

in God's revealed will. The search for a master good enough to lead men to life finds its end in God and his commandments <sup>407</sup>

**Chapter 22: How can Jesus be God if he called God "my God?"...**

*The last objection against the deity of Christ is how Jesus can be God if he has called God "My God?"*

The scriptures many times indicated that Father is the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore Jesus can't be equal to God. Here is what the scripture say:

1- Jesus called the Father "My God" many times in the scriptures:

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<sup>407</sup> Ibid, 107-108

Matthew 27:46 “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Cf. Mark.15:34)

John 20:17 “Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’”

Revelation 3:2 “Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.”

Revelation 3:12 “Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God.

Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name”

2- The phrase “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” is common in the NT epistles.

Rom.15:6; 2 Cor.1:3, 11:31; Eph.1:3, 17; Col.1:3; 1 Pet.1:3.

3- In Hebrews 1:8-9 speaking of the Son, the scripture says that God is “his God”

Some of these scriptures, however; can be explained based on the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ like Matt. 27:46. If Jesus payed, hungered, got tired, and thirsted, one shouldn't be shocked that in his hour of agony he called upon God, as a man, calling him “my God.”

The rest of these scriptures though seem to be talking about the Son in his eternal relation to the Father and we need to take a closer look at them.

Let me start with the phrase “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” “ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ”<sup>408</sup>

There has been two ways to understand this scripture: First; that the genitive “of our lord Jesus” refer only to “Father” and therefore the phrase mean “God who is the Father of our lord Jesus Christ.” Secondly; that “God” and “Father” are in opposition to one another and that the genitive depends on both of them therefore we should understand the phrase as “the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ”<sup>409</sup>

The second view here is better because of these reasons<sup>410</sup>:

Gramatically: because “God” “ὁ θεός” and “Father” “πατήρ” are connected by “and” “καὶ” And they are two personal, singular, non-proper nouns, the first is articulated and the second is anarthrous further describing the first noun, then the genitive depends on both of them<sup>411</sup>.

The Father is plainly called “the God of our lord Jesus Christ” Eph.1:17

It is certain that “God” and “Father” are to be joined together as one and the same as in Rev.1:6; 1 Cor.15:24

How then should we understand this phrase that the Father is “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ?”

I believe that we should understand this phrase in terms of the “eternal subordination” of the Son to the Father. After all Jesus was obedient to the Father during his earthly ministry even to the point of the death of the cross (Phil.2:6); he is the mediator, but not

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<sup>408</sup> Many try to understand this phrase in terms of the humanity of Christ. The Father is the God of the man Jesus Christ. Even though that might be the case, yet there is no compelling evidences from the text that requires us to understand it this way.

<sup>409</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, Ephesians: an exegetical commentary; (Baker Academic: Grand Rapids; 2002) 164

<sup>410</sup> Ibid, 164

<sup>411</sup> Called the Granville sharp rule in the Greek grammar.

the originator, of salvation (2 Cor. 5:19; Col.1:20; Heb.9:15) and after he finished his ministry God raised him from the dead (acts 13:30) and seated him at his right hand (Eph.1:20). God also “exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name ‘Lord’” Phil.2:9 and now Jesus is representing us before God as our high priest (Heb.9:24)<sup>412</sup>

So let us take a closer look at these scriptures: In Romans 15:5-7 we read “Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”

In the context we see that the Father is source of the salvation activities “he gives perseverance and encouragement...” and that he is the goal of this salvic activities because Christ has accepted us “to the glory of the Father” and we see that Jesus is the mediator of these salvic activities for he “accepted us.” So may be in that sense the Father is the “God of our lord Jesus Christ”

In the same way in all benedictions (2 Cor. 1:3; ; Eph.1:3; Col.1:3; 1 Pet.1:3) we see that the Father initiates the plan of salvation therefore he may be rightly described as “the God of our lord Jesus Christ”<sup>413</sup> Col.1:3 is a bit different than the rest of these benedictions. It reads “τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ” “God, the Father of our lord Jesus Christ.” There is no “and” “καὶ” between “God” and “Father” therefore, It can be translated as “God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Colin Brown ed., The New International Dictionary of the New Testament, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids; 1979) V2, 80

<sup>413</sup> Ernest Best, a critical and exegetical commentary on Ephesians, (T & T Clark: Edinburgh; 1998) 112

<sup>414</sup> Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids; 1992) 10 footnote 1

