

to the One whom we know historically as Jesus?

29. In view of all these wonderful names and titles which are ascribed to the One whom we know historically as Jesus of Nazareth, what do we conclude with respect to Jesus Himself?

### Lesson Ninety-seven

## THE DEITY OF JESUS

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Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:13-19; John 8:47-59; Heb. 1:1-14.

Scriptures to Memorize: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever" (I Tim. 1:17). "God . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3). "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

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### 30. Q. What do we mean by the Deity of Jesus?

A. By the Deity of Jesus, we mean His inherent Godhood; or, that He was as truly God as He was truly man.

(1) Please note that we say the *deity*, and not the *divinity*, of Jesus. This is for the purpose of clarity. (2) It no longer suffices to speak of the *divinity* of Jesus, for the simple reason that divinity is a term which has come to mean "all things to all men." Unitarians *et al* will admit frankly, and with a great show of orthodoxy, that Jesus was *divine*. But when asked to explain what they mean by "divinity," they will proceed to tell us that it is a quality or attribute possessed by *all men* in varying degrees; in other words, that every human being has, poten-

tially at least, the same divinity that Jesus had; the only difference being that where other men fail to nurture the divinity that is within them, Jesus utilized and nourished His divinity to the fullest extent. In short, with this class of sophists, divinity is a quality inherent in all men; and when they affirm that Jesus was "divine," they mean only that He was a man more "spiritually illumined," more "in tune with the Infinite," than others of His kind, *but withal a man, and entirely man*. Hence, for the sake of clarity, we avoid the use of the term *divinity* in this connection, and use instead the term *deity*, which is unambiguous. (2) Deity is, moreover, a term which cannot be used in any misleading or deceptive sense, for the simple reason that *deity belongs only to God*. It is a quality that is *inherent*, and never acquired, and inherent in God alone. It is a thing of *rank and kind*, and cannot be transferred, in the very nature of the case. The universal law of nature, "each after its own kind," applies here as well as in the biological realm. That is, *only the Deity can beget deity*; hence we find Jesus frequently spoken of as "the only begotten Son of God" cf. John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, etc.). So, when we speak of *deity*, it is understood at once that we have reference only to God and Godhood. In short, there can be no misapplication or misuse of the term *deity*, and that is the reason why we use it in this connection. (3) "Deity," writes the late Joseph Bryant Rotherham, "would appear to be the right word to express the thought that the Lord Jesus was, in the nature of His person, as truly God as He was truly man. Men may talk of the *divinity* of the stars when they mean no more than that in the stars we behold divine workmanship; and that as a workman is in some measure seen in his work, so God is seen in the stars. Of the *divinity* of the stars do they thus speak, but not of their *deity*! In like manner, there may be those who freely speak of the *divinity* of Jesus of Nazareth, who would certainly hesitate to affirm His *deity*. It is for this reason that we prefer to use the latter term.

It is unambiguous. It goes straight to the mark. It leaves no fair doubt of our meaning . . . that is, as nearly as it can be expressed in English, perhaps, we believe, not that Jesus did exclusively sum up in His own person the totality of the Godhead, but that He did truly participate in the nature of the Godhead" (art., The Deity of Christ, in *The Christian Standard*, May 14, 1921).

**31. Q. What, then, is a first proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A first proof of the Deity of Jesus is the completeness and perfection of His teaching.**

His teaching, as we have learned, is (1) simple, yet profound; (2) spiritual, yet practical; (3) comprehensive; (4) complete, in that it covers the entire field of human obligations and relations; (5) and consequently, in view of all these qualities, *perfect*. The verdict of all subsequent ages has been that of the Temple police who were sent to apprehend Him, and who returned empty-handed, saying, "Never man so spake!" (John 7:46). It must be admitted that the universal application of the principles of His teaching would cure the ills of our human civilization.

