

The Bible Denies the Divinity of Jesus

(part 1 of 7): Bible's writers



Christians and Muslims both believe in Jesus, love him, and honor him. They are, however, divided over the question of his divinity.

Fortunately, this difference can be resolved if we refer the question to both the Bible and the Quran, because, both the Bible and the Quran teach that Jesus is not God.

It is clear enough to everyone that the Quran denies the divinity of Jesus, so we do not need to spend much time explaining that.

On the other hand, many people misunderstand the Bible; they feel that the belief in Jesus as God is so widespread that it must have come from the Bible. This article shows quite conclusively that the Bible does not teach that.

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is not God. In the Bible God is always someone else other than Jesus.

Some will say that something Jesus said or something he did while on the earth proves that he is God. We will show that the disciples never came to the conclusion that Jesus is God. And those are people who lived and walked with Jesus and thus knew first hand what he said and did. Furthermore, we are told in the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible that the disciples were being guided by the Holy Spirit. If Jesus is God, surely they should know it. But they did not. They kept worshipping the one true God who was worshipped by Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (see Acts 3:13).

All of the writers of the Bible believed that God was not Jesus. The idea that Jesus is God did not become part of Christian belief until after the Bible was written, and took many centuries to become part of the faith of Christians.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, authors of the first three Gospels, believed that Jesus was not God (see Mark 10:18 and Matthew 19:17). They believed that

he was the son of God in the sense of a righteous person. Many others too, are similarly called sons of God (see Matthew 23:1-9).

Paul, believed to be the author of some thirteen or fourteen letters in the Bible, also believed that Jesus is not God. For Paul, God first created Jesus, then used Jesus as the agent by which to create the rest of creation (see Colossians 1:15 and 1 Corinthians 8:6). Similar ideas are found in the letter to the Hebrews, and also in the Gospel and Letters of John composed some seventy years after Jesus. In all of these writings, however, Jesus is still a creature of God and is therefore forever subservient to God (see 1 Corinthians 15:28).

Now, because Paul, John, and the author of Hebrews believed that Jesus was God's first creature, some of what they wrote clearly show that Jesus was a pre-existent powerful being. This is often misunderstood to mean that he must have been God. But to say that Jesus was God is to go against what these very authors wrote. Although these authors had this later belief that Jesus is greater than all creatures, they also believed that he was still lesser than God. In fact, John quotes Jesus as saying: **"...the Father is greater than I."** (John 14:28). And Paul declares that the head of every woman is her husband, the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God (see 1 Corinthians 11:3).

Therefore, to find something in these writings and claim that these teach that Jesus is God is to misuse and misquote what those authors are saying. What they wrote must be understood in the context of their belief that Jesus is a creature of God as they have already clearly said.

So we see then, that some of the later writers had a higher view of Jesus, but none of the writers of the Bible believed that Jesus is God. The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one true God, the one whom Jesus worshipped (see John 17: 3).

In the rest of this article we will explore the Bible in more depth, and deal with the passages which are most often misquoted as proofs of Jesus' divinity. We will show, with God's help, that these do not mean what they are so often used to prove.

(part 2 of 7): Acts of the Apostles

Jesus performed many miraculous wonders, and he without doubt said a lot of wonderful things about himself. Some people use what he said and did as a proof that he was God. But his original disciples who lived and walked with him, and were eyewitnesses to what he said and did, never reached this conclusion.

The Acts of the Apostles in the Bible details the activity of the disciples over a period of thirty years after Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Throughout

this period they never refer to Jesus as God. They continually and consistently use the title God to refer to someone else other than Jesus.

Peter stood up with the eleven disciples and addressed the crowd saying:

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” (Acts 2:22).

It was God, therefore, who did the miracles through Jesus to convince people that Jesus was backed by God. Peter did not see the miracles as proof that Jesus is God.

In fact, the way Peter refers to God and to Jesus makes it clear that Jesus is not God. For he always turns the title God away from Jesus. Take the following references for example:

“God has raised this Jesus...” (Acts 2:32)

“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)

In both passages, the title God is turned away from Jesus. So why he did this, if Jesus was God?

For Peter, Jesus was a servant of God. Peter said:

“God raised up his servant...” (Acts 3:26).

