

# **THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST**

**Ellet J. Waggoner**



## Chapter 1

### **The Words of Christ and Others Claim His Divinity**

The first text that we quote is that one so familiar to everyone who knows anything of the Bible:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”  
(John 1:1)

That this refers to Christ is evident from verse 4: “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men”; and from verse 14: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.”

Indeed, we never heard of anyone who doubted that the evangelist has reference to Christ in this passage. From it we learn that Christ is God. That text alone, if we had no other, is sufficient to establish the divinity of Christ, for the word “divinity” means, “the nature or essence of God.” We believe in the divinity of Christ, because the Bible says that Christ is God.

In the book of Isaiah, which is full of prophecies of the Messiah, we find the following words spoken in anticipation of Christ:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called

Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6)

It would be impossible to find titles which would more completely show the exalted nature of Christ than these: “The mighty God, The everlasting Father.” But we read again from the beloved disciple:

“No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.” (John 1:18)

This text shows the closeness of the relationship between Christ and the Father. He is “the only begotten Son,” and he is “in the bosom of the Father.” No matter where Christ may be in person, he is “in the bosom of the Father;” that is a statement that is universally true, showing the unity of the Father and the Son.

“He has declared him.” That is, no man has seen God, but they know his character and attributes, because they have seen him set forth in Christ. This truth is well indicated by the words of Christ to Philip:

Philip said unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us. Jesus said unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known me, Philip? he that has seen me has seen the Father; and how say you then, Show us the Father? (John 14:8-9)

So perfectly did Christ represent the Father, that for one to say that he had not seen the Father was equivalent to saying that he had not seen Christ. For this we have the words of Christ himself; therefore those who refuse to accept him as divine, do so simply because they cannot believe his word. Those who do not believe that Christ, as he was here on earth, was divine, do not give him credit for being even an honest man. The very name that was given to Jesus—Emmanuel—signifies, “God with us.” (See Matthew 1:23)

The writer to the Hebrews, speaking of Christ’s superiority to the angels, says that it is because:

“He has by inheritance a more excellent name than they.”  
(Hebrews 1:3)

What name is it that he has by inheritance? It is, “The mighty God.” As the only begotten Son of God, He has that name by right. It is most natural that the Son should inherit the name of the Father. That he has this name, is shown still further by the words of the Father himself, who addresses the Son by it. Speaking of God the Father, the apostle says:

“But unto the Son he says, Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom.”  
(Hebrews 1:8)

Perhaps as strong an argument for the divinity of Christ as can be found in the Bible, aside from positive statements, is contained in

Matthew 19, for it is Christ's own claim that he was God. It is even more emphatic than John 14:9. A young man, a ruler, came to Christ and said:

“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:16-17)

What did Christ mean by his counter question? Did he mean to reprove the young man for calling him good? Did he mean to disclaim that epithet? Not by any means, for he was absolutely good; he was goodness personified. Paul states that he is:

“...holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” (Hebrews 7:26)

There can be no question but that he was good. He meant to impress upon the young man's mind the fact that the one whom he was addressing as Master was not a mere man, as one of the rabbis, but that he was God. He claimed for himself absolute goodness, and since there is none good but God, he thereby identified himself with God.

And with this we may connect the statement of the apostle Paul, that

“In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

(Colossians 2:9)

The following passages undoubtedly refer to Christ, and give to him all the power and glory of the Godhead:

“The mighty God, even the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself.” (Psalm 50:1-6)

This text describes the second coming of Christ. Another somewhat similar is:

“God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand [margin: bright beams coming out of his side]; and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth; he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting.” (Habakkuk 3:3-6)

Here we have unmistakable reference to the coming of the Lord. His power and Godhead could hardly be more sublimely presented. Note the words, “He had bright beams coming out of His side; and there was the hiding of his power.” It was from the side of Christ that the mingled blood and water flowed, which showed that his heart had been broken for sinners. The wounds of Jesus are the pledge of his love to sinners.