**32. Q. What is a second proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A second proof of the Deity of Jesus is the faultlessness of His character and life.**

Jesus not only gave a perfect teaching, but, in striking contrast with all human teachers, He gave a perfect example as well. That is, He exemplified in His life perfectly the principles He enunciated in His teaching. In this respect especially, He is unique. The verdict of all subsequent ages, of non-believers as well as believers, is that which was voiced by Pilate, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4).

**33. Q. What is a third proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A third proof of the Deity of Jesus is the magnitude and supernaturalness of His claims.**

His claims, with respect to His relations with God the Father, and with respect to His own identity, nature, offices, mission and work, *are of such magnitude and scope,*

so distinctly *superhuman* in their signification, that we are compelled by sheer force of logic to accept Him as having been all that He claimed to be. For, if He is *not* all that He claimed to be, He is obviously the most notorious impostor who has ever appeared in the world.

**34. Q. What is a fourth proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A fourth proof of the Deity of Jesus is His fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy.**

No person ever came before the world with such a mass of prior documentary evidence to establish his identity and to attest his claims, as did Jesus of Nazareth; who fulfilled in His own person and life and work, even in their most minute details, every type, symbol and prophecy of Messianic import in the Old Testament writings.

**35. Q. What is a fifth proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A fifth proof of the Deity of Jesus is the historical fulfilment of the prophecies which He Himself uttered.**

Everything He predicted, with respect to the closing events of His own ministry in the flesh; with respect to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and of the city itself; with respect to the dispersion of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles—these prophecies have all been literally fulfilled. What more convincing evidence of the deity of Jesus Himself, and of the divine origin and inspiration of the Scriptures as well, could be offered?

**36. Q. What is a sixth proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A sixth proof of the Deity of Jesus is His miracles.**

Think of all the mighty works and wonders and signs which God wrought by Him, for the express purpose of attesting His divine Sonship and Christhood! Recall, if you please, the wide variety of His miracles as to kind, by which He demonstrated His absolute control over nature in all her forms! Surely such demonstrations of power are sufficient to convince the most skeptical that He was more than man! Cf. John 3:2—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs

that thou doest, except God be with him." To this frank testimony of Nicodemus, one of His contemporaries, we add that such mighty miracles of creation and deliverance and judgment which He wrought could have been performed only by Incarnate Deity!

**37. Q. What is a seventh proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A seventh proof of the Deity of Jesus is His Resurrection from the dead.**

Until infidelity can, on purely naturalistic grounds of course, account for the disappearance of the body of Jesus from Joseph's tomb, we shall continue to believe that God raised Him from the dead; and we shall continue to regard the Resurrection as an historical event, in the same category with the Burning of Rome, or the Battle of Gettysburg, or the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, or any other well-authenticated event of history. Truly He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

**38. Q. What is an eighth proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. An eighth proof of the Deity of Jesus is the beauty and grandeur of the names and titles which are ascribed to Him in the Sacred Writings.**

These various names and titles, as we have seen, are scattered throughout all the Scriptures, and not confined to any one book or writer. They describe every phase of His mission and work, and, collectively, the numerous functions of all the offices which He holds. Truly "God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). Truly He is The Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

**39. Q. What is a ninth proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A ninth proof of the Deity of Jesus is the actual ascription of Deity to Him, in the New Testament writings.**

(1) John 1:1—"The Word was God." Note: The Word was not only with God, but the Word *was* God. That is, as

to nature, The Word was Deity, as truly as God is Deity.

(2) John 1:18. Here the correct reading is, "the only begotten God," or "God only begotten." This is a plain ascription of absolute Deity to Christ. "He is not simply the only revealer of God, but He is Himself God revealed."

(3) John 20:28—the address of Thomas here, "My Lord and my God," since it went unrebuked by Jesus, is equivalent to an assertion on His own part of His claim to Deity. (4) Rom. 9:5—"of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever." "We do not hesitate to affirm," writes Rotherham, "that this text, according to the only natural construction of it, represents the Christ as being, beyond His fleshly nature and descent, 'The One existing over all, God, blessed for ever' " (*ibid.*).

(5) Phil. 2:5-7, "Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself," etc. (6) Titus 2:13—"the . . . appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." This, says Ellicott, is a "direct, definite, and even studied declaration of Christ's divinity."

