THE DIVINE SON WHO PRAYED

A Biblical Narrative on the Full Deity of Jesus Christ and the Mystery of His Prayers to the Father

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"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."
— 1 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)

INTRODUCTION

A Question That Opens the Heart of Scripture

Picture a quiet hillside in Judea just before the break of dawn. The stars are beginning to fade over the olive groves, and a lone figure kneels upon the cold ground, lifting His voice to heaven. He speaks with reverence, surrender, and deep intimacy, addressing the Almighty as 'Father.' To any casual observer watching from a distance, the scene looks unmistakably like a devout human being seeking strength from the Creator above.

Yet throughout the pages of the New Testament, this very same Person walks across raging seas, commands wind and waves into instant silence, forgives sins on His own authority, raises the dead with a single word, and accepts the worship of men and angels alike. Even more remarkably, the writers of Scripture repeatedly and explicitly call Him 'God.' This brings us to one of the most profound and rewarding questions anyone can ask when opening the Bible: How can Jesus Christ be fully God if He prayed to God the Father?

At first glance, prayer seems to imply inferiority. After all, does not a lesser being pray to a greater being? Does not a creature pray to its Creator? If Jesus is truly the supreme God—eternal, all-powerful, and self-existent—why would He ever need to bow His head, weep in a garden, or ask the Father for help? To answer this question honestly and thoroughly, we must let the Holy Scriptures speak for themselves. When we gather every thread of biblical testimony together, we discover that there is no contradiction whatsoever between Christ's full deity and His life of prayer. Instead, both truths stand side by side to reveal the breathtaking wonder of who God is and what He has done to rescue humanity.

In this narrative study, we will walk step by step through the entire biblical witness—using the timeless words of the King James Version (KJV)—to examine the overwhelming evidence that Jesus Christ is Almighty God, and then explore the glorious mystery of why the eternal Son of God prayed to His Father during His earthly life.

CHAPTER ONE

The Explicit Testimony: Scripture Calls Jesus 'God'

When we open the New Testament, we do not have to rely on vague hints or clever guesswork to discover the identity of Jesus Christ. Again and again, the inspired apostles and prophets use the clearest language possible to declare that Jesus is God. They do not merely call Him a great prophet, a mighty angel, or a godlike teacher; they attribute to Him the very title and nature of the one true God.

The Eternal Word Made Flesh

The Gospel of John opens with a thunderous echo of Genesis 1:1. Before time began, before a single star was hung in space or an angel was breathed into existence, the Word already was. Notice how John carefully balances two essential truths in a single sentence: the Word was 'with God' (showing personal distinction from the Father) and the Word 'was God' (showing complete identity of divine nature).

> **John 1:1–3, 14 (KJV) —** *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made... 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 leaves no room for misunderstanding. The Word who 'was God' is the exact same Word who 'was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' A few verses later, John reinforces this truth by calling the Son 'the only begotten God' (or 'the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father') who alone has seen God and made Him known to mankind.

> **John 1:18 (KJV) —** *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."*

Thomas's Uncorrected Confession

At the conclusion of John's Gospel, we encounter one of the most dramatic moments in all of Scripture. Thomas, who had stubbornly refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead unless he could touch the nail prints in His hands and the spear wound in His side, suddenly stands face to face with the risen Lord. Overwhelmed by awe and certainty, Thomas does not merely say, 'My Lord, you are alive!' Instead, he addresses Jesus directly with the highest titles known to a devout Jew.

> **John 20:27–29 (KJV) —** *"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."*

Think carefully about what happened in that upper room. Every faithful Jew recited the Shema daily from Deuteronomy 6:4: 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.' To call a human being 'my God' was the ultimate blasphemy. Whenever faithful angels or apostles in the Bible were mistakenly worshipped or called gods, they immediately tore their clothes or rebuked the speaker in horror. Yet when Thomas looks squarely at Jesus and calls Him 'My Lord and my God,' Jesus accepts the title as completely true and commends Thomas for believing!

