

Chapter Ten: Who Is Jesus Christ?



Perhaps most amazing of all is that Jesus' disciples who wrote the NT rarely argue the deity of Christ. They didn't need to, because the whole Christian community agreed that Jesus was God. The early Christians were often a contentious bunch. They fought and battled over a number of things, some of them central to the gospel ... But, so far as we can tell from the NT, they never argued with one another about the deity of Christ."

The Deity of Christ

Christ the Lord — **Paul:** Rom 10:9; 1 Co 12:3; Php 2:10-11 (see Isa 45:23). **John:** Exodus 3:14 is background to all Jesus' "I am" sayings: "the bread of life" (6:35,48,51), "the light of the world" (8:12), "the door ... the good shepherd" (10:7-14), "the resurrection and the life" (11:24-25), "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6); "the true vine" (15:1).

The (Unique) Son of God — Lk 1:31-32; Jn 1:34; 1 Jn 5:20; Rom 8:3,32; Jn 3:16; Heb 1:5-6 (worshipped by angels!). If *Lord* emphasizes Christ's relation to his people as head of the covenant, *Son* emphasizes his relationship to his Father (Jn 5:18-23).

The Christ — Ps 2:2; Dn 9:25-26; Ps 110:1-2; Isa 9:6 — a prophesied king from David's line, who would not only be greater than David, but be God himself.

God — 12 passages: Jn 1:1,18; 20:28; Ac 20:28; Rom 9:5; 1 Tm 3:15-16 (maybe); 2 Th 1:12 (not as clear in English); Tt 2:13; 2 Pt 1:1; Col 2:9 ("the whole fullness of deity")

Other Titles — "Son of Man," a human with divine prerogatives (Dn 7; Mk 2:5-10...) ... see Frame, p. 137.

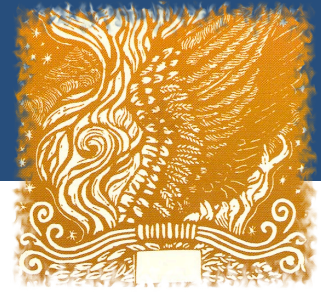
Divine Attributes — Everything that can be said of God *can* be and *is* said of Jesus: from his love (Jn 15:13-14) to his holiness (Mk 1:24) to his sinlessness (Jn 8:46) to his omniscience (Jn 4:16-19,24) to his eternity (Jn 1:1; 8:58; Rev 1:8), unchangeableness (Heb 1:8,10,12; 13:8), and glory (Jn 1:14; 1 Co 2:8; Jas 2:1).

Divine Acts — Jesus creates (Jn 1:3; Heb 2:1-3; Col 1:15-16), sustains (Col 1:17), performs miracles (Mk 4:35-41), forgives sin (Mk 2:5-7)

Problem passages —

- Jn 1:1 - Jesus merely a god?
- Pr 8:22 - Christ a created wisdom?
- Mk 10:18 - Why does Jesus say "only God is good"?
- Jn 14:28 - The Father is greater?
- Jn 17:3 - The Father is "the only true God"?
- 1 Cor 8:6 - Jesus as "Lord" distinguished from the Father who is the "one God"?
- Col 1:15 & 18 - As "firstborn of creation" & "firstborn of the dead," wouldn't he be created?

Why the Deity of Christ is Important — See Reggie's blog from Dec. 18, 2006, "Strong Enough to Save, Near Enough to Heal" <<http://reggiekidd.com>>



The Humanity of Christ

Jesus fulfills the glory of man by tasting sin & death for us — Heb 2:1-18 & 4:15, in the light of Psalm 8 — for which task, “though he was a Son, he learned obedience through what was suffered, and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Heb 5:7-10).

The rest of the NT presentation of Jesus’ humanity is commentary on this dynamic. See Frame’s rich exploration of the extent of Jesus’ humanity on pp. 142-143 — from conception to hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation, suffering, death, (and though Frame does not include it here) his resurrection as Last Adam, Second Man (1Co 15:45).

The Chalcedonian Formulation (A.D. 451): One Person, Two Natures

Hypostatic (Personal) Union — Jesus has two complete natures in one person, and those natures are “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.”

The doctrine developed as a **response** to a number of failed attempts at addressing the balance between Jesus’s humanity and his deity:

Against Docetists — who taught Jesus only *seemed* to have a physical body.

Against Ebionites - who taught Jesus only *seemed* to be divine.

Against Apollinarians — who taught Jesus’ human soul had been replaced by the divine Logos.

Against Arians — who taught Jesus was merely a god; that he was a subordinated, created divine being (“there was a time when he was not”).

Against Monophysites (or Eutychians) — who taught Jesus was so much God that there was really only one nature (divine), and that his humanity had been absorbed like a bucketful of water into the ocean of his divinity.

Against Nestorians — who wanted to protect Jesus’ humanity by positing a “union” that looked more like an Apollinarian “indwelling” — so that he was more human than divine.

Communication Idiomatum

Lutherans — What can be said of Jesus’ divine attributes can also be said of his human attributes; his two natures change one another. Thus, for instance, his physical body (human) is omnipresent (divine).

Reformed — The person Jesus is both divine and human, but his human nature remains human and his divine nature divine. Thus, his person is omnipresent, but his physical body is not omnipresent (located, for now, in heaven) — his person is present to us, for now, by means of the Holy Spirit