

How Do We Know Christ Is God? (Part 2)

Divine Claims, Authority & Activities

Savor The Savior, Session 4

Opening Discussion:

1. What is something only God can do that man cannot achieve?
2. In John 5:17-20, how does Jesus make Himself equal with God?
3. How does Jesus have authority over giving life (John 5:21)?
4. How does Jesus have authority over all judgment (John 5:22)?
5. How do we honor Jesus in the same way we honor God the Father (John 5:23)?

Introduction:

Ie/ What qualifies a ...

- Person to be President?
- A person for a home loan?
- Company for a federal bailout?
- Heisman trophy candidate or a BCS #1 Ranking?
- Applicant for a job?
- A student during a tryout for a sports team or a drama role?
- What qualifies Jesus to claim to be God?

Liberal Views Stripping Away The Deity Of Christ:

1. The Claim That Jesus Became A God Through A Christian Evolution

- But Christ was always God, even before the Bible declared it.
- Christ was God in all of eternity past, though liberals and atheist attempt to claim that Jesus became God after He was dead by the Christian movement.
- Thomas Sheehan, professor of philosophy at Loyola University, Chicago, present the time frame of the liberal perspective of Jesus' evolution to deity in his book *The First Coming* (Random House, 1986).
 - "STAGE ONE: THE APOCALYPTIC FUTURE: Whereas Jesus had dissolved the future of Jewish apocalyptic expectations into the presence of that future (the dawning kingdom), Christianity reconstituted the apocalyptic future by recasting Jesus as the future Son of Man.
 - "STAGE TWO: THE HEAVENLY PRESENT: Christianity then drew that apocalyptic future back into the present moment by reinterpreting Jesus as the Lord and Christ who was already reigning in heaven.

- "STAGE THREE: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL PAST: Finally the church projected the Lord Jesus into the past history of the cosmos by declaring that he had preexisted from before creation as the savior of the entire world." (pp. 179-180)
- Sheehan then describes three early groups that participated in this evolution of Jesus' reputation:
 - "THE APOCALYPTIC JUDGE: The Aramaic Jews believed that Jesus had been appointed by his Father to assume the role of Son of Man in the near future.
 - "THE REIGNING LORD AND CHRIST: The Hellenistic Jews declared that Jesus, was already reigning as the messiah in the interim before his glorious return.
 - "THE DIVINE SON OF GOD: The Gentile converts came to believe that Jesus was God's divine Son who had preexisted even before creation, had become a human being to save mankind, and had returned to heaven after his death." (pp. 181-182)

This is typical of the deconstruction of the Biblical record and historical events that liberals and atheist propagate in the de-deification of Jesus.

- Jon Meacham writes, in an upcoming Newsweek magazine, a summary of this view:

"And yet, as the decades of the first century came and went, the world wore on. In writing the Gospels, and then in formulating church doctrine in the second, third and fourth centuries, Jesus' followers reacted to his failure to return by doing what they arguably did best, for by now they had a good bit of practice at it: they reinterpreted their theological views in light of their historical experience. If the kind of kingdom they had so long expected was not at hand, then Jesus' life, death and resurrection must have meant something different. The Christ they had looked for in the beginning was not the Christ they had come to know. His kingdom was not literally arriving, but he had, they came to believe, created something new: the church, the sacraments, the promise of salvation at the last day—whenever that might be. The shift of emphasis from the short to the long term was an essential achievement. Because they believed Jesus' resurrection had given them the keys to heaven, the hour of his coming mattered less, for God was worth the wait." ("From Jesus to Christ, Newsweek, March 28, 2007, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7244999/site/newsweek/>)

2. The Danger Of Making Jesus Whoever We Want Him To Be

- Yale University's Sterling Professor of Humanities, Harold Bloom, writes of the illusive and diverse views of Jesus in *Jesus And Yahweh: The Names Divine* (Riverhead Books/Penguin, 2005). The reader must note that he "prefer[s] the Gospel of Thomas to the whole canonical New Testament" (p. 22) and claims himself to be a "Gnostic Jew" (p. 57) reflecting his liberal bias.
 - "Though even most Christian scholars finally regard Jesus as Jewish ... he is now American: he is multi-everything. We may as well have a Southern Baptist or Pentecostalist or Mormon or Muslim or African or Asian Jesus as a Jewish one. His paradoxes always have been universal ... (p. 11)
 - "Endless questing for the historical Jesus has failed, in that fewer than a handful of searchers come up with more than reflections of their own faith or their own skepticism. Like Hamlet, Jesus is a mirror in which we see ourselves.

