



FEED MY SHEEP

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Is Jesus God?

One thing which emerged clearly from the past several issues dealing with God's marriage, divorce and remarriage to Israel is that the person known as Jesus the Christ HAS TO BE God or else the entire superstructure of Christianity implodes for lack of foundation. But just because we recognize that a doctrine "has to be so" or else our whole theological basis of our faith falls, does not mean that it IS so. It remains to be proven.

Recall that the whole concept that God married Israel, then divorced her, and is individually remarrying and will corporately remarry her would be entirely illegal according to God's law if "the husband" (God himself) did not personally die. If Jesus Christ were not God himself but rather only a created being, and inferior to God, then he (Jesus) does not qualify as the husband of Israel and his death has no validity to set the woman (Israel) free from the law by which she was bound to her husband. (Rom. 7:1-4, as discussed in last month's FMS.)

Therefore it seems like a logical step in our progression of studies that we investigate the Scriptures and determine if that is what the Scriptures teach. Is Jesus really God? Or is he somehow "only" the son of God, implying that that means he is inferior to the Almighty Creator God? We begin with the presupposition that the Bible is the Word of God.

A skeptic might say: "Well, you can't do that. How do you know the Bible is the Word of God?" We answer that man: Friend, our purpose (at least in this series) is not to persuade skeptics of the validity of the Bible as God's Word. For true Christians, that is a given. Perhaps at some other time we will address that for you, but in the meantime, that is our starting point today.

The Bible is God's Word. We believe it does not just contain God's word—as though parts of it were not God's

words; but it is fully and completely God's word. We further believe that God's word is inerrant in the original. Translations always necessarily involve some degree of interpretation by the translator in order for him to do his work and therefore no translation is inerrant.¹

Let us then examine the word of God and see if Jesus is really God. Can it be proven by the Scriptures? We believe so. First, we will not hesitate to admit that nowhere in the Bible can one find in the spoken words of Jesus himself a statement by him where he says: "I am God." Based on the fact that Jesus never said those words, the Arianists² deny the deity of Christ. One might wonder then why Jesus did not simply state his divinity clearly and unequivocally, then the church through these past 20 centuries would have been spared this great cause of controversy and division. Oh, really?? Would things really have been that different? After all, look at the record in the gospel of John when Jesus was accused of not being clear:

John 10:24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

Here the unbelieving Jews were complaining to Jesus that he wouldn't tell them clearly or plainly that he is the Messiah (Christ), and what was the savior's reply?

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not:...

Jesus claims that he had told them, yet we know from the gospel record that he never said "I am God," so what did he mean when he said "I told you?" The answer is in the rest of this verse:

...the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

In other words, Jesus said that the miracles, the healings, etc. bore witness of who he was. From the unbelieving Jews' perspective, this wasn't sufficient reason

for them to believe in him. They demanded that he explicitly tell them who he was, in the manner that they wanted to hear it. It is no different today. Many of those who abjectly deny the deity of Christ do so because they cannot find in the Scriptures any place where Jesus plainly states who he is and see it stated in the manner in which *they* want to see it. However, the Scriptures admonish us to “search the Scriptures” and to “study to show ourselves approved” and to “seek him with all our hearts.” In other words, God wants us to believe without having his unequivocal statement of his deity. If we will study and search for it, we shall be rewarded with the truth of his divinity.

Nonetheless, in the case of these particular unbelieving Jews recorded in this incident, we have a special situation. It was not a matter of Jesus failing to announce plainly who he was. We can infer that even if he had unequivocally stated “I am God,” these particular Jews would still have rejected him. How can we infer that? Because of Jesus’ own revelation of their identity.

According to Jesus, the reason these people did not believe in him was because of who they were. Recalling what we taught about who the Bible sheep are in FMS #1, it is clear that Jesus is telling these Jews that they do not believe in him because they are not Israelites! They are not his chosen people although they have usurped the name of one of the tribes of Israel (i.e., Judah). Look! That is what it says:

John 10:26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Jesus went on to add that his Israel people “hear my voice” and “follow me.” What are followers of Jesus Christ called? Christians, of course! We recognize that many questions are being raised at this juncture in the minds of many readers who have never seen this simple truth before, but we must stay focused on our topic and move on. The concerns raised above should give many Christians pause to ponder. It will be addressed in a future FMS.