God the Father Calls the Son 'God'

Perhaps the most astonishing declaration in the entire New Testament comes in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer is demonstrating that Jesus Christ is infinitely superior to the angels because angels are created servants, whereas the Son is the eternal Creator. To prove this point, the author quotes Psalm 45:6–7 and presents it as the direct speech of God the Father addressing God the Son.

> **Hebrews 1:8–10 (KJV) —** *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:"*

Read those words again slowly. God the Father looks at His Son and says, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' In the very next verse, the Father says, 'therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.' Here in a single breath, Scripture affirms both realities: the Son Himself is addressed as 'O God,' and yet the Father is also 'thy God' in relation to the Son's incarnate mission and eternal relationship within the Godhead.

Apostolic Declarations Across the Epistles

The apostles Paul, Peter, and John repeatedly weave the deity of Christ into the very fabric of their letters to the churches. They speak of Jesus not as a secondary helper alongside God, but as 'our great God and Saviour' and 'God over all.'

> **Titus 2:13 (KJV) —** *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"*
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> **2 Peter 1:1 (KJV) —** *"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"*
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> **Romans 9:5 (KJV) —** *"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."*
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> **Colossians 2:9 (KJV) —** *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*
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> **1 John 5:20 (KJV) —** *"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."*

Notice the phrase in Colossians 2:9: 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Paul does not say that a portion of divine power resides in Jesus, or that Jesus carries a reflection of God's

glory like Moses did. He states that the entire fullness of deity—everything that makes God to be God—dwells permanently inside the physical body of Jesus Christ. Even His prophetic birth name, announced by the angel to Joseph, declared this truth before He was ever born in Bethlehem.

> **Matthew 1:22–23 (KJV) —** *"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*

CHAPTER TWO

The Words of Jesus: His Own Claims to Equality with God

Some skeptics throughout history have suggested that Jesus never claimed to be God, arguing instead that His followers invented the idea decades later. However, anyone who reads the four Gospels attentively quickly sees that Jesus' own words were the very reason the religious authorities of Jerusalem demanded His death. Time and again, Jesus spoke in ways that left His listeners with only two choices: either worship Him as the Lord of heaven and earth, or execute Him for blasphemy.

Before Abraham Was, I AM

In John chapter 8, Jesus was debating with religious leaders in the temple courtyard. When Jesus declared that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, the crowd scoffed, pointing out that Jesus was not yet fifty years old. Jesus responded with a sentence that shattered every human category.

> **John 8:58–59 (KJV) —** *"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."*

Look closely at the grammar Jesus chose. He did not say, 'Before Abraham was, I was,' which would merely claim pre-existence as an ancient angel or spirit. He said, 'Before Abraham was, I AM.' Every person standing in that courtyard immediately recognized those two words from Exodus 3:14, where God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush and revealed His eternal, self-existent covenant name:

> **Exodus 3:14 (KJV) —** *"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."*

By taking the sacred name 'I AM' upon His own lips, Jesus was declaring that He possesses eternal, timeless existence—the very essence of Jehovah. The crowd understood His claim so clearly that they instantly picked up stones to carry out the Old Testament penalty for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16).

I and My Father Are One

A short time later, during the Feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem, Jesus spoke of His sheep—the believers whom He protects and gives eternal life. He promised that no one could pluck them out of His hand, and immediately added that no one could pluck them out of His Father's hand either. Then He summed up their shared power and essence in six unforgettable words.

> **John 10:30–33 (KJV) —** *"I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

The enemies of Jesus could not have stated the issue any more plainly: 'because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.' Earlier in John chapter 5, after healing a crippled man on the Sabbath, Jesus defended His work by saying, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Once again, His audience immediately grasped what He meant by calling God His own unique Father and claiming the right to work alongside Him on the Sabbath.

> **John 5:18 (KJV) —** *"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."*

Shortly after that statement, Jesus explicitly declared that every human being must honor Him with the exact same level of reverence and worship that they give to God the Father.