- Consciousness of mortality seems to allow few other options. Blame is irrelevant: where, how, can our survival be found? Jesus is to the Greek New Testament what Yahweh is to the Hebrew Bible, or Hamlet to Shakespeare's play: the vital protagonist, the principle of apotheosis, the hope for transcendence.
- "Freud, reducing religion to the longing for the father, is relevant to Jesus, who called Yahweh *abba*. Since Hamlet is a skeptic, he quests for on one. Yahweh chooses Abraham and Moses and, if we submit to the Qur'an, also Muhammad. The Hebrew God cannot be said to select Jesus, except as another prophet. Pragmatically, the Son of Man fathers himself, or is the Father his own son? The American Jesus has usurped Yahweh, and may yet himself be usurped by the Holy Spirit, as we fuse into a Pentecostal nation, merging Hispanics, Asians, Africans, and Caucasian Americans into a new People of God." (pp. 12-13)
 - We can not pick and choose what we want Christ to be. We do not exist in a theological or religious smorgasbord. We must see Christ as the Bible proclaims Him

Review: Sessions 3

- **Christ Possesses The Divine Attributes Of God**
- **Christ Possesses The Divine Ascriptions (Names) Of God**

Overview: Session 4

- **Christ Possesses The Divine Authority Of God**
- **Christ Performs The Divine Activities Of God**
- **Christ Pronounces The Divine Claims Of Being God**
- **Christ Is The Subject Of Divine Allusions (Indirect Evidence Of Christ's Deity)**

I. Christ Possesses The Divine Authority Of God

A. Authority Over Salvation

1. He Is The Object Of Saving Faith

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

- Object of faith equal with the Father (Jn 14:1; 17:3)
- Object of faith without mention of the Father (Jn 3:36; Mt 11:28)

2. He Is The Forgiver Sins

Mark 2:1-12 ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." ⁶And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?' ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, ¹¹"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." ¹²Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Isaiah 43:25 ²⁵I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

Matthew 9:2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

Luke 7:47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

- Other men forgive sin on a temporary basis, Christ forgives sins eternally

3. He Is The Giver Of Eternal Life

John 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

John 18:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

4. He Is The Judge Over Sin

John 5:22,27 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son....and has given Him authority to execute judgment...because He is the Son of Man.

- Questions in the news – does the court have authority to rule over a Presidential Mandate?
- Will it go to the Supreme Court?
- Who has ultimate jurisdiction?
- Christ has ultimate jurisdiction
- The Jews are judging Jesus when Jesus is actually the Judge over Israel

5. He Has The Power To Resurrect The Dead

John 5:21-29 ²¹For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²²For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth— those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Christ Has The Authority Over Life (Jn 5:21)

- Creation
- Birth
- Rebirth
- Resurrection

John 11:24-25 ²⁴Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

John 11:43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

- John 11 – Mary & Martha are frantic because Jesus didn't get to their brother Lazarus to prevent His death

John 11:25 I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

- John 11:43-44 – Jesus calls Lazarus to come forth from the dead

6. He Has The Power To Resurrect Himself

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

John 10:18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.

Exercise: What is it that you fear in life? Do you give the thing you fear greater authority and power in your life than you do Jesus Christ? How does the realization of Christ's power and authority help you to overcome your fears and worries?

B. Authority Over The Laws & Institutions Of God

1. Law

Matthew 5:31-38 ³¹Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. ³³Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. ³⁸You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

2. Temple

Matthew 12:6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.

