***The Doctrine of the Deity of Christ,***

***No. 1

Colossians 1:4-9

COL-113***

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Our subject is "Hymn in Honor of Christ," number three, in Colossians 1:15-20.

Colossians 1:15 teaches that Jesus Christ is a God-Man: undiminished deity; and, true humanity. The apostle Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, declares that He is the image of the invisible God. Jesus Christ is the very image of the invisible God. This means that He is the true representation of the deity of God the Father. And He is the manifestation of God to mankind. He demonstrates the divine essence of God, and He makes God known to us.

**The Council at Nicea**

In 325 A.D., the first church council was held at Nicea in Asia Minor to decide the question of the deity of Jesus Christ. A presbyter named Arius of Alexandria Egypt led the party which declared that Jesus was a created being, created by God the Father, and so He was only *like* God. He was not divine. This position was described by a very interesting word. It's the Greek word "homoiousis." "Homoiousis," in the Greek, meant that Jesus was only similar (like) God. On the other hand, Athanasius, a deacon also of Alexandria Egypt led the party which declared that Jesus was of the same essence as God the Father, so He was of identical essence. This word is "homoousis." You will notice that there is only one letter difference between these two words. "Homoiousis," with this "iota" ("i") says He's just similar. He's like, but He's not the same thing. "Homoousis" says that He is exactly like God. And these theologians (250, or maybe 300 of them), from all over the empire, stood and spoke, and debated back and forth. And these two words kept bouncing back and forth in that auditorium and in that discussion. And they had to decide whether this one letter (this "i") should be in there, or should not be in there in the word describing the person of Jesus Christ.

Well, under the guidance of God, the Council of Nicea decided in "homoousis" – full deity of Jesus Christ. The deity of Jesus Christ, furthermore, ensured the preservation of the sinlessness of His humanity, which qualified Him, then, to pay for the sins of mankind with His own death on the cross as a sacrifice. It was essential that Christ be divine. If He was going to be able to come as the last Adam, and do what the first Adam could not do, it was essential that He not only be man to die, but he had to be God to preserve the integrity of His sinlessness. And that's why it was so important that the Council of Nicea got this story straight from Scripture – that Jesus Christ was God. And, of course, that's the only place they could get it from. There was no place else that they could decide about the person of Christ. As we will look in a moment now, it was what the Bible says, and that is the issue. That's why we're gathered here.

You're not here this morning to hear my opinions, and I'm not going to insult you by playing on your emotions. If you want to do that, then go down to the charismatic churches. And I'm not going to insult you by pretending that I have some kind of wisdom that's greater than the Bible. If you want that, then go down to the liberal churches. They'll play that kind of deceit on you. My job is to lead you through the Scriptures – the deep things of the Scriptures, and not to lead you a shallow twit in your Christian life such that anybody can come along and undermine you.

I constantly have to struggle in my own mind, wondering why Christians go into the horrendous sins they go into; why Christians are so indifferent to the Word of God; and, why they're so unconcerned about the things of God. I mean, if they have an appointment with somebody who's nothing but a human being, but is significant to them, like maybe their employer, they'll be right there on time at work. But if it's God, who cares? If it's their employer, they'll see to it that they do their job. But if it's Christian service, who cares? Maybe you will; and, maybe you won't.

What makes the difference? Well, the difference is those who are spiritual Christians. Those are Christians who have the Word of God, and whom the Spirit of God is leading. When you have that, you do right. Nobody has to tell you to do right? Nobody has to go after you. Nobody has to try to alert you.

One young man is a pastor here in Irving, who is an avid student of our tapes, and has a church here in Irving. And one of our people heard him. He had a little television program, and he heard him on TV, and he was so impressed that He said, "This fellow must have gone to Dallas Seminary, or he's been listening to tapes," because he had certain little words and little phrases in his terminology. So, he called him up after the program and said, "That was a splendid program. I just wanted to tell you how impressed I was. And I appreciate your instruction. It was so biblical." And he said, "Well, thank you. Where do you go to church?" He said, "I go to Berean Memorial Church." And the man said, "Oh, Dr. Danish – he's my mentor." That means teacher. That's pretty big-time stuff.

