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“Theology” – A Study of God (Part 2)

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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR THE WORD OF GOD
Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27
2. BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD
Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16
3. REPENT OF YOUR SINS
Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3
4. CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD
Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36
5. BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR
SINS Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4
6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH
Revelation 2:10

UPON THE ROCK is printed quarterly for the purpose
of setting forth sound biblical material and evangelism.
We strive to print articles that are informative for
Christians and non-Christians
Editor: Doug Post dipost@comcast.net

The Goodness and Severity of God

Scott Wiley

I. Introduction

“The goodness and severity of God.” This is a challenging phrase from the Scriptures.

Someone once said, “God made man in His own image, so man decided to return the favor.” Mankind seems determined to recreate God in our own image, or, if not ours, one more palatable to tastes of our culture and society. Many folk edit the Bible to fit *‘the god of their own choosing’* rather than accept God as He has revealed Himself. They either edit out all of the severity of God, the calls for obedience, repentance and the warnings of the wrath of God, or, seeking to discredit God they edit out all the love, mercy and longsuffering portraying Him as short-tempered, angry and mean-spirited.

What we need is to look to the whole story about Him and His dealings, His desires and His purposes where man is concerned. Rather than play God’s attributes off against one another - resulting in a two dimensional, flat, cardboard cut-out - we need get our heads around the full witness of Him in Scripture. We need to get a handle on **both** the goodness and the severity of God.

II. Romans 11:22, Context and Meaning

The phrase, **“the goodness and severity of God”** comes from Rom 11:22. Let’s take a moment to consider the phrase in its context and the meaning intended by the writer. **“Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off”** (Romans 11:22). (All quotations are from the ASV unless otherwise stated.)

In the immediate context Paul is dealing with the problem of the Jews who are not receiving the blessing of the Messiah. In this section Paul is warning the Gentile Christians not to get all puffed up over this, the unbelieving Jews – even if they are physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – have been cut off due to their unbelief. Notice, **“if thou continue in his goodness.”** **If** is conditional. **If you continue in His goodness.** You cannot continue in something you are not already in. How do we **continue in** God's goodness? We trust and obey. Here are some **points** to note:

1. The obligation to remain in God's favor is the responsibility of the individual. No one or no thing can take the saved out of the hand of the Lord (John 10:28), but the Lord says He will spew out those who do not continue in their love for Him (Rev 3:16).

another is substituted in place of my own.

In light of this “direct operation” dogma, it's incredible to think as some claim that a non-Christian must solely use his own reasoning skills and intellectual ability in understanding the gospel in order to “get in” (remission of sins), but once the individual crosses the threshold of conversion he or she **must** be enabled with direct supernatural help, infused with Divine power (i.e., “supernatural steroids”) in order to “stay in” (sanctified). In other words, the individual is “on his or her own” to think things through and make sense of Scripture PRIOR to conversion, but once the line is crossed following baptism, the individual can no longer think well enough for himself in order to abide in the Word of Christ, but must have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, having his mind infused with raw supernatural power, reasoning ability, and even intelligence. One may either call this the *Christian Enhanced-Willpower Theology* or the *Check Your Brains at the Door Theology*. Either concept is absurd! The lowly non-Christian is not similarly aided, as is the “supercharged” Christian, in his attempt to study and learn the meaning of any Bible passage, including Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, or John 3:16. Instead, they must use and rely solely upon their natural intellectual powers – their un-augmented and unenhanced humanity, which creates two hermeneutical procedures in interpreting the text – one for the sinner and one for the saint. Quite simply, away with this heretical dogma!

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remarkable personal accomplishment (Heb.1:3; 8-9; Phil. 2:8-11). Similarly, if one argues that we must have moral qualities and virtues “infused” directly by the Holy Spirit, then even our own humanity is just that much also denied, which is not only false but absurd in regard to individual human accountability. Again from Romans chapter six, Paul writes:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord..Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law (of Moses DP), but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you (Rom.6:11-17).

According to Paul the Christians at Rome were themselves responsible for accomplishing the above, especially in their dying to sin, not allowing sin to reign in their lives (and above all), in their not yielding to temptation. Anything less could not be considered genuine, legitimate, accredited obedience “**from the heart.**” However, we must take notice of the fact that these Christians were responsible for keeping themselves from sin and each Christian was individually charged with that duty. Their common humanity was addressed and Paul was appealing to their innate human ability in putting to death sin in their lives. Obviously, these finite human beings had the capability of carrying out Paul’s directives themselves, otherwise why ask them to do something they were incapable of performing? It is just here I am reminded of Calvinism, which teaches that “fallen” humanity is incapable of responding to the gospel message until and unless they are “zapped” directly (i.e., “divinely illuminated”) by the Holy Spirit. Once “zapped,” hearts are opened and understanding is directly supplied to them so they can respond (But if humanity is too wicked to understand the message without a direct “zapping,” then why did Jesus even attempt to teach the people?) Who is actually responding here? It is Deity (on behalf of the human being) responding to Deity – this makes about as much sense as Christians (or non-Christians) having to receive direct supernatural help to become more spiritual and remain sanctified. In the final analysis, if I am personally charged with having to produce obedience, but Deity **must** step in and do that which I am required to accomplish, then this simply amounts to nothing more than “Substitution or Proxy Obedience” (sometimes termed “Replacement Theology”), whereby the will of

2. Although some are duped and drawn off by false teachers (Mat 7:15; Acts 20:29-31; 2 Pet 2:1) following blind guides they will fall with those guides. But for the most part, people end up ‘cut off’ from God and lost because they love their sin and/or themselves more than they love God. Today, we too need to heed the warning here.

