

Cornerstone Systematic Theology: Christology (Part 1) 12/7/25

1. The question of all questions: Who is Jesus Christ?

- How would you answer the question?
- Do we ever ask people this question?
- How you answer the question determines your eternity.
- Not all answer with the directness and incisive clarity of Peter in Matt. 16:16! (Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.")
- The wide range of answers have been summed up as follows¹:

Is/was He

- A devout Jew in dispute with other Jews?
- A Christian alternative to Hellenic 'savior-gods'?
- A natural son of shameful paternity turned into glory?
- A Semite sharing his people's apocalyptic hopes?
- A contemplative sage offering words of wisdom?
- A prophet of New Age consciousness?
- The perfect embodiment of divine love?
- So venerated that followers could not accept his death?
- A political messiah, the prophet of social revolution?
- A semantic symbol of whatever satisfies craving for a fuller life?

Other opinions pertaining to God, Christ, and deity:

- God is good and merciful, a Creator who cares (Judaism)
- Repentance, amendment, and divine pardon are real (Judaism)
- Man may truly reflect the nature of the divine (Hindu or Baha'i)
- A divinely inspired and miraculously born prophet is quite acceptable.

¹ Henry, "The Manifold Views of Jesus," pp. 91-97

Jesus was a Muslim and a prophet, though lesser in significance than Muhammed (Islam)

- The divine spirit indwelling and guiding is accepted (universal)
- Sacramental meals, ritual washings, and initiation rites are demanded (universal)
- In all, man has an incredible ability to hear truth and adapt it...science fiction mind

2. The detailed answer to the question, "Who is Jesus Christ?"

a. His divine pre-existence:

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word"

- Birth in Bethlehem – His miraculous conception was not his origin but his **incarnation**. The difference is one of damning heresy and eternal truth.
- Created before Creation – not an option
- Lived in glory with God prior to creation - John 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."
- Jesus is probably the only individual who insisted that he existed prior to his birth –

John 8:56-59 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

- Abraham lived ca. 2000 BC. Jesus is speaking about 2000 years later.

b. His deity

John 1:1 "And the Word was God"

Hebrews 1:7-8 And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE." But of the Son *He says*, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM."

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus

Compare:

Isaiah 45:23 "I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear"

Philippians 2:9-11 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- One of the most basic conclusions one will reach from an honest and straightforward reading of the NT is this: Jesus is truly God.
- To deny the deity of Jesus Christ, one must either:
 - Deny the inerrancy of the NT texts
 - Apply a fallacious hermeneutic to the NT texts

c. His humanity

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus"

Christ was truly man. He is human in every way that all humans are human. The exception is spiritual; he is conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Why? To bypass the cursed line of Adam.

d. His incarnation

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

e. His virgin conception and birth

Matt 1:20 "But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

f. His being the Messiah

John 1:41 "He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ)."

His person

Col 2:2 "that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,"

His character

Heb 4:15 "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin."

His teaching

John 7:46 The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

His works

John 10:25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me."

His ministry

Matt 20:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

His death

Rom 5:6 "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

His resurrection

Acts 4:10 "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

His ascension

Eph 4:8 "Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."

His return

John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also."

This mass of data on Christ from the NT alone is sufficient, without any further elaboration, to counter the astonishing assessment of Brunner: "Jesus of Nazareth, the rabbi, the so-called historical Jesus, was an object of no interest for the early Christians, and is of no interest today for those who have preserved some understanding of what the Christian faith means" [*The Word and the World*, p. 87, as cited by F.F. Bruce, *Jesus: Lord and Savior* (IVP, 1966) 19].

3. The Eternal Pre-Existence of Christ

Cannot simply begin with the Jesus' birth at Bethlehem: His life on earth began there but His existence as a person did not, for He always has been, still is, and ever will be. Orthodoxy affirms pre-existence!