The title servant refers to Jesus. This is clear from a previous passage where Peter declared:

“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.” (Acts 3:13).

Peter must have known that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never spoke of a Triune God. They always spoke of God as the only God. Here, as in Matthew 12:18, Jesus is the servant of God. Matthew tells us that Jesus was the same servant of God spoken of in Isaiah 42:1. So, according to Matthew and Peter, Jesus is not God, but God’s servant. The Old Testament repeatedly says that God is alone (e.g. Isaiah 45:5).

All of the disciples of Jesus held this view. In Acts 4:24 we are told that the believers prayed to God saying:

“...they raised their voices together in prayer to God. ‘Sovereign Lord,’ they said, ‘you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.’”

It is clear that the one they were praying to was not Jesus, because, two verses later, they referred to Jesus as

“...your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.” (Acts 4:27).

If Jesus was God, his disciples should have said this clearly. Instead, they kept preaching that Jesus was God's Christ. We are told in Acts:

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.” (Acts 5:42).

The Greek word “Christ” is a human title. It means “Anointed.” If Jesus was God, why would the disciples continually refer to him with human titles like servant and Christ of God, and consistently use the title God for the one who raised Jesus? Did they fear men? No! They boldly preached the truth fearing neither imprisonment nor death. When they faced opposition from the authorities, Peter declared:

“We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus...” (Acts 5:29-30).

Were they lacking the Holy Spirit? No! They were supported by the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:3, 4:8, and 5:32). They were simply teaching what they had learnt from Jesus — that Jesus was not God but, rather, God's servant and Christ.

The Quran confirms that Jesus was the Messiah (Christ), and that he was God's servant (see the Holy Quran 3:45 and 19:30).

(part 3 of 7): Jesus is Not All-Powerful, and Not All-Knowing

Christians and Muslims agree that God is all-powerful and all-knowing. The Gospels show that Jesus was not all-powerful, and not all-knowing, since he had some limitations.

Mark tells us in his gospel that Jesus was unable to do any powerful work in his hometown except few things: **“He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.” (Mark 6:5).** Mark also tells us that when Jesus tried to heal a certain blind man, the man was not healed after the first attempt, and Jesus had to try a second time (see Mark 8:22-26).

Therefore, although we hold a great love and respect for Jesus, we need to understand that he is not the all-powerful God.

Mark's Gospel also reveals that Jesus had limitations in his knowledge. In Mark 13:32, Jesus declared that he himself does not know when the last day will occur, but the Father alone knows that (see also Matthew 24:36).

Therefore, Jesus could not have been the all-knowing God. Some will say that Jesus knew when the last day will occur, but he chose not to tell. But that complicates matters further. Jesus could have said that he knows but he does

not wish to tell. Instead, he said that he does not know. We must believe him. Jesus does not lie at all.

The Gospel of Luke also reveals that Jesus had limited knowledge. Luke says that Jesus increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52). In Hebrews too (Hebrews 5:8) we read that Jesus learned obedience. But God's knowledge and wisdom is always perfect, and God does not learn new things. He knows everything always. So, if Jesus learned something new, that proves that he did not know everything before that, and thus he was not God.

Another example for the limited knowledge of Jesus is the fig tree episode in the Gospels. Mark tells us as follows: **“The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.”** (Mark 11:12-13).

It is clear from these verses that the knowledge of Jesus was limited on two counts. First, he did not know that the tree had no fruit until he came to it. Second, he did not know that it was not the right season to expect figs on trees.

Can he become God later? No! Because there is only one God, and He is God from everlasting to everlasting (see Psalms 90:2).

Someone may say that Jesus was God but he took the form of a servant and therefore became limited. Well, that would mean that God changed. But God does not change. God said so according to Malachi 3:6.

Jesus never was God, and never will be. In the Bible, God declares: **“Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”** (Isaiah 43:10).

(part 4 of 7): The Greatest Commandment in the Bible and the Quran

Some will say that this whole discussion over the divinity of Jesus is unnecessary. They say, the important thing is to accept Jesus as your personal savior. On the contrary, the Bible's writers stressed that, in order to be saved, it is necessary to understand who exactly is God. Failure to understand this would be to violate the first and greatest of all the commandments in the Bible. This commandment was emphasized by Jesus, on whom be peace, when a teacher of the Law of Moses asked him: **“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” ‘The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’”** (Mark 12:28-30).

