

## ***EVIDENCE FOR CHRIST'S DIVINITY***

**John 18:1-11**

**By Andy Manning**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Why is the divinity of Jesus Christ an important issue?
  - i. If Christ is not God, then He cannot pay for our sins. One man may be able to take the punishment of another, but not those of the world. Yet because Jesus was divine, His death was sufficient to atone for the sins of us all.
  - ii. If Christ is not God, then we must not worship Him. It is sin to worship a mere man.
  - iii. If Christ is not God, then He is either a liar or a lunatic. If a man claims to be God, but is not God, then He is either a liar or a lunatic. He is not a good teacher, or a good moral example.
  - iv. If Christ is not God, then we cannot trust His words. If He was lying about His divinity, and if He was just a mere man, then why should we trust anything He says about God, morality, and the afterlife?
  - v. If Christ is not God, then we cannot trust the New Testament. The authors of the New Testament taught that Jesus was God. If He isn't God, then they are ignorant or dishonest, and we can't trust anything else they say.
  - vi. If Christ is God, then we know God exists.
  - vii. If Christ is God, then we know who God is and what He is like.
  - viii. If Christ is God, then we can trust the OT, because Christ repeatedly pointed to it as divinely inspired and authoritative.
  - ix. If Christ is God, then we can know right from wrong. He endorsed the Ten Commandments and expanded upon them with many moral teachings.
  - x. If Christ is God, then we know where we came from, why we are here, and what happens after death. If Christ is God, then the Bible is true, and that means we were created by God, for God, and will either die and go to heaven or hell.
2. All of this hinges on the divinity of Christ. It is the most crucial issue of all. There is no question more important.
3. The Gospel of John was written to convince us of the divinity of Christ (Jn 20:31).
4. So far John has given us many reasons to believe in the deity of Christ:
  - i. John stated it. **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
  - ii. Jesus claimed to be the giver of eternal life. **John 10:28** "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand."
  - iii. Jesus equated Himself with the Father on numerous occasions.
    1. To know Him was to know God. Jn 8:19; 14:7
    2. To see Him was to see God. Jn 12:45; Jn 14:7
    3. To believe in him was to believe in God. Jn 12:44
    4. To welcome Him was to welcome God. Mk 9:37
    5. To hate Jesus was to hate God. Jn 15:23

- 6. To dishonor Him was to dishonor God. Jn 5:23
- iv. Jesus claimed to be one with the Father. **John 10:30** "I and the Father are one."
- 5. Today we are going to study Christ's arrest, where remarkably Christ's divinity is demonstrated in a number of ways.

## II. TEXT: John 18:1-11

- 1. 1 After Jesus had said these things, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.
  - i. Jesus has just finished the Upper Room Discourse with His disciples.
  - ii. It is the night before Christ's death.
  - iii. After supper, He and His disciples exited the city gates of Jerusalem and crossed the Kidron Valley, east of Jerusalem.
    - 1. This occurred during the Passover festival.
    - 2. On the Passover, thousands of lambs were killed in the temple, and their blood was poured on the altar.
    - 3. To give you an idea of how many lambs, and how much blood we are talking about, a census was taken thirty years after Christ's death, and that year 256,000 lambs were sacrificed on the Passover.
    - 4. Next to the Passover, there was a channel, and all the blood from the altar ran into this channel, and out of the city, and emptied into the Kidron brook.
    - 5. When Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron brook, the water would have still been red with blood.
    - 6. This must have been a reminder to Christ of the sacrifice that He was about to make for the sins of the world.
  - iv. After crossing the Kidron Valley, they went to a garden. The other gospels give us more information. They went to the Mount of Olives, just outside of Jerusalem. On the slopes, many wealthy Jews had gardens, olive tree gardens, because there was not enough room inside the city. The garden that Jesus and His disciples entered was called the Garden of Gethsemane (oil-press). The words "went into it" suggest that this was a private, enclosed garden with a wall around it, and probably a locked gate. It is possible that a wealthy follower of Jesus owned the garden and gave Jesus a key so that He and His disciples could use it to rest and relax whenever they came to Jerusalem. The very next verse says they used this garden often.
- 2. 2 Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas took a company of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.
  - i. Judas was one of the Twelve. Jesus knew that He was going to betray Him. During the Last Supper, Jesus dismissed Him to commit His treachery. While Jesus was teaching His disciples in the Upper Room Discourse, Judas was plotting with the chief priests to kill Jesus. Judas knew where Jesus was going after supper, so he brought "a company of soldiers and some officials

