

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

What to Know When a Cult Member Knocks on Your Door

Philippians 2:5-11

1 There was a young couple who attended the first church I ministered with years ago. They were on the fringes of their faith and attended worship only during the holidays. Members of a well known cult knocked on their door one day and offered to give them literature and lead Bible studies in their home regularly. One day I received a letter from this couple condemning our church and calling our church members hypocrites. The reasons? We celebrated birthdays, Christmas and Easter. We taught the false doctrines about the existence of heaven and hell. We were all considered by them to be under Satan's influence. They now had their minds made up and would never change them.

I asked myself how I could fortify my congregation from becoming prey to these cults leading them away from their faith. Should I preach sermons about these religious cults and expose their false doctrines? There are so many of them. 2

There are common elements to most of the religious cults. They usually have another source of divine revelation beside the Bible, they were established by a charismatic leader and they deny the nature of Lord Jesus; they deny His deity. ³

Muslims teach the virgin birth of Mary but deny the Lord's deity. Try figuring that out!

Since I preach mostly expository messages I decided to emphasize the deity of Lord Jesus every time I shared a passage that presented Jesus as God in flesh. ⁴ If you understand fully the deity of the Lord Jesus you should not fall prey to the cults.

Our scripture passage today contains the gospel story and emphasizes this central teaching of our Christian faith. ⁵ It's from Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 through 11, **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ 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.**

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! ¹ ₆

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ²

The following is some of my research from the Bible concerning the Lord's deity. ⁷ Let's first look at . . .

I. The Term "Lord"

The term "Lord". ⁸ This was the favorite term for addressing God in the Old Testament. ⁹

When Moses was before God on Mount Sinai God gave Himself the divine name "I AM". ³ ₁₀ The name of

¹ v5-8.

² v6-11.

³ Exodus 3:14 - God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

God is four Hebrew consonants יהוה in the Old Testament. However, when Jews read the scriptures out loud and come to this divine name they do a strange thing. ¹¹ Out of respect for God and to avoid breaking the fourth of the ten commandments, they will substitute the word “Lord” (אֲדֹנָי) rather than pronounce the divine name. ¹²

Lord was the favorite term the disciples used for addressing Jesus! ⁴

The second thing I want to point out is that . . . ¹³

II. The Bible Calls Jesus God

The Bible calls Jesus God. ¹⁴

The Old Testament prophecies call the Messiah God. ¹⁵ At the virgin birth Jesus is named Emmanuel = God is with us. ¹⁶

The prophecy is found in Isaiah, chapter 9, verse 6, **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be called**

⁴ Luke 6:46 - Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ¹⁷ The fulfillment is in Matthew, chapter 1, verse 23, **“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” — which means, “God with us.”** ¹⁸

Then there are several Old Testament scriptures pointing this out quoted or referred to in the New Testament.

Old Testament Reference	New Testament Quote
Isaiah 40:3 - A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.	Matthew 3:3 - This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

Old Testament Reference	New Testament Quote
<p>Psalms 24:7 & 10 - Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. . . Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty— he is <u>the King of glory.</u></p>	<p>I Corinthians 2:8 - None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified <u>the Lord of glory.</u></p>

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Old Testament Reference	New Testament Quote
<p>Isaiah 6:1-3 - I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were</p>	<p>John 12:41 - Isaiah said this because <u>he saw Jesus' glory</u> and spoke about him.</p>

flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

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Old Testament Reference	New Testament Quote
<p>Isaiah 8:13-14 - The LORD Almighty is the one you are to <u>regard as holy . . . he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.</u> And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.</p>	<p>I Peter 2:8 - Now to you who believe, <u>this stone is precious.</u> But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” and, “<u>A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.</u>”</p>

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Old Testament Reference	New Testament Quote
<p>Proverbs 16:4 - The</p>	<p>Colossians 1:16 - For</p>

LORD works out everything for his own ends.

by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

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Old Testament Passage

Joel 2:32 - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

New Testament Quote

I Corinthians 1:2 - To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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There's the passages recorded by John. ²⁵ In chapter 1, verses 1 through 3, we have, **In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God, & 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.** The "Word", the expression of God's thoughts, was God. ²⁶

Then, in verse 14, **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.** This "Word" became flesh, a man; Lord Jesus! ²⁷

The second post resurrection upper room appearance of the Lord so impressed "Doubting" Thomas that he would fall on his knees and cry out, **My Lord and my God!** ⁵ ²⁸

Next are the passages recorded by Paul. ²⁹ Writing to Titus he would say, **while we wait for the blessed hope**

⁵ John 20:28.