- We are saved by a merciful God, and that salvation begins in His grace, His kindness, His goodness.
- By faith we lay hold of the promises, as well as the conditions that come with the promises.
- If we move away from faith, we move away from God. The loss of faith, means the loss of God, and loss of the blessings.

III. The Goodness of God

In Rom 11:22, Paul uses the Greek word *chrestotes*, which translators of both the ASV and KJV render *goodness*. In other places the same word is translated *kindness* (Eph 2:7; Col 3:12; Gal 5:22). Vincent’s Word Studies points out that *chrestotes* carries “the radical idea of the word is *profitableness*... it passes readily into the meaning of *wholesomeness*.” (Vincent, 35)

The goodness, the kindness, *the wholesomeness* of God, is seen in Scripture. When applied to God (contrary to some well-intentioned, but poor theology) it means the same things we normally mean when we apply it to others. His goodness is especially seen toward those who genuinely, faithfully, embrace His will with a full and authentic heart. In both Testaments we see that God expects His people to embrace Him and His will, not just in deeds, but from the heart. Consider the following:

- **“Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart”(Deut. 6:4-6, see also Deut 11:13; 30:6)**
- **“O Lord, open thou my lips; And my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou delightest not in sacrifice; Else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and contrite heart. O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa 51:15-17).**
- **“And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment” (Mat 22:37-38, see also Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27; 1 John 5:2-5).**
- **“Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me.”**

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But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men” (Mat 15:7-8).

In both Testaments it is heart-felt love expressed in obedience to His will, which God expects from His people. But while God’s goodness is evident toward His people, His kindness is also expressed toward those who rejected Him. Mat 5:45: **“... for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.”** God’s goodness is provided for all, and the material blessings of the creation are not limited to His people alone. Further, we see God’s goodness is expressed in His desire to bless all mankind.

- **“The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent”** (Acts 17:30).
- **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”** (2 Pet 3:9).

Notice that the offer to receive the penitent includes the same folks whom the Holy Spirit, through Paul, says the severity of God has fallen. The very next verse says, **“And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again”** (Rom 11:23). For the **“cut-off,”** reconciliation was still possible, if they came to belief in Christ. God has not shut His mercy off. His goodness and kindness is still available to those who will come to Him on His terms.

Many people – either having an ax to grind, or, having failed to receive something they expected from God – claim that God is not good. Usually the argument takes the form of defining *love*, *goodness*, and *kindness* in such a way that if God is good, then there can be no hurt or discomfort in the world (by which, they usually mean themselves). This one-sided approach does not work with humans. We generally recognize goodness in others, even when their doing the right thing causes someone pain or discomfort. God is not an enabler, nor does He fail to chasten those whom He loves when needed (Heb 12:9; Rev 3:19). Some where I read of a man arguing that wars and murders and such are proof that if there is a God, He is not neither good nor kind. In reply, someone else said, “Perhaps or, maybe, those are the footprints of God walking away from us, and leaving us to ourselves as we have demanded.”

The Scriptures are full of accounts of God’s goodness and kindness, run down your concordance on the words *goodness* and *kindness* and you cannot help but be impressed by the frequency with which they are applied to God. Notice too, that His goodness and kindness was

such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13). The fact we are promised a way of escape from temptation means we can choose the “way of escape” from sinning. Yet, some admit they do not know if or when they receive their alleged “illumination” and fail to see that there would therefore be no way in which their human spirit would be able to resist a Spirit-upon-spirit (alleged) “strengthening” or enlightenment should they desire to go against it.

Being vulnerable to sin (as all Christians are) and **having** to sin are two vastly different theological concepts, and the humanity of Jesus bears this out. We are as human as Jesus was, and sharing in the same humanity with Him means we are on the same level with Him – His humanity and ours are parallel. His humanity and our humanity are either the same in every aspect or it is not (which must be proved), and if His humanity is not parallel with ours, then it cannot be said He was completely human. Jesus was not made a programmed robot and neither were we. As Paul says, **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”** (Rom.6:1-2).

Jesus, certainly, had to fight temptation and remain sinless as a human being. To deny this point is to deny and reject the humanity of Jesus and place Him on some level above mankind much like the Gnostics did. However, since Jesus was as human as we, and we are as human as He, it stands to reason that human beings do not receive direct, immediate help outside of ourselves upon our own personal volition. For instance, Scripture records that when the Lord dealt with those who wished to **“accuse him”** regarding the man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1-4), **“when he had looked around about on them with anger, being grieved at their hardness of heart”** (Mark 3:5) the Savior healed him. How is that the Christ refrained from violating the principle of **“be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon thy wrath”** (Eph.4:26)? Was it because another entity, the Holy Spirit, stepped in to directly augment His human weakness in order to keep Him from going over the line? If so, couldn’t anyone remain sinless (Heb.4:15) under such circumstances? No, like Jesus, we do not receive such direct supernatural help from the Holy Spirit in order to maintain our moral purity (which includes overcoming temptation, producing the fruit of the Spirit, and comprehending Scripture). Rather, humans as believers or unbelievers maintain moral purity today from their innate ability and willpower as it relates to the will of God as revealed by Him to us in His Word.

Insofar as one is going to argue that Jesus maintained moral purity because His moral qualities and virtues were “directly infused” supernaturally, then one denies His Humanity, and thus denigrates His

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it simply eradicates His humanity. *Further, if the Spirit does the work, then why is Jesus the One credited with it?* The same principle would be true of the Christian. If the Spirit is the One who makes up the difference for the Christian, having to do what the Christian is personally commanded to do, then WHO is really is doing it? It certainly could not be called obedience from the individual human heart (Rom.6:17) but rather a supernatural, “programmed” response.

