that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God is also a declaration of deity.

So the Father is God, and Jesus, being distinct from the Father is also God; however, today we will see that scripture clearly reveals there is only one God, and Yahweh is that God.

- Deut 6:4-5: Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might
- Mk 12:29-30: Jesus answered, "The foremost is, ' Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength

## Yahweh, the Superior God

There are many passages that show Yahweh's superiority and priority over other gods.

- Deut 5:6: you shall have no other gods
- Deut 6:5: love God with all your heart, soul, and might
- Deut 6:13-15: Fear God and worship Him only. Don't follow the gods around you
- I Kings 18:21: Choose either God or Baal
- Mat 6:24: You can't serve God and mammon

Yahweh is claiming to be superior to other gods and take priority over them, but this doesn't mean that there are no other gods. In fact, this would give you the impression that there are indeed other gods, and that Yahweh is competing with them.

## Yahweh, the Unique God

Now let's look at passages where Yahweh claims to be unique (the only God).

- Deut 4:35: Yahweh is God. There is no other
- Isa 43:10: No other god formed before or after
- Isa 44:6: No other god besides Yahweh
- Isa 44:8: Is there any other god besides Yahweh? I know of none
- Isa 45:5: Besides Yahweh, there is no other god

- Isa 45:6: There is no one besides Yahweh
- Isa 45:14: There is no other god
- Isa 45:18: Yahweh is the God of creation. There is no one else
- Isa 45:21: There is no other god
- Isa 45:22: I am God. There is no one else
- Isa 46:9: I am God. There is no other. There is no one like Me.
- Jer 10:10: Yahweh is the true God

The OT makes it very clear that Yahweh is God, and Yahweh is the only God. However, does the Bible speak differently in the NT? Is it different when Jesus enters the story? Do the OT and NT contradict? No they don't. The NT also teaches that there is only one God.

- Mk 12:32: He is one. There is no one else besides Him
- Jn 5:44: Receive glory from one and only God
- Jn 17:3: The one true God and Jesus whom He sent
- Rom 16:27: The only wise God
- I Cor 8:4-6: There is no God but one. For us there is but one God.
- I Tim 1:17: The only God
- I Tim 2:5: One God, and one mediator between God and man
- Jd 25: Only God and Savior

It is undeniable that the Bible claims only one God, Yahweh to be in existence. So how can Jesus be God as well as the Father if there is only one God Yahweh? There are two options:

1. The Bible contradicts itself and is false
2. Jesus and the Father are both the one God, Yahweh

The second option seems like a stretch. Is there anything in scripture that seems to indicate that somehow Jesus and the Father are both Yahweh?

## Yahweh, the United God

Looking back on some of the previously read passages we find that they don't emphasize the uniqueness of God, but rather the unity of God.

- Deut 6:4-5: Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might
- Mk 12:29-30: Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength
- Jms 2:19: You believe that God is one. You do well

These passages say that God is "one". This doesn't mean that He is the only one, but that His existence is a oneness. What does it mean for Yahweh to be described as "one"? It is not a reference to His singularity or exclusive existence, rather that in His existence He is united.

### A One God:

- Echad: Hebrew: adj: One
  - Translated many different ways: alike, all at once, alone, altogether, another, single, some... and many more.
    - It is used as a singular numerical one
      - Gen 2:21: one of Adam's ribs
      - Gen 27:38: one blessing
    - It is also used to denote a collected one, i.e., multiple things being united to become one

- Gen 1:5: There was evening and morning, one day
- Gen 2:24: Man and women, the two shall become one flesh
- Consider how in one verse the word is used in both ways:
  - Gen 11:6: The Lord said, "Behold, they are *one* (ehad) people, and they all have the *same* (*one, ahat*) language.
- Very similar to the English word "one", echad can refer to a collected united one, as well as a numerical one.

It is noteworthy that there is a Hebrew word, Yachid, used to describe a numerical "one and only".

- Yachid: Hebrew: adj: only, only one, solitary
  - This word is used to describe an exclusive solitary oneness.
  - Consider how it is used in these verses:
    - Only [Son/ child]: Gen 2:22, 12, 16; Jug 11:34; Prov 4:3; Jer 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10
    - My only: Ps 22:10, 35:17
    - Lonely: Ps 25:16, 68:6

Deut 6:4-5 uses the word "echad" to signify a collected one, a united one. The word "yachid" is not used to describe God's existence ever. Consider all those passages in Isaiah when Yahweh is describing Himself as the only God, He never describes Himself as "yachid". What's more interesting is that after Jesus came and made His claims to be the Son of God, in the 2nd century when the Talmud was written, the Jews changed the word from "echad" to "yachid" in Deut 6:4-5. Clearly the Jews saw the theological implications of that word "one".

Why would God emphasize Himself as being united? Is there a plurality within God?

### **A Plural God:**

- Previously we've said that Elohim means God. That's actually inaccurate. Elohim is the plural of Eloah. Eloah means god, and elohim means gods.
  - Eloah: singular: translated: a god (II Chron 32:15), or God (Deut 32:15).
    - It is singular therefore is never translated "gods".
    - This word exists 60 times in the OT; the majority of the time referring to God.
  - Elhoim: plural form of Eloah: translated gods (Ex 20:3) or God (Ex 20:1).
    - It is plural so it is never translated "god/ a god".
    - This word exists 2598 times in the OT; the majority of the the time referring to God.
- God refers to Himself in plural form:
  - It is interesting that God most often refers to Himself in the plural form. Almost every time we read the word "God" in the OT, it is actually the word "Gods".
    - Gen 6:4-5: The LORD our "Gods" is one
- Singular verbs:
  - Even when the plural word "Elohim" is used, it is always in correlation with singular verbs. For example, "We *is* going to the store".
- (Almost always) singular pronouns:
  - Also, almost always, when the plural word "Elohim" is used, it is in correlation with singular pronouns (I, He, Me). For example, "Gods called the light day and He called the dark night" (Gen 1:5).
- (Rarely) plural pronouns:
  - However, in four cases God refers to Himself with plural pronouns (We, Us, Our).

- Gen 1:26-27: God says, “Let *Us* make man in *Our* image.”
  - Gen 3:22: God said, “Man has become like *Us*.”
  - Gen 11:7: God said, “Come, let *Us* go down”
  - Isa 6:8: God said, “Who will go for *Us*?”
  - It is curious to note that the plural pronoun is used of God only when He is speaking. Just after He is done speaking, the narrative returns to referring to Him with singular pronouns.
- 
- Explanations of use of plurality:
    - How do you explain these uses of plurality for God? Why would God be describes as “Gods”? Why would God speak of Himself in plural pronouns like “We”, “Us”, and “Our”? Consider three solutions:
      1. God was speaking to the angels?
        - When God says, “Who will go for Us”, or “Come let us go down”, perhaps He is addressing His angels or other spiritual beings surrounding His throne.
          - If Job 38:7 is to be taken literally, it states that angels were in existence while God was creating the earth. This doesn’t seem far fetched to me. So perhaps when God said, “Let Us” He was speaking to the angels.
        - Consider this: God said, “Let Us make man in Our own image”. In the image of God He created them”. Are humans are made in the image of God, not in the image of angels, or angels and God. Can’t can’t say, “Let Us make man in Our own image” in reference to the angels if He didn’t make us in the image of angels as well.
        - Also, this argument doesn’t address God being referred to as “Gods”.
      2. God is using plurality to exalt His majesty, i.e., “royal we”
        - It is said that use of plurality is a poetic device to ascribe majesty and importance. Is this why God speaks with plural pronouns and calls Himself “Gods”?
        - The Bible never uses plurality for this effect. No where in the Bible is royalty addressed as plurality for the purpose of exalting majesty.
        - This poetic device isn’t seen until the 4th century.
        - Also, no other pagan religions in Moses day refer to their god in the plural.
        - So the plural use of “Elohim” and pronouns is a rare thing that has no simple explanation.
      3. Within God’s nature, there is a plurality
        - Or perhaps scripture is hinting about a true and unrevealed nature of God, that He is in fact a plural being. There there is plurality within the true God Yahweh. Perhaps this is allowing and pointing to the possibility that both the Father and Jesus can exist as the one true God Yahweh.
        - This still seems like a stretch, but there is a foundation laid for this possibility. Let’s consider if there is more evidence to support this.

## More Evidence of Plurality in Yahweh

So far, nothing we’ve read proves that there is a plurality within Yahweh. This plural use of “Gods” and plural pronouns shouldn’t be sufficient for us to be convinced that Yahweh has a plurality within Him. The only reason we are considering this option is because we are trying to reconcile Jesus’ claims to be God, with Yahweh’s claims to be the only God, and if both the NT and OT are true, then somehow Jesus and God the Father both have to be the one true God Yahweh together. It is interesting to see that the grammar hints and provides the opportunity for there to be plurality within God, but that alone isn’t sufficient for us to necessarily know that it’s true. Is there more conclusive evidence that there is plurality within Yahweh?

There are passages that seem to indicate the existence of multiple beings referred to as Yahweh. That is definitely more solid evidence. If multiple beings are referred to as Yahweh, then we could see the pattern that the Father and Son as distinct beings are one Yahweh. It still seems far fetched, but is this really what scripture reveals? Several of these passages are not very conclusive. Several I think should be explained as just a variation of pronouns, and unannounced change of the antecedent, or just Yahweh speaking of Himself in third person. Other passages however, seem to inescapably point to the existence of multiple beings referred to as Yahweh.