> **John 5:22–23 (KJV) —** *"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."*

The Trial Before the High Priest and the Titles of Revelation

On the night of His arrest, Jesus stood bound before the Sanhedrin while false witnesses contradicted one another. Finally, the High Priest stood up and placed Jesus under a solemn oath to answer directly whether He was the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus answered by combining Psalm 110:1 with Daniel's famous vision of the divine Son of Man riding the clouds of heaven—a sight reserved exclusively for God in the Old Testament.

> **Mark 14:61–64 (KJV) —** *"Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death."*

After His resurrection and ascension into glory, Jesus appeared to the apostle John on the island of Patmos in the Book of Revelation. There, speaking from heaven in unveiled majesty, Jesus claimed the supreme titles that Jehovah used for Himself in the prophecy of Isaiah.

> **Isaiah 44:6 (KJV) —** *"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."*
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> **Revelation 1:8, 17–18 (KJV) —** *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty... And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*
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> **Revelation 22:12–13, 16 (KJV) —** *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches."*

Compare Isaiah 44:6 with Revelation 1:17–18 and 22:13. In Isaiah, Jehovah declares, 'I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.' In Revelation, the speaker who says 'I am the first and the last' is the very one who 'was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore'—namely, Jesus Christ Himself! There are not two 'Firsts and Lasts.' Jesus shares the eternal identity of the one true God.

CHAPTER THREE

Divine Works and Attributes: Doing What Only God Can Do

In Scripture, God reveals who He is not only by His titles, but also by His mighty works and unchanging attributes. Throughout the Old Testament, certain actions belong exclusively to God—creating the universe out of nothing, sustaining every atom in existence, forgiving sins against God, searching human hearts, and receiving religious worship. Remarkably, the New Testament attributes every single one of these divine prerogatives to Jesus Christ.

Creator and Sustainer of All Things

The Bible draws an absolute line between the Creator and creation. Everything that exists is either the uncreated God or something God made. In Isaiah 44:24, Jehovah declares that He created the heavens and the earth alone, by Himself. Yet the New Testament repeatedly tells us that Jesus Christ created every single thing in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, and that He holds the entire cosmos together right now.

> **Colossians 1:15–17 (KJV) —** *"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*
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> **Hebrews 1:2–3 (KJV) —** *"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"*

Notice the sweeping logic of Colossians 1:16: 'all things were created by him, and for him.' If every created thing—including every angelic throne, dominion, principality, and power—was created by Jesus, then Jesus Himself cannot be a created being. He stands on the Creator side of reality.

The Authority to Forgive Sins

When a human being wrongs another person, that person can forgive the offense. However, every sin is ultimately rebellion against God's holy law, so only God Himself has the authority to cancel a sinner's debt before heaven. In Mark chapter 2, four men lowered their paralyzed friend through the roof of a crowded house in Capernaum right in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus spoke words that stunned every scribe in the room.

> **Mark 2:5–11 (KJV) —** *"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."*

The scribes' theology was completely accurate: 'who can forgive sins but God only?' Their only mistake was failing to recognize that the God who forgives sins was standing right before them in human flesh. Jesus then proved His invisible authority to forgive sins by performing an unmistakable visible miracle—healing the paralyzed man on the spot.

Accepting Worship from Angels and Men

The First Commandment thunders from Mount Sinai: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' (Exodus 20:3), and Jesus Himself quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 to Satan in the wilderness: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve' (Matthew 4:10). Because worship belongs to God alone, righteous men and holy angels in the Bible strictly refuse it.

When Cornelius fell at Peter's feet to worship him, Peter lifted him up saying, 'Stand up; I myself also am a man' (Acts 10:25–26). When the apostle John fell at the feet of a glorious angel in Revelation, the angel urgently stopped him: 'See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant… worship God' (Revelation 22:8–9).

Now contrast their reaction with what happens whenever people fall at the feet of Jesus Christ. Never once does Jesus tell anyone to stand up or stop worshipping Him. Instead, He receives their worship freely, and God the Father actually commands all the angels of heaven to worship the Son!

