



IN
DEFENCE
of JESUS' DEITY

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By

Leroy Daisley, Th. D.

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Contact Information:

E-mail: ldaisley@gmail.com

PREFACE

“In Defence of Jesus’ Deity” was written in response to the book “COLLIDING WITH TRUTH: Restoring the Lost Ministry of Recalibration,” by Walter Phillips. In chapters 7 and 8 the author denied and tried to create doubt in the mind of the reader about the deity of Jesus Christ. I found his book to be a direct attack on the very foundation of our Christian faith and I found his exegesis of the Scriptures to be ludicrous. I took his blatant attack on the person and work of Jesus Christ personally.

In my rebuttal, I sought to give the correct interpretation to some of the biblical texts that the author incorrectly interpreted to prove that Jesus is not God. The other texts that he used are not even worthy of a response. Furthermore, I believe that the case I built for Jesus Christ’s deity is convincing enough to ignore the other texts.

Finally, at the conclusion of my response, I have listed a few Scriptures that clearly teach the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that my response to this heresy is clearly understood and that it will help others to be better able to stand their ground, defend the faith and give an account for what they believe. Gone are the days when we went to church to have a good time, to be emotionally stirred and to be repeatedly fed warmed over milk. The time has come for us to arm ourselves with the sword of the Spirit, take a stand against the heresies that are infiltrating our churches and earnestly contend for the truth.

INTRODUCTION

An Irate Reaction

MISLEADING!! This is the mildest description that I can give to the book “COLLIDING WITH TRUTH: Restoring the Lost Ministry of Recalibration,” by Walter Phillips. In his book he makes a pitiful attempt to prove that Jesus Christ is not God.

I will now begin my polemic on the **most important** and **fundamental** truth of the Christian faith, the deity of Jesus, and refute the erroneous interpretations of the biblical texts used. Rob Jesus of His deity and the church will crumble like a house of cards for this is the very foundation on which the church is built (Matt. 16: 16-18).

OUTLINE

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MY RESPONSE TO “GOD IS ONE”

Our “theologian” in chapter 7 entitled “Recalibrating the Tradition of Jesus” quotes Mark 12: 28 – 34 in which he highlights **“the Lord is one” “for there is one God,”** and **“and there is no other but me,”** to emphasize that God is one. In these verses, Jesus and the scribes were quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures. Anyone who understands hermeneutics (the science and art of Bible interpretation) would know that in order to unearth the truth of a text, one must go back to the original quotation and do a lexical, historical, contextual, cultural and grammatical analysis where it is necessary.

Evidence From the Old Testament (using lexical analysis)

The Old Testament Scriptures that Mark quotes are taken from Deuteronomy 4:35 and 6:4. All the other Old Testament Scriptures, including the above, that make that claim, use a word in the Hebrew language that does not mean a numerical one. Before proving this, it is important to note that the English language is not as thorough as Hebrew or Greek. The average person has only twenty to forty thousand words available to describe, identify, and discuss literally hundreds of thousands of identifiable parts, experiences, and happenings in his world. In our English we are severely limited in this respect. For example, as we all know, our English language does not allow us to differentiate between love for wife, friend and God, but the Greek language does. The same goes for words such as “know,” “dog” “another” to name just a few, in which our English language, unlike Greek, does not give a choice.

The Scriptures therefore use two words for ‘one’ or ‘oneness’. They speak of an absolute unity and a compound unity. The Hebrew words are **“yachead”** and **“echad.”** **Yachead** speaks of absolute unity, a mathematical or numerical number one. It is used about twelve times in the Old Testament, but *never* to describe the unity or oneness of God. A few examples of this can be found in Gen. 22: 2, 12; Zec. 12:10; Jer. 6:26; Jdg. 11:34.

Echad, on the other hand, speaks of a compound or collective unity which comprises more than one person as in one crowd, one people, one team, one nation, and of course, one God. When

the Scriptures speak of Adam and Eve becoming one flesh in Genesis 2: 24, ***echad*** is the word used. See also Ezra 3:1 and 1Chronicles. 12:38. In Zechariah 14:9 it reads, “*The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one (**echad**) Lord, and his name the only (**echad**) name.* Furthermore, in Gen.1:1 – 2 “in the beginning God” the plural of the Hebrew word for God is used, “***Elohim***” and not “***El***”, singular.