### **Gen 19:24: Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven**

- Here we see the LORD is raining fire from the LORD. Does this indicate multiple Yahweh's?
- Well it is interesting to note that this is in the context of when the three men came to visit Abraham. Evidently, one of them is the LORD who stays to talk with Abraham about the imminent fate of these wicked cities. This would be the LORD that rained fire from the LORD from heaven. We get the idea of Jesus on earth calling fire from the Father to destroy these cities.
- However, I'm not so sure how much we can lean on this passage to indicate a plurality of Yahweh.
- It is very easily just an odd use of third person. Haven't we prayed to God while using His name in third person. For instance: "God, help this person to have the wisdom of God in their life."

### **Ps 45:6-7: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You**

- The idea is that God is being addressed, and then later it because of that God (being addressed) and being anointed by God. So in essence, we have multiple beings addressed as God.
- It is interesting to note that this scripture is quoted as referring to Jesus in Heb 1. So in Essence, Jesus is the God addressed, and the Father is the God that has anointed Him. Is this solid evidence of a plurality of Yahweh?
- Or is this just a change and unannounced change pronouns and antecedents? When the Hebrew audience was first reading this poem, there is no way they came to the conclusion that there were multiple Gods being addressed. They could read it as such:
  - The king was being addressed in second person.
  - Then in verse 6, God is being addressed.
  - Then in verse 7, the king is being addressed in second person again.
- This kind of writing is not uncommon to Hebrew poetry. Consider Psalm 2 where David goes back and forth referring to the Christ (himself) in first and third person.

### **Isa 44:6: Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts**

- The claim here is that Yahweh (the Father) is speaking and so is Yahweh's Redeemer (Jesus) who is also called Yahweh of hosts.
- However, this one is pretty clearly not referring to a plurality of Yahweh. "His Redeemer" is referring to Israel, not Yahweh. So instead the idea is, "The LORD, the King and Redeemer of Israel".

*[We need to make sure we aren't reading English grammar and diction back into Hebrew writing, much less Hebrew poetry. We have our own modern style and rules. The Hebrew writer's are not writing as modern day English poets, but rather ancient Hebrew poets, so we need to be careful not to abuse the grammar and pronouns to make it read the way we want it to in order to support our preconceived ideas.]*

**Isaiah 48:16: Come near to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit**

- Here is the rundown of the whole passage:
  - In verse 12, it's Yahweh is speaking.
  - In verse 14, Yahweh loves "him". Who is "him"? Well in the context it refers to Cyrus, the Persian king who will overthrow Babylon, but it's likely referring more fully to the Christ.
  - Yahweh says He's called him and will make him successful.
  - Then it says, "Come near and listen. I have not spoken in silent. You will know that Yahweh has sent me and His Spirit.
- So is Yahweh speaking and saying that He is sent by Yahweh? To me this is again another case of ambiguous changes of pronouns and antecedents.
- When it says, "You will know Yahweh has sent me", who is "me"?
- The idea is that Yahweh is speaking, and claiming that Yahweh will send Him. So Jesus is speaking, and saying the Father will send Him; them both being referred to as Yahweh? Is this accurate?
- If we keep the pronouns consistent and don't change who is speaking from verses 15-16 it will read as follows:
  - Previously in verse 15 it was speaking of Yahweh who was calling His Christ, then that same Yahweh who called the Christ is being sent by Yahweh in verse 16? We know that the Father called Jesus and then sent Jesus. The Father didn't call Jesus and then was then sent by another Yahweh (the Father wasn't the one sent).
  - So for this reading to make sense, there has to be a change of antecedents; a change of who is speaking from verse 15 to 16. Yahweh is speaking in 15, and the person sent by Yahweh is speaking in 16.
  - We need to understand the ambiguous nature of Hebrew poetry and realize there are these sudden unannounced changes. The pronouns don't necessarily consistently refer to the same persons as they did previously.
- Well if we assume that there is a shift from the Father speaking in 15, and then Jesus speaking in 16, then it's not at all unlikely that it could just as easily be Yahweh speaking in 15, and Isaiah speaking in 16. However, prophecy is on our side that point to Jesus and the Spirit being sent by the Father. So that could point to it more clearly being Jesus whom is sent in verse 16. However, that doesn't mean Jesus is referred to as Yahweh, because in 16, it is no longer the previous Yahweh that is speaking.

**Amos 4:10-11: "I overthrew you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand snatched from a blaze; yet you have not returned to Me," declares the Lord**

- Yahweh is speaking, and compares His destruction as God's previous destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. So is Yahweh referring to another being as God?
- Well, if it really was Jesus that sent fire from Yahweh in Gen 19, then this would be fitting. Here Jesus is speaking again and saying that He destroyed Israel just as His Father destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.
- However, it is likely just Hebrew writing using "God" instead of the pronoun "I". I don't think this text is trying to emphasize or teach a plurality of Yahweh.

**Zech 2:8-11: For thus says the LORD of hosts, “After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye. For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” declares the LORD. “Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you”**

- Here is the run down of this passage:
  - Yahweh is speaking. Yahweh says that He has been sent against the nations.
  - Yahweh says that He will wave His hand, and the enemies will be slaves.
  - That will prove that Yahweh was sent by Yahweh.
  - Yahweh says that He is coming to dwell in the midst of His people. Then Yahweh says that many nations will be joined to Yahweh and become Yahweh’s people.
  - Then Yahweh says that He will dwell in the midst of the people and that will prove that Yahweh has sent Him.
- To me, here is the most conclusive evidence so far of a plurality of Yahweh. This passage doesn’t seem to rest on tricky grammar, but rather the context of the messiah being sent by Yahweh to accomplish Yahweh’s plan, and amazingly, the messiah is being called Yahweh. Yahweh, the messiah is speaking and confirming to the people that He is sent by Yahweh. That’s a plurality of beings referred to as Yahweh.
- Is there another way to read this passage?
  - Perhaps, even though it says, “Thus says Yahweh” the first person pronouns are actually referring to Zechariah who is sent by Yahweh. For instance, if Yahweh said these things to Zechariah, then Zechariah could be saying, “Yahweh said that I (Zechariah) will wave my hands over the nations to make them slaves, and that will prove that I (Zechariah) was sent by Yahweh. Is this the likely reading? Consider Zech 4:9 and 6:15 where it says “you will know that Yahweh sent me, and is clearly referring to Zechariah being sent by Yahweh.”
    - Two things:
      - Read Zech 2:8-11 and determine if it’s describing things that Zechariah is going to do (to do this, change every personal pronoun to Zechariah).
        - Was Zechariah sent against the nations for glory?
        - Are the people the “apple of Zechariah’s eye”?
        - Is Zechariah going to wave his hand to make the enemies slaves?
        - Is Zechariah telling the nations to rejoice because he is dwelling in their midst?
        - Will people join themselves to Yahweh and be Zechariah’s people?
        - Is Zechariah saying that dwelling in their midst will prove that he was sent by Yahweh?
      - Does it make sense For Zechariah to be the personal pronoun here? Or does it make more sense that Yahweh is the one doing these things, even Jesus?
        - Was Jesus sent against the nations for glory?
        - Are the people the “apple of Jesus’ eye”?
        - Is Jesus going to wave his hand to make the enemies slaves?
        - Is Jesus telling the nations to rejoice because he is dwelling in their midst?
        - Will people join themselves to Yahweh and be Jesus people?
        - Is Jesus saying that dwelling in their midst will prove that he was sent by Yahweh?
    - Still, when Zechariah says, “Thus you shall know that Yahweh sent me”, perhaps he’s not saying that those are Yahweh’s words, but that it’s a parenthetical statement by Zechariah, that these things happening will prove that Zechariah really is a prophet sent by God. That’s the way Zech 4:9 and 6:15 read.

- But in Zech 2, the whole point is that Yahweh is being SENT! In verse 8 the whole point is that the speaker is being sent by Yahweh. And then in the latter verses the whole point is that Yahweh has come to dwell with His people having been sent by Yahweh.
- Though ambiguity remains, this passage strongly points to a plurality of Yahweh, and is going to be confirmed by Jesus Himself.

**Zech 10:12: “And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in His name they will walk,” declares the Lord**

- Yahweh speaking says He will strengthen them in Yahweh. Yahweh refers to Yahweh in the third person pronoun Him as well.
- This shows a plurality of Yahweh unless we should see it as Yahweh referring to Himself in the third person.

## **Conclusion**

When we find that the Bible proclaims Jesus as God, but Jesus can only be God if He's Yahweh, it is amazing to see so much in OT scripture that sets up the possibility of there being a plurality of Yahweh, making it possible for both the Father and Jesus to both be the one true God, Yahweh. Though much of this so far is ambiguous and inconclusive, it is still impressive and noteworthy. Next class we will see much more conclusively that the NT reveals Jesus to be Yahweh.



# Lesson 6: Jesus is Yahweh

## Introduction

Remember that the discussion of the deity of Christ is about determining whether or not Jesus is God. This means either:

1. Jesus is a god
2. Jesus is God
3. Jesus is not God.

First, we saw that Jesus is distinct from the Father whom we know to be Yahweh. Second, we saw that there are numerous passages stating that Jesus is God. We then determined that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God is also a declaration of deity. Then last class we determined that there is only one true God, Yahweh. Therefore, that leaves us with two possible conclusions:

1. The Bible contradicts itself and is false
2. Jesus is Yahweh

The second conclusion would demand that both the Father and Son are collectively Yahweh. This idea seems like a stretch, but OT scripture provided several hints at this possibility, namely, the plurality of God (referring to Himself as "Gods" and using plural pronouns in reference to Himself), and also several passages that indicate two beings in the same text referred to as Yahweh.