Second Proposition

The example of the humanity of Jesus also demonstrates that we, as human beings, **do not have to sin**. In His humanity, Jesus was completely pure, both in mind and deed. Though faced with temptation, Jesus never sinned. His sinless life, therefore, is an example for us in overcoming temptation. How did Jesus overcome temptation and not sin? Quite simply, He loved the word of God (cf. 1 Thess. 2:10). He learned the Scriptures and applied them to His heart each day of His life. This is eternally illustrated during His “desert temptations” when He said, “**It is written**” (Matt. 4:4-10). Influenced by God’s word and allowing it to reign and dominate His mind, Jesus fought temptation, not allowing Himself to give in to it (Heb. 4:15). This particular point is troubling for “direct operationists” because it reveals that the man Jesus (though using any all indirect providence afforded Him such as His godly parents, the synagogue and Temple worship, the beauty of nature, etc.) relied centrally and primarily upon the Word of God in overcoming temptation and sin, not upon supernatural enabling power. This example, therefore, is fundamentally antithetical to the “direct operation” dogma. Some, however, aver that the example of Jesus overcoming sin, solely by the Word of God and other indirect providential influences, cannot be applied to Christians because we, as humans, are “weaker” than Jesus was. And, although most of these folks accept the idea of “free will” or free moral agency, they, nonetheless, tell us that due to our humanity it is impossible for Christians to live a sinless life. In other words, all Christians **must sin** sooner or later by virtue of just being human. They seem to read what Paul wrote as if he said: “for all **have to sin** and **have to** fall short of the glory of God.” But, of course, Paul actually wrote: “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**” (Rom. 3:23). In addressing the presumption that all Christians must sin, a few questions naturally arise. At what point in life do we enter into a situation where we have no choice but to sin? Is it ever impossible for us not to sin? If so, how can Christians be held accountable for something we have no choice in doing? Since human beings have been designed with volition (i.e., the ability to choose correctly or incorrectly), this freedom underscores the fact that Christians can choose **not** to sin and choose to live a sinless life. Moreover, the “direct operation” dogma and the position of humans having to sin by virtue of our humanity is shown biblically to be false. The apostle Paul writes: “**There hath no temptation taken you but**

even directed toward those who were not His chosen people in the Old Testament. For example, Amos 9:7 implies that God may also have led nations other than Israel on exoduses of their own.

The greatest evidence of God’s goodness is that He did not wash His hands of us and write mankind off long ago. God is not only *Good*, *Kind* and *Loving*, God is also *Holy*, *Just* and *Righteous*. Sin has never been something holiness, righteousness and justice can simply ignore. It must be dealt with, otherwise God is not just.

Justice is each one getting his due. Paul tells us, “**the wages of sin is death...**” (Rom 6:23). Fortunately, in God’s goodness and love there is more to the story, because in the same passage we are told, “**.... the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” We do well when we consider that “**the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us. For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man some one would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him**” (Rom 5:5-9). The goodness of God is seen in His provision for both the believer and the sinner. It is seen in His refusal to give up on mankind. It is seen especially in the sacrifice of Christ for us, while we yet sinners living in rebellion against Him.

IV. The Severity of God

Rom 11:22 speaks of the severity of God as well as His goodness. In the context the severity falls on the unbelieving Jews, and is a reminder to the Gentile believers what can happen to them if they do not continue in His goodness. In the prior verse (verse 21) Gentile believers are told, “**for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee.**” Due to unbelief the Jews were cut off, and if the Gentiles fall into unbelief they too will be cut off.

While some deny the goodness of God, others reject any hint of His severity. Rather than the God of the Bible and the gospel Jesus actually preached, what they seek is the **god of warm fuzzies**, a cosmic teddy bear, benign and mild, lacking any real concern about sin. But such a god cannot be considered **just** if He does not deal with sin. Since God is love (1 John 4:8) when His severity is seen it is under-girded by love. But sin must be judged, it must be condemned, and it must be dealt with if God is a **just** God.

Niebuhr sums up this naive view as “a God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross” (93). In both the modernist and post-

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modernist view, there is no room or place for the wrath of God against sin. But this is not the full picture of God in Scripture.

In our human recognition of human and environmental suffering, we call for justice. As mere humans we see that someone must be held accountable for the tears and hurt of the oppressed and abused. And yet, at the same time we call for justice, we seek to tie God's hands from ever delivering it. But Paul writes, **"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness"** (Rom 1:8).

The severity of God is not an arbitrary thing, its not the temper tantrum of the immature, nor is it applied unfairly. It is directed at the ungodliness and unrighteousness expressed by mankind. The severity of God assures us that God does take injustice, oppression, and deceit seriously. It tells us that there is hope for justice and restitution, that the innocent and defenseless who have been ground down by cruelty and abuse, who have had their humanity and dignity stripped from them, these wounded ones do have an advocate who will see to it that their tears were not meaningless. If men and women are offended at injustice and unrighteousness, how can God not be offended as well? How can He NOT and still be a God worthy of worship and praise? The severity of God is another proof that He cares. He cares about who we are and what we do. In John's vision in the book of Revelation (20:12-13) he **"saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne... and the dead were judged ... according to their works. And ... they were judged every man according to their works."**

V. The Horns of a Dilemma

Occasionally people will try to catch God on the horns of a dilemma related to His severity toward sin, and His kindness toward men. The question usually follows the line of... "If God is kind and loving, then why does the Bible talk about hell and wrath against sin?" If He is kind and loving, then He cannot punish and condemn mankind. Or, if He is severe and wrathful then He is not kind and loving." This is a false application of "either /or" reasoning. We are reduced to either:

