



Jesus is God

The necessity to believe in the deity of Christ

John 8:51-59

51 "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'"

53 "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God."

55 "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word."

56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

What kind of death was Jesus speaking of in verse 51?

Spiritual death, the second death spoken of in revelation 20 where unbelievers will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

What must a person do to never see death?

Keep the Word of Jesus?

What does it mean to keep Jesus' Word?

To believe Him and put your trust in what He said so that you take action as a result.

Why did the Jewish religious leaders accuse Jesus of being possessed with a demon?

They thought Jesus was talking about physical death. Abraham and the prophets all died. They thought Jesus was claiming knowledge superior to what the spokesmen of God had access to. The Jews knew that only God could keep people from death and if the proven prophets of God could not avoid it, no one could.

Who was Abraham?

Abraham was the chief patriarch of Israel. Abraham and his descendants were those whom God chose to work through to reveal Himself to mankind.

In verse 53, why did the Jews think Jesus was claiming to be greater than Abraham and the prophets?

Jesus was claiming that His Word was superior to that of Abraham and the prophets because by keeping it a person would not taste death.

Who would Jesus have to be if He was greater than Abraham and the prophets?

An even greater prophet such as the anticipated Messiah or God Himself.

Who is the Messiah?

The title "*Christ*" is from the Greek language meaning "God's Anointed." Likewise, "Messiah" is from the Hebrew language and means the same.

Who was Jesus making Himself out to be?

The Messiah and God.

Why didn't this combination resonate with the Jews?

They had come to expect the Messiah to be a prophet and political deliverer like Moses...

Deut 18:15 - The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear

God is spirit and could not come in the form of sinful man, God had never worked in that way before.

Not recognizing the deliverance of God reminds me of the story about a man who was being flooded out of his house when a truck came by and the driver told him he'd have to evacuate. But he responded, "it will not be necessary, I've been praying and God is going to deliver me." Well the waters continued to rise and before long a boat came down his street and the occupants told him he needed to evacuate. The man responded, "it will not be necessary, I've been praying and God is going to deliver me." The waters started rising very fast at that point and before long the man had to climb up on his roof but a helicopter came by with a rope ladder but the man waved them off shouting, "it will not be necessary, I've been praying and God is going to deliver me." The helicopter was low on fuel and had to leave. The current soon swept the man away and he drowned. Finding himself before the Lord in

heaven, the man asked Him, "Lord, why didn't you answer my prayer and deliver me from the flood?" The Lord said, "I sent you a truck, boat, and a helicopter, what were you waiting for?"

How did Jesus respond to their question about who He made Himself out to be?

By giving honor to the Father.

Why did Jesus give honor to the Father?

It was the Father who helped people to see who Jesus was...

Matt 16:15-17

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus 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.

Indeed, Jesus attributed His miracles to the Father, this was part of His humbling Himself coming in the form of a man...

Phil 2:5-8

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

What did Jesus accuse the Pharisees of by saying, "you say that My Father is your God"?

They were claiming to have a relationship with God when they did not.

Why would the Jewish religious leaders claim to have a relationship with God when they did not?

It gave them power over the people. They set themselves up as mediators between God and the people so that they could control them by "speaking for God".

How should you deal with people who claim to have a relationship with God yet reveal by their actions and what they say that they do not?

Point out their error using God's Word. Jesus did this and challenged them to point out where He did not keep God's Word.

- Paul publicly rebuked Peter when he endorsed those legalistic Christian Jews who said it was necessary to keep the Law, that salvation by Christ alone was not enough.

What does it mean in verse 56 that Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day?

That God revealed to Abraham His plan to send the Messiah to deliver Israel...

Gen 22:8 - And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

And it would be one of Abraham's own descendants who would bless the world...

Gen 22:18 - "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Why did the Jews ask Jesus if He had seen Abraham?

- The Jews missed Jesus' point that He was claiming to be the Messiah... If Jesus was just a common man like them what He said made no sense.
- A secondary reason was that Jesus spoke like He knew Abraham personally.

Why didn't Jesus come out and say that He was the Messiah?

Jesus confirmed this is who He was when others used this term like with Peter in Matthew 16 but He Himself specifically avoided using this term because it had come to mean a strictly political deliverer like Moses.

- People were looking for such a Messiah and Jesus didn't want people to be confused about why He came.
- The political environment was particularly sensitive to someone the people thought would lead them in a revolt against the Romans and Jesus did not want this to become a distraction.
- This is the reason He healed people and told them not to tell anyone.

The other reason is for the same reason Jesus taught using parables...

Why did Jesus teach using parables?

To mask the truth from those without spiritual discernment:

Matt 13:11 - He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

In fulfillment of prophecy about the Messiah speaking in parables (Psalm 78:2).

How did Jesus respond to the Jews asking if He had seen Abraham?

Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

What does it mean that Jesus preceded Abraham?

Jesus was much older than He appeared. In fact, He was ageless. He was around before Abraham and all men because He is God, our Creator.

What is the significance of the words "I AM"?

- This means that Jesus existed in all times because as God, He is outside the confines of time.
- Even of more significance to His Jewish audience, this is the very name God gave Moses in response to “who should I say sent me?” (Exodus 3:14).

How did the Jewish people respond to Jesus calling himself “I AM?”

They took up stones to throw at him... because they thought He was a mere man claiming to be God which is blasphemy...

Lev 24:16 - And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death.

See also John 10:33 the Jewish religious leaders knew that “*Son of God*” meant “the same as God.”

Should the Jewish religious leaders have known that the Messiah would be God Himself?

The Jewish religious leaders’ own Scriptures foretold that the Messiah would be God Himself...

Isaiah 9:6 - For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Micah 5:2 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

How did Jesus demonstrate that He was God?

He spoke with the authority of God. He claimed (and demonstrated!) the power of God to give life to the dead:

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. (see also John 10:17-18, 10:28, and 17:2).

Only God is perfect. Jesus acted in perfect accord with God the Father...

John 10:30 - "I and My Father are one."
(see also John 14:9).

John 8:58 says that Jesus was around in Abraham’s time but if Jesus were God, He would have had to be preexistent from before creation began. Where does the Bible say this?

Scripture confirms this and goes on to say that Jesus is our Creator...

John 1:1-3 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made

through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

John made clear that when he referred to the Word, he was referring to Jesus:

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Indeed, the Word of God was another name for Jesus:

Revelation 19:13 - He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Can you think of any instances other than John 8:58 where Jesus confirmed His preexistence?

Jesus confirms His preexistence and deity in a prayer the night He was turned over to be crucified:

John 17:5 - And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Another clear reference to the deity of Christ is:

Rev 4:10-11 - the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

How does Revelation 4:10-11 show that Jesus is our Creator?

In the context that follows it is clear that it is Jesus on the throne since only One was *found* “*worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals*”... “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David*” (Rev 5:2-5). Also:

Rev 5:6 - And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

The Apostle Paul declared Jesus to be Christ, “*who is over all, the eternally blessed God*” (Romans 9:5) and that we should be “*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13).

Paul believed Jesus to be the preexistent, omnipotent Creator who is actively involved in maintaining creation:

Colossians 1:15-17 - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

It is God who actively provides the forces which hold the atoms of the universe together. This is reinforced in Hebrews 1:2-3, 10...

Heb 1:1-3 - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Heb 1:10 - And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.

There is also Colossians 2:9 before, *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."* Note that: all is all and full is full, Jesus is fully God!

How do you reconcile the fact that Jesus presented Himself as God yet He prayed to His Father in heaven with Deuteronomy 6:4 that says that God is one?

Deut 6:4 - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

- Here is where the doctrine of the Trinity comes to the rescue. Scripture reveals that Jesus is the second person of the triune Godhead.
- It is important to recognize here that the Hebrew word for "one" here is a complex unity. Everywhere it is used in the Bible it refers to multiple parts making up a whole, for example:
 - Gen 2:24 - Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
- God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the same way each of us have a soul, body and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).

Why is the concept of the Triune nature of God so hard for people to understand?

The concept of the Trinity is a mystery that we can not fully comprehend in this life...

1 Timothy 3:16 - And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

- But Scripture does reveal enough that we may attain *"full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ"* (Colossians 2:2).
- While still a mystery, it is hard to avoid the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament.
 - When Jesus was baptized, He was in the water, the Holy Spirit descended on Him

like a dove and the Father spoke from heaven (Matthew 3:16-17).

- Jesus commanded us to, *"make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19).
- Jesus promised: *"the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name"* (John 14:26).

Since "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), why don't we see the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament?

The New Testament reveals a lot more about God than was known before Jesus came but the Trinity is indeed in the Old Testament. Here are some examples...

- The definition of the word "one" as mentioned before.
- God refers to Himself as a plurality. For example, *"God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'"* (Genesis 1:26).
- All three persons of the Godhead were represented when God told the prophet Isaiah, *"the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me"* (Isaiah 48:16).
- David said, *"The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'"* (Psalm 110:1).

Is a correct understanding of the Trinity a requirement to be saved?

Unless you accept the Trinity as truth, you'll have to doubt your salvation. Jesus said,

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Given that Jesus represented Himself as God, the person who does not believe Jesus is God has to question if they really believe in Him because they are not accepting what He said about Himself and thus can not be sure of their salvation.

- Believing in Jesus is a simple matter of "childlike faith" (Matthew 18:3) but it goes beyond just acknowledging the historical facts of His time on earth.

Doesn't the fact that Jesus was the "only begotten Son" of God indicate that He could not be God Himself because He was created?

