

# The Deity of Jesus Christ

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## **1. Does Christ Make Statements Only God Would Make?**

The following Scriptures, given the character of Jesus Christ, are only logically explained on the basis of His deity:

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. (John 6:38)

And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. (John 17:5)

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58)

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18)

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Jesus said... "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." (John 11:25)

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24; see John 10:27, 28; 11:25)

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. (John 12:45; see John 14:7-11; 17:5)

All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:15)

While I am in the world, I am the light of the world, (John 9:5)

There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. (John 12:48)

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 3:36)

[The Father has entrusted all judgments to the Son] 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. (John 5:23)

When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. (John 12:44)

Can we imagine the president of the United States appearing on national TV and making such claims for himself? Can we imagine even the most exalted angel doing so? The magnitude of these claims are such that if they are not true, Jesus cannot be considered a sane or a good man. He would have to be considered as the founder of the greatest sys-

tem of idolatry the world has ever seen. Loraine Boettner asserts in his *Studies in Theology* (1980, p. 144):

Certainly on the basis of His own teaching Jesus claimed Deity for Himself. No unprejudiced reader can reach any other conclusion. Such has been the impression of the great mass of those who have read the New Testament. This has led Dr. A. H. Strong to observe that "if He is not God, He is a deceiver or is self-deceived, and in either case, Christ, if not God, is not good." And Dr. E. Y. Mullins has pointed out that if we deny His Deity then "we must conclude that, with all His moral beauty and excellence, Jesus was a pitiable failure as a teacher if He did not succeed in guarding His message against corruptions which have led to His own exaltation as God, and to the existence through eighteen centuries of a system of idolatry of which He is the center."

Note again the close relationship between God and Christ in the following Scriptures. No mere creature, however exalted, could rationally make such claims:

I and the Father are One. (John 10:30)

He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father. (John 5:23)

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. (John 8:19)

He who beholds Me, beholds the One who sent Me. (John 12:45)

Whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. (John 5:19)

No one knows the Father except the Son. (Matthew 11:27)

You believe in God, believe also in Me. (John 14:1)

He who has seen Me, has seen the Father. (John 14:9)

He who hates me, hates my Father. (John 15:23)

He who receives Me, receives the One who sent Me. (Matthew 10:40)

All that belongs to the Father is mine. (John 16:15)

My Father is working until now and I am working. (John 5:17)

## ***2. Does Christ Conform to the Attributes of Deity?***

In the following condensed descriptions of various Scriptures, we see that Jesus Christ is God because He has the attributes of God.

### ***Eternity***

The everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6).

From everlasting (Micah 5:2).

In the beginning, He always was (John 1:1, 2, 14, 15).

Jesus had glory with God before the world was created (John 17:5).

### ***Omnipresence***

Where two or three are, He is there (Matthew 18:20).

He is with us always (Matthew 28:20).

He is in every believer (John 14:20-23).

He fills all (Ephesians 1:23; 4:20).

### ***Omniscience***

He knows people's thoughts (Mark 2:8; Luke 6:8; 11:17).

He knew the manner of His death (Matthew 16:21; John 12:33).

He knew the Father (Matthew 11:27; Only God can know Himself—1 Corinthians 2:11, 16).

He knew who would betray Him (John 6:64, 70-71).

He knew the future (John 2:19-22; John 18:4; John 13:19; Matthew 24:35).

He saw Nathaniel under the fig tree (John 1:49).

He knew the history of the Samaritan woman (John 4:29).

The disciples' testimony (John 16:30; 17:30).

He knew all men (John 2:24, 25).

While Christ is God, we must remember that in the incarnation He had surrendered the independent use of His attributes (Philippians 2:6-8; John 5:30). As a true man, He was a servant to the Father, as an example to us (John 13:4, 5). Therefore, while on earth, there were some things the Father did not allow Him to know and in His humanity only He was not omniscient. Thus, He didn't know the time of His return (Mark 13:32); He went to see if there was fruit on a fig tree (Mark 11:13) and He marveled at both unbelief (Mark 6:6) and belief (Matthew 8:10).