from the chief priests... and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.”

- ii. “Company of soldiers” refers to Roman soldiers, and “officials” refers to the Jewish temple police. The chief priests and Sanhedrin had their own police force to “keep good order and to carry out its decrees (Barclay).”
  - iii. The Greek for “company of soldiers” is *speira*; it has three possible meanings:
    - 1. Six hundred Roman soldiers.
    - 2. A cohort of auxiliary soldiers, which was 1,000 total made up of 760 infantry, and 240 cavalry.
    - 3. A detachment of soldiers called a maniple, which was made up of 200 men.
  - iv. Even if this only referred to a maniple, when you combine 200 Roman soldiers with a number of Jewish police officers, it is clear that Judas through he would need an army to arrest Jesus. Judas had seen Christ’s power.
- 3. 4 Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to him, went out and said to them, “Who is it that you’re seeking?”
  - 4. 5 “Jesus of Nazareth,” they answered.
  - 5. “I am he,” Jesus told them.
  - 6. Judas, who betrayed him, was also standing with them.
    - i. Notice that Jesus did not hide or run. Instead, he “went out” to them and surrendered Himself. That is a significant detail to remember.
  - 7. 6 When Jesus told them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.
  - 8. 7 Then he asked them again, “Who is it that you’re seeking?”
  - 9. “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.
    - i. There is an important reason that Jesus asked them who they were looking for two times.
  - 10. 8 “I told you I am he,” Jesus replied. “So if you’re looking for me, let these men go.”
  - 9 This was to fulfill the words he had said: “I have not lost one of those you have given me.”
  - 11. 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)
    - i. Something needs to be said about Peter’s courage. In just a few hours, Peter is going to deny Christ. But in this moment he showed great courage by drawing his sword and attacking a company of hundreds of soldiers all by himself to protect master.
  - 12. 11 At that, Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?”

### **III. CHRIST’S DIVINITY IS DISPLAYED IN SIX WAYS**

#### **1. His divine knowledge.**

- i. The Bible is clear about God’s omniscience. He knows everything. The most popular passage about God’s divine knowledge was written by King David.

##### **1. Psalm 139:1-4**

- 1 LORD, you have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I stand up;

you understand my thoughts from far away.

3 You observe my travels and my rest;

you are aware of all my ways.

4 Before a word is on my tongue,

you know all about it, LORD.

- ii. We see that same divine knowledge in Jesus.
- iii. **John 18:4** “knowing everything that was about to happen to him”
- iv. Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him. He knew that He was going to die. He knew how He was going to die. He knew everything that was going to happen to Him. This kind of knowledge points to His divinity.
- v. Do you know everything that will happen to you today? Tomorrow? A year from now? No, because you are not God. But Jesus did, because He is God.
- vi. Jesus knows everything that is going to happen to you, too. This is why it is important to follow Him. He can see what you can’t see. He can see danger and opportunities that are ahead long before you can see them. But if you stay close to Him, He will guide you safely along the best pathway for your life.

