

# The Early Church Fathers on The Divinity of Christ

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity. As such He was one in being with the Father. In other words, He was fully God. While engaged in His ministry He spoke with the authority of God and did things that only God could do. He forgave sins, healed the sick, and raised the dead of His own power. The apostle Paul refers to Him as "Our great God and Savior" (Titus 2:13). When Stephen was being stoned to death, "he called out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (Acts 7:59). If Jesus were not God, this prayer would make no sense. Jesus Himself proclaims that He will judge all of mankind (Matthew 25:31-46). The Scribes and Pharisees were aware of what Jesus was communicating to them. And that is why they accused Him of Blasphemy. And that is why they wanted Him crucified.

## Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church at Ephesus in Asia . . . predestined from eternity for a glory that is lasting and unchanging, united and chosen through true suffering by the will of the Father in Jesus Christ our God (*Letter to the Ephesians* 1 [A.D. 110]).

To the Church beloved and enlightened after the love of Jesus Christ, our God, by the will of him that has willed everything which is (*Letter to the Romans* 1 [A.D. 110]).

## Aristides

[Christians] are they who, above every people of the earth, have found the truth, for they acknowledge God, the Creator and maker of all things, in the only-begotten Son and in the Holy Spirit (*Apology* 16 [A.D. 140]).

## Justin Martyr

And since they are compelled, they agree that some Scriptures which we mention to them, and which expressly prove that Christ was to suffer, to be worshipped, and [to be called] God (*Dialogue with Trypho* [A.D. 155]).

## Tatian the Syrian

We are not playing the fool, you Greeks, nor do we talk nonsense, when we report that God was born in the form of a man (*Address to the Greeks* 21 [A.D. 170]).

## Melito of Sardis

It is no way necessary in dealing with persons of intelligence to adduce the actions of Christ after his baptism as proof that his soul and his body, his human nature, were like ours, real and not phantasmal. The activities of Christ after his baptism, and especially his miracles, gave indication and assurance to the world of the deity hidden in his flesh. Being God and likewise perfect man, he gave positive indications of his two natures: of his deity by the miracles during the three years following after his baptism, of his humanity in the thirty years which came before his baptism during which, by reason of his condition according to the flesh, he concealed the signs of his deity, although he was the true God existing before the ages (Fragment in Anastasius of Sinai's *The Guide* 13 [A.D. 177]).

## Irenaeus

For the Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and from their disciples the faith in one God, Father Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who announced through the prophets the dispensations and the comings, and the birth from a Virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from heaven in the

glory of the Father to reestablish all things; and the raising up again of all flesh of all humanity, in order that to Jesus Christ our Lord and God and Savior and King, in accord with the approval of the invisible Father, every knee shall bend of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth (*Against Heresies* 1:10:1 [A.D. 189]).

#### **Clement of Alexandria**

The Word, then, the Christ, is the cause both of our ancient beginning — for he was in God — and of our well-being. And now this same Word has appeared as man. He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things (*Exhortation to the Greeks* 1:7:1 [A.D. 190]).

#### **Caius**

I mean Justin and Miltiades, and Tatian and Clement, and many others, in all which divinity is ascribed to Christ. For who is ignorant of the books of Irenaeus and Melito, and the rest, which declare Christ to be God and man? (Fragment 2 [circa A.D. 200]).

#### **Tertullian**

The origins of both his substances display him as man and as God: From the one, born, and from the other, not born (*The Flesh of Christ* 5:6-7 [A.D. 210]).

#### **Origen**

Although he was God, he took flesh; and having been made man, he remained what he was: God (*On First Principles* 1:0:4 [A.D. 225]).

#### **Hippolytus**

Only [God's] Word is from himself and is therefore also God, becoming the substance of God (*Refutation of All Heresies* 10:33 [A.D. 228]).

For Christ is the God over all, who has arranged to wash away sin from mankind, rendering the old man new (ibid. 10:34).

#### **Cyprian of Carthage**

One who denies that Christ is God cannot become his temple [of the Holy Spirit . . .] (Letters 73:12 [A.D. 253]).

#### **Arnobus**

"Well, then," some raging, angry, and excited man will say, "is that Christ your God?" "God indeed" we shall answer, "and God of the hidden powers" (*Against the Pagans* 1:42 [A.D. 305]).

#### **Lactantius**

He was made both Son of God in the spirit and Son of man in the flesh, that is, both God and man (*Divine Institutes* 4:13:5 [A.D. 307]).

#### **Council of Nicea 1**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through Him all things were made (*Creed of Nicea* [A.D. 325]).