

JESUS' DEITY

1. Introduction.

a. True-false test.

- (1) God the Father and Jesus Christ are equally divine.
 - (a) True. The Council of Nicaea in 325 affirmed that the Father and the Son are of the same divine essence, and condemned Subordinationism, which teaches that Jesus is inferior to the Father.
- (2) Jesus is a hybrid, partially divine and partially human.
 - (a) False. Apollinarianism, condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381, taught that Jesus is not equally human and divine, but is one person with one nature. Jesus has a human body and soul, but a divine mind.
- (3) God the Son was created before the universe.
 - (a) False. The Council of Nicaea affirmed that the Son is coeternal with the Father and condemned Arianism, which taught that the Son was created by God before time.
- (4) “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” are three different names for one divine person.
 - (a) False. Modalism, ruled out by the Nicene Creed, teaches that God’s names (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) change with his roles or “modes of being” (like a chameleon).

b. Discussion questions.

- (1) What are some views people hold about Jesus?
- (2) Why are people so divided over who Jesus was?
- (3) Why do so many believe Jesus was just a good moral teacher?

2. Statistics.



3. Importance.

- a. Jesus' deity is the most crucial issue of Christian theology.
- b. An attack on Jesus' deity is an assault upon a central aspect of the Christian faith.
 - (1) "The central importance of the continued deity of Christ has been recognised by theologians from early centuries until the present, and any attack on the deity of Christ is justly recognised as an assault upon a central aspect of Christian faith."¹
- c. Questioning Jesus' deity leads to theological chaos.
 - (1) "Without question the crucial issue in biblical theology is the deity of Christ, and disregard or question of this central doctrine of the Bible leads to inevitable chaos in theology as a whole."²
- d. In 1918, theologian Augustus H. Strong grieved over the direction the church was heading regarding the deity of Jesus.
 - (1) "I grieve over the minimising of Christ's nature and claims that is current in our day, because I believe that it cuts the sinew of our Christian faith and destroys the chief dynamic in our missions. I deplore the denial of our Lord's deity and atonement, the refusal to address him in prayer, the ignoring of his promise to be with his people even to the end of the world. To meet our needs in the conflict with towering systems of idolatry and superstition, we need a supernatural Christ; not simply the man of Nazareth, but the Lord of glory; not the Christ of the Synoptics alone, but also the Christ of John's Gospel; not a merely human example and leader, but one who 'was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead'; not simply Jesus according to the flesh, but 'the Word who was with God and who was God' in eternity past; not simply God manifest in human life nineteen centuries ago, but the God who is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever'; not simply the humbled, but also the glorified Saviour, who sits now upon the throne of the universe, all power in heaven and earth being given into his hand. When we believe in an ascended Lord at God's right hand, the God of Creation, of Providence, and of Redemption, we have a faith that can conquer the world. Without such a faith in the omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent Christ, we are weak as water in the conflict with heathenism. We may set up Christ on a pedestal, in a pantheon..., with a statue of Krishna by his side, and the Hindu will laugh at the claims of the gospel. Only faith in Christ as very God can meet the demands of the hour."³
- e. We must not "desupernaturalise" Jesus.
 - (1) "Supernatural Christianity is the only historical Christianity. It is the desupernaturalized Jesus which is the mythical Jesus, who never had any existence. There never was a Christianity of which the deity of Christ was not a prime tenet."⁴

¹ J. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*.

² J. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*.

³ A. Strong, *A Tour of the Missions*, 211-12.

⁴ B. B. Warfield.

