HOW DOES THE BIBLE TEACH THAT JESUS IS FULLY DIVINE?

WHEATON, Ill.—The question of Jesus’s divinity has been at the epicenter of theological discussion since the early church. At the Council of Nicea in AD 325, the church fathers affirmed that Jesus the Son of God is “true God from true God.” Today, creeds such as this are professed in churches across the world, and yet there remains confusion as to who Jesus is. To some, Jesus is a radical prophet—nothing more than a footnote in history. To others, Jesus is the only Son of God, fully God and fully man—the author of history entering history.

Lanier writes, “In short, I am arguing that the full Trinitarian Christology that is bedrock to Christianity is found throughout the New Testament from the earliest days, is derived from the teachings of Jesus himself, and is rooted in the Old Testament. Put differently, my aim is to help readers discern how the concepts that later coalesce in the creeds are right there in the pages of Scripture from the outset of the Christian church.”

Lanier accomplishes this goal by tracing how Scripture does this in six major ways:

1. Asserting Jesus’s preexistence
2. Claiming that Christ is a fully divine “Son”
3. Applying the Old Testament in a variety of ways to show that Jesus is fully Israel’s God
4. Describing early worship offered to Jesus
5. Showing the relation of the Son to the Father and Holy Spirit
6. Describing Jesus as theos (“God”)

“The New Testament authors did not feel the need to defend or prove the idea that Jesus is God,” writes Lanier. “They assumed it. It was the inescapable conclusion toward which they were all drawn. This confession of the full lordship and the full divine status of Jesus Christ exploded overnight and was shared by all Christians. It shows up everywhere in the New Testament, even in places one might not expect. It was the air they breathed. Thus, the earliest Christology is not that Jesus was a man and got upgraded. The earliest Christology is not that Jesus was an angelic spirit being who shifted into human form. The earliest Christology is the highest and lowest and everything between: in Jesus Christ is found all the fullness bodily. The man Jesus is truly God.”
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Lanier (PhD, University of Cambridge) is associate professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He also serves as associate pastor of River Oaks Church (PCA). He has published multiple books and scholarly articles on early Christology, the Gospels, the Septuagint, and other topics. He currently resides in Orlando with his wife, Kate, and their three daughters.

Website: Glanier.wordpress.com

Twitter: @Lanier_Greg

Founded in 1938, Crossway is a not-for-profit global Christian publishing ministry that publishes gospel-centered, Bible-based content, to honor our Savior and serve his Church. Crossway seeks to help people understand the all-encompassing implications of the gospel and the truth of God’s Word—for all of life, for all eternity, and for the glory of God alone. Crossway is the global publisher of the ESV (English Standard Version) Bible, more than 1,000 Christian books, and an extensive list of gospel literature. For additional information visit crossway.org.

# # #