A. Statements from the Gospels

1. by the Apostle John John 1:1-3
"1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."
2. by John the Baptist John 1:15, 30
"15John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me."
3. by Christ Himself John 8:58
58Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

Existence prior to that of Abraham
Existence superior to that of Abraham
Existence of a different character

cf. 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.”

cf. 3:17 ““For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

cf. 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.”

cf. 7:29 “But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

cf. 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 17:5 (cf v. 24)

⁵“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

²⁴ Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

John 6:33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58 cf. 6:62, 8:42 16:28

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 7:41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”

John 7:50 “This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 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.”

cf. 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

Matt 22:41-45

⁴²saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “*The Son of David.*” ⁴³He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ⁴⁴‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’? ⁴⁵“If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”

An existence before His birth of the seed of David?

Matt 23:37 (implied)

³⁷“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!” He was there before in their history!

Matt 11:27

²⁷"All 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*."

no one knows the Son except the Father and vice versa. An intimate knowledge that goes beyond "the bounds of history and limits of time" [McDonald, *Jesus: Human and Divine*, 86].

B. Teaching from the Epistles

1 Cor 10:4, 9

⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Phil 2:5-7

⁶who, 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.

Col 1:17

¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

2 Cor 8:9 (implied)

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

C. Indications from the OT

1. The prophet Isaiah obviously saw Christ in His pre-incarnate glory
cf. Isa 6:10 and John 12:39-41 -

Isa 6:10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."

John 12:40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." Antecedent of the pronoun? Christ (12:36-37).

2. The OT Angel of the Lord was most probably the pre-incarnate Christ

This person's name was "Wonderful" Jdg 13:18

¹⁸And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

This name belonged to the Son Isa 9:6

- 6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

See also Gen 48:15-16 and Isa 63:7-9

Gen 48:16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Isa 63:8 For He said, "Surely they *are* My people, Children *who* will not lie." So He became their Savior. ⁹In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them All the days of old.

Moses worshiped this person Ex 3:1-5

- 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." ⁴So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground."

Joshua worshiped him (under a different title) Jos 5:14-15

- 14 So He said, "No, but *as* Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

*Note: no record has this One appearing after the birth of Christ!

Matt 1:20; 2:19; Acts 5:19; 12:7,23 all refer to an angel of the Lord and not to the Angel of the Lord.

3. An obvious connection with deity is given in Mal 3:1,

Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

4. The eternality of the Messiah is given in Mic 5:2,
 2" But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting." - the one from the tribe of Judah is from the days of eternity. Therefore, Christ is correctly referred to as the "Pre-existent One." Bethlehem points to his beginning as a man.

D. Pre-existence and deity

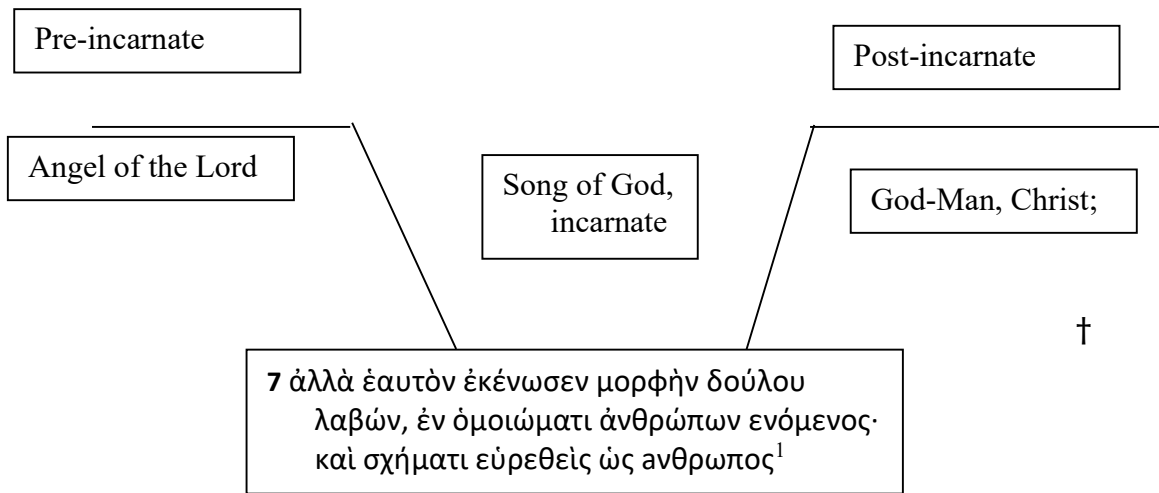
The "Colossian heresy" thought of Christ as existing before human birth but still as being created at some point in time. A creature, therefore not essentially divine.

