

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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THE NATURE OF CHRIST

By
Bruce Daugherty

The World in general, and the religious world in particular, is confused regarding the nature of Christ. Many deny that Jesus is part of the Godhead. An example of this denial is found in the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah Witness literature and their version of the Scriptures, the New World Translation, teach that Jesus was "a god" but not the "Almighty God." He was not the author of creation and not equal in nature or power to Jehovah.

Was Jesus "a god" Or "Almighty God"?

The Jehovah's Witnesses will appeal to several key Bible verses to support their doctrine. One of these verses is **John 14:28** where Jesus affirmed "The Father is greater than I." What the "witnesses" fail to account for in their interpretation of this passage is the fact that Jesus said this while He was in the flesh before his ascension into glory. In this state, he was decidedly less than equal to the Father, as

Philippians 2:7 confirms.

Another passage that is used to defend their doctrine is

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Bruce has preached in Italy and other foreign countries. The school is fortunate to have the members of our faculty and we want our readers and supporters to know of the opportunities our students are provided by the school.

Colossians 1:15. In this verse Paul says, "Who (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." From the statement "firstborn of all creation" the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Christ was a created being, and definitely not equal to the eternal God. Because of their preconceptions, the Jehovah's Witnesses fail to allow the verse to be supported by the context and thus miss

what the passage teaches. The translation of "firstborn of all creation" fails to denote the idea that Christ is first in honor among all of God's creation. The dictionary to the United Bible Societies 3rd edition of the Greek Test has this definition for **protokos** in Colossians 1:15 - "existing before creation or superior to all creation." The New English Bible correctly translates the phrase "His is the primacy over all created things." This thought is further developed by the context of verses 16 and 17 that state that Christ created all things. If Christ was the first creature made by God, how could He have created "all things?" Did Christ create himself?

To correctly interpret any passage in the Bible, one must know what the passage says in relation to its immediate context. Then comparison must be made to other passages to gain the total Bible teaching on the subject. Any interpretation that fails to apply these fundamental principles must

be discarded by serious Bible students.

The totality of Scripture in its context gives the truth concerning the nature of Christ. Isaiah prophesied that the "Mighty God, Everlasting Father" would be sent to Israel (**Isaiah 9:6**). In **Matthew 1:23** the angel told Joseph that Mary's child was to be called "Immanuel" which meant "God with us." The apostle Paul adds in **Philippians 2:5-11** that Christ existed in the form of God and was equal to God, yet He willingly chose to take on flesh and endured the crucifixion. Because of that spirit of humility and His sacrifice, God has now exalted Him and given Him the name above all names. Again, Paul states in **Titus 2:13** that Jesus is the "Great God and Savior."

Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

John 8:58

Many passages of Scripture regarding the nature of Jesus are to be found in the gospel of John. John stated, "The Word was God" (**John 1:1**). In **John 3:18** Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God. In **John 5:17-18** Jesus' enemies sought to kill him because they knew He was claiming to be equal with God. If Jesus had never made this claim, His enemies never would have sought to kill him. A similar event is recorded in **John 8**. Jesus' declaration of "I AM" caused the Jews to take up stones to kill him. They knew that He was not claiming to be "a god" but "the Almighty God." Also recorded in John's gospel are the

words of Thomas addressed to Christ: "My Lord and my God" (**John 20:28**). These passages in John teach that Jesus claimed to be God Incarnate, that Jesus always existed with God, that Jesus was equal to God, and that Jesus created all things.

What is the truth concerning the nature of Christ? The true "witness," the Bible says,

1. Jesus is Deity.
2. Jesus has always existed with God.
3. Jesus is one person of the Godhead.
4. Jesus as the Word was the agent of creation.
5. Jesus claimed His Divinity.

John states his purpose in writing his gospel, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name" (**John 20:31**).

Dear reader, do you believe the testimony of the Bible about Jesus? Have you obeyed His instructions to become His disciple (**John 14:15; Matthew 28:18-20**)?



**Don't Let Anger
Go To Your Heart**
(From Health and You
Newsletter, Blue Cross/Blue
Shield of Florida)

Does anger push you to extremes: either you blow your stack or you suppress your feelings? If so, you could be

setting yourself up for heart trouble later.

"It's fairly well established that anger relates to the development of premature heart disease," says Stephen Glasser, M. D., professor of medicine and cardiology at the University of South Florida. "And there is evidence that suggests that those who can reduce their chronic anger and stress levels may fare better."

In recent studies, researchers found that people who are exposed to stress have higher levels of the stress hormone adrenaline. "This causes your blood pressure to go up and your heart to work harder," Dr. Glasser says.

