

The Real Jesus

Peter distinguished Jesus and God as separate entities:

- Jesus "said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered, 'The Messiah of God'" (Luke 9:20).
- "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him" (Acts 2:22).
- "Rulers of the people and elders, ... Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:8, 10).
- "God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).
- "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; ... he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

Thus, the New Testament *does not* teach Jesus was God, but that God *sent* him,² God was *with* him,³ God was *in* him,⁴ and God *raised* Jesus from the dead. The traditional view that Jesus is God is based on only a few Bible texts.⁵ Most of them have grammatical difficulties partly due to the primitive structure of ancient language. Thus, Bible versions often differ as to whether they call Jesus "God." Some texts are rightly interpreted to mean God was in Christ, not Christ was God. In sum, Jesus was not God but a virgin-born man who endured temptation, suffering, shame, trial, and violent execution to provide salvation for us, and God vindicated and exalted him for it. Praise Jesus and his God!

Kermit Zarley, a former Trinitarian for 22 years, wrote this tract as a condensation of his (now retitled) book, *The Restitution: Biblical Proof Jesus Is Not God*. Visit his website, kermitzarley.com, to print this tract free and learn about him and his several books on biblical studies that are available on amazon.com. Mr. Zarley is known mostly for his 30-year, full-time career as a pro golfer on the PGA Tour and its Champions Tour. He was a pioneer in bringing Christianity to American professional sports by co-founding and co-leading the PGA Tour Bible Study, which still thrives today. Kermit also has been a member of the Society of Biblical Literature since 1999.

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² It is stated over forty times in the Gospel of John that God "sent," or did "send," Jesus.
³ John 3:2; 8:29; 16:32; Acts 10:38; cf. John 1:1-2.
⁴ John 10:38; 14:10-11; 17:21; 2 Corinthians 5:19.
⁵ Most prominent are: Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 18; 10:30; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6-7; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20.

Jesus of Nazareth is the most famous man who has ever lived. But who was he? To learn his identity, we must turn to the Bible. The New Testament presents Jesus as a seer-prophet, a teaching rabbi, an itinerant preacher, a wisdom sage, a charismatic healer, a miracle worker, and an exorcist. It applies to him the titles Messiah/Christ, Son of Man, Son of God, Savior, and Lord. It says he lived a sinless life and died for our sins, and for those who believe this about Jesus, God will forgive them of their sins and give them eternal life.

The Bible also says God vindicated Jesus by raising him from the dead and that for the next forty days he literally appeared to many of his disciples. Then he ascended to heaven and sat down with God on his throne. The Bible also says Jesus will return to earth in the future, bringing with him his promised and glorious kingdom. Then God will raise the dead and execute judgment day.

In the 4th and 5th centuries, Church fathers departed from the Bible by claiming Jesus was both man and God by possessing two natures: a human nature and a divine nature, the latter called "the deity of Christ." And in their creeds, they said if anyone did not believe Jesus is God—co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit—that person did not believe in Jesus and thus was not a genuine Christian. So, they said God is three Persons even though this statement and the word "Trinity" are not in the Bible. Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Protestants still embrace these proclamations, falsely claiming they are biblical.

When the Catholic Church said Jesus is God, it departed from the Bible's declaration that God is "one." Why? As the Church expanded into Gentile lands, it (1) became rather anti-Semitic, (2) abandoned the established principle of using biblical terms and categories to identify Jesus, (3) went beyond Scripture by employing Greek metaphysics to identify Jesus more precisely, and (4) interpreted Jesus' status as the Son of God ontologically, making this title synonymous with God. Rather, Jesus' Sonship must be understood in its Jewish context, meaning "One specially favored by God."

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Jesus is not God due to the following evidence or lack of it:

- There is *no* biblical evidence that Jesus *thought* he was God.
- There is *no* biblical evidence that Jesus *claimed* he was God.
- There *is* biblical evidence Jesus *denied* he claimed to be God.
- The New Testament regularly *distinguishes* God and Jesus.
- The New Testament often *interchanges* "God" and "the Father."
- The New Testament constantly *identifies* "God" as "the Father."
- The New Testament *never* says "Jesus is God" or anything like it.
- In the synoptic gospels and Acts, Jesus is *never* identified as God.
- When Jesus was interrogated by the Sanhedrin, he was *never* accused of claiming to be God.

Jesus is not God because Jesus said the following:

- "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mark 10:18).¹
- "The Son can do nothing on his own but only what he sees the Father doing" (John 5:19, cf. v. 30).
- "The Father ... the one who alone is God" (John 5:37, 44).
- Jesus' enemies said, "You" are "making yourself God." Jesus replied, "I said, 'I am God's Son'" (John 10:33, 36).
- "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).
- "Father, ... the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:1, 3).
- "Jesus said to her, ... 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" (John 20:17).

Jesus is not God because of the following logical reasons:

- If Jesus did miracles by means of a divine nature, the Father did not do the works of Jesus.
- If Jesus' ability to do miracles was intrinsic to himself, he did not need the power of the Holy Spirit.
- God is totally self-sufficient, but Jesus needed the miracle-working power of God's Spirit.
- There is no biblical evidence that Jesus had two natures and two wills, which is non-human.
- Since God transcends his creation, being God is incompatible with being human.
- God established, and thus foreknew, the yet future date of Jesus' return to earth, but Jesus did not know it (Mark 13:32).

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Jesus is not God because of these additional Scriptures:

- Jesus was visible, but God is "invisible" to us humans (1 John 1:1-3; 1:18; 1 Timothy 1:17).
- Jesus was approachable, but God "dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Timothy 6:16; cf. Psalm 104:2).
- Jesus was tempted, but "God cannot be tempted by evil" (Mark 1:13; James 1:13).
- Jesus was mortal, dying on a cross, but "the only God" is "immortal" (1 Timothy 1:17; cf. 6:16).
- Jesus called the Father "my God" several times (Matthew 27:46; John 20:17; Revelation 3:2, 12).
- "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10).
- "Jesus answered, ... 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;' ... Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'" (Mark 12:29, 32).

Paul did not believe Jesus was God because Paul wrote:

- "God is one" and "the only wise God" (Romans 3:30; 16:27).
- The Father is "the only God" and the "only Sovereign" (1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15).
- "For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human" (1 Timothy 2:5).
- "There is no God but one ... there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Corinthians 8:4, 6).
- "There is ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father" (Ephesians 4:4-6).
- "(The) God and Father of our/the Lord Jesus" (Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 11:31; Ephesians 1:3, 17).
- "God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Colossians 1:3).
- "Christ is God's" since "God is the head of Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:23; 11:3).
- "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).
- "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (6x).

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