A. God is kind and loving, and therefore not severe and wrathful or,

B. God is severe and wrathful, and therefore not kind and loving

The problem here is that the "either/or" does not take into account all the evidence. It overlooks the evidence of the Scriptures on what sin is, and why it must be dealt with, and that the evil in the world is not God's Will, but our own doing. His intent was that we live in a Garden of Eden, but that was lost due to the sin of man. We are reaping the consequences of sin. In trying to catch God on the horns of the di-

Similarly, if (as some erroneously claim) we as human beings today must and do have direct, enabling help from the Holy Spirit (Deity), being directly infused with power in order to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22) (i.e., required human ethical characteristics or traits); or to be immediately strengthened in order to overcome temptation and sin (Eph.3:16); or to receive direct supernatural wisdom or illumination in order to comprehend or interpret the Bible (1 Cor.2:10-13), then why are we not, now, in possession of almost sinless perfection? How can it be argued, as some do, that we "sin all the time"? Though Divine inspiration gave a person the ability to combine spiritual things with spiritual words (1 Cor.2:13), even this did not give one such alleged enablement in order to refrain from sin and produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.2:11-14), so why would anyone claim such for "divine illumination"?! Having this alleged direct power from Deity, how is it even possible for a Christian to legitimately be blamed for sin? If humans, Christians in particular, must be enabled by Deity, needing a direct operation of the Holy Spirit for all our spiritual victories in this earthly life, then the blame for our sin and failure cannot be placed strictly upon us, but upon Deity, and such is the consequence and theological failure of the doctrine of the modern day "direct operation of the Holy Spirit." The "direct operation" doctrine assumes that the role of the Holy Spirit is for the express purpose of enabling the Christian with power and ability above and beyond mere humanity: and without this necessary direct infusion of "supernatural steroids," Christians could never remain sanctified and make it to heaven. This dogma seems to assume an inherent design defect with humanity as well, almost mirroring Augustinianism and its error of "original sin." Of course, prior to sinning, Adam and Eve lived sinless lives, and being formed directly by the "hands" of God, they were "born" in *total hereditary righteousness* (as opposed to *total hereditary depravity* and the impossibility of one being able to do any good on their own), how could they possibly sin and commit any evil at all? *Quite simply as human beings, they chose to sin.* They did not have to make that choice and they certainly did not have to sin.

Suggesting that Jesus' own moral existence as a human required direct supernatural help, or that He was forced to use His Divine nature in order to accomplish His will in all of the previously mentioned areas found in the human realm, is tantamount to admitting Gnosticism. The idea completely rejects the humanity of Jesus. However, Jesus was indeed human and did not require direct supernatural help in all of these areas. Just like Jesus, who is our example, we also are not in need of supernatural help to accomplish His will and be pleasing to God. If the human nature of Christ (i.e. His humanity) needed direct help of the Holy Spirit to enable Him to be holy, then Jesus had an insufficient innate capacity for holiness in Him, which is an absolute erroneous view, because

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Being human does not automatically mean imperfection in that we have to sin.

First Proposition

James informs us that **“God cannot be tempted with evil”** (Jam.1:13). Thus, when Jesus was on earth as a human being (as a man), the victories which He won over temptation could not have been won by resorting to His omnipotent power as the Son of God, or from receiving an equivalent **direct** help from Deity in heaven. Rather, He won His victories over temptation in exactly the same way you and I must win our victories; by a personally determined will to apply the Word of God to our hearts, as a result of the faith we have gained from both General Revelation and especially the Scriptures in knowing that **“after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise”** (Heb.10:36). If Jesus had to resort to using the powers of Deity, then it cannot be said He overcame temptation as a human being. If Jesus, as a man, had to receive direct supernatural help from heaven, or if He resorted to using His own powers of Deity, then it cannot be said that He accomplished His sinlessness as a human being. Moreover, Jesus must have produced the fruit of the Spirit from the same human vantage point, by His own human will, otherwise it cannot be said He produced such fruit as one of us. If Jesus was forced into resisting all temptation by virtue of His Deity (rather than in spite of His humanity), then the power of His sinless life as a human being is robbed of its power and meaning, and the significance of His “Humility” is irrevocably diminished (Phil.2:5ff). Though He did not “empty” Himself of Deity (i.e., the divine metaphysical and/or moral attributes) in becoming human. He did give up the independent exercise of such outward glory). He did His efficacy as our sin-bearer and propitiation, and this **must** absolutely rest in the fact that He did not sin as a human being, and did so without direct supernatural help (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). If Jesus had to overcome all temptation by direct supernatural means, then the descriptions of His humanity and his sinless life are not only tarnished, but eradicated. Although Jesus was Deity in the flesh, it was His human nature that was tempted, and it was His human nature, which was forced to resist those temptations without the aid of Divine help. In this fact lies the extraordinary beauty of His sinless life and His expiatory sacrifice for our sins. Additionally, if the humanity of Jesus forced Him to receive Divine Illumination (i.e., a direct operation of Deity upon His mind) as a requirement in order to understand Scripture (aside from the normal processes of human learning involving educational growth and study (cf.Luke2:52), then He did not come to know Scripture as a human being, truly as one of us. *We should ask ourselves: Did not our Lord know some Scripture and produce at least some fruit of the Spirit even **BEFORE** He received the Holy Spirit without measure of power* (John 3:34; Mat.3:16)?

lemma, critics overlook man’s part in this. The critic tends to forget that much – if not most – human tragedy is caused by humans.

In man, God created a being He created for honor, for companionship with, created for holiness, justice, righteousness, mercy and compassion. Instead, what man gave Him was wickedness, injustice, arrogance and oppression – in a word, sin. And so, man reaps the consequences of sin. But even though man betrayed his creator God has not abandoned His beloved. Take a few minutes here and read the story of Hosea and you’ll see that God yet loves His unfaithful people.