## 2. His divine sovereignty.

- i. The Bible teaches the sovereignty of God. He is in control of everything that happens. Nothing can happen without Him allowing it. Without it going through His hands.
- ii. **Isaiah 14:24** “The Lord of Armies has sworn: As I have purposed, so it will be; as I have planned it, so it will happen.”
- iii. We see the same sovereignty, the same control over the circumstances of life, in Jesus Christ.
- iv. **John 18:4** “Then Jesus... went out and said to them, ‘Who is it that you’re seeking?’”
- v. When they came to arrest Jesus, He didn’t hide, or run, or fight. He could have instantly summoned twelve legions of angels to protect Him, but He didn’t. He gave Himself up. He surrendered. Why? Because this was all part of His plan.
- vi. Remember, Jesus knew the future. He knew Judas was going to betray Him, but He didn’t stop him. He knew they were on their way to arrest Him. He knew their murderous intents. If I knew the future, I would use that knowledge to protect myself. But Jesus didn’t. He allowed them to take Him. Why? Because this was part of His plan.
- vii. Peter drew his sword and tried to defend Jesus, but Jesus told him to put it away. Why? Because He did not want to escape. This was part of His salvation plan.
- viii. Jesus was in complete control of the situation. This was all supposed to happen. His plan was not to come to earth as a conquering hero, but as a suffering servant bearing the sins of the world.

- ix. Christ's death was not an accident; it was His mission. Christ's death was not a tragedy; it was a necessity. Christ's death was not a surprise; it was planned.
- x. The fact that Jesus gave Himself up is a reminder of His sovereignty. He is in control of everything. He has a plan, and He is working all things together for His glory and our good.
- xi. This is why we never need to worry or fear. Jesus in complete control of our lives and of everything that happens to us. He will only allow us to go through something if it's for our good and His glory (Rm 8:28).

### 3. His divine name.

- i. In the OT God goes by many names.
  - 1. Yahweh, God's personal name, spelled LORD in most English Bibles (Ex 6:2-3).
  - 2. El-roi, God sees me (Gen 16:13).
  - 3. Yahweh-yireh, the Lord will provide (Gen 22:14).
  - 4. One of God's most famous names is "I am." It means I am the eternal, self-existent One. In the Old Testament, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush and told Moses that His name was "I Am."
- ii. Jesus referred to Himself in the same way. When Judas and the soldiers showed up looking for "Jesus of Nazareth," he said, "I am he."
- iii. **John 18:5** "I am he"
- iv. Gk. *ego eimi*.
- v. Jesus used this phrase for Himself a number of times. The most notable was in John 8. Jesus was talking with a group of skeptical Jews when He said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad (8:56)." The Jews said, "You aren't even fifty years old, and you've seen Abraham?" Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am (8:58)." *Ego eimi*. Why is that significant? First, Jesus was claiming to pre-exist Abraham who lived thousands of years before this time. So, in claiming to be eternal, He was claiming to be God. But the words *ego eimi* are very significant. About 200 years before Christ, Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek (the Septuagint). When they came to the story of Moses and the burning bush in Genesis 3:18, when God said, "I am," how do you think they translated that into Greek? *Ego eimi*. So, when Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am," He was claiming to be the Great I Am, the God of the burning bush, the God who revealed Himself to Moses, and who destroyed the Egyptians, and who parted the Red Sea to deliver the Israelites.

### 4. His divine power.

- i. The Bible says that God is omnipotent. He is all-powerful. There is nothing He cannot do.
- ii. **2 Chronicles 20:6** "Power and might are in your hand, and no one can stand against you."

- iii. One of the first songs I taught my kids to play on the guitar was “My God is so Big.”
  - 1. My God is so big, so strong and so mighty; there’s nothing my God cannot do. The mountains are His, the rivers are His, the stars are His handiwork too. My God is so big, so strong and so mighty, there’s nothing my God cannot do.
- iv. We see this same power in Jesus when He calmed the sea, and walked on water, and healed diseases, and cast out demons, and fed the multitudes.
- v. We also see a glimpse of His divine power in this passage.
- vi. **John 18:6** When Jesus told them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.”
- vii. Let me try something. “I am he.” Nothing happens when I say it. But when Jesus said it, an entire army of armed soldiers fell to the ground.
- viii. Jesus is almighty God. The Bible says that everything was created by Him, for Him, and through Him. He made you. And the God who is strong enough to create the entire universe is strong enough to take care of you, to protect you, to provide for you, to deliver you, to heal you, to answer your prayers, to pay for your sins, to forgive your sins, to give you eternal life, and to take you safely home to heaven when you die.