### ***Omnipotence and Sovereignty***

He is the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).

He does whatever the Father does (John 5:19).

He upholds all things (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).

All authority, including over all mankind, is given to Him (Matthew 28:18; John 17:2, 3).

He is the head over all rule and authority (Colossians 2:10).

He has power to subject all things unto Himself (Philippians 3:21).

He will reign until He has put all enemies under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25).

He exerts control over His own life and death (John 10:18).

He is the ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5).

He has power over nature (Luke. 8:25).

He is Lord of all (Revelations 19:16; 1 Peter 3:22, Colossians 1:18; Acts 10:36).

### ***Immutability***

He is always and forever the same (Hebrews 13:8 cf., 1:12, 8, 10).

His words will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).

### ***Holy***

He is holy (Revelation 3:7)

He is the holy offspring that will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

He knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

He is without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

He is holy, innocent, undefiled, and separated from sinners (Hebrews 7:26).

He is unblemished and spotless (1 Peter 1:19).

He committed no sin (John 8:46; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22).

### ***Truth***

He is full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The truth is in Jesus (Ephesians 4:21).

He is the truth (John 14:6).

He is faithful and true (Revelation 19:11).

If the major attributes of deity are ascribed to Christ, the only logical conclusion is that Christ is God.

### **3. Are the Names, Titles, and Designations of God Ascribed to Christ?**

The following comparisons between **God in the Old Testament** and **Christ in the New Testament** prove that Jesus Christ is God. Any creature, however exalted, is unworthy of these statements collectively, and often individually.

#### **PROOF THAT JESUS CHRIST IS GOD**

Descriptions of God in the Old Testament used of Jesus in the New Testament

1. The first and the last—Isaiah 41:4; 44,6; 48:12 / Revelation 2:8; 22:13
2. I AM—Exodus 3:14 / John 8:58; John 13:19
3. Author of eternal words—Isaiah. 40:8; Psalm 119:89 / Matthew 24:35; John 6:68
4. Light—Psalm 27:1 / John 1:4-9; 8:12; 1 John 1:5
5. Rock—Deuteronomy 32:31; Psalm 18:2; Isaiah 8:14; Psalm 92:15 / 1 Peter 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 10:4
6. Bridegroom—Isaiah 62:5; Hosea 2:16 / Mark 2:19; Revelation 21:2
7. Shepherd—Psalm 23:1 / John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20
8. Forgiver of sins—Jeremiah 31:34 / Acts 5:31
9. Redeemer—Hosea 13:14; Psalm 130:7 / Titus 2:13,14; Revelation 5:9
10. Savior—Isaiah 43:3; Hosea 13:4 / 2 Peter 1:1, 11; Titus 2:10-13; Acts 4:12 (cf., Titus 1, 3)
11. The Lord of Glory—Isaiah 42:8 / John 17:1-5; 1 Corinthians 2:8
12. Judge—Joel 3:12 / Matthew 25:31-46
13. The Second Coming God—Zechariah 14:5 / Matthew 16:27; 24:29-31
14. The First Coming God—Isaiah 40:3 / Matthew 3:3
15. King of Glory—Psalm 24:7, 10 / 1 Corinthians 2:8; John 17:5
16. Jehovah our righteousness—Jeremiah 23:5, 6 / 1 Corinthians 1:30
17. Jehovah the first and last—Isaiah 44:6; 48:12-16 / Revelation 1:8, 17; 22:13
18. Jehovah above all—Psalm 97:9 / John 3:31
19. Jehovah's fellow and equal—Zechariah 13:7 / Philippians 2:6
20. The Lord Almighty—Isaiah 6:1-3; 8:13-14 / John 12:41; 1 Peter 2:8
21. Jehovah—Psalm 110:1 / Matthew 22:42-45
22. Jehovah the Shepherd—Isaiah 40:11 / Hebrews 13:20
23. Jehovah, for whose glory all things were created—Proverbs 16:4 / Colossians 1:16
24. Jehovah the messenger of the Covenant—Malachi 3:1 / Luke 7:27
25. Invoked as Jehovah—Joel 2:32; Isaiah 45:22 / 1 Corinthians 1:2
26. The eternal God and Creator—Psalm 102:24-27 / Hebrews 1:8, 10-12
27. The great God and savior—Isaiah 43:11-12 / Titus 1:3-4; 2:10, 13; 3:4-6
28. God the Judge—Ecclesiastes 12:14 / 1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1
29. Emmanuel—Isaiah 7:14 / Matthew 1:23
30. The Holy One—1 Samuel 2:2 / Acts 3:14

