

LESSON 9



THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Scripture Texts: John 8:58; John 17:5; John 6:38; John 1:11; Hebrews 1:8-10

This lesson is a continuation of the discussion of the Trinity. The fact of the deity of Christ is the foundation on which the whole structure of Christianity stands. It is because He is God that our souls are saved. Without the Divine Son of God, there would be no atonement, no salvation, no church, and no future glory. There could be no Christian religion without a divine Christ and nothing to justify our claims to having the truth.

The doctrine of the deity of Christ is the target of many clever assaults. Without directly attacking Christ, the method is to magnify His humanity while slyly denying His deity. We are left with a well-meaning Christ with certain limitations. But the issue is clear: either Christ is God, or He is not. He cannot be half-and-half, and there is no neutral place for Him.

MEMORY VERSE: *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Matthew 16:16

Christ Claims Preexistence

Abraham had been dead nearly two thousand years when Christ made the statement in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am." Christ not only lived at the time of Abraham but before Abraham. Abraham was born at a particular time, but of Christ it is said, "I am," which includes no suggestion of becoming but rather of eternal existence.

In His prayer to the Father in John 17:5, Jesus spoke of Their association before the beginning of the world. It is clear that Christ does not date His beginning from His birth in Bethlehem. In declaring that He came down from Heaven, Christ affirmed His preexistence with the Father whose will He came to do, as stated in John 6:38. He affirmed that He will return where He was before. Christ's statements of preexistence were not made to prove His great age, but rather His agelessness or His eternity.

Christ's Incarnation Is Affirmed

In John 1:14 Christ did not simply enter a physical body, but He became flesh. He did not put on humanity as one puts on a coat, but rather as one puts on weight. His humanity was a part of His Person. The divine Christ and the human Jesus are not two persons but one and the same. He lived with us for over thirty years. Christ took not the nature of angels but of the seed of Abraham. In physical form He was the same as we are. His human nature was the same as ours, except for sin. He accepted the limitations that go with humanity in that He became tired, hungry, and tempted like other men. The method of the incarnation was through the Virgin Birth.

Christ's Deity Is Affirmed

The doctrine of the deity of Christ rests on claims made by Christ Himself, and evidences of deity seen in His life and works. We believe the proofs are abundant that Christ is the Son of God, as in Matthew 3:16-17 and Luke 9:34-35. Either Christ laid claim to full deity, or He allowed Himself to be convicted by the Jews on a false charge without any attempt to clarify His real claim. He claimed to be equal with God. The Jews sought to kill Him for blasphemy, which He did not deserve. He healed the palsied man, and He said to Him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The Jews desired to stone Him because He claimed to have power that belonged to God alone.

He assured the thief on the cross that that day they would meet in Paradise. On another occasion Christ told certain people that they would die in their sins and that they could not come where he was going. In this, He claimed authority over the future destiny of man. Christ proclaimed Himself the final Judge of the living and the dead. This right belongs only to God. In Hebrews 1:8 the Father not only called Christ His Son, but He also calls Him God. There is no conflict here for Christ is God. At the close of his Gospel (John 20:31), John stated his purpose in writing as being "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

JUST A THOUGHT

**By yielding to temptation, one may lose in a moment what
it took him a lifetime to gain.**