Evidence From the New Testament

The two Greek words which carry the same thought as these two Hebrew words, “***yachad***” and “***echad***,” are “***heis***” and “***monos***.” This now brings us back to reference of Mark 12: 28 – 34 where the quotation “*the Lord is one*” “*for there is one God*,” is used. In these verses on both occasions, the plural “***heis***” is used. If we look at Eph. 4:4-6 *There is one body and one Spirit —just as you were called to one hope when you were called — ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* What is so interesting in this verse, for those who know Greek, is that the seven times the word ‘one’ appears, three different words are used, but only the plural “***heis***” is used to describe the “one Lord” and “one God.”

MY RESPONSE TO “JESUS AS GOD’S SON” (using cultural analysis)

Figuratively Speaking

The author claims that at the baptism of Jesus, God referred to Him as His Son (Matt. 3:17b), and again at His transfiguration (Matt. 17:5b).

He states:

The assumption made was that Jesus being called the Son of God meant that Jesus was God. In seeking to verify this assumption, we note that some verses state that believers can also be called sons and children of God. The Greek word, huiōs, used for “Son”... where God refers to Jesus as His Son, is the same Greek word used to describe believers as sons of God. ...Therefore being called a son, or children of God is not evidence of being God.

I stated earlier that in order to unearth the truth of a Scripture one must know which of the several hermeneutical principles (lexical, historical, contextual, cultural or grammatical) they must use if they are to correctly interpret the text. For example, if we apply grammatical analysis to Mathew 1: 25 where it states that Joseph had no union with Mary *until (heōs)* she gave birth to a son, the syntax of *(heōs)* affects the question of Mary’s perpetual virginity, a tradition associated with the Roman Catholic Church. Matthew used this word several times and a perusal of the passages where it is used indicates that there is no grammatical reason to assume that Joseph was intimate with Mary after the birth of Jesus. The question of Mary’s perpetual virginity therefore, cannot be settled on grammatical grounds. Contextually, however, in Luke 1: 34 the present tense focuses on her current status of sexual experience as opposed to a perpetual state of virginity. This is why hermeneutics (Bible interpretation) is also referred to as an art. One must know which of these principles is best suited for a particular text if the truth is to be discovered. This is not always an easy task.

Here is where the author has made a gross error concerning the reference made in Scripture to Jesus being called the Son of God. First, the term ‘son’ or ‘father of’ has a number of idiomatic

connotations. We speak, for example, of the late Prime Minister, Errol Barrow, as the father of our independence. The term ‘son’ also has an idiomatic spiritual nuance as when Paul referred to Timothy as his son (1Tim. 1:2) and qualifies it in 2 Tim. 1:2 by adding the phrase, ‘in the faith’. Jesus even charges that the Jews have the devil as their spiritual father (Jn.8:44). This idiom clearly means that the person thus spoken of, belongs very emphatically to that of which they are said to be sons. For example: son of hell (Matt. 24: 15), son of the wicked one (Matt.13:38), sons of disobedience (Eph.2:2).

The terms also have cultural significance that suggests ‘same as’ (Jn.5: 18; 10: 30 – 36). The most common use of the terms is the biological sense and here is where the confusion begins, for we seldom speak of ‘father and son’ in figurative terms.

The biological application of the term ‘son’ is so commonly understood that it needs no explanation. If someone has a biological son, that son is by no means inferior to the parent because they all possess the same qualities that make us human beings. So this understanding is carried over in the cultural use of the term where it is used as an idiom for having the characteristics of or doing the work of. “Son of God,” therefore, is a reference to Christ’s deity.

Two Words Explained

However, this cultural use of the term seems to play right into the hands of the author, who argues that we being called sons or children of God is not evidence of (us) being God. This is correct as it applies to humans. We are called sons and children of God, but it does not give us God status as is applied to Jesus Christ. It is unfortunate that the author only cites Paul’s use of the term in which he uses the Greek word *huios* (son). The author, for some reason, never cites one single Scripture from any of John’s writings who differs in emphasis from Paul’s use of the term *huios*. John employs the term *tekna*, reserving *huios* exclusively for Christ. What’s the difference? *Huios* stresses the dignity and character of the relationship, indicating the quality of that to which it is connected (this will be explained in more detail as we study John 1:1). Meanwhile, *tekna* is basically a child or little child.

We must not ignore the fact that Paul used the word for both Christ and the children of God. To explain this we must draw the distinction between us and Jesus as the unique Son of God.

Jesus, the Unique Son

Jesus, the people of Israel, angels and religious people in general, have all been called “sons of God”. Among Israel the name acquired theocratic significance. Jesus appropriated the name and others also ascribed it to Him. The name is applied to Him in four different senses.

1. The Messianic Sense

In this sense, the title describes His office rather than His nature. The Messiah could be called Son of God as God’s heir and representative. The demons understood the name in this sense when they applied it to Him (Mk.5:7).

