

# Are Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit "God" in Nature?

*A church leader teaches that both Christ and the Holy Spirit were created by God. He denies that Jesus and the Holy Spirit possess the nature of deity. What should be done by the faithful of that congregation?*

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By Wayne Jackson | Christian Courier

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**"We have an elder in our congregation who teaches that long, long ago, God the Father created both Christ and the Holy Spirit. He further teaches that neither Jesus nor the Spirit is 'God.' What can you advise concerning this matter?"**

As a general rule, we refrain from commenting on specific problems congregations or individuals may be having. Regardless, I must say that an individual who teaches what is represented in this question is wrong in these views regarding Christ and the Holy Spirit. Let us consider each of the propositions mentioned above.

## Created Beings?

As to the matter of the "creation" of Christ and the Holy Spirit, we offer the following evidence.

(1) Christ was *not* a created being. The Old Testament prophets characterized the Messiah as being eternal. Moses records the testimony of Him who spoke from the burning bush as the, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14), which signifies one who is "self-existent," or who is "eternal." But more than that, the expression affirms: "I am really and truly present, ready to help and to act, as I have always been" (Eichrodt, p. 190). Girdlestone says the words "mark an eternal, unchanging Presence" (p. 37).

One must note, however, that this same Person is identified as "the messenger of Jehovah" (3:2). This mysterious Person is viewed as "deity," and was the same Being as the Messiah in Old Testament prophetic literature (see: Gen. 16:10, 13; 22:15-16; 31:11, 13; Mal. 3:1; Mt. 11:19; cf. Jn. 8:58).

The prophet Micah affirms that the "goings forth" ~~of the one to be born in Bethlehem~~ have been "from everlasting" (5:2). Feinberg notes: "The phrases of this text are the strongest possible statement of infinite duration in the Hebrew language (cf. Ps 90:2; Pr 8:22-23)" (p. 173).

John's use of the imperfect tense ~~"In the beginning was [en] the Word?"~~ in his Gospel account (1:1), is clear testimony of the eternal nature of the Logos who became flesh and dwelt among men (cf. v. 14). Bernard observed that the triple use of *en* is expressive of "continuous timeless existence" (Vol. I, p. 2). Regarding this matter, Leon Morris wrote: "There never was a time when the Word was not" (p. 65).

In the book of Revelation, the expression "Alpha and Omega" symbolically depicts "the Eternal One," and is applied both to the Father and to Christ (1:8; 21:6; 22:13) (Harry, p. 100).

For a more extensive discussion of this matter, see the author's tract, **Jehovah's Witnesses and the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ**.

(2) It is equally clear that the Holy Spirit is an eternal being. This is arguable on the following bases.

First, if it is the case that the Spirit is deity, then it follows that he is eternal, for eternity is an intrinsic trait of deity (Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17).

Second, the third Person of the Godhead is described explicitly as "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14; cf. Ps. 139:7-10). [Note: While some dispute this view of Hebrews 9:14, in my judgment, the evidence weighs in that direction; see: Bruce, p, 217.]

## Denial of Deity

With reference to the charge that neither Christ nor the Spirit possess the nature of deity, and thus should not be referred to as "God," we can only say this.

(1) Long before he was born, Christ was designated as "Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14 — "God is with us"), "Mighty God" (Isa. 9:6), "Jehovah" (Isa. 40:3; cf. Mt. 3:3), and "Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts" (Isa. 44:6).

John referred to Jesus as "God" who became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:1, 14). Thomas also confessed Christ to be "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20:28), and the apostle was not rebuked by the Lord for that confession. Even the Father acknowledged his Son as "God." "But of the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Heb. 1:8).

Christ taught that only God is worthy of worship (Mt. 4:10), and yet he himself accepted such (Mt. 14:33). The conclusion to be drawn from these premises is only too obvious.

(2) It is equally demonstrable that the Holy Spirit is God (i.e., he possesses the nature of deity). He is designated as God by an inspired apostle. Peter rebuked the glory-seeking Ananias because he lied to the Holy Spirit relative to a money-gift offered to the church. Yet, as the apostle clarifies, the lie was not merely to man, but to God as well (Acts 5:3-4).

The Holy Spirit is associated with the Father and Son in certain contexts in such a way as to reveal that he is of the same exalted nature as they (Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

## What To Do?

It is regrettable that this must be said; but it must. Anyone who advocates the outrageous doctrine that is described in the question posed above is an advocate of heresy of the worst sort — be he an "elder" or otherwise. He should not be tolerated further as a teacher.

The wayward brother who teaches such should be approached and admonished in a loving but firm way. He should be urged to renounce his error. If he does not, his immediate resignation from the eldership should be pressed. If he continues to propagate this dogma, he should be subjected to the disciplinary process of the local church (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thes. 3:6ff; Tit. 3:10).

## Sources

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