

A SYNOPSIS ON THE DEITY OF THE MESSIAH

This document is in three major parts:

- The Trinity and the Divinity of the Messiah in the OT
- The Trinity and the Divinity of the Messiah in the NT
- What is at stake with the Deity of Christ?

THE TRINITY AND THE DIVINITY OF MESSIAH IN THE OT¹

1. We have Trinitarian tensions in the OT

- **Gen 1:26**
 - Then God said, "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
 - The use of "us" implies a plurality in the godhead. This is especially the case since it is parallel and dealing with the plurality within humanity (male and female). It implies the relationality in the godhead is the basis for the relationality in humanity. This is maintained in Gen 11:7 where "Let us" is again used to confuse the languages and relationships of mankind.
- **Gen 19:24**
 - ²⁴ Then **the LORD rained** on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire **from the LORD out of heaven**.
 - You have a YHWH on earth and a YHWH out of heaven raining judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah.
- **Deut 4:37**
 - ³⁷ "Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And **He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power**,
 - In Deut 4:37, it says that YHWH *personally led* Israel in the wilderness. *The idea is that YHWH's presence alone was involved.* However, other texts state that an "angel" did so (Num 20:6). Which is it? Even the rabbis understood the tension for their understanding of (unitarian) monotheism as Tigay (a Jewish commentator) points out:

Numerous passages in the Bible speak of God's direct involvement in the Exodus, but there are others that speak of an angel acting as His agent during the Exodus, the journey through the wilderness, and the conquest of the promised land. Most notable is Numbers 20:16 in which Moses says that when Israel cried out to God, He "sent a *mal'akh* who freed" Israel

¹ Thanks to Dr. Foreman for his contribution to this section.

from Egypt. *Mal'akh*, literally “emissary,” is the normal term for an angel. Deuteronomy, in contrast, never speaks of angels having any role in the events. Midrashic exegesis reconciles Numbers 20:16 with the passages speaking of God’s direct involvement by taking the *mal'akh* as Moses. However, although prophets are sometimes called *mal'akh*, Moses never is, and several of the passages referring to angelic involvement cannot easily be explained as referring to prophets. Critical theory sees the two sets of passages as reflecting competing traditions about the involvement of angels in the great events of Israelite history.¹⁰⁹ This difference of opinion about angels was still alive in talmudic times. The view of Deuteronomy is expressed in passages in talmudic literature which insist that in freeing Israel from Egypt, giving the Torah, providing rain for Israel, and even in punishing the people, God acted personally, “not by means of an angel, not by means of a seraph, and not by means of a messenger.” The repeated denial that angels were involved in these events indicates that claims that they were involved must have remained a bone of contention and that the rabbis—like Deuteronomy—considered them incompatible with absolute monotheism.²

- The only way to harmonize these texts is to say the angel IS YHWH. However, at that moment, you have to admit that YHWH SENT YHWH (Num 20:16). *This will be important for later usages of “sending” (like the Father sends His Son)*. This should accompany other angel of YHWH passages which argues for multiple persons in the godhead (cf. particularly Exod 23:20-21; Exod 14:14; see also Gen 16:10; Exod 3:2; Judg 6:22-23; 13:18).
- **Isaiah 48:16**
 - The Servant declares, “[And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me with his Spirit.](#)”
 - There we have Messiah/Son (Servant), Father, and the Spirit.
- **Isaiah 59:21**
 - Speaking to the Servant, Yahweh says, “[My Spirit, who is on you.](#)”
 - Again, the Father speaks to the Son about His Spirit.
- We can see other trinitarian tensions in Isa 11:1-9 and 61:1-3.

2. The Messiah is depicted as divine in the OT

- One can see this the storyline of the OT. Consistently, the Messiah is depicted as the One who will fulfill what no human Davidic king could ever be or do (cf. Ps 2; 72; Isa 7-11; Mic 3-5; cf. also the books of 1 and 2 Kings). If Messiah was *just* a man, the entire logic of this “greater” David would fall apart. After all, the OT

² Jeffrey H. Tigay, [Deuteronomy](#), The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 57.

thoroughly establishes that there is no man is righteous and even King Solomon states, “there is no man who does not sin.” The OT believes if man is involved, only sin and failure will ensue. God must act in spite of man in order for fulfill His promises.³

