

[ARM Prison Outreach International](#)

"Ministers' Minute" Volume X Number 11

"COMMUNICATING OUR FAITH TO OUR WORLD"

#6: "We Must Communicate the Deity of Christ"

Editor's Note: This "MM" is an email sermon, the 11th of 2011 --119th overall-- in a series we are sending as an encouragement to Christians around the world. This is the sixth message in our current series. It is my prayer that this message by my brother, Larry Farthing, will encourage you and honor God. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it! May God bless your labors!

-- Rod Farthing, Development Director

ARM QUICK FACTS:

News Flash: ARM's Bible program is currently on a pace of sending 2,382 Bibles per week to inmates! Over 102,000 have been sent during the first ten months of this year!!

Baptistry Report

ARM sent 6 baptistries to prisons in Sept-Oct 2011

Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility -- Walnut Grove, MS
Reeves Co. Juvenile Detention Center -- Pecos, TX (2 units)
Oshkosh Correctional Inst. -- Oshkosh, WI
Rockcastle Co. Detention Center -- Mt. Vernon, KY
Davidson County Sheriff's Office -- Nashville, TN

ARM sent 1 baptistry to the military in Sept-Oct 2011

US Army Camp Parks -- Dublin, CA

ARM sent 10 baptistries to the mission field in Sept-Oct 2011

Sent to Ahtapa Sinlee for distribution in Thailand and Myanmar

We praise God that these ten have recently been fully sponsored.

We will be shipping many more baptistries in the months ahead.

If you can donate toward this worthy cause, please send your gift of any size to:

ARM Baptistries

Thanks! And may the Lord bless you for caring and sharing!

"COMMUNICATING OUR FAITH TO OUR WORLD"

#6: "We Must Communicate the Deity of Christ"

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 16:13-16

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a

husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

INTRODUCTION:

As I stand before you this morning, I affirm that I believe that the foregoing Scripture passages are true. I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the second person of the Trinity that is the "Elohim" of Genesis 1:1, that says *"In the beginning God (Elohim, plural) created the heavens and the earth."* In other words, I believe Jesus is not "a god" but rather the incarnation of God Himself. In other words, I believe in the deity of Jesus Christ.

The deity of Christ is a vital part of the Christian faith and something we must communicate to our world. We have been commissioned to not just get the world to live according to the life principles Jesus taught but to convince the world that He is exactly who He said He was: the begotten of God – God in the flesh – God in a human body.

WHY MUST WE COMMUNICATE THIS TO OUR WORLD?

I can think of at least five reasons...

First, He said He was the Son of God and equal with God.

John 5 records Jesus' healing of an invalid. When the Pharisees objected on the grounds that He did it on the Sabbath, He said, *"My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working"* (v. 17). The Pharisees took this to mean that he was *"calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God"* (v. 18).

At another time (in John 8:56-59) Jesus told the Jews, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was*

glad."

"You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham?"

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Abraham lived about 2000 B.C.! Yet, Jesus said he existed before Abraham was born!

In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool; you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

The bottom line is that Jesus of Nazareth was who he said he was, or he was the greatest liar that ever lived.

Second, there are so many false and erroneous views of Jesus out there.

Almost every cult and world religion has their own unique view or opinion of Jesus, none of whom believe Him to be the only begotten Son of God or a part of what we call the "Trinity." He is believed to be everything from "a great teacher" to "a prophet of God" or "a god," but not the incarnation of God Himself.

There are even some churches that are classified as "Christian" that do not require belief in the deity of Jesus. They usually do not require belief in the virgin birth or the resurrection, either. I believe a genuine Christian will affirm belief in both of these as well as in Jesus' deity.

Third, Christianity rises and falls on the deity of Jesus Christ.

Since He claimed deity, if, indeed, He's not, then we are left with a faith based on the teachings of either a liar or a lunatic, in which case it is just as false a religion as the other world religions!

I have found that those who do not hold to the deity of Jesus consider all the world's religions as valid ways to God, a belief which flies in the face of teachings throughout the Bible.

Fourth, Christians not only follow the teachings of Jesus, but they believe in His deity.

Let me put it this way: Those who say they are Christians because they admire and respect the teachings of Jesus while denying His deity are not really Christians at all. To be a Christian is to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God – to believe that He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified, was raised from the dead the third day, and will return for all believers when the time is right.

Fifth, Jesus is the only way to God and eternal life.

There are not "many" ways to God.

To believe in Him is to believe what He said, and He said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6).

To believe in Him is to believe what the apostles said about Him, and Peter said, *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

Two men were talking. One said, "Would you like to know my Christianity? It's 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'"

The other man, a Christian who knew what it meant to be a Christian, replied, "Would you like to know my astronomy? It's 'twinkle, twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are...'"

The first man said, "That's not astronomy!"

The second man said, "No, it's not, and 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' is not Christianity."

Again, I say, Christianity is believing in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God – virgin born, sinless living, crucified, and raised from the dead on the third day.

HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE THIS TO OUR WORLD?

How are we to communicate to our world that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?

First, we can tell people what Jesus said about Himself.

People in general don't have a clue that Jesus claimed to be deity.

We need to keep two or three Scripture passages in mind, such as:

- John 5
- John 8
- John 14

Second, we can tell people what first century believers said about Him.

Again, we need to keep two or three Scripture passages in mind:

- John 1
- Matthew 16
- Hebrews 1

Third, we can tell people what has happened in our lives as a result of our belief in Jesus.

This is not stuff that would be presented in a courtroom, and it's probably not the stuff that would sway a hard core skeptic, but it's the kind of thing that ordinary people can identify with.

CONCLUSION:

Let me close with a capsulation of who Jesus was and is:

In the New Testament Jesus describes Himself as both "*Son of God*" and "*Son of Man.*" He was both; He had to be.

As "*Son of Man*" he was like us in every way that God created us. He began life in the womb, was born as a baby, and grew to adulthood just as we do. He was tempted just as we are. He was physically limited as we are: He tired; He hungered; He thirsted; He laughed; He cried.

He had to be like us so that he could live among us, teach us about God, resist temptation and live a sinless life, die on a cross as the atonement for the sins of the world, and defeat death by being raised from the

grave.

As *"Son of God"* or *"God incarnate"* His nature was that of God in every way that God is God. Hebrews 1:3 puts it this way: *"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being..."* In Philippians 2:6 and 7 Paul says of Jesus: *"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."*

Therefore, when Jesus was crucified, God Himself was dying for us. When He came forth from the grave, He came forth as God. And when He returns for us, it will be God returning for us.

When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are celebrating the day God died for us and rose from the grave for us and pointing to the time when He will come for us.

Meanwhile, He is our High Priest, maintaining our salvation until we can join God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in eternal life.

May many come to know God through our witness!

"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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Check out our web sites: www.arm.org www.abarc.org

In 2010, 71 ABA Bible courses were mailed from ARM every day!