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Jesus Christ Is Fully God, Not Just Fully Man

Abstract

Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) is a big religious organization that began in the Philippines and is spreading across the globe. INC teaches that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God is a very special man only and not God. They claim this by using their interpretation of biblical passages, such as John 8:40, Luke 24:38-39, and 1 Timothy 2:5. Contrary to the Scriptures and Christian traditions, they believe that the only true God is God the Father, who is the only Creator of the universe. However, the Scriptures (especially the New Testament) and Christian traditions demonstrate that Jesus is God-Man. He is fully human and also fully God. Since Jesus is God, He is also the Creator of the universe. After considering the proper exegesis of biblical passages that convey the deity of Jesus Christ, such as John 1:1–5, 10–18; Philippians 2:6–11; and Hebrews 1:1–12, these biblical passages demonstrate that Jesus Christ is fully God and not just fully human.

Keywords

Christology, Jesus Christ, Son of God, God, Creator, religion, worldview

Cover Page Footnote

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Introduction

Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) is a big religious organization that began in the Philippines and is spreading across the globe. This religious organization even built the largest indoor arena in the world, the Philippine Arena. It contains a maximum seating capacity of 55,000 and is located in Bocaue, Philippines.¹ Iglesia ni Cristo was founded by Felix Y. Manalo in Manila. Its first local congregation was inaugurated in Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila. It was registered under the Philippine government on July 27, 1914. According to their website,

The Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) is a Christian religion whose primary purpose is to worship the Almighty God based on His teachings as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ and as recorded in the Bible. The Church of Christ is a church for every one who will heed the call of God and embrace its faith — regardless of his or her nationality, cultural background, social standing, economic status, and educational attainment.²

Iglesia ni Cristo is not a sect or denomination. It is neither connected to any association or a religious group. It is an independent religious organization. INC claims to be the only true Church of Christ today. INC teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Nevertheless, according to them, He is a very special man only and not God. They claim this by using their interpretation of the Scriptures. They use John 8:40, Luke 24:38–39, and 1 Timothy 2:5. Contrary to the Scriptures and Christian traditions, they believe that the only true God is God the Father, who is the only Creator of the universe. However, the Scriptures (especially the New Testament) and Christian traditions demonstrate that Jesus is God-Man. He is fully human and also fully God. Since Jesus is God, He is also the Creator of the universe. After considering the proper exegesis of biblical passages that convey the deity of Jesus Christ, such as John 1:1–5, 10–18; Philippians 2:6–11; and Hebrews 1:1–12, these biblical passages demonstrate that Jesus Christ is fully God and not just fully human.

¹ Joyce Chepkemoi, “The Biggest Indoor Arenas in the World,” World Facts, WorldAtlas, March 26, 2019, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/which-are-the-biggest-indoor-arenas-in-the-world.html>

² “About the Iglesia ni Cristo,” *Iglesia ni Cristo*, accessed September 15, 2016. <http://iglesianicristo.net/index.php#1>

Confirmation: Jesus Christ Is Fully God, not just Fully Man

A Brief Exegesis on John 1:1–5, 14–18

The Scriptures display the full deity of Jesus Christ in addition to His full humanity. First, John 1:1–5, 10–13, and 14–18 reveal that Jesus is God in three ways: 1) His divine association with the Father in being “The Word” (verses 1 and 14), His radiant glory (verse 14), and the only begotten Son (verses 14 and 18); 2) His divine creation and salvation (verses 1–3, 10, 12–13); and 3) His divine nature of being God (verses 1 and 18).

Since the Gospel according to John speaks of Jesus Christ and His life on earth, it proclaims that Jesus was the Word and that He is God. John 1:1 states: “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.”³ This verse translates in English as, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”⁴ This is crucial because certain English translations, like the *New World Translation*, translate this verse differently by using “god” instead of “God.” However, per Colwell’s construction, the word, θεός, in the last phrase is considered predicate nominative and qualitative because it falls accurately in grammar and theology of the Gospel according to John and the entire New Testament.⁵ Daniel Wallace, a New Testament scholar, explains, “There is a balance between the Word’s deity, which was already present at the beginning (Ἐν ἀρχῇ... θεὸς ἦν [1:1]), and his humanity, which was added later (σὰρξ ἐγένετο [1:14]).”⁶ It also says in verse 2 that “The Word” (ὁ λόγος) was with God in the beginning. Verse 3 declares: “All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created.”⁷ This verse proves that “The Word,” who happens to be Jesus Christ, is also the Creator of the universe. Since He is also the Creator of all things, He is God.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all Greek bible versions are in *The Greek New Testament*, fifth revised ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014).