These next two verses also contain a revelation that will be a real “forehead-slapper” for many because it is one of those insights that we have read over and glossed over many times before and never realized the revelation it contains. In John 10 Jesus continues:

28 And I give unto them eternal [eonian] life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

Notice: Jesus is not being redundant. In the first clause, the believing sheep are promised eonian life; in the second clause, they are promised immortality; in the final clause, security of salvation. But notice also that it is Jesus

who is claiming that it is he who will bestow the gift of immortality. Who alone can give immortality but the one and only God!? Yes, we know that scientists are tinkering with the genetic code and are promising great “life-extension” and “age-reversing” potions and modalities which appear to be just around the corner. Sorry, that’s a long way from immortality and we do not believe that puny, finite, mortal man can ever bestow immortality on anything or anybody. It is not theirs to give. Keeping all this in mind, let’s read on:

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand.

“Aha!”, say opponents and skeptics of the divinity of Christ, “see that? Jesus even admits that the Father is greater than all; therefore Jesus cannot be God.” We are not surprised. That is the way one would interpret that verse if one were trying to disprove the deity of Christ. However, that is no proof at all because it could just as easily be interpreted that it is understood that Jesus is the exception, since he goes on immediately to state:

30 I and my Father are one.

We interpret that to mean that Jesus the Son and God the Father are one and the same. Of course, the skeptics would say: “Well, Jesus and the Father are one in purpose or one in mind, etc., but not one and the same God of very God.” And we acknowledge their possible interpretation, which simply shows that neither side has yet shown irrefutable and overwhelming evidence for their position.

Jesus charged with blasphemy for claiming deity

But there is more than that in these last three verses—the gloss-over missed by many. Look again at the end of verse 28 where it says: “...neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.” Whose hand? Jesus’ hand! Then compare that with Jesus’ basic restatement of that claim in v. 29: “...no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand. Do you not see that this is an indirect claim of equality with the Father by the Son? While many Christians today may have missed that point, it was immediately obvious to the non-Israelite Jews (the “not-my-sheep” people) who did not believe in Jesus. They knew that Jesus had just claimed he was God because they immediately attempted to execute him by stoning.

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 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.

It is evident that these unbelieving Jews—just as most Jews and many other people do today—believed he was only a man, not very God himself. Trying to give them a graceful way out of their hard-heartedness, Jesus answers:

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Some might think that for a moment here then, it appears that Jesus is “backing off,” restating that he is merely the son of God. But he was not really backing off at all, because these Jews understood that anyone who claims to be the son of God was indeed claiming equality with the Father. Witness:

John 5: 18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he ... said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

And to offer them a second witness and opportunity to acknowledge his deity, Jesus “blasphemed” again (in the view of the Jews) in v. 38.

John 10:37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

Jesus had claimed unity with the Father; i.e., divinity; and therefore the Jews again attempted to seize him and execute him for blasphemy, but since his time had not yet come, Jesus escapes.

Bible Algebra 101

Since there is no “plain” statement by Jesus himself saying “I am God,” (although the above incident was very “plain” to the non-Israelite Jews), we will now commence to pile up evidence upon evidence of indirect proofs that Jesus is indeed God. I even hesitate to use the term “indirect” proofs but all that is meant by that is that Jesus never said those three words “I am God.” Yet, the proof is overwhelming as we shall see.

Some of the proofs will follow “the duck rule.” Others will follow an algebraic axiom. The duck rule is the pattern laid down in the common American vernacular proverb: “If it looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck,

walks like a duck, and has feathers like a duck; you can bet it’s a duck.” Therefore, if we look at the attributes of the Almighty Father God and we see them all manifested in the Son, then we conclude that the Son and the Father are one and the same. This, by the way, is the reason why the theological term “trinity” had to be invented: God is a “tri-unity.” For we know that the Scriptures tell us that God is one.

Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.

or correctly translated and punctuated: “...YHWH, our God, is one: YHWH.³ God is one. There are not three Gods. Yet he has manifested himself in three different ways, but none of the three is inferior to the other two. They are one God.

If we remember anything about high school algebra, it is probably the concept of an axiom. An axiom is a proposition regarded as a self-evident truth. One of the basic axioms of algebra goes something like this: If $a=c$ and $b=c$, then $a=b$. Putting it into words, it would go like this: If two things are equal to the same thing, the two things are equal to each other. That is a self-evident truth, and this axiom will be employed over and over again as we demonstrate the deity of Christ.

Who is the rock and the stone?

Our first general category of proofs will be those which demonstrate that Old Testament prophecies and descriptions of Yahweh-God are applied to Jesus (Yahshua⁴) the Christ in the New Testament. For example, in Psalm 78 and in Deuteronomy 32 we find that God is said to be Israel’s “rock.”