Why the need for disciplining and/or chastening? Why all this severity? God, in love, seeks to get our attention and draw us back to Him (consider I Corinthians 5 and why the immoral man was put out of the congregation). God loves us, He will not abandon us, and therefore He works through such things to bring about reconciliation. Critics tend to leave this part out, and worse, forget that in Jesus the Messiah, God came and shared in our experience of the world.

The horns of the dilemma are created by ignoring some of the data. It’s not a matter of a lack of love, when severity is called for, nor is it a lack of concern about sin when God’s love continues for us when we do not deserve it. Rather, it’s a matter of **justice** that God must punish the offender. And it is a matter of Love that the punishment is to bring the offender back to God, if he will only do so.

God is working in the world to reconcile man back to Himself, and someday, when we are able to see the whole picture, we’ll understand, and perfect balance of God’s severity and kindness and their relationship to one another will be evident. We tend to play God’s attributes off against one-another, much like children will play their parents. Mom says ‘no,’ so they go to Dad for a ‘Yes.’ We also tend to see the other guy’s dirt as dirtier than our dirt. We want God’s mercy on us for when we have hurt others, but call for God’s justice against those who have hurt us. We are just human after-all, and we all have feet of clay. Those other folk though, they are hypocrites at best and wicked in general. Somehow, we deserve God’s grace (an oxymoron) where the other guy has God’s justice coming.

There is a sense in which we place God between a rock and a hard place. His loving-kindness impels Him to reach out to us; our sin causes His holiness to recoil from us. In the cross of Christ He we find the answer to the dilemma, for those who are in Jesus Christ have had their sins covered by His own righteousness.

VI. Conclusion

When thinking on the goodness and severity of God, consider the two “comings” of our Lord:

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- The first coming, Jesus came to **“seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10) He came in kindness, mercy and grace to sinners.
- The second coming, Jesus will come to judge the wicked as well as reward the faithful. The severity of God will be seen when Christ returns in the final judgment against sinners (Mat 25:31ff and 2 Thess.1:5-10).

Our choice is to accept His grace and mercy in this life or face His justice in the next one. Our eternal experience of God’s kindness, or wrath, is grounded in our belief in Christ. The Holy Spirit through John says, **“He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”** (John 3:36). This might be a good time to consider your own state before God! Further, the evidence of the Scriptures indicates that the severity of God, seen throughout the Scriptures, denies the errant idea of an “unconditional acceptance”. Although a popular, warm and fuzzy error, it is still an error. They say “God accepts me *just as I am, unconditionally.*” Is that what God says?

Consider Israel; Rom 15:4 says **“whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope.”** Did God accept the Israelites unconditionally, just as they were? If so, then why did He reject them? God does not accept the unrighteous. **“The wages of sin is death”** (Rom 6:23). God accepts only those whom He has justified (acquitted) by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The *Holy, Just and Righteous* God cannot accept impenitent sinners. The ones He accepts are those in Christ, and by extension, in His righteousness.

In God’s goodness and kindness we can come to Jesus, *“just as I am,”* as the old hymn says, if we come to Him in faith and repenting of our sin. In His goodness, His kindness, He will wash away the sin of the penitent. He calls us to come and receive the new life, to be born again, in the watery grave of Baptism. There He will crucify the old man of sin, and resurrect the penitent believer to the new life. See Rom 6:1-18 with John 3:3-5 for God’s teaching on His regeneration of the lost. To reject His gracious offer, is to face His severity. Which will you choose?

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cism. One of the pillars of Gnosticism was in the denial of the humanity of Jesus Christ. These false teachers were teaching that Christ could not have shared in humanity because it was impossible for Deity to take on *flesh and blood*. In combating the early stages of Gnosticism in the church, the beloved apostle of the Lord declared:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” ... “And the Word was made 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
(John 1:1,14).

John reinforces the Truth of Jesus being fully human, sharing humanity with us. This doctrine remains a foundational tenet of Christianity. *If one does not believe that Deity became flesh in order to save mankind, then that individual does not belong to God.* John indelibly impresses this fact upon our minds when he writes:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John 4:3).

While the humanity of Jesus Christ is truly a complex topic, there is a basic characteristic uniquely common to all humans (including Jesus) and that is our moral accountability to God. Since Jesus was, indeed, human, then this was no less true for Him. The Bible tells us that He came to do the will of the Father (Heb. 10:7) and the will of the Father was for Him to be the perfect sacrifice for mankind, (i.e., as a human Jesus, had to remain sinless in order to be the sacrificial “unspotted lamb.”) The only way for Jesus to remain sinless was to obey the Father (Heb.5:8-9), personally obeying **“from the heart”** (Rom.6:17) whatever the Father asked of Him. But was the Savior’s will actually determined directly by His own “humanness” or was His personal will taken over by His nature as Deity as some allege? This concept becomes significant when contemplating the humanity of Christ, because *whatever was true of Jesus as a human must also be true of us.* Since Jesus was completely human and was accountable as a human being (Heb.4:15), two significant propositions naturally follow:

Human beings do not require direct supernatural help in order to accomplish the following:

To be strengthened in order to keep from sinning.

To produce “the fruit of the Spirit”.

To receive illumination to understand and interpret Scripture. [We are not talking about divine inspiration here, whereby some were chosen to receive direct operations of the Spirit in order to speak and write God’s Truth as they were controlled as to the message by said Spirit]

is identified as a man while He was on earth. Second, His human nature continues to be identified as such even while sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We know this because the apostle Paul was writing many years after Christ's ascension, and, yet, by inspiration refers to Him as "the man Christ Jesus." While detailing the superiority of Christ and His word (the New Covenant), the writer of Hebrews also highlights His human nature:

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. 14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Heb.2:10-18).

