



“Jesus Christ: Entire God”

Romans 14:6-12

Lesson 6

In A Nutshell

The day I met my first team of Jehovah’s Witnesses was a very special day in my life. I was a Junior or Senior in high school, I believe. One Saturday morning I was home alone, when the doorbell rang. I answered the door to embark on my first defense of the deity of Jesus Christ, a doctrine my visitors denied. They were more prepared than I was, and by the time I closed the door on that conversation, my heart was greatly troubled about what I had been taught all my life. Could it be that I had been wrong believing that Jesus is God?

Those years were a period of rapid spiritual growth in my life. Each day, it was my practice to study in some depth a single Bible verse for my devotions. I had made my way through Philippians doing that, and now I was in Romans. With troubled heart I sat at my desk and opened my Bible to the next verse in that study, asking the Lord for help to understand. The verse for that morning happened to be Rom. 14:11. The deity of Christ could not be clearer than Paul makes it in this passage (vv. 8-12). Over three decades later, I still have my notes from that morning’s study. Here is part of what I jotted down then:

“Paul knew his Bible and could therefore use it as an effective weapon. The Sword of the Spirit is useless unless one knows it and how to use it. The passage Paul is referring to is found in Isaiah 45.” Clearly, the Lord had used my visitors that day to teach me a lesson about my need to know my Bible better. Then I wrote: “In this chapter, the Lord rebukes senseless idol worship, declaring His power as He asks all to come unto Him and be saved. There is no other God, and all must bow their knees one day and confess this fact.”

At the end of Rom. 14:11’s phrase, “every tongue shall confess to God,” in the New Scofield Reference Bible I used in those days, I wrote in parenthesis “(to Christ) - Phil. 2:10.” I noted: “Many religious cults as well as just plain atheists of our day deny the deity of Jesus Christ. They do not believe that Jesus Christ was the same God who, in Isa. 45:23, says that every knee will bow unto Him. In Phil. 2:10, however, it is evident that Jesus Christ is the One to whom all will bow, the same One who made that claim in Isa. 45:23.”

By God’s grace I have never doubted the teaching of Scripture on the deity of Christ since that day. Like Paul we need the ability to show from our Bibles the wonderful truth that Jesus Christ is entirely God. Any “Jesus” of lesser stature is powerless to save from sin.

To The Testimony!

Biblical Evidence for the Deity of Jesus Christ

Isa. 45:20-25 1. *Deity* means *Godhood*, and the *deity of Jesus Christ* means that Jesus Christ is the true God. Rom. 14:11 is a quotation from Isa. 45:23. What indications do we have from Rom. 14:6-12 that Paul had Jesus in mind as the subject of verse 11? How does Phil. 2:10-11 reinforce this conclusion? Understanding that Isa. 45:23 is applicable to Jesus Christ, what divine attributes mentioned in the Isaiah passage can be applied to Jesus Christ only if Jesus is God?

Isa. 45:24-25 2. Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Jesus is Jehovah, the God of Israel we read about in the Old Testament. *Jehovah* is a translation of the covenant name of Israel's God (Heb.: יהוה; *Yahweh*). In most of our English versions, this word is translated as either *LORD* or *GOD* (note the small caps), but it is the personal name of God, distinguishable from the other words for *Lord* and *God* (no small caps). Rom. 14:11 and Isa. 45:23 are one pair of references that tie this Old Testament name of God to Jesus Christ. They show that Jesus is Jehovah or Yahweh. There are many other pairs like this. Find them by matching the New Testament passage about Jesus with the Old Testament passage about Jehovah/Yahweh. Draw lines.