Psalm 78:35 And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

Deut. 32: 3 Because I will publish the name of YHWH: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Thus in the Old Testament we find that Yahweh is the rock. Compare that in the New Testament. In chapter 16 of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus speaks of himself:

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

There are three interpretations of the rock in this verse. The church of Rome claims that Peter is the rock, and the Roman church’s claim to authority is based upon that. We have shown the fallacy of that in the first of our eight-tape series on Roman Catholicism⁵. All Protestants

agree the Peter is not the rock. Some interpret the rock to be Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the living God. Many others, including this writer, adhere to the interpretation that the rock is Jesus Christ. Of course, we agree with the substance of Peter's confession. That is, we agree wholeheartedly that Jesus is the Christ and the son of the living God, but the confession is not the rock. Christ is the rock, as is borne out by other Scriptures. For example:

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers ... 4 ...did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Jesus is the Christ. Paul here emphatically declares that the Rock in the Old Testament was Christ. But according to Ps. 78 and Deut. 32, the rock was Yahweh-God. The conclusion is as simple as the algebraic axiom: Jesus is God!

We are just getting warmed up. There is much more to come to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus the Christ is God, not some being inferior to the great "I AM." Other Scriptures relating to YHWH and/or Christ as the *rock* or the *stone* which the reader can look up and compare include: Isa. 28:16; Acts 4:11, 12; Eph. 2:19, 20; Num. 20:7-11; 1 Peter 2:6-8; 2 Sam. 22:2, 3, 32; Ps. 18:2; 31:3; 89:26.

Meanwhile, we have available a four-tape series on the deity of Christ which includes much more than we have room for in these brief monographs. Request tape nos. 225 through 228. \$16 gift, ppd.

ENDNOTES

1. As the reader has noticed, we use the KJV as our primary version, but we have never been of the "King James only" persuasion. Like all translations, it has its flaws, but we believe it is the best one to use for reasons much too numerous to list here. Some years ago we did a 20-tape study entitled *Which Bible? Which Version* exploring this subject in great detail. It is still available in a pair of cassette albums. \$50 offering.

2. Arianism (not related to Aryan-ism or Aryan-anything) was named for Arius (died 336 A.D.), an ascetic pastor of a church in Alexandria, who was a primary exponent of the heresy which demoted Christ to the rank of a created being. In part of the fourth century, this doctrine was orthodoxy in the Eastern churches.

3. (For the benefit of new readers, we will continue to run this footnote for a number of issues.) In most English Bibles,

when one sees the word "Lord" in either all caps [LORD] or in upper and lower caps [LORD], it indicates that the Bible translators have removed the sacred name of our God, which is YHWH (as transliterated from the Hebrew letters, and pronounced Yahweh {Yah-way}). It will be our general practice to re-insert the sacred name where it belongs, either as the tetragrammaton (YHWH) or as the pronounced name (Yahweh).

4. Since the Hebrew name of the savior will soon be part of our studies on the deity of Christ, it is necessary at this point to explain our usage of the names. The name "Jesus," is of course, an English word. It is derived from the Greek "Iesous" (pronounced "Yay-soos"). Iesous is the Greek translation of the savior's Hebrew name "Yahshua." (The accent is on the second syllable.) Yah is the shortened form of Yahweh. Yahshua means "Yah (-weh) saves" or "Yah (-weh) is salvation." The name of the Old Testament hero, Joshua, is really also "Yahshua," the English letter "j" having only in recent centuries acquired its hard "dg" (as in "fudge") sound.

Although it is our practice to reinsert "Yahweh" as we quote the Old Testament (as explained in note #3), we choose to retain the English name "Jesus" in the New Testament, rather than "Yahshua." This is because (1) when Paul wrote his epistles, he wrote them in Greek and he consistently used the translation "Iesous." If a translated name for the savior into the *lingua franca* of Paul's day is acceptable or even preferable by him, then we should not hesitate to use the English translation, Jesus, today. (I have heard claims, but have seen no credible proof that Paul wrote in Hebrew. Nonsense, he traveled all over the Roman Empire communicating to Christians of various countries, and Greek was the *lingua franca* of the empire. It would have been totally illogical for Paul to have written in Hebrew for his Greek-speaking audiences.)

(2) When translators of the OT remove the holy name of God (YHWH) and substitute "LORD," they are not translating the Hebrew name of God into English, they are changing his Hebrew name to an English title. God is the Lord of the universe, but his name is not "Lord," or "LORD." There is no justification for "removing from" and "adding to" the Scriptures; in fact, it is forbidden by the Scriptures. However, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, translated the name of the savior from Hebrew into Greek, and therefore we feel it is entirely appropriate to use the English translation Jesus.

5. *Roman Catholicism: Is It Christian?* Eight cassettes. Tape nos. 133 through 140. A thorough expose of the doctrines and practices of Catholicism. (\$27 offering ppd.) Complete tape listing available on request.

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