(7) Heb. 1:3—"who being the effulgence of his [God's] glory, and the very image of his substance," etc. "The Godhead of Christ is here, but here as subdued into the soft and mellow radiance of His Sonship. In other words, the God-nature is seen enhanced in the Son-relationship" (Rotherham). (8) I Tim. 1:17—"the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God," etc. (Cf. I Tim. 6:15-16, Heb. 1:8, I John 5:20, Rev. 1:8, Rev. 4:8, etc.).

#### 40. Q. What is a tenth proof of the Deity of Jesus?

A. A tenth proof of the Deity of Jesus is the ascription to Him of the attributes of Deity, in the New Testament writings.

(1) *Life* (John 1:4, 14:6). (2) *Self-existence* (John 5:26, Heb. 7:16). (3) *Immutability* (Heb. 13:8). (4) *Truth* (John 14:6, Rev. 3:7). (5) *Love* (I John 3:16.) (6) *Holiness* (Luke 1:35, John 6:69, Heb. 7:26). (7) *Eternity* (John 1:1, 17:5; Eph. 1:5; John 8:58; Col. 1:17; Heb.

1:10-11; Rev. 21:6). (8) *Omnipresence* (Matt. 28:20, Eph. 1:23). (9) *Omiscience* (Matt. 9:4; John 2:24-25, 4:17-19, 4:29, 16:30; Acts 1:24, etc.). (10) *Omnipotence* (Matt. 28:18, Rev. 1:8). (11) Cf. Isa. 9:6—"his name shall be called . . . Mighty God, Everlasting Father."

41. Q. What is an eleventh proof of the Deity of Jesus?

A. An eleventh proof of the Deity of Jesus is the ascription to Him of the works of God, in the New Testament writings.

(1) *Creation* (John 1:3, Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:10, etc.). (2) *Upholding, or Preservation* (Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3). (3) *Revelation* (John 1:18, 14:9). (4) *Redemption* (Gal. 3:13, 4:4, etc.). (5) *Raising the dead, and Judging the world* (John 5:26-29, Acts 10:42, Matt. 25:31-46, etc.). (6) *Exercise of universal Sovereignty* (Matt. 28:18, Phil. 2:9-11, Eph. 1:20-23, I Cor. 15:25-28, I Pet. 3:22, etc.).

42. Q. What is a twelfth proof of the Deity of Jesus?

A. A twelfth proof of the Deity of Jesus is the ascription to Him in the New Testament writings of honor and worship due only to God.

John 20:28—"My Lord and my God." Rom. 10:9—"if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord." Acts 7:59—"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Acts 1:24—"And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men," etc. I Cor. 11:24,25—"this do in remembrance of me." Heb. 1:6—"let all the angels of God worship him." Phil. 2:9-11, "that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Cf. John 5:23, Rom. 10:13, Rev. 5:12-14, 2 Pet. 3:18, 2 Tim. 4:18; I Tim. 1:17, 6:16, etc.

43. Q. What is a thirteenth proof of the Deity of Jesus?

A. A thirteenth proof of the Deity of Jesus is the association of His name with that of God the Father on a footing of equality, in the New Testament writings.

Matt. 28:19—"baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." 2 Cor. 13:14—"the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and

the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." I Pet. 1:2—"according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Cf. I Cor. 1:3; John 5:23, 14:1, 17:3; Matt. 11:27; 2 Thess. 2:16-17, etc.

**44. Q. What is a fourteenth proof of the Deity of Jesus?**

**A. A fourteenth proof of the Deity of Jesus is His influence upon human history and civilization.**

His impress upon human history has been such that even to-day, over nineteen hundred years after His earthly ministry, time is reckoned in relation to His advent in the Bethlehem manger. He is the Central Figure of all human history. He is yet today the hope of humanity, the one and only all-sufficient remedy for the ills of our civilization. In short: *Jesus is Himself the Miracle of the Ages.*

#### REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON NINETY-SEVEN

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