NT passages about Jesus	OT passages about Jehovah/Yahweh
John 1:23	Isa. 6:1-10
John 12:37-43	Joel 2:32
Matt. 21:15-17	Zech. 12:1-2, 10
Eph. 4:7-10	Psa. 8:1-2
Heb. 1:10-12	Isa. 44:24
Rom. 10:9, 13	Psa. 102:21-27
Rom. 9:32-33, 1 Pet. 2:7-8	Isa. 44:6
Rev. 2:8, 22:12-13	Isa. 40:3
Col. 1:15-16	Isa. 8:13-14, Isa. 28:16
John 19:37	Psa. 68:17-19

3. The New Testament apostles and prophets call Jesus *God* (John: John 1:1, 1:18 [newer translations], 1 John 5:20; Paul: Rom. 9:5, Tit. 2:13, Acts 20:28; Peter: 2 Pet. 1:1; Matthew: Matt. 1:23; Thomas: John 20:28; and Luke [or Paul again?]: Heb. 1:8). In so doing they follow a precedent laid down by Old Testament prophets before them (Ps. 45:6, Isa. 7:14, 9:6). In addition, just like there are many descriptions of the coming Messiah in the Old Testament that indicate He would be God (Mic. 5:2, for example), so there are many descriptions of Christ in the New Testament that indicate He is God. List some of these from the passages below.

Passages:	Description that indicates that Jesus is God:
Matt. 12:8	
Matt. 28:17, 4:10	
Matt. 9:6	
Mark 4:41	
John 10:28	
John 1:3, Col. 1:16	
John 21:17	

Critical Doctrines Related to the Deity of Jesus

John 1:15 4. The preexistence of Christ means that Jesus Christ existed as the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, prior to Mary's conception of Him in her womb as a man (see Lesson 4).
 17:5 According to the Revelation passages, what is the complement of the truth that Jesus is the Alpha or the beginning of all things?
 Rev. 1:8, 2:8 What does this say about how we should live our lives (1 Cor. 10:31-33)?

Isa. 7:14 5. The virgin birth of Christ means that Mary conceived Jesus supernaturally, with only the help of the Holy Spirit, not the help of a human father. That this critical doctrine is related to the deity of Christ is plain from Isaiah's treatment of this miracle. He said it would signify the birth of Emmanuel, "God with us." How did some Jews read this sign from heaven, and what did that say about them (John 8:12-19, 39-45)?

Phil. 2:1-11 6. A third doctrine connected to the deity of Christ has to do with the nature of His incarnation (meaning *in flesh*; John 1:14). It is called the *Kenosis* of the Son of God, and the word comes from the Greek word *kenoō*, meaning *to empty*, which our KJV translates as *made himself of no reputation* in Phil. 2:7. It is generally thought that this passage describes the incarnation of Christ. All agree that Paul intends here to highlight an important quality exemplified by Christ. What is that quality, and what must its manifestations be in the local church? (vv. 1-5).

Interesting Insight!

Dr. Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 262-263:

“The key to the solution of both of these difficulties and to the proper interpretation of these verses is to recognize that it is not God the Son in his preincarnate state as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity who is the subject of the first two strophes [vv. 6-8] and to whom reference is made by the ‘him’ in verse 9 of the third strophe, but rather ‘Christ Jesus’ (see 2:5 and references to ‘Jesus’ and ‘Jesus Christ’ in 2:10-11 respectively)—God the Son certainly, for this is the meaning of ‘though in the form of God existing,’ but God the Son already incarnately present with men as himself the God-man. .

“With respect to the clause, ‘He did not regard equality’ I would urge that it may now be construed *res rapienda*, that is, ‘He did not regard equality with God a thing to be seized,’ and that it should be interpreted against the background of his temptation recorded in Matthew 4. . . .

“Some Old Testament scholars have therefore suggested that the phrase ‘himself he emptied’ is Paul’s Greek dynamic equivalent to the Isaianic expression ‘He poured his soul out unto death’ (which means, ‘He voluntarily died’) in Isaiah 53:12, climactically descriptive of the Suffering Servant’s self-sacrificing work so often referred to elsewhere in the New Testament (see, for example, Matt. 8:17; Luke 22:37; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Pet. 2:21-25). . . .

“The following paraphrase of the first strophe will assist the reader in understanding this suggestion: ‘Though Christ Jesus was and still is God [now, of course, God incarnate], /He did not regard equality with God a thing to be seized [at his temptation by a self-willed exercise of power], /But ‘poured himself out’ [unto death], /Having taken the form of the Servant [of Isaiah 53].”