

Christ's Deity

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Christ's deity is still an important issue of Christian faith. In many cultures, Jesus is greeted as a sage, a prophet of love, or as a role model of moral living. That seems a respectful perspective, but it ignores the most compelling argument of the New Testament. In the letters to Philippians and Colossians, Christ is not redeemed to only be a man of great character. They show Him as God, Eternal, Incarnate, Exalted, Creator, Redeemer and Lord. The misconceptions of Christ today could be addressed by referring back to the biblical witness of Philippians and Colossians, in which Christ is presented not as a created being, or a religious symbol, but as the divine Son, whose incarnation, cross, exaltation, creation authority and fullness of deity is established.

A very common misconception is to assume that Jesus was merely a good moral teacher. The concept comes up frequently because people respect the compassion of Jesus but do not believe in Him as God. Philippians 2:5-11 refutes that limited perspective. Paul writes that Christ was “in the form of God” and “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” yet He took “the form of a servant” and humbled Himself unto death (Biblegateway.com, n.d.). The passage teaches humility, but humility in the person of One who already had divine status. Keown (2024) states the Christ hymn does not just teach an ethical lesson, but altogether announces Christ's coming, emptying of self, incarnation, death, and exaltation, and his cosmic lordship. It is important because a merely moral Jesus would not support Christian salvation. But if Jesus was just an example, the cross is now just inspiration. The cross becomes redemption if Jesus is divine.

Another misconception is that Christ is created, especially when Colossians calls Him “the firstborn of every creature” (Biblegateway.com, n.d.). This phrase is sometimes used to

imply Jesus was the first creation of God. But Paul's argument is in the opposite direction. The reason Christ is called firstborn is that He has preeminence over creation, not that He is the first among created things. Colossians says, "by him were all things created," and "by him all things consist" (Biblegateway.com, n.d.). According to Kręcidło (2021), Colossians 1:15-20 are not only creation theology, but also theology of reconciliation, highlighting the role of Christ in the creation and the role of Christ through the cross. It provides Christ with a broad spectrum. Christ is not just the Saviour of individual souls. He is the Lord of the created world and the One in whom reconciliation is accomplished.

The third is the historical skepticism. Some people claim that the "historical Jesus" was only a Jewish teacher and that His deity was created later by the church. The objection may sound like an academic matter, but it is actually a matter of assumption that the divine incarnation is impossible. Kręcidło (2021) deals with this question by considering the correlation of belief in Jesus' deity and the historical study of His life. His approach is beneficial in that it does not require Christians to set aside history. Instead, it demonstrates that the biblical presentation of Jesus is not separated from his divinity, but is connected to it. When studying a text, a context and a claim, historical study should not preclude the possibility that God could reveal Himself in Christ. History is not the basis of the Christian confession. It is based on the testimony that Jesus' words, works, death, resurrection, and worship are connected.

Colossians 2 addresses contemporary confusion. Paul cautions believers against being defiled "by philosophy and vain deceit" and then states that "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Biblegateway.com, n.d.). It is a straightforward and challenging verse. Paul never claims that Jesus is part of God, that Jesus has a divine message or that Jesus represents divine love. He says the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. It is a

statement that safeguards Christ's deity as well as His incarnation. Jesus is not a 'God in human form' and not just a man possessing 'extraordinary power'. He is the divine Son who has truly become human.

The most effective approach today to correct misconceptions is by patient clarity, rather than a hard argument. The doctrine must be carefully formulated: Jesus Christ is God and Jesus Christ is man. Next, they should go back to the places in the text where Paul proclaims it in strength and beauty. The transition from divine glory to a servant's humility to universal worship is on display in the Philippians (Biblegateway.com, n.d.). Christ is revealed as image, creator, sustainer, head, reconciler and fullness of Godhead in Colossians. As a whole, these texts address the allegation that Jesus is just a prophet, just an example, just a later concept.

Christ's deity is important as it affects Christianity. Worship of Christ without a belief that He is divine is misplaced, salvation is diminished, and the power of the cross is gone. However, when the Bible book of Philippians and the book of Colossians are accepted on their own terms Christ cannot be made smaller. He is the humble Lord, the crucified Redeemer, the exalted Son and the One in whom is the fullness of God. The church confesses His deity because Scripture does not provide a lesser identity for Him. It is also a call for believers to defend Christ's identity in humility, worship Him with reverence and live under His lordship.

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