

The Deity of Christ

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I'd like to read quite a number of scriptures, but I've limited myself to only four. And the first one is in John's Gospel, Chapter 1. First one. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made, but was made.

[00:01:02] And now in the Book of the Acts, a short section in Chapter 25.

Verse 10.

Then said Paul, I stand Caesar's judgment seat, for I ought to be judged.

The Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have permitted anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if these things, if there be none of these things who of these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. [00:02:01] I appeal unto Caesar.

Verse 24.

Confess this said King Agrippa, and all men that are here present with us, ye see this man, of whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both of Jerusalem and also here, crying out that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him, of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord.

That will be enough. Now, Psalm 50.

Psalm 50.

[00:03:12] Just a verse or two here and there. The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Verse 5.

Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. Verse 15.

Offer unto God thanksgiving.

[00:04:01] Pay thyself unto the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? Verse 21.

These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. But I will approve thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Verse 23.

Do so oft with praise glorifyeth me. To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of the Lord. Now there's still one more verse. [00:05:01] Look at these in 1 Peter. 1 Peter chapter 3.

Verse 14. 1 Peter 3 verse 14.

But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as evildoers, [00:06:01] they may be ashamed to falsely accuse your good conversation. In Christ.

I wish tonight to speak about the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A very fundamental subject. And if I may say so, Yes. A subject that colors all aspects of our faith. Some of you brought up in the meetings, brought up in Christian homes, may well say, I have heard from my earliest days that Jesus is God.

That's very good. [00:07:02] Some of you who are parents, bringing up children, will say to me, Yes, that was the very first lesson I taught my child. Jesus is God. Excellent.

Now we are living in a day when this truth is being watered down.

Plain testimony to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ is being eroded.

And we do well tonight, I feel sure, to turn our attention to this fundamental matter. And I'd like to leave something of a clear impression on your mind. And then we'll consider the reason why we take up this subject. [00:08:09] There is in the scripture very clear and plain testimony to this fact that Jesus is God. And first of all we have to consider some of the direct statements of scripture. John 1.1 In the beginning was the Word.

And the Word was with God.

And the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. We have heard and we repeated, worth repeating, In existence he was eternal.

[00:09:04] In personality, distinct.

In nature, God.

And this added word, the same was in the beginning with God, is to confirm that his personality was eternally distinct. Then waited the important scripture. And you will very well find that someone will come and knock at your door and say, Ah, but when you look at the original language, there's no definite article. The Word was a God.

Well, you don't need to know very much about the original language to know that if you look at the original language, there's no such thing as an indefinite article in Greek. [00:10:06] But if the definite article had been put in, it would read like this, The Word was the God to the exclusion of all other. And you don't need to be very far advanced in your Greek studies to know that a great deal of weight is on the order of the words. God was the Word.

So you needn't be at all worried about those people who knock at the door. Stick to what we've always heard. In existence, he was eternal.

In personality, he was distinct. In nature, he was God.

He was eternally distinct in his personality. [00:11:02] Now when you turn over to Philippians 2, you come to another statement. Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in the likeness of men, being found in fashion as a man, and so on. Here you come to the expression, form of God. Why does it say form of God, and not just simply God? The reason seems to be that the word form is thrown up in contrast to likeness and fashion.

Speaking of the Lord's manhood, [00:12:02] he's found in the likeness of men, in the fashion of men.

Elsewhere we read he was made in the likeness of flesh of sin. Although the Lord was a man, he was a man of a different order. But you couldn't say concerning his deity that he was made in the likeness of God. Man was made in the form and likeness of God. Jesus was found in the image of God. And this word form of God carries with it the force of the outward appearance and the inward substance.

Jesus carried with him all the characteristics of God.

Now there's something to notice when you look a little more carefully at the original language. [00:13:04] Who be, Mr. Darby gives subsists.

Now if you were to sit down quietly alongside many of the dear brethren with whom we break bread, and I would have been in that position, I venture to say, till I'd been taught, they thought of the form of God is carried back into pre-incarnate dignity.

And that's wrong.