4. Old Testament Hints.

- a. Several Old Testament passages suggest plurality within the Godhead.
 - (1) **Ge 1:26** 26 Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.
- b. God's statement to the serpent in Ge 3:15 hints at a virgin birth. Men, not women, have seed. Ge 4:1 shows Eve believed Cain was both man and Yahweh (Ge 4:1).
- c. Yahweh promised David he would raise up David's seed after him and establish his kingdom. This seed would build a house for Yahweh's name, and Yahweh would establish the throne of his kingdom forever. Yahweh would be a father to him, and David's seed would a son to Yahweh. Through this seed, David's house, kingdom, and throne would be established forever (2 Sa 7:11-16).
- d. Ps 2 clearly identifies the Messiah (Ps 2:2) as Yahweh's Son (Ps 2:7), whom one must take refuge in to avoid wrath (Ps 2:12).
- e. In Ps 110, David calls the coming Messiah "Lord," asserting his son is greater than himself (Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44; Ac 2:34-35).
- f. Micah predicted from Bethlehem one would come forth for Yahweh whose coming forth is from long ago, from the days of eternity (וּמוֹצָאֲתָיו מִקֶּדֶם מִיְמֵי עוֹלָם)(Mic 5:2).
- g. Isaiah predicted a virgin would conceive a son and call his name Immanuel (עִמָּנוּ אֵל), meaning "God with us" (Is 7:14; Mt 1:23; Lk 1:31).
- h. Isaiah also predicted a child would come from the line of David who would be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God (אֵל גִּבּוֹר), Everlasting Father (אָבִי עֶד), Prince of Peace" (Is 9:6).
- i. Jeremiah predicted Yahweh would raise up for David a righteous Branch who would be called "Yahweh Our Righteousness" (יְהוָה צְדִיקָנוּ) (Jer 23:5-6).

5. Jesus' Own Assertions.

- a. Some scholars assert Jesus himself never claimed to be God.
 - (1) "Nowhere in the New Testament is Jesus unambiguously declared to be God" (M. Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Kindle Location 1520).
 - (2) These scholars usually assert the apostle John did not write the gospel of *John*. This is because *John* communicates Jesus' deity so clearly.
 - (a) "After D. F. Strauss [German, d. 1874] and F. C. Baur [German, d. 1860], John's Gospel could no longer be claimed uncritically as a historical source of authentic words of Jesus. Consequently, other concepts and titles that were more indirectly connected with Jesus' relation to God came into the foreground of the question of Jesus' 'Messianic self-consciousness.' However, the transfer of these titles to Jesus... has been demonstrated with growing certainty by critical study of the Gospels to be the work of the post-Easter community. Today it must be taken as all but certain that the pre-Easter Jesus neither designated himself as Messiah (or Son of God) nor accepted such a confession to him from others."⁵
- b. Matthew.
 - (1) Jesus progressively reveals his deity to the apostles (Mt 16:13-17).
 - (2) He generally does not reveal his deity to others (Mt 16:20; 17:9).

⁵ W. Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*.

- (3) He finally does to Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest. When charged with blasphemy, he doesn't deny his claim to deity (Mt 26:63-64).
 - (4) By the end of *Matthew*, the disciples are worshipping Jesus (Mt 28:17), and Jesus clearly communicates to them he is equal to the Father (Mt 28:19).
 - (5) Jesus is often ambiguous about his own deity, in order not to over offend Jews. But ultimately it becomes clear that Jesus is God, the Lord, Yahweh.
- c. Luke.
- (1) **Lk 2:49-50** 49 ...[Jesus] said to [his parents], Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house? 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.
- d. John.
- (1) Did the apostle John write *John*? Yes.
 - (2) If so, did John accurately convey Jesus' own words? Yes.
 - (3) If the answer to these two questions is yes, Jesus clearly asserted to be God.
 - (4) Jesus makes seven "I am..." plus predicate claims:
 - (a) "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35, 48, 51).
 - (b) "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).
 - (c) "I am the good shepherd" (Jn 10:11, 14).
 - (d) "I am the door of the sheep" (Jn 10:12).
 - (e) "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25).
 - (f) "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6).
 - (g) "I am the true vine" (Jn 15:1, 5).
- e. Jesus makes seven "I Am" (ἐγώ εἰμι) no predicate claims:
- (1) **Jn 8:24** 24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι) you will die in your sins.
 - (2) **Jn 8:28** 28 ...Jesus said to [the Jewish leaders], When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι)....
 - (3) **Jn 8:58** 58 Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι).
 - (4) **Jn 13:19** 19 I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι).
 - (5) **Jn 18:4-8** 4 ...Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, Whom do you seek? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι). Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι), they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 So he asked them again, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I told you that I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι). So if you seek me, let these men go.
 - (6) ἐγώ εἰμι is a LXX reference to Ex 3:14:
 - (a) **Ex 3:13-14** 13 ...Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name? what shall I say to them? 14 God said to Moses, I Am who I Am (Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὄν). And he said, Say this to the people of Israel: I Am (Ὁ ὄν) has sent me to you.