From his side flowed the blood which “cleanses us from all sin.” But if that blood is despised, those wounds become as powerful for wrath as for salvation. By his great sacrifice he showed his infinite power to redeem and to destroy. That the sight of the wounds of Jesus will deepen the fear and anguish of sinners is indicated by the words:

“Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” (Revelation 1:7)

But perhaps the strongest language of all, as showing the divinity and majesty of Christ, is found in Isaiah. The prophet says:

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts

of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” (Isaiah 6:1-5)

We should not know to whom this refers, if our Saviour himself had not, in John 12:40-41, quoted Isaiah’s words in the tenth verse of this chapter, and applied them to Christ:

“These things said Esaias, when he saw his [Christ’s] glory, and spoke of him [Christ].” (John 12:41)

From these texts we have proof not only that the inspired writers call Jesus the Divine Son of God, but that Jesus himself claimed to be God.



## Chapter 2

### **The Works of Christ Prove His Divine Nature**

We come to notice some of the works which Christ does as God, and in this we shall find additional proof of his divinity.

In one talk with the Jews, he used the following language, which shows his position of equality with the Father:

“For neither does the Father judge any man, but he has given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” He that honors not the Son, honors not the Father which sent him. (John 5:22-23, R.V.)

The first way in which God is revealed to us as demanding honor, is as Creator. Paul says that the heathen who know not God are without excuse, because God has revealed unto them that which may be known of him; for ever since the creation of the world, the invisible things of God, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made (Romans 1:19-20).

Now since Christ is to be honored by all, just as they honor the Father, it follows that he is to be honored as Creator; and so, according to Paul’s words to the Romans, the visible creation affords proof of the “eternal power and Godhead” of Christ. Let us note a few texts which speak of Christ as Creator. John 1:1-2 has

already been quoted, showing that Christ is God. Verse 3 says:

“All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3)

In Hebrews 1:8-10 we have the record of language which the Father addressed to the Son. The first, in verses 8-9, in which the Father addresses the Son as God, we have already quoted. But in verse 10 we are told that he said further to him:

“You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands.” (Hebrews 1:10)

So whenever we look abroad upon the earth, or view the shining heavens, we may know that they show the power and love of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without him was not anything made.

The apostle Paul makes this most emphatic, in his epistle to the Colossians, of Christ, through whose love we have redemption. He says:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” (Colossians 1:15-17)

From the words, “the firstborn of every creature,” some have argued that Christ himself is a created being. But that is not only a hasty conclusion, but one directly opposed to the text itself. Note the following points:

1. The same thing could not be both creature and Creator. But this text affirms in the most emphatic terms, what other texts teach, that Christ is Creator.
2. Verse 16 shows that he was not created, for, “by him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,” etc. Says John, also, “All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3) This excludes Christ from the list of created beings; for everything that was made was made by him. In Revelation 5:13, also, it is stated that “every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,” gave honor and glory to him.
3. The term “firstborn of every creature” cannot by any possibility indicate that he is a created being, standing related to other creatures simply as first, and highest in rank, because he is “the only begotten Son of God.” There is none other in the universe that stands related to God the Father as he does. The term firstborn does not in this case, at least, imply that others were born after him. It only shows his pre-eminence above all things, as stated in verse 18.

4. Verse 17 says that “he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” This again separates him from the creation, except as creation’s Lord; and this is what the text teaches. In him creation had its beginning, as stated in Revelation 3:14. Creation existed in him, in embryo, as it were; “for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” (Colossians 1:19) No language could more perfectly show the pre-existence and the creative power of Christ, than does the language of Colossians 1:15-17.

“By him all things consist.” Literally, “by him all things hold, or stay, together.” This is equivalent to Hebrews 1:3, which speaks of him as “upholding all things by the word of his power.”

He brought all things into existence, and he preserves them in existence. His word caused them to exist, and his word up holds them. In all these things he acts, not independently, but conjointly with the Father. Said he:

“I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30)

Not a thought does one have that is not the thought of the other. Their unity in creation is shown in the words,

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26)

This union of the Father and the Son serves to explain why the Hebrew word which is rendered “God” is in the plural number.

“No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.” (John 1:18)

All that we know of God, we learn through Christ. Let no one, therefore, say that in exalting Christ we are in danger of lowering our ideas of God. That is impossible, for the more exalted ideas we have of Christ, the more exalted must be our ideas of the Father.