I venture to say, and I think this can be well supported, that being in the form of God still applies to his manhood even when he took up the form of a servant. At no time in his earthly pathway [00:14:02] was he less than he was in pre-incarnate dignity.

He was in the form of God. He was in the form of a servant.

And I'll give you another scripture to confirm that. 2 Corinthians 8 verse 9.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor. Now this little word, was rich, doesn't apply to his pre-incarnate state.

It applies to the days of his sorrowing flesh. He was still rich although he was poor. Ask me to explain it? I cannot. He was a man, but he was never less than God. Two very important scriptures.

[00:15:02] John 1, 1. Philippians 2.

He was God. He was in the form of God.

And when you proceed, you find that the scripture evidence builds up. Hebrews 1.

Yea, hath God said, said the tempter in the garden, God hath spoken. Hebrews 1.

Sevenfold testimony to his greatness. Sevenfold testimony from the psalm. Who is it? The brightness of eternal glory. Express image of his substance. Creator, Redeemer, appointed heir.

He is the same.

Coming into the world. [00:16:01] I take this to be the commencement of the world to come. And let the angels of God worship him. And he's saluted, you remember. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

Marvelous scripture. God has spoken to us in his son.

He is God.

Colossians chapter 1.

Colossians chapter 2.

In him all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell. In chapter 2, bodily.

The father was there who did the works. He was justified in the spirit. And now he abides eternally in manhood.

And as we turn our eyes heavenward, who is there? The fullness of the Godhead is pleased to dwell in him. [00:17:04] It's a different word from what we get in Romans 1. You remember there in creation a testimony to his eternal power and Godhead. But in Colossians 2 what is found is the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Matthew chapter 1. Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.

Romans chapter 1. Declared son of God with power by the resurrection of dead persons. Alongside the wonderful scripture that he was made according to the seed of David. According to the flesh. Who do we look for? Titus 2.

The appearance in glory of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ. [00:18:05] I will not count you.

When you come to the text you'll critic. You'll find that he'll curl his lip a bit. No real cause of course.

Romans 9 verse 6.

Who is God over all, blessed forever.

And 1 Timothy 3.16.

God was manifest in the flesh. Don't take up those ones. But if he's difficult throw up another one against him and I'll give it to you. John chapter 1.

The only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father. The manuscripts are quite as powerful in support of this reading. God was manifest.

No man has seen God at any time.

[00:19:04] God manifest in the flesh. God which dwelleth in the bosom of the father. He hath declared it. You won't find it in the earlier manuscripts. But the latest edition which is going to come out is going to have this rendering. Well then we have these plain testimonies to the fact that Jesus is God. And I ask you to bear with me because although this might seem to be rather a recitation of scripture, I'm going to, I hope, bring home to you the force and reason for talking. Bear with me.

Under the second category I think we have to bring forward the immense testimony that we find in the gospel by John.

[00:20:03] This particular gospel, you remember, was written that we might believe that Jesus is the son of God. This is perhaps the gospel which is the battleground in closing days. And what do we find?

Well, in chapter one, he creates all.

John 1.3.

Without him was there nothing made that was.

He creates all.

And it's worth just pausing a moment on that. There are three bridges that man is unable to cross. He's unable to cross from nothing into something. He's unable to cross from the inorganic into the organic. He's unable to change the organic into God consciousness. [00:21:05] But the Lord Jesus Christ has done all this. He is the creator. He creates all. John 1.

But in the second chapter of John, we find that he knows all.

He didn't commit himself to man.

He knew all men.

He didn't commit himself to man because he knew what was in man. He knew all. And as a matter of fact, in John's gospel, you find this constantly. Knowing all things that should come upon him.

Knowing that he came from God and went to God. Jesus himself knew what he was going to do. He knew all. He's the omniscient one.

John 3.

He's a bubble. [00:22:01] He that is from heaven is a bubble. Stick to that.

In these closing days, as we're going to see shortly, there are lots of rivals for Jesus, even in the realm of teaching. He that is from heaven is a bubble. The Father loveth his Son and hath put all things into his hand. John 4.

Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did is not this the Christ. He tells all.

John 5.

All that are in their graves shall hear the voice.