So, pre-existence does not of itself necessarily establish deity. Nevertheless it is true that the idea of pre-existence has become associated with the idea of deity.

...for all practical purposes proof of His preexistence has been accepted by theologians as evidence of His eternity. Since the Arian controversy in the fourth century there has been no successful denial of His eternity which has not also denied His preexistence....The evidence for the eternity of Christ is therefore linked intrinsically with His deity (Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 25-26).

Evidence of His being eternal sustains the conclusion that He is God. Also evidenced in John 8:58 and well understood by the Jews according to their reaction to his testimony of pre-existence (John 8:59).

E. A diagrammatic representation



“Paul links His precedence in time with His pre-eminence as Creator and Preserver. ‘He is before all things, and by Him all things consist’ (Col 1:17). He compresses into three pregnant words the condition of our Lord in His former state of glory: ‘He was rich’ (2 Cor 8:9). This enhances the magnitude of the love which moved Him to lay aside ‘the splendors and prerogatives of deity, the exercise of infinite power and the disclosures of supreme majesty’” (J. Oswald Sanders, *The Incomparable Christ*, 21)

John 10:30-33; Matt 11:28-29; Gal 4:4

4. The Deity of Christ

[See previous study on the Trinity]

“Deity is not an easy term to define...But it is not impossible to imagine a line which separates God from all God's creatures, so that on one side is God, and on the other is everything less than God. If we ask on which side of this line Jesus Christ is to be found, the answer given by all the New Testament writers is 'God's side'” (Leon Morris, *The Lord From Heaven*, 108).

The doctrine of Christ's deity is not based on a few proof texts, rather it is woven into the very fabric of the New Testament. For a good summarization of the data refer to Doriani, “The Deity of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels” *JETS* 37/3 (Sept 1994) 333-50

*Furthermore, and for the sake of argument, the Deity of Christ need not be assumed upon a hypothetical initial reading of the NT. For in a natural, objective reading of the Scriptures, one discovers that this Jesus Christ is the exclusive being of the universe, set apart from the creation, and being very God himself. In addition, the NT does not mistakenly attribute divine titles to any other beings to whom they belong not. The precision in God's word is astonishing, consistent, and authoritative. Scripture is abundantly clear that Jesus Christ is God.

A. Divine Names are applied to Christ

1. Only properly applied to one who is God, and were specifically applied by intensely monotheistic Jews who knew their OT and understood full well the import of the use of such names.
2. Personally Christ applied to Himself and accepted of Himself such names!

John 20:28

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”
John 13:13

¹³“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am.”

*Jesus was addressed in terms reserved for Israel addressing Yhwh!

3. Note the following Divine Names applied to Christ:--

Lk 2:11 *et. al.* Lord, i.e. □□□□□□ [see also 4. below] For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

John 1:1 God and Word

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:18 only begotten God
[Logos already was at the beginning] Jesus as God (by Harris) –
excellent exegetical work

¹⁸No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

Acts 10:36 Lord of all

³⁶“The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all

Rom 9:5 God blessed forever
[in context, He’s over the Gentiles too] [see Cranfield, ICC 2:464-9] & (Harris, p. 143)

⁵according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

Tit 2 :13 great God and Savior (τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,)

¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [Granville Sharp rule]

Heb 1:8 the Son...O God

[Granville Sharp rule?] [no angel ever called 'My Son']

⁸ But to the Son *He says*: "Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;

2 Pet 3:2 Lord and Savior

² that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior

1 John 5:20 the true God

²⁰ 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

1 Cor 2:8 with Ps 24:8-10 Lord of Glory

^{1 Cor 2:8} which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (with)

^{Ps 24:10} Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, *He is* the King of glory. Selah

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.