Notice that Jesus was quoting the first commandment from the book of Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Jesus confirmed not only that this commandment is still

valid, but also that it is the most important of all the commandments. If Jesus thought that he himself is God, why did not he say so? Instead, he stressed that God is one. The man who questioned Jesus understood this, and what the man says next makes it clear that God is not Jesus, for he said to Jesus: **“Well said, teacher,’ the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him.’” (Mark 12:32).**

Now if Jesus was God, he would have told the man so. Instead, he let the man refer to God as someone other than Jesus, and he even saw that the man had spoken wisely: **“When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’” (Mark 12:34).** If Jesus knew that God is a trinity, why did not he say so? Why did not he say that God is one in three, or three in one? Instead, he declared that God is one. True imitators of Jesus will imitate him also in this declaration of God’s oneness. They will not add the word three where Jesus never said it.

Does salvation depend on this commandment? Yes, says the Bible! Jesus made this clear when another man approached Jesus to learn from him (see Mark 10:17-29). The man fell on his knees and said to Jesus: “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied: “Why do you call me good? No one is good — except God alone.” (Mark 10:17-18).

By so saying, Jesus made a clear distinction between himself and God. Then he proceeded with the answer to the man’s question about how to get salvation. Jesus told him: **“If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17, also see Mark 10:19).**

Remember that the most important of all the commandments, according to Jesus, is to know God as the only God. Jesus further emphasized this in the Gospel According to John. In John 17:1, Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed, addressing God as Father. Then in verse three, he said to God as follows: **“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:3).**

This proves beyond doubt that if people want to get eternal life they must know that the One, whom Jesus was praying to, is the only true God, and they must know that Jesus was sent by the true God. Some say that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. But Jesus said that the Father alone is the only true God. True followers of Jesus will follow him in this too. Jesus had said that his true followers are those who hold to his teachings. He said: **“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.” (John 8:31).** His teaching is that people must continue to keep the commandments, especially the first commandment which emphasizes that God is alone, and that God should be loved with all our hearts and all our strengths.

We love Jesus, but we must not love him as God. Today many love Jesus more than they love God. This is because they see God as a vengeful person who wanted to exact a penalty from them, and they see Jesus as the savior who rescued them from the wrath of God. Yet God is our only savior. According to

Isaiah 43:11, God said: **“I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.”** Also God said according to Isaiah 45:21-22: **“Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.”**

The Quran confirms the first commandment and addresses it to all humankind (see the Holy Quran 2:163). And God declares that true believers love Him more than anyone else or anything else (Quran 2:165).

(part 5 of 7): Paul Believed That Jesus is not God

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote: **“I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions...” (1 Timothy 5:21).**

It is clear from this that the title God applies not to Christ Jesus, but to someone else. In the following chapter, he again differentiates between God and Jesus when he says: **“In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession...” (1 Timothy 6:13).**

Paul then went on to speak of the second appearance of Jesus: **“the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time.” (1 Timothy 6:14-15).**

Again, the title God is deliberately turned away from Jesus. Incidentally, many people think that when Jesus is called “Lord” in the Bible that this means “God.” But in the Bible this title means master or teacher, and it can be used for addressing humans (see 1 Peter 3:6).

What is more important, however, is to notice what Paul said about God in the following passage, which clearly shows that Jesus is not God: **“God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever.” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).**

Paul said that God alone is immortal. Immortal means he does not die. Check any dictionary. Now, anyone who believes that Jesus died cannot believe that Jesus is God. Such a belief would contradict what Paul said here. Furthermore, to say that God died is a blasphemy against God. Who would run the world if God died? Paul believed that God does not die.

Paul also said in that passage that God dwells in unapproachable light — that no one has seen God or can see him. Paul knew that many thousands of people had seen Jesus. Yet Paul said that no one has seen God, because Paul was sure that Jesus is not God. This is why Paul went on teaching that Jesus was not God, but that he was the Christ (see Acts 9:22 and 18:5).

When he was in Athens, Paul spoke of God as **“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.”** (Acts 17:24). Then he identified Jesus as **“the man he (i.e. God) has appointed.”** (Acts 17:31).