Those that have done good, the resurrection of life. Those that have done evil, the resurrection of damnation. He raises all.

John 8.

Before Abraham was, I am.

He's before all.

[00:23:01] John 10.

I and my Father are one. Unity of substance.

John 16.

All of the Father hath a mind. Unity of possession. John 5.

My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. And if we don't see a clear testimony to his deity in it, at least the Jews did. Because we read in the scriptures, therefore the Jews sought the more earnestly to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but because he claimed that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

It's often been said, hasn't it, that we don't get the Mount of Transfiguration seen in John's gospel [00:24:03] because he's transfigured throughout it. But as you go through the pages, what a precious gospel we've got in John. You find his glory standing out from every page. On the one hand, his deity. On the other, his perfect, subject, holy manhood here. Signed, finger-posted, who he is.

And I think we can take up the language of Thomas at the end of the gospel, My God and my God.

When you turn over to John's epistle, you get the same thing, don't you? It's a bit of a puzzle sometimes to know whether the Spirit is speaking of Christ, or whether it's speaking of God.

[00:25:01] If you take up a scripture like this, you'll probably hear it tomorrow morning. Here in his love, not that we love God, but that he first loved us. Now you have a good look at that scripture when you go home tonight, and you'll find it difficult to know whether it's God or it's Christ. It's before the mind.

And as you go through John's epistle, you end up with this magnificent verse, This is the true God and eternal life.

True, not shadowy, but substantial. He is the true God.

A verse that was used with mighty weight and power against the Aryans in the conflicts of the fourth century. We can use it today. He is God.

And perhaps one could find very much more if you were to linger in John's writings.

[00:26:03] In the third group of scriptures, I'd just like to remind you briefly what others can handle better than I can. That the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old.

Thou shalt call his name Jehovah, for he shall save his people from their sins.

You will remember that when John Baptist embarked on his ministry, his message was this, prepare the way of Jehovah, make his path straight. Now whose path was he making straight? [00:27:01] It was the path of Jesus.

Isaiah, you remember, had to say, mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts. If you read the Old Testament, he saw Jehovah Elohim. Read the twelfth chapter of John, and you find that really he was seeing Jesus.

Jehovah was Israel's righteousness. We know that Christ is our righteousness. Jehovah clearly was Israel's redeemer, but we know that it's really Jesus who comes. Who is this that cometh from Eden with stained garments and bones?

We know it's Jesus. Who's going to put his feet on the Mount of Olives? We know it's Jesus. As I do, [00:28:04] Think well, give me my And they weighed unto me thirty pieces of silver. Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver. And they shall look on him whom they pierced. What? They'll look upon Jesus.

Time forbids that you develop it more, but I hope that that may be enough to show that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Jehovah Elohim.

In the fourth category, and I've got to cut this one very short, how about the incidental allusions to the fact that Jesus is God?

How about all the types of the Old Testament?

[00:29:03] Have to leave those.

How about those occasional little touches that warm up our hearts in our private reading and make our Bible readings good? Leave those.

I'm just going to give you three.

You remember in connection with the maniac of God.

After the Lord had healed him, seated, clothed him in his right mind, he desired that he might be with the Lord. But the Lord sent him away and he said, Go home and tell, go home and show, what great things the Lord has done for thee, what great things God has done for thee. And you find that the maniac, when he went back to his decapital of cities, [00:30:01] he proclaimed, what great things Jesus has done for thee.

In turn, pose to them another testament.

One that we've enjoyed some of us together in connection with the Apostle Paul, who before was an insolent, overbearing man, a blasphemer. Concerning the name of Jesus of Nazareth, he thought to do many things contrary to that name, which things also I did. He ever blasphemed the God of his fathers? Perished at all.

Hebrew of the Hebrews?

Never.

But he did do many things against the name of Jesus. When he got converted, he described himself as a blasphemer. And I'll give you one that I discovered just in the last week or two, [00:31:03] if I may say so, in connection with this scripture, in Acts. Acts 25.

You find that Paul, when he's brought to that point with the Jews, he says, I appeal unto Caesar.