⁴ Translation is mine.

⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 119–20.

⁶ Wallace, *The Basics*, 119–20.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all English biblical translations are in *Holman Christian Standard Version* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009).

The Gospel according to John is grounded upon Old Testament theology. The author begins with “In the beginning” (1:1), which uses the first words of Genesis 1, the creation account. The word, “beginning” indicates a time preceding creation.⁸ The emphasis of this verse is to prove the preexistence of the Word, which sets up for the new “beginning,” the incarnation of the Word, which is described in John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Andreas Köstenberger, a New Testament scholar, explains that “the Word” embodies Jesus’ full ministry, which identifies all of Jesus’ works and words within the structure of “both His eternal being and existence as God’s self-revelation in salvation history.”⁹

The author intended the Gospel for the reader to respond by believing in Jesus for who He is, the Christ and Son of God.¹⁰ He aimed to determine that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God by incorporating the numerous narrative sections, which include the prolegomena of Jesus before His birth as the “Word” who became flesh, the seven signs, the seven “I am” maxims, etc.¹¹ Jesus represents God in the Gospel of John, and He is definitely “One” with the Father who sent Him to this world (10:30), the “I Am” who was already here before Abraham was (8:59), and the “Word” who was with God in the creation and was God (θεός).¹² To demonstrate the divinity of Jesus, the Gospel recorded Jesus performing miracles in the presence of His disciples, and His disciples responded by believing in His name that gives “life-giving power for humanity.”¹³

Similarly, Matthew 1:23 shows Jesus, as God becoming human by taking upon flesh through incarnation. It states, “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, ‘God with us.’”¹⁴ The phrase, Μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός (“God with us”), denotes the beginning of Matthew’s report of Jesus, as well, as indicates a parallel at the

⁸ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 9–13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 31.

¹¹ Köstenberger, *John*, 9.

¹² J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010), 1.

¹³ Borchert, *John 1-11*, 31.

¹⁴ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

end of the Gospel, when Jesus said, “ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας” (“I am with you always”) in 28:20. This refers to a spiritual presence. The name, Ἐμμανουήλ (Ἐμμανουήλ or Immanuel), pertains to one who has just been proclaimed that His origin is through the work of the Holy Spirit; thus, making it more an explicit declaration of the presence of God in Jesus Himself.¹⁵ This means that Jesus’ pronouncement in 28:20 is only taking out what has already been true from the time of His birth, that God is present in the person of Jesus. This comes close to the unambiguous doctrine of the incarnation that is conveyed in John 1:14.¹⁶

A Brief Exegesis on Philippians 2:6–11

Second, Philippians 2:6–11 presupposes the full deity of Jesus. This passage is considered an early Christian hymn to honor Jesus Christ. The verses describe the humility of Christ in His incarnation and death. Because of this, God exalted Him. Verse 6 expresses that Jesus “who being in the form of God, did not consider [it] [as] something to be grasped to be equal with God.”¹⁷ The phrase, “in the form of God” (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ), is very significant to the hymn. It is so essential that “one’s exegesis of it has a bearing on the interpretation of the whole passage.”¹⁸ μορφῇ refers to that “form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it.”¹⁹ Peter O’Brien, another New Testament scholar, clarifies, “The phrase ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ, “is best interpreted against the background of the glory of God.”²⁰ It is that brilliant light in which God was depicted in the Old Testament and the intertestamental literature. This manifestation does not signify only to external form but portrays the “preexistent Christ as clothed in the garments of divine majesty and splendor. He was in the form of God, sharing God’s glory.”²¹ ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ agrees with John 17:5: “Now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with that glory I had with You before the world existed,” as

¹⁵ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew, New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 49.

¹⁶ France, *Matthew*, 49.

¹⁷ Translation is mine.

¹⁸ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians, The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991) 206.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 210.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ *Ibid*.

well, as Hebrews 1:3: “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of His nature, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

According to the New Testament scholars, Gerald Hawthorne and Ralph Martin, the word, “form” (μορφή), “is a word whose precise meaning is elusive, but at the same time...appears to our senses.”²² When the word “form” is attached to God, it denotes His innermost being, to what He is in Himself. Thus, to pronounce that Jesus Christ was “being in the form of God” (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ) means that beyond His human nature, Jesus Christ had no other means of “existing apart from existing in the form of God.”²³ Therefore, Jesus Christ existed and exists as God. Moreover, the hymn in Philippians 2:6–11 affirms that Christ, who distributed the nature of God and who was equivalent with God, ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (“emptied Himself”). Hawthorne and Martin explain, “The emphatic position of ἐαυτόν, ‘himself,’ and the form of the verb strongly suggest that this act of ‘emptying’ was voluntary on the part of the preexistent Christ.”²⁴ Furthermore, they argue that the verb κενόω could also mean “to pour out;” thus, Christ poured out Himself, placing Himself completely at the clearance of people (for example, 1 John 3:16), and that Christ became poor so that others might become abundant through Him (for example, 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1:23; 4:10).²⁵