Paul's saying in Eph. 1:17 "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him." has caused many Christological arguments through the history of the church. It was used by the Arians to teach that the Logos was the created son of God who prayed and worshiped God.<sup>415</sup> To avoid the apparent denial of the deity of Christ in this verse some of the church fathers tried to explain this verse as that "our Lord" refers to the human side of Christ, and that the word "glory" refers to the divine side of Christ.<sup>416</sup> But we should understand this phrase in terms of the "eternal subordination" of the Son to the Father. This expression is not more or less expressive of subordination than this, "the Father is greater than I"<sup>417</sup> In this phrase we should not fail to distinguish between the subordination of the Son to the Father, and the unity of the essence of both the Son and the Father.<sup>418</sup> The phrase maintains a distinction between God and Christ in which the latter is subordinate, and in the same time characterizes God as the one uniquely associated with Christ.<sup>419</sup>

Now moving on to John 20:17; Jesus after his resurrection told Mary Magdalene "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" Jesus here called God "My God" many commentators argue that Jesus here was speaking as the man who was sent by God to redeem the mankind, and therefore he called God "My God."

That might be the case. But this argument might not be extremely persuasive.

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<sup>415</sup> Hoehner, 257

<sup>416</sup> T.K. Abbott, *The epistles of Ephesians and Colossians*, (T & T Clark: Edinburgh; 1985), 27

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid*, 27

<sup>418</sup> Hoehner, 257

<sup>419</sup> Andrew T. Licolin, *Word biblical commentary: Ephesians*, (Word Book: Dallas; 1990) 57

Many times in the book of John when Jesus referred to the Father as “My Father” he was speaking in terms of his eternal relation with the Father. For examples; 5:17; 8:19; 10:37; 14:7, 20....

Jesus referred to the Father as “my God” even after his ascension Rev.3:2; 12

But there is no need to understand this saying of Jesus that Jesus was a mere created being and therefore God is “his God.” If that was the case, Jesus would have said; “I ascend to our Father and our God” ranking himself alongside the disciples as created being that owe everything to God who created them. God was Christ’s Father and God in a different way that he was to the disciples.

I believe that we should understand this phrase of John 20:17 in terms of subordination. Jesus was saying that he will ascend to the Father who has sent him to redeem mankind. Jesus, the Son of God, has finished the work that was given to him by his Father. In that sense we should understand the phrase “your God and my God”. The divinity of Christ was emphasized throughout the whole Gospel of John. Jesus through the whole Gospel emphasized his equality with the Father and his subordination to him. Along these lines we should understand the phrase “your God and my God” of John 20:17.

I believe that in the same way we should understand Rev.3:2; 12 and Heb.1:9. In both of these references the Father was called “Jesus’ God” but in both contexts the full divinity of the Son of God was emphasized. We have seen in our study of Jesus’ letters to the churches how he was not shy to claim equality with the Father (for examples 1:17, 18; 2:8, 23; 3:14, 16) yet in the same time he called the Father “My God” 3:2, 12. We should also notice that in these very two instances where Jesus called the Father “My God” 3:2, 12,

in the same two verses Jesus declared himself as the Judge and the rewarder of the church which are attributes can only be ascribed to God.

Revelation 3:2 “Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God”

Revelation 3:12 “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name”

In the same way in Heb. 1:9. we see in Heb. 1:8 that the Son is called “O God” and in Heb. 1:10-12 we see that he is the creator who never changes. Yet in v. 9 we see that God has anointed him with the oil of gladness more than his companions. Therefore; The Father can rightly be called “his God”

***Evaluating the evidences: Final Conclusion: Can one say that Jesus is God?***

Before we answer this question we need to understand what we mean by “God.” If we are using the word “God” as a generic name for the Father, then the answer is no. Jesus isn’t the Father. But if we use the word “God” as a description of who God is, then the answer is yes. Jesus is God (in his nature) is as much as God (the Father) is God (in his nature).

Jesus sat himself on the par with God. He claimed total equality with the Father, and ascribed to himself the characters and the functions of YHWH. He claimed that he is the great "I AM" and that he is sufficient to all man's needs. His disciples' referred to him as God, they implied his deity many times, and applied the rule of YHWH of the OT to Him. Even in the OT we see proves of his deity. The prophets spoke of it many times, and he was recognized by the OT saints as God himself. Jesus is exactly what God is. He is his exact representation. He can do all the works of the Father, He has his attributes, and he should receive glory just like the Father.

Yet the Son of God doesn't crowd the Father in his position. For the Father is the only true God, he is greater than the Son, and he is his head and even his God. The concept of the essential equality of the Son with the Father should not be understood apart from the concept of the subordination of the Son to the Father. While the Father is never said to be subordinate to the Son, the Son is always in subordination to the Father. The essential equality and the functional subordination don't contradict one another. On the contrary, they go hand in hand.