2. The Trinitarian Sense

The title is sometimes used to denote the essential deity of Christ (Matt.16:16; Jn.5: 18; 10: 30 – 36; Heb.1: 3, 5).

3. The Nativistic Sense

That is, He is called “Son of God” in virtue of His supernatural birth. This name is applied to Him in the well known passage of Luke’s gospel in which the origin of His human nature is ascribed to the direct, supernatural paternity of God (Lk.1:35).

4. The Ethico-religious Sense

It is in this sense that the name “sons” or “children of God” is applied to the believers in the New Testament.

Since the term is applied to both Jesus and New Testament believers, why is it the Scriptures call Jesus God’s **only** Son? This designation then, clearly points to something that is unique about Him as a Son. This distinction from all other sons can be found in John 1:18 and 1 John 4:9 quoted below in both NIV and KJV.

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known (John 1:18 NIV)

No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18 KJV)

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him (1 John 4:9 NIV).

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9 KJV).

Please note that the NIV in both verses omits the word begotten. I will give the reason for this in the following paragraph.

In the John 1:18 verse, the oldest Greek manuscripts p⁶⁶ and p⁷⁵ (third and fourth centuries) all have ***monogenēs theos*** “only begotten God,” a term not applied to any other. But let’s take the argument a little further. In the 1 John 4:9 verse, the Gk. word ***monogenēs*** which is compounded of ***monos***, “only,” and ***genos***, “offspring” literally means “only begotten.” It is interesting to note in the first three of nine times that ***monogenēs*** occurs in the New Testament, it is translated in the KJV as “only” (Lk.7:12; 8:42; 9:38). Moreover, in Heb. 11:17 Isaac is said to be the ***monogenēs*** of Abraham. But Ishmael was also begotten by Abraham! So it is obvious that the main thrust of ***monogenēs*** is not “only begotten” but “only,” perhaps in the sense of “unique.” Isaac was unique as the **“only” son of promise** (Gen. 22: 12, 16) although Ishmael was also Abraham’s son (Gen. 16: 15-16). In the same way Jesus is the **“only” Son of God in the sense of full deity**. Christians are also called “sons of God,” in the sense that they are born of the Spirit in the new birth. Herein lies the distinction between us and Jesus as it relates to both being called sons of God.

MY RESPONSE TO “Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Part I) (using grammatical analysis)

Grammatical Rules

I make my response to the above heading with mixed emotions which includes angry at the blatant attack the author makes on my Saviour. He attempts to prove that Jesus could not be God because the Bible “*consistently and explicitly describes them as separate persons.*” This line of reasoning by the author is obvious since he erroneously believes that there is only one (numerical #1) God which was refuted earlier.

To establish his point he cites 2 Pet.1:1 which states, “*Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of **our God and Savior Jesus Christ.***” To explain, justify, and correctly interpret this Scripture we must understand a rule in Greek grammar called the Granville Sharp rule, which will be explained in the following paragraph. Anyone could appreciate the fact that all languages must have grammatical rules for function. Take our English language for example, where the arrangement of words in a sentence usually follows the order of thought. The subject or the thing spoken of comes first, then follows the verb or the action performed by the subject, and then the predicate. Another rule is concord which is the agreement between nouns and verbs. These are descriptions of how language has function and ought to function.

The Granville Sharp Rule

The Granville Sharp rule in Greek grammar states that when two nouns of the same case are separated by the conjunction **kai** (and), with the first noun having the article and the second noun without the article, only **one entity** is in view. The two nouns here joined by **kai** (and) are **tou theou** (the God) and **sōtēros** (saviour). Both are in the genitive or possessive case but only **theou** (God) has the article **tou** (the) hence, grammatically, Jesus is being called God and Saviour. Since the ‘and’ in the text is explanatory (serves to explain), it can be translated as ‘even’ so the

verse can be legitimately translated “...*through the righteousness of God even our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

The Granville Sharp rule also applies to Titus 2:13 which the author also quotes, so the explanation is the same as above. The text reads, *while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

Even though the Granville Sharp rule was not known as *such* by the biblical writers, they knew how the language functioned. The rule is a modern description of how the language functioned in the 1st century.

MY RESPONSE TO “Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Part II) (using contextual analysis)

Baffled and Bewildered

The author continues his argument by saying how Paul repeatedly and explicitly identifies the Father as the God of Jesus, so Jesus cannot therefore be God. The Scriptures used to support this argument are Rom. 15:5-6; 2 Cor.1:3; 11:31; Eph.1:17; Col.1:3 all of which clearly say “*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Do these Scriptures **explicitly** describe God and Jesus as separate persons thereby teaching that Jesus could not be God?

