

## "The Word Was God"

Today we're beginning a new series on why we should believe Jesus Is Lord! Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. This is a Bible study, "In Search of the Lord's Way." Jesus is truly Lord, but don't take my word for it. Let's examine the evidence. Stay with us!

Hello, I'm Phil Sanders and we're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way. We want to please God because we love Him. We want to do His will and we have no other intention. God desires that we believe, love, and obey Him. And we're interested in what God says about every matter. We are so very thankful that you have joined us today. We want to be a part of your life each week, and we're asking you today to tell a friend about this program.

For all of October we're going to take a close look at Jesus Christ to determine who He is, why He came, and why it should matter to us. One thing is clear: Jesus of Nazareth is unique! Whether as a spiritual teacher, a prophet, a worker of miracles, or a friend, there has never been a person to equal Jesus Christ. No one has done so much to lift humanity out of sin and into a righteous life as He taught people to repent. No one has taught love, compassion, and forgiveness like He did. Jesus helped us to understand what God is like. In ancient times, people sought to appease the wrath of God; but because of Jesus, we can become the children of God.

In today's lesson, we're going to look at the deity of Jesus Christ. Yes, the deity of Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly teaches Jesus was Divine. Though some say he was merely a man and others suggest He was nothing more than a perfect man, the Bible does not hesitate to say that He has always been Divine in nature. And if He is Divine, then He is worthy of our study, of our faith, and of our obedience. If Jesus is Lord, then we should love and serve Him all the days of our lives. Let's examine the Scriptures.

Now, if you want to study more about this topic, we offer the information on this program free. If you would like a printed copy, a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send us an e-mail, that's to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, call our toll-free number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). The Edmond church will now worship in song, and then we'll read from John 1:1 through 4.

Our Bible reading today comes from the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 1 through 4. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life; and the life was the light of Men." That's from the Gospel of John and it's a reading from God's Holy Word. Let's pray together. Father, we are thankful that You created us and made us through the Word. And, Father, we are thankful that the Word came into this world and lived among us in Christ Jesus; and it is through His name we pray. Amen!

This passage says clearly, "In the beginning was the Word." The "beginning" was that period before there was time as we know it, before there ever was a universe or life on earth. To say the Word was in the beginning means that He was not created. God created men, but the Word has always existed; He was in the beginning. The passage says, "and the Word was with God." The word "with" means that the Word accompanied God and had a relationship with the Father. Then the text says, "and the Word was God." Here we have the Word described as Divine, yet He was with God. Well, what does this mean, "with God" and "was God"?

Well, Genesis 1 and verse 1 gives us a little more information. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And in verse 26 God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Here we have the word "us;" let "us" make man that's used. "Let us make man in our image." Well, are there Gods? No, but there are persons in the Godhead: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We only see a glimpse of this in the Old Testament, but we'll see each person clearly in the New Testament.

John 1 and verse 3 says about the Word, that is Jesus, that "He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." God the Father was not alone in creation. The Lord Jesus was with Him and was the means by which everything was made. Nothing was made without Jesus Christ.

The New Testament says about Jesus Christ in Colossians 1, verses 15 to 17 that, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." Jesus Christ is the power behind our creation; and everything has come into being through Him and for Him.

Some people hear the phrase, "firstborn of all creation," found in Colossians 1: 15 and they wrongly assume that Jesus was the first created being who then created everything else. But when they say that, they really misunderstand what the Bible is saying. He is not the first created being. He is the firstborn of all creation. The word "firstborn" is a title, a description of His place over all creation. The role of "firstborn" doesn't necessarily have anything to do with priority in time but in his place of preeminence. Colossians 1:18 says that, "He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent," that is have first place. You see, He is first in everything having to do with this world. He created it and He sustains it by His power; and He must have first place in everything!

Now, in spite of His preeminence, Jesus was humble and obedient to His Father, and His example teaches us how to be humble and obedient as well. The Bible says in Philippians 2, verses 5 through 8, "Have this mind in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied himself, (He made himself nothing) taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, (that is, in flesh) He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Jesus in the beginning and throughout time lived in glory with the Father in Heaven! He lacked for nothing. He was unlimited or infinite in His knowledge and in His power. Everything was and is His. He was the permanent form, in the permanent form rather, of God. He has always been and will always be divine. But the Lord Jesus saw the wickedness of mankind and out of love chose to empty Himself and become nothing, so that He could reach out to a lost and sinful world. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 8 and verse 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."

You see, He loved you more than His own life, and He was willing to empty Himself out so that you might be saved. He became a man with all the physical limitations of humanity. And though he existed in the form of God, He also took on flesh like a man. The Bible says in John 1 and verse 14, "And

the Word (that is Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." For the time that He lived on earth, He lived as both God and man. As a man he suffered death, and as the Son of God he suffered for our sins that you and I might live forever.

