

## D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle  
of discipleship.



*Keeping it Real*  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

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## THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHRIST (CHRISTOLOGY)

### An Examination of the Claims for the Deity of Jesus Christ – cont'd.

#### Jesus's Claim to Be the Messiah-God.

The Old Testament foreshadowing of the Messiah also pointed to his deity. Hence, when Jesus claimed to fulfill the Old Testament messianic predictions, **he thereby also claimed the deity attributed to the Messiah in those passages**. The psalmist wrote of the Messiah, **"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever"** (from 45: 6, quoted in Heb. 1: 8). Psalm 110: 1 relates a conversation between the Father and the Son: **"The LORD [Yahweh] says to my Lord [Heb. Adonai], 'Sit at my right hand.'"** Jesus applied this passage to himself in **Matthew 22: 43– 44**. Isaiah the prophet, in a great messianic prophecy, exhorted Israel, **"Behold your God!"** (40: 9). Isaiah 9: 6 declares the Messiah to be Deity, saying: **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father [i.e., Father of eternity], Prince of Peace."** Clearly "Mighty God" and "Father of eternity" are designations of deity.

Indeed the great messianic passage from Daniel 7: 13, quoted by Jesus at his trial before the high priest (Mark 14: 62), implies the deity of the Messiah. When Jesus quoted this passage to the high priest who demanded that Jesus declare whether he was Deity, the high priest left no doubt as to how he interpreted Jesus's claim. **"Are you the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Blessed?"** the high priest asked. "And Jesus said, **'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'**" At this the high priest tore his garment and said, "What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy" (Mark 14: 61– 64).

Also, the Samaritan woman said to Jesus, **"I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."** Jesus said clearly, **"I**

**who speak to you am he”** (John 4: 25– 26). This was a clear claim to be the Jewish Messiah whom the Old Testament declared to be God.

In short, the Old Testament not only predicted the Messiah but also proclaimed him **to be God**. And when Jesus claimed to be a fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic passages (cf. Luke 24: 27, 44; Matt. 26: 54), he laid claim to possessing the deity these passages ascribed to the Messiah. Jesus removed all doubts of his intentions by his answer before the high priest at his trial (Mark 14: 62).

### **Jesus’s Acceptance of Worship.**

The Old Testament forbids worship of anyone but God (Exod. 20: 1– 4; Deut. 5: 6– 9). In the Bible, humans were not to accept worship (see Acts 14: 15), and even angels refused to be worshiped (Rev. 22: 8– 9). And yet Jesus received worship on at least ten occasions without rebuking a single one of his worshipers. The healed leper worshiped him (Matt. 8: 2), and the ruler knelt before him with his petition (Matt. 9: 18).

After Jesus had stilled the storm, “those in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘**Truly you are the Son of God**’” (Matt. 14: 33). The Canaanite woman bowed before Christ in prayer (Matt. 15: 25), as did the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matt. 20: 20). Just before Jesus commissioned his followers to disciple all nations, “**they worshiped him**” (Matt. 28: 17). Earlier in the same chapter the women who had just been at the tomb met Jesus, “and they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him” (v. 9). Mark writes of the demoniac of the Gerasenes that “when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him” (Mark 5: 6 RSV), and the blind man said, “**“ Lord, I believe, ’ and he worshiped him”** (John 9: 38). **Not to rebuke these people who knelt before him, prayed to him, and worshiped him was not only utterly pretentious but also blasphemous, unless Jesus considered himself to be God.** The repetition and the context necessitate the conclusion that Jesus not only accepted but sometimes also explicitly approved of worship from the disciples, as he did from Thomas, who cried out, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20: 28).

### **Jesus’s Blessing of Those Who Called Him God.**

On one occasion Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who recognized his deity. When Peter confessed, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,**” Jesus answered, “**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven**” (Matt. 16: 16– 17). Also, at the climax of the Gospel of John, when even his most doubting disciple exclaimed of Jesus, “**My Lord and my God,**” Jesus accepted his acclamation without rebuke, saying, “**Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**” (John 20: 28– 29).

### **Jesus’s Request That Believers Pray in His Name.**

Jesus not only asked people to believe in him (John 14: 1) and to obey his commandments (John 14: 15), but he also asked them to pray in his name. “**Whatever**

**you ask in my name, I will do it,”** he said (John 14: 13). Again, **“if you ask anything in my name, I will do it”** (John 14: 14). Later, Jesus added, **“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”** (John 15: 7). Indeed, Jesus insisted, **“No one comes to the Father except through me”** (John 14: 6). Not only did the disciples of Christ pray in Christ’s name (1 Cor. 5: 4) but they also prayed to Christ (Acts 7: 59). There is no doubt that both Jesus intended and his disciples understood it was Jesus’s name that was both to be invoked before God and to be used as God’s name when addressing him in prayer.

But prayer is a form of worship, and the Bible forbids worshiping anyone but God. Indeed, reaffirming Deuteronomy 6: 13, Jesus declared, **“You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve”** (Matt. 4: 10).