Now when Festus is reporting this to the assembled company, he doesn't say, this prisoner has appealed unto Caesar, he says, he's appealed unto Augustus. This word Augustus is the same word as you get in Thessalonians in connection with the one who will be worshipped. I have nothing concerning this prisoner to write to my lord. You see, in the Roman world, the emperor was already in the position of being worshipped. [00:32:02] Did Paul say, I'm going to appeal to Augustus? Not a bit. No.

I appeal unto Caesar.

Let Festus talk about Augustus.

Let him talk about my lord. But he isn't the one who's killing the apostle Paul, is he? Oh no.

And finally, there's a very clear testimony to the Lord's deity in connection with moral consideration.

Who is this that forgiveth sins?

Who can forgive sins save God alone?

And the Lord Jesus said, that you might know that the Son of Man has power on earth [00:33:04] to forgive sins, he said to the man sick of the palsy, rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

He was able to forgive the man his sins and to give him power to walk. More than this, the Lord himself performed miracles. How glad we are to have a saviour like that. You take away from me the Lord's deity and his ability to reverse the laws of nature, you rob me of my saviour.

He not only performed miracles, but he sent out his disciples also. More than this, he answered prayer.

He did then, he does now.

Psalm 66, only God can do this.

[00:34:04] He received worship.

You remember how when Herod was worshipped, a man, immediately God smote him, and he was eaten up with worms.

When the angel came to, when they came to Peter and worshipped him, he said, worship God.

But the Lord Jesus, he accepted worship, another testimony to his deity.

I think one can say in a company like this, that the Lord Jesus Christ is everything to the believer. Christ is all, and in all.

[00:35:02] Christ dwells in the heart.

Christ is the object of faith. He believed in God, believe also in me. Christ is the one who fills the horizon. If he were not God, it would be falling into the strictures of what we get in that last verse in John's epistle, children, keep yourselves from idols. To the Christian, Christ is everything.

Now you may wonder why ever I've been pressing this thing, or perhaps you haven't.

There are three very good reasons, I may fall to say, why we're needing to be braced up, every one of us, in respect of this matter of the Lord's deity. [00:36:08] Three very good reasons.

And the first of these reasons is, that if Jesus is not God, we have no atonement.

Once, in the end of the age, he has appeared to put away sins, by the sacrifice of himself.

By one sacrifice he has perfected forever them who are sanctified.

Jesus is God, and he's taken up the sin question.

He, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man. And wherever you turn in Paul, or John, or Peter, [00:37:04] you see a clear testimony to this, that it's by blood, on the basis of sacrifice, through death and resurrection, the sinner can come in now into God's presence, set up in righteousness, abiding there.

And can face not only the judgment seat, but the age of eternity, on the basis of blood.

We're redeemed by his blood, cleansed by his blood, we're brought nigh by his blood, we're reconciled by his blood. Everything hinges upon the death and resurrection and the bloodshed of our Lord Jesus Christ. But you might say, but we know that, it has to be said tonight in Denmark Street Hall, Newcastle, [00:38:06] that it's sad to say, this is just the very truth that men and women don't want.

S.I.N.

I'm afraid sin is dropping out of man's vocabulary.

They're glad to get rid of this awful matter of sin. The fact that man is accountable to God, men don't want it. The fact that I'm accountable to God, I don't want it.

But the simple truth is, that if this sin matter is not resolved, God is going to come as judge and he's going to deal with both individuals and nations, [00:39:02] and the time of that judgment is drawing near. In fact, we need a Savior who is divine.

There's a little verse that isn't quite so well known from a piece of poetry that I think you'll know one line at least, from John Newton. Do you remember? What think ye of Christ?

Is the opening verse. Now in one of the verses of this hymn it says, some take him a creature to be, a man or an angel at most.

But they cannot have feelings like me, or know themselves when at last.

[00:40:03] So helpless, dependent am I.

I dare not confide in his blood, nor on his protection rely, unless I am sure he is God.

There's a cry from the heart that's awakened us to the awareness of sin for a Savior who is divine.

And how glad we are to know that this is the Savior that these scriptures provide. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Now secondly, if Jesus were not God, we have no revelation from God.