> **Matthew 14:33 (KJV) —** *"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."*
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> **Matthew 28:9, 17 (KJV) —** *"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him… And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted."*
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> **John 9:35–38 (KJV) —** *"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."*
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> **Hebrews 1:6 (KJV) —** *"And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."*

Eternality, Immutability, and Omniscience

Created beings change, grow, learn, and age, and no creature knows the secret thoughts of every human heart. God alone is eternal, unchanging, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Yet Scripture ascribes all of these divine attributes directly to Jesus Christ:

> **Micah 5:2 (KJV) —** *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."*
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> **Hebrews 13:8 (KJV) —** *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."*
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> **John 2:24–25 (KJV) —** *"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."*
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> **Matthew 18:20 (KJV) —** *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*
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> **Matthew 28:20 (KJV) —** *"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."*

CHAPTER FOUR

Old Testament Jehovah Identified as Jesus Christ

One of the most compelling proofs of Christ's deity is often overlooked by casual readers because it requires comparing Old Testament passages with New Testament quotations. In the Old Testament, the sacred personal name of God—YHWH, translated in the King James Version in all capital letters as 'the LORD'—is applied to specific prophecies and historical events. When the New Testament writers quote those exact verses, they boldly identify 'the LORD' (Jehovah) as Jesus Christ!

Isaiah's Vision of the LORD of Hosts

In Isaiah chapter 6, the prophet sees a breathtaking vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, surrounded by burning seraphim crying, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.' In that vision, the LORD gives Isaiah a message regarding the spiritual blindness of the people. Centuries later, in John chapter 12, the apostle John quotes Isaiah 6:10 to explain why many rejected Jesus' miracles, and then adds a stunning explanation of whom Isaiah actually saw on that throne.

> **Isaiah 6:1, 3, 5 (KJV) —** *"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple... And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory... Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."*

> **John 12:39–41 (KJV) —** *"Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."*

Read John 12:41 carefully: 'These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.' In context, 'his' and 'him' refer directly to Jesus! The King, the LORD of hosts whom Isaiah beheld high and lifted up in the temple, was the pre-incarnate Son of God.

Preparing the Way of the LORD

In Isaiah 40:3, the prophet foretells a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way for Jehovah Himself. Every single Gospel writer quotes this verse and applies it to John the Baptist preparing the way for the arrival of Jesus Christ.

> **Isaiah 40:3 (KJV) —** *"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*
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> **Mark 1:2–3 (KJV) —** *"As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."*

Every Knee Shall Bow and Calling Upon the Name of the LORD

In Isaiah 45:22–23, Jehovah declares that He alone is God and that every knee shall bow to Him. In Philippians 2:10–11, Paul applies that exact oath directly to the name of Jesus. Similarly, Joel 2:32 promises salvation to everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah, and Paul quotes it in Romans 10:9–13 to explain salvation through confessing Jesus as Lord.

> **Isaiah 45:22–23 (KJV) —** *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."*
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> **Philippians 2:10–11 (KJV) —** *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*
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> **Joel 2:32 & Romans 10:13 (KJV) —** *"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

Even the pierced Messiah in Zechariah 12:10 is Jehovah Himself speaking in the first person: 'and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.' John 19:37 explicitly cites this prophecy as fulfilled when the Roman soldier pierced Jesus' side on Calvary!

CHAPTER FIVE

Unraveling the Mystery: Why Did Jesus Pray to the Father?

Having seen the overwhelming, unmistakable witness of Scripture that Jesus Christ is fully God, we now return to the second half of our question: If Jesus is God, why did He pray to the Father? Why did He spend entire nights on mountainsides in prayer? Why did He cry out in Gethsemane, 'Not my will, but thine, be done'? And why did He call the Father 'the only true God' in John 17:3 and 'my God' in John 20:17?

