

# WEEK TWENTY-ONE

## Letter To An Infidel

John R. Rice

In the Sword of the Lord some months ago was printed a letter which I wrote to a modernist in New York City who had attended our tent revival campaign in Brooklyn and who had written to me denying the deity of Christ and the authority of the Bible, though he claimed to be a Christian and thought we should preach, he said, "the message of Jesus."

My letter to him was published under the title, "Is Jesus God?" Later I received his answer protesting that it was uncivil to class him with infidels and not to call him a Christian brother. He made the charge that it was uncivil to class him with infidels and not to call him a Christian brother. He made the charge that these infidels in the church often make against us who believe the Bible and accept Jesus Christ as deity, as the virgin-born Son of God, as God's atoning Saviour for sinners. He said that that we Bible Christians are intolerant and uncivil in not accepting modernists as Christian brothers. Here is my answer to his letter, very carefully written.

Dear Mr. J---:

Your letter of October 15 is before me, and I have very prayerfully considered what you have to say.

You say that "viewed on the plane of human civility," my last letter to you deserves no reply.

But why, Mr. J---, should this battle between Christianity and anti-Christianity be on the mere plane of human civility? Why should the friends of Jesus Christ those who love Him, who trust Him, who accept Him as exactly what He claimed to be—the very Son of God, deity incarnate in human flesh—why should we be so politely civil to those who would take the crown of deity from the head of the Son of God? Why maintain such an anxiety for politeness? Why strive so hard not to offend the enemies of the cross of Christ? Must we Christians be more civil than our Saviour?

I wrote you in the language of the Lord Jesus Himself, quoting His words in Matthew 23 to others, like yourself, very religious in observance, but denying Christ's deity,

rejecting Him as Saviour, as you do.

The religious leaders in the days of Christ professed to worship the true God, as you do. They professed to follow the spirit of the Bible, as you do. Yet they rejected Christ, they denied His deity, they believed He was an illegitimate child of Joseph, not the virgin-born Son of God, just as you believe the same. They would not admit His deity; they would not accept Him as Saviour. Neither do you. And to these, Jesus said seven times "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Jesus said that they were whited sepulchres, outwardly very nice, inwardly rotten.

He said they were blind leaders of the blind. He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" If that is the way Jesus Christ described those religious leaders who denied His claims while pretending to serve God, why should not all true Christians feel just as Jesus did feel then and does feel now about it? Any you talk about "human civility!"

# THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST: HIS DEITY

# HIS NAMES AND TITLES

The word deity refers to His nature as God. When we teach about the deity of Jesus Christ, we are teaching that He is God.

As we examine the deity of Jesus Christ, we will see the convergence of several things that have already been taught and some yet to be taught. While this lesson may reference those items, it will not examine them in the same depth that they are covered elsewhere in our study.

Other lessons have examined the Holy Scriptures. Jesus said "these are they which testify of me." (John 5:39) When we see the names and attributes and see them applied to Jesus in the New Testament, they are a testimony to His deity. When we discuss the Trinity we establish several factors that teach the deity of Christ.

Our last lesson on the incarnation included a discussion on the virgin birth, which is an essential element to our teaching on the deity of Jesus Christ.

We will begin this week by examining His deity revealed through His names and titles.

**Matthew 1:23:** What name is given to Him and what does it mean?

The title Lord (Kurios) means supreme.

**Acts 2:36:** Who did God make Lord?

Who must we confess is Lord to be saved?

The title "Christ" is equivalent to "Messiah" in the Old Testament and refers to the Anointed One. When we read "Jesus Christ" we must understand that Christ was not His last name but a designation of His deity.

**Mark 14:61-62:** Some have suggested that

Jesus never claimed to be deity. However, when the High Priest asked if He was the Christ, the Son of God, how did Jesus respond?

When we find these two titles together we see Jesus presented as the "Supreme Anointed One."

**Philippians 2:11:** What will every tongue confess?

**2 Corinthians 4:5:** What did Paul preach?

**1 Corinthians 8:6:** What titles are given to Jesus as the Creator and Sustainer of all things?

As we learned from the Scriptures last week, Jesus was not the son of Joseph but indeed the Son of God. As the Son of God, He carries the nature of His Father in Him and is indeed God, Himself.

**Mark 1:1:** How does Mark address Him in the opening verse of his gospel, which was the first Gospel to be written?

**Luke 1:35:** What does the angel say will be unique about her son?

The Word of God plainly teaches that mankind is sinful. We neither have our own righteousness nor holiness.