#### 5. His divine love.

- i. The Bible, from beginning to end, says that God is a loving God.
- ii. **Psalms 33:5** “The earth is full of the Lord’s unfailing love.”
- iii. **1 John 4:8** “God is love.”
- iv. God’s love is demonstrated through His many promises to His people: protection, provision, pardon, presence, etc.
- v. But the love of God is most fully manifest through Jesus Christ. We see His loving character in John 18.
- vi. **John 18:8** “I told you I am he,” Jesus replied. “So if you’re looking for those you have given me, let these men go.”
- vii. When Judas and the soldiers showed up to arrest Jesus, He said, “Take me, but let my friends go.”
- viii. In fact, notice that Jesus asked the same question two times. “Who is it that you’re seeking?” One commentator suggested He repeated this question to force them to acknowledge that they had no authority to take his disciples. He was looking out for His disciples to the very end.
- ix. His love is also seen in the fact that He allowed Himself to be arrested. He didn’t run or fight or resist. Why? Because it was His purpose and mission and intent and desire to go to the cross to die for our sins.
- x. A third way His love is manifest in this story is with Malchus. Peter drew his sword and tried to chop off Malchus’ head but missed and chopped off his ear. Jesus told Peter to put His sword away. But John doesn’t tell us what happened next. Luke, a doctor does. Jesus reached out his hand and healed Malchus. Malchus was there to kill Jesus, but Jesus loved him.

- xi. That's how Jesus treats all of us. We are all sinners; rebels against God. We have chosen to go our own way rather than live for God. We are enemies of God. Yet Jesus loves us anyway, and He went to the cross to pay for our sins so that we could be forgiven and go to heaven. The Bible says that is the definitive act of love in all of history.
- xii. **1 John 4:10** "Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice, for our sins."
- xiii. When you think about Christ's love for you, how can you not love Him back? It makes you want give Him everything – your obedience, your worship, your affection, your possessions, your time, your career, your reputation, everything.

#### 6. His divine holiness.

- i. The Bible says that God is holy. He is righteous. He has no sin. Exodus 15:11 says that God is "glorious in holiness." Job 24:12 says that "God does not act wickedly" or "pervert justice." Psalm 5:4 says that "evil cannot dwell" with God. Hab 1:3 says that God's eyes are "too pure to look on evil, and He "cannot tolerate wrongdoing."
- ii. This is why we love and adore God. We can trust that He will never wrong us in any way. He will never treat us with wickedness, or selfishness, or injustice. He will always do what is right.
- iii. We see the same holiness in Jesus in this story when Peter drew his sword.
- iv. **John 18:11** At that, Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?"
- v. In the OT "cup" is figurative for suffering and judgment. God would pour out the cup of His judgment on and punishment on people.
- vi. Jesus knew why God sent Him. It was not for self-preservation, but for self-sacrifice. It was not to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many. And even though obedience to God's will meant intense suffering, Jesus obeyed. He refused to run from God's will. He embraced it.
- vii. Jesus was completely perfect.
  - 1. **2 Corinthians 5:21** "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
  - 2. **Hebrews 4:15** "[Jesus] has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin."
  - 3. **1 John 3:5** "You know that he was revealed so that he might take away sins, and there is no sin in him."
- viii. Jesus lived a sinless life because He is God, and God is sinless. And it was essential for Him to be sinless so that He could bear our sins. If He was a sinner, then He could only be punished for His own sins. But because He was sinless, He could be punished for our sins.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- 1. John wrote this book to persuade us that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. And that's what Jesus is. He is God. He came to earth, took on human flesh, lived a

perfect life, willingly died on the cross to pay for our sins, and rose again. And whoever repents and believes in Jesus will be forgiven and have eternal life.