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Chapter 07 – God the Son: His Deity and Eternity

Matthew 16:13-17 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Notice what Jesus does not ask. He does not ask the disciples "Who am I?" He wants to know what others "say" about Him and in particular who do you say that He is. Every man that is confronted with special revelation regarding Jesus must respond in some way to this question. The claims are too stupendous not to. The people of Jesus' day basically said He was a great prophet. Today, most people say Jesus is a "great moral teacher". C.S. Lewis' framed the modern issue well when he said,

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 one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of thing 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 with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.'

Not much was different in Jesus' day. People gave the same basic nonsense answers to who Jesus was. But "Simon Peter answered,

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus said, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." First observation of Jesus' response: Peter's knowledge of the true identity of Jesus was based on revelation from the Father. This means that no one can give this answer unless the Father has revealed it to him. The people who write the articles for Time magazine each Easter: The Search for the Historical Jesus can search all they want but they can never know who Jesus really is unless the Father reveals this knowledge to them. Second observation: Simon Peter's answer reveals something to us about Simon Peter, not about Jesus. Jesus had already made Himself out to be the Son of God in the Gospel of Matthew. We already know that. But what we really discover is something about Peter, don't we. We discover that the Father had revealed to Peter the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He couldn't have said that if it hadn't been revealed to him.

Now, hundreds of years later and we still have this question from Christ, "Who do you say that I am?" And no matter how a person answers that question, their answer doesn't tell us anything new about Jesus, instead it tells us something about the person. Turn over to John 3:18-21

John 3:18-21 ¹⁸ *"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."*

So, what does a person's response to Jesus' question tell us about the person? Charlie Clough says, it tells us that...

If the light shines in the world and men say there is darkness, the problem is not with the light; the problem lies with the men who are blind to that light (John 3:19-21).¹

If you walk into a fully lit room and you say, "It's dark in here" where is the problem? Is the problem with the light or is the problem with your eyes? See, the problem with unbelievers is that they close their eyes to the light and after awhile God just says, "alright, I've made knowledge of Myself clear to you, but you want to reject that knowledge so, fine, have it your way", and He just seals your eyelids shut. People can't see the light because they close their eyes to it. That doesn't mean the lights not there. This is what we call self-imposed blindness. We have a lot of people running around with self-imposed blindness. Unless the Father peels back their eyelids their never going to see the light. When a person does come to the light what you're seeing is God peeling the eyelids back. He's giving them

eyes to see and ears to hear the truth of who Jesus really is. So, who is Jesus? Is He a liar, a lunatic, or just as He claimed to be, Lord? Let's look at the OT and NT scriptures to discover who He really is and in the process we'll discover whether you can personally receive these truths or not. Today, we'll look at the claims of deity and eternity.

A. Direct Statements of Eternality

1. Of Promised Messiah in the Old Testament

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;

This verse teaches the pre-existence of the Son since for something to **be given** it must already exist. Technically this does not prove eternity but only pre-existence.

Micah 5:2 ² "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *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, From the days of eternity."

Prophecy of the Messiah going forth. His days are from the days of eternity meaning He is eternal (also see Hab 1:12).

Isaiah 7:14 Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel, [God with us].

If God is eternal, and no one disputes that, then when the Son is named "God with us" then it affirms that the Son is God and therefore eternal and divine.

2. Of Jesus Christ in the New Testament

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the beginning "was" the Word, and the Word "was" with God, and the Word "was" God. (not "was a god" or "was divine" (as Jehovah's Witnesses claim). "was" is the Greek *hn*, which is an imperfect tense meaning continual existence in past time. This means that whoever "the word" is they are eternal. Jehovah's Witnesses (JW's) try to get around this

verse by translating it differently. “In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god” (New World Translation of 1971). The problem with this is that if John had wanted to say “a god” he would have used the Greek word *theios* (a “divine” as in Acts 17:29; 2 Pet 1:3) rather than *theos* (God), as here. Daniel Wallace says this expression “*was the most concise way he could have stated that the Word was God and yet was distinct from the Father.*”

ii This verse shows both the eternity of the Son and the deity of the Son. Verse 14 adds that the word became flesh, that is, took true humanity.

John 8:58-59 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

The name "I AM" was the name God gave Himself before Moses in Exodus 3:14 in the burning bush. Jesus is identifying Himself with the One in the burning bush. "I AM" means "continual or absolute existence". When Jesus said, "before Abraham was born, I am" He was claiming "continual existence" outside of space and time and yet immanent within space and time. This is affirming His eternity and His deity. Those who heard Jesus' say this at least understood what He was claiming. Notice verse 59. Jehovah's Witnesses today appear to not even understand what Jesus was claiming. They were picking up stones to throw at Him because He was claiming to be God and this was considered blasphemy to the Jews and blasphemy was punishable by death (stoning).