31. Lord of the Sabbath—Genesis 2:3 / Matthew 12:8
32. Lord of All—1 Chronicles 29:11-12 / Acts 10:36; Romans 10:11-13
33. Creator of all things—Isaiah 40:28; Psalm 148:1-5 / John 1:3; Colossians 1:16
34. Supporter, preserver of all things—Nehemiah 9:6 / Colossians 1:17
35. Stumbling rock of offense—Isaiah 8:13-14 / Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8; Acts 4:11
36. Confess that He is Lord—Isaiah 45:23 (Jehovah) / Philippians 2:11 (Jesus)
37. The Judge of all men—Psalm 98:9 / Acts 17:31
38. Raiser of the dead—1 Samuel 2:6; Psalm 119 (11 times) / John 11:25; 5:21 w/Luke 7:12-16
39. Co-sender of the Holy Spirit—John 14:16 (The Father sends) / (Jesus sends) John 15:26
40. Led captivity captive—Psalm 68:18 / Ephesians 4:7, 8
41. Seen by Isaiah—Isaiah 6:1 / John 12:41
42. Judge of the nations—Joel 3:12 / Matthew 25:31-41
43. Salvation by calling on the name of the Lord—Joel 2:32 / Romans 10:13

#### **4. Are the Prerogatives of Deity Ascribed to Christ?**

- Raising the dead while on earth (Matthew 9:25, the Synagogue official's daughter; Luke 7:12-16, the widow's son; John 11:44, Lazarus; John 2:19-22, Himself).
- Doing the works of God (John 10:37-39).
- Giver of eternal life with authority over all mankind (John 17:2; John 10:28).
- Worshipped by angels (Psalm 148:2): God—Hebrews 1:6; Jesus—Luke 4:8.
- Addressed in prayer (Acts 7:59).
- Providence and eternal dominion (Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 17:2; Ephesians 1:2; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 1:5).
- Power to transform the bodies of all believers (Philippians 3:21).
- Raising the dead for judgment (John 5:24-29; Acts 10:42; Acts 17:31).
- Worship by people. Only God is worthy of worship (Psalm 95:6). Neither people (Acts 10:25-6), nor angels (Revelation 19:10) are to receive worship, only God (Luke 4:8). But Jesus received worship from: the man born blind (John 9:38); the disciples (Matthew 14:33; 28:17); the wise men (Matthew 2:2, 11); the young ruler (Matthew 9:18); women (Matthew 28:9); the disciples (Matthew 28:17); the demons (Mark 3:11; 5:6); everyone (Philippians 2:10, 11); the four elders (Revelation 5:14).
- Forgives sin (Matthew 1:21; Mark 2:7).
- Sending the Holy Spirit (a creature cannot send God; John 16:7; cf. 14:26).

Even in the baptismal formula, we find Christ clearly asserting His Deity. In his *Studies in Theology* (1980, pp. 144-145) Loraine Boettner quotes the great Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 204):

The precise form of the formula must be carefully observed. It does not read: "In the names" (plural)—as if there were three beings enumerated, each with its distinguishing name. Nor yet: "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," as if there were one person, going by a threefold name. It reads: "In the name (singular) of the Father and of the (article repeated) Son, and of the (article repeated) Holy Spirit," carefully distinguishing three

persons, though uniting them all under one name. The name of God was to the Jews Jehovah, and to name the name of Jehovah upon them was to make them His. What Jesus did in this great injunction was to command His followers to name the name of God upon their converts, and to announce the name of God which is to be named on their converts in the threefold enumeration of “the Father” and “the Son” and “the Holy Spirit.” As it is unquestionable that He here intended Himself by “the Son,” He here places Himself by the side of the Father and Spirit, as together with them constituting the one God. It is, of course, the Trinity which he is describing and that is as much as to say that He announces Himself as one of the persons of the Trinity.