- f. **Jn 5:18** 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill [Jesus], because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
- g. **Jn 10:29-33** 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one. 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of them are you going to stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.

6. Jesus' Titles.

- a. Son of God.
 - (1) The title "Son of God" doesn't always mean "God the Son."
 - (a) **Re 21:7** 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.
 - (2) Sometimes it is another way of saying Messiah.
 - (3) When applied to Jesus, the title "Son of God" often means "God the Son."
 - (4) Progressively, the title "Son of God" more clearly meant "God the Son."
 - (5) Often Jesus seems to deliberately avoid calling himself "the Son of God." He is careful to whom he discloses full knowledge of who he is.
 - (6) See *Jesus as Son of God*.
- b. Son of Man.
 - (1) **Mk 14:61-64** 61 Again the high priest asked him, Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I Am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death.
 - (2) See *Jesus as Son of Man*.
- c. Lord.
 - (1) **Lk 6:5** 5 ...[Jesus] said to them, The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.
 - (2) **Php 2:10-11** 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - (3) See *Jesus as Lord*.

7. Jesus' Attributes.

- a. All divine attributes.
 - (1) **Col 2:9** 9 For in [Jesus] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
 - (2) **Heb 1:3** 3 [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature....
- b. Self-existence.
 - (1) **Jn 1:4** 4 In [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - (2) **Jn 5:26** 26 ...As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.
- c. Omnipresence.

- (1) **Mt 18:20** 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.
- (2) **Mt 28:20** 20 And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
- (3) **Mk 2:8** 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, Why do you question these things in your hearts?
- (4) **Jn 1:48** 48 Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Jesus answered him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.
- (5) **Jn 14:18** 18 I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.
- d. Omniscience (Lk 10:22; 22:10-13; Jn 2:24-25; 4:17-19, 39; 21:17; Re 2:23).
- e. Omnipotence (Is 9:6; Mt 8:27; Mk 4:39-41; Lk 6:19; Php 3:21).
- f. Transcendence (Jn 3:13, 31).
- g. Eternity (Is 9:6; Jn 1:1-2; Col 1:17; Re 22:12-13).
- h. Incomprehensibility.
 - (1) **1 Ti 3:16** 16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.
- i. Immutability.
 - (1) **Heb 1:12** 12 ...Like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.
 - (2) **Heb 13:8** 8 Jesus Messiah is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- j. Sovereignty (Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22; Jn 3:35; 17:2; Eph 1:22; Php 3:21).
 - (1) **Mt 28:18** 18 And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
- k. Holiness.
 - (1) **Lk 1:35** 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.
- l. Righteousness.
 - (1) **Jer 23:5-6** 5 Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: Yahweh our righteousness.
 - (2) **1 Jn 2:1** 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
- m. Truthfulness.
 - (1) **Eph 4:21** 21 ...Assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus....
- n. Faithfulness.
 - (1) **Jn 14:1** 1 Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.
- o. Quotes.
 - (1) "The wisest of scholars as well as the most simple of humble believers have bowed alike to the manger in Bethlehem and acknowledged that the Infant, born

of the virgin and laid in swaddling clothes, is their Lord and Saviour in whom is resident all the attributes of the infinite God.”⁶

