

Truth about God

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

(I Timothy 3:16)

INTRODUCTION:

Approximately two millennia ago a man named Jesus lived, walked, and taught in an area of the Middle East now called Israel. No sincere knowledgeable historian will deny the fact. In addition to twenty-seven books of the New Testament that speak of Him, historians of His time document His existence. Cornelius Tactius, a Roman historian of the beginning of the second century; Lucian, a satirist of the second century; and Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century, all refer to Jesus in their writings. Historically there is no question of Jesus' existence.

The question is, "Who was this Jesus of Nazareth?" Jesus asked who men said He was (Matthew 16:13). Men still continue to ask this question. And rightfully so, because the response each individual gives to this question will determine their eternal destiny. That is if Jesus was God. If He was not, He was a blasphemer who perhaps deserved the cruel death He received on the cross of Calvary. Such a question deserves conscientious, soul-searching research before giving an answer. To find the answer you must search the Word of God, the Bible. You will find that **Jesus was God.**

JESUS' EARLY LIFE:

The first indication of Jesus' deity comes from the record of His birth. It definitely was supernatural. His mother was a virgin named Mary, who conceived Jesus due to the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 1:18). An angel explained His conception to Joseph, Mary's betrothed, and dictated that the child should be called "JESUS: for he shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). His Father was God; His mother a virgin; and His mission, announced by an angel, was divine. He was no ordinary man. Jesus was the Son of God.

Scripture tells little of Jesus' childhood except for wise men being led by a star in the east to come and worship the King of the Jews. Angels announced His birth to

shepherds. Hearing that Christ the Lord was born, the shepherds went to worship Jesus. Then at the age of twelve, Luke tells us that Jesus' parents took Him to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When their caravan started on the return journey to Nazareth, Jesus did not accompany them. His parents, discovering this, returned to Jerusalem to locate Him. "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:46-49). Even at the age of twelve, Jesus knew that He had some heavenly business to attend to.

Again, however, scripture becomes relatively silent about Jesus for a time except for statements like, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52).

JESUS' MINISTRY:

Finally, at the age of thirty, Jesus emerged from obscurity to begin a ministry that would bring about His crucifixion. Jesus had been born without the curse of sin upon His life:

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet without sin.*" (Hebrews 4:14-15)

Even though He never committed a sin, soldiers and religious leaders of His day crucified Him on the cruel cross of Calvary as a blasphemer. Jesus claimed to be God, which if He was not, was blasphemy. If He was, His death was not in vain, but a vicarious one for every individual who wants to take advantage of it.

We have already seen how Jesus' miraculous birth and early life supports His claim to deity. Let us now take a brief look at His ministry and its effect. Many volumes fill the libraries of the world concerning Jesus' ministry. His impact upon mankind can only be measured in eternity. Words are too confined to express it. Napoleon Bonaparte said it probably about as well as any, "I tell you, I know men. Jesus was more than a man. Charlemagne, Alexander, and I have founded empires, but on what have we founded them? On force! Jesus has founded an empire greater in territorial extent, and vaster in significance, on love. I have inspired men so that they would die for me, but fancy a man dying for me nearly twenty centuries after I am dead, and yet that's what men are doing, the world over, for this man, Jesus of Nazareth."

Yes, Jesus' ministry must have been supernatural to have such a lasting effect. Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, during the time of persecution of the followers of Jesus, spoke truth. At that time Christianity was a relatively new thing and the accepted religious leaders of that day were trying to stamp it out by slaying Jesus' followers. Gamaliel arose to the disciples' defense with words of wisdom, "And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." (Acts 5:35-39).

What was there about Jesus' ministry that caused men to have such loyalty to Him even two thousand years after His life on earth? Simply the fact that He was God come to earth to perform work that would redeem men from sin. During His ministry He performed many miracles that attested to His supernatural power, but still they were not enough to cause men to live and die for Him two thousand years later. He turned water into wine, healed the lame, the deaf, the blind, even brought the dead back to life, but Jesus was more than miracle worker. **Jesus was God manifested in the flesh** (I Timothy 3:16). God was come to reconcile the world unto Himself (II Corinthians 5:19)

Some men of Jesus' day, being hungry for truth and sensitive to the Spirit of God, received the revelation from God that Jesus was the promised One of the Old Testament. Jesus inquired of His disciples on the coasts of Caesarea, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15,16). From the writing of some of the apostles and disciples it is obvious that they recognized Jesus as the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Being Jews and knowledgeable of the Old Testament they knew well that there was but one Jehovah God. To believe anything else was idolatry. The first commandment of the law was, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29). "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me..." (Isaiah 45:5). For them to accept Jesus as God was completely against their background, teaching and character. The evidence for Jesus' deity had to be overwhelming in their eyes. Study of scripture shows it was.

