

# Jesus Of Nazareth: God The Son?

## Introduction

Many of the references that follow taken individually can be cleverly explained away, but together they are compelling. Why do I say that? I say that because these references include explicit statements of Jesus' divinity - by Jesus, his Apostles and those who heard him teach and saw him forgive and heal - but there are also many subtle references to his divinity. Were Jesus genuinely God we would expect to see occasions where he quite naturally spoke as if he were God whilst not trying to prove he was. Those subtle references are instances of just that. So the complete Biblical picture is of a man who did teach directly that he is God and also when not directly teaching about his divinity he spoke and acted in such a way that he fundamentally believed he is God. (I say "is" because he is alive today and still God the Son!)

## Jesus is the Creator

**John 1:3** 'All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.'

**John 1:10** 'He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.'

**Colossians 1:16** 'For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him.'

It is correct to translate these verses with 'all things' and not as 'all *other* things'. The insertion of the word *other* is interpretative, it is not present in the MSS.

**Hebrews 1:2** 'but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.'

Compare the above texts with those below, which state that God created the universe.

**Genesis 1:1** 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.'

**Isaiah 44:24** 'Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: "I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.'

It is most interesting that God states that he **alone** created the heavens and the earth.

**Isaiah 45:12** 'I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.'

**Jeremiah 27:5** 'It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me.'

## Jesus is Credited with Divine Titles and Attributes

**Matthew 21:15, 16** 'But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise'?" '

Psalm 8, which Jesus quotes from, has YHWH receiving the praise from infants, but in Jesus' situation the infants were praising Jesus. Jesus understands himself to be the rightful receiver of YHWH's praise.

**Matthew 23:34** 'Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town.'

Jesus claimed to be the one who sent prophets etc. Those are people sent by God; not man.

**Matthew 23:37** 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!'

Here Jesus assumes the position that God had in the OT. Compare Psalm 57:1 'Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.' The imagery employed by Jesus is identical to the imagery employed by David (*divinely inspired*) to describe God's protection of his people. Simply put, Jesus claims to be the "owner" of God's wings of protection! Other occurrences of God being described as gathering his people under "his wings" are Psalms 17:8; 36:7 and 61:4.

**Mark 13:26, 27** 'And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.'

Firstly, only God rides on clouds (i.e. the Shekinah). Secondly, the elect, which are God's chosen people according to Luke 18:7; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12 and Titus 1:1, Jesus calls *his* elect. The Son of Man chose the elect. If Jesus were not assuming divinity here he would have had to say words to this effect: "And then he will send out the angels and gather the Father's (or God's) elect from the four winds..."

**John 1:1** 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

Should the translation read 'and the Word was a god' because the definite article (the) is not present before *theos* (god)? There is a Greek grammatical rule that allows for this verse to mean the Word was *the* God (in English the translation would mean "the Word was fully God"), even though the article (the) is not present in the Greek text. Moreover, the NWT, which translates the verse as 'a god' is entirely inconsistent with

the rest of John 1. For example, in verses 6, 12, 13, and 18 there are no definite articles present before *theos* (god) in the MSS, however, the NWT consistently translates those occurrences of *theos* as “God”. Verse 1 is therefore translated as ‘a god’ solely in order to maintain a predetermined doctrinal position.

**John 1:18** ‘No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.’

**John 5:18** ‘This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.’

Whilst this was the Jews’ perception of Jesus’ claims, this verse is a note by the author (John). Were this a misconception he would have cleared it up immediately as he does elsewhere (e.g. John 2:21). Furthermore, Jesus himself did not go on to clear up the supposed misconception. This suggests that Jesus believed the Jews’ interpretation of his claims to be correct.

**John 8:58, 59** ‘Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.’

If Jesus were not making a claim of divinity it is hard to understand why the Jews were preparing to stone him - a punishment for blasphemy!

**John 10:30-33** ‘ “I and the Father are one.” The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?” The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God.” ’

Whilst the following verses could be debated that debate will never prove that Jesus was arguing that he was misunderstood by the Jews. At no point does Jesus overturn their misunderstanding. They had not misunderstood and Jesus had not made a mistake. Rather Jesus refers to Psalm 82 by way of saying that he is superior to the rulers of Israel. Certainly God is superior and so the Jews were right, Jesus ‘made himself God’ and he did not deny it when pressed.

**John 14:8, 9** ‘Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” ’

**John 18:5, 6** ‘They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.’

English translations insert “he” after “I am” because otherwise the Greek does not make sense. But “he” is not present in the Greek in either case. Again we see Jesus alluding to the divine name YHWH from Exodus 3.

**John 20:27-29** 'Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." '

This is not a case of exclamation akin to our "Oh my God!" I doubt that Jesus would stand for such a thing. Yet Jesus associated a blessing with the belief that Thomas entered into. Rather Thomas addresses Jesus with the titles, "my Lord and my God", for the text has, 'he answered him'.