8. Jesus’ Abilities.

- a. He created the universe.
 - (1) **Jn 1:3** 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
 - (2) **Jn 1:10** 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.
 - (3) **Col 1:16** 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.
 - (4) **Heb 1:2** 2 ...But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
 - (5) **Heb 1:10** 10 And, You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands....
- b. He sustains the universe.
 - (1) **Col 1:17** 17 ...[Jesus] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
 - (2) **Heb 1:3** 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.
- c. He fulfilled the Torah and the Prophets (Mt 5:17).
- d. The winds and waves obey him (Mt 8:27; Mk 4:41).
- e. He is able to torment demons (Mt 8:29).
- f. He has the authority to forgive sins (Mt 9:2-7; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:20-25; Lk 7:48-49).
- g. He accepts worship (Mt 2:11; 28:9).
- h. All things have been handed over to him (Mt 11:27).
- i. He alone knows the Father (Mt 11:27).
- j. He is able to destroy demons (Mk 3:11).
- k. He raises himself from the dead (Jn 2:19).
- l. He raises others from the dead (Jn 5:25).
- m. He receives the spirit of believers (Ac 7:59).
- n. He sits at God’s right hand (Mt 22:4; Heb 1:3).
- o. He comes on the clouds of heaven (Mt 26:64).
- p. Believers are baptised into his name (Mt 28:19).
- q. He gives life to whom he desires.
 - (1) **Jn 1:4** 4 In [the Word] was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - (2) **Jn 5:21** 21 ..As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he desires.
 - (3) **Jn 5:26** 26 ...As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.
 - (4) **Jn 11:25** 25 Jesus said to [Martha], I am the resurrection and the life.
 - (5) **Jn 14:6** 6 Jesus said to [Thomas], I am the way, the truth, and the life.
 - (6) **Jn 17:2** 2 ... You [the Father] have given [the Son] authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

⁶ J. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*.

- r. He is the judge of the living and the dead.
 - (1) **Mt 25:32** 32 Before [the Son of Man] will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
 - (2) **Jn 5:22** 22 ...The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.
 - (3) **Jn 5:27** 27 ...[The Father] has given [the Son] authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.
 - (4) **Ac 10:42** 42 ...[Jesus] commanded us [apostles] to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.
 - (5) **Ac 17:31** 31 ...[God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man [Jesus] whom he has appointed. And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.
 - (6) **2 Ti 4:1** 1 I [Paul] charge you [Timothy] in the presence of God and of Messiah Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead....
- s. He is greater than the angels.
 - (1) **Mt 25:31** 31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.
 - (2) **Heb 1:6** 6 ...When [God] brings the firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God's angels worship him.
- t. He orders Satan around.
 - (1) **Mt 4:10-11** 10 ...Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship Yahweh your God and him only shall you serve. 11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.
 - (2) **Jn 13:27** 27 ...After [Judas] had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, What you are going to do, do quickly.
- u. He sent the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Jn 15.26

9. Jesus' Resurrection.

- a. **Jn 2:18-22** 18 ...The Jews said to [Jesus], What sign do you show us for doing these things? 19 Jesus answered them, Destroy this temple [his bodily death], and in three days I will raise it up [his bodily resurrection]. 20 The Jews then said, It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days? 21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.
- b. **Ro 1:4** 4 ...And was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Messiah our Lord....

10. Bystander Reactions.

- a. The Jewish leaders.
 - (1) **Mt 26:65-66** 65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66 What is your judgment? They answered, He deserves death.
 - (2) **Mt 27:42-43** 42 He saved others. He cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts

in God. Let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, I am the Son of God.

- (3) **Mk 14:61-64** 61 ... The high priest asked [Jesus], Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I Am (Ἐγώ εἰμι), and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. 63 And the high priest tore his garments and said, What further witnesses do we need? 64 You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death.
 - (4) **Jn 5:18** 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill [Jesus], because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
 - (5) **Jn 8:58-59** 58 Jesus said to [the Jewish leaders], Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am. 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.
 - (6) **Jn 10:27-33** 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I [Jesus] know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one. 31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of them are you going to stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.
 - (7) **Jn 19:6-7** 6 When the chief priests and the officers saw [Jesus], they cried out, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. 7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.
- b. The Romans.
- (1) Pilate.
 - (2) Centurion (Mt 27:54).
- c. Angels.
- (1) **Heb 1:6** 6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God's angels worship him.
- d. Demons (Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24; Lk 4:41).
- e. Apostles.
- (1) **Mt 14:33** 33 And those in the boat worshiped him saying, Truly you are the Son of God.
 - (2) Peter.
 - (a) **Mt 16:16-18** 16 Simon Peter replied, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock [the confession] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
 - (3) Thomas.
 - (a) **Jn 20:28** 28 Thomas answered [Jesus], My Lord and my God!
 - (4) All the apostles.

