

**Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (13):
Walking and Watching (Col. 2:6-15) (part 2)**
[Or, The Fulness of God in Jesus Christ]

Our last time together in Colossians 2, which was two Sundays past, we began to consider the paragraph contained in verses 6 through 15. The Apostle Paul had set before these Christians in this local church in Colossae, the centrality and significance of Jesus Christ to their faith and life. Whatever the nature of the error that had plagued the church, it was an effort to direct their focus on matters other than Jesus Christ. Here, in this paragraph, the apostle pressed upon them that they were to be devoted wholly to Jesus Christ. They were not to allow anyone or any teaching to divert them from their commitment to Jesus Christ. He set forth the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to enable them to live before Him. He is able to do so because He has all authority, having caused them to be born again and saved them from any and all that threatened them.

You will recall that we proposed an outline for this paragraph that was based on the two main verbs found in this paragraph. In verses 6 and 7 Paul emphasized their need to be *walking in Him*. And then in verses 8 through 15 Paul exhorted them to be *watching in Him*; that is, they were to be on guard against anyone or any teaching that would lead them away from the centrality of Jesus Christ in their faith and practice. We have already addressed the subject, "walking in Him." Let us now continue to address what it is to be "watching in Him."

II. Watching in Him (2:8-15)

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹²having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.

The English Standard Version (ESV) opens with the words, "See to it." Perhaps the sense of warning and urgency is better conveyed by the King James Version rendering: "Beware!"

There were two kinds of error that threatened the church (v. 8). These were in the form of (1) philosophy, (2) empty deception. "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit." There were two ways in which error had been promoted among them. Error was promoted to them (1) according to human tradition and (2) the elemental spirits of the world.

Both the preventive and the corrective for the false teaching that was corrupting the church at Colossae was to see their identity and sufficiency in Jesus Christ alone. These errors that troubled them were "not according to Christ." In other words, these false teachings would direct them to things, to matters, that had essentially nothing to do with Jesus Christ. The apostle then explained further in **verses 9 and 10**: "*For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*" The Holy Spirit has set before us two great essentials in understanding who we are as Christians, two matters for which we are always to be on guard. First, the deity of Jesus Christ is to be believed and affirmed and the teaching of which should be preserved and guarded. Second, the truth that Christians are "complete in Him" is to be taught, affirmed, and preserved.

Verse 9 is one of the clearest statements in Scripture of the deity of Jesus Christ: ***“For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”*** This is a doctrine that is essential and foundational to our faith. Jesus of Nazareth, a man “attested by God by miracles, wonders, and signs”, is none other than the eternally begotten Son of God. Here is the ancient **Nicene Creed** (325 AD), which the early church set forth to describe the person of our Lord Jesus.

We believe in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only begotten, that is, from the being of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father, through whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, who because of us men and because our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended to the heavens, will come to judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say, “There was when he was not,” and, “Before being born he was not,” and that “He came into existence out of nothing,” or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or being, or is subject to alteration or change--these the catholic (universal) and apostolic Church anathematizes.¹

Later, **The Council of Chalcedon** in 481 set forth more fully the person of the Lord Jesus Christ:

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

The Scriptures set forth the deity of Jesus of Nazareth in a number of ways. It would serve us well to review some of these. I have set down 9 ways in which the deity of Jesus Christ is set forth in the Scriptures. I am sure there are more than these, but these are sufficient to affirm to anyone with a heart and mind open to the truth this clear teaching of the Christian faith.

I. First, that Jesus Christ is God is amply testified in the Scriptures.

We read in the opening verses of John’s Gospel these words:

John 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Clearly this teaches us that Jesus is God.

In the opening passage of Hebrews 1 Jesus Christ is addressed as God.

¹ Trans. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (3rd ed.; Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex: Longman Group Limited, 1972), 215-216, altered.

Hebrews 1:8. “But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.””

In John 20:28 Thomas confessed that Jesus was God: “And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”” If this were not true, Jesus would have immediately rebuked Him.

