

# The Traveling Pulpit

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## The Deity of Jesus Christ

**“And the Word was made 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. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*. (Jh. 1:14-18)**

### Introduction

Our subject is a major foundation block upon which the Christian Faith is built. That subject being, The Deity of Jesus Christ! Let's begin by asking a simple question. Can people, who believe that Jesus Christ was a good moral example as well as a great teacher, deny His deity and be genuinely saved individuals? I will answer that question by saying that there are many who claim to be Christians, but do not truly know God. In other words, it's impossible to be saved and have a transforming encounter with the Lord of Glory while denying His deity. One may believe that Jesus was the greatest of all God's creatures and even believe in His pre-existence, yet deny Him as God in human flesh.

In spite of man's depraved view of God, Christ's deity is clearly taught throughout Scripture and confirmed in the pages of the New Testament. If a person fails to recognize the deity of Jesus Christ, then His atonement for our sin will also be mistaken and one will have a distorted concept of salvation. When the “angel ... appeared unto ... Joseph,” he declared that Christ would be called “Emmanuel which being interpreted is God with us” (Matt. 1:20-23). Standing before the Sanhedrin on

the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus affirmed His deity by using a Greek idiom for “YES” in answering His critics. When asked “Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am” (Lk. 22:70).

Belief in Christ’s deity is essential in order for Him to be the sinner’s Savior. Many cults believe that Jesus was merely a created being who became human through the virgin birth. They deny Christ as the Son of God. They believe that God sent a third party to pay for sin. However, the historic Christian Faith sees Jesus Christ as God in human flesh Who endured our agony of Hell on Calvary as our substitute for sin. In other words, God Himself took our punishment for us. Christ suffered the wrath of God upon Hell deserving sinners in our place. This mind boggling love of God wrapped Himself in human flesh and did for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Therefore, we must approach the study of Christ’s incarnation just as Moses approached the burning bush. Do you remember what God told Moses on that occasion? God told Moses to “put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5). The study of Christ’s life is Holy Ground because there is no other life comparable to His. It can truly be said that He is the being who never began. The apostle John begins writing the first chapter by saying, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** (Jh. 1:1-13) At God’s appointed “time” (Gal. 4:4), this “Word” took upon Himself a physical body and became the One and only Godman. The infinite became finite as the invisible became tangible. While never ceasing to be God, He became a perfect Man without any flaw of sin.

### **His Mysterious Incarnation v.14a**

Over 2,000 years ago, this One Who “was with God” and Who “was God” appeared on earth as a babe in the likeness of sinful flesh. Christ is not God in a man and neither is He God with a man. He is the Godman, possessing two perfect natures. Bethlehem’s Babe was “God with us” (Matt. 1:23). Please notice that the word, “Word,” is His divine title and the word, “flesh,” speaks of His holy humanity. As the “Word,” Christ could be heard, but not seen. As the “flesh,” Christ could be seen, but not heard. However, when the “Word became flesh,” Christ could be both heard and seen in human form. The remedy for sin in our sin cursed world is discovered in God’s merger of “Word” and “flesh.”

The union of “Word” and “flesh” is as much a mystery as the Trinity itself (I Tim. 3:16). Christ didn’t take upon Himself the nature of angels, but in grace, He chose to appear on earth like unto the seed of Abraham in the body of humanity. The incarnation is a “great mystery of godliness.” Just remember that the “mystery” of the incarnation is the “mystery” of grace. I don’t understand why God chose to come as He did, but neither do I understand why God chose to save a wretch like me. All I know is that His union of the two natures was necessary in order to equip Christ for His office of Mediator today (Heb. 4:15).

### **His Profound Humiliation v.14b**

Christ humbled Himself to leave the portals of glory and live on a sin cursed earth among sinners. His arrival in Bethlehem’s manger was not a hurried greeting like the angels who appeared to Mary and Joseph. Jesus didn’t just visit planet earth, but He “dwelt among us” for some thirty-three plus

years in a body of flesh. He had arms and legs, fingers and toes just like all the rest of us mortals. His coming to earth was a voluntary adoption of Himself into the family of humanity. He voluntarily chose poverty to become a helpless babe in a humble barn.

In the Old Testament, God tabernacled with Israel in the wilderness in “a “pillar of cloud” by day and a “pillar of fire” by night (Ex. 13:21). However, in the New Testament God humbled Himself in the very likeness of sinful man. “Dwelt among us” in the Greek means the same thing as pitching a tent. In other words, Christ pitched His tent among us, He tabernacled among us. He came and lived among us in a body of flesh. The Old Testament tabernacle was the place where God met with man as it foreshadowed the incarnate Christ through the various types. Therefore, Scripture affirms both in the Old and New Testaments that Jesus Christ is the only place where man can meet and know God in saving grace. In the Old Testament, the tabernacle was only temporary, whereas the temple became a more permanent structure. Likewise, Christ stay on earth was extended as He “dwelt among us,” but yet it was not at that time permanent. There came a day when He was nailed to an old rugged cross and died for the “sins of his people” (Matt. 1:21). Then, He was placed in a borrowed tomb to be raised victorious over death on the third day. Someday, He’s coming again in great glory at which time He will reign forevermore as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (I Tim. 6:15, Rev. 17:14, 19:16).