### **Jesus’s Demand That He Be Given Honor Equal to God’s.**

He claimed Jesus should be honored just as the Father is honored, declaring: **“All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father”** (John 5: 23; emphasis added). It is true that the Bible also claims that we should honor other humans. The commandment says: **“Honor your father and your mother”** (Exod. 20: 12). Paul said, **“Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed”** (Rom. 13: 7). However, nowhere in the Bible does it say that we should honor mere humans “just as” we honor God. But this is what Jesus demanded.

### **Jesus’s Claim to Be God by Forgiving Sins.**

In Mark 2: 5 Jesus said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” But the scribes immediately recognized this as a claim for deity and replied: **“Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”** (v. 7). By claiming the ability to forgive sins (cf. John 8: 1– 11), Jesus was claiming to be God.

### **Jesus’s Claim to Be God by Proclaiming He Would Resurrect All the Dead.**

Other persons were given by God the power to raise the dead (e.g., Elijah and Paul). But they did not claim to be able to resurrect all the dead on the last day. However, Jesus did. He said: **“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. . . . All who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment”** (John 5: 25, 29). But raising the dead is clearly a power that only God has (1 Sam. 2: 6; Deut. 32: 39).

### **Jesus’s Claim to Be God by Proclaiming to Be the Judge of All People.**

As is evident from the passage in John 5 just cited, Jesus claimed not only the power to raise all the dead but also the power to decide their eternal destiny, sending “those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5: 29). He added elsewhere, **“The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day”** (John 12: 48). In Matthew 25 he claims this ultimate authority when he says, **“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ . . . Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels’”** (Matt. 25: 34, 41). In this strictly Jewish, monotheistic context no mortal human could legitimately claim such power.

### **Jesus’s Placing His Words on the Same Level as God’s.**

Jesus not only accepted the titles and worship due Deity alone but also often placed his words on a par with God’s. **“You have heard that it was said to those of old, . . . But I say unto you . . .”** (Matt. 5: 21, 22) is repeated over and over again. **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”** (Matt. 28: 18– 19). God had given the Ten Commandments through Moses, but Jesus added, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another”** (John 13: 34). Jesus once taught that **“until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law”** (Matt. 5: 18). Later Jesus put his own words on the same level as the Old Testament Law of God, saying, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”** (Matt. 24: 35). Speaking of anyone who rejects him, Jesus declared, **“The word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day”** (John 12: 48).

**In view of his categorical and authoritative pronouncements we are left with but one conclusion: Jesus intended his commands to be on the level with those of God. His words were equally authoritative with God’s words.**

### **Jesus’s Claim to Be God in His Parables.**

Jesus made numerous implicit claims to be God. Many of these are tucked away in parables. The logic of the claim is this: (1) in the Old Testament God referred to himself by a certain image; (2) Jesus used this image to refer to himself; (3) therefore, Jesus used this image to claim that he was God. These images include (a) **the Sower** (Luke 8: 5– 8; cf. Num. 24: 6– 7; Ps. 80: 8– 15); (b) **Director of the Harvest** (Matt. 13: 24– 30; cf. Isa. 27: 3– 12; Jer. 51: 33); (c) a Rock (Matt. 7: 24– 27; cf. Ps. 19: 14; 28: 1); (d) **a Father** (Luke 15: 11– 32; cf. Deut. 32: 6; 2 Sam. 7: 14); (e) **Forgiver of Sins** (Luke 7: 41– 50; cf. Exod. 32: 32; 34: 7); (f) **Vineyard Owner** (Matt. 20: 1– 16; cf. Deut. 8: 8; Ps. 80: 8– 15); (g) **the King** (Luke 19: 11– 27; cf. 1 Sam. 12: 12; Ps. 10: 16); (h) **Shepherd** (John 10: 1– 18; cf. Ps. 23; Ezek. 34). Though these were indirect claims to

deity, nonetheless, they were powerful because they involved a story, bypassed defenses to direct discourse, and allowed the listener to engage in self-discovery.[ 681]

Throughout Jesus's claims, several important points emerge. **First**, there is no question that Jesus often accepted and sometimes even encouraged the appellations and attitudes appropriate only for God. **Second**, Jesus himself unquestionably affirmed by words and actions these characteristics and prerogatives appropriate only to deity. **Third**, the reaction of those around him manifests that they too understood him to be claiming deity. The disciples responded with **"you are the Christ, the Son of the living God"** (Matt. 16: 16) or **"my Lord and my God"** (John 20: 28). Unbelievers exclaimed, **"Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming!"** (Mark 2: 7). When Jesus claimed to be one with the Father, the Jews wanted to stone him, as they said, **"for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God"** (John 10: 33). This they repeated on several occasions (cf. John 5: 18; 8: 59). The high priest reacted similarly when he heard Christ solemnly swear to his divine origin (Mark 14: 62– 64). Whatever one may think about the truth or falsity of Christ's claims, it should be clear to the unbiased observer of the New Testament record that Jesus claimed to be equal to and identical with the Yahweh of the Old Testament. The cumulative case for **Christ's claim to be God is overwhelming**. No human of any other major religion ever made such claims.