[applied to Christ but in OT applied to Yhwh]

Acts 3:14 with Hos 11:9 and Isa 48:17 the Holy One

[definitely a title of deity, which in Isaiah stands in apposition to "the LORD your Redeemer" and to "I am the LORD your God," and in Peter's words stands in apposition to "the Righteous One"]

^{Acts 3:14} But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

^{Hos 11:9} I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I *am* God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror.

^{Isa 48:17} Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I *am* the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.

Great God and Savior

looking for the blessed hope and the ^aappearing of the glory of ^{1b}our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ² (Titus 2:13)

Rev 1:17-18, 2:8 with Isa 44:6 and 48:12-16 the First and the Last
[applied by Christ to Himself but applied by Isaiah to the one and only God]

Rev 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.
Isa 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is no God*.

Rev 19:16 and I Tim 6:14-15. King of Kings and Lord of Lords
[applied to Christ Jesus by John but applied to the "blessed and only Potentate"]

Rev. 19:16 And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

1 Tim. 6:14 that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, ¹⁵which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

4. The name "Lord" --

- a. In the light of Isa 45:5-6 and Rev 11:15 what is significant about the application of this title to Christ?

Isa 45:5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is no other*; *There is no God besides Me*. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

^a 2 Thess 2:8

¹ Or *the great God and our Savior*

^b 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; 2 Pet 1:1

² *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Tit 2:13). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

Rev. 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

*The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord → how can you take a name applied to only God and apply directly to that person of Christ, unless they are the person of God?

Significance: Who Christ is in relation to YHWH (Rom 10:9, Isa 45:23 – Phil 2:10-11)

- b. Is there not also significance for the Septuagint translating the sacred name Yhwh with *Kurios*? [used >6,000x in LXX to translate Yhwh]

Note Acts 2:36

³⁶ "know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Note also passages which apply *kurios* to God Himself:

Matt 11:25

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

Lk 1:15-16 Of John the Baptist "in the sight of the Lord"

¹⁵ "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

Lk 20:37 of Moses who called the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"

³⁷ "But even Moses showed in the *burning bush passage* that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'

Acts 16:31-2, 34

³¹ "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...spoke the word of the Lord...having believed in God" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

5. The name "Son of God" --

[cf. EDT, s.v. "Son of God" by G. Burke, 1032-34, and see also the concise summary, "II. Son of God," in Parker, "The Incarnational Christology of John" CTR 3/1 (Fall 1988) 39-40]

a. Son of God already used in OT Ps 2:7 "my King...my Son" ⁷ "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

b. Meant in Christ's day "equal with God"

John 5:18

¹⁸He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

John 10:30 I and the Father are one

³⁰"I and My Father are one."

John 10:32-36 (Jesus) made Himself God

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" ' ? ³⁵"If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶"do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God' ?

John 19:7

⁷We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.

c. Related expressions also do not mean origin

"only begotten" means absolutely unique and does not correspond with procreation

"first born of creation" marks priority in position and does not designate coming into existence through procreation

d. Use of "Father" does not equate Him with men

That He called God His Father does not mean that He is like men who also call God their Father.

That He made an apparent distinction between the reference of "Father" to Himself and to them is somewhat significant:

John 20:17 Jesus said to her,
17“Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’ ”

Matt 5:16
16“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Many times spoke of "the Father" or "My Father"

Instructed them to pray "Our Father"

e. Others gave recognition of His being the Son

Mk 1:11 God Himself so testified at Jesus' baptism
11“Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Mk 9:7 God Himself also so testified at the Transfiguration
7And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”

Mk 3:11; Matt 8:29 demons directly asserted “You are...”

^{Mk 3:11}And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, “You are the Son of God.”