**Acts 2:27:** While preaching on Pentecost, Peter applies David's prophecy to Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_ One.

**Acts 3:14:** What title or description is applied to Jesus?

**1 Timothy 6:15:** What two titles are given to Jesus in this Scripture?

In the Old Testament lambs were sacrificed

and offered for the forgiveness of sin.

**John 1:29:** When John saw Jesus, what did he call Him?

**Hebrews 9:12-14, 10:1-18:** Why was the blood of Jesus better than the blood of goats, bulls and lambs?

**Revelation 17:14:** What titles are given to Jesus?

**Exodus 3:14:** What name does God give to Moses for Himself?

**John 8:58:** Who claims that title?

**John 1:1, 14:** Who was the Word and what was the Word made?

**Revelation 19:13:** What was the name of Jesus called?

You have turned quite a few pages in Scripture today. Your journey through God's Word should leave no doubt in your mind that the Bible clearly proclaims the deity of Jesus! To say otherwise is to clearly overlook, omit or simply obfuscate the simple truths of God's Word.

If we have nothing more than the names and titles given to Jesus, we know that He is God in the flesh! However, we have so much more and we will continue to explore the Scriptures tomorrow and learn more of the deity of Jesus Christ!

Day 1

## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# HIS ADVOCATES AND ADVERSARIES

As we venture into this study on the deity of Jesus Christ we should be compelled to hear eye witness testimonies. Not only did Jesus, Himself, claim to be God but there were many around Him who believed this to be true as well. We should hear their testimony in this matter.

**John 1:2-30:** Who do we find testifying to the deity of Jesus Christ. \_\_\_\_\_

What does he say that Jesus will do for the world? \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 5:21:** Even according to the Scribes and Pharisees, who alone can forgive sins? \_\_\_\_\_

While the ability to forgive sins was a claim to deity for Jesus Christ, it is shameful and blasphemous how some men in robes claim this same power for themselves.

**Matthew 3:16-17:** Who claims Jesus as His own Son? \_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 9:2-7:** Who claims Jesus as His own Son? \_\_\_\_\_

Both at His baptism and transfiguration, God the Father claims God the Son as His own. There is no more powerful witness than this!

**Matthew 1:20-23:** Who testifies to Joseph that Jesus is conceived of the Holy Ghost and is literally "God with us?" \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 1:35:** Who testifies the same to Mary? \_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 1:6:** Who worship's Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 28:5-6:** What title did the angels give to Jesus as they testified of His resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_

Thus far, we have heard the testimony of John the Baptist, God the Father and angels. They all proclaim His deity with one voice!

In addition to these voices there were twelve that followed Him and were called Apostles. Write the name of the apostle that testifies to the deity of Jesus in the space after the Scripture. (If it is a narrative rather than a quote, it may be the author of that book of the Bible.)

**John 1:40-41:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 16:16:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 20:28:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 1:45:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 1:49:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 1:1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 21:24-25:** \_\_\_\_\_

**James 1:1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Jude 1:1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 27:4:** \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, even he testified to the deity of Jesus Christ! He acknowledge the unique integrity of the sinless blood of Jesus! Judas even repented of his sin. The only problem, and its a big one, is that he confessed to the wrong person! He confessed to the powerless priests. He didn't just confess to one priest but to several of them. He didn't just confess to ordinary, low ranking priests, he confessed to the chief priests. But just like today, no priest has any power to forgive any sin. It is a useless exercise that misleads, misdirects and condemns many with a false hope. If Judas had confessed to Christ and sought His forgiveness, it would have been granted.

**Acts 12:12:** Who was the first apostle to give his life for Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

He testified to the deity of Jesus Christ with something more powerful than words! He was the first to give his life. The others would follow, their sacrifices, their commitment and dedication serving as both living and dying testimonies to their faith in the deity of Jesus Christ. Only a fool would die for something he did not believe in. But these had a solid foundation of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

**Acts 26:14-15:** \_\_\_\_\_

Note the following women who testified of His deity.

**John 11:27:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 20:20-21:** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 4:29:** By what title did the woman at the well call Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

Yet not only did His advocates believe in Him but even enemies acknowledged His deity.

**Luke 4:3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 1:23-24:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 8:27-28:** \_\_\_\_\_

**James 2:19:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 27:54:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 22:66:** Though the religious leaders did not believe, how did they hear it? \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# HIS ATTRIBUTES

Jesus is God. Those who saw Jesus saw God. He was one with the Father. If you have seen one you have seen both. As we examine the attributes of Jesus Christ we will find that those attributes are exclusive to God. If they are exclusive to God and Jesus has them, we must conclude that Jesus is God as the Bible clearly proclaims.

