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The Deity of The Lord

Introduction

The undeniable truth

- a) To have an open Bible and an open mind, the acceptance of the deity of the Lord is only rejected by the will of man. Just as in the days when our Lord was here, despite the evidence the Jews rejected Him. The rejection was not due to lack of evidence but the unwillingness to accept Him as such.
- b) It is an undeniable truth Satan uses religions and cults to deny the deity of the Lord! This is not new nor is it teaching which has only occurred in the last hundred years, for even when our Lord was here His deity was denied by the religious hierarchy. As they listened to the Lord they heard Him say, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17) and immediately they said He was making Himself equal with God (Jn. 5:18). What was it about what the Lord said that caused them to understand His claim to deity? It was a mixture of His words and cultural understanding. When the Lord used the word “My” it indicated a unique relationship of full equality culturally when a son was able to function as a full representative of their father. If they said “My father”, it was understood he was speaking as one who had the full authority of the Father and was in full fellowship with him. Before many more years passed the Ebonites and others also denied that living relationship. Today, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Muslims are two of the religious bodies which deny His deity. There are those who deny the “full deity” of the Lord. I say “full deity” for they teach He is a lesser God but not fully God, having every attribute of Jehovah. They would teach that He is the “Mighty God” but not the “Almighty” or that He is the highest of one of a series of gods, but not truly God and Jehovah’s co-equal in every attribute and is co-eternal.
- c) When the Lord walked this earth, neither Satan nor any of his demons ever denied its truth knowing He was God! Indeed the temptations were an attempt by Satan not only to set aside the will of God but also to separate the humanity of the Lord from His deity. However, that knowledge did not hinder Satan from tempting the Lord and in so doing, having the Lord separate His deity from His humanity.
- d) The question under consideration is not “Is Jesus the Son of God” or the Messiah? To these many would readily say “yes”. However, if one were to ask, “Was the man Jesus God’s co-equal, co-eternal Son, that is He was as fully God when here on earth as when in Heaven?” Putting it another way, when He was a babe in the arms of Mary, working as the carpenter, or hanging on the cross, was He still the fulness of deity? (Col. 2:9). That is, possessing all the attributes of deity and being co-eternal co-equal with God in every way.

The question is:

“Was Jesus the human being during His earthly sojourn, everything that God is in every way without diminishment, and a lessening of His deity?”

Biblical Truths Bearing Evidence to His Deity

Nathan Busenitz presents the following pieces of evidence for His deity with biblical references:

- a) The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah would be God (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23).
- b) Jesus claimed:
 - i) A heavenly preexistence (Jn. 6:62; 8:23; 16:28; 17:5).
 - ii) Divine authority:
 1. Over the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8; Mk. 2:28; Lk. 6:5).
 2. Over the forgiveness of sins (Mk. 2:5–11).
 3. In determining people’s eternal destinies (Jn. 8:24; cf. Lk. 12:8–9; Jn. 5:22, 27–29).
- c) Jesus exercised divine authority:
 - i) Over demons (Mk. 1:2–27; 3:11; 5:1–20).

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- ii) Over disease and death (Mk. 1:29–31; 40–45; 5:25–43; 8:22–26).
 - iii) Over the natural world (Lk. 5:1–11; 8:22–25; 9:10–17).
- d) Jesus claimed ownership over that which belongs only to God:
- i) The kingdom of God (Matt. 13:41; 16:28; cf. Lk. 1:33).
 - ii) The elect of God (Matt. 24:30–31).
 - iii) The angels of God (Matt. 13:41; 24:30–31).
- e) Jesus claimed:
- i) The right to receive worship and the ability to answer prayer (Jn. 14:13–14; cf. Acts 7:59; 9:10–17; Rev. 1:17).
 - ii) Absolute unity with the Father, such that He could tell His disciples, “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father” (Jn. 14:9–10; cf. 10:30; 12:45).
- f) Jesus called Himself:
- i) The Son of Man, a title with divine implications from the Old Testament (cf. Dan. 7:13–14)
 - ii) The Son of God, a title His opponents understood as a claim to deity (Matt. 27:43; Jn. 5:18; 10:30; 19:7).
 - iii) “I Am,” thereby applying the Old Testament name Yahweh to Himself (Jn. 8:58; cf. cf. 6:51; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).

If I were to ask many individuals, “What is an ichthyostega?” There would possibly be a look of bewilderment from them. This illustration focuses one's attention on the necessity of clarification of the subject under consideration. John wrote his entire gospel to enable readers to understand what is meant by the terms, “the Christ” and “Son of God”. “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (Jn. 20:31). Such is its essentialness that he writes in his first epistle, “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 2:22) and, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him” (1 Jn. 5:1). To deny the deity of the Lord, he is a liar, a child of Satan and certainly not saved. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44).

Therefore, when we sing, talk, or discuss the deity of the Lord, what do we mean? It is an acknowledgement that the descriptive term “Son of God” is a declaration of the fullness of equality with the Father, who is God. Our task is to determine what is meant by the term “God?”

- a) The task that God had to do was to seek to communicate to man the gloriousness of His position, power, person, perfection, and preeminence. A living illustration of this difficulty is a family in the town of “Odd” in West Virginia who are all inbred. The result is that since only one ever went to school they just give grunts for communication. To try to communicate with them in English would be virtually impossible. Most of the family would not understand what is being conveyed so it is impossible for a human being with limited understanding and earthy measurements to comprehend the nothingness in which God dwelt before he made Heaven. Human beings cannot grasp the non-beginning or non-ending of God in existence or His unchanging person.
- b) In grace, God gave man language skills by which He sought to convey to man what is meant by the disclosure of His names. Names in the scriptures are very important because they tell something about the individual. For instance, Moses was named “Moses” because he was drawn out of the water. Therefore what names does God seek to reveal Himself?

His names:

- a) “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the

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children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations “(Ex. 3:13-15).

- b) “The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name” (Ex. 15:3).
- c) “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Ex. 34:14).
- d) “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6).

Other ways in which God seeks to enlighten humanity as to His greatness:

- a) God seeks to exhort humanity to open their eyes to the infinite greatness of God by:
 - i) His declarations of absoluteness.
 - 1. Clearly, it is only one who knows everything and has all ability who can without reservation say, “I will”. Satan said “I will” but he did not have the ability. Hitler said “I will” but he neither knew the turns war would take nor the ability to fulfil his will of world domination.
 - 2. But God says:
 - (a) “And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (Gen. 6:7), and He did with the flood.

. . . . Rowan Jennings