Since his “Father and Son”, and “God and Saviour” errors have already been disproved, it would be repetitious and time consuming to individually investigate the above Scriptures given by the author since it would take lengthy contextual analysis. He goes on to correctly state that Paul’s letters open with a greeting “*in the name of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus.*” He says, “This seems to indicate that Paul wanted his readers to understand that God is the Father, and Jesus is the Lord.” How pathetically and ridiculously funny (I will deal with the Jesus is the Lord issue on page 16).

It is here that the author’s reasoning baffles and bewilders me. He argues earlier that the Bible consistently and explicitly describes God and Jesus as separate persons. 2 Peter 1:1 was the text

cited because the conjunction separated God and Saviour making them appear as two distinct entities. It reads, “Our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Yet, to prove the Father as the God of Jesus so Jesus cannot therefore be God, he uses the above Scriptures where the conjunction falls between “God” and “Father.” According to the author’s reasoning, this then, should make God and Father separate person. If with the conjunction he sees God and Father as one, how can he argue that God and Jesus are separate with the conjunction between them?

Context is the Key

From the texts given above, I will select Eph.1:17 and apply contextual analysis to show that it was **never** Paul’s intention to use these Scriptures to identify the Father as the God of Jesus. This approach takes this phrase completely out of context.

This verse begins with the Gk. word *ἵνα* (in order that) so it introduces the content of his prayer for the Ephesians. Paul begins his intercessory prayer with a twofold description of God. The first is the one of interest to us which is “*the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” This is an exact repetition of what he said in v.3. Paul praises God for blessing us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (v.3), he prays in v.17 that we would receive the blessing of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we may know God better. The phrase is to demonstrate the centrality of Jesus Christ to God’s purpose.

The Centrality of Jesus Christ

The church of Jesus Christ must comprehend what God has already done for them in Christ. He has already blessed them in Christ with every spiritual blessing (v.3). The lesson to be understood here has everything to do with the fact that believers must praise God for the spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ for He plays the central role in the purposes of God. All that God has done for His people has been effected in and through Christ. God has blessed us (v.3), chosen us (v.4), destined us to be His sons (v.5), lavished his grace upon us (vv.6, 8), and made known to us his plan and purposes for the world (vv.9-10).

The sphere within which the divine blessings are given and received is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that in the first fourteen verses of chapter one the name or title Christ (or its equivalent or a personal pronoun) occurs no fewer than fifteen times. The phrase ‘in Christ’, ‘in whom,’ or ‘in him’ appears eleven times. It is in Christ, that is, because of our incorporation in Him, that God has blessed us. So in context, the centrality of Christ to God’s purposes is the emphasis. Though the deity of Jesus Christ cannot be disproved by the text, to force the point would be a disservice to the point Paul is making.

MY RESPONSE TO “Where is Jesus”

The author endeavours to make another case for his thesis by saying, “Jesus is repeatedly and consistently described as being at God’s right hand following His resurrection.” The point he wants to make is how can Jesus be God when the Scriptures say that He is at God’s right hand? He mentions five Scriptures as evidence (Acts 5:30-31; 7:56b; Rom.8: 34; Col.3:1; 1Pet.3:21-22). He concludes his argument on page 61 saying, “All of the verses in this chapter should not be ignored, but must be reconciled with any evidence that claims to support the tradition that Jesus is God.”

This argument can be easily refuted once we understand that the terms “seated,” “standing” or “at God’s right hand” are figurative and not literal. The figure of speech in question is called an “anthropopatheia” which is the ascribing of human attributes, etc., to God. It is a compound term from *anthropos* which means “man” and *pathos* meaning “affections” and “feelings,” etc. This figure is used for the ascriptions of human passions, actions, or attributes of God. The Greeks also had another name for it: *syncatabasis*, from *syn* which means “together with,” *kata* which means “down,” *bainein*, “to go.” So it meant a going down together with: i.e., God, by using this figure, condescended to the ignorance and infirmity of man. Since man, in his limited capacity and finite mind cannot comprehend the greatness and vastness of God (Ps. 145:3), human terms are used so that we can understand infinite things. It has also been described as the accommodation of revelation or anthropomorphic language, a language of man. Hence, we

speak of God having body parts like a face, eyes, ears hands, feet, etc. We read how God remembered Noah, Sarah and Hannah and how He looks down from heaven and sees (Lam. 3: 50). Human emotions are attributed to God as well, rejoicing, sorrow, grief, repentance, anger, jealousy, zeal, pity, etc. All of which are “*anthropopatheia*” so that we can understand, accommodate or comprehend this incomprehensible God.