- Individual passages fill in this entire framework. Even in Job, Job wished for one who was both human and divine (Job 9:33). That was necessary for effective mediation between God and man. That sets up for the NT and affirms the OT perception that a divine Messiah/mediator is necessary.
- In Isaiah 6, YHWH is declared to be holy and then speaks of His holy seed. The term “seed” goes back to Gen 3:15 as a messianic term. The Messiah has God’s own holiness for He is God.
- This is affirmed throughout Isaiah. For example, the Messiah in Isaiah 7 is named “God with us” and in Isaiah 9, “Almighty God” (cf. 10:20-21 where the term is used of YHWH).
- In addition, in Isaiah , God claims He exclusively is the Savior (43:11; 45:21; 49:26); however, His Messiah is the savior both seen in Isaiah itself (Isa 49:6) and of course in the NT (Luke 2:11; Phil 3:20).
- Likewise, YHWH claims to open blind eyes (Isa 35:5) and the Servant specifically does that task (Isa 42:7).
- YHWH does not give His glory to another (Isa 42:8) yet Jesus has the Father’s glory (Isa 49:1-3; John 17:1-5).
- Furthermore, Isaiah 53 depicts the Messiah as God. He is high and lifted up, a title used only for YHWH who is seated on the throne in Isa 6.
- Daniel 7 confirms this picture .It depicts one like a son of man who takes the throne to have dominion from the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:13-14). Only God is worthy to receive all glory and honor and to receive service from all peoples, nations, and tongue. In fact, throughout the book, human kings are denied this honor (cf. Dan 3:4; 5:19). Just like Isaiah states that the high and lifted up one in Isa 6 is Messiah, so Daniel depicts the same reality.
- Consistently, in Ezek 1:26-28, the one seated on the throne is like a man yet has the glory of God. Ezekiel did not view this individual as an elevated human being but rather as God Himself. Indeed, the very next chapter this individual speaks to Ezekiel as God whom Israel rebelled against (Ezek 2:1-3). *This is important for Paul’s (and author of Hebrews) description of Jesus as the “image of God.” That language is from Ezek 1:26-28. If Ezekiel saw YHWH (as he claims, cf. 1:1-3) and described Him as the “image of the glory of God” (Ezek 1:28), then when other writers describe Jesus as the “image of God” (cf. Col 1; Heb 1), they mean Jesus is the same YHWH that Ezekiel saw.*
- In Ezekiel 34, YHWH notes that there are no good shepherds in Israel. Therefore, He must become the good shepherd for His people (see vv. 5-11). He states that YHWH personally will do this (vv. 14-16) and parallels that the second David (v. 23). If YHWH alone is personally going to shepherd yet the second David will be the Shepherd, this begins to imply that YHWH is the second David

³ Thanks to Dr. Bolen for his contribution here. Please see his fuller paper for further discussion.

and the Shepherd. That is fitting given Psalm 23 and of course John 10 (see below).

- Jeremiah 23:6, the Messiah is called “YHWH is our righteousness.” How can a human king (who are only bent to evil, see Solomon’s quote above) ever have righteousness *muchless* YHWH’s own righteousness? This too affirms the divinity of the Messiah.
- Note also the following verses:
- **Zech 12:10**
 - ¹⁰ "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that **they will look on Me whom they have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.
 - In context, the Messiah is the One afflicted by Israel (see Zech 11:4-14; see also especially Zech 13:7). Yet YHWH calls Him “Me.” The Messiah is God. This is affirmed in NT usage (see John 19:37).
- **Psalm 110:1**
 - YHWH said to my Lord
 - the language of “my lord” is significant. Although אדון (master) is not אדני (Adonai, the typical title for God), David only uses “my [fill in the blank]” to refer to two groups: God (my salvation, strength shield, etc.) and his enemies. So linguistically we have a choice – either David is speaking of God with “my lord” (which makes sense, emphasizing the Messiah’s royal mastery over him as God) or his enemy. The latter makes no sense and the former not only makes sense but corresponds to Jesus’s own interpretation in Matt 22:41-46.
- **Psalm 45:6-7**
 - ⁶ Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. ⁷ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore **God, Your God**, has anointed You With the oil of joy above Your fellows.
 - Note that the Davidic king is addressed as God yet at the same time is anointed by God. This tension not only affirms multiple personhood in the godhead but also that the Messiah is divine.
- **Psalm 102:19-20**
 - ¹⁹ For **He** looked down from His holy height; From heaven **the LORD gazed upon the earth**, ²⁰ **To hear** the groaning of the prisoner, **To set free** those who were doomed to death, ²¹ **to tell of the name of the LORD** in Zion And His praise in Jerusalem,

- Note that in this Psalm, YHWH looks down to do three things: 1) to hear, 2) to set free; and 3) to tell the name of YHWH.⁴ Note that with the third item, one would expect that it would say “YHWH tells of *His* name.” That would make grammatical sense if there is only one person involved. However, the text says that YHWH will “tell of the name of YHWH.” The idea is that *YHWH is speaking about YHWH*. This tension affirms what we see above. There seems to be multiple persons of the godhead at work such that they can speak about each other.
- Furthermore, the activity of YHWH in this verse revolves around Zion and Jerusalem. That already gives it a royal messianic idea. This is confirmed in Isaiah where the language of these verses is used of the Suffering Servant (cf. Isa 42:7; 61:1-3). Again, the Messiah is cast as YHWH.
- *Is it without surprise that both Psalm 45 and Psalm 102 are quoted in Heb 1 about Christ? This isn't a NT re-interpretation of the OT but the OT prophets already knew the tensions of multiple persons in the godhead and that the Messiah must be God.*
- Even in this “brief” survey, we have quoted from the Pentateuch (Genesis and Deut), the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah), and the writings (Job and Psalms). The OT is replete with indications of the Messiah's divinity.