A Brief Exegesis on Hebrews 1:1–12

Third, Hebrews 1:1–12 is a clear passage that speaks that Jesus is God because the universe was created through Him (verses 2), all of the angels of God worship Him (verse 6), He created the earth and the heavens (verse 10), and He remains forever (verses 11-12). No one can create the universe, except God alone, even the people of INC will agree to this. Nevertheless, Jesus did create the heavens and the earth, which proves that He is God. The major theme of Hebrews 1:1–4 involves a sequence of proficiently organized confirmations concerning the

²² Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, revised and expanded by Ralph P. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary*, revised ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 114.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 116–117.

²⁵ Ibid., 117.

Son.²⁶ The sequence commences with a prophecy grounded upon Psalm 2 (“God has appointed Him heir of all things”; see Psalm 2:8) and finishes with one obtained from Psalm 110 (“He sat down at the right hand...”; see Ps 110:1).²⁷ As William Lane, a New Testament scholar, conveys, “In each instance, the source of the declaration concerning the Son is a coronation psalm celebrating the enthronement of a royal figure.”²⁸ The prevailing confirmations are comprised of prophecies that are similar to the Jewish wisdom literature, which extols divine Wisdom as the driving force of creation, revelation, and redemption (for example, Wisdom 7:21–27; 9:2).²⁹

Only God is to be worshipped, and it says in Hebrews 1:6, “And all God’s angels must worship Him.” James Moffat, a New Testament scholar, clarifies, “Here it means that Christ was Son in a pre-eminent sense; the idea of priority passes into that of superiority.”³⁰ The phrase πρωτότοκος υἱός had a connection of similarity and imminence to God which was supreme. As the context denotes, the phrase emphasizes the pre-eminent reverence and the sole relationship to God possessed by the Son among the heavenly host.³¹ This is another proof that Jesus is God.

Hebrews 1:8 proclaims concerning Jesus: “Your throne, God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of justice.” God the Father called Jesus “God” in verse 8, which justifies that Jesus is God. This verse and the quotation observed in verses 10–12 are utilized to demonstrate that the Son is referred to in Scripture both as God and as Lord.³²

God does not age. Hebrews 1:10–12 affirms the cosmic task of Jesus Christ through time. Although He will be involved in bringing the earth and

²⁶ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, vol. 47A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1991), 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ James Moffat, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, *International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1924), 11.

³¹ Moffat, *Hebrews*, 11.

³² Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993), 122.

heaven to completion, He will remain consistent.³³ As it says in Hebrews 8:12: “But You are the same, and Your years will never end.”

Refutation: Jesus Christ Is a Very Special Man, but not God.

Johnny Martin, INC pastor in Quezon City, Philippines, claims that the INC considers Jesus Christ to be Lord and Savior, but not necessarily God.³⁴ Greg Worthen, INC pastor in Miami, Florida explains that the INC does not believe that Jesus is God or God-Man because he declares that this is not found in the Bible nor it is taught by Jesus. He uses John 8:40a to show that Jesus is only human.³⁵ The verse says, “but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.”³⁶ Ruben Bustos, INC pastor in Los Angeles, California concurs with him and says that according to the Scriptures, there is no true disciple of Jesus Christ that thought of Him as God or God-Man.³⁷

One of Jesus’ twelve disciples, Thomas exclaimed in John 20:28: “My Lord and my God!” Worthen explains that Thomas had disbelief towards the risen Lord before Thomas made that statement, so if we will base our faith on what Thomas said in the Bible then we are making a grave error.³⁸ Martin concurs with Worthen by giving Luke 24:36–37. Martin rationalizes that Thomas’ reaction to Jesus was the same as the other disciples—frightened and terrified, which made him say to Jesus, “My Lord and my God.” Therefore, this was just an expression due to the fear of Thomas.³⁹ Bustos defends this by stating that Jesus corrected the disciples’ view of Him as a spirit of God in Luke 24:38–39 by claiming that He is a man with flesh and bones.⁴⁰

For Philippians 2:6, Bustos says that being in the form of God means that He is in the image of God, and should not be taken literally. It is like what

³³ Ibid., 126.

