

## The Deity of Christ

### Incarnation: part 1

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CHRISTMAS DÉCOR PIC: Well, there is good news and bad news about my **Christmas decorations** this year. The good news is that I truly out did myself this year with my Christmas decorations. The bad news: the cops advised me that it would cause traffic accidents as they almost wrecked when they drove by. A 70 year old lady grabbed the 75 pound ladder almost killed herself putting it against my house and didn't realize it was fake until she climbed to the top (she was not happy).

What is God like? People can **speculate** all they want. "Well, I think...."; "Well, *I* think...." People think that just because they have opinions about who God is that that's all that matters. It doesn't matter if they're right or wrong. It doesn't matter what the ramifications are. As long as they have their opinions that's all that matters.

When I was growing up the most prevalent picture of God was this: a heavenly **killjoy** (looking for someone having fun and putting an end to that!), a God of wrath (meaning, one who blows his top, goes way overboard, and punishes unfairly). It was Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon, Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God.

Over time, this popular image of God morphed into something very different. God became a **grandfather** (lazily hanging out on front porch, swinging in his porch swing, watching you do whatever you wanted to do. If it was something bad "God" would just chuckle and say, "Boys will be boys.")

Speculation about unimportant things like football games is one thing. But speculation about important things is foolish if **investigating** will find more sure answers. But by-and-large, mankind is about as interested in investigating the facts about who God is, as a married man is interested in asking his wife for directions! It seems obvious that all would benefit by the man asking for **directions**, but his pride keeps him from doing so.

**Revelation:** God has gone to exorbitant lengths to reveal who he is to man so there is no need for speculation. The bible says that you *could* know a lot about God by looking at creation. You *could* know a lot about God by listening to His prophets. You *could* know a lot about God's activity in O.T. history over 2,000 years.

For the most part humanity rejected his prophets, rejected his kings, rejected his priests, and rejected his scripture. What else could he do to show people how much he loved them? How much their sin mattered to him? How much he wanted to give people freedom from their sin? God did the unthinkable. He became man!

**Incarnation** (Lat. incarnatio, being or taking flesh). **1. God became flesh.**

*John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Incarnation refers to the affirmation that God, in one of the modes of His existence as **Trinity** and without in any way ceasing to be the one God, has **revealed** Himself to humanity for its salvation by becoming human. Jesus, the Man from Nazareth, is the incarnate Word or Son of God. As the God-Man, He mediates God to humans; as the Man-God, He represents humans to God. By faith we become as adopted children of God the Father.

Paul, in a statement on the supremacy of Christ...**2. Divinity of Jesus.**

*Col. 1:19 Because all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him. (John 20:28; Titus 2:13).*

**3. Taking the Name of God.**

*Ex. 3:14 (God) "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

Jesus was aware of His divine status (John 10:30; 12:44-45; 14:9). With the "**I am**" sayings, He equated Himself with the God who appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3:14).

*John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "**I am** the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

**4. The assertion of the NT is that Jesus was God** (John 6:51; 8:58; 10:7,11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1).

- The **preexistence** of Jesus.

*John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. (John 1:15; 8:58; 17:5; Phil. 2:5-11).*

## 5. Jesus realized **accomplishments** and claimed authority ascribed only to divinity.

- He forgave sins.

*Matthew 9:6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."*

- sent others to do His bidding, claiming all authority.

*Matthew 28:18-19 (Jesus) "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"*

- The prime message of the gospel is that He is **the only way to eternal life**, a status held by deity alone.

*John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:9).*

- **Worthy of honor and worship** due only to deity (John 5:23; Heb. 1:6; Phil. 2:10-11; Rev. 5:12).

*John 5:23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.*

- He is the **Agent of creation**

*John 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

- **Mediator of providence**

*Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Heb. 1:3).*

- **He raised the dead**

*John 11:43 Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. (Jesus) "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."*

He healed the sick (John 9:6-7), and vanquished demons (Mark 5:13). He will effect the final resurrection of humanity either to judgment or to life (Matt. 25:31-32; John 5:27-29).