In Acts 20:28 Jesus is identified directly as God.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood.” Here God is referring to Jesus Christ.

There are several verses in 1 John that speak directly of the deity of our Lord Jesus. We read in 1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” God laid down His life for us. It was not God the Father that laid down His life for us, but Jesus Christ, here identified as “God.” And in 1 John 5:20 it states, “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

The Apostle Paul declared that Jesus was God in 1 Timothy 3:16: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.”

From John’s Gospel alone, we see this truth emphasized quite clearly and repeatedly.

John 3:13. “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.” And so, there we see the pre-existence of Jesus.

John 6:38. “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Jesus did not have His beginning in Bethlehem, nor in the conception of Mary. But rather, He came down from heaven.

John 6:46. “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.” Because He was with God; He was God; He was in the presence of God the Father.

John 6:62. “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?” The Son of Man was eternal God, the eternal Son of God, who was with the Father from eternity, Who descended to the earth to become a man.

John 8:23. “And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.’”

John 8:42. “Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.’” Here He is asserting that He had been sent by the Father because He was the Son of God, eternally existing with the Father, whom the Father sent into the world to be our Saviour.

John 16:28. "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." And so we see that our Lord Jesus was clearly the pre-existent Son of God.

II. There are attributes of Jesus that are only true of God, for they are the incommunicable attributes that only God can possess.

Now when speaking about the attributes of God, we may identify some as communicable and some incommunicable. These attributes that are communicable, are those of which we can also be like, in a finite but real manner. But incommunicable attributes can only be true of God. In the Scriptures, Jesus is shown to have incommunicable attributes, therefore Jesus is God.

(1) Jesus is described as *eternal*, which is only true of God. Revelation 1:17, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; ***I am the First and the Last.***'"

(2) Jesus is *infinite* as only God can be infinite. Jesus was teaching them to observe all things that He had taught them, saying, "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Only God can be with His people everywhere for only God is infinite.

(3) Jesus is *omniscient* as only God can be. Matthew 9:4 records, "But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'"

(4) Jesus is *omnipotent* as only God can be all-powerful. John 3:31, "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all." In Philippians 3:21 it is said of Jesus that He "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." And Revelation 1:18 declares, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death." Only an omnipotent God has the keys of Hades and Death, and we see here the Lord Jesus has those keys. Jesus Christ is eternal God.

And so, that Jesus Christ manifested God's incommunicable attributes, that is, those attributes that are unique to God and cannot be said to be experienced by finite, mortal human beings, therefore, as God is eternal, so is Jesus, as God is infinite, so is Jesus, as God is omniscient (all-knowing), so is Jesus, as God is omnipotent (all-powerful), so is Jesus. And so the conclusion is that Jesus is God.

III. There are relations that Jesus has with God the Father that can only lead to the conclusion that Jesus Himself is eternal God.

We will only cite several. (1) Jesus is *the only begotten Son* of the Father. John 1:18, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." (2) Jesus is *the very image* of God the Father. Of unbelievers it is said in 2 Corinthians 4:4, "whose minds the god of this age has blinded (a reference to satan blinding them), who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of *Christ, who is the image of God*, should shine on them." And **Colossians 1:15** reads of Christ, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." And "firstborn" does not mean that Jesus was the first one created, because Jesus is not a created being; He is the Creator. "Firstborn" in this context speaks of His priority or pre-eminence within the family of God, as say a first born son would have been in that role in the ancient world. And then there is Hebrews 1:8, which tells us of Jesus, who is the brightness of His glory and is the express image of His person, and is upholding all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:3). And therefore these relations that Jesus has with God, one can only conclude that Jesus Himself is God; Jesus is divine.