## Chapter 3

### **His Pre-Existence and Equality with the Father**

The fact that Jesus is spoken of as the only begotten Son of God should be sufficient to establish a belief in his divinity. As Son of God, he must partake of the nature of God.

“As the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (John 5:26)

Life and immortality are imparted to the faithful followers of God, but Christ alone shares with the Father the power to impart life. He has “life in himself,” that is, he is able to perpetuate his own existence. This is shown by his own words when, showing the voluntary nature of his sacrifice for man, he said:

“I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:17-18)

That Christ is divine is shown by the fact that he receives worship. Angels have always refused to receive worship and adoration. But we read of the Father, that

“...when he brought in the first begotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels of God worship him.” (Hebrews 1:6)

If he is to receive worship from angels, it follows as a matter of course that he should receive worship from men; and we find that even while here on earth, in the likeness of man, he received worship as God. The prophet John thus records the adoration which Christ will finally receive equally with the Father:

“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, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Revelation 5:13)

If Christ were not God, this would be idolatry. The great indictment against the heathen is that they:

“...changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator.” (Romans 1:25)

It matters not what the position of a creature may be, whether a beast, a man, or an angel, worship of it is strictly forbidden. Only God may be worshiped, and since Christ may be worshiped, Christ is God. So say the Scriptures of truth.

It is hardly necessary, with all this army of testimony, to speak of the pre-existence of Christ. One of the strangest things in the world is that men professing to believe and reverence the Bible, will claim that Christ had no existence prior to his birth of the Virgin Mary. Three texts only will be quoted here to disprove this theory,

but texts which will be quoted later, on another point, will just as fully prove the pre-existence of Christ.

The first text is in the prayer of Jesus, on the night of his betrayal. He said:

“And now, Father, glorify me with your own self, with the glory which I had with you before the world was.” (John 17:5)

We don’t know what could be plainer, unless it is the statement that he made the world. John says that:

“All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” (John 1:3)

But stronger still are the words of the prophet, who foretold the place of the birth of the Messiah, in these words:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” (Micah 5:2, margin)

He who would dispute the pre-existence of Christ, in the face of these texts, would deny that the sun shines at midday, if it suited his notion to do so. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. He was begotten, not created. He is of the substance of the Father, so that in his very nature he is God; and since that is so,



“...it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.”  
(Colossians 1:19)

Or, as the apostle states in Colossians 2:

“For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”  
(Colossians 2:9)

It would be difficult to frame language more expressive of the divine nature.

Some have difficulty in reconciling Christ’s statement in

“My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28),

with the idea that he is God, and is entitled to worship. Some, indeed, dwell upon that text alone as sufficient to overthrow the idea of Christ’s divinity. But if that were allowed, it would only prove a contradiction in the Bible, and even in Christ’s own speech, for it is most positively declared, as we have seen, that he is divine.

Christ is the Son of God. The statement is emphatically true in view of the position which Christ had assumed. He

“...emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:7, R.V.)

“[He was] made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death.” (Hebrews 2:9)

In order to redeem men, he had to come where they were. He did not lay aside his divinity, but he laid aside his glory, and veiled his divinity with humanity.

So his statement, “My Father is greater than I,” (John 12:48) is perfectly consistent with the claim, made by himself as well as by all who wrote of him, that he was and is God.

## Chapter 4

### **Christ as Lawgiver**

Since all must honor the Son even as they honor the Father, they must honor him not only as Creator, but as Lawgiver. Says Isaiah:

“The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.” (Isaiah 33:22)

Consider the statement of Christ:

“The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son; That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” (John 5:22-23)

This is in itself evidence that Christ is lawgiver. Only the power that makes the laws can provide for their execution. We shall now proceed to give proof that the law was given by Christ, even as it is His righteousness.