[00:41:06] We are living in a day at the schools where it's not only Christianity that's taught, but Mohammedanism, and Judaism, and all the other isms if you like. Now if there's one thing that the Mohammedan does not like, and there's one thing that the Jew will fight against, is the deity and the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We get one newspaper in our house every week, the Jewish Chronicle. And a Jewish mother wrote up to the editor in some distress to say that her little girl, age three, had been knocked sideways [00:42:01] by her companion, age three, who said to her, Mommy, said to this little girl, my friend says that Jesus is God.

And this mother went a bit puzzled to know how to answer this phenomenon. And the editor said, referred to the rabbi, you know, the rabbi. He said, well now, Jesus was a wonderful man. His ethical teaching was excellent. Whatever you do, you have to resist the Christian teaching that Jesus is God.

And moreover, the atonement you must refuse. These are the two points they don't want. We can stand four square on this. We have a revelation from God. No man has seen God at any time.

[00:43:02] The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared it. He's been into the depths of death. He's risen to the pinnacle of glory. The Spirit of God is here. Glory lights up His face.

The realms of glory shine before our souls. Already we're taken into living union with Himself. We know God as our Father, and it's all dependent and underpinned by the glorious act that Jesus is God.

One pauses just for a moment on this.

I think we ought to know that many of these modern translations that are floating about just now, they're legion.

They have to be viewed very carefully [00:44:02] because I'm afraid since the King James has been downgraded, there's been a progressive and steady arrangement of the clear textual testimonies to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm not saying this is true of all the translations, but watch them carefully.

And I'm afraid this leads me to the third point, that perhaps one of the biggest dangers we have in the period in which we now live is to humanize Christ and to deify man.

[00:45:05] You remember in the garden how the tempter said, we shall be as gods.

We know from Thessalonians that antichrist will sit in the temple, be worshipped, giving out that he is God.

Already there are many antichrists in this world, and this spirit of the up and up with man seems to be infecting the whole community.

I've said before, pardon me if I've repeated this, that when I visit older reverent sisters and ask them about conditions in the meetings [00:46:02] when they were younger, the thing that I find almost invariably from them is that in those days there was a very deep reverence in the meetings. A deep reverence in the meetings. A sense of the presence of God.

But it almost seems today that everything conspires to get rid of that. And that's why I read that verse in Psalm 50, Thou thoughtest I was altogether such in one as thyself.

There's a great danger in thinking of the Lord Jesus, of thinking of God, that he's altogether such in one as ourselves. It's to be God.

And I think along these lines some of us are very nervous about this habit [00:47:02] of addressing God as you.

I'm not saying, of course, that there aren't genuine souls who do so, but let's be careful, dearly

beloved brethren, that we maintain properly the sense that Jesus is God.

Now finally, and this is the verse I'd like to close with, 1 Peter 3.

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready to give reason to every man, a reason for the hope that is in you. Now in the King James Version, set apart Jesus as Lord.

In Mr. Darby's translation it says, sanctify the Lord the Christ in your hearts.

[00:48:02] In the King James, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Again another of those transpositions, God and Christ. But the effect upon faith and morals of doing this is apparent.

It gives us boldness to render a reason for the hope that is in us. Now in these New Testament quotes, it's always very interesting to look at the Old Testament context from which they're taken. This is taken from the 8th chapter of Isaiah. At that time there was a confederacy and there was a real danger of the heart being frightened by a multitude of foes.

In this particular situation, the way out of the difficulty was to keep the eye firmly fixed upon God.

[00:49:04] Dearly beloved brethren, I venture to say that in 1977, the difficulties that may surround us, they melt, they disappear when we have before our souls not a bold Christ, but a great one.

And in the scripture, if you read of a failure, if a failure is a great one, and a redeemer is strong in a God who is mighty, you find all these vital convivialities of the blessed one who loved us to the point of going to death. He did it for us and he encouraged us. In the Christian heart, it is the same. Now I hope that's something of a clear impression on your mind. I would like to repeat, Jesus is God.

[00:50:04] And the impact of this is that we've not only got atonement, we've not only got the revelation of God, we've got something entirely spiritual in the being of the object Christ.

Amen.