IV. There are acts that Jesus did that can only be done by God, proving Him to be eternal God incarnate.

There are a number of these. (1) Jesus refers to Himself as the author of the believer's election. He told His disciples in John 13:8, "I do not speak concerning all of you. *I know whom I have chosen*; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'" Commonly the Scriptures attribute the believers' election to God the Father, but here the Lord Jesus speaks of His having elected His own. Again, one must conclude that Jesus is God.

(2) Jesus is shown to have *known* the inner secrets of men's unexpressed thoughts. Matthew 9:4, "But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'" Only God has the ability to be a discernor of men's thoughts. You don't. I don't. Jesus could. Jesus can. Jesus is God.

(3) Jesus hears *the prayers* of His people. John 14:14, "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it." Only God can hear and answer prayer.

(4) Jesus will be *the judge* of all human beings. John 5:22, "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son." Only God could judge the entire human race; Jesus is God.

(5) Jesus *creates* as only God can create. John 1:3, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

(6) Jesus *commands* as only God could command. **Matthew 8:26**, "But He said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." That is evidence of His deity.

(7) Jesus *forgives sins* as only God can forgive sins. Matthew 9:6, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" -- then He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.'" Jesus forgives sins. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus is God.

(8) Jesus *sanctifies* His people as only God can sanctify, as we read in John 1. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." How could Jesus sanctify His people unless He is God?

(9) He *glorifies* as only God can glorify. John 10:28, "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." How can Jesus glorify someone unless He is God Himself? And so these acts that Jesus did could only be done by God. Proving that Jesus is God.

V. It can be shown that Jesus Christ is God by the manner in which His disciples regarded Him and related to Him.

This is certainly the case throughout the Gospel accounts. His disciples regarded Him and treated Him as only God would be, showing that they believed Jesus to be God.

(1) Jesus is *believed* on as God would be believed on. John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And so, we believe on Jesus as we believe on God, for Jesus is God.

(2) Jesus is *loved* as only they would love God. 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!" Here, we see again, if anyone does not love the Lord Jesus, let him be damned. And so, we see that disciples loved Jesus as they would only love God, because Jesus is God.

(3) Jesus would be *obeyed* as God alone would be obeyed. John 17:5, "While He was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'" That command of the Father to hear His Son means, "Listen to Him teach you and listen to him command you and do what He says." And so Christians obey Jesus Christ as they would obey God for He is eternal God.

(4) Jesus is *prayed* to as though He were God. Acts 7:59, "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'" Now normally we read in the Scriptures that prayer is offered to God the Father, through the merit of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. But it is

perfectly proper to pray to the Spirit or to pray to Jesus directly, as we see here in Acts 7:59. But the normal order that we should practice is that prayer is offered to the Father through the Lord Jesus.

(5) Jesus is *praised* as God is praised. Revelation 5:13, “And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’” Here we see blessing, honor, and glory being ascribed to the Father, but in addition to God the Father, to the Lamb of God as well, which is clearly Jesus Christ, because Jesus is God as the Father is God.

(6) Jesus is *adored* by His people as God is adored. Hebrews 1:6, “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’” Angels worship Jesus; only God should be worshipped. Angels worship Jesus to how that He is. And then we read in Philippians 2:10, “At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth and they will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And so, they do obeisance to Him. They humble themselves and acknowledge Jesus as Lord. They glorify Him. They praise Him with a praise that only God deserves and only God should receive, but Jesus receives it, because He is God.

Now earlier we cited some Scripture passages that affirmed the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I would like to rehearse some more of these at this time. That Jesus is God is clear from the following verses that speaks to our Lord’s eternal pre-existence.

VI. In John’s Gospel there are a number of sayings in which Jesus uses the expression, “I am”, which is His own confession that He is God.

This brings the reader to see Jesus as the God that revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush, back in Exodus 3. There we read of Moses’ encounter with the thrice holy God.