- (a) **Lk 24:50-52** 50 ...[Jesus] led [the disciples] out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy....
- (5) John.
- (a) **Jn 1:1-4** 1 In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- (b) **1 Jn 5:20** 20 ...We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Messiah. He is the true God and eternal life.
- (6) Paul.
- (a) **Ro 9:5** 5 To [Israel] belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Messiah, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.
- (b) **Php 2:6** 6 ...Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
- (c) **Tt 2:13** 13 ...Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Messiah....
- f. Quotes.
- (1) “The deity of Christ is the presupposition of every word of the New Testament. He is the supernatural Saviour who entered supernaturally into this world to accomplish His supernatural work. The New Testament does not provide any data whatever that would support an inference that the Christian community ever held a different view.”⁷

11. Early Church.

a. Church fathers.

(1) Ignatius.

- (a) “Therefore let us do everything with the knowledge that [Jesus] dwells in us, in order that we may be his temples, and he may be in us as our God—as, in fact, he really is, as will be made clear in our sight by the love which we justly have for him.”⁸
- (b) “For our God, Jesus the Christ, was conceived by Mary according to God’s plan, both from the seed of David and of the Holy Spirit. He was born and was baptised in order that by his suffering he might cleanse the water.”⁹

⁷ B. B. Warfield.

⁸ Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 15.2-3, in M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 147.

⁹ Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 18.2, in M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 149.

- (c) “Nothing that is visible is good. For our God Jesus Christ is more visible now that he is in the Father. The Work is not a matter of persuasive rhetoric; rather, Christianity is greatest when it is hated by the world.”¹⁰
- (d) “I glorify Jesus Christ, the God who made you so wise, for I observed that you are established in an unshakable faith, having been nailed, as it were, to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ in both body and spirit, and firmly established in love by the blood of Christ, totally convinced with regard to our Lord that he is truly of the family of David with respect to human descent, Son of God with respect to the divine will and power, truly born of a virgin, baptised by John in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him, truly nailed in the flesh for us under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch (from its fruit we derive our existence, that is, from his divinely blessed suffering), in order that he might raise a banner for the ages through his resurrection for his saints and faithful people, whether among Jews or among Gentiles, in the one body of his church.”¹¹
- (e) “I bid you farewell always in our God Jesus Christ; may you remain in him, in the unity and care of God.”¹²
- (2) “The prevalence and centrality of the worship of Jesus in early Christianity from an early date has frequently been underestimated, as has its importance for understanding christological development. . . .Johannes Weiss called the emergence of the worship of Jesus ‘the most significant step of all in the history of the origins of Christianity.’ David Anne makes a similar claim, but with more historical precision: ‘Perhaps the single most important historical development within the early church was the rise of the cultic worship of the exalted Jesus within the primitive Palestinian church.’”¹³
- b. Christianity’s early critics.
 - (1) “Interesting evidence that the worship of Jesus was the central distinguishing feature of early Christianity comes from pagan observers and critics. . . .Most second- and third-century pagan writers who discuss Christianity emphasise the worship of Jesus (Pliny, Ep. 10.96.7; Lucian, Peregr. 13; Celsus apud Origen, Cels. 8.12, 14, 15; Porphyry apud Augustine, Civ. 19:23; cf. Mart. Pol. 17:2).”¹⁴
- c. Christological heresies.
 - (1) Subordinationism: Jesus is inferior to the Father.
 - (a) The Council of Nicaea in 325 affirmed that the Father and the Son are of the same divine essence.
 - (2) Apollinarianism: Jesus is partially divine and partially human.

¹⁰ Ignatius, *To the Romans* 3.3, in M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 171.

¹¹ Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans* 1.1, in M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 185.

¹² Ignatius, *To Polycarp* 8.3, in M. W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Updated ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 201.

¹³ Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*.

¹⁴ R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*.

- (a) Apollinarianism was condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381.
- (3) Arianism. Jesus, the Son, was created by God before time.
 - (a) Arianism was condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325 and at the Council of Constantinople in 381.
 - (b) Why do so many believe Jesus was created before the universe?
- (4) Adoptionism.
- (5) Modalism: God's name (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) changes with his roles or modes of being (like a chameleon).
 - (a) Modalism was ruled out by the Nicene Creed.