Christ was the leader of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. Perhaps there is no one who does not believe this in a general way; but it is susceptible of very clear proof. We quote first:

“[Our fathers]...did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed [margin: went with] them:

and that Rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:4)

This of itself is sufficient to settle the matter:

- Christ is the Rock upon which the church of God is built, and the Rock that shall grind the enemies of God to powder (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-8; Luke 20:17-18).
- He is the Rock upon which those who are lifted from the horrible pit of sin have their goings established (Psalm 40:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:11).
- It was he whom Israel rejected when he “lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation” (Deuteronomy 32:15).

This is still more clearly shown by a comparison of Numbers 21:5-6 and 1 Corinthians 10:10. The first text tells that:

“The people spoke against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loathes this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” (Numbers 21:5-6)

Here we see that the people spoke not only against Moses, their visible leader, but also against God, their invisible leader. Now in 1

Corinthians 10:9 Paul tells plainly against whom they were murmuring. He says:

“Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.” (1 Corinthians 10:9)

So it was Christ who, with the name of God, was leading Israel, and it was against him that they murmured.

Heb. 3:5-11 also teaches the same thing very plainly. One has only to read it with care to see that Christ is the one whose voice the Holy Ghost warns us not to reject as did the fathers who tempted him forty years in the wilderness. We quote:

“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if you will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.” (Hebrews 3:5-11)

Since Christ was the leader of ancient Israel from Egypt to Canaan, it follows that Christ was the Angel of the Lord who

appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said:

“I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Exodus 3:6-8)

If any should object to this most natural conclusion, on the ground that the one here speaking calls himself “I AM THAT I AM,” the self-existent One--Jehovah--we have only to remind him that:

- The Father has given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26);
- Christ asserted the same thing of himself when he said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:5-6); for which supposed blasphemy the Jews attempted to stone him; and
- By the prophet he is most plainly called Jehovah, in the following passage: “Behold, the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell

safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;" literally, "Jehovah our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

But to return to the main point, which is that Jesus was the leader of Israel from Egypt, the Redeemer of his people from bondage, as shown by the texts cited. Now connect the introductory words of the Decalogue:

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:1-3)

This scripture positively identifies the leader of the children of Israel from Egypt, as the giver of the law from Sinai. If it is said that in the transaction we cannot separate the Father and the Son, we reply that that is just the point we are making. The Father and the Son cannot be separated in any transaction, for they are one. But just as the Son was the one by whom all things were created, so was he the one who declared to the people the law of Jehovah. Thus he is the divine Word. The Son declares the will of the Father, which is also his own will.

The fact that it was the voice of Christ that declared the law from Sinai, may be demonstrated in another way, as follows: After speaking of the giving of the law, in Hebrews 12:18-21, the apostle says:

“See that you refuse not him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven; Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” (Hebrews 12:25-26)

This tells us that the same voice which shook the earth at the giving of the law from Sinai will once again shake the earth, and the heavens also. Now note the following texts, which show what takes place in connection with the second advent:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

That it is Christ’s voice that is then heard is shown by the following:

“For as the Father has life in himself; so has he given to the Son to have life in himself; And has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:26-29)



So it is the voice of the Son of God that opens the graves. Now we will compare a few more scriptures. In Psalm 2:6-8 we learn that Christ is to rule the heathen with a rod of iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Isaiah says that "he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4).

In Revelation 19:11-21 we have a description of the going forth of Christ with the armies of Heaven to contend with and destroy the wicked nations of earth; and in Jeremiah 25 this battle is thus described:

"The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword." (Jeremiah 25:30-31)

Compare with this Revelation 19:15 and Isaiah 63:1-6, and read the following:

"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." (Joel 3:16)

These texts are sufficient to show that the shaking of the heavens and the earth is done by the voice of the One who has the controversy with the nations, and who is to destroy them and deliver his people. We have already seen that the voice that is to shake the heavens and the earth is the same voice that shook the earth at the giving of the law.

But it is Christ who is to dash the nations in pieces, and so it is his voice that will shake the earth and also heaven. Therefore it was the voice of Jesus that spoke the ten commandments from the top of Sinai. The law is the truth (Psalm 119:142), and Christ says,

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)

The ten commandments are God’s righteousness (Isaiah 51:4-7), and His will (Romans 2:17-18); but they represent the righteous will of Christ as much as they do that of the Father; for he and the Father are one.