There are at least six reasons established for the Christ becoming fully human and sharing with our humanity:

1. He had to suffer as a human before *bringing many sons to glory* (v.10).
2. He had to become one with us in order to call us *brethren* (v.11).
3. He had to fully share in *flesh and blood* to destroy the devil and death (v.14).
4. He had to partake of our human nature, choosing to help mankind (Abraham's seed), and like us, was made a little lower than the angels (v.16; cf.2:6-7).
5. He had to become human in order to reconcile man to God and to continue being fully God in forgiving our sin and making atonement for us (v.17).
6. He had to share in our humanity in order to be tempted and suffer as we do, yet without sin (v.18).

Two Significant Propositions

Like today, the first century church had to deal with its share of false teaching, especially with the heretical movement known as Gnosti-

The Deity of Christ

Travis Main

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-15) (1)

The question of the Deity of Christ is debated by many. The atheist denies the existence of God. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim Christ was a created being. The Mormon believes Christ was a man who became a god. Muslims declare Christ was simply a prophet of Allah. The answer does not rely upon the decision of any individual or group. Jesus is either Deity or He is not based upon fact. Most Christians believe Jesus is Deity based upon the belief the Bible is a God-breathed, inerrant, word for word record by which God wants man to pattern his life. It is therefore the final authority of examination for all answers man derives (2 Peter 1:2-3). In a nutshell, the Word of God is truth and if any conclusion contradicts the Word, the conclusion must be in error (John 17:17). Before and after the appearance of Jesus, man looked to the scriptures, now completely revealed, to affirm the Deity of the Messiah. By the lifetime of Christ, the world had the Old Testament in complete, affirmed by Christ, and the prophets to examine any claim of Deity. By the end of the first century, man also had the complete New Testament of the Bible to examine any claims of Deity, during the formation of which the apostles and prophets affirmed the scriptures. Since the Bible is declared the source for the claims of Deity, whether one believes in the inerrancy of the Bible or not, verification the Bible makes the claim of Deity for Christ must be accomplished.

The contemplation of Christ as Deity must be broken up into two separate questions: First – Is Jesus Deity? Second – Is Jesus God? For some, this question means the same thing. For others, it does not. They declare Jesus is a god, but not God; He is just the son of God, a demigod, but not equal to the eternal God of all. The concept of a triune or "trinity" God is rejected by some because this would in their mind mean that there are three Gods and not one God. Since this article will not examine in depth the "trinity" or Godhead, it must be understood that this author believes the Father (John 20:17, I Corinthians 8:6, Galatians 1:1, Philippians 2:11), Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4, 2 Cor. 3:17-18, Mat. 28:19), and Jesus the Son are one God in total. They are three individual entities of the Godhead. To illustrate, consider an army. An army from the Commander in Chief all the way down to the private is still one army, but many parts.

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Also consider the marriage which is composed of two separate parts, a man and a woman. Together they are not marriages, but a singular marriage. Finally, consider the Church as a singular body consisting of many members making up its whole (Romans 1:16, Galatians 3:8, I Corinthians 12:12-27). In all of these cases, there are different responsibilities, but this does not divide their singular makeup. Jesus declares about God: “... **Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:**” (Mark 12:29). If it is concluded that Jesus is Deity, then it should be clear to see that Jesus is also God.

Deity is defined by the Collins English Dictionary as: “1. a god or goddess 2. the state of being divine; godhead 3. the rank, status, or position of a god 4. the nature or character of God”. (2) In order to determine that Jesus is Deity and therefore God, the definition of Deity must apply to Him.

John the immerser speaks in John 1:40 and the following occurred: **“One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.”** Who is this Messiah or Christ they were looking to find? Knowledge of the coming Messiah dated back to the Old Testament. God promised Abraham that through his descendant (singular referencing the Messiah) all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3, Genesis 22:18). Isaiah said He would be one referred to as **“with us is God”** and be born of a virgin (**Isaiah 7:14**). He also said this Messiah would be named **“mighty God”** and **“eternal Father”** (Isaiah 9:6). Micah 5:2 predicts this Messiah would be born in Bethlehem though his existence was from always or everlasting. This establishes that the Messiah to come would be God for the Lord said this about himself in Isaiah 41:4, **“Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he.”** If the Messiah were from everlasting, then it means he could not come after God. He must, therefore, be God. Taken with the other Old Testament verses, this is quite obvious and confirms Christ’s Deity.

From the introductory scripture of Matthew 16:13-15, Christ asked his disciples who they believed He was. Peter’s answer was that Jesus was **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”**. The retort by skeptics of Christ as God is in part made from this verse. Christ is only the son and not God establishes the accusation. However, putting aside for the moment the claim Christ is not God, the phrase “Son of God” needs to be understood. For ages leading up to and beyond the time of Christ, the phrase “son of God” has been applied to leaders of nations and others thought to have divine nature. It applied to the genuine belief

Deity of Christ must not be set aside or approached lightly for it is the foundation upon which Christians are born and the Church stands.

Holy Bible King James Version; This scripture and all the following are from this translation.