Today we will look at several NT passages that identify Jesus as Yahweh.

## Jesus is identified as Yahweh

One way that Jesus is identified as Yahweh is that He is called Yahweh in NT scripture. This needs to be clarified however. There is no use of the Hebrew name YHWH (Yahweh) in NT scripture. When the NT scripture quotes OT scriptures that use YHWH, the apostolic writers instead use the word "kurios" which means "lord". Even though the name Yahweh isn't used in the NT, we know that "Lord" refers to Yahweh when it is substituted for Yahweh in a direct quote from the OT.

### **Heb 1:10: You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands**

- Heb 1:10 is quoting Psalm 102:25 which is speaking about Yahweh whom created the world.
- Heb 1:10 says that these words about Yahweh are addressed to and applicable of Jesus.
- Undeniably, Jesus is identified as Yahweh of the OT.

### **I Cor 2:16: For who has known the mind of the LORD, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ**

- Here a scripture is quoted about knowing the mind of Yahweh. In the next sentence, we are told that we have the mind of Christ.

## Jesus fulfills prophecy that Yahweh said He would do

One way that Jesus is identified as Yahweh is as follows: in OT scripture Yahweh prophesies that He will do certain things. Then NT scripture reveals these things being fulfilled by Jesus. Therefore, the collection of scripture reveals as being Yahweh. Let's look at some examples:

**Isa 40:3-5: A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness. Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley. Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken"**

- Clear the way for the LORD:
  - The NT makes it plain that John the Baptist is the "voice calling in the wilderness" (Mat 3:1-3).
  - The prophecy says that the voice is preparing the way for Yahweh, but who is John the Baptist preparing the way for? John is preparing the way for Jesus:
    - Mat 3:11-12
    - Mk 1:7-8
    - Lk 3:15-17
    - John 1:23-36
  - Therefore, the gospels are claiming that Jesus is Yahweh that John is preparing the way for.
- The glory of the LORD will be revealed:
  - Then it says that the glory of Yahweh will be revealed, and all flesh will see it. What is the glory of Yahweh that will be seen? Again, it is clear that the glory of Yahweh is Jesus:
    - John 1:14
    - John 17:5, 24

**Mal 3:1: "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts**

- Clear the way before Me:
  - Yahweh is speaking, saying that He will send a messenger before Him.
  - The gospels identify John the Baptist as the messenger going before Yahweh (Mat 11:10, Mk 1:2).
  - Who did John go before? Who is the "Me" in Mal 3:1? John was the messenger that went before Jesus; therefore, the gospels are claiming that Jesus is Yahweh that John went before.
- The Lord whom you seek will come to His temple:
  - Malachi then says that "the Lord whom you seek will come to His temple".
    - It says that the Lord (adonai, master) will come to His temple. This isn't saying Yahweh will come to His temple. Who is the Lord that they were seeking? This would be the Christ. So it says that the Christ would enter *his* temple. How could it be the Christ's temple? It is Yahweh's temple. Jesus, the Christ, enters His temple because He is Yahweh. This is a small prediction of the deity of the messiah. Here we see the distinction of Jesus while He is being identified as Yahweh.

**Joel 2:28-32: It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

- I will pour our My Spirit:
  - Yahweh is speaking, and He is saying that He will pour forth His Spirit.
  - In Acts 2:16-20 Peter claims that this prophesy is being fulfilled on that day of Pentecost.
  - But consider who Acts claims is the one who pours forth the Spirit.
    - Jesus is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (Mat 3:11, Acts 1:5)
    - Peter says that Jesus is the one poured forth the Spirit on that day (Acts 2:33); therefore, Acts is claiming that Jesus is Yahweh that poured forth the Spirit.
    - Consider how the Father and Son are both involved in the pouring forth of the Spirit: John 14:16, 26, 15:26. We can see that it makes sense that Yahweh poured forth the Spirit, and the Father and Son are both equally involved in the fulfillment of this promise.
- Whoever calls upon the name of the LORD will be saved:
  - The conclusion of the prophesy is all who call on Yahweh's name will be saved.
  - What is the name the NT tells us is the name we call upon for salvation? It's Jesus' name:
    - Jesus is the name they need to be baptized in for salvation (Acts 2:38). This is reinforced by Acts 22:16 that repeats Jesus name is for salvation from sin while also equating baptism to calling upon the Lord's name.
    - Jesus' name is the only name given for salvation (Acts 4:12).
    - Rom 10:9-15 also makes it clear that Yahweh's name is Jesus. It says we need to confess Jesus you will be saved. Then it says the same Lord is is Lord of all which fulfills the scripture "all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved". Then it describes the necessity of hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to be able to call upon the name of the Lord.
    - Saints are described as those who have called upon Jesus' name (1 Cor 1:2).
  - The NT claims that Jesus is Yahweh, whose name we call upon for salvation.

**Isa 45:23: I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance**

- Yahweh promises that all knees will bow, and every mouth will swear allegiance.
- We see this is said to apply to the Father (Rom 14:11). That's assuming that "God" is referring to the Father (as it usually does), but keep in mind that II Cor 5:10 also speaks of the judgment seat of Christ, so God here could just as easily be referring to Jesus.
- This passage is also said to apply to Jesus (Phi 2:10).
- Jesus is Yahweh that will have the submission and allegiance of all creation.

## **Jesus is identified by exclusive titles for Yahweh**

Another way Jesus is identified as Yahweh is when Yahweh claims exclusive titles and descriptions and they are then applied to Jesus in NT scripture. Let's look at some examples:

## The First and the Last:

There are a series of passages in Isaiah that identify the uniqueness of Yahweh by declaring Him to be “the first and the last”. This is a boast of His exclusive eternal existence. There was nobody before Him. There will be no one after Him. Look at some of these passages:

- Isa 41:4: Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am the first, and with the last. I am He.
- Isa 44:6: Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me”
- Isa 48:12: Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last

The title “the First and the Last” is very significant because it is only used to describe Yahweh, and the context of these passages is to declare Yahweh to be the only God in existence. What’s remarkable is that this exclusive description of Yahweh is used of Jesus in the book of Revelation

- Rev 1:17: When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “ Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last
- Rev 2:8: And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: the first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this...
- Rev 22:12-13: Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end
  - Jesus can be identified as the one who is coming (Rev 1:7, 2:5, 16, 22:20)

It is very significant that Jesus is identified as “the First and the Last” because this is an exclusive title of Yahweh used to declare His sole existence. So Jesus is here identified as the the unique God Yahweh. Jesus is the only God Yahweh.

## The Rock:

Yahweh identifies Himself as the one and only rock:

- Isa 44:8: Do not tremble and do not be afraid. Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none

The NT declares Jesus to be that Rock:

- I Cor 10:4: And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ

Jesus is identified as the rock of the OT. The image is of the physical rock that was struck by Moses to bring forth water. In the same way, Christians drink spiritual drink from our spiritual rock. Our spiritual rock is Jesus, and the NT declares that Jesus isn’t only our rock, but *the Rock* that was following with them in the wilderness. Jesus is the rock that was with the people. There is not other rock besides Yahweh, and Jesus is that rock.

## Jesus identifies Himself as Yahweh

Perhaps the most significant testimony of Jesus being Yahweh is from Jesus’ own mouth. Let’s look at two examples:

**Mat 21:16: And [they] said to Him, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ‘ Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself”**

- As Jesus enters Jerusalem, the people are crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David!”. The scribes and priests tell Jesus that he needs to silence the crowds. To this Jesus responds by quoting the Psalm 8:2.
- The psalm is speaking of Yahweh establishing strength from the mouth of babes. In Matthew the “babes” are praising Jesus; therefore, Jesus equates Himself being praised as the praise Yahweh has prepared for Himself. So here, Jesus is identifying Himself as Yahweh.
- Perhaps aren’t really praising Jesus, but rather glorifying God for what He’s accomplishing in Jesus. Luke 19:39-40 gives us some more insight. It reads:
  - [The crowds] shouted, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”, but Jesus answered, “I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out.”
- Here Jesus is receiving the glory, and the Pharisees know that. Since they don’t believe Jesus is worthy of this kind of glory and adoration they tell Jesus to rebuke them for their blasphemy. Jesus justifies their glorification of Him. It is clear that Jesus is the one receiving the praise.

**Jn 8: Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am”**

- In the seventh and eighth chapters of John, Jesus is facilitating a very controversial discussion about His true identity.
- First, in chapter 7, we see the crowds inquiring about who Jesus is:
  - “How is He so learned having never been educated?” (Jn 7:15)
    - Jesus responds by saying that He is speaking the words of Him who sent Him. The one who sent Him is true.
  - Then the crowds begin to consider that Jesus is the Christ (Jn 7:25).
    - Jesus responds by repeating that He came from Him who sent Him, and He who sent Him is true.
  - In Joh 7:40-41, 44 the crowds are divided, and the leaders want to seize Him.
- Then in chapter 8 we see Jesus begin to make some claims about Himself:
  - Jesus says that He is the light of the world (Jn 8:12).
    - The Pharisees respond by saying His testimony is not true (Jn 8:13).
    - Jesus replies by saying that His testimony is true because the Father who sent Him testifies about Him.
  - Jesus says that He is not of this world (Jn 8:23)
  - Jesus also says, “Unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins” (Jn 8:24)
    - The Pharisees respond to that by saying, “Who are you?” (Jn 8:25).
    - Again Jesus repeats that Him who sent Him is true (Jn 8:26).
    - When you see the Son of Man lifted up you will know that I am, and also that He is with me and hasn’t left me alone (Jn 8:28-29).
  - The next claim Jesus makes is that those who hear His words and obeys them will be true disciples whom are set free (Jn 8:31-32).
    - They respond by saying that they’ve never been slaves (Jn 8:32).
    - Jesus clarifies by telling them that they will be free from sin (Jn 8:35).
  - Jesus also says that He “proceeded forth and [came] from God” not by His “own initiative”, but by Him who sent Him (Jn 8:42).
  - Then Jesus says that if you keep His words you won’t die (Jn 8:52).
    - The Pharisees challenging that by asking Him if he thinks He’s greater than Abraham. “Who do you make yourself out to be?”, they say (Jn 8:53).
    - Jesus responds that Abraham was glad to see Jesus (Jn 8:56).