If we mistakenly thought that "Jesus is God" meant "Jesus is the Father," then Jesus praying to the Father would make no sense at all—He would merely be talking to Himself! However, the Bible never teaches that Jesus is the Father. Instead, Scripture reveals two foundational truths that make Jesus' prayer life completely clear, logical, and deeply moving: (1) the one God is a family, presently the Father and the Son as distinct members, and (2) the Incarnation, in which the eternal Son voluntarily took on true human nature.

Truth 1: One God Family, Presently the Father and the Son

From its opening chapter to its final page, the Bible teaches that there is only one true God. Yet Scripture reveals that this one God is not a solitary being but a family—a divine household. At present that God family is made up of two: God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, the Word who was with God and was God. The Bible does not present a trinity of three co-equal persons in one being; it presents the Father and the Son as distinct members of the one God family, bound together in perfect unity of mind, purpose, and love. The Holy Spirit is the power and presence of God, sent forth by the Father and the Son to dwell in and work through those who believe—not a third person of a trinity.

> **Ephesians 3:14–15 (KJV) —** *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,"*
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> **Romans 8:29 (KJV) —** *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

Notice that Paul describes God as a family, with the Father at its head and Jesus as the firstborn Son. At Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, the Son stood in the water, the Father's

voice spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16–17), and the Spirit of God descended like a dove—the power of God proceeding from the Father to the Son. The Father and the Son are two distinct Beings who speak to one another, and that is exactly why Jesus could pray to His Father.

Because the Father and the Son are distinct members of the God family who have loved and communed with one another from all eternity, communication between them did not begin in Bethlehem! In His High Priestly Prayer in John chapter 17, Jesus pulls back the curtain on eternity past to show us the fellowship He shared with the Father before creation ever existed.

> **John 17:4–5, 24 (KJV) —** *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was... Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."*

Think about what this means. Before there was a universe, the Father and the Son already shared a relationship of perfect love and fellowship. Therefore, when Jesus prayed on earth, He was not engaging in a theatrical performance or speaking into empty air. His prayers were the earthly continuation of the eternal, loving dialogue between the Son and His Father within the God family.

Truth 2: The Incarnation and Voluntary Humility

The second vital key to understanding Jesus' prayers is the Incarnation—the stupendous event in which the eternal Son of God added a complete, sinless human nature to His divine nature without ever ceasing to be God. When Jesus walked the dusty roads of Galilee, He was fully God and fully man in one Person.

Because Jesus took on real human flesh and a real human soul, He genuinely experienced human hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow, pain, and dependence upon God. He did not cheat by using His divine powers to bypass human weakness; instead, He lived a true human life in complete reliance upon His Father and the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul explains this voluntary self-humbling in one of the greatest passages in the New Testament:

> **Philippians 2:5–8 (KJV) —** *"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: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Look closely at every step of that progression in Philippians 2:6–8. First, Jesus existed 'in the form of God'—possessing the very nature and attributes of deity—and His equality with God was not something grasped or stolen, because it belonged to Him by right. Second, out of boundless love for sinners, He 'made himself of no reputation' (emptied Himself of outward heavenly majesty and privileges) and 'took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.' Third, 'being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death.'

When the eternal Son entered the world as a servant and as the representative Head of a new humanity (the Last Adam), He voluntarily placed Himself under the Father's authority for the sake of our redemption. Notice how this explains verses where Jesus says 'my Father is greater than I' (John 14:28) or calls the Father 'my God' (John 20:17; Revelation 3:12). In terms of His divine nature, Jesus is completely equal with the Father ('I and my Father are one,' John 10:30). In terms of His incarnate role as a human servant and mediator, the Father occupies the position of supreme authority ('my Father is greater than I,' John 14:28).

A Sinless Man Living by Faith and Prayer

The Epistle to the Hebrews highlights how deeply Jesus entered into our human experience, specifically pointing to His earnest prayers and tears during His earthly ministry:

> **Hebrews 2:14, 17 (KJV) —** *"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... 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."*
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> **Hebrews 5:7–9 (KJV) —** *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"*

What a remarkable truth! To save human beings, Jesus had to live as a truly righteous human being—one who loved the Father with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength, and who depended on the Father moment by moment. A human being who never prayed would not be a sinless human being, because prayerlessness is pride and independence from God. Therefore, Jesus prayed not because He lacked divinity, but because He possessed true humanity!