Clearly, for Paul, Jesus was not God, and he would be shocked to see his writings used for proving the opposite of what he believed. Paul even testified in court saying: **“I admit that I worship the God of our fathers...”** (Acts 24:14).

He also said that Jesus is the servant of that God, for we read in Acts: **“The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.”** (Acts 3:13).

For Paul, the Father alone is God. Paul said that there is **“one God and Father of all...”** (Ephesians 4:6). Paul said again: **“...for us there is but one God, the Father . . . and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ...”** (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Paul’s letter to the Philippians (Philippians 2:6-11) is often quoted as a proof that Jesus is God. But the very passage shows that Jesus is not God. This passage has to agree with Isaiah 45:22-24 where God said that every knee should bow to God, and every tongue should confess that righteousness and strength are in God alone. Paul was aware of this passage, for he quoted it in Romans 14:11. Knowing this, Paul declared: **“I kneel before the Father.”** (Ephesians 3:14).

The letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 1:6) says that the angels of God should worship the Son. But this passage depends on Deuteronomy 32:43, in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. This phrase cannot be found in the Old Testament used by Christians today, and the Septuagint version is no longer considered valid by Christians. However, even the Septuagint version, does not say worship the Son. It says let the Angels of God worship God. The Bible insists that God alone is to be worshipped: **“When the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites, he commanded them: ‘Do not worship any other gods or bow down to them, serve them or sacrifice to them. But the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices. You must always be careful to keep the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands he wrote for you. Do not worship other gods. Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. Rather, worship the LORD your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.’”** (2 Kings 17:35-39).

Jesus, on whom be peace, believed in this, for he also stressed it in Luke 4:8. And Jesus too fell on his face and worshipped God (see Matthew 26:39). Paul knew that Jesus worshipped God (see Hebrews 5:7). Paul taught that Jesus will remain forever subservient to God (see 1 Corinthians 15:28).

(part 6 of 7): Evidence from the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John, the fourth Gospel, was completed to its present form some seventy years after Jesus was raised up to heaven. This Gospel in its final form says one more thing about Jesus that was unknown from the previous three Gospels — that Jesus was the Word of God. John means that Jesus was God's agent through whom God created everything else. This is often misunderstood to mean that Jesus was God Himself. But John was saying, as Paul had already said, that Jesus was God's first creature. In the Book of Revelation in the Bible, we find that Jesus is: **“the beginning of God's creation” (Revelation 3:14, also see 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Colossians 1:15).**

Anyone who says that the Word of God is a person distinct from God must also admit that the Word was created, for the Word speaks in the Bible saying: **“The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works...” (Proverbs 8:22).**

This Gospel, nevertheless, clearly teaches that Jesus is not God. If it did not continue this teaching, then it would contradict the other three Gospels and also the letters of Paul from which it is clearly established that Jesus is not God. We find here that Jesus was not co-equal with the Father, for Jesus said: **“...the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28).**

People forget this and they say that Jesus is equal to the Father. Whom should we believe — Jesus or the people? Muslims and Christians agree that God is self-existent. This means that He does not derive his existence from anyone. Yet John tells us that Jesus' existence is caused by the Father. Jesus said in this Gospel: **“...I live because of the Father...” (John 6:57).**

John tells us that Jesus cannot do anything by his own when he quotes Jesus as saying: **“By myself I can do nothing...” (John 5:30).** This agrees with what we learn about Jesus from other Gospels. In Mark, for example, we learn that Jesus performed miracles by a power which was not within his control. This is especially clear from an episode in which a woman is healed of her incurable bleeding. The woman came up behind him and touched his cloak, and she was immediately healed. But Jesus had no idea who touched him. Mark describes Jesus' actions thus: **“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’” (Mark 5:30).** His disciples could not provide a satisfactory answer, so Mark tells us: **“Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.” (Mark 5:32).** This shows that the power that healed the woman was not within Jesus' control. He knew that the power had gone out of him, but he did not know where it went. Some other intelligent being had to guide that power to the woman who needed to be healed. God was that intelligent being.

It is no wonder, then, that in Acts of the Apostles we read that it was God who did the miracles through Jesus (Acts 2:22).

