

In Christ Alone – Defining and Defending His Deity and Lordship

Solus Christus – Christ alone saves sinners by His perfect righteousness, life, death, and bodily resurrection in their place. Christ alone is the church’s founder, head, builder, substitutionary atonement, and its only Redeemer, Mediator, Lord, Savior, Prophet, Priest, and King. As fully God and fully man, Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and the only way to heaven.

The key question is the same question Jesus asked in Matthew 16:13-18: Who do you say He is? How you answer this question determines whether you’re a part of the true Church that Jesus Christ is building and headed to heaven ... or the gates of hell

Who was Jesus? Josh McDowell says we have 3 choices (the “trilemma”):

1. If he was a mere man who sincerely thought he was God, then he was a lunatic
2. If he knew he was not truly God, but claimed to be anyways, he would be a liar and not a good man, because he convinced others to die for believing a lie
3. If on the other hand, Jesus is truly who He claims to be in Scripture, then He is to be worshipped as LORD and God (John 20:28)

Do I have to remember what all the different false groups believe about Jesus?

No, just ask anyone the basic question Jesus asked in Matthew 16: *Who do you say He is?* Did He always exist or was He created? Is He God, equal to God the Father in nature? Did He become God, or earn His Godhood in some way, or has He always been fully God and the same yesterday, today, and forever? Do you believe Jesus physically and bodily rose from the grave? Are you trusting in Jesus Christ *alone* and His righteousness and sacrifice as substitute for your sins as the only hope for heaven? (Review verses on *our need for grace* from prior lesson)

Answering Common Objections to the Deity of Christ

Objection: Colossians 1:15 says Jesus was “the firstborn of all creation” – therefore He was the first created being.

Answer: Read the rest of the context which which says Christ is not a created thing but instead He “created all things.” The JW New World Translation renders it as “created all [other] things” but notice “[other]” is in brackets because it’s not in the Greek text (their own Interlinear New World Translation shows clearly that they have added to God’s Word here). Their own translation says Jehovah created all by Himself (Isa 44:24, 45:12). Whoever the Creator of all things is cannot be any other than Jehovah.

So what does “the Firstborn” mean in Colossians 1:15?

The Greek word is *prototokos* (“first-born” or “first-bearer”) not *protoktistos* (“first-created”). It does not necessarily refer to a birth from a mother (see 1:18) and JW’s admit Jesus existed long before He was born through Mary (similarly “only begotten” does not mean He came into existence when He was physically born) Even when referring to those literally born, “first-born” does not necessarily refer to chronology or timing, but means “first in rank” or “pre-eminent.” For example, King David was actually the last-born son of Jesse, yet God called him “firstborn” (Psalm 89:27) because he was the preeminent one. See Colossians 1:18-19 and 2:9 which develop this (“first place ... fullness of Deity”)

Objection: Jesus is God's Son and therefore is not "God the Son" as Christians claim

Answer: The Bible says Jesus "was *with* God and *was* God" (John 1:1), distinct from and yet equal in nature to the Father (Col. 2:9) and one with the Father (John 10:30, see v. 31-33). To the Jew, a mere man claiming to be the Son of God or calling God "my Father" or claiming to be one with the Father was claiming to be equal with God and therefore blasphemy punishable by death (look up John 19:7, 5:17-18, 23 and 10:30-33)

Objection: Jesus said "the Father is greater than all" (John 10:29) and "greater than I" (14:28) therefore Jesus is not equal to God

Answer: Don't stop with John 10:29. Read verses 30-33 which make clear the Jews understood Christ was there making Himself out to be God. John 14:28 refers to Christ's voluntary submission as second member of the Trinity. In His incarnation He laid aside glory (17:5) but even then never ceased being equal in nature to God (5:18) as He subordinated Himself to the lowest role (Philippians 2:6-8) for ultimate exaltation.

Questions for the Jehovah's Witness at the door

- Is "Jehovah" (LORD) the name which is above every name?
- If so, who does their own Bible say has "the name which is above every name" in Philippians 2:9 – who has this name LORD (Greek version of OT "Jehovah")?
- How can He be inferior to the Father if He has "the name which is above every name"?
- Jehovah says (even in the JW translation) "to Me every knee will bow and every tongue will swear" (Isa. 45:23) – to Whom and in Whose Name is this applied in Philippians 2:10-11? What does it mean then to confess "Jesus is Lord"?
- Why is it important we bow to Jesus and confess Him as Lord? (Romans 10:9 says we must do this to be saved).
- Why is it important that we literally believe God raised Him from the dead? (same verse)
- What name of the LORD did Jesus use of Himself in John 8:58 and how did the Jews respond?
- Why would they pick up stones if He was not blaspheming by using God's name?
- What did Jesus say would happen "If you don't believe I AM ..." (verse 24)
- Whose "Name" saves? Acts 2:23 says it's Jehovah (LORD from O.T.) but see 4:12

Who do the Bible writers say Jesus is?

- Isaiah describes Him not as having a beginning but as "Everlasting" and "Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6 – same phrase used of Jehovah in 10:21)
- How does Matthew identify Jesus (Matt 1:23)?
- What does John's gospel say Jesus claimed (5:18)
- What does Thomas call Jesus in John 20:28? Whom does the text say He's speaking to? How does Jesus respond (does He correct Thomas)?
- How does John use this great confession in the overall purpose of his writing the book (v. 31)?
- Paul calls Him "Christ, who is God over all" (Rom. 9:5 NIV) and "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13) in whom "all the fullness of Deity dwells" (Col. 2:9)
- God the Father calls His Son "God" (Heb. 1:8)!