The deity of Christ in the scripture is a trial of one jury. And this jury is you. You decide what to do with Jesus who is called Christ (Matt.27:22) but as far as I am concerned he is "My Lord and My God"

### **Appendix: God came near**

In Romans 5:6-8 we read “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

The reason why many people can't believe that in Jesus “all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in a bodily form” is that they can't imagine that God can love them that

much. They don't believe that God could have become a man in the person of Jesus Christ because they can't believe that the Almighty can care about our fallen human race that much. That is in a way what Paul was saying here in Romans 5. He wrote that according to our human logic "scarcely for a righteous man will one die." We can try hard to persuade some evil man to give his life for a good man yet most likely we won't be able to persuade him. In other words "perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die." But God when he loved us he did what man's logic can't comprehend nor imagine. This is how he showed us love "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"

The bible says that "we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Rom.3:23. The Bible also say that "the wages of sin is death" Rom.6:23. That is why the scriptures say "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Eph.5:5 and "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor.6:9-10. the fact of the matter is that we are have broken God's laws of righteousness and we all came under his wrath because of our sins.

Some people try to reach out to God through different religions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, even Christianity. They try good works, prayers, alms, and fasting. But the problem is "we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6. In Isaiah's words the problem is that our very best works, our

righteousnesses is so unclean before God because it is mixed with our sin. We can't reach out to God. We can't because of our sins.

But what about repentance? Isn't God merciful and forgiving? So if we repent of our sins he will forgive us.

It is true that "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Ex. 34:6-7b. Yet God also "by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Ex.34:7c. God is merciful and gracious but he is also just and righteous. *Only when* the penalty of our sins is paid, and the judgement of breaking God's law is fulfilled, *then God* in his grace will be able to forgive those to come to him in true repentance.

So what is the solution? Here it is "when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Rom.5:6. When we couldn't reach out to God, God reached down to us. When we had "no strength" to afford the eternal punishment for our sins, when we had "no strength" to break the bondage of sin in our lives, we we had "no strength" to reach out to God who is Holy, God reached down to us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. And on the cross God provided the solution for the problem of man's kind that is sin. On the cross Jesus died and paid in full the penalty of our sin. On the cross he was the substitute for man kind. The just for the unjust, the righteous for the unrighteous, the innocent for the guilty, the sinless Lamb of God for the sinful man race, the creator for his creation. Yet this very Jesus who died on the cross to pay the penalty of your sins in the third day rose again from the dead "having loosed the pains of death,

because it was not possible that He should be held by it.” Acts 2:24 and because he is alive, he is well able though his life in us to set us free from the bondage of sin in our lives.

One can't help it but to shout with Paul “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!” Rom.11:33 In the cross and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ God provided the salvation and the freedom for mankind from the wages, the bondage, and the guilt of sin.

If you are reading this book and you are not sure that your sins are forgiven; if you are so burdended with the guilt and the shame of your sins, If you are not sure that you will spend eternity with God; If the thought of death scares you; If you are so tired of trying to live a life that is truly pleasing to God and you came to the conclusion that you can't; If you are looking for a meaning and a purpose in your life; If you have tried sex, drugs, alcohol, money, and fame may be even religion and church and you are not fulfilled yet. **Jesus Christ is the answer**. He is whom you are looking for. He died for you so you don't have to die. He bore your sin, guilt, and shame. He endured God's wrath onyour behalf so you can have eternal live. And he rose victorious and he is well able to break every chain of sin, every bondage of shame, and every yoke of the devil in your life.

All what you need to do ask him to forgive you of your sins, change your heart, and to rescue you from the wrath to come. Here is a simple prayer that you can pray:

*Lord Jesus, thank you that you loved me. That you came from heaven to die for me. Lord I know that I am a sinner, and that I have broken your laws. But I come to you right now. I ask you to forgive me of my sins, to wash me clean with your blood from every sin in my life. I repent of all my sins and I ask you to change me because I can't do it on my own. From this day on lord, by our grace and power I will read your word, pray, and live a Christian life. Answer me Lord for in your name I pray. Amen.*

If you have prayed this prayer and you mean it, the Lord Jesus Christ will change your heart. He promised “and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” John 6:37.

Here is what you need to start doing:

- 1- Set apart time every day to pray to God. Go to your room and seek God daily.
- 2- Read the bible every day. You can start with the Gospel of John.
- 3- You have to become an active member of a bible based church.
- 4- Tell all your friends, and family about your decision and that the Lord Jesus can save their lives too.

If you have made this commitment; please let us know:

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