¹³Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

¹⁴And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’”

God had identified Himself to Moses as “I Am”, which signifies God’s eternal nature and His everlasting commitment to see that His Word and His promises are fulfilled and that He was ever faithful to His covenant commitments to His people. When our Lord was speaking before a crowd, He identified Himself as the great “I AM”, or the Jehovah (or Yahweh) of the Old Testament. And the meaning of Yahweh or Jehovah translated into English is “I Am. We read in John 8:51ff,

⁵¹“Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

⁵²Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ ⁵³Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?”

⁵⁴Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. ⁵⁵Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸Jesus said to them, “***Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.***”

⁵⁹Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:51-58)

Now aside from this one forthright statement in which He identified Himself as “the I AM”, there are a number of other “I AM” sayings of Jesus in John’s Gospel. It has been shown through the Greek construction of the Words that Jesus was asserting the same truth: He is the I AM. These verses include the following assertions, with respect to a number of metaphors. For example...

(1) Jesus as the Bread of life

John 6:35. “And Jesus said to them, ‘**I am** the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.’”

John 6:48. “**I am** the bread of life.”

John 6:51. “**I am** the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

(2) Jesus as the Light of the world

John 8:12. “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘**I am** the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’”

John 9:5. “As long as I am in the world, **I am** the light of the world.”

(3) Jesus as the Door of the sheep

John 10:7. “Then Jesus said to them again, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, **I am** the door of the sheep.’”

John 10:9. “**I am** the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

(4) Jesus as the Good Shepherd

John 10:11. “**I am** the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”

John 10:14. “**I am** the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”

(5) Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life

John 11:25. “Jesus said to her, ‘**I am** the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.’”

(6) Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life

John 14:6. “Jesus said to him, ‘**I am** the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

(7) Jesus as the true vine

John 15:1. “**I am** the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.”

John 15:5. “**I am** the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

In each of these metaphors our Lord used to describe Himself, He used the Greek pronoun/verb construction, "I AM." Each one of these instances calls the reader back to that great declaration of God to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Jesus Himself is God.

Now, there is one more I AM statement which we may examine.

(8) Jesus in Gethsemane.

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He revealed Himself to His captors as the great "I AM."

³Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. ⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

⁵They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. ⁶Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

⁸Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," ⁹that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none." (John 18:3-9)

VII. There are several accounts of our Lord's dealings with unbelieving Jewish leaders that revealed Jesus is God.

There were occasions when the Jewish leaders understood clearly His implying or asserting that He was God incarnate; His opposers clearly understood Jesus to be claiming to be God.

(1) When Jesus asserted clearly His deity, the Jews who did not believe on Him desired to kill Him for the crime of blasphemy.

⁵⁸Jesus said to them, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.*"

⁵⁹Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:51-58)

Here our Lord clearly and forthrightly told the Jewish leaders that He was the eternal God, whom was the object of Abraham's faith and worship. They would kill Jesus for making such an assertion.

(2) Jesus made Himself equal with God when He claimed to be the Son of God before the Jewish leaders.

We read of this encounter of Jesus with the religious leaders in **John 5:15-18**.

¹⁵The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

¹⁶For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

¹⁸Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, *because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.*

(3) At His trial His opposers knew that He was claiming to be God. We read this in Matthew 26:62-68.

⁶²And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?” ⁶³But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! ⁶⁶What do you think?”

They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.”

⁶⁷Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, ⁶⁸saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

VII. The Lord Jesus speaks of four great parallels between Himself and God the Father that affirms His deity.

These parallels show both an association and equality between the persons of God the Father and God the Son. The passage to which I would draw your attention is Matthew 11:25-27, the parallel being in Luke 10:21f). **Gerhardus Vos**, a biblical scholar of a generation ago, described this as “The culminating point of our Lord’s self-disclosure in the Synoptics.”² What he meant by that was that our Lord revealed His divine nature more clearly through what He taught here than at any other time that we have recorded for us in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. **Matthew 11:25-27** reads:

²⁵At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. ²⁶Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²⁷All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