Lk 1:32, 35 Gabriel testified so in the birth announcement

35And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

John 1:34 John the Baptist testified

34 “This is the Son of God”

Mk 15:39

39So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

Matt 14:33 the disciples collectively

33Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God. ”

Matt 16:16 Peter testified

16Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

John 1:49

⁴⁹Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

John 11:27 Martha believed

²⁷ “She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

Note: in context Gabriel, Martha, and Nathanael’s statements also linked this title to His being the promised Messiah. Demons also knew Him to be the Christ (Lk 4:41). Jesus Himself answered the High Priest’s question in the affirmative and added a word on the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven (Mk 14:61-2).

☞ Others’ recognition of Jesus’ sonship

- John Baptist in his preaching Jn 1:34
- Satan in indirect acknowledgement Matt 4:3, 6
- Demons in direct assertion (Mk3:11, Matt 8:29)
- Roman Centurion in testimony (Mk 15:9 Truly this man was the Son of God
- Disciples in their assessment (Matt 14:33, 16:16, Jn 1:49, 11:27)

Note too that both Satan at the Temptation and the mockers at Calvary indirectly acknowledged His status by their challenge “If you are the Son of God, then...” (Lk 4:3,9 and Matt 27:40).

☞ Designated Son of God

- Birth – Gabriel to Mary Luke 1:35
- Baptism

☞ Son of Man presented as Son of God

- Mark 2:10, 8:29; Matt 16:16, 8:31, 8:38; Mark 9:31
- Pre-Christian Hebrew writing: no use of the term “Son of Man” w/ the definite article.

B. Divine Attributes are applied to Christ

Note the attributes of Greatness and Goodness being presented in the following:--

1. In respect of Greatness

Matt 18:20 omnipresent

²⁰ “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Matt 28:20 omnipresent

²⁰I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.

John 1:4 source of life

⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 2:24-25 omniscient²⁴He knew all *men*, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

John 5:26 self-existent life

²⁶For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself

John 6:64 omniscient

⁶⁴For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him

Acts 3:15 self-existent life

¹⁵and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead,

1 John 5:11 eternity

¹¹that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Heb 1:10-12 immutability - however, he did change in some respect due to the in carnation.

¹⁰You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.¹¹They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment;¹²Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”

Heb 13:8 immutability – in context, related to the faith of believers

⁸Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Col 2:3 omniscient

³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Phil 3:20-21 omnipotent

²¹who 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.

Eph 3:8, 19 incomprehensibility

¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

2. In respect of Goodness

Acts 3:14 holiness and righteousness

¹⁴But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you

Lk 1:35 holiness

³⁵And the angel answered and said to her, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*”

Rev 3:7 true

⁷these things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”

Rev 19:11 faithfulness

¹¹Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

1 John 3:16 love

¹⁶By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

1 John 2:1 righteousness

¹My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 Tim 4:8 righteousness

⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Jude 21 merciful

²¹keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Jas 5:8,11 merciful

⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

¹¹Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Remember to read into these attributes all that has been predicated of God.

cf.

John 16:15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

and Col 2:9

⁹For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily

C. Divine Works are done by Christ

1. He created and sustains all things Col 1:16-17 and Heb 1:2-3

Colossians 1:16 For 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.

Hebrews 1:2 has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

[cf. Isa 44:24 which allows for this syllogism:

Yahweh is the only one who participated in creation

Christ is one who participated in creation

Therefore, Christ is Yahweh

See Francis Beckwith, "Of Logic and Lordship: The Validity of a Categorical Syllogism Supporting Christ's Deity" *JETS* 29/4 (December 1986) 429-30]

☞ Beckwith's Syllogism (1 page article in *JETS* → Beckwith recently resigned from ETS – 2007 – b/c of his conversion to RCC)

- Isa 44:24 → YHWH is the ONLY one who participated in creation
- Jn 1:3 → Christ is one who participated in creation
- Col 1:16 → Therefore, YHWH is Christ

2. He forgives sin Col 3:13; Mk 2:5-12 cf. Isa 43:25 & Ps 51:4 – God alone forgives sin

Col. 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do* Mk 2:10 “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic, ¹¹“I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” ¹²Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw *anything* like this!”

Isa 43:25 “I, *even I, am* He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake;

And I will not remember your sins.

Ps 51:4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight – That You may be found just when You speak, *And* blameless when You judge.

