

# ***The Divinity of Jesus***

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## **I. JESUS HAS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES**

- Omnipresence is a characteristic of God (Ps 139:1–13)
  - Jesus is omnipresent:
    - **Matt 18:20**
      - “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.”
    - Jesus lives in us: **Gal 2:20**
      - “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
- Omniscience is an attribute of God (Isa 66:18; Ps 44:21; 1 Kgs 8:39)
  - Jesus is omniscient: **Rev 2:23**
    - “And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.”
- Eternality is a divine attribute (Ps 18:2; Isa 44:6)
  - **God** is “the Alpha and Omega, the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty” (**Rev 1:8**)
  - **Jesus** is eternal, “the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (**Rev 22:13; cf. Rev 1:17; 2:8**)
- Immutability is a characteristic of God (Mal 3:6; Ps 102:27)
  - Jesus is immutable: **Heb 13:8**
    - “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
- Creative ability is an attribute of God (Jer 10:11–12; 2 Kgs 19:15; Isa 44:24; Heb 3:4; Rom 1:20)
  - Jesus is creator and sustainer of the universe
    - **Col 1:16**
      - “For all things in heaven and on earth were created by him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him.”
    - **1 Cor 8:6**
      - “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.”
    - **Heb 1:3**
      - “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the material in this paper is taken from Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, *The Divinity of the Messiah* (Keren Ahvah Meshihit: Jerusalem, 2002 [1836]). This helpful book was written by a converted Jew and addresses many of the objections raised by Socinians.

power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

- God is the giver and sustainer of life (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; 2 Kgs 5:7)
  - Jesus had power to raise his own life: **John 2:18; Acts 2:24; John 19:18**
  - Jesus has power to raise others: **John 5:21, 25, 28**
  - Jesus *himself* gives eternal life and *himself* protects against the evil one: **John 10:28**
- Only God deserves to be worshiped (Deut 6:13–15; 10:20; Exod 34:14)
  - Jesus receives worship:
    - **Luke 24:51–52**
      - “While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”
    - **John 5:23**
      - “That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”
      - Note: the honor given to Jesus is equal to the honor given to the father. This goes beyond just making Jesus an ambassador for God, “for the honour given to an envoy is never that given to the head of state” (Carson, *John*, 255).
    - **Eph 1:12**
      - “So that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.”
- God is the ultimate judge
  - Jesus is the ultimate judge: **Matt 7:22–23**
    - “On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”
- Prayer is to be directed toward God
  - Stephen prayed to Jesus: **Acts 7:58–60**
    - “Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”
  - Paul prayed to Jesus: **2 Cor 12:8–12**
    - “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. <sup>9</sup> But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

## II. OTHER EVIDENCE

- Jesus is preexistent:
  - **John 17:5**
    - “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”
    - “Were there no intimation in the whole NT of the pre-existence of Christ, this single passage would irrefutably demonstrate and establish it. Our savior here, in a solemn act of devotion, declares to the almighty that he had glory with him before the world was; and fervently supplicates that he would be graciously pleased to reinstate him in his former felicity. The language is plain and clear. Every word has great moment and emphasis. Upon this single text I lay my finger.” (Frey, *Divinity of the Messiah*, p. 211).
  - **2 Cor 8:9**
    - “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.”
    - “When and where was our savior rich in this world? His whole history contradicts this assertion. [...] But upon the hypothesis that our Lord enjoyed the most exalted station before his incarnation, everything is consistent and natural. In his preexistent state, he was rich in glory, honor, and happiness, with a greatness and benevolence of soul that can never be sufficiently exalted. He abdicated all this and became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich.” (Frey, *Divinity of the Messiah*, p. 212)
    - “This passage is, in my opinion, no inconsiderable argument to prove that the earliest Christians, and in the days of the apostles themselves, were not unbelievers in our Lord’s divinity, but orthodox in the great article of our faith; for the apostle writes to the Corinthians with all the confidence of one who was mentioning, not a novel thing, but a truth long since received and acknowledged. For had this point at all been questionable, or not fully credited, he surely would not have said ‘ye know’ what they absolutely did not know, had never heard of before, or perhaps denied.” (Frey, *Divinity of the Messiah*, p. 212).
- Jesus, unlike the prophets, spoke on *his own authority*: **Matt 7:29**
  - “For he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”
- Paul was not appointed an apostle by men, but then says Jesus (and the Father) appointed him as an apostle: **Gal 1:1**
  - “Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead”
- Jesus is involved in our faith:
  - He’s the pioneer of our faith and of those in the OT (=preexistence): **Heb 12:1–2**
    - “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

- “Pioneer of faith” may be a better translation (cf. F.F. Bruce, *Hebrews*, 337). In any event, Jesus is portrayed as having gone before the OT saints and set an example for them. This implies preexistence.
- He’s the sustainer of our faith: **John 10:28**
  - “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”
- Jesus descended from heaven: **John 3:13**
  - “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.”
- Jesus’s response to the accusation of working on the Sabbath rests on equality with God:
  - If God can work on the Shabbat, then so can Jesus: **John 5:17, 19**
  - Something greater than the temple is here: **Matt 12:6**
    - Temple = God’s presence, but limited access
    - Jesus = God’s presence, unlimited access
  - Jesus (Son of Man) is Lord of the Sabbath; i.e., he can do as he pleases: **Mark 2:28**

### III. IF JESUS IS NOT GOD, THEN:

- Jesus is a blasphemer
  - He claimed equality with God (John 5:17–23; 10:27–39)
  - The Jews understood him to claim this as well (in addition to the above see Caiaphas’s response in **Matt 26:63–68**)
- Many of the most learned Christians in past ages, as well as today, are guilty of idolatry for believing in the divinity of Christ and worshiping him.
- One’s faith and hope is completely in the hands of a man.
- God, incredibly, has no problem with the worship of a human being in his presence in heaven (**Rev 5:1–14**)—contrary to many statements elsewhere in the Bible that God is a jealous God and thus forbids worshiping anyone other than himself (e.g., Exod 34:14).

### IV. IF JESUS IS GOD, THEN:

- God’s love is staggering: he himself died for us, he didn’t just send someone to do the job for him.
- It not only is proper for us to worship him, but necessary. God *demand*s worship.
- It is blasphemous to reduce him to the status of a man.
- Those who deny his deity are not worshiping the true God.
- How happy and blessed are true believers! If God did the most unthinkable thing for us (dying himself), is there anything he wouldn’t do for us (if he saw fit)? Paul picks up on this in **Rom 8:32**.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

The Jesus of the New Testament is omnipresent, omniscient, eternal, immutable, the creator and sustainer of the universe, the giver and sustainer of life, deserving worship, the recipient of prayer, preexistent, authoritative, the sustainer of our faith, and descended from heaven.

The argument that the New Testament never attributes divinity to Jesus requires such interpretive gymnastics that it is ultimately unbelievable. The clear and plain teaching of the New Testament is that Jesus is God come in the flesh.