

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.
The Tree of Life for week ending 02/10/02.

The Doctrine of The Deity of Christ.

As we continue our study of Gen 16, we reviewed a very important doctrine that every believer must have a firm understanding of. Every believer must be able to defend the faith, to explain the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Point 1 was our definition. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is eternal God. As a member of the Trinity, He always existed. The Lord Jesus Christ is also coequal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Spirit, Col 1:15-17, ***“And He [Jesus Christ] keeps on being the exact image of the invisible God, the privileged first-born with reference to all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*”**

This is important because Gen 1:1 says ***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”***

In eternity past, Jesus Christ had the same essence as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. In time, He still had the same functions of deity, but He also became true humanity. So He is now different than the Father and the Holy Spirit because He is also true humanity and therefore, He is unique.

To prove that Jesus Christ is God, we can begin by pointing out that in Gen 1:1 the Bible says ***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”***

Those who deny that Jesus is Lord must be asked, "Who created the Heavens and the earth?"

The answer of course, God did! Yet Col 1:15-17, as we have seen, says The Lord Jesus Christ did.

Jesus Christ is eternal God and as a member of the Trinity, He always existed as God. There never was a time when He was not God.

The “privileged first born” in Col 1:15 refers to the humanity of Christ. The humanity of Christ was born as taught in Isa 7:14, ***“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”***

This was of course fulfilled in Mat 1:20-23. However, the deity of Christ always existed as taught in Joh 1:2 “He was in the beginning with God.”

In Col 1:15, we read, ***“He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.”***

Note that Jesus Christ was not created but He is the first-born of every creature. This means Christ was the first born with reference to all created beings, that's the way Col 1:15 should be translated. In other words, the passage doesn't say he is the firstborn among creatures but the firstborn with reference to all creation or creatures.

So Col 1:15 says ***“And He [Jesus Christ] keeps on being the exact image of the invisible God, the privileged first-born with reference to all creation.”***

The Lord Jesus Christ is God, He created all humanity and He is unique.

Everything that we will ever possess, all we will ever have depends upon the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

Understanding and mastering this doctrine is important. Look at 1Jo 2:22-23 ***“Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”***

Point 2 in our doctrine deals with the Syllogism of Deity.

A syllogism is a logical formula consisting of two premises and a conclusion. There is a major and minor premise plus a conclusion, derived from deductive reasoning. For example, every virtue is admirable (major premise), kindness is a virtue (minor premise), therefore, kindness is admirable (conclusion). Following this formula, we can say that the Trinity is eternal, Christ is a member of the Trinity, therefore, Christ is eternal.

1Pe 1:1-2 is one of at least three verses of scripture where the deity of Christ is presented as a syllogism, 1Pe 1:1-2 ***“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.”***

Notice we have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit all mentioned in this verse. We have the omniscience of God the Father mentioned by the word foreknowledge and we have the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit sanctifying the believer. Then we have obedience to The Lord Jesus Christ. (see also 2Co 13:14, Mat 28:19)

Isa 48:16 is also a syllogism, ***“Come near to Me; listen to this. From the first, I have not spoken in secret. From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God [God the Father] has sent Me [God the Son], and His Spirit [God the Holy Spirit].”***

Point 3 deals with the Claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ could look at a crowd of people who were angry at His claims of sharing God's nature and tell them that no one has lived a sinless life, except for Himself. Joh 8:28-29 ***Jesus therefore said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am {He,} and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”***

In Joh 8:46-47 ***“Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear {them,} because you are not of God.”***

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed to be the ONLY way to God, not one of several ways, but the one and only way, Joh 14:6.

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed not to teach the way, but to be the way to God. Nobody has ever made claims like that before and backed them up, but The Lord Jesus Christ did through his love, life, miracles and power.