[If God alone forgives sin then what about Jesus words to His disciples in John 20:23; Matt 16:19?]

John 20:23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.

Mat. 16:19 “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” –Proclaiming the forgiveness God has already provided

3. He bestows eternal life John 10:28

John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

☞ Overwhelmingly one would agree that God alone offers eternal life

4. He receives and answers prayer John 14:14; Acts 7:59

John 14:14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

5. He will raise the dead in the Resurrection John 5:21, 28-29; 11:24-25

John 5:21 “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

John 11:24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

☞ Believer's judgment

- But a judgment of life—evaluation of life
- Beyma - 2 Cor 5:10 (Clint Archer's Th.M)

6. He is the Final Judge of the world Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rev 20:11-15

Acts 10:42⁴²“ And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead

17: 31³¹“because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Rev 20:11¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. — ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

[Believers do not appear at these judgments but only at the *beyma*, 2 Cor 5:10]

2 Cor 5:10¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

7. He builds the Church and keeps its corporately Eph 4:7-16; Matt 16:18 –His own personal building project

Eph 4:11¹¹And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ----- ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Mat. 16:18¹⁸“ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

8. He will dispatch angels to remove evildoers from the kingdom. Matt 13:41
⁴¹The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

Apart from "7." above, such works in the OT were not only attributed to God but were the marks of the one, true God. Yet knowing this, the writers and their readers still did not hesitate to assert them of Christ Jesus, without modification so as not to offend the religious sensibilities of their audiences.

D. Divine Claims are made by Christ

1. Absolute authority over the laws and institutions of God

Over the Law Matt 5:31-38 - "You have heard...but I SAY..." = Authority
³¹"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²"But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Over the Temple Matt 12:6

⁶"Yet I say to you that in this place there is *One* greater than the temple. Jesus' presence is God's presence

Over the Sabbath Matt 12:8

⁸For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath

Over the Kingdom Matt 16:19

¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven - Which means he's the supreme object of saving faith

2. Supreme object of saving faith

Either equally with God John 14:1; 17:3

^{14:1}"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

^{17:3}"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Or with no mention of the Father John 3:36; Matt 11:28

^{John 3:36}"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

²⁸"Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

3. Closest of human relationships must yield to Him

Matt 10:37 - He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me

Lk 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My

disciple -Nothing, save, the utmost of exclusively supreme being is worthy of such statements. Thus, an ordinary man would be utterly insane saying such things.

4. All spiritual and eternal needs of humanity satisfied in Him

All the "I Am's" from His lips -- Bread, Light, Door, Way, Truth...

Plus He provides knowledge of God Matt 11:27
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*.

rest for the soul Matt 11:28-29
²⁸"Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
²⁹"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls

security from danger John 10:28-30
²⁸"And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone 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 My Father's hand.

fruitbearing energy John 15:5
⁵I 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.

rivers of living water/Spirit John 7:37
³⁷On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

Jesus Christ energetically and repeatedly preached Himself.
He also clearly contrasted Himself with His countrymen -- John 8:23
He was self-advancing, pointing to the Truth and to Himself. – and significantly, in a completely different manner than the rest of mankind.
Advancement of self is not unique to the human race. However, advancement of self in such a manner of glorifying God with his authority is exclusive to Jesus.

²³And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Indeed, eternal destiny depends upon response to Jesus Christ!

Further, an unwillingness to forfeit life for Christ means loss of it forever:

Mt 10: 37-39; Mt. 16:24-26; Lk 14:26-27; Mk 8:34-38

Matt 10:37-39 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹“He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

E. Divine worship accepted and demanded by Christ

1. Men and angels refused worship from men

Apostles said no Acts 14:11-15

¹⁵and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,

Peter said no Acts 10:25-26

²⁵As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. ²⁶But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.

Angels said no Rev 19:10; 22:8-9 – and angels dwarf man to microscopic proportions in power and splendor. Nevertheless, being heavenly beings, they know well their rank in reference to the Holy One

^{19:10}And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

2. Christ did not refuse worship from men

Disciples worshiped Him -- Matt 14:33

³³Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.