PROOFS OF JESUS' DEITY:

Jesus possessed the attributes of deity. Jesus possessed characteristics that belong to God. Many Biblical authors referred to the eternality of Jesus:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

“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. ...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 1:1-3,14)

“Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**” (John 8:58)

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Colossians 1:17)

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;” (1 John 1:1)

Jesus is everywhere present at the same time, omnipresent (Matthew 18:20, 28:20). His disciples testified openly of His omniscience, or all knowing, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things..." (John 16:30). Peter confessed of Jesus, "...Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee" (John 17:30). Matthew 28:18 records Jesus' claim to omnipotence, or all power, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Paul confirmed Jesus' power, " ...he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippines 3:21). Hebrews 13:8 expresses Jesus' immutability, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Jesus received worship, "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33). Jesus, Himself, declared that only God was to be worshipped: "Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**" (Matthew 4:10).

The work that Jesus performed further attests to His deity. If Jesus were not God He could not have been the Creator, however, "All things were made by Him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Only God can forgive sin as Jesus did:

“And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; **Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.** And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, **Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and walk*? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on**

earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) **Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.** And he arose, and departed to his house.”

(Matthew 9:2-7)

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, **Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.** But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, **Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?” (Mark 2:5-7)**

And when all is said and done Jesus will be the judge of all (John 5:22).

Jesus also possessed the names of God. Isaiah 9:6 referred to Him as the "Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." Isaiah also prophesied, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). Matthew 1:23 says, " ...Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Jeremiah prophesied of Him being called "The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). Jesus claimed the names of God. He referred to Himself as the Son of God (John 10:36) and told the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58); which they knew had reference to the name of Jehovah which was given to Moses from the burning bush: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:14).

The name Jesus actually is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word **Joshua**. The name Joshua comes from a contraction of God's name **Jehovah**, with the Hebrew name Hoshea which means *salvation*. So Jesus actually means **Jehovah has become our salvation**: "Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the **LORD JEHOVAH is** my strength and *my* song; he **also is become my salvation.**" (Isaiah 12:2).

Jesus did not hesitate to claim to be God. As well as referring to Himself as the Son of God, and the I Am, Jesus asserted His deity in other ways. Jesus told His disciples, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Jesus further stated that:

- to see Him was to see God: "**And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.**" (John 12:45) "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*, Show us the Father?**" (John 14:9);
- to know Him was to know God: "...**if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.**" (John 8:19);
- to believe in Him was to believe in God: "Jesus cried and said, **He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.**" (John 12:44);
- to receive Him was to receive God: "**Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.**" (Mark 9:37);

- to honor Him was to honor God: **“That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.”** (John 5:23);
- to hate Him was to hate God: **“He that hateth me hateth my Father also.”** (John 15:23).

Truly the evidence was enough to convince the disciples that Jesus was God because they wrote and spoke of it. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16). Thomas, seeing the nail prints in His hands and the wound in his side after His resurrection, cried out, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). John began his gospel by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Verse fourteen, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." Paul summed it all up by explaining a mystery, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Timothy 3:16).

CONCLUSION:

The evidence is in, the verdict is conclusive: Jehovah of the Old Testament, Father of all, desired to reconcile man unto Himself. To do it He needed a sinless human sacrifice. Since all men inherit the sinful nature of their father, Adam, God needed a special man having His divine Holiness, a God-man. Therefore, God in heaven, "...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippines 2:7,8). The eternal God of glory decided to let the fullness of His godhead dwell bodily in the person of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:9). This Jesus was crucified on the cross of Calvary, but being sinless, death had no power over Him. Therefore, the eternal Spirit of God that was manifested in Him quickened His mortal body to arise from the grave within three days. Jesus is alive to live evermore!

As a result, if we will believe that Jesus is the Christ, and obey His commands, repent of our sins and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, we can be redeemed from sin and its consequences. He will then fill us with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38), and if we continue to live a holy life before Him we will be partakers of His gift of eternal life.

But, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:8,9). "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" (John 20:31).