Anyhow, he's been here a few times visiting. So, he called me and he said, "Let's go out to lunch." And we went out to lunch the other day. And he's asking me things, and we're talking about this whole issue of what people need – what Christians need, and what it is that makes people do what is right. And his experience has been: "When I can get people into the instruction of the Word, and I can get them to be serious about the Word of God, then they do right?" He said, "And I struggle just like you do." How can somebody know the Word of God and then blow it off? They don't understand that this is the most important thing in life. This is what makes the difference between being significant and not in life.

After all is said and done, I want you to remember this. The only thing that's going to count is when you stand up before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and that life of yours gets brought up before the evaluation team, and it's full of that human good nonsense that's going to be hay, wood, and stubble. And that's what the emotional churches are going to give you. That's what the liberals are going to give you. Or it's going to be gold, silver, and precious stones. For the hay, wood, and stubble, you get nothing, For the precious things; the valued things; and, the divine good works, you get eternal rewards. And the difference is the people who know the Word of God.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ should be recognized for what He is, and therefore His commandments, He says, "If you love Me, you will keep them. You will obey Me." But for us to do that, we have to get a sense of His dignity. We have to stop treating Him as if: "Oh yeah, we're going to have a church service. Well, I don't know whether I should go or not? I'll take my time."

Somebody the other day said, "Oh, there's the late Mr. So-and-So. And I looked, and I saw what he meant. The guy is not dead. He's just always late. And he won't make it to his funeral – I can tell you right now. Something is going to happen. They're going to be driving down the street, and the hearse back door is going to open; the guy is going to hit the brakes; and, that thing's going to go down the street. The people are going to stand there, waiting for him. Everybody's going to be at the grave site. And this guy's going to be late. I can tell you about that for sure (almost).

It's the Word of God. And these things can only be found in the Bible. That's why it's what the Bible says that's important. This is what you have to know. And you should not tolerate anybody who treats you like an ignoramus, and doesn't give it to you straight, because he wants to be sure that you like him, or that you don't want to be upset, and not come back, because one of the things the Bible says is to feel sorry for yourself if God has called you to be a pastor-teacher. Just feel sorry for yourself, because you'll be under such great judgment of God of evaluation that the rest of the people will not be, because when they go wrong, it is because you didn't give them a chance. But if they go wrong after you've given them a chance, then it's their fault. But if they never had an opportunity to know better, it'll be your fault.

So, I appreciate the fact that here Berean tapes go out, and this young preacher here in town grabs hold of them, and he's serving a specific niche that needs to be ministered to. And he took me in, and he says, "Here are the tapes that we're doing." And I looked at the tapes, and right from the titles I could see where he is getting some of his background. And what he's doing is following what? The Word of God. That is because in this congregation, you have dignified the Word of God. And you have said, "When there's a church service, I'm going to be there, and that's what I'm going to support. And when you lose track of that, do you know what you'll do? You'll go out to the rah-rah churches, and we won't see you here anymore. You'll find yourself the preacher who will entertain you; who will scratch your itching ears; and, who will dishonor your potential before God.

So, the battle was fought early on in the history of the church: Who is this Man from Nazareth? Is He just a man? Is He created? Is He different? Is He God? And the decision was that he was the God-Man. The mission of the Lord Jesus Christ was to restore believers to the sinless image of God in which man was originally created. Therefore, He had to be Himself (God); and, He had to be Man (that same combination) to restore us to the image of God. We originally, as human beings, were created in the image of God.