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Our Shared Humanity

*What is true of Jesus is true of us -
Dispelling Holy Spirit Direct Operation Dogma*

By Doug Post

Religious extremes have grappled with the nature of Christ for centuries, from the early heresies of the Gnostics to the more recent “Jesus Seminar,” where one extreme denied His humanity and the other His Deity. Most Bible students, however, accept the God-Man concept of the Person of Christ. After all, Jesus was both Divine and human at the same time, a fact clearly established in Scripture. The “beloved” apostle provides a sufficient summary of the nature of Christ: **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”** (John 1:14). Quite simply, God became human. This theological concept was earlier understood by both Jews (Isa.7:14; Matt.2:4-5) and Gentiles (Col.1:16-17; Phil.2:5ff). Jesus Christ possessed all the attributes of humanity while possessing all of the attributes of Deity. **Both human and Divine natures conjoined in one Person.**

Without being fully human, Jesus could not be one of us, yet without being fully God neither could the Christ save us. Therefore, the “Incarnation” – the coming together of both the human and divine natures – was not only a historical fact, but a necessary reality. Aside from His miraculous conception and Mary being **“found with Child of the Holy Spirit”** (Matt.1:18), the physical development of Christ was completely human. Actually, one could say that His human development, from birth to adulthood, was completely normal. Luke writes, **“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”** (Luke 2:52). This is the natural human progression – the normal progression for both non-Christians and for Christians, or at least ought to be (cf.Eph.6:1-4).

Various passages of Scripture clearly identify Jesus as being a man. In addressing the Jews, the apostle Peter declared Jesus as a **“man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs”** (Acts 2:22). Moreover, the apostle Paul writes, **“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”** (1 Tim.2:5). These two verses depict two facts about our Lord. First, Christ

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question. This belief is brought up now in light of all the evidence thus far seen regarding Christ's Deity. A deep analysis in the Greek is not needed when it is clear such a twisting of scripture would contradict the Bible presentation of Christ extensively.

The final examination of the Deity of Christ must be taken from the Church of God. This is a phrase which the apostle Paul used with the Churches in Ephesus, Corinth, Galatia, and Thessalonica (Acts 20:28, I Corinthians 1:2, 10:32, 11:16, 22, 15:9, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:13, I Thessalonians 2:14, 2 Thessalonians 1:4). Additionally, he referred to the Church of God in his first letter to Timothy (I Timothy 3:5, 15). It is seen that God added the saved to His Church in Acts 2:47. If it is God's church, should He not be the head of it? Ephesians 5:23 says Christ is the head of the Church and Savior of it. The Church is also sanctified by Christ (I Corinthians 1:2, Ephesians 5:26). The Church is presented to Christ by Himself (Ephesians 5:27). How could He present something to Himself which is not His in the first place? The Church is described as His **body** in Colossians 1:24 by the apostle Paul. He used the term Church of God many times, yet uses the synonymous phrase "**Churches of Christ**" in Romans 16:16. With such evidence, how can one claim that the Church of God is not the Church of Christ? Even more importantly, how does an individual claim Christ is not God? It is God's Church. Continuing on from the initial passage of this article (Matthew 16) upon Peter's confession, Jesus is the Christ and Son of God, Jesus tells him upon that rock (which is Christ – I Corinthians 10:4, I Corinthians 3:11), "**I will build my Church**". Whose Church is it? Christ's Church! Whose Church is it? God's Church! There is one Church, one body, built by the one God of all (Ephesians 4:4-6). God is the one and only Deity. He is the Father, He is the Son, and He most certainly is Jesus the Christ.

While those who utilize means of authority outside of the Bible will continue to proclaim "Jesus is not Deity, He is not God", the Bible as the sole means of authority to the Christian confirms that He is. Jesus the Messiah was presented as being God in the Old Testament. Jesus also was presented as being God in the New Testament. Being the Son of God, He was obviously understood to claim Deity by the people of His age. He was all man and all God and not just part of one or the other. He is equal to God, shares the attributes of God, and proclaimed to be God by God and man. He is said to be the Word God, present from the beginning, and presented upon the earth in the flesh. The Church of God has the blessing of being Christ's Church, the only Church, and the Church accountable to His headship. If Christ is not God, then the Bible is a false witness, and the Christian faith is in vain. The concept of the

the individual being spoken about was Deity. This phrase was even seen during the times of Daniel when the fourth image was seen with Daniel and his friends in the fiery pit. Nebuchadnezzar then used the phrase, "**son of the gods**" in reference to Deity in Daniel 3:25. This was some 500 years before the time of Christ.

The Jews of Jesus time had a very clear understanding of what it meant to claim to be the "Son of God". In Matthew 26:63-65, Jesus is before the Sanhedrin, the spiritual leadership of the Jews. Jesus is asked if he is "**the Christ, the Son of God**". His reply, declaring that He would come in the clouds of heaven and they would see Him, leads the Sanhedrin to declare that Christ has blasphemed. It is not perfectly clear, initially, upon what they base the claim of blasphemy. Is it the affirmation that He is the Son of God? Or the declaration He would come from heaven? Or perhaps the idea He would be coming in judgment (God Judges - Ecclesiastes 12:14)? What aids in making this situation clearer is the passage found in John 10:22-39. The Jews gathered in Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Dedication. They asked Jesus to tell them clearly if He was the Christ. He tells them that He has told them before and the works He does should identify who He is. Jesus further tells them that He gives eternal life and He and the Father are one. There are those today who believe the statement that Christ was one with the Father means they both have righteous purposes. However, that is not at all what the Jews understood. They state: "**You being a man, make Yourself out to be God.**" Jesus responds by pointing out God has referred to them as gods (judges with divine authority – Psalms 82) who were to impart and uphold the commands of God. Being in that position, they were accusing Jesus of blaspheming by saying that He was the Son of God. Remember, they equated the phrase "**the Son of God**" with being God from their own words in this text. Jesus asks them with their understanding of the Law of God, if they were making the charge because His works were contrary to the Law. Of course, His works were not contrary. He further bolsters his case of being God (Son of God) by pointing out the miraculous works which confirmed He was who He said He was. It should be noted in neither Matthew nor John did Jesus deny His Deity, but rather affirmed it in both situations. The Son of God references Deity.

