

I. THREE PRIMARY LAST DAYS GLOBAL CONTROVERSARIES

1. JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ETERNAL SALVATION
2. JESUS IS THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH
3. JESUS IS GOD
 - a) These three truths have been controversial in every generation and will likely remain among the primary issues that divide the nations in the last days because they make exclusive claims about truth, authority, and salvation.
 - b) They are dividing words because they confront humanity's desire to live independently of God, challenge the belief that all religious paths are equally valid, and expose the rebellious nature of the human heart that resists God's rule, exclusive truth, and authority.

II. A CLOSER LOOK AT THESE THREE CONTROVERSARIES

1. CONTROVERSARY OF JESUS BEING THE ONLY WAY TO SALVATION
 - a) ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." -Jn 14:6***
 - (1) This claim rejects the idea that all religions lead to God, sincerity and self righteousness is sufficient for salvation.
 - (2) This truth is offensive in a world that is seeking tolerance and inclusivity..
2. CONTROVERSARY OF JESUS AS FINAL JUDGE
 - a) ***"The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son." -John 5:22***
 - (1) People generally prefer a God who only loves all people and does not evaluate and hold accountable their actions, choices and lives on the earth.

(2) The idea that every person will one day stand before Christ challenges the idea that people can self govern, live for themselves, and continue to believe in what they want and what ultimately allows them to live for themselves.

3. CONTROVERSARY OF JESUS IS GOD

a) ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." -Jn 1:1***

b) ***"My Lord and my God!" -Jn 20:28***

(1) If Jesus is truly God, then His words carry ultimate authority, His commands demand obedience, and He cannot be reduced to merely a prophet, teacher, or spiritual guide.

(2) This is why the deity of Christ has been attacked throughout church history. If Jesus is not God, Christianity loses its foundation. If He is God, then every person must respond to Him.

c) Every thing that rejects the deity of Christ is heresy and at the core is anti-Christ in origin.

(1) ***"For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."-2Jn 7***

III. WHO DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?

1. ***¹³ When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do me say that I, the Son of Man, am?"¹⁴ So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."-Matthew 16:13-15***

- B. Jesus asked what may be the most important question ever presented to humanity: “Who do you say that I am?” How a person answers that question will shape not only their life on earth but also their eternal destiny.
- C. Jesus first posed this question to His disciples because they would soon be entrusted with taking the gospel to the nations. Before they could accurately proclaim who He was to the world, they needed a clear and unwavering conviction regarding His true identity as the Son of God, and the promised Messiah.
- D. This passage highlights a reality that remains true today: people and religions hold vastly different views about Jesus Christ. Nearly every major religion has an opinion about Jesus, yet they do not agree on who He is. This is one reason why the identity of Jesus is so central to Christianity while growing in controversy.
- E. The most important question is not whether someone believes in Jesus, but which Jesus they believe in. Christianity stands on the conviction that Jesus is more than a prophet, teacher, or religious leader, He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and God in the flesh.

IV. WHAT THE MAJOR RELIGIONS BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS

- A. Christians believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man, the Messiah, Savior of the world, crucified, resurrected, and returning King.
- B. The muslims call Jesus (Isa), and do not deny his historical existence and believe he was one of the greatest prophets, born of a virgin, performed miracles, and will return, but is not God, or the Son of God.
- C. In Judaism Jesus is generally viewed as a historical Jewish teacher, but not the Messiah, Son of God or divine.
- D. In Hinduism, they view Jesus as a holy teacher, guru, but not the messiah and Son of God.
- E. Buddhists generally regard Jesus as a wise teacher, or enlightened person, but not divine or the Savior of humanity.
- F. Jehovah Witnesses believe Jesus as God’s first creation and believe He is Michael the Archangel and not Almighty God.

- G. Mormons believe in a different Jesus than Christians. They believe He is the Son of God and Savior, but understood differently from historic Christianity regarding the nature of God and the Trinity.

V. BELIEVING JESUS IS GOD IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL

- A. "Who is Jesus?" was not a secondary issue, it was the central issue upon which salvation, the gospel, and the entire Christian faith depend.

1. *Jesus did not leave us the option of calling Him merely a good teacher. Because of His claims, He must either be a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord.-C.S. Lewis*

- B. The deity of Christ is not merely one doctrine among many; it is the doctrine upon which every other Christian doctrine stands. If Jesus is not God, there is no virgin birth, no incarnation, no sufficient atonement, no divine revelation, and no salvation.

VI. WHY IS THE DEITY OF JESUS AN ESSENTIAL TO OUR FAITH ?

A. THE NEED FOR A PERFECT SACRIFICE

1. His divine nature made Him fit for the work of Redeemer; His human body allowed Him to shed the blood necessary to redeem.
2. No human being with a sin nature could pay such a debt. No one else could meet the requirements to become the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.
 - a) ***So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.-Mrk 10:18***
 - b) If Jesus were merely a good man as some claim, then He had a sin nature and was not perfect. In that case, His death and resurrection would have no power to save anyone.
3. Because Jesus was God in the flesh, He alone could pay the debt we owed to God.
 - a) ***21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.-2Cor 5:21***

B. ONLY GOD CAN FULLY REVEAL HIMSELF SO WE CAN KNOW HIM

1. ***"No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."-Jn 1:18***
2. ***"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"-Jn 14:9***
3. ***"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell."-Coloss 1:19***
4. ***"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."-Coloss 2:9***
5. ***"who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person," -Heb 1:3***

C. ONLY GOD CAN FORGIVE SINS

1. ***"Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."³ And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"-Mt 9:2-3***

D. ONLY GOD CAN RAISE HIMSELF FROM THE DEAD

1. ***"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."-Jn 10:18***
2. ***"And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!"-1 Cor 15:17***

E. ONLY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

- a) If Jesus is not God, He cannot be worshiped. If Jesus is God, then worshiping Him is not optional, it is the only appropriate response.
- b) The question of Jesus' deity is not an academic debate. Christians pray to Jesus, worship Jesus, sing to Jesus, and trust Jesus for salvation. Therefore, either Jesus is God and worthy of worship, or Christians are idolaters. There is no middle ground.-John Stott

2. The wise men worshiped Jesus as a child.
 - a) ***"And they fell down and worshiped Him."-Mt 2:11***
3. After Jesus walked on water and calmed the storm:
 - a) ***Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.-Mt 14:33***
4. All of heaven is worshipping Him now
 - a) ***"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...."And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the elders fell down and worshiped."-Rev. 5:12 & 14***

F. ONLY GOD CAN BE FINAL JUDGE

1. Final judgment belongs to God alone because only God is perfectly holy, all-knowing, completely just, and sovereign over eternal destinies.
 - a) ***Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is Judge-Ps 50:6***
 - b) ***For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son. -Jn 5:22***
 - c) ***It is He (Jesus in context) who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.-Act 10:42***
 - d) ***Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.-Acts 17:31***

VII. FINAL THOUGHT

- A. *If Jesus is not God in human flesh, then Christianity is reduced to merely another religion offering noble teachings and moral principles. But if Jesus is truly God incarnate, then Christianity is not simply one option among many—it is the truth, and Christ is worthy of our worship, trust, and wholehearted obedience.*