- The Pharisees think this is ludicrous, naturally, because Abraham died hundreds of years ago. How in the world could Abraham even know Jesus who isn't yet 50 years old? How could Jesus have any experience with Abraham if Jesus isn't even 50 years old (Jn 8:57).
- To this Jesus makes His most extreme claim by far:
  - "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn 8:58).

What is meant by Jesus' claim, "before Abraham was, I am"?

- First, it is a claim to His eternity. Jesus is claiming that He preexists their ancient patriarch Abraham. Jesus is claiming to have existed before He was born in this earth.
- But more than that, Jesus is claiming to be *THE* "I Am".
  - The phrase, "before Abraham was, I am" is just as improper in the original Greek as it reads in the interpreted English. If Jesus was simply claiming His eternity, He could've rightly said, "before Abraham was, I was". That would mean the same thing, and it would be the proper and expected grammar.
  - Instead, Jesus deliberately uses improper grammar to make it clear that He is claiming to be *THE* "I Am" of Exodus (Ex 3:14).
  - As we've previously discussed, in Ex 3, the true God reveals Himself to Moses, and identifies Himself as "I Am". Then God fashions a name rooted in the words "I Am". This derivative name is YHWH, translated Yahweh.
  - When Jesus says, "before Abraham was, I am", Jesus is claiming to be Yahweh, the great I AM.
- This is a fitting conclusion for this entire discussion.
  - Who is Jesus?
    - They wonder, "How does Jesus know so much?"
    - They wonder, "Is Jesus the Christ?"
    - Jesus claims to be the "light of the world".
    - Jesus claims to be "not of this world".
    - Jesus claims that His words set free from slavery.
    - Jesus claims that His words keep people free from death.
  - What is the answer to all these questions and claims? How can Jesus be all of these things?
    - His answer is the He is sent from the Father, He proceeded forth from the Father.
    - He tells us we need to believe that the Father sent Him.
    - He says, you need to believe that "I am".
    - He says, when you see me lifted up you will know that "I am".
  - Consider the comparison to Zech 2:8-11:
    - Yahweh says that He was sent for glory to set free the captives (Jn 8:31-32).
    - Yahweh says, "Then you will know that Yahweh sent me".
    - Yahweh declares that He will dwell in their midst and then they will know that Yahweh sent Him.
  - The answer is that Jesus is Yahweh, the I Am that is sent by Yahweh to set free the captives and bring people to Yahweh. Then the people will believe that He was sent by Yahweh. That's the conclusion He is trying to lead us to.
  - The Pharisees understand this conclusion and want to kill Him for it (Jn 8:59).

## Conclusion

We've learned that Jesus is a distinct being from the Father who is known to be Yahweh. We also learned that Jesus is God. After that we learned that there is only one God Yahweh, so if Jesus is God, He would have to be Yahweh. This would mean that multiple beings are Yahweh. This seems farfetched, but in the OT we see that there are hints of the plurality of Yahweh seen by Him being identified by the plural word "Gods" as well as plural pronouns, and also by scriptures that seem to speak of plural beings being referred to as Yahweh in a single text. With all of that established, seeing multiple scriptures that clearly

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identify Jesus as Yahweh solidify the concept that Jesus is the only God Yahweh just as much as the Father is the only God Yahweh.

We can now consider other passages that show the unity, interchangeability, equality, etc... of Jesus and God the Father to further emphasize the Biblical truth that Jesus is Yahweh.

# Lesson 7: OT Prophecies of the Deity of Christ

## Introduction

When the OT scriptures so heavily impress the absolute truth of Yahweh being the only God, it becomes challenging to accept that there are multiple beings being identified as God in the NT. This seems like a contradiction to those monotheistic texts. It would seem as if the NT scriptures are a contradictory revelation. It helps us to know then, that there are OT scriptures that prophesied the deity of the Christ.

No one knew who Jesus was before He was born, but people did know things about the Christ. They knew that the Christ was coming, and they knew some things about what he would be like. How did they know these things about the Christ before he came? They knew these things because the OT scriptures prophesied what the Christ would be like. One exceedingly important thing revealed in the OT prophecies about the coming Christ is that He would be deity. That the OT monotheistic writings themselves ascribe deity to the Christ reveal Jesus' claim to deity as being fully consistent with all scripture. This should help fortify our faith that Jesus is truly God. Let's look at some of these passages.

## Old Testament prophecies of the deity of the Christ

One thing that really helps us accept that both Jesus and the Father are the one true God Yahweh, is to read OT prophecies that foretell the deity of the Christ. That the OT monotheistic writings themselves ascribe deity to the Christ reveal Jesus' claim to deity as being fully consistent with all scripture. This should help fortify our faith that Jesus is truly God. Let's look at some of these passages.

### **Ps 110:1: The Lord says to my Lord: Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet**

- This passage is seen to be messianic according to Jesus and the Pharisees (Mat 22:41-45).
- Since the Pharisees agree that David is addressing the Christ in Ps 110:1, Jesus asks them "If David calls him Lord, how is he his son?"
  - The point is this: David is the father of the Christ. The Christ is the son/ descendant of David. Descendants refer to their elders and ancestors as Lord. So why would David call his own descendant "lord"? Why would David refer to his great-great-great-etc...-grandson as lord?
  - The answer is that David refers to the Christ (his own physical descendant) as lord because the Christ existed before David was born. David calls his descendant lord, because this descendant is deity.

### **Isa 7:14: Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel**

- Here we see that the Christ is ascribed the prophetic name Immanuel, which means "God with us".
- This alone doesn't prove that the Christ will be God in the flesh, but after we read Jesus' claims to be deity in the NT, we can see that it was already foreshadowed in Isaiah with this symbolic name.



**Isa 9:6: For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace**

- Here is another messianic text in Isaiah. It again gives us more prophetic names of the Christ.
- It explicitly says that the Christ will be called Mighty God. This is a clear prediction of the deity of the Christ.

**Mic 5:2: But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity**

- This messianic text reveals to us the origins of the Christ.
- Geographically the Christ will come from Bethlehem. He will be born there.
- But what about His true origins? The Christ comes from the days of eternity. This is saying that Jesus existed before the world just like God. This reveals Him to be more than just a man. This passage is prophesying the deity of Christ.

**Dan 7: 13-14: I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. “And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom. That all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”**

- This is another passage messianic passage. One like the Son of Man comes before the Ancient of Days. This is describing the Christ coming up to God. The Christ then receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom. All the nations will serve Him.
- Aside from the Christ receiving dominion, glory, and a kingdom (which are typically belonging to God), it also says that all nations will serve him.
- The word serve is the hebrew word “pelach”. It means to serve or pay reverence to.
  - The concept of serving can be applied to either humans serving humans (Gen 29:15), humans serving gods (Deut 7:4), or humans serving God (Deut 10:12). So the concept of serving, although is used in the sense of worshipping deity, it isn’t exclusive of worshipping a deity. So just saying that the Son of Man is served doesn’t necessarily mean He is being worshipped as deity.
  - However, consider this: the most frequently used word for “serve” is “abad”. All the previous scriptures are the word “abad”.
  - The word “pelach” used in Daniel 7:14 is only used ten times in the OT. Consider how the word is used:
    - Once the word is used to describe servants of the temple (Ezra 7:24).
    - Three times it’s used to refer to serving gods:
      - Dan 3:12: These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not **serve** your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up
      - Dan 3:14: Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed- nego, that you do not **serve** my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?
      - Dan 3:18: Let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to **serve** your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up
    - Five times it’s used to describe serving Yahweh
      - Dan 3:17: If it be so, our God whom we **serve** is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire
      - Dan 3:28: Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king’s

- command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to **serve** or worship any god except their own God
- Dan 6:16: The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Your God whom you constantly **serve** will Himself deliver you.”
  - Dan 6:20: The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly **serve**, been able to deliver you from the lions?”
  - Dan 7:24: Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will **serve** and obey Him.
  - Every time the word “pelach” is used in the Bible, it is used in reference to serving deity. In the book of Daniel that makes such an emphasis about these faithful men refusing to **serve** any idol and are so committed to **serving** Yahweh, it is remarkable that this same word is used to refer to the whole world **serving** the Son of Man.
  - The Christ being prophesied of receiving this kind of reverence is a clear prediction of His deity.

# Lesson 8: Miscellaneous

## Introduction

More important than learning about Jesus deity from several passages that state His divine nature, let's learn more about the nature of Christ explained through scripture and see even more that He really is God. When we take a look at Jesus in scripture we will see that He is revealed to be united and equal to the Father in a wide variety of ways. This reenforces His divine status.

## Jesus does what only God can do

One way that Jesus is seen to be God is by seeing Him do things that only God has the power or authority to do. If only God can do something, and Jesus is doing it, it's more proof that He is in fact God. Let's look at some examples.