**The Trinity**

Please turn to Genesis 1. I hope you have your Bible here this morning. We've got a lot of verses to look at. Genesis 1:26-27: "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to our likeness.'" Now you see those plural personal pronouns. What does that tell you? That tells you that the Godhead is more than one person. It is three persons, in fact. While the word "trinity" does not appear in the Bible, the doctrine certainly does, and you can see it here in these very pronouns: "Let Us make man in Our image, and let them rule over the fish of the sea; over the birds of the sky; over the cattle; over all the earth; and, over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Who has animal rights? Man has rights over animals. Animals don't have any rights. They should not be abused, but there is no such thing as animal rights. Animals are not citizens. If you're not a citizen, you don't have any rights.

Genesis 1:27: "And God created man in His Own image. In the image of God, He created them. Male and female, He created them." Now what that means was that Adam and Eve walked in that garden, and they were little reproductions of God. They were finite beings, but they had all of His capacities. They had all the powers of the mind, and of the emotions, and of the will – these capacities that God had, in Whose image we had been made. He was infinite in them; and, we were finite. But it was a great life.

Turn to Psalm 8. In Psalm 8:4-6, we have a description of this dominion authority of man over nature: "What is man, that You have thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and does crown him with glory and majesty. You make him to rule over the works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet." What a magnificent statement! Who is man? This is what you are. This is what God intended you to be. He has made you in His own image. And He has put all of His creation under your authority. He has made you just a little bit under Himself, but you're just like God. What a magnificent reality!

In Hebrews 2:5-9, this passage is quoted. But in Hebrews 2:5-9, interestingly enough, this passage, quoting that Psalm about man, is applied to Jesus Christ: "For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere saying, 'What is man that You remember him, or the Son of Man, that You are concerned about him? You have made him for a little while a little lower than the angels.'" Now the word there in the original Hebrew is "Elohim." And sometimes that is translated as "Spirits." The Septuagint translation, which was the translating of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, which was made early (near the first century), they translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and there they translated the word for "Elohim" as "angels" (as ministering spirits is the idea). But it's obvious that what was meant there, in the original Hebrew, was God. So, that's why the Greek carried over the word "angels," but it is a Spirit Being that is in mind, and is referring to God – not angels as we know them.

"You have crowned him with glory and honor, and has appointed him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him, but we do see him who has been made, for a while, lower than the angels; namely Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that, by the grace of God, He might taste death for everyone."

Here's an interesting application. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the God-Man, came to take upon Himself the judgment of death for our sins, so that we could be transformed back into the image of Christ. That is our normal status. That is our normal destiny. That is what God intends you to be – someone who acts in the image of Christ. Now, that is the purpose of God in salvation. He wants to get us back to what we once were.

So, here, this passage is saying that Jesus Christ came (He Who is God Himself) in order to transform us back to being into the image of Christ. Now, part of that solution has already come about in some degree because of our salvation. One of the things is that Christ is in us. He dwells in us. Jesus, in John 14:20, said, "Ye in Me, and I in you."

I have some very serious things to do this week. They are of monumental importance. And I have been repeatedly in prayer that Christ in me would completely take over my soul, and that I would be in a position to let him do it, so that the decisions I have to make; the attitude of emotional response that I'm going to have; and, the movement of my will, will be Christ in me. What am I talking about? I want to act as if I were in the perfect image of Christ. I want Christ (God Himself) to do these things that are going to be so significant this week, if done right now.

Now, you and I have these times. You have this same situation. And it is well to remember that he's not only there for fellowship with you, as the Holy Spirit is there for fellowship with you, but Christ is there to enable you to act in the image of God. And the Spirit of God is there to give you the power to do it right.

We lost a great thing when we lost that image, but we have regained it (Hebrews points out) through Christ. He has come to do the thing that needed to be done. He tasted death for everyone so that here is the same image that we lost being restored by Christ. Though the divine image in man is now defaced by sin, when the destructive effects of sin are removed, the new man will appear renewed in the sinless humanity, and the glory of Jesus Christ, his Creator. That is the point of 1 Corinthians 11:7: "For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and the glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man." The man, in his worship, should not have his head covered. In the early New Testament church, the women, as a sign of their submission to the authority of Christ, did have a covering on their head. The apostle Paul later said, "A woman's long hair (her female style hair) is the symbol of her covering, and of her honoring of her subjection to the authority of Christ." But here the man is in the image and the glory of God. That is his natural status.

