

Jesus Is Not God Bible Verses

by Servetus the Evangelical

Nearly all Christians believe that Jesus was and is God. That is what the institutional church has always taught. Christians professedly rely strongly on the Bible for this belief. Yet there is not a single verse in the Bible which states unequivocally, “Jesus is God,” or the like. Moreover, the New Testament (NT) gospels have no statement by Jesus in which he identifies himself as God. In fact, there are many Bible verses which indicate that Jesus cannot be God by declaring that only the Father is God or by distinguishing Jesus from God. Three irrefutable texts in the NT declare both of these points.

First, and foremost, is one of Jesus’ sayings recorded only in the Gospel of John. The setting is the Last Supper, right before he was arrested and crucified. He prayed for his disciples, saying, “Father,... This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17.3). So, Jesus tells the Father that he is “the only true God” and then distinguishes himself from that one God. Both of these points clearly indicate that Jesus himself cannot also be God.

Two other times the Johannine Jesus identified the Father as the only God. Earlier, he told his Jewish opponents that the Father is “the one and only God” (John 5.44). And again, at the Last Supper, Jesus distinguished himself from this one and only God by commanding his disciples, “believe in God, believe also in Me” (14.1).

The other two NT passages which irrefutably establish that only the Father is God and distinguish Jesus from God are in Paul’s letters. He writes to the church at Corinth, “There is no God but one.... yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him” (1 Corinthians 8.4, 6). Here, Paul clearly declares that for Christians there is one God, who is the Father, and there is no other God, so that Jesus is not God.

Many traditionalist scholars cite this passage to support that Jesus preexisted, thus concluding that he was God. Yet in doing so, they often ignore its double declaration that there is only one God, who is the Father. Even if Jesus did preexist, this does not prove that he was God. Second Temple Judaism regarded that some righteous men preexisted, and Jews did not conclude that such preexistence indicated that they actually were gods.

The third irrefutable NT text which establishes that there is God, who is the Father, and distinguishes Jesus from God is in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. He writes, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4.4-6). Here, Paul implicitly identifies Jesus Christ as “one Lord” and distinguishes him from the “one God,” whom he unequivocally identifies as “the Father.” Paul is a unique author of NT literature in that he exclusively and consistently calls Jesus “Lord” and the Father “God.” Therefore, he never calls Jesus “God.”

So, these three NT passages—John 17.3; 1 Corinthians 8.4, 6; and Ephesians 4.4-6—establish without any doubt that only the Father is God, so that Jesus cannot be God.

One of many other NT passages which confirm that Jesus is not God is his encounter with the rich young ruler. This man sincerely asked Jesus, “‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone’” (Mark 10.17-18/Luke 18.18-19; cf. Matthew 19.16-17).

Many Christians have been confused by this saying, thinking that Jesus implies that he himself is not good. Yet the NT often declares that Jesus was such a righteous man that he never sinned (Acts 3.14; 2 Corinthians 5.21; Hebrews 4.15; 7.26; 2 Peter 2.22).

Then what did Jesus mean when he said, “no one is good but God alone”? In the OT, Judaism, and especially Hellenistic theism, only the one God was considered “good” in an absolute sense. This must be what Jesus meant in this encounter. Humans were called “good” only in a derived sense, with God being recognized as the Source of goodness.

Many NT passages show that Jesus was not God. For instance, the NT often declares that God sent Jesus, God was with Jesus in his mission, and God raised him from the dead. Peter preached about “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst” (Acts 2.22). Peter later proclaimed about “Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him” (10.38).

In the salutations of all ten of Paul’s NT letters he identifies God as the Father, distinguishes God from Jesus Christ, and he never mentions the Holy Spirit. He typically writes, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This evidence further affirms that only the Father is God and that Jesus is not God.

Moreover, the Bible contains several verses which state unambiguously that Jesus had a God, and most say he was the Father. When Jesus hung upon the cross he quoted Psalm 22.1, crying out to the Father, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME” (Matthew 27.46/Mark 15.34). The day Jesus was resurrected, he said to Mary Magdalene, “I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God” (John 20.17). And three times the Apostle Paul writes about “the God and Father of our/the Lord Jesus (Christ)” (Romans 15.6; 2 Corinthians 1.3; 11.31; cf. Ephesians 1.17). Finally, the heavenly Jesus is quoted five times saying “My God” (Revelation 3.2, 12; cf. 1.6).

The one verse that caused this author to first question whether Jesus is God is Jesus’ saying in his Olivet Discourse about the time of his return. He said, “But of that day and/or hour no one knows, not even the angels of/in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Matthew 24.36/Mark 13.32). Since Jesus did not know the time of his return he could not have been God, for he reveals that God the Father did know it. Orthodox Christian theology has always insisted that God is omniscient, knowing everything, including everything about the future. Accordingly, Jesus could not have been God.