Joh 14:6 ***Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.***

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed to have shared the glory of God in Heaven and to have pre-existed the people he spoke with. The apostle John wrote that The Lord Jesus Christ was with God in the very beginning, and that ***"all things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."***

In Joh 17:5 He prayed, ***"And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."***

He also claimed to be able to forgive sins. Luk 5:20-21, this is one of the reasons that the Jewish leaders were so angry with Him, His continual practice of forgiving people's sins. The religious leaders understood clearly that since sins were rebellion against God Himself, and only God could forgive sins.

Luk 5:20-21 ***And seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this {man} who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"***

Our Lord claimed to be equal with God in Joh 5:18 ***"For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."***

The Lord Jesus Christ claimed to be a Heavenly King, Luk 22:69 and He claimed to be the King of the Jews, in Luk 23:3. He also claimed to be the Son of God and the King of Israel, Joh 1:49.

In our study of Gen 16, we are on verse 13 which reads ***Therefore, she called upon the name of the Lord who was speaking to her, you are the mighty God of vision or doctrine, or revelation, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"***

Notice that it says that she remained alive after seeing Him or seeing God. We have noted that the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the only Person of the Trinity to ever be seen, as taught such passages as Joh 1:18, 6:46; 1Ti 6:16; 1Jo 4:12.

Look at Joh 1:18 ***"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained {Him.}"***

In Gen 16:13 Hagar sees the second person of the Trinity, The Lord Jesus Christ. Look at Joh 5:37, ***"And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form."***

Or Joh 6:46 ***"Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father."***

As we have noted, the deity of Christ is important to understand because one thing that other religions such as the Buddhists, Mormons, Muslims, Hindus, Moonies, the Way international, Jehovah's witnesses, Christian scientists, Scientology, the New Age movement, etc. all have in common is that they all deny the deity of Jesus Christ or the fact that Jesus is Lord, or that Jesus is Jehovah and God.

However, what does the Bible say?

Look at 1Jo 2:23 ***"Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also."***

Or Joh 5:21-23 ***“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”***

Point 4 deals with Scriptural Documentation regarding the Deity of Christ.

For example, Mic 5:2 says Jesus Christ is eternal God during the incarnation, Mic 5:2 ***“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {Too} little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”***

This was fulfilled by our Lord in Mat 2:5-6, ***And they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler, Who will shepherd My people Israel.”***

Notice the phrase in Mic 5:2, ***“His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”***

This same Hebrew word for *eternity* **“olam”** is used to affirm the eternal existence of the Father in many passages, Gen 21:33;

Psa 41:13; 90:2; 103:17; Isa 40:28. So, what this proves for the Father, it also proves for the Son.

In Joh 8:56-58 ***“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw {it} and was glad.” The Jews therefore said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”***

The phrase “I am” means He always existed.

“I am” in the Greek is ***“ego eimi”*** and it cannot be correctly rendered as anything except “I am.”

The Jews understood His use of ***“ego eimi”*** to be the same as when used by the Father, as evidenced by the fact that they sought to kill him when He said it.

Jehovah is the traditional translation of the Hebrew consonants JHWH - the special name for the one true God. However, the Jews said that this name was too sacred to be pronounced. So they replaced it by a variety of names - such as “Lord” or “the Name.”

On a number of occasions Jesus refers to himself by using “I am.”

For example, in Joh 6:35 Jesus said ***“I am the bread of life;”***

Joh 6:41 ***“I am the bread that came down out of heaven.”***

Joh 6:51 ***“I am the living bread”***

Joh 8:12 ***“I am the light of the world”***

Joh 8:18 ***“I am He who bears witness of Myself”***

Joh 10:7 ***“I am the door of the sheep.”***

Joh 10:14 ***“I am the good shepherd”***

Joh 11:25 ***“I am the resurrection and the life;”***

Joh 14:6 ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life;”***

Joh 15:1 ***“I am the true vine”***

Those are the ten “I am’s” of the Gospel of John and of course ten represents the number

of completion of the divine order and The Lord Jesus Christ was completely identifying Himself as the great I am.

