

IS JESUS REALLY GOD? *answered*

By Mark Roberts

A small brochure entitled, "Is Jesus Really God?" has been circulated by The Institute of Islamic Information and Education. It offers various proofs that Jesus is not deity, with the express intention of teaching that Jesus is not God. The tract states "the very Bible which is used as a basis for knowledge about Jesus and as the basis for doctrine with Christianity clearly belies this claim." Is this really so? Can the claims the Institute makes be answered from the Word of God? This tract will prove that the accusations about Jesus' deity are completely false, cannot be substantiated from scripture and will lead people away from God.

Jesus - God in the Flesh

The tract fundamentally misunderstands the mission of Jesus here on this earth, and so raises erroneous and false charges against Jesus' deity. The apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of God, tells us Jesus "*being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, **taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.** And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*" (Philippians 2:6-8). Notice that Jesus was not a man but came in "the likeness of men." Thus, since Jesus came in flesh we should not be surprised to find Him becoming hungry, getting tired, or showing other signs of humanity. That is why He came -- to experience life exactly as we know it. Jesus loved us so much that He gave up some privileges and powers of deity to come here and accomplish our redemption. Thus it is a terrible mistake to try to apply the normal attributes of God (such as not tiring, needing food, etc.) to Jesus while in the *unusual* state of being in flesh.

Yet this is exactly the mistake the Institute's tract makes. Over and over it tries to say Jesus isn't deity because while in the flesh here on earth He didn't have all the attributes of deity. The Institute says, "1. God is All Knowing... but Jesus was not." The text that follows quotes Mark 13:32 in which Jesus says He doesn't know some thing the Father knows. But all this proves is that while Jesus was in the flesh He voluntarily gave up the perfect knowledge He enjoyed when in His normal state in heaven. Truthfully, this passage actually proves that Jesus is God. "*But of that day and hour no **man** knows, not even the **angels** in heaven, nor the **Son**, but only the Father*" (Mark 13:32). Notice the progression in the passage. Men don't know, angels don't know, and even Jesus doesn't know. But if Jesus was only a man it would be redundant for Him to say He didn't know -- He already told us no man knew. So Jesus obviously is more than just a man!

The tract says Jesus is not God because "2. God is all powerful... but Jesus was not." Several verses are quoted in which Jesus says He did nothing of Himself. Do these prove Jesus is not deity? Hardly. All these verses prove is that Jesus and the Father work together, in total harmony and union in all that we do. Jesus wants us to

understand that He was not here on His own or operating as some sort of heavenly "Lone Ranger." Again, this was just part of how Jesus operated when He was here in the "likeness of men."

The tract shows the same misunderstanding of Jesus' mission here on earth in its points three, four and five. "3. God does not have a God . . . but Jesus did have a God." The tract mocks Jesus' cry on the cross "My, my God why hast thou forsaken Me? (Matt. 27:46), asking if Jesus shouldn't have said, "Myself, myself, why hast thou forsaken me?" But Jesus was not crying to Himself, He was crying to His Father in heaven with whom He shares the One Divine Essence. That Jesus spoke or prayed to another does not prove Jesus isn't God, it only proves that Jesus is not the Father.

Interestingly, in this point the tract says, "God is the ultimate judge" but Jesus said, "*For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.*" (John 5:26-27). The Institute is right: God is the ultimate judge, Jesus has the authority to judge, and so is God!

The tract continues with point four. "God is an invisible spirit . . . but Jesus was flesh and blood." This is exactly true, but does not prove that God could not decide to take on flesh to redeem mankind. For certain, *usually* God is a spirit, and *usually* He cannot be seen but Jesus coming here was anything but usual.

Point five says "No one is greater than God and no one can direct Him . . . but Jesus acknowledged someone greater than himself." Yet we have already read from Philippians 2:6-8 that Jesus "humbled Himself." Naturally, while in the flesh, Jesus acknowledged that the Father was greater than He was. But this admission does not prove that the divine essence within Jesus' flesh was any less than deity. Remember, being in submission to another cannot and does not make a person inferior. We are all subject to governing officials, but we are not subhuman as a result, are we? Similarly, Jesus was subject to the Father but that did not make Him sub-deity. The Institute's tract completely fails to grasp what it means for Jesus to come in the "likeness of men" and come here as God in the flesh.

Again, it is important to understand that Jesus voluntarily gave up many privileges and powers of deity when He came here. He could have taken them again any time (John 10:17-18). But Jesus loved us so much He was willing to come here and be wrongfully treated that we might have redemption from our sins (John 3:16).

Unfortunately, the Institute's tract concludes by pointing people to the Quran, rather than the Bible. Several passages are given from the Quran that speak against Jesus' deity, and even deny His death for all mankind.

Yet a careful study of the Quran finds that it cannot possibly be the Word of God. First, the Quran contradicts the Bible. The Quran says Noah's son drowned (11:42-42) but Gen. 7:1-5 says all saved. The Quran teaches that Abraham left his father (19:46-47)

but Genesis 11:32; 12:4 says he didn't. The Quran says Zacharias was silent three days (3:41) but Luke 1:13, 20, 23, 57ff says nine months. The Quran grants easy divorces, for many reasons (2:229-232) but Matthew 19:9 gives one reason. The Quran says Jesus was not crucified (4:157-159) but Luke 23:33 says He was.

The response of some is to say, "So what – the Bible is wrong." But Islam's own prophet, Muhammad, says the Bible is right. The Quran says the Bible is God's word (2:75). Jews and Christians are told to look into their own scriptures for "guidance and light" (5:44-48). Would Muhammad send Christians and Jews to a corrupted, faulty book which would teach them error? Further, the Quran emphatically states that the Word of God cannot be altered (10:65). What can we conclude? We must believe the Bible!

The word of God is clear about Jesus Christ. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:1, 14). The Word is Jesus, and the Word is God. Jesus tells us Himself. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* (John 8:58).

Is Jesus really God? Men may say "no," but the Bible says "yes." Thus if we are to be believers in God and His Word we must conclude that Jesus is deity. Do not be deceived by the misconceptions others have about Jesus Christ. He is deity, and your salvation depends upon accepting this fact. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24).

Ask the one who gave you this tract, or contact the church distributing this tract, for more information about how to obey Jesus Christ. He is King of Kings, Lord of Lords and Mighty God!