Syrophoenician woman worshiped -- Matt 15:25

²⁵Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!

Women worshiped on resurrection morn -- Matt 28:9

⁹And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

Blind man worshiped -- John 9:38

³⁸Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

All this accepted by one who had clearly declared that men should worship God alone -- Matt 4:10

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve. Jesus commanded worship of God alone. Jesus did not reject worship as regenerate man and angels. Keeping in mind Jesus' unmatched humility and genuine lowliness, this attitude testifies to his deity. Jesus the Christ is God.

3. The Father commands worship of the Son Heb 1:6

⁶But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

4. The host of heaven worship the Son Rev 5:8-14

¹³And 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!"¹⁴Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

5. Finally all will worship the Lord Phil 2:10-11

¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

F. Further testimony to His deity

This might be called indirect evidence, that is, it arises out of statements or stories which are not directed toward proving the deity of Christ but what is said or done requires the fact of His deity.

Lk 7:37-38, 44-48 Only God forgives sins

Therefore Jesus must be God

³⁷And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, ³⁸and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with

her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil.

⁴⁷“Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are many*, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.” ⁴⁸Then He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.

John 14:28-29 Ridiculous for mere finite person to try to convince others that God is greater than he. If Jesus were not Himself God, how could He even begin to compare Himself with the Father? Actually, the text points to the deity of Christ.

²⁸“You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I. ²⁹“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

John 19:37 with Zech 12:10 Context of OT passage (v. 1) shows that it was Jehovah who was pierced. Thus, Christ must be God!

John 19:37 And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

Zech 12:10“ And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

1 Tim 1:13 Paul, as a Pharisee, did not go about blaspheming the God of Israel, but he did speak against Christ. Since he assumes the reader identifies Christ with God his former words are to be understood as blasphemous.

^{1Tim 13} For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Also conclude that Christ's oneness with the Father is such that man's attitude to Him is man's attitude to God:--

To know Him is to know God

John 8:19; 14:7

^{8:19}Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”

To see Him is to see God

John 12:45; 14:9

^{12:45}“ And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

To believe in Him is to believe in God John 12:44; 14:1
12:44 Then Jesus cried out and said, He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

To hate Him is to hate God John 15:23
15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.

To honor Him is to honor God John 15:25
15:25 But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, "They hated Me without a cause.

To receive Him is to receive God Mk 9:37; 10:40
9:37 "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

"It is very important, therefore, to note that in Scripture the confession of the deity of Christ is not at all regarded as a threat to, or as competitive with, monotheism" (Berkouwer, *The Person of Christ*, 190)

☞ What man thinks of Jesus Christ is what man thinks of God.

F. Theories opposed to the deity of Christ

1. Arianism: Christ was a created being, exalted, himself the creator of the universe but he was not God. Christ in relation to the Father was of similar essence not of the same essence, ie. homoiousios and not homoousios.
2. Socianism: Christ was the best of men--thus a created being--exalted to share in the Divine nature because of His perfect obedience, and therefore He is worthy of worship.
3. Unitarianism: Christ was a great, good man who lived in close communion with God. He is to be honored and imitated but not worshiped.

All errors on Christ's character either deny or distort his humanity or deity. These theories stand refuted by all the data on His deity given above. As a reminder thereof, Jesus' implicit claims to deity may be summarized under twelve headings:

Jesus claimed three divine rights:

- To judge mankind
- To forgive sins
- To grant eternal life

Jesus declared that:

- His presence was God's presence
- The attitude to him would determine eternal destiny
- He identified his actions with God's actions
- He taught truth on his own authority
- He performed miracles on his own authority
- He received worship or obeisance
- He assumed his life was a pattern for others
- He applied to himself OT texts that describe God
- He indirectly identified himself with a parabolic character who represented God

Excellent Articles: [see Doriani, "The Deity of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels" 339-40 and see also Payne, "Jesus' Implicit Claim to Deity in His Parables," *TrinJ* 2/1 (Spring 1981) 3-23]