Take a look at Colossians 3:10: "And have put on the new self, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One Who created him." We are being renewed into the image of the one who created us. Who created us? Jesus Christ. He is the image of God. He is the pattern of the God in Whose image we have been made. And notice what it says: "We are being renewed to that image by a true knowledge ('epignosis')." The means full understanding of the Word of God.

So, do you see how terrible it is to let a group of people sit in a church service, and go through a rah-rah, football pep rally type of thing, and send them out deceitfully thinking that they have gotten something from God, and that they have some relationship with God? And they don't have the foggiest realization of the enormous potential of their lives, and what they are, and how their lives may make an impact for now, but also for that eternity that they're going to spend the richer or the poorer for what they have done with their lives? It's the knowledge of the Word of doctrine that moves us toward the image of Christ.

How about 2 Corinthians 3:18? "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit." How are we being changed from glory to glory into the image of Christ? Through our knowledge of the Word of God, and through our positive volition to that word. You can only go so far, folks, in reading the Bible, and have this happen to you. This is why God said, "I have established the local church structure (the local church authority), where you are going to be instructed." If the local church fails you, you are never going to move into the image of Jesus Christ. His glory is never going to be reflected in your life. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who bore the image of the earthly Adam in His humanity. And He bore the image of the invisible God in His deity. Therefore, He was the unique manifestation of both God and man. Wherever Jesus, the man, was, there was also God. Man, though in God's image, however, is not God.

One of the popular charismatic preachers, Benny Hinn, who is quite a big rah-rah boy, and very popular in that circle, was teaching people that they were gods: – that when they learned the Bible: they could speak the Bible; they were now speaking the Word of God; they were gods; and, they should look upon themselves as gods. And what did the people do? They said, "Wonderful." And what did they do? They couldn't put enough money in the offering plate, because Benny Hin had instructed them how they were gods. That is the deception that can be played on people who do not know the Word of God. No, though we are in God's image, and though that image has been tarnished, and though that image is now capable of being gradually restored, which it is being by those who are in the Word of God, and who are subject to it, we are gradually reflecting more and more the glory of God, and when we are in the presence of Christ (what does 1 John say?): "When we see Him, we shall be like Him." And the image that we lost in Adam will be fully reflected. And there you will be again: very God-like; under God; made beneath Him; and, finite – not with His infinite capacities. You'll have knowledge, but you'll not have omniscience. You'll have power, but you'll not have omnipotence. You'll have a presence but you'll not be omnipresent. But you will be in that image.

This is what is so gross. I wonder what Carl Sagan thinks now. This is what is so gross – to equate man as just an animal, a little higher than the rest of the animals. The Bible says that man is made just a little lower than God. Carl Sagan said that he's been made just a little higher than animals. Now, who's right? The Bible says that we're just made a little lower than God. And we are coming increasingly to that capacity. We're not God, but we are in the image of God.

Colossians 2:9 points this out: "For in Him (Jesus), all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus Christ has the image of the invisible God. He is Himself deity, while also being humanity.

Romans 9:5, speaking of the Jewish people – the nation of Israel, says, "Whose are the fathers, and from whom is Christ, according to the flesh, Who is over all. God blessed forever. Amen." He is God; and, He is man.

**The Doctrine of the Deity of Christ**

So, this morning, let's begin pulling all this together – a summary of the doctrine of the deity of Christ.

1. **A Member of the Godhead, the Trinity**

Jesus Christ is a member of the Godhead, the Trinity: Father; Son; and, Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." It is clear from that Scripture that Jesus Christ is included as part of the Godhead. He would not be included as part of the Godhead by the Holy Spirit in this passage if He were not indeed himself divine.