### **5. Does Scripture Declare Unequivocally that Christ Is God?**

As if the “Proof that Jesus Christ is God” comparisons were not sufficient, Scripture plainly declares Christ’s deity:

- John 1:1, 14, “The word **was God**.... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”
- John 1:18, “The only begotten **God**.”
- John 20:28, Thomas said to him [Jesus] “My Lord and **my God**.”
- Titus 2:13, “Our Great **God** and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
- Hebrews 1:8, But about the Son he says, “Your throne **O God**, will last forever and ever.”
- 2 Peter 1:1, “Our **God** and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
- 1 John 5:20, “Jesus Christ. He is the **true God** and eternal life.”
- Colossians 2:9, “In Christ all the fullness of **the Deity** lives in bodily form.”
- Isaiah 9:6, “For to us a child is born...and He will be called *Mighty God*.”
- Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23, “Immanuel”—“God with us.”
- Hebrews 1:1-3, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the **exact representation of His being**....”
- Colossians 1:15-17, “He is the **image of the invisible God**... by him **all things** were created.”
- Acts 20:28, The church was purchased with the blood of **God**.
- 2 Corinthians 4:4, “Christ, who is the **image of God**.”
- Romans 9:5, “Christ, who is **God** over all, forever praised.”
- 1 Corinthians 1:24, “Christ the **power of God** and the **wisdom of God**.”
- 2 Thessalonians 1:12, “Our **God** and Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Philippians 2:6, “being in **very nature God**.” (The Greek could be literally translated “continuing to subsist in the form of God.”)

Some critics have responded to the above listing with, “Is that all?” Others, even some theologians, have claimed that the actual direct scriptural references to Christ’s deity in the New Testament are “exceedingly few.”

Only one clear reference of God to Christ’s deity should be sufficient; the truth is we have hundreds of direct and indirect references. The term for “Jehovah God” that is employed some 6,000 times in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) is *kurios* (Lord). In other words, *kurios* is the specific term the Septuagint translators chose to

designate the one true God of all the earth. The Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers were well aware of this fact. What is significant is that the very word chosen to designate *God* in the Septuagint is the word *they* chose to designate Jesus Christ in the New Testament—*kurios*. The implication of this could hardly be lost on either the New Testament writers or its readers. The New Testament writers clearly chose to describe Jesus Christ as God hundreds of times by their use of the term *kurios*.

## 6. Other Testimonies

Thomas: “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28).

Peter: “The Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16; to a Jew, this made Him God’s equal, cf., John 5:18).

John: “Making Himself [Jesus] equal with God” (John 5:18).

The Jews: “You a mere man claim[ing] to be God” (John 10:33).

The High Priest” “You have heard the blasphemy” (Mark 14:61-64).

## The Deity of Christ and Early Church Testimony

Some critics, as well as most liberal theologians, maintain that the doctrine of the trinity was not part of the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, but merely invented by the church centuries later. Emanuel Swedenborg, founder of the Church of the New Jerusalem claimed that the apostolic church knew nothing of the Trinity and that the Trinity was really fabricated by the Council of Nicea in the fourth century as a belief in three Gods, not the one true God, which he believed was unipersonal: “A Trinity of Persons was unknown in the Apostolic church, but was hatched by the Nicean Council,” and “No other trinity than a trinity of Gods was understood by the members of the Nicean Council...[and] so understood by the whole Christian world as well.”<sup>1</sup> Likewise, in a sermon given in August, 1964, at New York City, liberal theologian James A. Pike declared, “The Trinity is not necessary. Our Lord never heard of it. The apostles knew nothing of it.” Victor Paul Wierwille, founder of “The Way International,” claims in his book, *Jesus Christ Is Not God*, that the early church (to 330 A.D.) never believed in the Trinity or in Christ’s deity. He argues, “Certainly, during this time, church leaders spoke of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but they never referred to them as co-equal.... In fact, the opposite was the case. They spoke of the Father as supreme, the true and only God... and of the son *as inferior*... having a beginning, visible, *begotten, immutable*.”<sup>2</sup>