### Receives worship:

- Only God receives worship:
  - Worship God alone: Ex 20:3-5; Mat 4:10
  - Don't worship men: Acts 11:25-26, 12:22-23, 14:11-18
  - Don't worship angels: Col 2:18; Rev 19:10, 22:9
- Jesus receives worship:
  - Mat 2:2, 8, 11, 14:33, 28:9, 17; Lk 24:52; Jn 9:38; Heb 1:6; Rev 5:6-14

### Served/ followed (as God):

- Only serve/ follow God:
  - Deut 6:13, 10:20; I Kings 18:21; Mat 4:10, 6:24
- Jesus is served/ followed:
  - Dan 7:13-14; Mat 10:38, 16:24; Jn 12:26; Rom 14:18; Col 3:24
  - Jesus is our only Lord and Master: Jd 4

### Forgives sin:

- Only God forgives sin: Isa 43:15; Dan 9:9; Lk 5:21
- Jesus forgives sin: Mat 26:28, Lk 5:20-24; Acts 5:31, 26:18; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14

### Judges the world:

- Only One Judge: Jas 4:12
- God judges:
  - Rom 2:5 day of wrath and revelation of righteous judgment of God
  - Rom 3:6 God will judge the world
  - Rom 14:10: judgment seat of God
- Jesus judges:
  - Mat 7:21-23: Jesus will say, "depart"
  - Mat 16:27: Jesus will repay men for their deeds
  - Mat 25:31-33: from His throne, Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats
  - II Cor 5:10: the judgment seat of Christ
- Both:
  - Acts 10:42: Jesus was appointed by God to judge the living and the dead

- Rom 2:16: on the day when God judges secrets of men through Christ
- Jn 5:22, 27: God has given all judgment to Jesus

### **Is glorified:**

- The LORD will not share His glory: Isa 42:8, 48:11
- God glorifies Jesus:
  - Jn 13:31-32: Jesus is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, then He will glorify Him in Himself
  - Jn 17:1: glorify the Son so He may glorify you
  - Jn 17:5: glorify me with yourself with the glory I had before the world
  - Jn 17:24: I want them to be where I am so they can see my glory that I had before the world
  - II Cor 4:6: the glory of God is in the face of Christ

Being glorified isn't a proof of deity. God says He will glorify each of us, but it is clear that Jesus glory is different. This glory is a return to Jesus true nature before the world existed. It is about Him returning to the true glory of His divine form (Phi 2:6). Also, there is a close connection between the glory of God and Jesus. God is glorified by glorifying Jesus. Glorifying Jesus is glorifying Himself. Now we will look at passages where Jesus is glorified by men. God has the right to glorify anyone in whatever way He wants, but He makes it clear that we shouldn't glorify anyone but Him. These passages make it clear that we are supposed to glorify Jesus as we glorify the Father.

- Men glorify Jesus:
  - Acts 17: Jesus was being magnified
  - Phi 3:3: we glory in Christ
  - II Tim 4:18: to Him be glory forever and ever
  - Tit 2:13: the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus
  - Heb 13:21: through Christ to whom be glory forever and ever
  - I Pet 4:11: that God may be glorified in Christ, to whom belongs glory forever and ever
  - II Pet 3:18: to Him be glory forever and ever
  - Rev 1:6: to Him be glory forever and ever

### **Created the world:**

- God created the world: Gen 1:1; Isa 40:10-12 42:5, 43:7, 44:24, 45:12, 45:18
- Jesus created the world:
  - Jn 1:3: all came into being through Him
  - Jn 1:10: the world was made through Him
  - Col 1:16: all things made by Him, through Him, and for Him
  - Rev 3:14: Jesus is the beginning (origin) of creation
- Both:
  - I Cor 8:6: All things from the Father and we exist for Him. All things by Jesus and we exist through Him
  - Heb 1:2: God made the world through Jesus
  - Heb 11:3: the worlds were prepared by the word of God

When we look back at Gen 1, we see how this makes sense. God said, "Let there be light!"; and there was light. Every time God made something new, He spoke it into existence (Gen 1:6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26). Heb 11:3 tells us that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God. Jn 1:1, 14 make it clear that Jesus is the Word by whom the world was created. So here we have the Father speaking the world to existence through His Word, and yet Mal 2:10 tells says, "Has not one God created us?".

### **Is eternal:**

- Only God is eternal:
  - Isa 43:13: from eternity, I am He.

- I Tim 6:16: who alone possesses immortality
- Rom 16:25: the eternal God
- Jesus existed before He was born:
  - Existed before John the Baptist: Jn 1:15
  - Existed before Abraham: Jn 8:58
- Jesus existed before the world was created:
  - Jesus was in the beginning: Jn 1:1-2
  - Jesus had glory before the world was: Jn 17:5
  - Jesus was loved by Father before the foundation of the world: Jn 17:24
  - I Pet 1:20: Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world
- Jesus is from eternity:
  - Mic 5:2: He is from long ago; the days of eternity
  - II Tim 1:9: God's purpose that was granted to us in Christ from all eternity
- Jesus is eternal (no origin and no end)
  - Heb 1:10-12: Jesus will remain. His years will not come to an end
  - Heb 7:3: Melchizedek is without father or mother, genealogy, beginning of days and end of life. He is this figuratively because He appears as a priest in the Bible with no recorded origin or death. Melchizedek is described as being like the Son of God, because Jesus truly has no origin or end. He is perpetual.
  - I Jn 1:2: Jesus is the eternal life proclaimed to you
  - Rev 1:17, 2:8, 22:12-13: Jesus is the First and the Last which is a description of immortality ascribed to Yahweh in the OT and Jesus in Revelation.

## **“God” and “Jesus” are used interchangeably**

Another way that Jesus is seen to be God is by seeing “Jesus” and “God” being used interchangeably. How many times could you take God's name out of a verse and insert my own name? Can you use my name to describe the church instead of God's? The church of Tim? No you can't, but you can do that with Jesus. This continues to build the case of the equality and unity of God the Father and Jesus the Son which strengthens the case that Jesus is God.

Keep in mind that just because it says “God” it doesn't necessarily mean it's referring to the Father, although it usually does. The point is that Jesus is equal to God and that strengthens the case that He is God.

### **Gospel of God/ Jesus:**

- Gospel of God: Rom 1:1, 15:16; I Thes 2:1, 8, 9; I Tim 1:11
- Gospel of Jesus: Rom 1:9, II Cor 4:4, 9:13; Gal 1:7, II Thes 1:8

### **Church of God/ Jesus:**

- Church of God: Acts 20:28; I Cor 1:2, 11:22; II Cor 1:1; Gal; 1:3, II Thes 1:4; I Tim 3:5, 15
- Church of Jesus: Rom 16:16; Eph 1:22-23, 5:23; Heb 12:23
- Both: I Thes 1:1, 2:14; II Thes 1:1

### **Words/ Law of God/ Jesus:**

- Words/ Law of God: Mat 15:6; Acts 8:14, 11, 4:31, 6:2, 7; Rom 9:6; I Cor 14:36
- Words/ Law of Jesus: Mat 5:22, Rom 10:17, Col 3:16, II Thes 3:1; II Jn 9
- Both: I Cor 9:21; Phi 1:14-17

### **Grace of God/ Jesus:**

- Grace of God: Acts 11:2-3, 13:43, 14:26; Rom 5:15, 15:15

- Grace of Jesus: Acts 15:11; Rom 16:20, II Cor 8:9, Gal 1:6, 6:18; II Tim 2:1
- Both: II Thes 1:12

### **God/ Jesus is our Savior:**

- God is our Savior: Lk 1:47; I Tim 2:3; Tit 1:3; I Tim 4:10; Jd 25
- Jesus is our Savior: Lk 2:11; Acts 13:23, 5:31; Tit 3:6; Phi 3:20; II Tim 1:10

### **A servant of God/ Jesus:**

- Servant of God: Acts 16:17, Tit 1:1
- Servant of Jesus: Rom 1:1; II Pet 1:1; Jd 1
- Both: Jm 1:1

### **Kingdom of God/ Jesus:**

- Kingdom of God: Acts 8:12, 28:23, 31; Col 4:11
- Kingdom of Jesus: Col 1:13; II Tim 4:1, 18; II Pet 1:11
- Both: Eph 5:5; Rev 11:15

## **God and Jesus are united**

Another way to see that Jesus is God, is by seeing how united He is to the Father. Several statements refer to Jesus and the Father as being so very united that they are almost synonymous.

- Lk 17:11-18: when the healed leper returns to Jesus to thank Him, Jesus says that he is glorifying God
- Jn 1:1: the Word was with God and the Word was God
- Jn 10:30: Jesus says that He and the Father are one
- Jn 10:38: Jesus says that the Father is in Him, and He in the Father
- Jn 12:44-45: if you believe in Jesus, you don't believe in Jesus, you believe in Him who sent Jesus
- Jn 13:31-32: God glorifies the Son, and is glorified by the Son being glorified
- Jn 14:7: if you've seen Jesus, you've seen the Father
- Jn 15:23: hating Jesus is hating the Father as well
- I Jn 2:22-24: if you deny that Jesus is the Christ, you deny the Father and the Son. If you deny the Son you deny the Father also. If you confess the Son you have both the Father and the Son
- II Jn 9: if you don't abide in the teaching of Christ, you don't have the God. If you abide in the teaching you have both the Father and the Son

## **God and Jesus are equal**

Another way to see that Jesus is God is by seeing scripture refer to Jesus as being equal to the Father.