3. Sabbath

Matthew 12:8 For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

4. Kingdom

Matthew 16:19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

C. Authority Over The Worship Of Man

1. He Is The Receiver Worship

- Tim LaHaye recounts a confrontation with the publishers of the Jehovah's Witness official Bible, *The New World Translation*. He pointed out that "wherever they translated the Greek word *proskuneo* in relation to God, they rendered it 'worship,' which is correct. But wherever they translate the same word *proskuneo* when used in relation to Jesus Christ, they translate it, 'do obeisance.' ...There is no grammatical or exegetical reason for doing so – only the cult's doctrinal stance that Jesus is not God." (*Jesus Who Is He*, p. 157)
- If Christ does have all of the divine attributes, and exercises the divine rule of God himself, then it makes sense that he should receive the worship, devotion, confidence, and trust that God alone demands and deserves. But to appreciate that a mere man could not receive such divine worship, we need to recognize that for hundreds of years, the people of Israel recited the Shema' (Deut. 6: 4) twice daily. This foundational confession affirmed that Yahweh is the one true and living God

and that he alone is the proper object of worship. The worship of a creature, any creature, even the highest and most powerful angel, brought an individual and ultimately the nation under the covenant curse of exile and death (Ex. 20: 1– 7). And the early church continued this same understanding, specifically rejecting the idea that a human being should be worshiped (cf. Acts 14: 14– 15; Rev. 19: 10). Wellum, Stephen J. (2016-11-16). *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ (Foundations of Evangelical Theology)* (Kindle Locations 5107-5113). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

a. Only God Is Worshipped

Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

- John R. W. Stott: "Nobody can call himself a Christian who does not worship Jesus. To worship him, if he is not God, is idolatry; to withhold worship from him, if he is, is apostasy." (*The Authentic Jesus*, 1985, p. 34)

b. God Does Not Share His Glory With Others

Isaiah 42:8 I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.

c. No Man Or Angel Receives Worship

Matthew 4:10 ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

Revelation 19:20 ²⁰Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 22:8-9 ⁸Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

- The apostles refused to be worshipped (Acts 14:11-15)
- Peter refused to be worshipped (Acts 10:25-26)
- The angels refused to be worshipped (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9)

d. Christ Received Worship From Men

- To worship anyone other than God is blasphemy (Ex 20:1-4; Dt 5:6-9), but Jesus accepted worship in His deity.
- Jesus received worship:
 - from a leper (Mt 8:2)
 - from a ruler (Mt 9:18)
 - from the disciples (Mt 14:33; 17:6)
 - from the Syrophenician woman (Mt 15:25)
 - from Mrs. Zebedee, James & John's mom (Mt 20:20)
 - from the women after the tomb on resurrection morning (Mt 28:9)
 - from His disciples post-resurrection (Mt 28:17)
 - from Thomas (Mt 20:28)
 - from the demon possessed man from Gerasene (Mk 5:6)
 - from the blind man (Jn 9:38) "Lord I believe!" And he worshipped (*proskuneo*) Him."
- Michael Green: "Jesus' response was to calmly accept the worship...They would not offer any kind of worship to any man or statue: only to God alone. The implications of Jesus accepting worship are obvious. He knew it was His due! Humble though He was, full of love and service to all, He nevertheless knew who He was and where He had come from. 'He had come from God and was going to God' as the apostle John put it in 13:3. And sometimes, just sometimes, He accepted the worship due to God alone. It was the prelude to the worldwide worship that would follow." (*Who Is This Jesus?*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990)
- Jesus received worship and commended the worshippers.

John 20:29 ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Matthew 16:17 ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

e. **God The Father Commands Others To Worship The Son**

Hebrews 1:6 ⁶But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

f. **Angels Of Heaven Worship The Son (Rev 5:8-14)**

g. **Everyone Will Eventually Worship The Lord Christ**

Philippians 2:10-11 ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Discussion:

1. If our time in heaven will be spent in worship of Christ (Rev 5:8-14), why do we not consider worshipping Christ daily on earth?
2. How could one personally worship Christ Monday through Saturday?
3. If we are not careful, music styles, liturgy, and tradition can become the center of our worship. How can we guard ourselves to keep Christ in the center of our worship?

2. He Is The Receiver Prayer

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Discussion: We've been told that we should pray to the Father, in the name of Christ, in the power of the HS. Is it ever appropriate to pray to Christ, the 2nd Person of the Godhead? When would you address Christ instead of the Father?