12. Trinitarian Monotheism.

- a. **Mt 28:19** 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit....
- b. **2 Co 13:14** 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Messiah, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- c. “[T]he worship of Jesus was central to the character of early Christianity throughout the early centuries, beginning in the early Palestinian Christian movement. At the same time as a worshipping response to Jesus was integral to Christian faith, the early church also clung tenaciously to the Jewish understanding of monotheism, according to which belief in the one God was defined in religious practice by the exclusive worship of the one God. In time it became clear that the practice of the worship of Jesus in the context of Jewish monotheism constituted both a christological principle—that Jesus is such that he can be worshipped—and a theological (Trinitarian) principle—that God is such that Jesus can be worshipped.”¹⁵
- d. “Repeatedly, under questioning, the martyrs claim to worship the one God who made heaven and earth, call down destruction on the gods who did not make heaven and earth..., appeal to Old Testament commandments prohibiting the worship of any but the one God, echo traditional Jewish polemic against idols, and use other standard formulae of Jewish monotheistic worship.... But, with no sense of incongruity, the martyrs also speak of Christ—the crucified man—as God.”¹⁶

13. Heresies and Skeptics.

- a. Heresies.
 - (1) Ebionites.
 - (2) Dynamic Monarchians.
 - (3) Arians.
 - (4) Socinians.
 - (5) Unitarianism.
 - (6) Liberalism.
 - (7) Jehovah's Witnesses.
- b. Religions.
 - (1) Nearly every religion considers Jesus a good man, perhaps a prophet, but not God.
- c. Skeptics.

¹⁵ R. Bauckham. *Jesus and the God of Israel*.

¹⁶ R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*.

- (1) Benjamin Franklin.
 - (a) “As to Jesus of Nazareth. . . , I think the system of morals and His religion as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see.”¹⁷
 - (2) Thomas Jefferson.
 - (a) “I am a Christian in the only sense in which He wished anyone to be: sincerely attached to His doctrines in preference to all others.”¹⁸
 - (b) “The practice of morality being necessary for the well being of society, [God] has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. We all agree in the obligation of the moral principles of Jesus and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in His discourses.”¹⁹
 - (3) Schleiermacher.
 - (4) Ritschl.
 - (5) Bart Ehrman.
- d. Typical arguments.
- (1) Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection were not miraculous.
 - (2) Jesus never claimed to be God.
 - (3) Jesus’ followers made the claim and were mistaken.
 - (4) The Bible is not authoritative.
 - (5) Quotes.
 - (a) “Today those who deny His full deity regard Jesus either as a great man (to be followed but not worshiped), a good man (who had the courage to die for His convictions), or a man more advanced than any other in His time.”²⁰
 - (b) “Liberal alternatives to the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ fall into three categories as suggested by William A. Spurrer. Christ may be viewed simply as a great teacher, a great man entirely human but to be respected like other great men of history. Hence, Christ is not to be worshiped but to be followed. Scriptural stories about Him such as His resurrection, miracles and other evidences of supernatural power are denied as human inventions. A second view emphasises the goodness of Christ who was sincere to the end and had the courage to die for His convictions. This view tends to minimise His greatness and makes Christ one of many good and sincere men. A third view sees Christ as an example or model of other men, who although human and not divine, set a new standard for nobility in man, and to some extent was ahead of His time in the evolutionary process. While the majority of mankind follows one or more of these liberal views of Christ, they stand in sharp contrast to the orthodox position that Christ is both God and Man and is in fact the incarnation of the eternal God.”²¹
- e. Jesus cannot be just a great moral teacher. Consider “Lewis’s Trilemma”:

¹⁷ Benjamin Franklin (1790).

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson (1803).

¹⁹ Thomas Jefferson (1809).

²⁰ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972).

²¹ J. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*.

- (1) “A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”²²

14. Importance for Salvation.

- a. **Mt 16:16-18** 16 Simon Peter replied, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock [the confession] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- b. **Jn 8:24** 24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I Am (ἐγώ εἰμι) you will die in your sins.
- c. **Jn 20:31** 31 ...These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- d. **Ro 10:9-10** 9 ...If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord (Yahweh) and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

15. Application.

- a. Honour Jesus as God.
 - (1) **Jn 5:22-23** 22 ...The Father...has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.
- b. Do not tolerate any minimising of Jesus’ deity in the church or Christian theology.
- c. Emphasise Jesus himself claimed to be God.

²² C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, rev. ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1960), 55-56.