3. Dealing with supposed objections of a Trinity/divine Messiah in the OT⁵

- One major objection deals with the language of “son of God” in the OT. The idea is that the “Son of God” in the Old Testament is a title for a human king and no more. It simply means “inheritor” and has no divine connotations. Old Testament usage is synonymous with New Testament usage. Thus, Jesus as “son of God” simply means Jesus is a human king, an inheritor of what God has.
- However, (1) “Son of God” is not *only* a human figure in the OT:
 - In several places in the Old Testament, heavenly beings are called “sons of God”:
 - **Job 1:6**; “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord...”
 - **Gen 6:1–2**; “When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive.”
- Likewise, (2) Language is flexible, metaphors are not always used consistently—almost never in fact.
 - E.g., who are the shepherds in Jeremiah? Foreign armies, Israel's leaders, Jeremiah himself, God.
 - By the same token, “son of God” can bear the same general meaning (“king”), but more meaning can be imported into the phrase.

⁴ Some translations add “men will tell” but that is unwarranted given the parallelism and that “man” is not even in the text at all (hence, NASB puts it in italics). Grammatically, all of these phrases refer back to YHWH.

⁵ Thanks to Dr. Foreman for his contribution here.

- Hence, (3) to be sure, Psalm 2 and 89 do deal with the Messiah's human kingship and fulfillment of that role. No one denies that. Jesus is God-man. However, the above analysis shows that the title "son of God" is *not exclusive* to humanity. Sons of God are not human beings and metaphors has flexibility. This is especially seen in Psalm 2 when the relationship between YHWH and His king/Son is put in very exclusive and unique terms (see vv. 4-8). In fact, the phrase "kiss the Son" (v. 12) parallels the statement to worship YHWH (v. 11). It parallels YHWH with the Son and equates the two types of action. Nowhere is anyone commanded to worship David or any Davidic king. This already implies the sonship of the ultimate Davidic king is something far beyond human. Coupled with other psalms of David (like Ps 110), David is conceiving a divine Messiah.
- Even more, (4) "Son of God" is not the only title for Jesus. The other titles for Jesus (see some examples from Isaiah above) affirm and further establish what we have seen here. After all, even Isa 9:6 ties sonship with the Messiah's divinity. These connections help to fill out the full idea of son in the OT.
- This sets up exactly for what we see in the NT (5)
 - **John 5:18**; "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."
 - **Matt 4:3**; "And the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.'"
 - Clearly "son of God" in this passage refers to more than just "a special relationship" that Jesus had with God.
 - Satan's argument would make no sense if he did not believe that Jesus was claiming to be God: e.g., "If you are a human, turn these stones into bread."
 - **Matt 14:28–32** And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat **worshipped** him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."
 - Notice that the disciples recognize him as "Son of God" **because** of his miraculous power. This implies that they understood "son of God" to refer to more than a human.
 - **Matt 28:19** ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- “Son” is sandwiched between the father and the spirit – both of which are clearly God. This closely associates son of God with God.
- **Matt 11:27** All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
 - The son has the power of election: he enlightens to salvation those whom he desires.
- Jesus frequently referred to God as his father (e.g. **Matt 7:21; 10:32; 11:27**). If Jesus was simply using the title “son of God” to refer to the special relationship that he has with the father, this would not have bothered the Jews because they also saw themselves as sons and daughters of God. But it did. They understood that in saying that God was his father, Jesus was making a claim to deity.
- Hence, it might be helpful to think of Jesus’s use of “son of God” as roughly equivalent to, “one of the class of.” Just as my son is 100% human and belongs to the class of humans, so God’s son is 100% God and belongs to the class of God.

4. Some conclusions from the OT discussion

- The divinity of the Messiah is *possible* given the tensions of the multiple personhood of God in the OT.
- The divinity of Messiah is *actual* given the storyline of the OT and numerous passages that attest to this.
- The divinity of Messiah is *necessary* per the OT. Without divinity, the storyline would never be fulfilled given man’s inability. Without divinity, one would not have true mediation (cf. Job) for the mediator must be able to be equal with God and man. Without divinity, salvation cannot be fulfilled for the Messiah would not have divine righteousness (Jeremiah). The OT shows that the divinity of Messiah is not merely a remote idea affirmed or some trivial notion but rather absolutely vital for the operation of God in His plan.

THE NT AFFIRMS THE TRINITY AND THE DIVINITY OF THE MESSIAH

1. The NT explicitly affirms this

- **1 John 5:20**
 - ²⁰ And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, **in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.** (1 John 5:20)
- **Rom 9:5**
 - ⁵ whose are the fathers, and from whom is the **Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.** (Rom 9:5)
- **Luke 24:51-53**

- ⁵¹ While He was blessing them, **He parted from them and was carried up into heaven** ⁵² **And they, after worshiping Him**, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising **God**. (Luke 24:51-53)⁶

2. The NT thoroughly describes Jesus as divine and preexistent.⁷

A. PAUL'S VIEW OF JESUS

Jesus is Active Prior to the Incarnation

- **Phil 2:5–8**
 - ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was **in the form of God**, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - The incarnation is a **free act of Messiah**. He “emptied himself”. This implies pre-existence.
- **2 Cor 8:9**
 - I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake **he became** poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Jesus has descended from heaven

- **1 Cor 15:47**
 - ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.
 - Paul believes Adam literally came from the dust (Gen 2.7); Paul believes Jesus literally came from heaven.
 - Contrast is not simply that Jesus is “heavenly” just as we are “heavenly” (v. 48). Paul’s argument is that a person’s identity is determined by one’s relation to either Adam or Christ.

