

Jesus Is God Outside The Gospels

We continue our study of New Testament passages that teach Jesus is God. In our previous study, we looked at the testimony of the gospels that Jesus Christ is God. This time we are going to look in the New Testament outside the gospels. We will discover that the rest of the New Testament also teaches He is God.

JESUS IS FULLY GOD. The first passage I want to consider is Philippians 2:6-8. This is a very important, however somewhat complex passage. We may not cover every detail, but we will come close.

We are going to look at the key aspects that show us that Jesus is God. Later on we will deal with some passages that the cults emphasize, and we will show you why the cults are wrong in their interpretations.

The end of Philippians 2:5 says,

... Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ... Philippians 2:5-6 (NASB)

There is a lot in this verse, so we are going to look at it a piece at a time. The first part says, “although He existed in the form of God.” The word for “form” is *morphe* in the Greek. It just means “nature and character.” That is, Jesus existed in the full character and nature of God. This emphasizes the outward manifestation of the internal. The idea is that Jesus is completely God in terms of His nature and His character.

Some of the church creeds actually talk about Jesus and the Father being consubstantial, a fancy term that just means they are of the same substance, or the same essence. The early Church fathers struggled trying to explain that Jesus is God. Rather than using the Greek work *morphe*, they said Jesus is of the same essence as the Father or Jesus is of the same substance. The wording, substance, is a little different, but it conveys the right idea. Jesus was God, in every way, shape, or form. Again, the Greek word is *morphe*—same nature,

same character. There is no difference.

THE KENOSIS THEORY. Then the verse says “and did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.” The message is, Jesus did not try to hang onto being God. The Greek word for “grasp”

actually has the idea to hang on with force. “But,” verse 7 says, “emptied Himself.” Now this is very interesting. In theology we refer to this as the Kenosis Theory. The Greek word for “emptied,” is the verb *kenoo*. *Kenoo* means to empty completely or to eliminate something that has high status. So it has the idea that Jesus emptied Himself of something. The question in theology is of what did He empty Himself? It is a theological issue because the passage does not tell us of what He emptied Himself. Paul just writes that Jesus emptied Himself. He lets the rest of Scripture answer our questions.

Let me give you a couple of clues. In John 17:5 we are told that Jesus prayed,



Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. John 17:5 (NASB)

What Jesus just said is that “before the world was, I had glory,”

Glorify me together with yourself with the glory that I had.

Why does He speak in the past tense? Because He is God in human form now and His glory is not visible. Matthew 17 helps us understand to what He is referring when He said, “Glorify me now with the glory that I had with you.” Matthew 17 records the Mount of Transfiguration account and the first verse says,

Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. Matthew 17:1 (NASB)

Then He was transfigured before them.

And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Matthew 17:2-3 (NASB)

Jesus took the disciples up on a mountain. While they are up there, all of a sudden Jesus turns radiant. That was the Shekhinah glory. The glory of God is emanating from Jesus. In John 17:5 Jesus was talking about the glory that He had with the Father. When He walked among us here on planet earth, He did not walk around radiant in white. It only happened on the mountain. That means His glory was hidden while He walked among us. When Jesus came to earth, He suppressed the use of His divine prerogatives.

Luke 2:52 also helps us understand what happened when Jesus became a human,

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:52 (NASB)

What does it mean that Jesus was increasing in wisdom, increasing in stature, and increasing in favor with God and man? Is the answer that because He was God, He already knew everything? How can He be increasing in wisdom? The cults say He was not God, He was just a man. He was having to learn. He was having to increase in wisdom.

The correct answer is that not only did he “empty” Himself of His glory, but He also suppressed the use of His divine knowledge and of His wisdom. He suppressed the manifestation of these attributes, but they were still there. When He was on the Mount of Transfiguration, all of a sudden He was radiant white in glory. The glory was still there; but when He walked among us, it was not apparent. He suppressed the use of His divine prerogatives for the entire time He lived on earth.

Let us now look at another example of this in Matthew 24:36. Jesus is speaking about the coming of the Kingdom and says,

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Matthew 24:36

It seems unlikely that Jesus would not know when His return is going to happen since He is God. Notice that He says, “nor the Son.” But then He said,

... but the Father alone.

One of the attributes that He suppressed was His knowledge. That obviously includes the future.

