

## Jesus Christ the Lord

The uniqueness of Christianity is the Person Jesus Christ and the distinctiveness of Christ is the fact that He is the God-man. He is a divine-human Being.

### A. The deity of Christ

#### 1. His preexistence

- a. Names given to Him in the Old Testament indicate His pre-existence: "Everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:6); "Ancient of Days" (Daniel 7:9).
- b. Micah 5:2 teaches the eternity of the Son.
- c. Certain works which are said to have been done by Christ could only have been done if He existed before time; e.g., creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17).
- d. He himself claimed to be preexistent when He said, "...before Abraham [came to be], I AM" (John 8:58). The statement "I AM" (Gk. "ego eimi") is not only a claim to existence before Abraham, but also is a reference to the sacred name of God (Yahweh), and thus a claim to be God (Exodus 3:14-15).

#### 2. His deity

##### a. His assertions

Jesus of Nazareth claimed equality with God when He said that He and the Father were one (John 10:30). Those who heard Him make this statement understood exactly what He meant because they accused Him of blasphemy (v.33).

When Jesus stood before the high priest he gave a clear, affirmative answer to the question whether He was the Christ (Matthew 26:63-64). Note that His answer was given under oath. Again, He was accused of blasphemy (v.65).

In both John 10:36 and Matthew 26:63 the phrase "Son of God" is used (cf. Matthew 16:16; Luke 1:35; John 9:35-37), which some claim means something less than deity in order to avoid the conclusion that Christ claimed to be God. This is not so:

In Jewish usage the term "son of God" did not generally imply any subordination, but rather equality and identity of nature. Thus Bar Kokba, who led the Jewish revolt 132-135 A.D. in the reign of Hadrian, was called by a name which means "Son of the Star."

It is supposed that Jesus took this name to identify Himself as the very Star predicted in Numbers 24:17. The name Son of Consolation (Acts 4:36) doubtless means, "The Consoler." "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17) probably means "Thunderous Men." "Son of Man," especially as applied to Christ in Daniel 7:13 and constantly in the New Testament, essentially means "The Representative Man."

Thus, for Christ to say, "I am the Son of God" (John 10:36) was understood by His contemporaries as identifying Himself as God, equal with the Father, in an unqualified sense. [J. Oliver Buswell, *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 1:105.]

Not only did Jesus make the claim to be equal with God for Himself, but the writers of the New Testament did the same (John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; Titus 2:13).

##### b. His works

Jesus of Nazareth claimed to do certain things which only God can do. In Mark 2:1-12 the Lord demonstrated He had the power to forgive sins by healing a paralytic. The scribes considered this claim to be blasphemy because they recognized that only God can forgive sins. Jesus healed the paralytic in order to validate His claim to be able to forgive sins (v. 10).

On other occasions He claimed that all judgment was given into His hands (John 5:22; cf. Acts 10:42; 17:31), that He would send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26) and that He would be the one to raise the dead (John 5:25; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Since these are all special powers of deity, they support His claim to be God or else they make Him a liar.

Elsewhere in the New Testament works are attributed to Christ which only God can perform, further supporting His equality with God: creating (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16); upholding all things (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3); being Judge of all men (Acts 17:31).

c. His characteristics

Jesus of Nazareth possessed characteristics which only God has:

He claimed to be omnipotent (Matthew 28:18); He displayed knowledge that could only have come from His being omniscient (Mark 2:8; John 1:48); He made promises that depended on His being present everywhere (Matthew 18:20).

These claims indicate that either He is God or a great deceiver.

d. His ascriptions

Others credited the powers of deity to the Lord substantiating His own claims:

He was worshiped by men and by angels (Matthew 14:33; Philippians 2:10; Hebrews 1:6); His name is coupled with other Members of the Trinity in a relationship of equality (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14); the writer to the Hebrews declared that He was the same in substance with the Father (Hebrews 1:3); Paul said that "in Him dwells all the fullness of deity in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9, free trans.). Compare Luke 1:76 with Malachi 3:1 and Romans 10:13 with Joel 2:32.

Note the other names of deity which are given to Jesus: God (Hebrews 1:8); Lord (Matthew 22:43-45); King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

We can only conclude that Christ's deity is fully attested by the ascriptions given Him in the New Testament.