2 Corinthians 13:14 adds this: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of *the* God (the Father), and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Here, in this benediction of the Godhead, again, Jesus Christ is included. If He were not God, He would not have been associated with *the* God (the Father) and the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:2: "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood. May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure." Here is this opening salutation. What do you have again? "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, the sanctifying (the setting apart work) of the Holy Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ." How do you obey him? "You believe Him. You believe in the gospel. You believe His claim to be your Savior. You accept it so that you may be sprinkled with His blood."

**Preexistence**

These verses make it very clear that Jesus Christ is indeed a part of the Trinity. Now, if He is a member of the Godhead, this not only indicates His preexistence, but also His eternity. Preexistence simply means that Jesus Christ existed before His incarnation at His birth in Bethlehem, where He had His physical beginning. Jesus Christ existed before His physical birth in Bethlehem, but it also shows His eternity. Eternity means that He existed from eternity past. He had no beginning and no end. This is a concept that we can't even humanly mentally grasp – that He was without beginning, and without end, so that He is more than preexistent.

**Eternal**

He is also eternal; that is, He is God. If He is not God, He would not be eternal. None of us is eternal in the sense of no beginning and no ending.

These qualities are also pointed out to us in John 1:1-3, for example: "In the beginning," and this is the un-beginning beginning. This is trying to put this into human terms: "In the beginning was the Word." This is that Greek word "logos" L O G O S. "Logos" means "word." The word "logos" means the concept of God – that which reflects what God is. This is a significant word in Greek philosophy. That's why John was led by the Holy Spirit to use it. The Greeks understood that when you talked about "logos," you were talking about a concept. And he is talking about the concept of deity here in this verse. Now, that's significant to you. You have plenty of IQ to understand this. And you should be told this. Now, when you read that in the beginning was the Word (and this is why it's capitalized). He's using the word "logos," which every one of the Greeks understood referred to deity – to divinity. "In the beginning was Divine, and the Divine was with God, and the Word was God." The word was God. This refers to Jesus Christ. He was in the beginning with God: "All things came into being by Him (by Jesus Christ). He is the Creator. Apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being." So, here you have the clear statement that Jesus Christ was with God in the beginning. He is eternal.

In the Old Testament, Micah was one of the Minor Prophets. Micah 5:2: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephratah." Remember when Herod wanted to find where this King of the Jews was to be born, that the wise men had told him about. He goes to the prophets, to the scribes and the theologians. And he says, "Where is the Messiah going to come from?" And they opened the Bible to this. They said, "Oh, the Scripture says that He's going to be born in Bethlehem: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephratah, 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 now." Now, obviously, he's talking about Jesus Christ beginning His incarnation, taking on the human body, speaking about Him as a person in His preexistence. Notice the next phrase: "From the days of eternity." His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. He is eternal. He's not only pre-existent, but He is also eternal.

1. **Creation**

The pre-incarnate work of Christ in creation of the universe necessitates both His preexistence and His deity. John 1:3: "All things came into being by Him (Jesus). Apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being. Jesus Christ was delegated by the Father to be the Creator.

This is the problem – that Arius missed this. He should have read this Scripture and said, "No, God the Father doesn't create anything, so He could not have created Christ. Christ does all the creating."

Colossians 1:16-17, coming up very shortly in our study of this book: "For by Him (Jesus Christ) all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities (these are various classes of angelic beings), all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him (get this) all things hold together." Science cannot explain why the molecules hold together. To this day, science has no explanation why everything doesn't fly apart. What keeps an object together? Most of you are just hollow space. Most of you are just empty space. That might make you feel better. Your molecules in some of you have gotten out a little further than in others, but you're just empty space. When you see them in a structure, you can see the molecules, and you have all this empty space. They're floating around each other. Why don't they fly apart? He holds it together.

**The Colossian Force**

In an earlier time, when science was not so antagonistic against the Bible, do you know what they used to call this quality that holds the molecular structure together? They called it "the Colossian Force." Where did they get that from? They got it from this verse. They said that God holds it together. Specifically, Christ who made it, keeps it together.