Jesus is Creator

- **1 Cor 8:6**

⁶ At bare minimum, Jesus receives worship from the disciples. I would argue that these lines are parallel which means that Jesus is here labeled as God for after all, God is the one who blesses as Jesus does.

⁷ Thanks to Dr. Foreman for his contribution who synthesized the work of Gathercole, Simon J. *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006, for use here.

- ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
- Jesus is involved in the act of creation with God the Father.
- **Col 1:16**
 - ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.
 - Jesus is involved in creation. (Note Col 1:15 where Jesus is the image of the invisible God).

Jesus is sent by God – this means pre-existence

- **Rom 8:3**
 - For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,
 - By saying “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” Paul is saying Jesus the Son took on a condition he had not previously possessed. The point: the son was pre-existent—he was *sent*.
- **Gal 4:4**
 - ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”
 - There is a parallel with the sending of the Spirit in Gal 4:6. The Spirit was pre-existent!
 - Note that it’s the spirit of *his son*. Can this be said of a human?

Jesus Was Active in Israel’s History

- **1 Cor 10:4, 9**
 - ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.
 - ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents,
 - What does Paul mean by the Rock? Difficult to say. But the point seems to be that the Israelites had Jesus the Messiah accompanying them in the desert.
 - Notice that Paul said some tested Christ in the desert. It’s difficult to avoid the conclusion that Jesus was existing in OT times.

Paul calls Jesus God

- **Rom 9:5** – Christ who is God over all.
 - ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

- ⁵ ὧν οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἐξ ὧν (from whom) ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα, ὁ ὧν ἐπὶ πάντων θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.
- The alternative translation: “To them belong the patriarchs, and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh, who is over all things. God be blessed for ever!”
 - Seems out of place to have “God blessed forever” suddenly.
 - Makes more sense that Paul is making a crescendo. They have rejected *God*!
- Paul doesn’t usually refer to Christ as God. He usually calls Christ Lord. But he includes Jesus in the divine identity:
 - **Phil 2:10**; quotation of **Isa 45:23** that speaks of Yahweh
 - Paul equates the judgment seat of God (**Rom 14:10**) with the judgment seat of Christ (**2 Cor 5:10**)

Summary

- Paul believed Jesus was pre-existent: Jesus was alive before the incarnation.
- Jesus came down from heaven.
- Jesus was *sent* by God.
- Jesus was active in creation.
- Conclusion: Paul believed Jesus was more than just a human.

B. HEBREWS

Jesus is the co-agent in creation with God

- **Hebrews 1:2**
 - ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world** (Grk: *aionas* = “ages”; this probably means *this* age and the one to come [6:5]).
 - Is a human involved in creation?
- **Hebrews 1:8–10**
 - ⁸ But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.” ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” ¹⁰ And, “**You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning**, and the heavens are the work of your hands;
 - This is a quotation of Ps 102:25–28. The Psalm is clearly talking about **God** being the creator. Jesus, therefore, is equated with God the creator.

Jesus is brought into the world and worshiped

- **Hebrews 1:6**
 - And again, when he **brings** the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

- “Bringing” language implies he brought from *somewhere*. This means pre-existence.
- How can a human be worshiped?

Scriptures about the Father are Attributed to Jesus

- **Hebrews 1:8–9**

- ⁸ But of the Son he says, “Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.” ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” ¹⁰ And, “**You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning**, and the heavens are the work of your hands;
- A passage clearly speaking about God in the OT (Ps 45:6–7) is attributed to Jesus. The author therefore believed the two were one and the same.

Jesus is *brought* into the World (=incarnation)

- **Hebrews 2:17**

- ⁷ Therefore he had to **be made** like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- Note: the fact that he was *made* like his brothers proves the point: he has *become* human. That would be an odd thing to say if Jesus were simply born a regular human. Incarnation is in view here.

Jesus is active in Israel’s History

- **Jude 5**

- Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.
- Cf. Deut 6:21 – God is the one who brought Israel out of Egypt.
- Jesus is active in history before his incarnation.

C. THE GOSPELS

Jesus is presented as a heavenly being at the Transfiguration

- **Mark 9:2–8; Matt 17:1–8; Luke 9:28–36**

- Appearance of Jesus with white clothing (whiter than any launderer on *earth*) imply he’s a heavenly figure.
 - Note **Mark 16:5** – man in white robe at tomb is heavenly.
 - Note **Dan 7:9** – the ancient of Days has clothing as white as snow.
 - Note **Rev 1:12–16** uses the same description for Jesus.
- In **Matt 17:2** Jesus’s *face* is transformed.
- Location: Elijah and Moses both appeared on Mt. Sinai and had a theophany there. They were the only two people in history to go up on Mount Sinai. This is significant.

Jesus has authority over the heavenly realm

- **Luke 10:18–19**

- ¹⁸ And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, **I have given you authority** to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.
- Notice that **Jesus** *has authority*. Can any other human say that?

Jesus has authority to forgive sins

- **Mark 2:1–12**

- ⁷ “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” ¹² And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”
- Objection: Jesus is talking like a priest – *God* forgives your sins.
- Response: Jesus is not saying *God* forgives your sins. The Jews accused him of blasphemy – no one can forgive sins but God alone. Jesus agrees with them by healing the man.
- **Luke 7:49** – Luke adds that those witnessing the scene say, “Who is this, who even forgives sins?”