### **Jesus is greater than everything**

One way that Jesus is shown as being equal to God, is by seeing that Jesus is greater than everything else, just like the Father is. Here are some examples:

#### **Jesus is greater than every human:**

- Mat 3:11: Jesus is greater than John the Baptist
- Lk 9:35: Jesus is greater than Moses and Elijah. Jesus is the authority that we need to listen to.
- Lk 11:29-32: Jesus is greater than Jonah and Solomon
- Lk 20:41: Jesus is greater than David
- Heb 3:1-6: Jesus is greater than Moses

- Moses was faithful to his house, but Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses in the same way that a builder is worthy of more glory than the house.
- Here Jesus is seen to be more worthy than Moses because Moses is a creature, and Jesus is a creator. Moses is in the house of God. Jesus builds the house of God. Moses is a servant in the house of God. Jesus is over the house of God.

There is no human being that will ever have the authority or greatness that Jesus has.

### **Jesus is greater than every created thing:**

- Mat 12:8: Jesus is greater than the Sabbath
  - Jesus was accused of not keeping the Sabbath. Jesus says He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus is the author creator and master of the Sabbath and the entire Law. He is greater than the Law. Who else would this every apply to? Who else besides God could be greater than His Law?
- Mat 28:28: Jesus has all authority
- Jn 3:31: He who comes from heaven is above all
- Eph 1:20-23: Jesus is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come”
- Heb 1:4: Jesus is greater than angels
- Heb 2:8: All things are subjected to Jesus

There is no created thing that will ever have the authority or greatness that Jesus has. Jesus does declare that the “Father is greater” (Jn 14:28), but he has already been identified as the same divine nature as the Father, so it is true that the Father has greater authority than Jesus, but Jesus is not in the same category as any other created thing.

### **Jesus claims equality**

Do others inappropriately see Jesus as being equal to God? Or does Jesus Himself confess His equality to the Father? Consider some bold claims He made about His equality to the Father?

#### **Jn 5:23: So that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him**

- Jesus is claiming that He should be honored in the same way that they honor the Father. Jesus should be honored as God. Not honoring Jesus is a failure to properly honor God.
- This is a bold claim to equality to God.

#### **Jn 14:1: Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me**

- In the OT, Yahweh was the one true God that they were to trust in. They were commanded to trust in Him (Isa 12:2, 26:4, 50:10) and condemned for trusting in anything else 9 (Isa 30:12, 15, 31:1, 42:17).
- Yet here, Jesus is telling them to put the same trust and faith in Him that they put on God.
- That is an expression of equality to God.

### **Scripture addresses Jesus and God as being equal**

If Jesus is equal to the Father, He will be addressed in scripture as being on the same level as the Father. Scripture does this very thing. Here are some examples:

- Mat 28:19: baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit
- Rom 1:7: Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus
- I Cor 1:3: Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus
- II Cor 1:2: Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus

- Rev 6:16-17: the wrath of God and the Jesus
- Rev 7:10: salvation to God and the Jesus
- Rev 11:15: the kingdom of God and Jesus
- Rev 14:4: first fruits to God and Jesus
- Rev 20:6: priests of God and Jesus
- Rev 21:22: God and Jesus in the temple
- Rev 21:23: God is the light and Jesus is the lamp
- Rev 22:3: the throne of God and Jesus

Jesus is put in the same category as God the Father in all these verses. They are spoken of as equals in the same party.

## Conclusion

We can't just see the deity of Jesus as being proven by a few "proof-texts". We need to realize that the deity of Christ is interwoven through every passage about Jesus. Whether it is by Him acting just as His Father, or being addressed the same as His Father, or any of these things, they further emphasize that Jesus is in fact the one true God that we believe, honor, serve, and love.

Consider these verses in Isaiah:

- Isa 2:11: The LORD alone will be exalted
- Isa 2:17: The LORD alone will be exalted
- Isa 40:18: Who will you compare to God?
- Isa 40:25: Who is God's equal?
- Isa 43:10: Before Me there was no god. No god was formed after Me
- Isa 43:11: There is no savior besides Me
- Isa 44:7: Who is like Me?
- Isa 46:5: Who is like Me? Who can you compare Me to?

Jesus is too similar and comparable to who we know God to be. Jesus is the LORD and God that we've always known.



# Lesson 9: Challenges of the Deity of Christ

## Introduction

Even with all the verses that prove to us that Jesus is deity, the concept continues to be a struggle. “In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” As much as that sentence is a contradiction in this earthly realm, we should expect more challenging statements as the nature of Jesus and His relationship to the Father is explained. We should study and investigate these challenging verses and try to learn as much as we can about the nature of Jesus’ deity, but we should also keep in mind the elusiveness of this topic. It is not something that is completely described in scripture. It is not something we will be able to come to a perfect description of.

I believe that false convictions regarding the deity of Christ have come from people trying to perfectly understand and describe the nature of Christ’s deity. It’s hard to accept multiple beings that are Yahweh. It’s hard to accept Jesus being distinct from the Father, and yet, one God with the Father. So we try to over simplify and come up with wrong conclusions. For instance, God created Jesus, and Jesus isn’t really God (Jehovah’s Witness). Or, the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct Gods (Mormon). Or, Jesus is the Father, and He is the Spirit; there is only on person (Oneness Pentecostal). Or, the Trinity (majority of Christianity).

Though “The Trinity” is the closest (in my belief) to the truth, and I don’t have a specific way to say that it’s wrong, I’m apprehensive of the concept of “The Trinity” simply because scripture doesn’t spell it out so explicitly. “The Trinity” is a very simple way of describing the nature of Jesus’ deity, so why didn’t scripture just explain it that way [*One passage, I Jn 5:7-8, explains the relationship of the Father, Son, and Spirit in this trinitarian sense; however, it is very clear this passage is not the original scripture, but was instead added in much later. This verse should not be accepted*]. In whatever full way Jesus is God, and whatever is the full truth of Jesus’ relationship with the Father, I’m convinced it is more complicated than “The Trinity” and more complicated than any one word or sentence can explain. Let’s try to refrain from over simplifications and accept all scripture that sheds light on this topic.

## Jesus is a man

One thing that complicates the idea that Jesus is God, is the fact that Jesus was a man.

- I Tim 2:5: For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

In what sense is Jesus man?

- Jn 1:14: And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth
- Phi 2:6-7: Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond- servant, and being made in the likeness of men
- Col 2:9: For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form

Jesus is God, and then became God in human form. While holding onto His complete deity, He takes on flesh and lives on this earth as a human. This provides us with many challenging things to consider.

- Jesus prays to Father (Lk 6:12; Mk 14:32):
  - Jesus came to the earth as a man, and then lives to God the Father as all men do. There is no reason to believe He had special supernatural connections to heaven or to the Father on a consistent basis, so, like the rest of all humans, Jesus communicated with His Father as we do: in prayer.
  
- Jesus obeys the Father:
  - Jn 15:10: Jesus keeps His Father's commandments
  - Mat 8:4: Jesus heals a leper and tells him to be purified according to the Law
  - Mat 3:15: Jesus is baptized
    - Jesus comes down on the earth to live as a human, so naturally He follows all of the Laws and commandments God has for humans. Jesus is above the Law and the Lord of the Sabbath (Mat 12:8; 17:24-27) and He would actually be exempt from certain Laws (since He is deity), but He follows them anyway because He is on the earth living as a human and doing as God wants humans to do.
  
- Jesus was tempted (Mat 4:1, Heb 4:15)
  - It says that God isn't tempted because God can't be tempted (Jms 1:13).
  - So how can Jesus be God if He was tempted? When Jesus takes on human form, then He is taking on the flesh and the ability to be tempted just like the rest of us. His temptation is the human nature of Jesus. However, unlike the rest of us, Jesus never gave in to temptation (Heb 4:15). His perfection is His divine nature.
  
- Jesus was weak:
  - Mat 4:11; Lk 22:43: angels gave Him strength
  - Jn 11:35: Jesus wept
  - Lk 12:50: Was distressed about His coming crucifixion
  - Lk 22:42: Jesus prays for His "cup to pass"
  - I Pet 1:23: was reviled on the cross
  - II Cor 13:4: crucified because of weakness
  - Mat 27:46: My God, why have you forsaken Me?
    - Jesus came as a human and subjected Himself to these human "weaknesses". It was His divine strength and perfect character that enabled Him to be perfect with these human weaknesses. Consider the cross. Jesus, being human, subjected Himself to the weakness of the flesh that can be rendered useless by beatings and scourging, but His divine will is why He *chose* to remain upon the cross subjected to that weakness. At any point, He could've called 12 legions of angels. He had the power, but He subjected Himself to live with the weaknesses of humanity.
  
- Heb 5:8-9: Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation
  - This kind of explains the whole concept of Jesus being a human. He was God's Son, but He became flesh and learned obedience through suffering. This suffering is what perfected Him. We could consider if Jesus was really learning things He didn't already know. Does this mean He isn't omniscient? Or see that Jesus is being perfected. Does that mean He wasn't perfect before? The point is, Jesus taking on human form and subjecting Himself to suffering is what makes Him the perfect savior. He understands our suffering and He conquered the world through suffering. What more could God do to craft the perfect Savior for us to follow? We don't just follow the strong arm that conquered Egypt, we follow the suffering servant that delivered us from sin.

## Jesus is in submission to the Father

Many passages emphasize that Jesus is in submission to the Father and does what the Father tells Him. Consider Jesus in Gethsemane. He was praying for another possible way to redeem mankind from sin besides the cross, but ultimately submits His own will to the wishes of the Father, and goes to the cross. It is challenging to consider Jesus as the all powerful God if He is in submission to the Father. It is challenging to consider Jesus as equal to the Father when He is in submission to the Father. Let's consider some of these things.