1. The first parallel that Jesus draws between His Father and Himself is the mutual and exclusive knowledge that the Father has of the Son and the Son has of the Father. Jesus said, “No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son” (Matt. 11:27). Jesus emphasizes the exclusive nature of this knowledge. “No one” knows the Father except “the Son.” The Greek word is a heightened form for emphasis; He knows the Father, not just γινώσκει (he knows), but ἐπιγινώσκει. (he knows intimately or fully). In the same manner the Father knows the Son. There is a mutual knowledge of one another. It speaks of the same kind of knowledge in degree. As the Father knows the Son the Son knows the Father. And it is exclusive knowledge. No one knows either One of these persons, the Father or the Son; they alone know each other. Vos described what this tells us:

The essential rather than acquired knowledge is meant follows... from the correlation of the two clauses; the knowledge of God has of Jesus cannot be acquired knowledge [it must, from the fact that it is God’s knowledge, be direct, intuitive, and immediate—Reymond]; consequently the knowledge Jesus has of God cannot be acquired knowledge either, [it must be direct, intuitive, and immediate—in a word, divine—Reymond] for these two are placed entirely on a line. In other words, if the one is different from human knowledge, then the other must be so like wise.³

And so, “the only conclusion to be drawn is that God has this exclusive and interpenetrating knowledge of the Son because he is the Father of the Son, and that Jesus has this exclusive and interpenetrating knowledge of

² Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), p. 218ff.

³ *Ibid.* p, 219.

God because he is the Son of the Father.”⁴ Thus we see the equality of the persons; we see the divinity of the Lord Jesus asserted by this parallel of mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son.

2. The second parallel that Jesus draws between His Father and Himself is the mutual necessity to reveal each other if people are going to know either one of them. Jesus thanks the Father for having hidden truth of Him from some but revealed Him to others. Matthew 11:25 reads,

“At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.’”

And then later, Jesus declared, “Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matt. 11:27). The Son has infinite knowledge of the Father, He and He alone. Therefore, He alone has the capability to reveal the Father to people. This, too, affirms the divinity of Jesus.

3. The third parallel that Jesus draws between His Father and Himself is the mutual authority that each possesses. Jesus refers to the Father as “Lord of heaven and earth” (Matt. 11:25). Jesus also says with reference to Himself, “All things have been delivered to Me” (Matt. 11:27). Of course in another place Jesus said, “All authority is given to Me in heaven and earth” (Matt. 28:18). Each one, the Father and the Son is all-powerful. How could the Son have all power and the Father have all power, except they be one God? This is further evidence of the deity of the Lord Jesus, who is equal to the Father in His power.

4. The fourth parallel that Jesus draws between His Father and Himself is the mutual exercise of sovereign will that each exercises. In the third parallel we spoke of the ability of both the Father and the Son to be equal; they are equal in power. In this fourth parallel we are saying that they are equal in the sovereign exercise of the power to accomplish their will. The Father is sovereign in His ability and His selection of who will come to know of Him and His Son in salvation. In the same way the Son is sovereign in His ability and his selection of who will come to know of the Father and Him in salvation. With respect to the Father’s sovereignty in this matter we read in Matthew 11:25, when Jesus prayed, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.” And then with respect to the Son’s sovereignty in this matter we read in Matthew 11:27, “Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

B. B. Warfield wrote of this revelation of the Father and Son in this passage:

in it our Lord asserts for Himself a relation of practical equality with the Father, here described in most elevated terms as “the Lord of heaven and earth” (v. 25). As the Father only can know the Son, as the Son only can know the Father: and others may know the Father only as He is revealed by the Son. That is, not merely is the Son the exclusive revealer of God, but the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son is put on what seems very much a par. The Son can be known only by the Father in all that He is, as if His being were infinite and as such inscrutable to the finite intelligence; and His knowledge alone—again as if he were infinite in His attributes—is competent to compass the depths of the Father’s infinite being. He who holds this relation to the Father cannot conceivably be a creature.⁵

We see in these four parallels between the Father and the Son, that the Lord Jesus clearly asserted His equality with the Father. Jesus Christ is the divine Son of God.