Jesus is accused of Blasphemy

- **Mark 2:7**

- ⁷ “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
- Jesus claims to forgive sins. First century Jews understood this to be a divine claim. The offense is against *God*—Jesus is claiming to do something that only God can do.

- **Mark 14:61–64**

- ⁶¹ But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” ⁶² And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³ And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? ⁶⁴ You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death.
- There is nothing intrinsically blasphemous in claiming to be the messiah.
- What was considered to be blasphemous was the claim to have a *heavenly* throne. In their mind *God* was king in heaven.

The “name” of Jesus is more powerful than a human name

- **Matt 18:20**

- ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”
- Certainly odd if Jesus is just a human.
- **Matt 28:19**
 - ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - Notice Jesus is sandwiched between the father and the spirit – both of which are clearly God.
- **Matt 7:22**
 - ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not **prophecy** in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many **mighty works** in your name?’ ²³ And then will I **declare** to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’
 - They are prophesying **in Jesus’ name**.
 - Compare this with **Deut 18:18–20**:
 - ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put **my** words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I **command** him. ¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. ²⁰ But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’
 - People are legitimately prophesying in Jesus’s name. The move made here: Jesus is God.
 - The power to do **mighty works** is from Jesus’s name. Can this be said of a human?
 - Notice also that Jesus is the **judge** – this is *God’s* prerogative.
- **Acts 9:34**
 - And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.” And immediately he rose.
 - Note that it’s *Jesus* who heals Aeneas, not Jesus relying on God’s power. Jesus himself is the source for miracles. This means Jesus is more than a human.

Jesus is worshiped

- **Matt 14:28–32**
 - And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³² And when they got into the boat,

the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat **worshiped** him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

- Notice that the disciples recognize him as “Son of God” **because** of his miraculous power.
- They “worship” him here.
- **Matt 28:17**
 - ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
 - Jesus is worshiped, then he says he has all authority **in heaven** and on earth. Isn’t this God’s prerogative?
 - An exalted response from the disciples makes sense.
- **In Luke:**
 - **5:12** – leper falls on his face
 - **17:16** – Samaritan leper falls on his face
 - **24:52–53** – worshiped (*proskuneo*) Jesus and were continually in the temple blessing God.
 - These *could* simply be human devotion.
 - But: Luke’s account in **Acts 10:25–26** where Cornelius falls down before Peter (*proskineo*), Peter says he’s just a man and shouldn’t worship him.
 - This implies that in Luke the *proskuneo* is genuine worship that is appropriate for Jesus since he’s more than a man.

Jesus is preexistent – “I have come...”

- This formula (“I have come...”) is used over twenty times (24) in early Judaism for a heavenly figure (angel) descending from heaven to earth for a purpose.
 - The argument is not that Jesus is therefore an angel, but that he had *prior intent* in coming. He was **preexistent**. Jesus came *from somewhere*.
 - If Jesus is preexistent, then he’s not a human.
- **Mark 1:24/Luke 4:34**
 - ²⁴ “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”
 - Note Jesus is the “holy one of God.” This is typical to heavenly beings: Deut 33:2; Ps 89:5; Dan 4:17; Zech 14:5; Jude 14.
 - The point: Jesus has come into the world.
- **Mark 2:17/Matt 9:13/Luke 5:32**
 - ¹⁷ And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- There is deliberate action. Jesus came *in order* to call the righteous. This implies preexistence.
- **Luke 12:49**
 - “I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!
 - Notice he says he has come to cast fire *on earth*. Implication is that he’s come from outside of the earth—heaven. Fire comes from heaven.
 - Close parallel in **Gen 19:24** (Sodom and Gomorrah) – there the fire comes from heaven to earth.
- **Luke 19:10**
 - ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”
 - There is purpose to Jesus’s coming – to seek and save. Similar to the shepherd parable where the shepherd leaves the flock to seek out the lost.
- **Matt 20:28**
 - even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
 - Again, Jesus *came* from somewhere.

Jesus is preexistent – “I have been sent...”

- **Mark 9:37/Luke 9:48**
 - ³⁷ “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”
 - Like the “I have come” saying, this sending statement implies preexistence as well.
- **Mark 12:1–12**
 - Parable of the vineyard. Servants sent, they’re killed. Finally, the son is sent and he is killed.
 - This is a parable, but it’s clearly about Jesus. The parallel is: Jesus was *sent* by the father. He was preexistent.
- **Matt 10:40**
 - “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.
- **Luke 10:16**
 - “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”
 - Notice the parallel between Jesus sending his disciples and God sending Jesus. Both Jesus and the disciples have been sent from one place to another. This implies preexistence.

Jesus was active throughout Israel’s history

- **Matt 23:37–24:1**
 - “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together

as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would have none of it! ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate! ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me from now until you say, '*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*'" Now as Jesus was going out of the temple courts and walking away, his disciples came to show him the temple buildings.