**Acts 20:28** 'Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.'

Jesus shed his blood, not the Father. Here Paul says that God shed *his own* blood. Jesus must be God for that to be true.

**Romans 9:5** 'To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.'

**Philippians 2:9-11** 'Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so 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.'

Compare this with Isaiah 45:23, 'By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance." ' Every knee cannot simultaneously bow before God and Jesus if they are not one and the same being and therefore either Isaiah or Paul was wrong. The only option that remains is that Jesus is indeed God and Isaiah and Paul both spoke the truth!

**Colossians 1:15** 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.'

**Colossians 1:19** 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell'.

**Colossians 2:9** 'For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily'.

**1 Timothy 3:16** 'Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.'

It is immediately obvious that Paul is describing Jesus. However, who was he talking about in the immediate context? Verse 15 has, '... the church of the living God ...' It seems most likely that Paul was referring to God in his description of the gospel in verse 16.

**Hebrews 1:8** 'But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom." '

**1 John 5:20** 'And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.'

**Revelation 17:14; 19:16** 'They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.'; 'On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.'

Compare Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:3; 1 Timothy 6:15, where God (YHWH) is given the title King of kings and Lord of lords.

**Revelation 22:12, 13** ' "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." '

Compare Revelation 1:8 ' "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." ' The Lord God is the Alpha and Omega and so is Jesus - that's equality of being.

## Lord

Whenever Jesus took the title “Lord” or was addressed with that title in the New Testament the Greek word used is *kyrios*. That is significant because whenever YHWH is translated into Greek the same word (*kyrios*) is used. A few examples:

**John 13:13** (Jesus speaking) ‘You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.’

**1 Corinthians 10:26** ‘For “the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.” ’

Paul quotes Psalm 24:1, which refers to YHWH, Paul uses *kyrios* to translate YHWH.

**Hebrews 8:8-12** ‘For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbour and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” ’

This is a citation of Jeremiah 31:31 ff.. This passage has several references to YHWH.

Those references are consistently translated with *kyrios* by the author of Hebrews (they have been underlined).

So we see Jesus taking for his own as a title the same word used to translate God’s name of Exodus 3.

## Jesus is God and Saviour

According to the Old Testament God (YHWH) is Saviour:

**Psalms 106:21** 'They forgot God, their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt'.

**Isaiah 43:3** 'For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.'

**Hosea 13:4** 'But I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no saviour.'

It is interesting to note that God claims to be the only Saviour. There is no Saviour besides him. That leaves no room for Jesus to be a separate being and still be saviour. He could however be God the Son and Saviour.

The Apostle Paul also agrees that God is Saviour:

**1 Timothy 1:1** 'Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope'.

**Titus 1:2b, 3** 'God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Saviour'.

But then Jesus is called "God and Saviour":

**Titus 2:13** 'waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'.

**2 Peter 1:1** 'Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ'.

Some of those translations may be disputed but we still end up with Jesus being called Saviour - a divine title. Here is one more reference to Jesus the Saviour:

**Titus 1:4** 'To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour.'

## Jesus is to be Worshipped

**Matthew 14:33** ‘And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” ’

**Matthew 28:9** ‘And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him.’

**Matthew 28:16, 17** ‘Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted.’

**Luke 24:52** ‘And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy’.

**John 9:35-38** ‘Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshipped him.’

**Hebrews 1:6** ‘And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.” ’

This reference is significant for at least two reasons. 1. It makes a fundamental distinction between the angels and Jesus (the Son) - Jesus is not an angel, not even a superior angel. 2. Angels - who know who to worship - are commanded to worship Jesus (the Son).

**Revelation 5:14** ‘And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshipped.’

This scene of heaven has the elders (who surround God's throne) falling down and worshipping. But if you read the whole chapter you realise that they are worshipping Jesus alongside God (the Father). It cannot be understood any other way, they have just sung a song in joint honour of “him who sits on the throne” and the Lamb - that song provides the context to their worship. Verse 8 also explicitly states that they fell down before **the Lamb**.

In all of the cases cited above the Greek word used for *worship/worshipped* is *proskuneō*. There are several cases in the Bible where the same word is used to describe an act that is to be reserved for God alone: Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8; John 4:23, 24; Acts 10:25, 26 and Revelation 22:9.

It will not do to translate *proskuneō* in some places as worship and in the places that it is an act toward Jesus as “pay obeisance to”. To do so is interpretive, not translation.

In only a few cases it is right to not translate *proskuneō* as ‘worship’ but the context makes this clear. The instances regarding Jesus do not allow for this interpretation. In particular Matthew 28:9 the disciples **grabbed** Jesus' feet and worshipped him. This is clearly nothing other than the worship that should be reserved for God.