### **His Testimony of Salvation v.14c-17**

To experience Jesus Christ is to experience His glory. On the Mt. of Transfiguration the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ saw a glimpse of His matchless “glory.” However, the outward manifestation which they saw was only the visible expression of the inward “glory” of His “grace.” The only way to behold the “glory” of God is to behold it in the face of “the only begotten of the Father” (Jh. 14:9). To know God’s “glory” is to know His “fullness” (Jh 14:16). After Joseph’s brothers beheld his glory in Egypt, they were permitted to live with him and so shall it be with the children of God. Immediately at conversion the Holy Spirit is given us as the “earnest of our inheritance” (Eph. 1:14). As a born again child of God, we have the assurance that the best is yet to come. One of these day, the Lord is going to call us home to live with Him forever.

Not only did “grace and truth” come by Jesus Christ, but He is “full of grace and truth.” The “grace” of Jesus Christ is the kindness of God upon Hell deserving sinners. Grace is often defined as God’s unmerited favor. Sometimes, the acrostic for Grace is used to mean God Redeeming At Christ’s Expense or God Redeeming At Calvary’s Expense. Grace is God’s outward demonstration of love for sinners in the death of Jesus Christ. By the mere fact that our God is “full of grace” tells us that His “grace” is inexhaustible. When it comes to “grace” it’s a fountain that shall never run dry. Regardless of sickness, sadness, or salvation, God’s “grace” is “sufficient” for our every need (II Cor. 12:9).

When it came to “grace,” God didn’t just tell us about it, but He demonstrated it in the Person of His “only begotten son” (Jh. 3:16). “Grace and truth” are inseparable companions. While “truth” condemns us, it is “grace” that forgives us. In the incarnate Christ, we see the personification of God’s “grace.” Jesus achieved the perfect balance between “grace and truth.” In Him alone, God is just in justifying the unjust who will repent and believe in God’s “only begotten son.”

### **His Divine Manifestation v.18**

The only way to ever see and know God is through a personal saving encounter with Jesus Christ. I’ve had people to ask me down through the years. Knowing that “God is a spirit” (Jh. 4:24), will we ever see God? The answer to that question is YES. To see Christ is to see God. It is the manner in which God reveals Himself as Jesus explained to Philip. “Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in

me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (Jh. 14:9-11).

Christ being "in the bosom of the Father" depicts the eternal, immortal, and invisible character of the "Son." In becoming man, Christ didn't leave His place of union with the Father (Matt. 11:27, I Jh. 5:7-8). The incarnation never impaired the intimacy of Christ with the Father. It takes God the Father to know the greatness of God the Son. It takes God the Son to give a perfect declaration of God the Father. It takes God the Spirit to make man capable of receiving the manifestation of God the Father.

### **Closing**

The "Word" (Jh. 1:1,14) is the eternal incarnate Christ Who alone dispels the darkness of the world. Salvation is not an assent to logical principles, but it's a supernatural and eternal change in one who truly rests completely on the finished work of the incarnated "lamb of God: (Jh. 1:29). If you've never before, would you today see the "glory" of God in the incarnate Christ? The same Holy Spirit that impregnated Mary must impregnate our hearts with "the Truth" (Jh. 14:6), Jesus Christ. The same Holy Spirit that birthed Jesus Christ into the world, must birth us into the "kingdom of God" (Jh. 3:3).

It's so very sad, but the majority of people go through life without genuinely being alive. I'm referring to spiritual life. Eating, breathing, working, and sleeping are automatic functions of physical life. In other words, people get out of bed, go to work, come home, go to sleep, and get up the next day to repeat the same routine. However, the necessary factor that makes life worth living is spiritual life through the new birth. Jesus said that He came so we might have "life ... more abundantly" (Jh. 10:10). To know spiritual life in Christ is to know "everlasting life" (Jh. 3:16) and without "everlasting life" nobody can know life to its fullest. Have you ever "received" the "fullness" of God's "grace" in Jesus Christ? Have you ever been transformed by the wonder working power of the Holy Spirit and birthed into the family of God? Because Jesus Christ is Deity, He can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He came to save His people from their sins. Halleluiah, what a Savior!!

### **A Ministry Update**

It's been said that time flies when you're having fun. Well, I must be having lots of fun because it seems like only yesterday that we were celebrating the start of 2016 and now here we are at 2017. This past year was one that we'll never forget, but God remained faithful through all our health issues for which we praise His Holy Name. Having just come through the 2016 Christmas season, I chose to share in this quarter's Bible Study, a message on "The Deity of Jesus Christ." May it be a reminder to us all of the price our Savior paid in stepping out of the halls of paradise to a sin infested world to be our Blessed Redeemer.

I remind you that all of my books and publications are now available over our website as well as the radio messages. If you prefer a bound book edition instead of reading the flip book over the internet, they are free for the asking. This past year has been the best yet for our internet outreach. We've had over 30,000 "hits" on our website.

I'm also glad to report that a new radio station has been added to our Sunday broadcasts over WBXR FM-101.3 Huntsville, AL, at 1:45 PM (Central) or 2:45 PM (Eastern). As always, "thank you" all for your prayers and support to this ministry. May God give you the assurance of His loving presence and sufficient grace every step through this New Year.

Because of His Sovereign Grace.....BWM