

The Deity of Christ and the Personality of the Holy Spirit

As we have explored unconventional approaches to the deity of Christ, we have avoided the usual text by text proof of His deity. JW's would certainly argue with the translation of various passages so as to avoid allowing Jesus to be God. But even with their careful attempts to re-translate the Bible to make Jesus into someone other than the second person of the godhead, there are simply too many places where His deity comes through for them to avoid.

As we investigate these texts, we must be careful to avoid slipping into Modalism. This belief is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a single person, appearing in different places at different times for different roles. The Trinity on the other hand, declares that the three are separate persons who make up a single being, known by name as Yahweh (or Jehovah). Thus, Jesus is Jehovah, just as the Father is Jehovah, and the Spirit is Jehovah. As long as we keep our definitions clear, we will have no difficulty. And the JW, who would have a much easier time defending his belief against Modalism will be in a much more difficult position.

(All in-line quotations are from the NWT.)

1. Who is the Savior? (Isa 43:11; 45:21; 49:26)

11 I - I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior. (Isa 43:11)

21 Make your report and YOUR presentation. Yes, let them consult together in unity. Who has caused this to be heard from a long time ago? [Who] has reported it from that very time? Is it not I, Jehovah, besides whom there is no other God; a righteous God and a Savior, there being none excepting me? (Isa 45:21)

2. Who is the Savior? (Titus 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6)

10 not committing theft, but exhibiting good fidelity to the full, so that they may adorn the teaching of our Savior, God in all things.

13 while we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of [the] Savior of us, Christ Jesus, (Titus 2:10, 13)

4 However, when the kindness and the love for man on the part of our Savior, God, was manifested,

6 This [spirit] he poured out richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, (Titus 3:4, 6)

3. Who is the Savior?

4. Who is "the first and the last?" (Isa 44:6; 48:12, Rev 1:8)

6 This is what Jehovah has said, the King of Israel and the Repurchaser of him, Jehovah of armies, 'I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God. (Isa 44:6)

12 Listen to me O Jacob, and you Israel my called one. I am the same One. I am the first. Moreover, I am the last. (Isa 48:12)

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says Jehovah God, "the one who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty. (Rev 1:8)

5. Who is "the first and the last?" (Rev 1:17-18; 2:8; 22:10-16)

17 And when I saw him, I fell as dead at his feet.

And he laid his right hand upon me and said: "Do not be fearful. I am the First and the Last, 18 and the living one; and I became dead, but, look! I am living forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Ha'des. (Rev 1:17-18)

8 And to the angel of the congregation in Smyr'na write: These are the things that he says, 'the First and the Last,' who became dead and came to life [again], (Rev 2:8)

10 He tells me ...12 " ' Look! I am coming quickly, and the reward I give is with me, to render to each one as his work is. 13 I am the Al'pha and the O-me'ga, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ...16 " ' I, Jesus, sent my angel to bear witness to YOU people of these things for the congregations. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright morning star. ' " (Rev 22:10-16 partial)

6. Who is "the first and the last?"

7. Is Jesus to be worshiped? (John 5:22-23, Phil 2:9-11, Rev 5:8, 13-14)

22 For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son, 23 in order that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. (John 5:22-23)

9 For this very reason also God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every [other] name, 10 so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, 11 and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11)

8 And when he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp and golden bowls that were full of incense, and the [incense] means the prayers of the holy ones.

13 And every creature that is in heaven and on earth and underneath the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying: "To the One sitting on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures went saying: "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev 5:8, 13-14)

8. Is Jesus to be prayed to? (Acts 7:59, 2 Cor 12:8-9, Rev 5:8 [#7 above])

59 And they went on casting stones at Stephen as he made appeal and said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:59)

8 In this behalf I three times entreated the Lord that it might depart from me; 9 and yet he really said to me: "My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for [my] power is being made perfect in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast as respects my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may like a tent remain over me. (2 Cor 12:8-9)

Having examined the deity of Christ, we now move to the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. JW's regard the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force sent from God, but not as a person. Once again, the NWT actively attempts to avoid any reference to the Holy Spirit as a person.

9. Does the Holy Spirit have emotions? (Isa 63:10, Heb 10:29, Eph 4:30)

10 But they themselves rebelled and made his holy spirit feel hurt... (Isa 63:10a)

29 Of how much more severe a punishment, do YOU think, will the man be counted worthy who has trampled upon the Son of God and who has esteemed as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness with contempt? (Heb 10:29)

30 Also, do not be grieving God's holy spirit, with which you have been sealed for a day of releasing by ransom. (Eph 4:30)

10. Are there things which the Holy Spirit does which only a person can do? (Acts 16:6, Rom 8:26-27, Gal 4:6)

6 Moreover, they went through Phryg'i-a and the country of Ga-la'ti-a, because they were forbidden by the holy spirit to speak the word in the [district of] Asia. (Acts 16:6)

26 In like manner the spirit also joins in with help for our weakness; for the [problem of] what we should pray for as we need to we do not know, but the spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered. 27 Yet he who searches the hearts knows what the meaning of the spirit is, because it is pleading in accord with God for the holy ones. (Rom 8:26-27)

6 Now because YOU are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts and it cries out: "Abba, Father!" (Gal 4:6)

11. Is the Holy Spirit a person? (John 16:13)

13 However, when that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, he will guide YOU into all the truth, for he will not speak of his own impulse, but what things he hears he will speak and he will declare to YOU the things coming. (John 16:13)

12. Is the Holy Spirit the spirit of the Father or the Son? (Gal 4:6[#10 above], Rom 8:11)

11 If, now, the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in YOU, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also make YOUR mortal bodies alive through his spirit that resides in YOU. (Rom 8:11)

13. Is the Holy Spirit God? (Matt 12:31-32 cf. Luke 12:10, Mark 3:29)

31 "On this account I say to YOU, Every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. 32 For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things or in that to come. (Matt 12:31-32)

14. Discussion: Why are there three persons who make up Jehovah?

15. Why does Jesus sometimes refer to the Father as if he is equal, and at other times as if the Father is above Christ? (John 17:3, Heb 2:7)

3 This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3)

7 You made him a little lower than the angels; with glory and honor you crowned him, and appointed him over the works of your hands. (Heb 2:7)