Luke 5:17 is another important passage. I think this is one of the most curious passages in the New Testament. It says,

One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing. Luke 5:17 (NASB)

This verse implies that He was not able to heal on His own without the help of the Holy Spirit. That means He sup-

pressed His ability to do miracles. So how did He do miracles when He walked among us? He did it by the power of the Spirit. We know He forgave sin. He could do that because He is God. So when Philippians 2:7 says that “Jesus emptied Himself,” we believe He emptied Himself of the use of His divine prerogatives. If I may use another phrase, He limited the use of His attributes. Somebody once asked, “Did Jesus give up His attributes?” No, He can not give them up because He is God. He still had the attributes. He just suppressed their use. He just limited the use of them so He could experience what it is like to be human.

... but emptied Himself ...

JESUS IS FULLY MAN. Notice the next phrase in Philippians 2:7 speaks of His humanity.

... taking the form of a bond-servant ...

This word form, *morphe*, also appeared in verse 6. There we were told that He was in the form of God. The word for “form” in verse 7 says He was in the form of a bondservant. Jesus is not only of the same nature and character as God. Verse 7 says He was of the same nature and character as a human being. “Bondservant” refers to us or to humans.

... and being made in the likeness of men ...

Now you might be interested knowing what the word “likeness” means. The Greek word means “similar” or “looked like.” Jesus looked like us. Verse 6 tells us that Jesus was completely and totally God. Verse 7 says he was completely and totally man. He was the God-man. He was both.

I want you to notice in verse 7 a very interesting word. The verse says, “being made in the likeness of man.” The phrase I want you to look at is “being made.” The word for “being made” is *ginomai* in the Greek. *Ginomai* means “to become.” God the Son became a man. In verse 6 we are told He “existed in the form of God.” It is a present participle which means He was existing in the form of God. He was eternally God. Then verse 7 says, “being made”—that is

ginomai. He became in the likeness of men. Therefore, Jesus is in the *morphe* of God in verse 6. In verse 7 it says He is in the *morphe* of man. He is completely and totally God, and He is also man.

Verse 8 emphasizes the humanity of Christ further.

Being found in appearance as a man . . . Philippians 2:8 (NASB)

When people looked at Jesus, He looked like a man. If we read Romans 1:3-4, that is exactly what it says. This is a very powerful passage of scripture, Philippians 2:6-8 really says that Jesus was completely God and completely man. When He walked among us, He did not walk around knowing everything, because He chose not to know everything when He became a man. That was a decree made in eternity past. That was part of the grand plan from eternity past.

Romans 1:4 shouts loudly,

... who was declared the Son of God . . . Romans 1:4 (NASB)

We saw in our last study that the phrase, “Son of God,” simply means God.

Who was declared ...

I am going to change the wording.

... who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord . . . Romans 1:4 (NASB)

If we go back to verse 3, it tells us that,

Concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh . . . Romans 1:3 (NASB)

So verse 3 says He was man and verse 4 says He was God. And verse 4 says the resurrection proves that He is God.

... who was declared the Son of God ...

Or God.

... with power by the resurrection from the dead. . .

That is, the resurrection proved He was God. So again, He is man. He is also God, and now we understand why He had to grow in wisdom and knowledge. Now we know why He did not know the time of the Second Coming or the Kingdom. Only the Father did. Now you know why the Holy Spirit had to help Him when He did healings. These occurred because He limited the use of His divine prerogatives. We also understand why on the Mount of Transfiguration He suddenly illuminated with the Shekhinah glory.

CHRIST - FIRSTBORN OF CREATION. Colossians 1:15 is our next verse and it says,

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
Colossians 1:15 (NASB)

The word for “image” is *eikon*. It means “copy” or “exact likeness.” The idea is that Jesus is an exact likeness of God the Father. He is the image or He is identical to the invisible God. There is no difference at all. Now the cults love this verse. They usually ignore the word “image” or *eikon*. They do not want to emphasize the idea that He is actually God. They say, “Look, it says ‘firstborn of all creation.’ That means He was the first one created, He was the first in the creative acts of God.” That is not what the word firstborn means. The word for firstborn just means “priority.” What it is really telling us is that Jesus is identical to the invisible God. He is the priority one of all creation. When He became a human, He was sinless; He was the most important human who ever existed on the planet is what we are being told. To see that, look at verse 18 where the same term “firstborn” also appears. It says,

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. Colossians 1:18 (NASB)

The word for “firstborn” just means “priority one.” But how

can we know this? I want you to think about what is being said. It says He is the firstborn from the dead.