Some say that Jesus Christ never claimed to be God, this is not true. At the time of his trial, Jesus was asked by the high priest about His Messiahship. Look at Mar 14:60-64 ***And the high priest stood up {and came} forward and questioned Jesus, saying, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed {One?}" And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.***

Many scriptures prove that The Lord Jesus Christ is God. In Isaiah 45:22-23 God says of himself (through the prophet), ***"Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear {allegiance.}"***

In Phi 2.10 Paul says ***"at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."***

In Joh 5:18 ***"For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."***

Jesus was indeed "making himself equal with God" as we read in John's Gospel. He was beginning to teach that the "unity" of God involved a true uniting of three "persons" in the Godhead or in the divine nature; and he was claiming to be one of them.

In Col 2:9 Paul writes ***"in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."***

The Bible clearly teaches the deity of Jesus Christ.

God is omnipotent (all powerful) according to the Scriptures, 1Ch 29:11. In Phi 3:21 Jesus Christ is all powerful, ***He exerts the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."***

In Gen 2:3, God is the Lord of the Sabbath, In Mat 12:8 we read ***For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.***

We read that Jehovah will judge mankind in Isa 3:13 ***The Lord arises to contend, And stands to judge the people.***

In 2Co 5:10 ***For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,***

Isa 44:6 reads ***"Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me."***

In Rev 1:17 ***And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,"***

In 1Ch 29:11 we read ***"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth;"***

Mat 28:18 ***And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."***

In 2 Ch 7:14 we read ***"and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."***

Mat 9:6 ***“But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”-- then He said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed, and go home.”***

So back to our main verse Gen 16:13 and our corrected translation says ***“Therefore, she [Hagar] called upon the name of the Lord who was speaking to her, “you are the mighty God of vision or doctrine, or revelation, Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?”***

The point that is so important is that Hagar recognized that God was talking to her. The most important question that anyone needs to answer is found in Mat 22:42 ***“What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?”***

Remember that The Lord Jesus Christ LJC said “I am He!”

He said I am He in Joh 8:18; Deu 32:39; Isa 41:4; 43:10; 43:13; 48:12; Jer 29:23; Joh 8:18; 8:24; 8:28; 13:19; 18:6; 18:8;

Rev 2:23.

So in Mat 16:16-17 ***And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal {this} to you, but My Father who is in heaven.”***

Here is the point, unless a person believes that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, they cannot be saved. That is why this doctrine is so important to understand.

Point 5 deals with the Bible Verses Stating Jesus is God.

Mat 1:23 ***“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, God with us.”***

Joh 1:1-4 ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”***

In Joh 1:9-10 ***“There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.”***

Then we should correlate Joh 1:1 ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”***

With Joh 1:14 ***“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”***

In Joh 5:18 ***“For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”***

Then in Joh 5:21-23 ***“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”***

Joh 10:30 ***“I and the Father are one.”***

Whoever is the true God is also eternal life. Therefore, if we identify the one who is eternal life, we also identify the true God.

Point 6. The Preincarnate Work of Jesus Christ Indicates He Was God.

The most obvious preincarnate work is the fact that The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe, Joh 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10.

Joh 1:3 ***“All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”***

He had to be God to preexist all other creatures.

We have a lot of Biblical documentation of His preincarnate person.

Joh 1:14-15, Joh 3:13, Joh 8:23, Joh 8:56-59, Joh 17:4-5, Joh 17:14, Joh 17:18, for example.

So the fact that He existed before He became a man points to His deity.

Point 7. TLJC also is identified as God by the Old Testament Theophanies.

The Lord Jesus Christ often came as a man in the Old Testament.

For example, He was the one who wrestled with Jacob in Gen 32:24-30.

He also came as the burning bush to Moses in Exo 3:(1-6).

In the Old Testament, He appeared as the angel of the Lord or the angel of Jehovah. And there are passages where The Lord Jesus Christ is not only called the angel of Jehovah but at the same time He is also called Jehovah, Gen 22:11-18, Gen 31:11-13, Exo 3:1-6, Acts 7:31-35, Exo 13:21, 14:19, Judg 6:11-23, 13:9-22.

