



APOLOGETICS
PRESS

Deity of Christ: Jesus Was Rational

A STUDY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST on Earth quickly reveals that Jesus functioned rationally, logically, and sensibly. Unlike many religious people who claim to represent Him, Jesus possessed high respect for doctrinal correctness (after all, He authored the Law!). In all of His interactions with people, He conducted Himself with logical precision. One example of this attribute of our Lord is seen on the occasion when Jesus entered the synagogue and encountered a man

who had a deformed hand (Matthew 12:9–13). This circumstance prompted His enemies to ask Him a question in hopes of being able to accuse Him of breaking the Law. They asked: “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” Of course, they had pre-decided that the answer to the question was “no,” that, in fact, the Law would naturally forbid such an action.

Unfortunately, the prevailing interpretation of the Law of Moses

at the time, at least among the Jewish leaders, was that the Sabbath law enjoined total inactivity—as if everyone was to sit down for 24 hours and do nothing. This view was a distortion of God’s law on the matter. The Law gave the right, even the obligation, to engage in several activities (that could rightly be designated “work”) that did not constitute violation of the Sabbath regulation. On this occasion, Jesus pinpointed one such instance: “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?” (vs. 11). Jesus was recalling a directive from the Law of Moses:

You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother. And if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him. You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with

his garment; with any lost thing of your brother’s, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise; you must not hide yourself. You shall not see your brother’s donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again (Deuteronomy 22:1-4; cf. Exodus 23:4-5).

Such passages give insight into the nature of God, and provide tremendous assistance in making proper application of God’s laws to everyday circumstances.

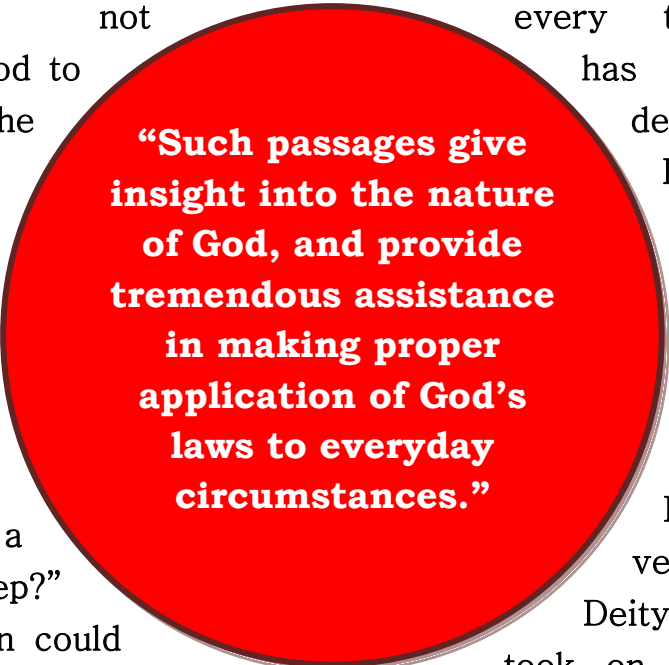
Observe that God’s laws never contradict or countermand each other. Unlike manmade laws which often manifest inconsistency and contradiction, God’s laws function in perfect harmony with each other. The Mosaic passage to which Jesus alluded demonstrates that the general principle of the cessation of usual work on the Sabbath did not conflict with any number of specific circumstances in which benevolence and compassion were to be expressed. In an agriculturally-based society, a family’s survival depends on its

farm animals. If a sheep, ox, or donkey were to break out of its stall, flee the premises, and then fall into a pit from which it would be unable to extricate itself, the animal would most likely die or become seriously ill if left in its predicament for 24 hours. To expend the necessary effort (i.e., “work) to retrieve the animal from danger was not considered by God to be included in the Sabbath prohibition. Hence, Jesus stated the logical conclusion: “Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep?” (vs. 12). If action could be exerted to see to the well-being of a dumb animal, then obviously, God would approve of action taken to see to the physical care of a human being! The logic is penetrating and decisive. Far from suggesting that law is unimportant and may be ignored under the guise of “human need,” or implying that humans can break

the “letter of the law” in order to keep the “spirit of the law” (see Miller, 2003), Jesus demonstrated that inherently built into God’s laws are all concerns deemed by Deity to be necessary. The benevolent, loving thing to do will always harmonize with God’s laws, since “love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10), i.e., every truly loving action has already been defined by God in His legal admonitions. The religion of Christ surpasses all human religion. It is rooted in the very essence of Deity. When Jesus took on human form on Earth, He showed Himself to be the Master logician Who always conducted Himself in a rational manner. May we do likewise.

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