**John 14:9:** How did Philip see the Father?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**John 10:30:** Jesus said He and the Father are what?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cults always redefine the Scriptures. Always! They dismiss these Scriptures by saying that Jesus and the Father are merely one in purpose. An unwitting and unlearned Christian doesn't know how to answer that and sometimes has his faith shaken. Remember the best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture. In addition to the passages you have studied for the last two days, let us explore others that clearly define the deity of Christ in His attributes.

**Colossians 2:9:** What dwells within Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 1:1-3:** Who is the express image of God?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 4:15:** What was Jesus, our High Priest, without?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2 Corinthians 5:21:** What did Jesus not know?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1 Peter 2:21-22:** What did Jesus not do?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:46:** What were the Jews unable to convince or convict Jesus of?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 10:18:** Who alone is good?  
\_\_\_\_\_

If God alone is good and Jesus is **sinless**, then Who must Jesus be? \_\_\_\_\_

**Omnipotent** is a theological term that simply describes God as being all powerful. The following Scriptures will illustrate this divine attribute in Jesus.

**John 5:19:** What does the Son do?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 28:18:** What is given to the Son?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 1:3:** By what does Jesus uphold all things?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Revelation 1:8:** Who mighty is Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Omnipresent** is another of those "silver dollar" words which simply means everywhere all at once. This too is an attribute belonging only to God.

**Matthew 18:20:** Where is Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 1:19-23:** What does He fill?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This next passage contains a truth that is so marvelous yet so easily overlooked if one reads to quickly and carelessly. This is one reason we should never rush our reading when it comes to Scripture. You just might miss something.

Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus. As we read the end of the previous chapter, we learn that Jesus is in Jerusalem and it is the time of the Passover Feast.

**John 3:13:** Where does Jesus say He is? Not where He was or will be but where does He say He is?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Even as He spoke with Nicodemus, He was also in heaven! He is omnipresent, an attribute that belongs to God alone!

I have one more "omni" for you. Jesus is **omniscient**. That simply means that He is all knowing. (You knew that didn't you.)

**John 16:29-30:** What did His disciples say He knew?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What did this reveal to them about Him?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**John 21:17:** What did Peter confess about Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Colossians 2:3:** What is hid in Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Only God is **eternal** without beginning and end. A Christian has a beginning but no end. But Jesus always was, is and always will be. He is the first and the last.

**Micah 5:2:** According to the prophetic passage, how far back does Jesus go?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:58:** Who was Jesus before?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What two words are an emphatic statement of self-existence, dependent upon nothing and not bound by time?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hebrews 1:8:** Whose throne is forever?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Alpha and beta are the first two letters of the Greek *alphabet*, from which we get that very word. Omega is the last letter.

**Revelation 1:8:** What is Jesus telling us?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**John 17:5:** When did Jesus have glory with the Father?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Immutability** describes the unchanging nature of God.

Hebrews 1:10-12: Who is consistent?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 13:8: When does Jesus change?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# HIS TEACHING

We have examined much evidence all leading to the inevitable conclusion that Jesus is God. Yet have taken little time to hear from Jesus, Himself. He would certainly be our key witness. If He is Christ, as we believe Him to be, then He would certainly not deny it. In fact, we could expect to hear it from His own lips.

While we have examined some of these verses already in different contexts, lets listen to them again as the personal testimony of Jesus.

**Matthew 16:16-17:** Peter makes a bold profession of faith in Jesus as the Christ. If Jesus were a good man but not the Savior, He would certainly have corrected Peter. This is not what we find. In fact, Who does Jesus give credit for revealing this truth to Peter? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 13:13:** For what did Jesus give His disciples credit? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:24:** What did Jesus say would happen to those who do not believe in Him? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:58:** What was He claiming? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:18:** Who did Jesus say bears witness of Him? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 8:23:** How did Jesus distinguish Himself? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 17:5:** What did Jesus say He shared with the Father and when? \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 22:66-71:** Who heard His claim to deity from His own mouth? \_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 14:60-62:** Did Jesus deny or affirm His deity? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 27:11:** Pilate wanted a direct

answer. Was Jesus claiming to be the King of the Jews? Jesus answered "\_\_\_\_\_."

Today we might phrase that "You said it!"

**John 18:36:** How does Jesus differentiate His kingdom from others? \_\_\_\_\_

Only a fool would doubt that Jesus claimed to be God. In fact, he would have to be worse than a fool. One may be foolish enough to doubt the claims of Christ but no intelligent person can deny that Jesus made these claims.