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

He **is** (continually existing in past time) before all things,". Verse 16 proves that Christ created all things, while verse 17 indicates that Christ is uncreated and therefore eternal. It logically follows that if Christ created all things (v. 16) then He could not have been created (v. 17). (Also see Heb 13:8; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:2-3; Eph 1:4; Rev 1:11)

B. Direct Statements of Deity

1. Of Jesus Christ in the New Testament

Even though many people don't know it the Bible does explicitly say Jesus is God in several places.

1 John 5:20 ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so 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.

*This is a good one to use on JW's. Some argue that the antecedent of **this** (outos) is God rather than Christ but this is unlikely. Christ is the nearest antecedent and Christ is called "truth" and "life" elsewhere in John's writings (John 14:6) so it would not be odd for John to make this statement. Further, the Father is never referred to as "life" and John's use of **this** (outos) never refers to the Father.*

Hebrews 1:8 ⁸ But of the Son *He* says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.

God the Father is speaking here and He quotes Ps 45:6 applying it to the Son. He says to the Son "YOUR THRONE, O GOD". So, here the Father directly calls the Son...God. The accent of the Hebrew of Ps. 45:6 indicates a pause between "throne" and "God" indicating that they took "God" as the direct address. If God the Father applies this Psalm to the Son then I suggest that we too affirm that the Son is God. Any other view would be denying the Father's evaluation of His own Son. That, in essence, would deny God's attribute of omniscience because it is a claim that God did not know that the Son was less than God.

Two very important texts on the deity of Christ are found in Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1. Both of these texts follow a Greek grammar rule known as the Granville Sharp rule. Granville Sharp was a student of the Scriptures who was not trained theologically, but he had a strong belief in the deity of Christ and therefore studied in the original languages to better defend that belief. By the way, why is it important to believe in the deity of Christ?

If He's not God then the doctrine of the Trinity is out the window. If He's not God then He's a creation, therefore not eternal. If He's not God then He can't redeem humanity because His sacrifice would not be of infinite value and could not be offered for the whole world. So, as you see, it is very important to affirm the deity of Christ. Now, back to Granville Sharp. In the course of his studies he noticed a repetitive pattern (article – substantive – *kai* – substantive; TSKS).ⁱⁱⁱ

Titus 2:13

<i>Art</i>		<i>Noun 1</i>		<i>Noun 2</i>		<i>Person</i>
<i>tou megalou</i>		<i>theou</i>	<i>kai</i>	<i>soterou</i>	<i>umon Iesou Christou,</i>	
<i>G/S/M Adj</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>	<i>Conj</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>	<i>1PPP G/P</i>	<i>G/S/M</i>
<i>of the great</i>		<i>God</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>Savior</i>		<i>of us, Jesus Christ</i>

Thus, the nouns God and Savior both refer to Jesus Christ. This is an undeniable proof of the deity of Christ.

Romans 9:5 *Whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.*

Nearest antecedent of God is Christ affirming both His deity and eternity. Here's another good one to use on JW's.

Romans 10:9, 13 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord [*kurios*] and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;...¹³for “whoever will call upon the name of the Lord [*kurios*] will be saved.”

In verse 9 Jesus is clearly called Lord [Gk. *kurios*]. In verse 13 Paul quotes Joel 2:32. **Joel 2:32** *"And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD [YHWH] Will be delivered;"* In Joel 2:32 the Hebrew word for “Lord” is YHWH. When Paul quotes Joel 2:32 he replaces “YHWH” with “kurios”. This is one of many “Christ” for “YHWH” substitutions found in the NT.

John 1:18 ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

“only begotten God” refers to Jesus Christ. This is the harder reading. Some manuscripts read “only begotten Son”.

John 10:30-33 ³⁰ "I and the Father are one." [referring to essence] ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" ³³ 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."

Jesus claims to be of the identical essence with the Father. Once again, JW's don't even realize what Jesus is claiming. The Jews clearly understood His claim because in v. 31 they attempt to stone Him. Verse 33 shows that they were stoning Him for blasphemy because He claimed to be God. Was He a liar, a lunatic, or is He Lord of all? Christ's personal claims were far more than merely a “great moral teacher”.

C. Deity and Eternality of Christ Implied

His deity and eternity are implied in five different ways: 1) His titles, 2) the angel of the Lord, 3) His names, 4) His attributes, and 5) His works.

1. His titles

a. YHWH

Deuteronomy 6:16 ¹⁶ "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested *Him* at Massah.