- "Jerusalem...you who kill the prophets" points to Israel's past.
- Notice how in 23:36 Jesus sends prophets. This pointing to the future.
- Thus, Jesus who longed in the past (v.37) and will send prophets in the future (v. 36) is active throughout all of Israel's history. This means preexistence—certainly more than can be said about a human.
- Is Jesus talking about his past contact with Jerusalem in his ministry? Neither Matthew nor Luke have focused on Jerusalem in any way. Thus, from the context of the book, this is not a good option.
- "Investigation of titles is not determinative for, or even central in, the study of earliest Christology." (p. 231)

3. The NT's use of the OT affirms this

- The NT uses OT passages about YHWH to describe Jesus.
 - "Prepare the way for YHWH" in Mark 1 refers to Jesus (but is clearly about YHWH in Isa 40).
 - "Every knee will bow" in Phil 2 is a quotation of Isa 45 which discusses YHWH. Paul applies Isa 45 to Jesus because He is YHWH.
 - Jesus' claim as the good shepherd (John 10) comes from Ezek 34 where YHWH claims He alone is the good shepherd (Ezek 34:9-11) and from Psalm 23 which discusses how YHWH shepherds.
 - Hebrews applies Psalm 102 which talks about God's eternality to Jesus (cf. Heb 1:10; Ps 102:25).
 - As noted above, Jesus is the image of God (cf. Col 1:15) which is language used of YHWH Himself in Ezek 1:26-28.
 - Jesus' resurrection and the language of "o death where is your sting" speaks of YHWH in Hosea 13:11-14. However, Paul applies it to Jesus in 1 Cor 15. Again, Paul views Jesus as the YHWH mentioned in Hosea 13.
 - YHWH's name is one full of "grace and truth" in Exod 34:6-8 and that is used of Jesus in John 1:17.
 - YHWH is the first and the last in Isa 41:4 and in Rev 1:8, Jesus is the first and the last.

4. The Rest of the NT

- We have appealed so far to the Gospels, Paul, Hebrews, and Jude. The rest of the NT affirms Jesus' divinity as well.
- James acknowledges that God is one (Jas 2:19) yet speaks of the Spirit as God (Jas 4:5) and speaks of faith in Jesus and faith in God as synonymous (cf. Jas 2:1; 2:23).

- **2 Pet 1:1 by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.**
 - The Greek grammar indicates that “God” is the Savior, Jesus Christ. This is already affirmed in the OT since Jesus is called “YHWH our righteousness” (Jer 23:6).
- 1 John of course has explicit declarations about Jesus’ divinity (cf. above concerning 1 John 5:20). That is tied with Father-Son relations in the book. That is significant for this is used to warn about false teachers who deny Jesus “coming in the flesh” (2 John 7). To be sure, “in the flesh” (2 John 7) emphasizes Jesus’ humanity. However, the term “coming” is important. If one comes somewhere, he earlier was somewhere else. The language of “coming” reminds us that Jesus existed before being in the flesh and *came* or arrived on scene in the flesh in this world. The language of “coming” is the language of the incarnation, which includes Christ’s preexistence (and full divinity) as well as His full humanity. John asserts that those who deny this doctrine are a form of anti-Christ. The Son’s divinity is also why the one who denies the Son denies the Father (1 John 2:23). They are one. In fact, it is this oneness that grounds the nature of love (cf. 1 John 4:7-9).
- Revelation shows that the Son will receive the same worship as the Father (Rev 4-5). In fact, its depiction of the Godhead mirrors that of the OT (cf. Rev 1:4-5; Isa 11:1-9; 48:16). This shows the OT and NT read itself one way, in a way that affirms the truth of the Trinity and the deity of Christ. It is for this reason as well that the Lamb and the Father share *one* throne (Rev 22:1-2). It is for this reason that the Lamb and the Father are the temple of the people, for their presence *is* the glory of the only God (Rev 21:22).
- Although more could be said, at this point, we have shown that every NT writer affirms the deity of Christ and the Trinity. This is not some obscure doctrine. The support for it is overwhelming.

5. Dealing with supposed objections

- Some argue the language of “sent” makes Jesus not to be God (in John particularly). After all, God sends John the Baptist who is a man so Jesus being sent must make Him just a man.
 - However, see the issue before of God sending in Num 20:16. There, actually denotes YHWH sent YHWH.
 - Even more, YHWH sends His Word to accomplish His work all over the OT (cf. Pss 33; 143:13-18). His Word is the extension of God Himself and acts as God (see personification language in 143:13-18). This might be in the very background of John given John 1!
 - Along this line, John uses that language of sent to that effect. Sending shows that Jesus is the emissary of God Himself for the One who denies the Son denies the Father that sent Him (**John 5:23**, 38; 6:29; see also 1 John 4:9; see also John 8:16; **John 17:6**). In light of OT background AND usage in John, sending language refers to the divine equal of the Father who is the perfect representative of the Father to the degree that if one does not believe in the Son He does not believe in the Father.