³⁴ “Is Jesus Both God and Man?” hosted by Bob Pellien, *INC International Edition*, INC Media, video, 41:56, <https://incmedia.org/is-jesus-both-god-and-man/>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016).

³⁷ “Is Jesus?”

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

happened to Jesus in Luke 9:29. He also rationalizes that Jesus said in John 4:24 that God is spirit, so God doesn't have flesh and bones. If God doesn't have flesh and bones, Jesus cannot be God when He has flesh and bones. Bustos also explains that Philippians 2:6 is similar to Ephesians 4:24 that Jesus was created according to God's likeness and righteousness. He further explains that there is no one who can reach that standard of God's quality or image since all have sinned and fall short (Romans 3:23). Only Jesus was able to reach that standard of God's image, but He is still not God the fact that Jesus did not consider Himself to be equal with God in Philippians 2:6.⁴¹

As for Jesus' appearance as a man in Philippians 2:7, Worthen defends by using 1 Timothy 2:5, which says: "There is only one God, and Christ Jesus is the only one who can bring us to God. Jesus was truly human, and he gave himself to rescue all of us." Therefore, Jesus was only human. Martin concurs with them and says that just like John 20:28, Philippians 2:6 should not be used as the basis for Jesus as God.⁴²

The refutation of Bustos on Hebrews 1:8 is that God did not call Jesus, "God," because in verse 9 it says, "this is why God, your God has anointed You with the oil of joy rather than Your companions."⁴³ If God called Jesus, "God," then that makes them two Gods. Worthen concurs with Bustos on this. This opposes the Scriptures, which assert that there is only one God; therefore, Jesus cannot be God. Martin adds that there are different versions of Hebrews 1:8. Some versions, like *The Moffatt Bible*, state, "he says of the Son, 'God is thy throne for ever and ever, thy royal sceptre is the sceptre of equity.'" Here, God did not call Jesus, "God." Another version he argues for is the *Goodspeed Bible*, which says, "But of the Son he says, 'God is your throne forever and ever! And a righteous scepter is the scepter of his kingdom!'" Lastly, he uses the New World Translation (the Bible of the Jehovah's Witness), which expresses, "But about the Son, he says: "God is your throne forever and ever, and the scepter of your Kingdom is the scepter of uprightness." In these different versions of the Bible, Hebrews 1:8 tells that God is the throne of the Son, Jesus Christ.⁴⁴ Therefore, Jesus is a very special man and not God.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² "Is Jesus?"

⁴³ *The New King James Version*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982.

⁴⁴ "Is Jesus?"

Counterargument: Objections to Jesus is only human because He is also God

Worthen uses John 8:40a to show that Jesus is human. However, when Jesus said, “But now you are trying to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God” (John 8:40), He was telling the hearers who supposedly believed Him that He is a divine messenger from God just like in Genesis 18:1–15 when the Lord God with His angels appeared to Abraham.⁴⁵ Instead of believing in Jesus as the Messiah, the response of the Jews was like the people of Sodom in Genesis 19:1–5. This verse also correlates with John 1:11 that the Lord God came to His own people, but His own people did not even recognize Him.⁴⁶ Worthen clearly treats this text out of context.

If Jesus uses John 8:40 as a way to show the people that He is just a man and not God, this begs the question of why He would say to them in verse 58: “Amen, Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” After hearing Jesus say this, the Jews wanted to stone Him because He claimed Himself to be God. This is not the only time in John 8 when Jesus said the words, “I am.” The Septuagint regards ἐγώ εἰμι (“I am”) as the divine name of Yahweh, pertaining to the “I AM” in Exodus 3:14, Isaiah 43:25, 45:19, and 51:12.⁴⁷ So when Jesus said those words in John 8:58, He was implying “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I am the God of the living and not of the dead.” This closely links to “and the Word was God” in John 1:1.⁴⁸ Therefore, Jesus is God, the Great I Am.

Worthen explains that Thomas’ reaction toward Jesus in John 20:28 was through disbelief. That is why he called Him, “My Lord and my God!” However, according to J. Ramsay Michaels, a New Testament scholar, the response of Thomas was not faithless, but with faith. This confirms the introduction of John that Jesus is God (1:1). Jesus did not make Himself God (10:33) or equal to God (5:18), just like how His adversaries charged Him, because He *is* God. Jesus’ disciples have realized this, and Thomas addresses Jesus in this way. Thomas’ profession, like Peter’s in 6:69, represents the faith of all the disciples, which have assembled behind closed doors on those two consecutive first days of the week.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2010) 513-14.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 533-35.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Michaels, *John*, 1018.