- Jesus is submissive to the Father as a human
  - Heb 10:7: I have come to do your will
  - Lk 22:42: Not my will, but your will be done
  - Jn 15:10: Jesus keeps the Father's commandments
  - Jesus is God's servant: Isa 42, 53; Acts 3:13, 26, 4:27, 30
    - Jesus came to this earth to live as a human and accomplish God's will as a human. The humanity of Jesus explains why Jesus obeys the Father. Jesus came as a human servant of God.
- Jesus is submissive to the Father as God
  - But Jesus in His divine nature is also in subject to the Father. Jesus isn't subject to the Father just as a human, or only while He was human. Jesus is subject to the Father eternally.
  - The eternal nature of Jesus is in submission to the Father:
    - Jesus isn't greater than the Father (Jn 13:16, 14:28)
    - God is the head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3)
  - God gave Jesus authority:
    - Lk 5:24: authority to forgive sins
    - Mat 28:18: all authority is given to Him
    - Jn 5:27: Jesus given authority to execute judgment
    - Eph 1:20-21: Jesus is seated above all authorities
    - Col 2:10: Jesus is above all authority
  - But Jesus returns authority back to the Father
    - 1 Cor 15:24-8: Jesus rules until all things are subjected to Him, then Jesus Himself hands the authority to the Father, and subjects Himself to the Father. This is so that God may be all in all.
    - Jesus true nature as God is being in subject to the Father. This doesn't make Him any less deity, or a lesser deity, but rather, this is the true nature of God; Jesus subject to the Father, and the Father as the authority.

## Other statements

Then there are just some other statements that are challenging. Here are a few:

- Lk 18:19: And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone."
  - Here Jesus is saying that only God is good. So does that mean that Jesus isn't good? Does this mean that Jesus isn't God?
    - Well we do know very clearly that Jesus is good (whether or not you see Him as divine). We are told to imitate God and walk in love like Christ (Eph 5:1). Our moral standard is Jesus just as much as it is the Father.
    - Why then does Jesus deny being called "good" in this passage? The man didn't know Jesus to be God. He just saw Jesus as being a teacher, and yet was referring to Him as good. Jesus was trying to influence the people to stop elevating men above their true position (Mat 23).

- Jesus doesn't want to be called "good" as a human because there is no "good" human. So Jesus responds to this address as the man addressed Him; as a human.
- I Jn 4:12: No one has seen God at any time
  - If no one has seen God, but we have seen Jesus, then how can Jesus be God?
    - First let's put this verse in perspective. The same author that wrote this also wrote these statements:
      - Jn 1:18: No one has seen God; Jesus has explained Him
      - Jn 6:46: No one has seen the Father, except the one who is from the Father
      - Jn 14:19: He who has seen Me has seen the Father
      - III Jn 11: The one who does evil has not seen God (the implication is those who do righteousness have seen God (Mat 5:8)).
    - Other passages describe people who have seen angels, but proclaim that they've seen God (Gen 32:30, Jud 13:22)
    - Moses was given the right to see God's back (33:23).
  - With all these verses combined, we are left with this impression:
    - No one has seen the Father in His full glory. No one has seen His true nature. Moses was the closest, but He only saw a small portion of that glory.
    - God manifested Himself in various ways (a bush, cloud, fire) but none of those manifestations were the actual full glory of God. They were just physical manifestations.
    - The human body that the Word possessed was not the full glory of God. It was just a human body. The character that was exhibited in that body was the full glory of God's character, but not the full glory of God's nature.
    - So in Jesus, we've seen the true character of God (Jn 1:18, II Cor 4:6), but we haven't seen the full glory of God visibly. This is why Jesus was praying to receive His true glory again (Jn 17:5, 24), and this is why we see Jesus in a different form in Rev 1:12-26. Revelation isn't describing what Jesus actually looks like in His true glorious form, but it's describing something closer to what He really is like.
    - So in the body of Jesus, yes, we've seen God's character, but we still haven't seen His absolute glorious form.
- Col 1:15: He is...the firstborn of all creation; Rev 3:14: [Jesus is]...the Beginning of the creation of God
  - If Jesus is the beginning of creation and the firstborn of creation, does that mean He is created by God? Some people teach that God made Jesus first, and God created everything else through His creation, Jesus. They use these passages to teach that Jesus is the first created thing in Yahweh's entire creation. Is this true? Do these passages teach this?
    - First, keep in mind that Jesus is God, and there was no other god created before or after Jesus (Isa 43:10).
    - So if Jesus is God, then He can't be a later creation of Yahweh.
    - Jn 1:3: All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.
      - All things came into being through Jesus. Therefore Jesus is not something that came into being. He is the source of all things that came into being.
  - So how is Jesus called the firstborn?
    - There's the obvious literal meaning: the first child born of a Father.
      - No one thinks that Jesus was literally born out of the Father's womb, but people take this to figuratively mean that Jesus was firstborn in the sense of the first thing created by God. Is that what is meant by Jesus being called the firstborn?
    - Firstborn also has a figurative meaning: preeminent, or first.
      - The firstborn child would be considered preeminent and get an extra portion of the inheritance. So the term "firstborn" is a word used to describe a preeminence.

- God uses “firstborn” in this sense several times:
  - Ex 4:22: Israel is my firstborn. Israel was not really the firstborn. Jacob was. God is using the term to describe His special preeminent people.
  - Jer 31:9: Ephraim, my firstborn. Again, Ephraim wasn’t really the firstborn. Manasseh was. Ephraim received the blessing of the firstborn and was made preeminent, so God describes them as being His firstborn.
  - Job 18:13: leprosy is described as the firstborn of death (the preeminent killer)
  - Psalm 89:27: God makes David the firstborn. David wasn’t the firstborn, but God made him preeminent over all other peoples. This is a messianic passage also describing how Christ would be preeminent over all creation.
- Since we know that Jesus wasn’t created, we know that Him being described as the firstborn over all creation is meant that He is preeminent over all creation (which we know to be true).
  - Rom 8:29: Jesus is made the firstborn among His brethren. He is made preeminent, and we are to be like Him and follow Him.
  - Col 1:15: Jesus is the firstborn of creation. Then it describes how he made everything and rules over everything. The point is that Jesus is the most preeminent in creation.
  - Heb 1:6: God brings His firstborn into the world. This is just another statement of God’s preeminent servant, Jesus.
  - Heb 12:23: The church belongs to this preeminent one.
  - Rev 1:5: Jesus is the firstborn of the dead. This could be another statement of His preeminence over all those who will resurrect, or perhaps it’s being more literally by stating He is the first to resurrect.
- Statements of Jesus being the firstborn are not to describe His origins, but rather His preeminent status over all.
- The statement that Jesus is the “beginning of creation” means the Jesus is the source of all created things. He is the beginning from which everything else comes. We now this to be true in many other passages.

## Conclusion

There is an infinite amount of things to consider regarding the deity of Christ. We need to stay fair minded and persistent in order to learn more about Jesus’ true nature.

# Lesson 10: Is the Holy Spirit a Divine Person?

## Introduction

Now that we've seen that Jesus is a distinct divine person that is Yahweh, what about the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit distinct from God the Father? Is the Holy Spirit a person like the Father and Jesus? Is the Holy Spirit also deity? These are challenging questions, but scripture can help us make some clear conclusions.

## The Holy Spirit is a Person

Let's begin this discussion by determining whether or not the Holy Spirit is a distinct person from the Father and Jesus. Some suggest that the Holy Spirit isn't a person, but instead a powerful force that comes from the Father and is given by the Father. Others might think that the Holy Spirit of God is just another way of referring to God by His passions, feelings, or intentions. Does scripture present the Holy Spirit as being a distinct person or not?

## Two things that don't bear weight in the personhood of the Holy Spirit

First, let's address some misconceptions. There are two things people tend to focus on that actually have no weight in determining the personhood of the Holy Spirit one way or the other. The first is the Holy Spirit being referred to as a "spirit", and the second is the Holy Spirit being referred to by the personal pronoun "He".

### The Holy "SPIRIT"

"Father" and "Son" are words that hold a strong personal connotation because, obviously, fathers and sons are in fact persons. "Spirit" however does not give us a strong impression of personhood. When we hear "spirit" we might think of a force, essence, or some other kind of ambiguous entity. However, the Holy Spirit being referred to as a "spirit" doesn't give any evidence for or against the discussion of His personhood. We see that impersonal entities are referred to as spirits, and impersonal entities are referred to as spirits. The label "spirit" isn't conclusive one way or the other.

- Spirit (n):
  - Ruach (Hebrew): breath, wind, spirit
  - Pnuema (Greek): breath, wind, spirit
  
- "Spirits" that aren't persons:
  - Gen 7:22: spirit of life
  - Ex 28:3: spirit of wisdom
  - Num 5:14: spirit of jealousy
  - Isa 4:4: spirit of judgement
  - Isa 19:14: spirit of distortion
  - Eph 1:13: spirit of wisdom
  - II Tim 2:17: spirit of timidity

- My impression is that none of these spirits are persons, but rather metaphorical essences. The spirit of life in Genesis could more accurately be seen as the “breath of life” referring back to Genesis 1. The spirit of wisdom, or timidity, etc... could be seen as having that essence inside of you to account for your actions and behavior. Is God’s Holy Spirit
- “Spirits” that are personal beings:
  - II Chron 18:20-22: spiritual creatures good or bad
  - Mk 1:23: demons
  - Eph 2:2: Satan
  - I Cor 15:45: Jesus
  - Jn 4:24: God
- The word “spirit” used to describe the Holy Spirit doesn’t have much conclusive weight. When an entity is an actual distinct spirit, it is a personal being, but we see spirit being used impersonally to describe an inner essence of some sort.