— the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ⁶ ₃₀

In Romans, chapter 9, verse 5, he says, Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! ₃₁

Then in Colossians, chapter 1, verses 15 and 16, speaking about Jesus, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ₃₂

Then there's a passage recorded by Peter in Second Peter, chapter 1, verse 1, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours.

Lord Jesus was definitely called God in the Bible! ₃₃

⁶ Titus 2:13.

The third concept that I want to point out is . . .

III. Jesus is Described as God

³⁴ Jesus is described as God. Let me point out some details from our first scripture today from Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 through 11. ³⁵

Jesus existed at one time in the form of God. ⁷ ³⁶ He emptied Himself, taking on the likeness and appearance of a man and the form of a servant. ⁸ ³⁷ Then, He became obedient to the point of suffering and dying on a cross. ⁹ ³⁸

Then, He was exalted with a name above all other names. ¹⁰ ³⁹ When His name is mentioned in the future

⁷ Philippians 2:5-6 - Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped . . .

⁸ Philippians 2:7 - made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁹ Philippians 2:8 - And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

¹⁰ Philippians 2:9 - Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will acknowledge Him as Lord! ¹⁰ 40

To top off the descriptions is Colossians, chapter 2, verse 9, For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. 41

Then Lord Jesus is described as having God's attributes. Matthew, chapter 28, verse 18, says, **Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** 42 Then, talking about Jesus Paul said, **Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.** 11

The final fact I want to point out is that . . . 43

¹⁰ Philippians 2:10-11 - that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹¹ I Timothy 1:17.

IV. Jesus Claimed to be God

Jesus claimed to be God. The Apostle John makes a big deal of it in his gospel. ⁴⁴ In chapter 8, verse 58, **Before Abraham was born, I am.** ⁴⁵ In chapter 10, verse 30, **I and the Father are one.** ⁴⁶ In chapter 10, verses 37 and 38, **The Father is in Me and I in the Father.** ⁴⁷ In chapter 12, verses 44 and 45, **When he (a man) looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.** ⁴⁸

John finally relates a conversation Jesus has with His disciples to push this idea home. In John, chapter 14, verses 7 through 11, he records, **Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”** Jesus answered: **“Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?** The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is **the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.** Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the

Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ⁴⁹

Mark relates a very interesting scripture in chapter 2, verses 1 through 12. Jesus is teaching in a house crowded with people. Four men carry their paralyzed friend on a stretcher to ask Jesus to provide healing. They can't get in the house because of the crowd, so they climb up to the roof. They chisel a hole in the ceiling big enough to lower their friend into the room in front of the Lord. He stops his sermon, approaches the crippled man and says, "Your sins are forgiven".

The religious leaders in the back of the room go bananas! ⁵⁰ In verse 7 they yell, "**Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?**" ⁵¹ Notice the Lord's answer in verses 8 through 10, "**Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.**" He said to the

paralytic, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

Think about this a minute. This man is paralyzed, can't move a muscle. Yes, only God can forgive sins. But only God can instantly heal a completely paralyzed man! ⁵²

Besides that, His enemies clearly understood His claims to be God. ⁵³ They tried to kill Him for it because He was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. ¹¹ ⁵⁴

As the Lord was walking He was surrounded with men with rocks in their hands ready to kill him. He asked them what He did to deserve this. John, chapter 10, verse 33, was their reply, “We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

¹¹ John 5:18-19 - For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

So – was Jesus just a good moral man or simply a prophet as many claim? If He claimed to be God, He was either a liar, a psychotic who actually believed he was someone he wasn't or He was God, Almighty, Creator and sustainer of the universe!

You decide!

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