God did extraordinary miracles through others too, but that does not make the others God (see Acts 19:11). Why, then, is Jesus taken for God? Even when Jesus raised his friend Lazarus from the dead, he had to ask God to do it. Lazarus' sister, Martha, knew this, for she said to Jesus: **“I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” (John 11:22).**

Martha knew that Jesus was not God, and John who reported this with approval knew it also. Jesus had a God, for when he was about to ascend to heaven, he said: **“I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” (John 20:17).**

John was sure that no one had seen God, although he knew that many people had seen Jesus (see John 1:18 and 1 John 4:12). In fact Jesus himself told the crowds, that they have never seen the Father, nor have they heard the Father's voice (John 5:37). Notice that if Jesus was the Father, his statement here would be false. Who is the only God in John's Gospel? The Father alone.

Jesus testified this when he declared that the God of the Jews is the Father (John 8:54). Jesus too confirmed that the Father alone is the only true God (see John 17:1-3). And Jesus said to his enemies: **“...you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God.” (John 8:40).** According to John, therefore, Jesus was not God, and nothing John wrote should be taken as proof that he was God — unless one wishes to disagree with John.

(part 7 of 7): God and Jesus Are Two Separate Beings

For example, in Matthew 9:2, Jesus said to a certain man, **“Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.”** Because of this, some say that Jesus must be God since only God can forgive sins. However, if you are willing to read just a few verses further, you will find that the people **“...praised God, who had given such authority to men.” (Matthew 9:8).** This shows that the people knew, and Matthew agrees, that Jesus is not the only man to receive such authority from God.

Jesus himself emphasized that he does not speak on his own authority (John 14:10) and he does nothing on his own authority, but he speaks only what the Father has taught him (John 8:28). What Jesus did here was as follows. Jesus announced to the man the knowledge Jesus received from God that God had forgiven the man.

Notice that Jesus did not say, “I forgive your sins,” but rather, “your sins are forgiven,” implying, as this would to his Jewish listeners, that God had forgiven the man. Jesus, then, did not have the power to forgive sins, and in that very episode he called himself **“the Son of Man” (Matthew 9:6).**

John 10:30 is often used as proof that Jesus is God because Jesus said, **“I and the father are one.”** But, if you read the next six verses, you will find Jesus explaining that his enemies were wrong to think that he was claiming to

be God. What Jesus obviously means here is that he is one with the Father in purpose. Jesus also prayed that his disciples should be one just as Jesus and the Father are one. Obviously, he was not praying that all his disciples should somehow merge into one individual (see John 17:11 and 22). And when Luke reports that the disciples were all one, Luke does not mean that they became one single human being, but that they shared a common purpose although they were separate beings (see Acts 4:32). In terms of essence, Jesus and the Father are two, for Jesus said they are two witnesses (John 8:14-18). They have to be two, since one is greater than the other (see John 14:28). When Jesus prayed to be saved from the cross, he said: **“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42).**

This shows that they had two separate wills, although Jesus submitted his will to the will of the Father. Two wills mean two separate individuals.

Furthermore, Jesus is reported to have said: **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).** If one of them forsook the other, then they must be two separate entities.

Again, Jesus is reported to have said: **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46).** If the spirit of one can be placed into the hands of another, they must be two separate beings.

In all of these instances, Jesus is clearly subordinate to the Father. When Jesus knelt down and prayed he obviously was not praying to himself (see Luke 22:41). He was praying to his God.

Throughout the New Testament, the Father alone is called God. In fact, the titles “Father” and “God” are used to designate one individual, not three, and never Jesus. This is also clear from the fact that Matthew substituted the title “Father” in the place of the title “God” in at least two places in his Gospel (compare Matthew 10:29 with Luke 12:6, and Matthew 12:50 with Mark 3:35). If Matthew is right in doing so, then the Father alone is God.

Was Jesus the Father? No! Because Jesus said: **“And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.” (Matthew 23:9).** So Jesus is not the Father, since Jesus was standing on the earth when he said this.

The Quran seeks to bring people back to the true faith that was taught by Jesus, and by his true disciples who continued in his teaching. That teaching emphasized a continued commitment to the first commandment that God is alone. In the Quran, God directs Muslims to call readers of the Bible back to that true faith. God have said in the Quran:

Say: “O people of the Book (Christians and Jews)! Come to a word that is just between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords beside God.” (Quran, 3:64)