Matthew 4:7 ⁷ Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

b. Adonai

Matthew 22:42-45 ⁴² "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "*The son of David.*" ⁴³ He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, ⁴⁴ 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET "'? ⁴⁵ "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?"

“The Lord (Father) said to My Lord (Son),” applying it to Himself. Son is equal to the Father. Son claims equality *to*, yet is distinct *from* the Father in this passage. This shows He is divine and eternal..

2. The Angel of the Lord proves His pre-existence

Judges 13:3 ³ Then the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have borne no *children*, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son.

Judges 13:22 ²² So Manoah said to his wife, "We will surely die, for we have seen God."

The Angel of the Lord was the pre-incarnate Christ.

- The angel of the Lord is recognized as deity.
- The angel of the Lord is called God.
- The angel of the Lord is distinct from YHWH (Zech.1:12; 3:1; 12:8).
- The angel of the Lord ceases to appear after the incarnation.

3. His names

- a. **God** (Titus 2:13; 2 Pt 1:1; 1 John 5:20; John 20:28; Rom 9:5; Heb 1:8)
- b. **Son of God**

“Son of” means “Son of the order of God”. The 2nd Person was a Son in relation to God the Father from all eternity. If He were not always a Son then there would have been a change in God. And if there’s a change in God then He’s not immutable. If the Son was not always a Son in relation to the Father then the Father was not always the Father since a Father can only be a Father if He has a Son. So, we can’t have changes in the Trinity. Why not? Because if there was a change in God in the past, how do we know God will not change in the future? Therefore, the title **Son of God** indicates that the 2nd Person is an eternal Person.

4. **His Attributes**

- a. **Eternal - the 2nd Person has always existed as the Son (eternal sonship)**

John 1:1 explains three things

- 1) Christ continually existed in past time
 - 2) Christ was in fellowship with the Father
 - 3) Christ is God, but distinct from the Father
- Heb. 1:10-12

- b. **Omnipresent – the 2nd Person is completely present at every point in space and time.**

Matt. 28:20 – “I am with you always”.

John 8:58 – “Before Abraham was born I AM!”

Christ is localized in His humanity at the right hand of God. In His deity He is omnipresent. The triune God indwells us (John 14:23)!

- c. **Omniscient – the 2nd Person knows all things actual and possible**

John 4:18 “for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.”

Jesus had never met this lady before. This verse also shows that live together is not equal to marriage.

Matthew 11:21-24 ²¹ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in *the* day of judgment than for you. ²³ "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ "Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the* day of judgment, than for you."

Jesus even knew the what-if's of history.

d. Omnipotent - the 2nd Person can do anything compatible with His character

Matthew 28:18 ¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mark 2:5-7 ⁵ And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Mark 2:10 ¹⁰ "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- He said to the paralytic,

e. Immutable – the 2nd Person’s character is forever perfectly stable

Hebrews 13:8 ⁸ Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

f. Life

John 1:4 ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Jesus has life inherent with in Himself. All other life is derived life, not inherent/resident life. (Ps. 36:9; Jer. 2:13; John 14:6, “I am the life”).

g. Gives Gifts

Eph. 4:8 – the imagery is Christ returning with the spoils of war and distributing the gifts from the spoils to His people. Ps. 68.

5. His Works

a. Creator

John 1:3, Col. 1:16, Heb. 11:3

b. Sustainer

Col. 1:16-17 – “in Him all things hold together”

Heb. 1:3 – “He upholds all things by His power.” Christ carries all things forward on their appointed course.

c. Miracle Worker

The miracles of Christ attested to His deity.

4. He Receives Worship

John 5:23 – Ask Jehovah’s Witnesses, “Do you worship Jesus Christ in the same way that you worship Jehovah God?” No, then you are disobeying the Scriptures!

Matt 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14 – Equality of the Son, the Spirit, and the Father.

John 9:24-34 – Jesus healed a blind man! There has never been any happening of this ever before or after Jesus! Jesus received worship, if He were not God He should not have accepted worship.

Therefore, we can only conclude with the same words that the early church fathers at the Council of Nicea concluded...

Nicene Creed (325AD)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance, with the Father. By whom all things were made, both which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down [from heaven] and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead.

¹ Clough, Charlie, *A Biblical Framework for Worship and Obedience in an Age of Global Deception; Part V. Confrontation with the King* (Unpublished), 3.

ⁱⁱ Wallace, Daniel, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 269.

ⁱⁱⁱ When the copulative kai connects two singular nouns of the same case, if the article ο, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle: i.e. It denotes a farther description of the first named person... (Sharp, Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article, 3)

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