But is this really what we find when we carefully examine the writings of the earliest Christian leaders, or is this merely an invention by those who, for whatever reason, choose not to believe in the Trinity? The following twenty-two chronological examples of key leaders show that the early church clearly believed that Jesus Christ was God:

**Ignatius of Antioch (30-107 A.D.).** He was born before Christ died and consistently spoke of the deity of Jesus Christ. Consider a few examples: In his writings *To the Ephesians*, *To the Romans*, *To the Magnesians* and other letters, we find references such as the following: “Jesus Christ our God”; “who is God and man”; “received knowledge of God, that is, Jesus Christ”; “for our God, Jesus the Christ”; “for God was manifest as man”; “Christ, who was from eternity with the Father”; “from God, from Jesus Christ”; “from Jesus Christ, our God”; “Our God, Jesus Christ”; “suffer me to follow the example of the passion of my God”; “Jesus Christ the God” and “Our God Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup> The fact that Ignatius was

not rebuked, nor branded as teaching heresy by any of the churches or Christian leaders he sent such letters to proves that the early church, long before 107 A.D., accepted the deity of Christ.

**Polycarp (69-155 A.D.).** He possibly spoke of “Our Lord and God Jesus Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

**Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.).** He wrote of Jesus, “who... being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God.”<sup>5</sup> In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, he stated that “God was born from a virgin” and that Jesus was “worthy of worship” and of being “called Lord and God.”<sup>6</sup>

**Tatian (110-172 A.D.).** This early apologist wrote, “We do not act as fools, O Greeks, nor utter idle tales when we announce that God was born in the form of man.”<sup>7</sup>

**Theophilus (116-181 A.D.).** He was the first to use the term “Trinity” in his *Epistle to Antolycux II*, xv.<sup>8</sup>

**Irenaeus of Lyons and Rome (120-202 A.D.).** He wrote that Jesus was “perfect God and perfect man”; “not a mere man...but was very God”; and that “He is in Himself in His own right...God, and Lord, and King Eternal” and spoke of “Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour and King.”<sup>9</sup>

**Tertullian of Carthage (145-220 A.D.).** He said of Jesus “Christ is also God” because “that which has come forth from God [in the virgin birth] is at once God and the Son of God, and the two are one...in His birth, God and man united.” Jesus is “both Man and God, the Son of Man and the Son of God.”<sup>10</sup>

**Hippolytus (170-235 A.D.).** He said, “[it is] the Father who is above all, the Son who is through all, and the Holy Spirit who is in all. And we cannot otherwise think of one God, but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit.... For it is through this Trinity that the Father is glorified.... The whole Scriptures, then, proclaim this truth.” And, “the *Logos* is God, being *the* substance of God.”<sup>11</sup>

**Caius (180-217 A.D.).** He was a Roman Presbyter who wrote of the universal Christian attestation to the deity of Christ in his refutation of Artemon, who maintained that Christ was only a man. Caius appealed to much earlier writers, all of whom taught Christ’s deity: “Justin and Miltiades, and Tatian and Clement, and many others—who is ignorant of the books of Irenaeus and Melito, and the rest, which declare Christ to be God and man? All the psalms, too, and hymns of brethren, *which have been written from the beginning by the faithful*, celebrate Christ the Word of God, ascribing divinity to Him.... [This] doctrine of the Church, then, has been proclaimed so many years ago,...”<sup>12</sup>

**Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neo-Caesarea (205-270 A.D.).** He declared in *On the Trinity*, that “All [the persons] are one nature, one essence, one will, and are called the Holy Trinity; and these also are names subsistent, one nature in three persons, and one genus [kind].”<sup>13</sup> He referred to Jesus as “God of God” and “God the Son.”<sup>14</sup>

**Novatian of Rome (210-280 A.D.).** He wrote in his *On The Trinity* of Jesus being truly a man but that “He was also God according to the Scriptures.... Scripture has as much described Jesus Christ to be man, as moreover it has also described Christ the Lord to be God.... this same Jesus is called also God and the Son of God.” “Christ Jesus [is] our Lord God.”<sup>15</sup> (Note, then, that in the 200’s we already had discourses on the Trinity.)