Charles Spielberger, Ph.D., a professor of psychology and director of the Center for Research in Behavioral Medicine and Health Psychology at the University of South Florida, first began exploring links between heart disease and anger two decades ago.

"We found that when patients with high blood pressure are treated badly, they often

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respond with intense feelings of anger, which they suppress. Those who express anger have slightly lower blood pressure. People who boil over but still attempt to suppress their anger experience higher blood pressure," he says.

Carl Pepine, M.D., professor of medicine and co-director of the division of cardiology at the University of Florida, is one of the researchers working on a study conducted by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Dr. Pepine and his colleagues looked at how patients with clogged arteries respond to mental stress and physical exercise. Researchers found mental stress caused a sudden squeezing down of blood vessels. This produced a blood-supply shortage in the heart muscle, a condition known as ischemic. While patients exercised, however, their vascular resistance fell. This result supports the long-held belief that exercise can relieve some of the negative effects of stress.

Further, when the researchers compared the results of those who express anger with those who hold it in, they found that the subjects who suppressed anger were more likely to experience the damaging blood-supply shortage leading to ischemic.

Four Ways to Control Anger

■ *Keep an anger diary. Each evening write about what ticked you off that day. Look for patterns. If you tend to blow up discussing money with your*

spouse, for example, work to get a handle on it.

■ *Call a friend and give a blow-by-blow description of how angry you feel. Describing your outrage does wonders to defuse it.*

■ *Exercise. Research shows exercise helps to bring down cholesterol and other anger-related substances in the bloodstream.*

■ *Step back. Count to ten and ask yourself: "Is this really worth getting so upset about?" If you can laugh about it, you have won half the battle.*

When I read this article I could not help but relate the medical profession's suggestions to Bible principles. Consider the following verses in view of what has been quoted above:

James 1:19-20

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Ephesians 4:26-27

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil."

Matthew 5:22-26

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the

altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

Matthew 18:15-20

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

James 5:16

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

How could mere men of the First Century have such

wisdom? What is there that is mentioned by the health profession that is not already covered in principle in our Bible?

Indeed the Lord stated it as follows: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly" (John 10:10). -Editor



May Graduation

Due to some students leaving and others entering in January, we have only one graduating in May.

Brother Larry Miller is a member of the 20th Street Church of Christ in St. Petersburg, Florida. He graduated from Gibbs High School in 1964. He furthered his education and completed a course to become a respiratory therapist.

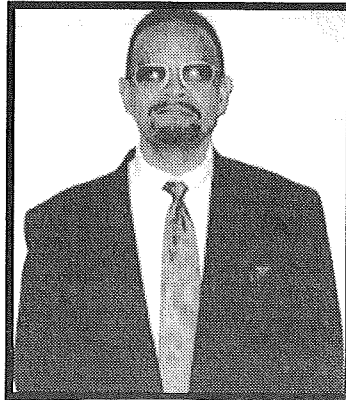
In 1995 Larry had major hip surgery for a degenerative disease that left him disable.

Larry became a Christian in June of 1990 and has been active in personal work, song leading and teaching Bible classes.

In 1996 with the encouragement of his wife, Lena, and brother Keith Delaney, brother Larry decided to enter the Florida School of Preaching.

While in school, brother and sister Miller, lost a son. He was killed in a drive-by shooting and this deeply affected the family and friends.

Larry plans to work with the 20th Street Congregation in St. Petersburg, Florida. He will be going with a group of students from the Florida School of Preaching to Jamaica in August.



Larry Miller

Larry receives his certificate, May 10, 1998.



Anniversary Watches

In this paper last month, we mentioned that 1999 is the 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING. We also stated that watches were being ordered to commemorate this landmark.

The first shipment of watches has arrived and been depleted. We are pleasantly shocked. This is not a money making project for the school. It is a way of calling attention to the longevity of the school.

We have ordered another shipment of watches, both men and ladies editions. Like the first, because of the early order, we are able to purchase these at \$20.00 each. If you have not ordered one and are interested in the Florida School of Preaching, you need to get the order in immediately. After the next order is in, we are not sure if the price will remain the same.

All who have seen them are impressed with them and some, including this writer, have ordered some as gifts.

Call or write the office and place your order immediately.



Fall Classes

Registration for classes will be 1:00 p.m., Friday, August 21, 1998, the first class will be Monday, August 24, 1998. You need to register so that text books and other items might be ordered by August 1, 1998. **Contact the office at once.**



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