Hebrews 1:10, "And You, Lord, in the beginning, did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands." This is an interesting statement. This is referring again to creation. And as we have seen, from New Testaments declaration, this was the work of Jesus Christ. In fact, this is how Christ has done part of His work of manifesting God to us. He is the image of God, in that He manifests God to us. His work of creation is one of the ways He manifests God.

Notice Psalm 19:1-6. This is a very familiar passage. But now read it with the realization that this is how Christ is manifesting God the Father through His creative work: "The heavens are telling of the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of his hands. Day to day pours fourth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words. Their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them, He has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bride groom coming out of his chamber. It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them. And there is nothing hidden from its heat." This is a grand declaration of the work of Christ in creation. And what does it say? It reveals the glory of God.

Romans 1:19-20 has the same concept: "Because that which is known about God is evident within them. For God has made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes . . ." Creation tells us that there's a God out there. Creation tells us that there's somebody that has the power to make this. His eternal power and His divine nature are revealed by His creation: "They have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

Aha. How about the person in that jungle who has never heard of Jesus Christ, and who has never been told the gospel? What is God going to do with that person? Here's the answer. God is going to deal with him on the basis of his God-consciousness. When he looks out at creation, he comes to an age of awareness, and he says to himself, "There's a God out there," it's going to do one of two things. He may say, "I'm going to look for you. I want to want to know you, God. I want to know Who You are that made all this. I want to know about you. That's positive volition, response to God, consciousness. Or he can go negative, and make himself an idol, and say, "Here is my God." What do you think Abraham did back there in Ur of the Chaldees, in the magnificent Babylonian structure, reared in a pagan family? He looked out and he said, "There's something out there. God, I'd like to know you." And when a person is positive to God-consciousness, along comes a guy down the trail (a missionary). And he comes up to this fellow, and he sits down, and he tells him the gospel, and he's saved. God gets the message to the person who needs it.

One missionary said that He came upon a group of men sitting around a fire in a jungle area. He sat down and he told them about the God who had made all this, and the God who had created them, and their sin that they all knew, but that God had sent a Savior. And he told them about Christ. And he told them that if they would believe in this God, and take Him as their Savior, they would go to heaven. And one the natives jumped up; went in the tent; rummaged around in his little hut; came out with all of his idol gods; and, threw them on the fire. Now the missionary had just been speaking without really expecting much to happen. He was just telling the story. And he said, "And the first thing I thought was, 'My goodness! Wasn't that effective? What did I say?'" And he tried to remember so that he could say it again next time. But what had happened was that the Spirit of God took the gospel to a native who was sitting there, saying, "God, I'd really like to know about you." And this missionary gave him the message, and he believed it. This is the work of Jesus Christ in creation declaring the message of God.

So, the pre-incarnate Christ, in the creation of the universe, necessitates that He not only has pre-existence, but He is deity.

1. **Christ Declares His Own Divinity**

The Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be divine. He claims this for Himself. John 4:25-26: "The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming.'" This is the woman at the well. They knew that the Messiah was going to be a divine person: "She said, 'I know the divine one, the Messiah, is coming. He was called Christ. When that one comes, he will declare all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'" Jesus says, "You're right to look for the Messiah. And I want to tell you something, I'm the Messiah." Now, what He did in saying that was declared that He was God.

Then there's John 9:35-38. This is even more explicit: "Jesus heard that they had put Him out, and finding him, He said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'" This is the blind man whose eyesight had been restored: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Now, you have to understand that here's a technical expression. When you see this expression, "Son of Man," this comes from Daniel. Daniel, in describing the Messiah (the coming Savior) used this term. He said, "And I saw the Son of Man." Daniel is telling ahead of time that it would be an incarnate deity. God-Man would be the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And the term among the Jews, "the Son of Man," immediately was understood to be speaking about the coming Divine One.

He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him (that is, Who is this God)?' Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you.' And he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshiped Him." Now, if Jesus was only a Man, and this man gets down now and proceeds to worship Him, what should Jesus have done? And knowing the integrity of Christ, what would He have done? He would have said, "Oh, don't do that. You can only worship God." But Jesus accepted the worship.

