The Relationship of the Son to the Father

Bible Study 9 October 2017

Introduction

Many cults deny the deity of Christ. They say Jesus is a son of God, but not God.

As God, Jesus in His pre-incarnate state was, is, and always will be equal with God the Father. However, in His incarnate state, He is subservient to the Father.

A study of the pre-incarnate Christ will help us to appreciate what the Son emptied Himself of in order to become our Saviour (Philippians 2:5-8).

Jesus Christ is equal to the Father

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:23)

See John 5:18. The Jews, who were strong believers in Deutereonomy 6:4, understood Christ's meaning. They recognised but one God and considered Christ's claim as blasphemous (Leviticus 24:12).

But the Father and Son are indivisible (John 10:30, John 14:9)

Jesus Christ is equal to the Father

Jesus Christ is the visible reflection of the invisible God – invisible because He is a Spirit (Colossians 1:15)

Jesus was trying to prove to them that He was God but they stubbornly refused to believe (John 10:33)

Jesus was honestly equal with the Father God (Philippians 2:5-6; John 17:5)

Jesus Christ is equal to the Father

John, both in His Gospel and epistles states the fact repeatedly that Jesus is God (John 1:1, 1 John 5:20) and Titus agrees (Titus 2:13). The writer of Hebrews also agrees (Hebrews 1:8) and so does Jude (Jude 25).

So to say that Jesus is only “a” son of God is to insult and blaspheme the Saviour (Colossians 2:9).

Let us glory in the fact that though He were true God, equal with the Father, He emptied His self for our sake (Matthew 17:2)

Jesus Christ as a man is subordinate to the Father

When Jesus Christ became a man, He voluntarily took the lower place of humility and subordination to the Father God (John 14:28, Hebrews 1:5, Luke 1:35)

Jesus is the “only begotten son” (John 3:16), as prophesied in Psalm 2:7. Though born, God the Son always existed (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Jesus Christ as a man is subordinate to the Father

Ways in which the Son was subordinated to the Father:

1. John 6:57 – The Father sustained the Son
2. John 5:19 – Jesus couldn't do anything independently of the Father
3. John 6:29 – Jesus Christ was sent to earth by the Father (also in John 8:29 and 42)
4. John 10:18, John 13:3 – The Father gave the Son authority and directions
5. John 8:26 – Jesus received messages from the Father

Jesus Christ as a man is subordinate to the Father

Ways in which the Son was subordinated to the Father:

6. John 5:36 – The Father gave to the Saviour certain works to accomplish (also John 17:4)
7. Luke 22:29 – The Father assigned a kingdom to the Son
8. 1 Corinthians 11:3 – During the presdent church age Jesus is subjected to the Headship of the Father
9. Hebrews 7:25 – Christ has become the way by which men are able to approach God
10. John 14:6 – Jesus has become the way to God through salvation
11. John 20:17, Matthew 27:46 – Jesus called the Father, “My God”

Jesus Christ as a man is subordinate to the Father

The extent of this subordination – how long will it last?

Luke 22:29 says the Father gave the Son a kingdom. The Son will return to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).

The period of subordination extends beyond this – beyond the consummation of this age, even beyond the Great White Throne Judgement. (1 Corinthians 15:27-28)

Conclusion

If we understand the Scriptures correctly, there is no conflict here. The pre-incarnate Chris is and always has been equal to the Father God Almighty.

The human incarnate Christ laid aside this position and in His self-humiliation chose a place of subordination to the Father.

The more we study the sevenfold humbling of Christ (Philippians 2:5-8), the more we see manifested His tremendous love for us while we were yet unlovely sinners.

Review Questions

1. What were the five downward steps that Jesus took in Philippians 2:5-7
2. Why did the Jews react so strongly in John 5:18?
3. How do you explain John 10:30?
4. What is the significance of John 1:1?
5. List four New Testament writers who speak of Christ as God.
6. In what way is Christ subordinated to the Father?
7. Explain John 14:28, “My Father is greater than I”.
8. When was Jesus begotten? (Psalm 2:7 and John 3:16)
9. Name seven ways in which the Son is subordinated to the Father.
10. How long will this period of subordination last?