

Defending the Deity of Jesus Christ to the Cults

By Lorri MacGregor

“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to every one who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Peter 3:15 NAS).

If we hope to effectively win souls for Christ out of the cults, we must be ready to defend the Deity of Christ above all else, for Christ is always misrepresented by the cult groups. This misrepresentation usually takes the form of denying His Deity. In the world of the cults, they either deify man or humanize God. We need to present them with the right Jesus Christ since they have “another Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

PRESENTING THE TRUE JESUS CHRIST

The Jesus Christ of the Bible is truly God, and yet truly man, and both these aspects need to be dealt with to clear up the confusion in the cultists’ minds.

In our human thinking, which is finite, we cannot always understand the infinite God. However, He has revealed Himself through the pages of the Bible, and we must either accept the revelation of Himself that He has made, or resort to man-made doctrines and concepts. Most cults will accept the Bible as an authority, so we may proceed.

BELIEVING JOHN 1:1 AS WRITTEN

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (NAS).

In our human thinking, we say, “wait a minute, how can the Word be WITH God and yet BE God, since there is only ONE GOD?” Our human understanding is just not up to this statement. We know WE can’t be “with” someone, and yet “be” that someone, but remember, God does not have our limitations! God reveals Himself this way throughout scripture. An example is Isaiah 44:6, “Thus says the LORD [YHWH], the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD [YHWH] of hosts [sounds like two, but...] ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me’” (NAS).

We must either accept this truth or reject it. Let’s choose to accept the fact that God says there is only one God, and that the “Word was God.” This is what the early church did, although they did not fully understand it. We find what I like to call an early creed of the church, a common confession, in 1 Timothy 3:16, “And by common confession great is the MYSTERY of godliness: [God] who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).

KNOWING GOD’S MYSTERY, JESUS CHRIST

Just because Jesus Christ is called a “mystery,” it doesn’t mean that we can never know Him, or understand how He can be truly God and truly man at the same time. Colossians 2:2 promises, “that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a TRUE KNOWLEDGE of God’s mystery, that is Christ Himself” (NAS—emphasis ours).

JESUS CHRIST IS ALMIGHTY GOD

We need to make the vital point that Jesus Christ is Almighty God at the very beginning. He is not some secondary god, or one of many gods, but really is the one, true, Almighty, God. Christians believe Jesus Christ is Almighty God manifest in the flesh. What follows is a good presentation to Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and others denying the full deity of Jesus Christ.

"THE FIRST AND THE LAST" PRESENTATION

I title this presentation on the Deity of Christ, "the First and the Last," not only because it uses this term, but also because it uses the first and last chapters of Revelation to prove the point. We begin by reading Revelation 1:8, "I am the ALPHA AND THE OMEGA," says the LORD GOD, who is and who was and who is to come, the ALMIGHTY" (NAS).

This scripture teaches us a few points. The "Alpha and Omega" is the "Lord God Almighty," and He is coming. All will agree, but the Jehovah's Witnesses will point out that their bible inserts "Jehovah" for "Lord." Refer them to their purple Kingdom Interlinear Translation so they can see for themselves that "Jehovah" is not in the Greek text, but is an insertion by the "translators" of their bible. In spite of this, all can agree that Almighty God calls Himself "the Alpha and the Omega."

Turn now to Revelation, chapter 22. There are several speakers in this chapter, but we want to single out the "Alpha and Omega" Speaker to see what else He has to say. Insist on reading the verses IN CONTEXT. The Speaker does not change between verses 12 through 16, so let's consider Revelation 22:12-16,

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to every man according to what he has done. 'I am the ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, the beginning and the end.' Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. I, JESUS, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star" (NAS).

Only now, with verse 17, does the Speaker change. Therefore the same Speaker, namely the Alpha and Omega, has said all the above things. He is "coming quickly" (agreeing with Revelation 1:8 read first), He is the "Alpha and the Omega," He is the "First and the Last," and He identifies Himself as "I, Jesus." The Apostle John evidently agrees, for in verse 20 he records, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come Lord Jesus" (NAS).

Jehovah's Witnesses will become agitated at this point, insisting that verse 12 is probably Jesus, then verse 13 must be Jehovah, then verse 16 is Jesus again. Rather than arguing, ask them, "Do you agree that in Verse 13 the "Alpha and Omega" calls Himself "The First and the Last?" They must agree. Remark that Revelation, chapter one, leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of "The First and the Last." Turn to Revelation 1:13-18. This account is a vision of the "son of man." Ask them who this is. They will reply "Jesus." You will agree. You could take the time to read through the vision, but concentrate on verses 17 and 18, where the Apostle John says: "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, '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'" (Revelation 1:17,18 NAS—emphasis ours).

Jesus has here called Himself “The First and the Last,” the same as He did in Revelation 22:13, where He also called Himself the “Alpha and the Omega.” It is obviously Jesus speaking also in Revelation 1:8, where He repeats that He is “coming,” He is the “Alpha and the Omega” and He is “Almighty God.” We’ll read Revelation 1:8 again to fully establish the claims of Jesus Christ,

“‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God (Jesus Christ), who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Jesus Christ is truly Almighty God by His own witness of the fact. Therefore, He is not some secondary god, or one god among many, or the Archangel Michael, nor only a good man. Jesus Christ is Almighty God manifest in the flesh.

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