**Origen of Alexandria (wrote ca 230 A.D.).** He stated that Christ was “God and man.”<sup>16</sup> In 254 A.D. he wrote, “Jesus Christ...while he was God, and though made man, remained God as he was before.”<sup>17</sup>

**Athanasius (293-373 A.D.).** This keen defender of New Testament teaching against the early Arian heresy, which taught that Jesus Christ was not God, declared of Jesus, “He always was and is God and Son,” and “He who is eternally God,... also became man for our sake.”<sup>18</sup>

**Lucian of Antioch (300 A.D.).** “We believe in... one Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, the only-begotten God...God of God...”<sup>19</sup>

**Alexander of Alexandria.** He spoke in reference to Jesus of “his highest and essential divinity” and that he was “an exact and identical image of the Father.”<sup>20</sup>

**Eusebius of Caesarea.** Stated that “the Son of God bears no resemblance to originated creatures but...is alike in every way only to the Father who has begotten [Him] and that he is not from any other hypostasis and substance but from the Father.”<sup>21</sup> And (325 A.D.), “We believe in... one Lord Jesus Christ, the word of God, God of God...”<sup>22</sup>

**Cyril of Jerusalem (ca 350 A.D.).** “We believe in... One Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God...very God, by whom all things were made.”<sup>23</sup>

**Epiphanius of Constantia (374 A.D.).** “We believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ...of the substance of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God.”<sup>24</sup>

**Augustine.** Declared that Christians “...believe that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, maker and ruler of the whole creation: that Father is not Son, nor Holy Spirit Father or Son; but a Trinity of mutually related Persons, and a unity of equal essence,” and that therefore, “the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit God; and all together are one God.”<sup>25</sup>

**Tertullian.** Wrote of Jesus that “He is God and man.... We have here a dual condition—not fused but united—in one person, Jesus as God and man.”<sup>26</sup>

**Proclus.** “He was born of woman, God but not solely God, and man but not merely man.....Christ did not by progress become God—heaven forbid!—but in mercy he became man, as we believe. We do not preach a deified man; we confess an incarnate God...him alone who was born of a virgin, God and man.”<sup>27</sup>

**Cyril of Alexandria.** Wrote of Jesus, “For he remained what he was; that is, by nature God. But...he took it on himself to be man as well,” and, “There is nothing to prevent us from thinking of Christ as being the one and only Son at once both God and man, perfect in deity and perfect in humanity...he is conceived of as God and is God...”<sup>28</sup>

From the very first the leaders of the Christian church—immediately after the time of the apostles up to the Council of Nicea in the fourth century and beyond—had consistently believed and taught that Jesus Christ is God. Therefore, those who deny this are clearly mistaken when they maintain that the Trinity was “invented” by Christians only in the 4th century or later.

There is only one logical explanation for the abundant early testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ: early church leaders were simply declaring what was already declared by Jesus Christ and the apostles in Holy Scripture: that Christ was indeed God. As Gregory of Nazianzus stated in his “Third Theological Oration Concerning the Son,” “From their [the apostles] great and exalted discourses we have discovered and preached the deity of the Son.”<sup>29</sup> E. Calvin Beisner, author of *God in Three Persons*, states:

The testimony of the New Testament to the deity of Christ is unanimous.... Were there no passages at all which directly call Christ God, we would still have a great weight of evidence

that is the New Testament conception of him, for in all senses he is depicted as precisely parallel to God the Father. C. F. D. Moule wrote: “Far more impressive than any single passage are two implicit Christological ‘pointers.’” At first is the fact that, in the greetings of the Pauline epistles, God and Christ are brought into a single formula. It requires an effort of imagination to grasp the enormity that this must have seemed to a non-Christian Jew. It must have administered a shock comparable (if the analogy may be allowed without irreverence) to our finding a religious Cuban today inditing a message from God-and-“Che” Guevara....”

