

Review

When we began our study of the epistle of 2Peter last time, we focused in on Peter's descriptions of himself as a bondservant and an apostle. We also talked about his letter's target audience, who were people of faith - a faith of the same kind as his. A faith which is in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

That took us almost all the way through the first verse. But we're not done with 2Peter 1:1 just yet. You see, Peter makes a statement when he writes about the righteousness of Jesus. He says uses the phrase:

2Pet. 1:1 ...the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ

This gives us perfect opportunity to discuss one of the most vital teachings the Bible has to give us: the deity of Jesus Christ.

1:1b Our God And Savior Jesus Christ

Peter couldn't make the issue any clearer. He calls Jesus "our God and our Savior."

But millions of people in cults like Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormon religion have been deceived. They've been taught that Jesus isn't God. Or that He is simply "a god."

In addition, Gnosticism has been gaining in popularity since the release of Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code." Things will only get worse when the movie directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks is released in May, 2006.

"What is Gnosticism," you might ask? We took some time to explain it in detail last Sunday night in our History and Future of the World study (#22 "Constantine's Christian Empire"). But at its very roots, it denies the deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus is, according to Gnosticism, simply an "emanation" of God.

Between the cults at your door and the friends who will soon be convinced by the lies of the Da Vinci Code, you need to be prepared to answer the question: "How can you make the claim that Jesus is God?"

So, this morning I think it would be beneficial to us to make sure that we know the answer, because the time when you need to know it is inevitably coming.

In the past, I have given you long lists of Scriptures proving that Jesus is God. We have seen how Jesus claimed to be God, and that His enemies confirmed this by trying to kill Him every time He did.

But this morning, I want to do things a little different. In order to allow you to have these locations memorized, I want to give you just three instances (in addition to 2Peter 1:1) that you can read through, study out, and have in your arsenal to combat those who would disparage the doctrine of Christ's deity.

1) God Was The Word

John opened his gospel with the statement,

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In case you don't know who the Word is, you can continue reading the gospel of John, and see that the Word is Jesus, Who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), and Who was testified of by John the Baptist (John 1:15).

The Jehovah's Witnesses have managed to bring confusion to this verse by re-writing the Bible and adding an "a," so that it reads, "...and the word was a god." Unless you want to become a Greek scholar this morning, I won't spend the time trying to explain how ludicrous that translation is. Besides, the better way to answer the Jehovah's Witness with this is to ask them, "Is Satan is a true god or a false God?" They will assert that Satan is a false god. Then ask them, "If Jesus is 'a god' then is He a true God or a false one?" Either answer will get them in trouble!

2) God's God

Turn with me to the book of Hebrews... Notice that chapter one begins with a lengthy statement about God (Heb. 1:1). Notice what that statement contains:

Heb. 1:1-10 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the

word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"? And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM." And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE." But of the Son He says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM. "YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS." And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS"

We have about three hours of Bible study on CD if you want to delve into this passage of Scripture in detail. But notice the point in verse eight: The Father calls the Son, "God"!

Heb. 1:8 But of the Son He says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER"

3) The Son Is God

On Thursday night, we've been going through the book of Isaiah. Recently, we were in chapter nine, and read of a prophecy that God gave to Isaiah. He told Isaiah that although the land of Galilee had been decimated by the Assyrian Army, in the future, a light would shine on them. Matthew tells us that this foretold of the coming of Jesus to Galilee (Matt. 4:13-17). As the prophecy continues, we read how this would come about:

Is. 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God...

Jesus Christ is the son, born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), who was given to us. And He is the mighty God Himself.

The Necessity

Okay, so is all of this really important? Is it necessary for us to defend the idea that Jesus Christ is God? "Can't we all just get along," some ask.

The answer is that a person's eternal destiny hangs on this issue. You see, only God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7). People who think that Jesus is simply "a god," an "emanation" of God, a great man, a teacher, a prophet, etc. can't be forgiven for their sin. Jesus told the Jews this clearly in John chapter eight, and they understood what He was saying. But some of us might need an explanation first.

Back when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He was telling Moses His plan. He had chosen Moses to be the deliverer of the Jews, who were enslaved by the Egyptians. But Moses was hesitant. He tried a number of excuses on God, but none of them worked. Finally...

Ex. 3:13-14 ...Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

God is the "I AM."

But what does this have to do with having to believe that Jesus is God in order to be saved? Just this: Jesus said very clearly,

John 8:23-24 "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins."

"Unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins," Jesus said. Jesus is the I AM, the mighty God. If someone does not believe that, they will die in their sins.

Because of this, I strongly encourage you to review these verses from 2Peter 1, John 1, Hebrews 1, and Isaiah 9. Be prepared, for the enemy is preparing as well.