## 6. The **titles** ascribed to Jesus provide conclusive evidence for the NT's estimate of His person as God.

- Lord of Glory

*1 Corinthians 2:7-8 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

- Who is God over all...

*Romans 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

Jesus is "**Lord**" (Phil 2:11), "**Lord of lords**" (1 Tim. 6:15), "**the mediator**" (Heb. 12:24), In addition, the NT repeatedly couples the name "**God**" with Jesus (John 1:18; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 2 Thess. 1:12; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:1; 1 John 5:20).

**The mystery of the incarnation: Jesus, God incarnate, was one Person in two natures—fully divine and fully human.** Walter D. Draughon III

How did people come to faith in Christ? They watched and listened. Some asked directions. Some didn't. As a result some came to find joy, some didn't. Some found forgiveness and a new life; some didn't. Some found a



peace that passes all understanding; some didn't. But in the most profound sense, people's greatest opportunity to see the character of God was not even through the life of Christ. It was through his death. Roman **centurion**:

*Mark 15:39 "Truly this man was the Son of God."*

The Roman centurion believed that Jesus was God not because of Jesus' power, but through apparent "failure" and "defeat." As Jesus sacrificed and died on that cross the soldier saw God's presence alive in the man Jesus.

I hope you are wowed by this. God became man. But what does this mean for you and me? You can never again take **sin lightly**, as Jesus Christ saw it as something so destructive that he came out of heaven and endured the worst that man could throw at him to deal sin a deathblow. And you can never again take God's **love lightly**. He didn't have to become a man and suffer as he did, but he did, and he did for you!

Christmas confirms the ancient prophecy that he is "**Emmanuel**, God with us!" He is with us not just on **Sunday** morning or when you need a parking place at Target. He is not "God with us" just someday in heaven, or in private devotions. He is not just "God with us" in our successes and happiness. He is "God with us" in our failures, our heartaches, our sadness, our challenges, our struggles, our temptations, times when we feel lost, times when joy and peace seem to have left us. He is "God with us" in our fear, our anxiety, and our loneliness.

He wants to be "God with us" to **Tiger** and Elin Woods, people who have known the best the world has to offer and it's not enough. He wants to be "God with us" to us little people who live quiet lives of desperation.

**Looking for the Lord**, by John Fischer

A colleague in the ministry was at a coffee shop late one night that had internet access. His family's internet was down at home, and he had an article due early the next morning. Here's his story.

Monday night found me sitting on the ground leaning against the locked door of the local coffee bar with my laptop at 11:30 p.m. using their free wireless connection that was fortunately still working. It was freezing cold, at least by so. California standards. I felt no sense of inappropriateness about tapping into someone else's connection given the amount of money I have poured into this place during working hours.

Two doors down is a gay bar, and an off key version of Elton John's "I Guess That's Why They Call It the Blues" was heard. As I got in my car to drive away, I noticed in the rear view mirror, a man alone outside the gay bar in a dress. He lit up a cigarette. Just seeing his bare shoulders made me shiver on such a cold night. I felt a palatable loneliness for him.

When I got back to my desk at home, a text message from my wife was waiting for me. It read, "Be careful. Anyone out at this time is **searching for the Lord**, but doesn't know it." I thought of the man in my rear view mirror and knew she was right. Actually, she's right about all of us—even those who aren't out at night—we're all trying to find **something lost**. We need someone more than just a good man, a moral man, or a great example for us all. He need the Lord!

With every **Shortage**, every longing, every need...

We're looking for the Lord.

With every **Heartbreak**, every disappointment, every loss...

We're looking for the Lord.

With every **Accomplishment**, every triumph, every gain...

We're looking for the Lord.

With every **Mystery**, every question, every doubt...

We're looking for the Lord.

With every **Struggle**, every challenge, every fight...

We're looking for the Lord.