- This is precisely why John states that John the Baptist is sent from God (John 1:6) and not from the Father (see usages above). The sending of the Father and Son denotes a relation that John does not have. John is human; Jesus is divine. It is as simple as that.
- Some argue John 10:29-38 does not show Jesus is God but rather an elevated human like a judge.
 - However, Jesus uses Ps 82 as an argument of lesser to greater. ³⁵ "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"
 - Note the language of sending here (see above). This is actually claiming an argument of lesser to greater that human judges that have delegated authority are even labeled "gods" then One sanctified and SENT from the Father should be so much more! This is not Jesus = judge or even something a slight bit better but a category different.
 - Even more, why did the Jews want to kill Jesus afterwards if this interpretation is correct? This lacks coherence.
- Some argue that Jesus being in God's image (Col 1 and Phil 2?) means Jesus is a human
 - A preposition makes all the difference here. In Gen 1, we are created IN God's image. BUT in Col 1 and Phil 2, Jesus IS the image of God. And in Rom 8:29 – we are conformed to that image. So the image of God in Gen 1 IS the image of Christ. Christ is thereby God.
 - In fact, the language of image harkens back to Ezek 1 (see above). That only strengthens the notion of Jesus being YHWH unless the proponent of this view would like to deny the one in the vision of Ezek 1 is YHWH even though the text claims that He is.
- Some argue that Jesus has "divinity" but it is more like Him being a temple than being God Himself
 - Again grammar plays a very important consideration. Fundamentally in John, the apostle claims that the Word became flesh and TABERNACLED. It does not say that the Word is a tabernacle OR that His flesh is a tabernacle. He tabernacled (verb) just as YHWH did of old (Exod 40; 1 Kgs 8). This actually proves He is God. One might counter that only the Word is then divine but the flesh is tabernacle so Jesus is just "God in a bod" (and thus Jesus is not divine but rather indwelt by God mightily) However, John 1:14 states "the Word BECAME flesh" (as opposed to tabernacle in or came upon or indwelt) which would argue that this is not indwelling but incarnation.
- Some struggle with how Jesus could have a God (cf. Eph 1:3)
 - However, a more precise reading of this text is: The God who is the Father of Jesus Christ (Granville Sharp rule). Jesus has a "God" in the sense that He has a Father in His relationship within the Godhead.

- John 20:17 plays a key part of this: “Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”
 - Note that Jesus does not say OUR Father and OUR God (including Himself with all of us). Rather we are parallel and distinct from Him. Jesus shows that our sonship is via His and His is distinct and greater than ours. He relates to God as Father differently than we do. With what has already been established in context (see Father sending Son) this should make sense why. Jesus’ sonship and relationship with God is categorically different than us having a God. Contrary to the argument alleged, this actually shows the opposite. Jesus “has a God” relative to being within the Godhead versus us having a God being outside of the Godhead. Carson elaborates on this in his Pillar commentary on John.
- Some have pointed to 1 Tim 2:5 which states, *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*. They argue that this proves Jesus is a man.
 - No one denies the humanity of Christ. That is necessary and as stated here, necessary for mediation.
 - The question is whether this is exclusively so. Paul may have *emphasize* one aspect of Christ but that does not mean he *excludes* everything else.
 - Even more, the language of “mediator” presumes an equality with God and man. Job 9:33 comes into play where Job declares that the only true mediator could put his hand on both God and man. For true mediation to occur, the mediator must be able to be equal with both. Hence, a word study helps to clarify that Paul is not excluding Christ’s divinity here.
 - On top of that, the term “man” Christ Jesus is significant. Paul has used such language of Christ in talking about the second Adam (Rom 5) with its whole connection to Dan 7 and Gen 3:15. Of course this deals with Jesus’ humanity, but in Dan 7 the one *like* a son of man claims the throne of the Ancient of Days. He is equal to the Ancient of Days (God Himself). That too amplifies the notion of a God-man mediator discussed above.
 - All of these ideas dovetail with a closer reading of the the grammar of the passage does so as well. Note that the above translation (NASB) puts the word “and” in italics (*and one mediator*). The reason is, it is not in the Greek text. At bare minimum, this ties “one God” in very close parallelism with “one mediator.” They are juxtaposed together which further shows the notion of equality. However, as Marshall points out, the grammar even suggests that this entire verse is one phrase about one person. He translates it as “There is one who is God, one who is also (καί) the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.”⁸
 - In other words, this phrase is most likely a chiasm where “one God” actually parallels “man Jesus Christ” and the center of the chiasm is that Jesus is the

⁸ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 2000), 88.

mediator between God and men. Such a reading actually explains why Jesus is the mediator between God and men, because He is God and man.

- Thus, at bare minimum this passage does not contradict any notion that Jesus is divine. Paul is not claiming something exclusive and in fact has left indications and openness that Jesus is God as needing to be a mediator between God and man. Upon closer study, this could actually show the opposite of what people have tried to argue; namely, this is an explicit declaration that Jesus is both God and man.
- This idea is not new to Paul. In 1 Cor 8:6, Paul quotes the *shema* (one God) just like he does here. In 1 Cor 8:6, Paul also states that there is “**one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.**” Paul parallels and identifies Jesus as the one God both by title (using the term “one”) and by description (Creator). If Jesus is just a man, how can He be the Creator? Paul believed in monotheism; he believed the *shema*. But he also believed that Jesus is in the one God.

7. A concluding reflections from the NT discussion

- Much more could be said. Suffice it to say, every NT writer affirms the deity of Christ. This shows not only have thorough the doctrine is in the NT but even more, how it is extensively interwoven in the theology and doctrine of the NT.
- Along that line, one more concluding thought: this is barely scratching the surface of the discussion. However, even a quick survey through the Scripture shows a plethora of evidence for Christ's divinity. Further evidence is seen by carefully studying every book and verse of Scripture and seeing how immersed Scripture is in this reality. The theology and operation of the truths of the NT and truly the entire Bible stand or fall on the deity of Christ. That is where we turn to next.