What do the cults say? He was the first one who was created. So I have a question. How many people at this point in time have come back to life from the dead? The cults want to tell us to believe that “firstborn” means that He is the first in line, the first in sequence. Verse 18 says He is the firstborn from the dead. The logical question is: is there anyone else who came back to life before Jesus was resurrected? There are six people recorded in the pages of Scripture who were previously resurrected: the son of Zarephath’s widow, the son of the Shunammite woman. Do you remember Elisha? Inadvertently his corpse touched that of another dead person. That man came back to life. The son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus are the others. All we need is one, but we have six. Jesus was not the first one to come back from the dead. Jesus was actually the seventh one that is recorded in Scripture. So there is something wrong with the cults’ understanding of the word “firstborn” if it is supposed to mean that He was the first in the sequence of people resurrected from the dead.

We have just shown that the word firstborn just means priority one. In fact, if we look at the rest of verse 18, it becomes clear. It says,

... so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
... Colossians 1:18b (NASB)

So He is the priority one. He is the most important human to ever come into existence.

Next look at verse 16.

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. Colossians 1:16 (NASB)

Think about this verse. It says that Jesus created everything visible and invisible. What is invisible? Angels, demons, things in heaven! What does that mean? He created everything including all the angels. The Jehovah’s Witnesses want

us to believe that Jesus is an angel. I have a question for you then: how do you create yourself? Note the verse says,

... all things have been created through Him and for Him.

How does he create Himself if He is a created being? The answer is He did not. You can not create yourself. How do you create something before you even exist? You cannot! Verse 16 is screaming that Jesus is God! The cults ignore the obvious in verse 15-18.

Verse 17 adds,

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:17 (NASB)

He is eternal and is holding the creation together. That is divine power. That is deity. The message is that Jesus is God. He died, was resurrected and returned to heaven.

CHRIST - FULLNESS OF DEITY. Let us look at another passage, Colossians 2:9.

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form. Colossians 2:9 (NASB)

The word for “fullness” is *pleroma* and it just means “total” or “completeness.” When we are told, “For in Him all the fullness,” the idea is that He is completely deity, there is nothing left out. This is another incredible statement - that Jesus is completely deity within. Everything that we call deity, everything that Jehovah God is, Jesus is. It is like a bottle filled up to the top, just totally filled up. A simple statement, a powerful statement, He is total deity.

CHRIST - GOD AND SAVIOR. Or next passage is Titus 2:13. It says,

... looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus . . . Titus 2:13 (NASB)

At first upon reading this, we might conclude that Jesus is God. But the cults read it and say, “No, that is not true. They point to the word ‘and.’” The cults split up the sen-

tence. They separate “God” and “Savior,” and tie “Savior” to “Christ Jesus.” But they have ignored the Greek text. They have ignored the Grand Sharp Rule. In Greek there is a rule that tells you how to understand certain phrases. The Grand Sharp Rule says that if we have two nouns joined by the Greek word *kai*, which is the word “and” and there is a definite article before the first noun, they refer to the same person. So let’s look at the verse. Do we have a “definite article” before “God and Savior”? It says,

The glory of our great God and Savior. . .

Actually, the Greek text has the word “the” before the phrase, but it is not translated. So you would have to know a little Greek at that point. There is a definite Greek article that precedes the first noun. Then the Grand Sharp Rule says: When you have two nouns connected by the word *kai*, and a definite article occurs in front of the phrase, then that means the two noun describes the same person. That means “God” describes “Savior” and Savior describes God. What is the correct conclusion? Jesus is God and Savior. The cults can not split it up. This means that the Savior is described as God and so Jesus is both Savior and God.

This is really valuable. Did you know that it also applies to 2 Peter 1:1? That passage says,

... by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:1 (NASB)

The Grand Sharp Rule applies to this verse also. We have two nouns, “God” and “Savior,” connected by the Greek word *kai*, there is a definite article before “God.” You do not see the definite article in your English translation because it would sound a little funny to say, “Our the God.” Sounds a little funny, but the message is that Jesus is God and Savior.

CHRIST - THE BEGOTTEN. Hebrews 1:1 is our next important verse.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways . . . Hebrews 1:1 (NASB)

The message is that God spoke through the prophets in this verse. Verse 2-3 reads,

In these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory . . . Hebrews 1:2-3 (NASB)

Now notice, here we are told that in “these last days” God has spoken to us in His Son and that Jesus made the world.

And He is the radiance of His glory . . . Hebrews 1:3a (NASB)

What does that mean? We already saw that on the Mount of Transfiguration where all of a sudden He displayed His Shekhinah glory.

And He is the radiance of His glory, the exact representation of His nature . . . Hebrews 1:3a (NASB)

That is, Jesus is identical with God in His very nature.

. . . and upholds all things by the word of His power . . . Hebrews 1:3b (NASB)

We saw that in Colossians. He is holding everything together.