D. Authority Over The Church

Colossians 1:18 ¹⁸And He is the **head** of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 2:19 ¹⁹and not holding fast to the **Head**, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Ephesians 1:22-23 ²²And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be **head** over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 4:7-16 ¹⁵ ... the **head**—Christ— ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

E. Authority Over Nature

Mark 4:35-41 ³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid?"

Have you still no faith?"⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Matthew 8:26-27²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.²⁷ And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

- What seems like a miracle to us (because it is contrary to our comprehension and laws of nature) is no miracle to Christ Who has all authority over nature as God, Creator and The Omnipotent One.
- C. S. Lewis: "If you begin by ruling out the supernatural, you will perceive no miracles." (cited by Ron Rhodes, *Answering The Objections of Atheists, Agnostics & Skeptics*, p. 64)
- An objection against miracles is that Natural Laws are violated and/or religious believers do not believe in Natural Laws
- Christians do believe in natural laws
- Christians assert the universe as a *Cosmos* (opposed to chaos)
- But we also believe in a power over natural laws
- Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody illustrate: "Since miracles, if they occur, are empowered by something higher than nature, they must supersede the ordinary processes or laws of nature. If you took a flying leap off the edge of a sheer cliff, the phenomenon that we call the law of gravity would surely bring you to an untimely end. But if you leaped off the same cliff in a hand glider, the results would (hopefully!) be quite different. The principle of aerodynamics in this case overcomes the pull of gravity as long as the glider is in the air. In a similar way, the occurrence of a miracle means that a higher (supernatural) principle has overcome a lower (natural) principle for the duration of the miracle. To claim that miracles violate or contradict natural laws is just as improper as to say that the principle of aerodynamics violates the law of gravity." (*I'm Glad You Asked*, Victors Books, 1994, pp. 50-51)
- Ron Rhodes: "We are told that all living creatures 'are a direct product of the earth' and that 'living things owe their origin entirely to certain physical and chemical properties of the ancient earth.' We are assured that nothing supernatural – *no God* – was involved." (*Answering The Objections Of Atheists, Agnostics, & Skeptics*, Harvest House Publishers, 2006, pp. 59-60)
- **What Is Naturalism? Naturalism Opposes Supernaturalism (The Existence Of God And Miracles)**
 - Everything in the universe has a natural cause
 - Every operation in the universe are results of natural laws
 - There is only "natural", there is no "*supematural*"
 - God does not exist (Atheism) or is not involved (Deism, Liberalism)
 - Miracles do not exist
- L. Russ Bush III: "... according to the worldview known as "**naturalism**," there is nothing beyond nature that has any causal influence or effect on nature. Either there is no God or

God has no effect or influence on nature. Some might suggest that nature itself may be thought of as a creative being. **Naturalism claims that life on earth arose from natural substances by natural selection for natural ends. There is no reality that can properly be called *supernatural*.** Spiritual realities, according to naturalism, are either illusions or they are merely complex or unusual natural realities." ("Naturalism: A Worldview," in *Evidence For God: 50 Arguments for Faith from the Bible, History, Philosophy and Science*, ed. By William Dembski & Michael Licona, Baker Books, 2010, p. 28)

- "**Naturalism**' ... is the philosophical belief that nature is all that exists, and that therefore everything can be explained by natural causes. Supernatural causes, such as God, angels, and the soul, do not exist. (Terence Nichols, *The Sacred Cosmos*, p. 10)

F. Authority Over Satan And Demons

Matthew 12:25-30 ²⁵ But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. ²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. ³⁰ He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

- Christ was being accused of using the power of Satan to cast out Satan. Jesus points to the absurdity of that thought because Satan wouldn't divide his own power system. Jesus' authority is exalted because He is able to bind the strong man (Satan) and enter his house (Satan's realm of unbelievers).

Matthew 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

- Christ recognized the influence of Satan upon Peter's proud statement. Jesus is able to command and renounce Satan because Christ is victorious over him.

Satan's Eternal Condemnation Is Fulfilled At The Cross

1. The Statement By The Savior

John 12:31-32 ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.