### **The Holy Spirit referred to as “He”**

Another thing that people think about when considering the personhood of the Spirit is the fact that in numerous occasions, the English scriptures refer to the Spirit as a “He”. If the Spirit is called “He”, then He must be a person, right? The fact is, the Spirit is also referred to as an “it” in scripture as well.

- The Holy Spirit referred to as a “He”:
  - Jn 14:26: But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you
- The Holy Spirit referred to as an “it”:
  - Rom 8:26 (KJV): But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you

So, which is it? Is the Holy Spirit a “He” or and “it”? In the English language, these personal or neutral pronouns would seem to have a big significance in the discussion of the personhood of the Spirit, but in fact they hold no weight one way or the other. Why is that?

- English grammar regarding the genders of nouns and pronouns:
  - In English, we have masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns with matching pronouns:
    - Masculine: man, he
    - Feminine: woman, she
    - Neuter: a box, it
  - English reserves masculine or feminine genders for personal beings of actual gender, whether it be humans, animals, or personified objects (i.e. car, boat).
  - If something is a person, it has a gender, and is referred to with gender specific personal pronouns like “he” or “she”.
  - When we read the Holy Spirit being called “He”, in English, that would definitely mean the Spirit is a person. This, however, is not the case in Greek. Consider Spanish. It has masculine and feminine genders for impersonal objects. The table is “la mesa” (female). This “female” table would also have matching feminine pronouns. Yet, no one would consider the table to be a person. This is similar to the Holy Spirit being referred to as “He” or “it”.
- Greek grammar regarding the “gender” of the Holy Spirit:
  - The word “spirit” is neutral. The matching pronoun for this noun would be “it”, because “it” is a neutral pronoun.
  - In Jn 14:26, the Spirit is being referred to as “the Helper/ Comforter”. This is the Greek word “paraklétos”. This word is masculine. The only reason why the pronoun “He” is used, is because it matches the male gender of the masculine noun “paraklétos”.

- So, the pronouns, whether personal or impersonal, don't bear any weight for or against the personhood of the Spirit.
- To help us put this in perspective, the word "child" in Greek is "paidion". The appropriate pronoun for the neutral noun "child" is "it". This means that John the Baptist is referred to as "it" eight times in the Gospel of Luke.

Some points regarding translation:

- Be aware that different translations will take certain liberties when translating texts with pronouns attached to the Holy Spirit. Theological presuppositions can take over. The KJV accurately translates the Spirit's pronoun as "itself", whereas the NASB will use the pronoun "He" because their presupposition of the Holy Spirit's personhood. Keep in mind the KJV as well as every other translation, translate the pronoun "it" into "he" when it's antecedent is the Greek neutral noun "child". This just reminds us the complicated nature of translation. Other times, the Greek or Hebrew sentence will be lacking a pronoun that is necessary to make sense when translating into English. Since the translators need to add a pronoun to fit proper English grammar, and there is no pronoun supplied in the original text, they take the liberty to choose a pronoun, and often choose "He" (Num 11:17, 25 (NASB)).

All that being said, we need to acknowledge that pronouns used for the Holy Spirit are inconclusive in the discussion of His personhood.

## The Holy Spirit is Distinct

So far we've only addressed items that don't determine the personhood of the Spirit. So what evidence actually is conclusive? First, we need to see that the Spirit is distinct from the Father.

## Is the Spirit of God synonymous to God?

Often times, a spirit can almost be synonymous with the person possessing that spirit.

- Mat 26:41: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak
- Lk 1:47: And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour
- Acts 7:59: And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit
- Acts 17:16: Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry
- Gal 6:18; Phi 4:23; I Thess 5:23; II Tim 4:22; Phil 1:25: Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit
- I Thess 5:23: And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

The spirit is almost seen as being a part of us, something we possess, or something that we are. What's the difference between you and your spirit? Is the Holy Spirit like this? Is the Spirit of God just a true essence of God's being and intentions? When we say "God's Spirit" do we just mean His feelings or essence? It's use in I Cor 2:11 suggests that that is the case.

- For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God

Is the spirit of God just like our own spirit? Not a distinct being, but somehow possessed by us... and also what we are? Consider these passages that show the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father.

- The Holy Spirit is distinct:
  - Mat 3:16
  - Acts 9:31
  - Rom 15:30
  - I Cor 12:4



- II Cor 13:14
- Eph 2:18
- Eph 4:3
- Heb 9:14
- Jms 4:5

These passages don't relate the Spirit of God as just being synonymous with the Father, but as being an entity somehow distinct from the Father just as Jesus is.

## The Holy Spirit is a Person

Now that we've seen that the Holy Spirit is distinct, let's consider if He is spoken of as a distinct person. Seeing that the Holy Spirit is a person only further emphasizes the fact that He is distinct from the Father. So first, to consider whether or not the Holy Spirit is a person, consider how the concept of a person is defined. What is the criteria for being considered a person?

1. Intellectual activity
2. Free will/ desire
3. Communication
4. Emotions

Why might we think that the Holy Spirit is a person? Read Mat 8:28-31. Would you consider this evil spirit to be a distinct person? Yes you would, but why?

1. They demons cry out to Jesus (communications)
2. The demons engage in conversation and negotiate with Jesus (intellectual activity)
3. The demons express their desire to not be tortured, but rather cast into the pigs (free will/ desire)
4. The demons express dread and fear (emotion)

The discussion of the personhood of the Spirit will be similar. Does scripture reveal the Spirit to conduct intellectual activity, have free will, communicate, and express emotions or not? That will lead us to our conclusion.

## The Holy Spirit is the Helper

Jesus tells of the coming Holy Spirit and His work in such a way that reveals His true personhood.

- Jn 14:25: He is a helper, and advocate, a comforter. He teaches and guides. This is intellectual activity that persons do.
- Jn 15:26: The Helper comes, is sent, proceeds from the Father (all these descriptions are used to describe the coming of Jesus as well). The Helper will communicate by testifying.
- Jn 16:5-11: The Holy Spirit will convict people as a lawyer convicts
- Jn 16:13: The Spirit will guide in truth. Just like Jesus, He will by His own submission, only speak as the Father speaks. He will glorify Jesus and reveal things.

Keep in mind that Jesus refers to the Spirit as "another helper" that will take over after He ascends. The idea is that another person will fill in after the person, Jesus, has left.

## The Holy Spirit Acts

Jesus reveals the Spirit of God as a person coming to engage in necessary interaction and assistance with the disciples after the ascension of Jesus. This means, after Jesus ascends, we should see the Spirit engaged in this kind of activity in the book of Acts. We do.

- Acts 1:16: Spirit spoke
- Acts 5:3, 9: The Spirit is lied to and tested
- Acts 7:51: The Spirit is resisted

- Acts 8:29: The Spirit tells Phillip to go
- Acts 8:39: The Spirit snatches Phillip away
- Acts 10:19: The Spirit spoke to Peter
- Acts 11:12: Spirit told Peter to go
- Acts 11:15: The Spirit falls on the gentiles
- Acts 13:2: Spirit said, “separate Paul and Barnabas”
- Acts 15:28: It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and the apostles
- Acts 16:6: The Spirit refused for Paul to go somewhere
- Acts 20:22: Paul was bound by the Spirit
- Acts 20:23: Holy Spirit was testifying
- Acts 20:28: Holy Spirit made men overseers of church
- Acts 28:25: The Holy Spirit spoke

All through the OT we’ve known about the Holy Spirit of God. The NT reveals Him to be a distinct person carrying on responsibilities and doing the work of the Father.

### **Other passages**

- Mk 1:12
- Mk 13:11
- Lk 12:12
- Rom 8:16
- Rom 15:30
- I Tim 4:1
- I Cor 2:10-13
- I Cor 12:11
- Eph 4:30
- Heb 3:7
- Heb 9:8
- Heb 10:15
- Heb 10:29
- I Jn 5:6
- Rev 2:7, 11, 16, 29, 3:6, 13, 22
- Rev 22:17

### **Holy Spirit along side the power of God**

- Lk 1:35
- Acts 10:38
- Rom 15:13-19
- I Cor 2:9
- II Cor 2:6-7

## **The Holy Spirit is God**

If the Holy Spirit is a distinct person from the Father, is He also God? Well, we’ve already identified that multiple beings are Yahweh, so that provides the distinct Spirit of God to be Yahweh as well. As far as His deity, if He is the Spirit of God, then certainly He is divine. Let’s look at some passages that speak of the deity of the Spirit

## **The Holy Spirit is Called God**

- Acts 5:3-4: You have lied to the Holy Spirit = you have lied to God.
- I Cor 3:16, 6:19: You are the temple of God = you are the temple of the Holy Spirit

## **The Holy Spirit is equal to God**

### **Attributes**

The spirit is attributed all the essential attributes of God

- Spirit of grace: Heb 10:29
- Spirit of life: Heb 8:2
- Spirit of truth: Jn 14:17
- Spirit of holiness: Rom 1:4
- Spirit of glory: I Pet 4:14
- Eternal Spirit: Heb 9:14

### **Identified equally**

- Mat 28:18
- Rom 15:30
- I Cor 12:4
- II Cor 13:14
- Eph 6:17
- Phi 2:1
- I Pet 1:2

## **The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit**

- Acts 16:6-7
- Tom 8:9-11
- I Pet 1:11
- Gal 4:6
- Phi 1:19
- II Cor 3:17-18