Jesus Christ was full of grace and truth. And if you think a little about that, you'll realize that only a Divine Being could be full of grace and truth; grace to forgive us and truth to show us the right way. The Bible says in Titus 2, verses 11 to 14, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly desires (or passions), and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." The Bible here calls Jesus "our great God and Savior." Only Jesus could offer His body as a sacrifice so that He might purify us, forgiving our sins, and making us new people.

It's not strange to refer to Jesus as God. The prophet Isaiah by inspiration prophesied about John the Baptist in Isaiah 40 and verse 3 that, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.'" John, you see, was preparing the way for Jesus Christ, whom Isaiah calls the Lord and our God.

Likewise the book of Hebrews directly refers to Jesus as God. The Hebrew writer quotes the inspired psalmist (that is Psalm 45, verses 6 and 7) and says in Hebrews 1, verses 8 and 9, "But of the Son (that's only Jesus he is talking about here) of the Son He (God) says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.'"

The Hebrew writer continues in verses 10 to 12 quoting from Psalm 102, verses 25 to 27; he says, "And, You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years have no end." To speak of the Son Jesus as Lord and to recognize that He is God is in the Scriptures. Who else but a Divine being could lay the foundation of the world and have no end?

Jesus told the Jews in John 10 and verse 30 that, "I and the Father are one." You see, Jesus was with God and yet was God. Because of this, we can know what God is like. John 1, verse 18 says that, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God (or "the only God" as in the English Standard Version puts it) who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." That is Jesus explains the Father. The Lord Jesus explains the God of Heaven to you and to me; and because Jesus lived on earth we can understand better what God is like. Jesus is God in the flesh, and He explains God to us.

In John 14, verses 7 to 9, the Lord Jesus said, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me (Jesus said that) He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?' " Jesus shows us the character, the love, and the power of Almighty God.

The Lord Jesus once told the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." Well, the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen

Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." The Bible makes it clear Jesus has always existed and will always exist. Hebrews 13, verse 8 says that, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

In the book of Revelation, Jesus proclaimed to John in Revelation 1:17 to 18, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Jesus has always indeed lived. Always! The death of the cross could not hold him. You see, He conquered death to live forever and forever. Jesus has all the power of a Divine Being.

When Jesus arose from the dead, the disciples were fearful and some doubted the testimony of the women that He had risen from the dead. And you will remember that Jesus suddenly appeared to the apostles who had hidden themselves in the upper room, and they saw Him. John tells about Thomas in John 20, verses 24 to 29; it says,

"But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and I put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' Well, after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here with your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.' "

Now, Jesus didn't rebuke or stop Thomas from saying to Him, "My Lord and my God." You'll remember that Paul stopped the people of Lystra from worshiping him and calling him Zeus and Barnabas Hermes. Paul said to them in Acts 14, verse 15, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you." But Jesus didn't stop Thomas, because He indeed is our Lord and God.

The Bible tells how John in Revelation 22, verses 8 and 9 fell down to worship at the feet of an angel. But the angel told John, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren and the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; (then he said) worship God!" Jesus didn't speak like this angel spoke. You see, He accepted worship from Thomas as Lord and God.

Colossians 2, verses 9 and 10 says, "For in Him (that is, in Jesus) all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority." My friend, have you made Jesus Christ the Lord of your life? Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we are thankful that through Your will we have come to know that Jesus is Lord and Christ; and that He is Divine. And, Father, may our hearts always set upon serving Him; and, Father, it is in His name that we pray. Amen!

Because Jesus emptied himself and took on the form of a servant and died upon the cruel cross of Calvary, God honored Him. The Bible says in Philippians 2, verses 9 to 11, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father."

After His resurrection Jesus said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." It's incorrect to say, as some do, that Jesus will have authority when He

comes again. My friend, Jesus already has all authority. He is already King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17, verse 14). He is already the One to whom each of us must give an account. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5 and verse 10). My friend, do you believe Jesus Christ is now Lord?

To become a Christian, believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. Be willing to deny yourself, to take up your cross daily and follow Him. The gospel calls us to love and obey the Lord with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And if you believe Jesus is Lord, you're going to turn away from sin and you are going to live for righteousness. This is repentance. And with faith and repentance, we should confess Christ and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of our sins as Acts 2:38 teaches.

We hope today's study of God's Word has blessed you or challenged you to think about your life. Now, if you want a free printed copy or CD of this series on Why I Believe Jesus Is Lord, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send us an e-mail. Send it to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. These programs appear on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). And we offer a Bible Correspondence course that will help you learn more about the Lord's Way. Now, if you would like to have a Bible Correspondence course, just let us know. We also offer free study sheets that go along with our programs. You can download them free before the program or you can call and request them. Now, we won't hassle you for money or put you on some list.

Please worship with a church of Christ in your area. You see, they're the reason we don't ask for money. They love you and they want you to come and visit with them and you'll be happy that you went and worshiped with them. Churches of Christ love guests. Now, if you are looking for a church home, we hope we can help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, keep searching God's Word with us; tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.