John 16:11 The ruler of this world is judged.

Luke 10:18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

- This statement probably refers to a general victory over Satan and is difficult to find a specific prophetic or historical event that this statement refers to. Perhaps this is a reference to Christ's victory over the temptation of Satan.

2. The Crush Of The Cross

Colossians 2:14b-15 And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Hebrews 2:14-15 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

- The power of death is removed
- The fear of death is removed
- "Satan and the demons are no match for Christ...the cross accomplished God's self-glorification, released the devil's prisoners, publicly routed evil spirits, and sealed their judgment." (C. Fred Dickason, *Angels: Elect & Evil*, p. 214)
- "The death of the Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated the bankruptcy of Satan's entire theory of success. It was in this that He made a public example of Satan and all his principalities and powers. Their embattled efforts to build a kingdom on earth would fail. They would seek to give man power through the place of pride; their kingdom would fail....It was on the basis of this unmasking of Satan at Calvary that the Lord God took from the pretender all of the offices which had been given him in his unfallen state and deprived him of all that he had seized in the rebellion....The death of the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled him of all that he had been given and of all that he had seized." (Donald G. Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, p. 222-223)

3. The Route At The Resurrection

Ephesians 1:19-22 ¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church

- "Jesus Christ, when He came into the world, challenged Satan. He challenged Satan's right to be worshiped; He challenged Satan's right to be believed; He challenged Satan's control. When Jesus Christ went to the cross, He entered into combat with Satan and, by defeating Satan through the resurrection, He authenticated His authority. And God, by receiving Him up into glory, demonstrated that He was enthroning Jesus Christ in the place of authority and that men were obligated to obey Him, to believe Him, to trust Him and no other." (Pentecost, p. 160)

4. The Disarming Of The Devil/Demons

Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- Disarmament
- Humiliation

Mark 5:7-9 ⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." ⁸ For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹ And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

II. Christ Performs The Divine Activities Of God

A. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of Creating The Universe

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

- 3 prepositional phrases: by Him (lit. in Him), through Him and for Him
- "Paul's use of three different prepositions is one way of refuting the philosophy of the false teachers. For centuries, the Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed a primary cause, an instrumental cause, and a final cause. The primary cause is the plan, the instrumental cause the power, and the final cause the purpose. When it comes to creation, Jesus Christ is the primary cause (He planned it), the instrumental cause (He produced it), and the final cause (He did it for His own pleasure)." (Wiersbe, *Be Complete*, p.49)

1. Christ Is The Realm Of Creation

- "by Him" = *en autoi* = lit. "in him"
 - Gnostic heretics taught that angels were the center of creation – Paul clearly taught that creation centers around Christ
 - not only does Christ have the power to create, but all of creation resides in His domain
- "all things" = *ta panta* = totality of the universe
 - from the electron to the black hole
- "visible and invisible"
 - false teachers taught dualism (material bad, spiritual good) and denied that God created a physical world
 - Paul contradicts the false teachers directly – all things visible

- “throne...dominions...principalities...powers” = angels and demons
 - Gnostics believe that a superior being created an inferior creature, then the inferior created something more inferior, and so on...
 - Paul taught that Christ “created all spirit beings instantaneously, directly, and out of nothing.” (Gromacki, *Stand Perfect In Wisdom – Colossians*, p. 64)

2. Christ Is The Source Of Creation

- “through him” = *di autou* – Christ is the active participant

John 1:3 Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.

Hebrews 1:2 His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God (Elohim = plural oneness) created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:26 Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, according to *Our* likeness

3. Christ Is The Goal For Creation

- “for Him” = *eis auton* = lit. “unto Him”
- all of creation, from microbes to galaxies point to Christ

Q: How should our appreciation of creation/nature bring glory to Jesus Christ?

B. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of Sustaining The Universe

Colossians 1:17 “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

- “consist” = *sunesteke* = lit. hold together, stand together, cohere

Hebrews 1:3 “Upholding all things by the word of His power”

- “upholding” – sustained for a purpose
- “word” = God’s word is what sustains it – greater than laws of physics & gravity

C. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of Giving Life

John 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

D. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of His Incarnation

Ephesians 2:14-17 ¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

E. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of Resurrection

John 11:43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

F. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of Atonement

1. Christ Forgives Sin

Colossians 3:13 even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Mark 2:5-12 ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." ⁶And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk?' ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, ¹¹"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." ¹²Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

Psalms 51:4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

2. Christ Gives Eternal Life

John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

- Could any mortal offer immortality? We can't offer what we don't possess.
- Christ is the Possessor of Eternity (Isa 9:6) and is authorized to offer eternal life

G. Christ Is Involved In The Divine Work Of Providence

- Provides all spiritual and eternal needs of man

1. Provides Divine Knowledge

Matthew 11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

2. Provides Restful Comfort

Matthew 11:28-29 ²⁸Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

3. Provides Eternal Security

John 10:28-30 ²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. ³⁰I and My Father are one."

4. Provides Spiritual Fruit

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

5. Provides Living Spirit

John 7:37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

III. Christ Claims Himself To Be God

- Josh McDowell: "Among the religious leaders who have attained a large following throughout history, Jesus Christ is unique in the fact that He alone claimed to be God in human flesh. A common misconception is that some or many of the leaders of the world's religions made similar claims, but this is simply not the case. Buddha did not claim to be God; Moses never said that he was Yahweh; Mohammed did not identify himself as Allah; and nowhere will you find Zoroaster claiming to be Ahura Mazda. Yet Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, said that he who has seen Him (Jesus) has seen the Father (John 14:9)." ("Did Jesus Claim To Be God?")
- Millard Erickson: "In looking at the biblical evidence for the deity of Christ, we begin with Jesus' own self-consciousness. What did Jesus think and believe about himself? Some have argued that Jesus did not himself make any claim to be God. His message was entirely about the Father, not about himself. We are therefore called to believe *with* Jesus, not *in* Jesus. How do the actual evidences of Scripture square with this contention?" (*Christian Theology*, p. 701)
- Louis Berkhof: "In recent years there has been a tendency to go back to the *self-consciousness of Jesus*, and to deny that He was conscious of being the Messiah or the Son of

God. Naturally, it is not possible to have any knowledge of the consciousness of Jesus, except through His words, as these are recorded in the Gospels; and it is always possible to deny that they correctly express the mind of Jesus. For those who accept the Gospel testimony there can be no doubt as to the fact that Jesus was conscious of being the very Son of God.”
(*Systematic Theology*, p. 318)

A. Jesus Claimed To Be Yahweh

John 8:58 ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

- “Jesus claimed to be *Yahweh*. He prayed, ‘And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was’ (John 17:5). But *Yahweh* of the Old Testament said, ‘my glory will I not give to another’ (Isa. 42:8). Jesus also declared, ‘I am the first and the last’ (Rev. 1:17)—precisely the words used by Jehovah in Isaiah 42:8. He said, ‘I am the good shepherd’ (John 10:11), but the Old Testament said, ‘*Yahweh* is my shepherd’ (Ps. 23:1). Further, Jesus claimed to be the judge of all people (Matt. 25:31f.; John 5:27f.), but Joel quotes Jehovah as saying, ‘for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side’ (Joel 3:12). Likewise, Jesus spoke of himself as the ‘bridegroom’ (Matt. 25:1) while the Old Testament identifies Jehovah in this way (Isa. 62:5; Hos. 2:16). While the Psalmist declares, ‘The LORD is my light’ (Ps. 27:1), Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world’ (John 8:12).” (Norman Geisler, *Baker’s Encyclopedia Of Christian Apologetics*, p. 129)

B. Jesus Claimed To Be Equal With God

John 5:17-18 ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” ¹⁸Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

- Jesus is responding to the Jewish leaders criticism of His healing on the Sabbath
- He equates Himself with God
- God works continuously and so is Christ
- Jesus is operating above the law of mortals
- Jesus is claiming equality with God
- “Equal” = *isos* = as in isosceles triangle has 2 equal sides
- God the Father and the Son are equally God but different in role and authority

Mark 2:5-11 ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.” ⁶And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷“Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

C. Jesus Responds To Questions Concerning His Deity Affirmatively

Matthew 26:63-65 ⁶³But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “**It is as you said.** Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁶⁵Then the

high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!"