How can Jesus claim to be the son of man and Son of God and not be a demigod? A demigod is part mortal and part God. If Jesus was part both, why is He not considered a demigod? Christ was indeed flesh. He was born of a virgin as prophesied (Matthew 1:18-25). He was born a descendant of David according to the flesh (Romans 1:3). He was a descendant of Abraham according to the flesh (Acts 2:29-32). By the flesh, Jesus suffered for mankind (I Peter 4:1). In His flesh and blood, He was

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crucified and put away the Law of Moses through fulfillment (Ephesians 2:13-16, Colossians 1:22). In His flesh and blood, He died as all men die (Hebrews 2:14). Jesus was resurrected in His flesh and appeared to the disciples and ate with them (Luke 24:36-43). It is the flesh and blood of Jesus which man remembers in the partaking of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29). Jesus was 100% flesh. He was not partly flesh. Jesus was not born from Heaven. Jesus was sent from Heaven (Matthew 21:37, John 3:16, 5:23, 6:39, 10:36, 14:24). He was the begotten of God (John 1:14, 3:16, 3:18, I John 4:9). The term begotten used in reference to Christ means "single or one of its kind" according to Thayer's Greek Definitions. Colossians 2:9 says of Jesus, "**For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form**". This certainly would explain Jesus being the begotten of God. God took the form of man and His name was Jesus. As established by "**all**" and "**fullness**", it was not "part" of God in the form of Jesus. It must be understood Christ is the "only" of God because He was 100% Deity. Jesus was not part man, part God, and thus, a demigod. **Jesus equals God.**

To say Jesus is equal to God must be demonstrated through the use of scripture. It has already been established the Jews understood Jesus was claiming to be equal to God (John 5:18) and He backed this claim with the power of God. Paul further affirms this fact by his inspired words in Philippians 2:5-7, "**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.**" This verse establishes Jesus was in the form of God. The word "**form**" refers to his image, nature, makeup, and essence. "**Form**" doesn't mean just "personality" or righteous attributes here. Jesus was God in heaven and therefore being God it was not an issue to be considered equal to God. When Jesus was sent to man, He completely assumed the role of servant and put on the image of man, being flesh. Though, He took the more humble form of man, He did not give up his Deity.

When attempting to discern if there is a difference in the nature of God and Jesus, the process is relatively simple. Identify the unique attributes of God and if Jesus does not have these attributes, then he cannot be God. When the Jews identified Jesus' claim as having equality with God, Jesus laid out a number of attributes showing it was so. In John 5:9-24, He mentions that whatever the Father could do, He could do. He could raise the dead, judge all men, receive the same honor, and give eternal life. At the end of the passage, Jesus again mentions the miracles witnessed His words as true. Further attributes to be noted: Jesus could forgive sins (Mark 2:5). Jesus knew the hearts and minds of men

(Matthew 9:4, John 2:24-25). God has no sin (I John 1:5), Jesus did not sin (I Peter 2:21-22). Jesus accepted worship of man (Matthew 28:9), while stating such was for God alone (Matthew 4:10). Jesus is omnipresent (Matthew 18:20). God is everlasting (Psalm 90:2) and Jesus is everlasting (Hebrews 1:8). By examination of attributes alone, Jesus can be seen to be God.

The Hebrews 1:8 scripture not only proclaims Jesus as everlasting, but even more astounding is the knowledge the words spoken there are by God and He calls Jesus "**God**". This is not the only place in scripture Jesus is identified as God. Jesus established himself as existing before Abraham and identified Himself as "**I AM**" the same way God did to Moses (John 8:58-59, Exodus 3:13-15). Following Jesus' crucifixion, the apostle Thomas said he would not believe Jesus had risen until he personally could "**see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side.**" John 20:24-28 records those comments and the moment Thomas saw Him and, then and there, declared to Jesus "**My Lord and my God.**" Jesus did not rebuke him, but affirms his belief. I Timothy 3:16 speaking of Jesus Christ, proclaims God appeared in the flesh. Romans 9:5 announces Jesus as God overall all. Titus 2:13 speaks of the return of Christ calling Him God and Savior. One verse is all that is needed to validate Jesus as God, but there are numerous examples in scripture.

Another identification of Jesus Christ in scripture is by the Greek term "**logos**" or simply "**Word**". The first 18 verses of the first chapter of the book of John go a long way to understanding Jesus relationship to Deity by using the term "**logos**". John 1:1 establishes three things: 1) The Word was in the beginning, 2) the Word was with God, and 3) the Word was God. The evidence the Word is Jesus dominates the full text. Verse 4: The Word was life – Jesus is the life (John 14:6). The Word was the light – Jesus is the light (John 8:12). Verse 7: John came to **bear witness of the light** – John bore witness of Jesus (John 1:29-30) [Note: John says in this text **Jesus existed before him, yet, Jesus was six months younger...** see Luke 1:35-36... this points again to the Deity of Christ.]. Verse 10 – **The Word was in the world** – Jesus was sent into the world (John 3:16). Verse 14: **The Word became flesh** – Jesus became flesh (Romans 1:3). The Word was the begotten of God – Jesus was the begotten of God (Acts 13:33). There are many more proofs within the John one text which demonstrate Jesus was God, but from these samples it is clear the statement is true. The New World Translation attempts to say Jesus was "a" god, however, it does so in attempt to try to prove Christ as simply a glorified man. This is a twisted doctrine which ignores the Greek language and even contradicts its own application of the grammar in