No! The term *"begotten"* refers to the humanity of Christ which was indeed a self-created aspect but does not replace His deity. The Son of God is at the same time 100% God and 100% Man (Philippians 2:5-7).

Objection Handling

I had an opportunity to discuss spiritual matters with someone who had been brainwashed by a cult that did not recognize Jesus as God. One of his justifications for this was that the Bible does not command us to worship Jesus.

Why would this be a valid objection if it is true?

This should cause a problem for anyone who believes that Jesus was created because the Bible also says that to worship anyone other than God Himself is idolatry (Romans 1:22-25).

Does the Bible command us to worship Jesus?

- It was not hard for me to find over a dozen verses that show many instances where disciples and others worshipped Jesus and were never rebuked for doing so thus setting the example for us.
- In John 5:23 where Jesus commanded our worship by saying we should honor the Son as the Father. Indeed this verse says that if you don't worship the Son, you can not worship the Father.
- Paul also made it clear that all people will either willingly worship Jesus now or unwillingly after they die...

Philippians 2:9-11 - Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Another argument that Jesus was not God came from Colossians 1:15, "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*" Why is this not valid?

The Greek word used here for "firstborn" means "preeminence in rank." There is another Greek word, *protoktistos*, which means "first created" which is the meaning you have placed on "firstborn" in this verse. If this verse is supposed to tell us that Jesus isn't God, why wasn't the Greek word *protoktistos* used instead? Certainly the context here where Jesus is our Creator reinforces the meaning that "firstborn" means "preeminence in rank."

How would those denying the deity of Jesus deal with Colossians 1:16 that says regarding Jesus that "*all things were created through Him?*"

- Those denying the deity of Jesus deal with this by saying that the Son worked beside the Father as a super angel master craftsman in the creation.
- However, this argument pales in light of Isaiah 44:24 which says that God "makes all things, and stretches

out the heavens **all alone**, and spreads abroad the earth **by Himself?**"

Some other objections to the deity of Christ raised by an ex-Jehovah Witness are addressed below:

Beginning of the Creation

Those denying the deity of Jesus dismiss John 1:1 arguing that Jesus was created since Revelation 3:14 says Jesus was at "the Beginning of the creation of God." You need to take a closer look at the meaning of the Greek word translated as "beginning" here. If you use a reliable Greek dictionary, you'll find it also means, "supervisor, designer, cause, origin, source."

First and the Last

I'm sure you agree that Isaiah 44:6 is referring to God the Father: "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God.'" How can you reconcile the fact that the "First and the Last" name is also given to Jesus in Revelation? Revelation 1:8 says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Yes, "the Alpha and the Omega" is God Almighty and you will probably argue this is not Jesus but look at Revelation 22:13, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." You have to take this verse completely out of context to attribute it to the Father. Look at Revelation 22:12, who is coming? This is Jesus talking. The context is further established by Revelation 22:16-17 where Jesus is obviously speaking.

Now, if you need further reinforcement that "the First and the Last" is Jesus, look at Revelation 1:17-18, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.'" Again the context reveals that this is Jesus speaking, per reference to the "Son of Man" in Revelation 1:13 and being bracketed by "He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive" which can only be Jesus. Jesus is the First and the Last!

From Everlasting

Micah 5:2 is a clear Messianic passage which describes Him as "the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." The Hebrew word for "everlasting" is "olam" which is only used in reference to God as in Psalm 90:2, it is never used for anything created.

Jesus = The God

There are three instances where the Greek term “ho theos” is attributed to Jesus which means “the God”:

Matthew 1:23 - Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

John 20:28 - And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Hebrews 1:8 - But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.

Jesus = True God

I John 5:20 - And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Jesus = Only God

Look at the following verses in context. You can't separate the reference to Jesus in verse 16 from God in verse 17 because the “amen” closes the thought.

1 Timothy 1:16-17 - However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Prophetic Implications

The denial of the deity of Christ among people who call themselves Christians has become common today. Those who call themselves Christians yet deny the deity of Christ are in league with cults like the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses. Now even leaders in “mainstream” (albeit liberal) Christendom deny the deity of Christ. I see this trend as just one more sign that Jesus will return soon. The apostasy of the professing church will grow prior to the return of Jesus per Matthew 24:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, and 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

Believing the Deity of Christ is a Matter of Salvation

A correct view that Jesus is God is a matter of eternal life and death because Jesus said, “if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). You really don't believe in the Jesus of the Bible if you don't believe His testimony. Jesus represented himself as God per John 5:18, 10:30-33 and 14:9. Those who reject Jesus' testimony do not believe in Him and will perish (John 3:16).

Closing thoughts:

Jesus said that if you do not believe that He is God, that this condition is sin and you will face destruction in hell because of this...

John 8:23-24 - And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."