Mark 14:60-62 ⁶¹ ... "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" ⁶²Jesus said, "**I am**. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

Luke 22:67-70 ⁷⁰Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "**You rightly say that I am.**"

John 18:33-37 ³³Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" ³⁵Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." ³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "**You say rightly that I am a king**. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

- If the President of the United States or the General Secretary of the United Nations claimed to be God, they would be removed, replaced and restrained.
- It was no small matter that Jesus would make these claims.

D. Jesus Proclaims The Old Testament To Be His Words

- Millard Erickson: "There are additional indications of Jesus' self-estimation. One is the way in which he juxtaposes his own words with the Old Testament, the Scripture of his time. Time and again he says, "You have heard that it was said, ... But I tell you ..." (e.g., [Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28](#)). Here Jesus presumes to place his word on the same level as Old Testament Scripture. It might be argued that this was merely a claim to be a prophet of the same stature as the Old Testament prophets. The prophets, however, based their claim to authority upon what God had said or was saying to and through them. Thus, one finds the characteristic formula, "The word of the Lord came to me ..." (e.g., [Jer. 1:11](#); [Ezek. 1:3](#)). Jesus, however, does not cite any such formula in setting forth his teaching. He simply says, "But I tell you ..." Jesus is claiming to have the power in himself to lay down teaching as authoritative as that given by the Old Testament prophets." (*Christian Theology*, p. 704)
- Jehovah's Witness claim that "Jesus never claimed to be on the same level as Almighty God (<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/is-jesus-almighty/>)"
- New York's Judge Gaynor concluded that the verdict of Jesus' trials before His crucifixion: "It is plain from each of the gospel narratives, that the alleged crime for which Jesus was tried and convicted was blasphemy." (Quoted in Charles Edmund Deland, *The Mis-Trials of Jesus*, 1914, pp. 118-19)

Exercise: Analyze the 7 “I Am” statements of Christ in the Book of John. How is each statement a claim to deity? How does Christ fulfill each of these claims? How does each title of Christ meet a need in your life?

I AM The:

❖ I AM The Bread of Life

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

❖ I AM The Light Of The World

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

❖ I AM The Door

John 10:9 “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

❖ I AM The Good Shepherd

John 10:11-14 ¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹²But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”

❖ I AM The Resurrection and Life

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”

❖ I AM The Way, Truth & Life

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

❖ True Vine

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

IV. Others Claim Christ To Be God

A. God The Father Claims Christ To Be God

Hebrews 1:8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom."

- The Father declared Christ to be His Son at His Baptism and Transfiguration

B. Demons Claim Christ To Be God

Mark 1:24 "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God."

Luke 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

V. Christ Is The Subject Of Divine Allusions (Indirect Evidence Of Christ's Deity)

A. Jesus Offers Divine Forgiveness

Luke 7:37-38 ³⁷And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, ³⁸and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

Luke 7:44-48 ⁴⁴Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. ⁴⁵You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. ⁴⁷Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." ⁴⁸Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

- Only God forgives sins, therefore Jesus must be God

B. Jesus Is Compared To God

John 14:28 You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

- Why would a mere mortal need to say that God the Father is greater than us – that would be obvious
- Christ only makes a comparison to God because He is God Himself

C. Jesus Received The Piercing Of Yahweh

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they

will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

John 19:37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

D. Jesus Received Paul's Blaspheming Of God

1 Timothy 1:13 ¹³although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

- Paul blasphemed against Christ – it wouldn't be blasphemy unless Christ was God

E. To Know Jesus Is To Know God

John 8:19 ¹⁹Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

John 14:7 ⁷"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

F. To See Jesus Is To See God

John 12:45 ⁴⁵And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

John 14:9 ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

G. To Believe In Jesus Is To Believe In God

John 12:44 ⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

John 14:1 ¹"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

H. To Hate Jesus Is To Hate God

John 15:23 ²³He who hates Me hates My Father also.

I. To Honor Jesus Is To Honor God

John 5:23 ²³that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

J. To Receive Jesus Is To Receive God

Mark 9:37 ³⁷"Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

Conclusion:

- C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* states: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come away with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."