WHAT IS AT STAKE WITH THE DEITY OF CHRIST?

Traditionally, we have summarized all the Bible teaches in 10 major categories of systematic theology. A denial of the deity of Christ changes every single one of them in dramatic ways:

1. God (theology proper) – obviously a change to the Trinity changes the fundamental nature of God.

2. Holy Spirit – a denial of the Trinity denies the deity and personhood of the Spirit even though the Bible parallels the Spirit with God Himself (even from the very beginning, Gen 1:1-2) and discusses how one can grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30) and how the Spirit makes decisions (1 Cor 12:1-5). The doctrine of the Spirit dramatically changes when the deity of Christ and the Trinity are assaulted.

3. Christ – again, this changes the fundamental nature of Christ which changes who He is. In fact, in John, if one denies Jesus' incarnation (“coming in the flesh”), then this is tantamount to idolatry (1 John 5:21).

4. Angels (angelology) – God made man a little lower than the angels. If Jesus is just a man, then He is actually inferior to the angels. This changes both our understanding of angels and Christ (and completely undoes the point of Hebrews 1-2).

5. Man (anthropology) – those who deny the deity of Christ, yet want to see Christ in some salvific/"biblical" way, maintain that Jesus is still a perfect and sinless human (but still just a human). However, how can one be human yet sinless after the Fall (cf. Rom 1-3; Pss 14; 53)? This changes the nature of man (original sin and total depravity).

6. Sin (hamartiology) – speaking of which, if a man (even if with any kind of assistance) can overcome sin as a simple man, then is sin really that powerful and pervasive? Is it really that deep? Is total depravity true? The doctrine of sin is completely undone (cf. Gen 6:5).

7. Salvation (soteriology) – in fact, if a man (again with any kind of assistance) can overcome sin and live a perfect life, then why does one need forgiveness and the gospel? One can simply just be like Jesus the man and avoid the gospel altogether. After all, per the view, Jesus the man did not need the gospel but lived a perfect life, God could simply replicate this for every other person as well.

Other implications against the gospel arise. 2 Cor 5:21 reminds us that Jesus is the **righteousness of God** for us. How can a mere mortal have God's own righteousness. We have already seen that this is precisely why Jesus is God, declared in the OT to be YHWH our righteousness (Jer 23:6) which is affirmed in the NT (2 Pet 1:1). Justification fails if Jesus is not God.

In fact, this produces a sort of works salvation. The gospel of grace is that God by Himself does it all. However, if Jesus is a man, then God does some and a man contributes as well. This is no longer by grace but by grace and human work. Denial of Christ's deity produces a different gospel.

On top of this, sanctification is affected. The Holy Spirit's work in the life of the believer (cf. Rom 8) is undermined since He is not a person nor God (how can He intercede for us?). Furthermore, even Job and the author of Hebrews acknowledge that Jesus' divinity and divine life is necessary for Him to intercede for us without failing (Job 9:33; Heb 7:23). Our security in salvation will fail if Jesus is not God.

Even glorification could be affected. If Jesus is still just a man, then when we are glorified, we will not just be like Christ, we will actually be the same as Jesus. For He would be just a glorified man just as we will be. However, we are *to be conformed to the image of Christ* (Rom 8:29) not equal to Christ. Our glory points to His ultimate glory, the glory of God Himself (John 17:5).

8. Eschatology – for this reason, the future is totally changed. In the end, is Jesus worshipped (Rev 4-5)? Does He have full equality with God the Father and the same

glory that fills the earth (Rev 21:22-23; 22:1)? If Jesus is just a man, this cannot be. The very ending and point of the storyline is changed and with that, the very movement and purpose of God is changed.

9. Bible (bibliology) – at this point, one has either ignored or explained away so much of Scripture that one has a new Bible, a new canon, and rejected the inerrancy and authority of that which is Scripture. This makes sense since one has undone the underpinnings of inspiration. The Holy Spirit inspires men to write Scripture (2 Pet 1:20-21). But if He is not a person or God Himself, then the divine authority of Scripture breaks down. Likewise, the divinity of the Word and its climax is connected with Jesus as divine Son who speaks better than all prophets (Heb 1:1-2). However, if He is not this, then the entire revelation of God breaks down (cf. Rev 1:1-2). Put this way, the word of God is always connected with the Word (John 1:1; Rev 19:11-12). Destroy one (Jesus' divinity) and you will destroy the other.

10. Church (ecclesiology) – We are the body of Christ (Eph 4:12). We are Christians. Our faith, identity, and purpose is rooted in Christ. He is the cornerstone of the church (Eph 2:20). Change Christ and you thereby change Christianity. This has already been illustrated in the points above but is solidified with this.

What is at stake in the denial of deity of Christ: EVERYTHING. All of Christianity,

This is why we take the issue seriously. It is not remote but central. Everything is at stake. Even more, all of these doctrines show the supremacy and exclusive preeminence of our Savior (Col 1; Heb 1; Rev 4-5). Every knee must bow (Phil 2) and the entire universe will acknowledge Him (Rev 5). Christ is all in all (Eph 1). We must treat Him as such and nothing less.