The Firstborn of Many Brethren: The God Family Will Grow

The Bible's purpose for the God family does not end with the Father and the Son. Jesus Christ is called the "firstborn among many brethren," and a firstborn implies that others will follow. God's plan is to bring many sons and daughters into His family, and the Son is the pattern for all of them. He was the first to be resurrected to immortal, glorified life, and the children of God will be raised in His likeness at His return.

> **Hebrews 2:10–11 (KJV) —** *"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. 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,"*
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> **1 John 3:1–2 (KJV) —** *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God… Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."*
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> **Philippians 3:21 (KJV) —** *"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*
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> **1 Corinthians 15:20, 49 (KJV) —** *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept… And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."*

Notice the progression: the Father begets the Son; the Son is the firstfruits; and those who are Christ's will be resurrected at His coming and be made like Him. This is why Jesus could say, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). The same Father is now Father to many brethren. Today the God family consists of the Father and the Son; when the children of God are resurrected in the likeness of Christ, that family will be enlarged, and God's purpose of bringing many sons to glory will be fulfilled.

CHAPTER SIX

Walking Through the Prayer Life of Jesus in the Gospels

When we examine the actual prayers of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels, we see how beautifully His deity and His humanity harmonize in every moment. Far from undermining His divinity, His prayers reveal His unique, peerless relationship with the Father as the eternal Son.

Praying Before Major Turning Points

Throughout His ministry, Luke especially emphasizes that Jesus withdrew to solitary places to commune with His Father before every major decision and ministry milestone. He prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21), rose early in the morning to pray in a solitary place (Mark 1:35), spent an entire night in prayer before choosing the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12), and was praying alone when Peter confessed Him as the Christ (Luke 9:18).

> **Luke 5:16 (KJV) —** *"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."*
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> **Luke 6:12 (KJV) —** *"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."*

Notice that whenever Jesus prayed, He never once asked the Father for forgiveness of sin! Every other godly person in the Bible—Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul—had to confess personal sin when approaching God. Jesus alone prayed with an unbroken, spotless conscience, addressing God simply as 'Father' or 'Holy Father' or 'Righteous Father'—never 'Our Father' in the way sinners do, because His relationship to the Father was unique by nature, whereas ours is by adoption.

The Prayer of Submission in Gethsemane

Nowhere do we feel the weight of the Incarnation more deeply than in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before the crucifixion. Knowing that within hours He would bear the full wrath of God against the sins of the world and endure the agony of the cross, Jesus fell on His face and poured out His soul to the Father.

> **Matthew 26:38–39, 42 (KJV) —** *"Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt… He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."*

Why did Jesus say, 'not as I will, but as thou wilt'? Because in becoming truly human, Jesus possessed both a divine will (which He shared identically with the Father) and a real human will that naturally recoiled from horror, abandonment, and death. In Gethsemane, Jesus' sinless human will freely and heroically aligned itself with the Father's redemptive plan. Where the first Adam in the Garden of Eden said to God, 'Not thy will, but mine be done,' the Last Adam in the Garden of Gethsemane said, 'Not my will, but thine, be done'—and thereby secured our salvation.

The Cry from the Cross and the Voice of Intercession

Even while hanging upon the cross at Calvary, Jesus remained in unbroken prayer. He prayed for the very soldiers who drove the nails through His hands: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). In the darkest hour of His suffering, as He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, He cried out in the opening words of Psalm 22: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46)—stepping into the place of spiritual separation that sinners deserved so that we might never be forsaken. And at the very end, having cried 'It is finished,' He voluntarily surrendered His spirit to His Father:

> **Luke 23:46 (KJV) —** *"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."*

Today, resurrected, glorified, and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Jesus still exercises a ministry of intercession for His people—not as an inferior pleading with a reluctant ruler, but as our Great High Priest and Advocate whose finished sacrifice guarantees our eternal acceptance before the throne of grace.