In all of these passages you will find The Lord Jesus Christ mentioned in context as the angel of Jehovah. There is also something else that is very interesting, the angel of Jehovah is also distinguished from Jehovah.

Because, the angel of Jehovah is always Jesus Christ. There are times that Jehovah can refer to God the Father, God the Son, or God the Spirit.

The word Elohim is in the plural and as a plural word translated God in the Old Testament, it refers to the entire Trinity, it is used in Gen 1:26, 3:22.

Gen 1:26 ***Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;”***

Gen 3:22 ***Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil;”***

Whenever one or more persons are going to be mentioned we have the word Jehovah. It is used for God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. However, it is only the Son who is the "angel of Jehovah".

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only visible member of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ is the only the manifest person of the Godhead...but He is still God. He is the only person of the Godhead who ever is manifest to man or to creatures in the form of a creature or in some other form like the burning bush or the pillar of fire at night or the cloud by day.

Jesus Christ was the angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament but since He's also Jehovah, the passage will say somewhere in it that “Jehovah said” indicating that the angel of

Jehovah is Jehovah and that Jehovah is also the angel of Jehovah. The angel of Jehovah is a Theophany and Jehovah is God.

So obviously when some other member of the Godhead is involved in the passage where the angel of Jehovah is functioning it will say Jehovah said to the angel of Jehovah, because the Father is Jehovah too.

This is true in Gen 24:7 *“The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, To your descendants I will give this land, He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there.”*

Or Gen 24:40 *And he said to me, The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives, and from my father's house;”*

Note that in these passages, the angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah and another principle emerges which is the fact that the angel of Jehovah is the second person of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ is always said to be the visible God. The only member of the trinity who is ever visible is Jesus Christ, again that's Joh 1:18, 6:46, 1Ti 6:15-16, 1Jo 4:12, and after the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the angel of Jehovah never appears again.

Point 8. The essence of God is ascribed to Jesus Christ.

1. Savior, Psa 2:6; Mat 28:18; Act 2:36; 2Pe 1:11; Rev 19:16.
2. Perfect righteousness and justice = holiness, Luk 1:35; Joh 6:69; Heb 7:26.
3. Love, Joh 13:1,34; 1Jo 3:16.
4. Eternal life, Isa 9:6; Micah 5:2; Joh 1:1, 8:58; Col 1:16-17; Eph 1:4; Rev 1:11.
5. Omniscience, Mat 9:4; Joh 2:25; 1Co 4:5; Col 2:3; Rev 2:23.
6. Omnipresence, Mat 28:20; Eph 1:23; Col 1:27.
7. Veracity, Joh 14:6; Rev 3:7.
8. Omnipotence, Rev 1:8.

He is the supreme being of the universe, king of heaven and earth! He has absolute authority and volition.

Jesus Christ is also the sovereign one of the universe according to Gen 1:1, Rev 17:14, 1:5-6, 19:16.

So God is sovereign, Jesus Christ is sovereign, therefore Jesus Christ is God.

God is also immutable. He is neither capable of nor susceptible to change.\

He is absolute stability. His word and His works are immutable.

And therefore we are told that TLJC is the same yesterday, today and forever, Heb 13:8.

To say that Jesus Christ is God is to say that we can know the truth about God or we can know what God is like. In fact, apart from Jesus Christ, we really cannot know God.

There is no knowledge of God apart from a knowledge of The Lord Jesus Christ.

The second practical application of the truth that Jesus Christ is God is that God was always like Jesus.

Sometimes we tend to think of God as just, and holy and stern and that TLJC changed God. However, TLJC opened a window in time so that we might see the eternal and unchanging love of God.

Thirdly, because Jesus Christ is God it means that He is available and able to satisfy all the needs of your heart. God is infinite and has inexhaustible resources. So in our main passage of Gen 16:13 we have more than enough evidence that Hagar was talking to God in the person of Jesus Christ called the angel of Jehovah.