

Saturday, June 9th, 2007

The [God-ness] of Jesus

way of grace church

“But who do you say that I am?”

-Jesus, from Mark 8:29

seminar notes:

I. Introduction: Identity Matters

II. Examining Some Different Perspectives



A. **View #1:** A Man Who Became God

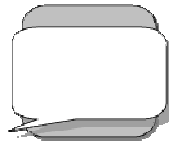
B. **View #2:** A “god” with a Little “g”

C. **View #3:** A “God” with a Capital “G”

D. **View #4:** A Manifestation of THE God



III. The Question of Sources



IV. The Hebrew Concept of God



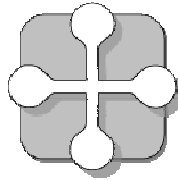
A. Foundational Principle #1: There is Only One True God

B. Foundational Principle #2: This God is the Only One Worthy of Worship



C. Foundational Principle #3: This God is Worthy Because of Who He Is

V. What We Learn About Jesus



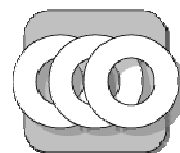
A. Truth #1: Jesus Was Fully Human

B. Truth #2: In a Pre-existent State, Jesus Was with, But Distinct from, God the Father.



C. Truth #3: Jesus Shares in God's Worthiness as God

VI. Reconciling the Father/Son Relationship



different views:



Below you will find quotes confirming some of the different views about the “God-ness” of Jesus. In the right column is listed the name of this teaching as it was known to the early Christian church.

View #1: **A Man Who Became One with God**

When Jesus was born, he was God in potential. By living the life he did, he glorified his humanity, uniting it with the divinity which was his essence. So through the process of his life, death, and resurrection, the Lord's human essence was united with his divine essence and he became one with God.

-The Swedenborgian Church website

View #2: **A “god” with a Little ‘g’**

...the Bible plainly states that in his prehuman existence, Jesus was a created spirit being, just as angels were spirit beings created by God. Neither the angels nor Jesus had existed before their creation...[Jesus] was "divine," "godlike," "a god," but not Almighty God.

-from the Watchtower (Jehovah’s Witnesses) Publication, “Should You Believe in the Trinity?”

"The angel foremost in power and authority—the chief angel—is named Michael the archangel. He is none other than Jesus Christ."

-From the Watchtower magazine (March 15th, 2007, p. 21)

Ancient name of this perspective:

This view was known as *Adoptionism* or *Dynamic Monarchianism*.

This view was known as *Arianism*.

View #3: A “God” with a Capital “G”

Latter-day Saints believe in God the Father, in his Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. These three Gods form the Godhead, which holds the keys of power over the universe. Each member of the Godhead is an independent personage, separate and distinct from the other two. Although the three members of the Godhead are distinct personages, their Godhead is "one" in that all three are united in their thoughts, actions, and purpose, with each having a fulness of knowledge, truth, and power.

-From the Official LDS Church Website

View #4: A Manifestation of THE God

There is one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in three manifestations: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

-Bishop T.D. Jakes, The Potter's House Statement of Faith

This view is *polytheism* and shares some similarities with the view of God found in *Gnosticism*.

This view was known as *Modalism* or *Sabellianism*.

quick reference

The outline and verses provided were designed to help you think and communicate clearly about the “God-ness” of Jesus.

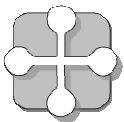


The writings of the Bible (Old and New Testaments) are the best source of information about the “God-ness” of Jesus because they are the earliest and most reliable records about these ancient beliefs (no special translation of these documents is necessary). Later suggested sources must be judged in light of the earliest records.



We must begin with the **Hebrew concept of God**. Jesus and everyone who wrote about him spoke from this perspective. Three foundational principles:

- **There is only one God:** Deuteronomy 4:39; II Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 43:10, 44:6, 8; 45:5, 18; 46:9; I Corinthians 8:4-6.
- **This God is the only one worthy of worship:** Exodus 20:4-6; 34:14; Matthew 4:9, 10; Isaiah 42:8, 48:11; Acts 12:21-23 (consequences of misdirected worship); Acts 10:25, 26; Revelation 19:10; 22:9 (redirecting worship).
- **This God is worthy because of who he is:** Uniqueness (II Samuel 7:22; Jeremiah 10:6; Psalm 89:6, 7), Creator (Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 44:24), King (Psalm 95:3-5; Deuteronomy 10:17; I Timothy 6:15, 16), Savior (Isaiah 43:10, 11; Joel 2:32; I Timothy 4:10), Judge (Isaiah 40:10; Psalm 62:12; 96:13).



With the Hebrew concept of God as the backdrop, the New Testament teaches us three important lessons about Jesus:

- **Jesus was fully human:** Hebrews 2:14-17; Galatians 4:4; John 1:14
- **In a pre-existent state, Jesus was with, but distinct from, God the Father:** John 1:2, 14; I John 4:9; John 17:5, 24.
- **Jesus Shares in God’s Worthiness as God:**
 - **Shares God’s Unique Titles:** Creator (John 1:2, 3; Colossians 1:16), King (Revelation 17:4; 19:16), Savior (Titus 2:13; II Peter 1:1), Judge (Revelation 2:23; 22:12)
 - **Old Testament Verses About Yahweh Applied to Jesus:** Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:8-13; Psalm 102:25-27 and Hebrews 1:10-12; Isaiah 45:23 and Philippians 2:9-11; Zechariah 12:10 and Revelation 1:7; Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:17; 22:12.

- **Worthy of Worship:** John 5:22, 23; Matthew 2:11; 14:33; 28:9; Luke 24:52; John 9:35-38; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:11-14 (cf. 7:11, 12).
- **Additional verses:** John 1:1; 14:8, 9; 20:26-29; Colossians 1:15, 19; 2:9; Hebrews 1:3.



The only conclusion that deals with all the evidence: there is one God, singular in nature or being, but plural in terms of persons. The Father is God and the Son is God. But they are not two Gods. There is one God. The Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son. They are distinct persons and have distinct roles. It's this distinction of persons that helps us understand Jesus' relationship with the Father. Add to this the fact that this Son became fully human. This is the complex dynamic we see at work in the New Testament.



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