

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
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St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 1

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**THE DEITY AND PRE-EMINENCE
OF JESUS CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ is the foundational Corner Stone of Christianity. He is the very heart of the Christian faith - Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, came to die for sinners, and that He rose again on the third day. The denial of this truth renders the preaching of the gospel useless and faith in Jesus Christ meaningless (1 Corinthians 15:14).¹ In other words, if Jesus Christ is not God, we can stop preaching repentance of sins and belief in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Lord and wonderful Saviour, we should approach the study of His life and ministry diligently. How else can we introduce Him to others? The spiritual benefits are tremendous. There is no substitute to the daily study and meditation of His Word - we should set aside a quiet time each day. It puts a brake

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

to the frantic and hectic lifestyle of contemporary living.

The whole life of Jesus Christ is supernatural and miraculous—from His pre-incarnate existence, His birth, His death, His resurrection and His ascension. We must approach our study of and meditation on the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ from the perspective of faith, especially when we touch on the subject of the miracles of Christ (Hebrews 11:6).² We see the words and works of Jesus Christ as proof of the truth of His claims. This was the conviction of those who were with Him during His earthly life, and also the conviction of the early Christians. Approaching the study of His life without considering the miraculous would make the message and ministry of salvation meaningless and ridiculous. The Four Gospels present a faithful and factual account of the life and work of Christ.

This study will use Dr Jeffrey Khoo's ***THE GOSPELS IN UNISON—A Synthetic Harmony of the Four Gospels in the KJV*** as the basic text. We recognize that it is too monumental a task to study every aspect of the life, word and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in detail. The purpose and value of this study is to give a panoramic view of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and to concentrate on certain events of His life.

A proper start to the study into the life and ministry of Jesus Christ should begin with:

(1) the Deity of Jesus Christ, and

² Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

(2) the Pre-Incarnate Existence of Jesus Christ.

UNDERSTANDING

The Deity of Christ

One of the most comprehensive New Testament passages that declare that Jesus Christ is God is John 1:1-14:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John referred to the Lord Jesus Christ as “the Word” (Greek, *ho logos*). He used this name again in verse 14, “and **the Word** was made flesh,” and in Revelation 19:13 — “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called **The Word of God.**” This name has its root in Psalm 33:6 “By the Word of the LORD (JEHOVAH) were the heavens made”. The Psalmist used the “Word of the LORD” to refer to a Person. The Bible is the written Word. Jesus Christ is the Living Word.

John explained that the term is significant in that it describes the Lord Jesus Christ’s relationship and fellowship with God the Father (v.14). It indicates that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who has the power to make all those who believe in Him “to become the sons of God” (v.12). He is the Creator of all things and the Source of life — “*all things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made, and in Him was life, and the life was the light of men*” (John 1:3, 4).

All the three synoptic gospels recorded that God the Father uses the title “Son” when referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17, Mark 1; 11; Luke 3:22). The book of Acts and the epistles also record the same reference to Jesus as the Son of God. Paul wrote in his epistle to the Romans (1:3-4):

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the

resurrection from the dead.”
[emphasis added]

Another epistolary reference to Jesus as the Son of God is in Hebrews 4:14:

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our profession.* [emphasis added]

The title of Jesus Christ as “the Son of God” is understood to mean “one with God” in the sense that He shares all the attributes of God. Paul described Jesus Christ “*who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God*” (Philippians 2:5, 6). Jesus Christ did not usurp the position, power and person of God, for He Himself is with God the Father from the very beginning even before time began and He is fully God. Jesus Christ is Deity. Jesus Christ Himself declared that He is God. He spoke to the Jews in the Temple in Jerusalem, “*I and my Father are one*” (John 10:30). The Jews took offence because they understood exactly what Jesus meant, so they said that He had made Himself God (vv. 31-33) and wanted to stone Him. Jesus Christ, undeterred by their intention to stone Him to death, repeated that “the Father is in me, and I in Him” (v.38).

The Pre-Incarnate Existence of Christ

John declares that in the beginning was the Lord Jesus Christ, and He was with God, and He was God (1:1). This statement says that the Lord Jesus Christ existed even before the world was

created, that is, before there was anything. This verse must not be misunderstood like the way the Mormons do. They misinterpret this verse and say that Jesus Christ has a beginning like everyone else i.e. He was created by God. This verse does not refer to that at all. This verse simply means that from the very beginning, even before time began, Jesus Christ was there with God. The strongest evidence of this is in His pre-incarnate existence as revealed by Jesus Himself in John 8:56-59 where Jesus Christ told His Jewish audience:

*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Before Abraham was, I am.** Then they took up the stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.* [emphasis added]

Our Lord Jesus Christ talked about His existence before He was born of the virgin Mary into the world. Jesus said, “*Before Abraham was, I am.* [emphasis added]” Jesus deliberately used the present tense. If it had been any other human being, he would have to use the past tense. The phrase “I am” also link Jesus with the account in the Old Testament in Exodus 3:14:

*And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM:** and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* [emphasis added]

Jesus Christ's existence did not begin with His birth in Bethlehem. By using the phrase "I AM", our Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself as the LORD God who spoke to Moses and revealed Himself in the mountain of Horeb.