Verse 39: "Jesus said, 'For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.'" How is that for a description of our society? All the sophisticated people who pull the levers of power in our country think that they see, but they're blind as bats. They have no guidance whatsoever. They do not see because they do not have the Word of God. You may be a great intellect, but if you do not have salvation so that you are spiritually alive, and a knowledge of the Word of God, you're nothing but an ignorant intellectual. And that's what Jesus was saying: "I came, and here you are – a simple man. You understand what it's to be blind. Now you understand what it is to see. Now you understand what it is to be blind spiritually. Now you understand what it is to be able to see spiritually. You have just been born again." That was Jesus' claim to (again) be God.

In John 5:17, we have this statement: "Jesus answered, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.'" Here He directly associates Himself with God the Father: "For this cause, therefore, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His On father, making Himself equal with God." So it is very clear that Jesus Christ claimed to be God. And those who heard Him speak understood what He was saying.

The liberals are wrong. They're totally deceitful when they say that it's the followers of Jesus who said that He was God, but He never claimed it Himself. John 8:42: "Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me. For I proceeded forth, and have come from God. For I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.'" Jesus here claims to come from heaven. This is a claim to deity.

Certainly, the enemies of Jesus Christ clearly confirmed His claims to deity. John 8:58-59: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.'" Now, here again, you have to have a technical understanding. The phrase "I am" is a way of declaring eternity. And the Jews knew that when He said "I am," he was saying, "I have always existed. I am eternal. Therefore I am God." And boy, the rulers caught it right away, when He said, "I am." That's a present tense in an eternal expression: "I am."

I remember when I was a teenager, there used to be a great cult leader on the east coast, and he called himself "The Great I Am." And he dressed all in white. I've always liked that. I've always wished that I had a nice white suit. Ken Boozer, when he was younger, had one, only he looked so much like Charlie Chan that he quit wearing it. But he always looked kind of splendid. But this guy had this white suit, and all these people in his congregation. The ladies were these white robes, and they would jump. It was always a good jumping, jiving service. He was "The Great I Am." Well, if he was "The Great I Am," that meant that he was eternal, and he was deity. And one thing that would not have touched him was death. But one day, "The Great I Am" died, and he became "The Great I Ain't," not only for time, but for all eternity. It was ludicrous. But the guy did understand enough Bible to know that the term "I am" was a great claim to divine power.

So, when Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I was already there – way before Abraham was born," because they said, "What do you mean? How old are you? Are you older than we think you are? Abraham has been dead hundreds of years." Jesus said, "Before he was, I was already eternally there."

Notice John 8:59: "Therefore, they picked up stones to throw at Him." They were going to kill Him. They thought that He had been guilty of blasphemy: "But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple." So it was very clear that the enemies of Jesus knew that He was claiming to be God.

Take a look at John 10:30-33, in another example: "Jesus said, 'I and the Father are one.' The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus said to them, 'I showed you many good works from the Father (miracles). For which of them are you stoning Me.' The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.’" They were on the side of Arius: "You're not God. You're very much like God. You're a very nice person, but you are not God." They were mistaken. He was God Himself.

Then there was, of course, the testimony to his deity of other people. John 6:69, for example: "And we have believed, and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God." This is Peter's confession. "The Holy One of God" meant that He was deity.

We have one more in Titus 2:13: "Looking for the blessed hope (that's the rapture), the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus." There was clear testimony on the part of the apostle Paul in this letter that Jesus was God. And he had seen Him in His eternal glory.

Now we come to an interesting evidence that we will begin with next time. You've heard about the Angel of Jehovah throughout the Old Testament. Who was the Angel of Jehovah, and what does that tell us about Jesus of Nazareth?

Our Father, we thank You for this insight into the deity of our Savior. And we pray that this will help all of us to be confident when we are challenged by the world and the cults. All of those who are blind to the truth of the Word of God may challenge us concerning Christ as being God of God: "Very God of Very God."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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