The other Christological pointer, evidenced early... [is the undeniable] fact that Paul seems to experience Christ as any theist reckons to understand God—that is, as personal, but as more than individual: as more than a person. This is evidenced by certain uses (though admittedly not all) of the well known incorporative formulae, “in Christ.”...<sup>30</sup>

The truth is that for all those who deny Christ’s deity—as for the early Arians—the Trinity is simply a stumbling block to their rationalism. What they cannot fully comprehend, they will not accept. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be rejected on biblical or historical grounds because the testimony for it is too abundant. It can only be rejected on philosophical and personal grounds which have no merit.

#### Footnotes:

1. Emanuel Swedenborg, *The True Christian Religion*, Vol. 1, p. 260 (n. 174); p. 258 (n. 172).
2. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Is Not God* (New Knoxville, OH: American Christian Press, 1975).
3. Kirsopp Lake, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library*, Harvard University Press (1965), *To the Ephesians I*, Greeting; I:I; vii. 2; xvii. 2; xviii. 2; xix. 3; *To the Magnesians*, xiii. 2; *To the Trallians*, vii. 1; *To the Romans*, Greeting; iii. 3; vi. 3; *To the Smyrnaeans I.I; To Polycarp*, viii. 3, respectively.
4. *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, Chapter 6, in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325 (Vol. 1 The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 34.
5. Justin Martyr, “The First Apology,” Chapter 63, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 184.
6. Justin Martyr, “Dialogue of Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, with Trypho, a Jew,” Chapters 64, 68, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, pp. 231-233.
7. Tatian the Assyrian, “Address of Tatian to the Greeks,” Chapter 21, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, p. 74.
8. Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2, p. 101.
9. Irenaeus, “Against Heresies” Book III, Chpt. 16, Title; Chpt. 19, Title, para. 2; Book I, chapt. 10, para. 1, in Roberts and Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, pp. 440, 448-49.
10. Tertullian (Quintus Tertullianus), “A Treatise on the Soul,” Chapter 41, and “Apology,” Chapter 21, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 221, 34-35, and *Against Praxaes* in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3, p. 498, respectively.
11. Hippolytus, *Against the Heresy of Noetus*, p. 14, cited in Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1984), p. 95; *Refutation of All Heresies*, X, XXIX, *Ante Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 5, p. 151.
12. Caius, “Against the Heresy of Artemon” in “Fragments of Caius” in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Fathers of the Third Century*, Vol. 5, p. 601.
13. Gregory Thaumaturgus, “On the Trinity,” para. 2, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6: Fathers of the Third Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 48.

14. In Beisner, p. 81.
15. Novatian, a Roman Presbyter, "A Treatise of Novatian Concerning the Trinity," Chapter 11, in Roberts and Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Fathers of the Third Century, Vol. 5*, p. 620.
16. Origen, "Dialogue with Heraclides," 1-4 in Wiles and Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, p. 23.
17. In Beisner, p. 80, citing *On the Principles*, Preface, p. 4.
18. Athanasius, "Against the Arians," III, para. 29, 31, in Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer (eds.), *Documents in Early Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 52, 54.
19. In Beisner, p. 82.
20. "Alexander of Alexandria's Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica," para. 37, in William G. Rusch (trans./ed.), *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 40, 42.
21. "Eusebius of Caesarea's Letter to His Church Concerning the Synod at Nicaea," para. 13 in Rusch, p. 59.
22. In Beisner, p. 84.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
25. Augustine, "On the Trinity," IX, para. 1; XV, para. 28, in Wiles and Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, 36-37, p. 91.
26. Tertullian, "Against Praxeas," Chapter, 27, in Wiles and Santer (eds.), p. 46.
27. Proclus, "Sermon I," paragraphs 2, 4 in Wiles and Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, pp. 62-64.
28. Cyril of Alexandria, "Second Letter to Succensus," 2, 4, in Wiles and Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, pp. 67, 69-70.
29. Gregory of Nazianzus, "Third Theological Oration Concerning the Son," 17 in Rusch (trans./ed.), *The Trinitarian Controversy*, p. 143.
30. In E. Calvin Beisner, *God in Three Persons* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1984), pp. 33-34.