> **Hebrews 7:25 (KJV) —** *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Answering Common Questions and Misunderstandings

When believers and seekers study these passages together, a few specific verses often come up in conversation as apparent puzzles. Let us look directly at three of the most frequently asked passages in the King James Version and see how clearly they fit into the whole counsel of God.

1. Why did Jesus say, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God' (Mark 10:18)?

When the rich young ruler knelt before Jesus and addressed Him as 'Good Master,' Jesus replied:

> **Mark 10:18 (KJV) —** *"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."*

Notice carefully what Jesus did NOT say. He did not say, 'I am not good,' nor did He say, 'I am not God.' Instead, Jesus asked a probing question to expose the young man's superficial thinking. The young ruler viewed Jesus merely as a wise human rabbi, yet flattered Him

with the title 'Good.' Jesus challenged him to follow his own words to their logical conclusion: 'Only God is truly good. Are you prepared to recognize who I really am, or are you tossing around the word good casually?'

2. Why did Jesus say in John 17:3, 'that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent'?

In His High Priestly Prayer, Jesus prayed:

> **John 17:3 (KJV) —** *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

Some ask: If Jesus calls the Father 'the only true God,' does that exclude Jesus from being the true God? Not at all—for two decisive reasons. First, in contrast to all the false pagan idols of the Roman world, the Father is indeed 'the only true God.' Second, look at what Jesus places right alongside knowing the Father as the very essence of eternal life: knowing 'Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent'! No mere prophet or angel could ever say that eternal life consists equally in knowing God and knowing himself. Furthermore, just two verses later in that very same prayer (John 17:5), Jesus asks the Father to glorify Him with 'the glory which I had with thee before the world was'—a glory that Jehovah explicitly declares in Isaiah 42:8 He will never share with anyone who is not God ('I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another').

3. Why did Jesus say that only the Father knew the day and hour of His return (Mark 13:32)?

> **Mark 13:32 (KJV) —** *"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."*

This verse is a textbook illustration of the Incarnation described in Philippians 2:7. When the eternal Son took on true human nature, He willingly accepted the genuine limitations of a human mind and body during His earthly state of humiliation. Luke 2:52 tells us that the young Jesus 'increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' As to His divine nature, Jesus is omniscient (John 21:17); as to His voluntary human state during His earthly mission, He chose not to draw upon independent divine omniscience regarding the timing of the end, submitting completely to the Father's appointed timetable.

CONCLUSION

Worshipping the Divine Son Who Loved Us

When we step back and behold the full portrait painted by Scripture, the pieces fit together with breathtaking harmony. If Jesus were merely a human prophet or an exalted angel, the

New Testament's explicit declarations that He is 'God' (John 1:1, 20:28; Hebrews 1:8; Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5), its attribution of creation and forgiveness of sins to Him (Colossians 1:16; Mark 2:7), and its command that all angels and men worship Him (Hebrews 1:6; John 5:23) would shatter the Bible's strict monotheism into idolatry.

Conversely, if Jesus were not truly distinct from the Father and had not taken on genuine human flesh, His prayers in the wilderness, His tears in Gethsemane, and His cry upon the cross would be an inexplicable riddle.

Because Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God—one with the Father in purpose, nature, and glory as members of the one God family, yet a distinct Being—and because He humbled Himself to become fully human for our sake, both truths shine with crystal clarity. As Almighty God, He possesses full authority to forgive our sins, conquer death, and grant us eternal life. As the sinless, praying Son of Man, He stood in our place, modeled perfect trust and obedience toward the Father, and opened the way for us to be born into that family as beloved children.

We can therefore join our voices with Thomas in his timeless confession, and with the redeemed host of heaven in Revelation, giving honor, love, and worship to the Father and to the Son forever:

> **Revelation 5:13 (KJV) —** *"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."*