This is contrary to what the pastors of INC have said that no disciple of Jesus ever acknowledges Him as God when Jesus' disciples all know that He is God.

Bustos claims that being in the form of God in Philippians 2:6 means that Jesus is created in the image of God. The word used in Philippians 2:6 is μορφή (“form”), which refers to actual physical form,⁵⁰ not an image. If Paul meant “image,” he should have written εἶδος, which implies “appearance or shape as it appears to someone.”⁵¹ As stated in the confirmation above, ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ indicates that Jesus is the preexistent Christ. He is God. Moreover, if Philippians 2:6–8 is arranged as two stanzas of four lines each, the hymn presents a contrast between God and man on the first and second lines, while the third line expresses Jesus voluntarily humbling Himself. The clear connotation of these striking lines shows that the divine and preexistent Christ was inclined to deem Himself as nothing by taking upon human form through incarnation. He even decreased Himself by obeying God to the point of shameful death.⁵² Thus, these verses again support that Jesus is fully God and fully man through incarnation.

Bustos argues that if God called Jesus, “God,” in Hebrews 1:8, then Jesus and God the Father become two Gods. INC does not believe in the Triune God because they cannot fathom that there are three Persons in one God and that Jesus is the Second Person. Furthermore, Martin uses three different “biblical” versions of Hebrews 1:8, which are not considered accurate by evangelical Christians. First of all, the Greek version states: Ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος. Most Greek grammarians and translators consider ὁ θεὸς as a vocative case. Thus, it is translated to “Your throne, O God, is eternal (literally, “to the age of the age”) and the scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.” According to David Allen, an expository preacher and New Testament scholar, four proofs validate ὁ θεὸς as a vocative.⁵³ First, the ὁ θεὸς in Psalm 44:7 (LXX) is vocative. Second, the word order leans toward the vocative rather than the nominative. Third, the words, λέγει πρὸς (1:7-8) in the New Testament denote

⁵⁰ Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, BDAG, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001) 659.

⁵¹ Ibid, 280.

⁵² Moisés Silva, Philippians, 2nd ed, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005) 99.

⁵³ David Lewis Allen, *Hebrews, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010) 178-79.

“say to.”⁵⁴ Paul Ellingworth, a New Testament scholar, explains that the *πρὸς* in verses 7-8 is closely connected by the adversative *μὲν... δὲ* and the omission of *λέγει* in verse 8, which makes God as the subject, and Jesus, having the title as His Son.⁵⁵ These verses show that in the Scriptures, the Son is referred to as God and as Lord.⁵⁶ Fourth, the whole context and course of the argument in Hebrews 1:5-14 validate the vocative case, especially the contrast between the Son and the angels. God spoke about the angels, while He talked to the Son.⁵⁷ As Allen explains, “The statement ‘your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever’ (verse 8) make the point that if the personal rule of the Son is eternal then the Son as ruler is thus likewise eternal.”⁵⁸ If the reign of Jesus is eternal, then He is eternal. In addition, the titles of Jesus Christ as God and Lord in verse 8, especially His eternal rule, are expounded in verses 10–12. The main argument of the author of Hebrews appears to be that the Son employs regal power, whereas the angels are considered as His ministers or servants. Thus, Hebrews 1:1–12 as a whole attests that Jesus is God.

Conclusion

After an examination of John 1:1–5, 10–18; Philippians 2:6–11; and Hebrews 1:1–12, these biblical passages indicate that Jesus is fully God and not just fully human. The deity of Jesus Christ was also confirmed at the Council of Nicea in AD 325 in which the following Nicene Creed was formulated:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 122.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Allen, *Hebrews*, 179.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.⁵⁹

Since Jesus is God, He deserves to be worshiped by every living creature. Worshiping Him involves four aspects. First, worshiping Him includes proper knowledge of who God is. Worshiping Him involves a contrite heart and a proper attitude towards Him. Proper worship honors Him, and true worship glorifies His name. Second, worshiping Him means acknowledging Him in everything we do because all glory belongs to Him alone. Third, worshiping Him entails loving Him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strengths. This is the greatest commandment. Fourth, since Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the Lord of all, and God of the universe, worshiping Him includes evangelism. This is the Great Commission.

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⁵⁹ “Nicene Creed,” Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed November 27, 2016, <https://www.ccel.org/creeds/nicene.creed.html>.

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