Another evidence is Jesus Christ's priestly prayer to His Father (John 17:5):

*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory **which I had with thee before the world was.***
[emphasis added]

Jesus Christ testified that He was with God the Father from the very beginning, the beginning that had no beginning!

God is a spirit (John 4:24).³ A spirit has neither bones nor flesh (Luke 24:39). Yet in the Old Testament, God appeared as a man to Jacob, and wrestled with him, and Jacob said (Genesis 32:30): "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." This visible appearance of God in human form in the Old Testament is called a "theophany" (Greek, *theo* = God; *phaneo* = to appear, to become visible, to manifest). A theophany is a temporary, visible appearance or manifestation of God in human form. In the Old Testament, God frequently appeared in human form. The Angel of the LORD appeared to Hagar (Genesis 16:7), Abraham (Genesis 22:11-12), Moses

(Exodus 3:2-6), Joshua (Joshua 5:14-15), Gideon (Judges 6:11-14), and David (1 Chronicles 21:15, 18, 27).⁴ These appearances in the

⁴ Genesis 16:7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

Genesis 22:11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

Joshua 5:14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

Judges 6:11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

³ John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

Old Testament are those of the Lord Jesus Christ before His incarnation. We may call these appearances Christophanies. The Angel of the Lord is to be distinguished from God the Father who is Spirit. These appearances of Jesus Christ are known as His preincarnate appearances.

MEANING

Scripture clearly affirms the Deity of Jesus Christ and His Pre-Incarnate Existence. From the beginning, He was with God and He is God the Son. His birth two thousand years ago was not the beginning of His being. His birth is really His incarnation according to the Scripture. Long before the birth of Jesus Christ, the prophet Isaiah foretold His miraculous conception and incarnation (7:14):

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

“Immanuel” means “God with us.” Jesus Christ, who is God made in the likeness of men, came to the world to give His life a ransom for sinners.

1 Chronicles 21:15 And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chronicles 21:18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

1 Chronicles 21:27 And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

That Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man is the foundational teaching of Christianity. If Jesus Christ was just a man, and not God -- His incarnation or virgin birth would be a lie, His pre-incarnate Christophanies would not be possible, His death would be like any other man, and He would not be able to save sinners. He would be a sinner like everyone else. We will all still be in our sins and our final abode will be the lake of fire together with Satan and his fallen angels (Revelation 20:14,15).⁵

So we rejoice that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man and sinners can come to Him in repentance and receive Him into their lives as Lord and Saviour, and their names will be written in the Book of Life, eternally saved and sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:14).⁶ This cleansing of the sinner and the certainty of salvation are permanently secured in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, Lord and Saviour of the world.

Jesus Christ performed many miracles in the three and half years of His ministry in the land of Palestine. To Almighty God, the working of miracles belongs to the “natural”. But to finite and feeble men, these miracles seem stupendous and incredible. In the same way, the assurances of resurrection for all who believe in Jesus Christ, the son of God as

⁵ Revelation 20:14-15. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

⁶ Ephesians 1:13 In whom (Jesus Christ) ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

Lord and Saviour, may seem like an unbelievable and impossible miracle but, let us remember that with God, all things are possible.

REFLECTING AND APPLYING

God, who created the heavens and the earth, also created man. Thus all mankind belongs to Him and one day, we will all have to account to Him on the Day of Judgement. We ought to give serious consideration to our standing and relationship with our Creator God and the Lord Jesus Christ His Son.

We ought to fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul. We ought to worship and serve Him for that is the whole duty of man. Our lives should be lived in constant consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that our speech, conduct and actions glorify Him and are edifying one towards another.
AMEN

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DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 1:1-14

TUESDAY: Philippians 2:5-11.

WEDNESDAY: Colossians 1:13-17.

THURSDAY: Zechariah 12:9-10; Isaiah 9:6-7.

FRIDAY: Revelation 1:1-8.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you understand by "In the beginning was the Word . . ."?

2. What is the basis of Jesus Christ's claim that those who receive Him will become the children of God?

3. Why is the teaching of the deity of Jesus Christ so important?

4. What proofs can be used to show the deity of Jesus Christ?

5. What is the significance of John 8:58, 59?

6. Did Jesus have a beginning? How would you explain His birth two thousand years ago?

7. How does the biblical teaching of the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ relate to His deity?

8. What do we know about God through Jesus' coming that we would not otherwise have known?

9. Since Jesus Christ is God, what should be our proper response to Him?

10. What can you say about the professing Christians who reject the deity of Jesus Christ?