. . . When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels . . . Hebrews 1:3c-14a (NASB)

Now notice this passage says that He is much better than the angels.

. . . as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:14b (NASB)

What is the verse telling us? It tells us that He is better than the angels. The message is, He is not an angel. The Jehovah’s

Witnesses want us to believe that Jesus is an angel. They want us to believe that He is Michael the Archangel. This says that He is better than the angels. In verse 5, the writer of Hebrews goes on to prove the point. He says,

*For to which of the angels did He ever say,
“YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”?
Hebrews 1:5a (NASB)*

We saw in our last study that the phrase “begotten” just means He is the unique one. But what is being described? The message is the term “begotten” was never used of the angels.

*And again,
“I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM
AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME”?
Hebrews 1:5b (NASB)*

The message is God never ever said that to any of the angels, it is only to Christ. Verse 6 adds,

*And when He again brings the firstborn into the world . . .
Hebrews 1:6a (NASB)*

We already know what “the firstborn” means. It means He is the priority one.

*He says,
“AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP
HIM.” Hebrews 1:6b (NASB)*

Now we are told the angels worshiped this person. Why would the angels of God worship another angel? It is important to see that the writer of Hebrews is trying to make the point that Jesus is not an angel. Chapter 1 was written so that we would understand that Jesus was and is not an angel.

The next verse is verse 7.

And of the angels He says,

“WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS,
AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE.”
Hebrews 1:7 (NASB)

The message is angels are ministers. Now verse 8 is what we were waiting for.

But of the Son He says,
“YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER .
. . . Hebrews 1:8a (NASB)

Who has been speaking? God the Father. Verse 8 says,

But of the Son He says,
“YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER,
AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER
OF HIS KINGDOM. Hebrews 1:8 (NASB)

It tells us that Jesus is God. Verse 9 adds,

YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED
LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS
ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE
YOUR COMPANIONS.” Hebrews 1:9 (NASB)

How many Gods are there, according to scripture? Only one. The Old Testament says so. The New Testament confirms that.

In the very first study in this series we learned the Old Testament teaches that Jesus is God. When we went through that study, we demonstrated that there is only one God. In Isaiah 43:10 God states that He is God, and there are no other gods who will come after Him. Isaiah just kept pounding the point that there is only one God. When we arrived at chapter 48, verse 16, God was still speaking and He said, “The Lord God has sent Me.” The “Me” was the one who was speaking all along, who was saying that He was the only God and that is what verse 9 is saying,

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you . . .

So how do we explain one God, and yet He is God the Father and the Son? The only way we can explain it is to create the term “trinity.” We define it to mean a plural one. We cannot explain it; we just know that Scripture teaches the concept. Because scripture teaches it and we believe scripture, we therefore believe the concept and know it is true. There is a triune God who is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What is the message of Hebrews 1? Jesus is not an angel; He is God. This is powerful.

CHRIST - THE TRUE GOD. Another important passage is 1 John 5:20.

. . . and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20 (NASB)

What does this verse tell us about Jesus? He is the true God. The Greek word for “is” in this verse is *emi*. It just means “to be” and it is in the present tense. So the idea is that Jesus is being the true God. He is the true God.

CHRIST - ALPHA AND OMEGA. The last verse we are going to examine is Revelation 1:8. It reads,

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Revelation 1:8 (NASB)

Be sure to read Revelation 22:12-13. You will learn that Jesus refers to Himself as the Alpha and Omega. So why did I pick this verse? Think about how Jehovah described Himself in Isaiah 48:12. He described Himself as the Alpha and the Omega. He said He was the first and the last. What we are being told here is that Jesus is Jehovah of the Old Testament. He is God. Jesus is God.

CONCLUSION. This is our third study (one in the Old Testament and two in the New Testament) that teaches that Jesus is God. We looked in the Gospels and outside of the Gospels. We trust these studies have really helped you understand that Jesus is God.

If you ever encounter cult members who want to tell you Jesus is not God, you have some verses that will help you discern their false teaching. Perhaps you can make some notes

in the back of your Bible which serve as reminders.

But the most important message in this series is that Jesus was God in the Old Testament and is God today. He is our Savior and Lord and someday He will judge every person. He has warned us that most people will go to hell and few will go to heaven. Where are you going when you die? What will you say when you stand before Him on judgment day?

Have you repented of your sin and turned to God? Have you believed that our God came in human flesh to die for our sins and returned to life? His resurrection proved that He was and is our God and His death was accepted by God the Father. He urges us to turn to Him in order to have our sins forgiven and live with Him forever.