This brings us back to the Lord, Liar or Lunatic argument from week nine, day two. It is impossible for Jesus to be a good man, prophet or teacher but not God. A good man would not claim to be God if he is not God. A man who says he is God but isn't is a liar or a lunatic. Neither is trustworthy of deserving of the following Jesus has. Only if He is Lord is He worthy. He is Lord!

In addition to these direct claims, Jesus has another claim to deity. John the Baptist was in prison. He sent messengers to Jesus asking if He really was the One.

**Matthew 11:1-5:** What does Jesus say should verify His authenticity? \_\_\_\_\_

We will examine the miracles of Jesus more in a later study. However, we do see that both His miracles and His message confirm His identity.

Jesus is famous for teaching through parables. Some have described parables as earthly stories with heavenly meaning. Sometimes the message was hidden and only for those who Jesus wanted to understand. At other times they were strikingly poignant. The parable you are about to read is just such a parable.

**Matthew 21:33-46:** Who does the son in this parable represent? \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the husbandment? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is the householder? \_\_\_\_\_

In 1922, the famous baseball player turned evangelist, Billy Sunday, preached on the subject of the deity of Christ in my hometown of Richmond, Indiana. Following is what he said.

"He claimed to be the Son of God. Can you prove that that claim was false? I challenge you to find any flaw in that claim. Didn't He talk like the Son of God should have talked? Didn't he talk like you would have had you been the Son of God? Did He say anything that you wouldn't have said had you been the Son of God?"

"Did any of His recorded words show that He had no right to say what He said, or do what He did? Can you find any utterances that are out of place in the Son of God? Doesn't your own heart say that every word Jesus Christ said was true?"

"He declared God to be what every true heart wants God to be. He declared that God loves men and was willing to forgive men who had gone astray if they would repent. Can you find any fault with that? Isn't that what you feel that God must be in order to be God?"

Certainly, Jesus fit the description in word and in deed. One should expect that Satan would vigorously attack this great truth. This is all he has left to do: to keep people from believing in Jesus. But the Word of God is powerful and Jesus is still in the saving business!

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# APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you have learned from God's Word today and how can you apply it to your life?

# HIS POWER

You are to be commended for your diligence in study this week! You are putting into practice the admonition of Paul.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

You have searched the Scriptures (John 5:39) and allowed them to testify of Jesus. You are not learning a man’s philosophy or interpretation of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20). You are simply letting the Word of God speak for itself.

While 2 Timothy 2:15 is often quoted, we frequently forget the following verses.

“But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

The only substitute for diligent study is error and ungodliness brought on by worthless discussions of philosophy and theology not rooted in God’s Word.

At the completion of this lesson, you should be well equipped to defend the deity of Christ based on more than your feeling but literally on the Word of God.

Jesus made another claim to deity when He received worship. Throughout the Scriptures some would begin to worship men like Paul who had performed miracles. They supposed them to be gods (Acts 14:8-18). They would not accept the worship that only God deserves. But Jesus did accept worship because He is God!

**Matthew 4:10:** Who alone deserves worship? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 2:1-11:** Who worshipped Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 8:1-3:** How did Jesus respond to the leper’s worship? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 9:18:** Whose worship did Jesus receive? \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 14:33:** How did those onboard the ship worship Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

Not only did Jesus receive worship but He also forgave sins.

**Mark 2:5-12:** Who alone can forgive sins? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the Son of Man have power to do? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened to the lame man? \_\_\_\_\_

Scribes were well trained in the Old Testament Law. They knew that forgiveness of sins only comes from God.

None of the Old Testament priests or prophets ever claimed to be able to forgive sins. Therefore they recognized Jesus’ claim to forgive sins as a claim to deity. The proof was in the results. Its awful hard to deny that kind of change!

There can be no clearer claim to deity than the resurrection!

**Romans 1:4:** What is Jesus declared to be? \_\_\_\_\_

How is this declared? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the proof? \_\_\_\_\_

**John 10:17:** What does Jesus have the power to do? \_\_\_\_\_

**1 Corinthians 15:12-20:** What does this passage say about the power of the resurrection? \_\_\_\_\_

The final witness of the deity of Jesus Christ is His Holy Spirit.

**John 15:26:** What does the Holy Spirit testify of? \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPLICATION

What is the greatest truth you you have learned from God’s Word today and how can you apply it to your life?



# TABLE TALK



# PASTOR'S MESSAGE