VIII. The Deity of Jesus Christ can be seen throughout Paul’s epistles

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Reymond, p. 220.

To this point we have shown forth the deity of our Lord Jesus from many places in Scripture. We do not have the time (or perhaps need) in our study to consider exhaustively what Paul wrote testifying of the deity of the Lord Jesus. The fact is that any fair-minded reader of the New Testament would see the deity of the Lord Jesus asserted and assumed throughout the books of the New Testament. And so, rather than exhaustively treating all that Paul wrote respecting the deity of Christ, we might just summarize the various ways in which Paul asserted and displayed the deity of Jesus Christ before His readers.

First, Paul prayed to Christ, as one would pray only to God. With respect to his thorn in the flesh, Paul prayed to Jesus for relief. **2 Corinthians 12:8-9** read,

Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

“The Lord” was Paul’s reference to the risen and enthroned Jesus.

Second, Paul showed forth the deity of Jesus in that “the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” should be called upon in the church. In other words, not only did he pray to the Lord Jesus but he encouraged churches to do the same.

1 Corinthians 1:2. “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

Romans 10:9-13. “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Third, Paul uses the name of Jesus in conjunction with God the Father as the source for divine blessing, thus placing them on par with one another.

Galatians 1:3. “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 1:7. “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Fourth, in numerous places Paul applied the title of “Lord” to Jesus, which was the Greek word **κύριος** (*kurios*), which was used for Jehovah (or Yahweh) in the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Fifth, Paul applied to Jesus Christ Old Testament passages that were addressed to God. For example, we read **Isaiah 45:23**, “I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.” This is a reference to Jehovah, or Yahweh in Isaiah. But Paul applies it to Jesus Christ in Philippians 2:10, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth.”

Sixth, Paul taught, or at least implied Christ’s pre-existence as God’s Son. Consider that Paul taught Christ’s pre-existence in these passages:

Romans 8:3. “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, *God did by sending His own Son* in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh...” There we see Christ’s pre-existence in that God sent His Son.

2 Corinthians 8:9. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich [there is His pre-existence], yet for your sakes He became poor [There is His humility in His incarnation], that you through His poverty might become rich” [speaking of our glorification].

Galatians 4:4. “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”

Philippians 2:6. “Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” Christ did not regard equality with God as robbery. He saw it as legitimate, of course. He saw Himself as equal with God the Father.

Colossians 1:15f. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” And so, the Father is the Creator, but Jesus is the agent of creation; it was through the Son that all things were created and it was for the Son that all things were created.

Ephesians 4:8. “Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.’ ⁹(Now this, ‘He ascended’-- what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?” [Here, “lower parts of the earth” are a reference to Mary’s womb. We can see this from Psalm 139:15, “My frame was not hidden from You (speaking of God), when I was made in secret, and skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth”, speaking of his development within the womb of his mother.]

IX. Paul wrote 8 specific passages in which Jesus Christ is identified or declared to be God.

(1) Romans 1:3f. “Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

(2) Romans 9:5. “Of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

(3) Titus 2:13. “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Here Jesus is referred to as both Savior and God.

(4) Colossians 1:15-20. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [This speaks of His pre-eminence, of course, not that He was created first. Christ was not created; Christ is the Creator.] ¹⁶For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” The fullness of deity dwells in Him.

(5) Colossians 2:9. “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily...” A clear declaration of His deity.

(6) Philippians 2:6-11. “Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(7) 1 Timothy 1:15. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Again, this speaks of His pre-existence.

(8) 1 Timothy 3:16. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”

And so, we see that the divine nature of Jesus Christ is taught in many places and in many ways in the Holy Scriptures. This is an essential doctrine to be believed. One cannot have the salvation from sin that God brings unless one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to believe on Him rightly necessitates that one believes that He is eternal God incarnate; He is God with us. And so, we have shown **that Jesus Christ is God is amply testified in the Scriptures.**

The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace. (Numb. 6:24-26)
