

Is Jesus God?

Phil 2:9–11



Introduction

- The word *name* can signify a proper name (which may or may not express meaning), a description, or a title.
- Jesus wears DIVINE NAMES that point to his deity.
- The use of divine proper names, description, and titles does not necessarily prove that a person is God (e.g., Joshua/Jesus), but often, when applied to Jesus, the context demands more than a symbolic use.
- We will consider these divine names: Jesus, Lord, God.

Jesus

- The name Jesus (or Joshua) means “Yah saves” (= the shortened name of Yahweh + the verb [Heb. yāša‘] for “to save”), which points to his mission and nature.
- The Bible describes the name of Jesus, which may not only mean the name “Jesus,” as an exalted name (Phil 2:9–11; Col 3:17; cf. “Jesus” or “Son,” Heb 1:3–4).
- The naming of Jesus specifically identifies him as the divine savior of humanity (Matt 1:21; cf. Luke 2:11; 1 John 4:14; 2 Pet 1:1, 11; Acts 4:12).

Lord

- The word *lord* (Gr. *kyrios*) can be a respectful title (“sir,” Matt 21:30), a master (10:24), a false god (“lord,” 1 Cor 8:5), or the divine name (“LORD,” Matt 22:44).
- The common practice in the NT (and the LXX) is to render the divine name Yahweh as “Lord” (Gr. *kyrios*).
- The Bible repeatedly applies the divine name to Jesus.
 - The Gospels apply (OT) scripture about the LORD to Jesus (Isa 40:3 // Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23).
 - Acts does the same (Joel 2:32 // Acts 2:21, 36; cf. 1:24).

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Far from being a designation of a lesser deity, when used in place of the divine name YHWH, Lord was the highest designation a Jew could use for deity. (Bowman/Komoszewski)

God

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It was such shocking language that, even when the beliefs underlying it were firmly established, it was easier, and perhaps more politic, to express those beliefs in less direct terms. The wonder is not that the NT so seldom describes Jesus as God, but that in such a milieu it does so at all. (R. T. France)

God

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- The Gospel of John specifically says that “in the beginning ... the Word [Jesus] was God,” but is this translation of John 1:1 correct?
 - Some (e.g., JW's) translate the phrase as “the Word was a god” but this is biased and inconsistent (1:1, 2, 6, 12, 13, 18),
 - Others (e.g., Unitarians) wrongly as “the Word was the God,”
 - But only “the Word was God” is contextually acceptable (John 1:1; cf. v. 18; 20:28).

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The construction the evangelist chose to express this idea was the most concise way he could have stated that the Word was God and yet was distinct from the Father. (Daniel B. Wallace)

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God

- John is not the only New Testament writer to refer to Jesus as God; Paul (and Luke), the writer of Hebrews, and Peter do as well (Acts 20:28; Rom 9:5 [?]; Heb 1:8; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet 1:1; cf. “Granville Sharp’s Rule”).
- The name Immanuel (“God with us”) identifies Jesus as God, but not God the Father (Matt 1:23; Isa 7:14; cf. 9:6–7 [?]; 63:16; 53:10; 8:18; Heb 2:13).
- In sum, the Bible identifies Jesus as God; though he is not God the Father (or the Spirit), he is God.

Conclusion

- Jesus wears divine names.
 - *Jesus*. The name “Jesus” means “Yahweh Saves,” and Jesus himself saves us from our sins. Will we seek his favor?
 - *Lord*. Jesus is the Lord, that is, Yahweh himself, because he is the “I AM.” Will we obey him as the divine master?
 - *God*. Jesus is God. Will we honor him as God?
- Jesus is God. He accepted divine **HONORS**, possessed divine **ATTRIBUTES**, and wore divine **NAMES**.