To understand why a right hand is therefore attributed to Him, we must go back to its use in the Old Testament. To be at someone’s right hand was to be in the position of special honour and privilege (1Kings 2: 19). The Lord’s right hand, according to Psalms 80: 18 and Jeremiah 22: 24, is the position of favour. In Psalms 20: 6; 44: 3 and Isaiah 41: 10, it is a position of victory, and in Exodus 15: 6; Psalms 89: 13 and Isaiah 48: 13, it is a position of power.

And so a right hand is attributed to God to denote the highest power, and most divine authority, which the Scriptures use of the place accorded to Christ Jesus. To spell it out for the author, Jesus Christ being at the right hand of God simply means that He holds the highest position of honour, power and authority in the entire universe.

MY RESPONSE TO “Jesus Called Lord”

The Author’s Argument

The argument put forward here to divest Jesus of His deity hinges on two Greek words for Lord, *despotes* and *kyrios*. A verbatim of the author’s argument will help us to better understand his line of reasoning:

The evidence is that throughout the Gospels, Jesus calls himself Lord and others call Him Lord. For example.

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” (John 21:15)

The Greek word used for Lord is *Kurios*, and it can be translated to mean: God, Lord, master, or Sir. The word is used when referring to Jesus and to earthly leaders. However, when people are unmistakably referring to God alone, they use a different word for Lord called *despotes*, which is only used twice in the New Testament, and is translated absolute ruler, Lord, and master in the Greek dictionary. The first usage of *despotes* was when Simon saw and blessed the baby Jesus.

“Lord (*Despotes*), now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; (Luke 2:29)

The second usage of *Despotes* was after the disciples had been apprehended and subsequently released.

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord (*Despotes*), You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them...for truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together (Acts 4:24, 27)

In both instances, the use of *Despotes* refers to God and not to Jesus. Therefore, Jesus being referred to as Lord (*kurios*) is not evidence of Jesus being God.

The Biblical Evidence

In my response to this argument we will trace the word *kurios* from its use before the New Testament. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) the translation that Paul and all the early apostles used, the name “Lord” (***Kurios***) is applied to God (Deut. 6:4). (a) as the equivalent of Jehovah; (b) as the rendering of *Adonai*; and (c) as the translation of a human honorific title applied to God. Josh. 3:11; Ps. 97:5. In the New Testament we find a somewhat similar threefold application of the name to Christ, (a) as a polite and respectful form of address, Matt. 8:2; 20:33; (b) as expressive of ownership and authority, Matt. 21:3; 24:42; and (c) with the highest connotation of authority, expressive of an exalted character, and in fact particularly equivalent to the name “God,” Mark 12:36-37; Luke 2:11; 3:4; Acts 2:36; 1Cor.12:3; Phil. 2:11.

Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ the specifically divine import of the title had already been reached (Matt. 7:22; Luke 5:18; John 20:28). There is no reason to doubt that the use of the name, as applied to Jesus, is rooted in the Old Testament. In the Jewish synagogue appellation “Lord” had long before been substituted for God’s “name” (Yahweh). The early believers had now transferred that “name” (Lord) to the risen Jesus.

MY RESPONSE TO “The Word and the Word was God”

Beyond Comprehension

As I read the comments made by the author on John 1:1, “***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,***” He says:

It is possible that a person’s words, before they are spoken, can be considered to be part of the person. My words not yet spoken are with me, and can be said to be me. However, once spoken, they represent me, but are separate from me. ... the unspoken Word was with God in the beginning. This unspoken Word was God. The unspoken Word was spoken and creation was the result. ... Once spoken, the Word became a separate entity with a life of His own. The Word separated from God, eventually became flesh. ...it is a plausible explanation that does not damage the integrity of any of the verses.

I will begin my brief rebuttal to this comment with the simple and then move on to the more complicated.

A Brief Historical Background

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”

The Greek word for “word” is ***logos***. In the city of Ephesus, six centuries before John wrote his gospel there, Heraclitus used the term ***logos*** for the rational principle, power, or being which speaks to men both from without and from within. Plato used it for the divine force creating the

world. With Aristotle it was “insight.” In general, the Greeks thought of *logos* as “reason” or “thought,” whereas the Jewish emphasis was on *logos* as “word.”

Philo, a Hellenistic-Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, in the time of Christ, sought to combine these 2 ideas – reason or thought and speech. It has been said that with Philo the *Logos* is often personified but never truly personalised. In Stoic philosophy, *Logos* was Reason, the impersonal rational principle governing the universe. The apostle John, using a term **familiar to his audience, takes it beyond Philo and Stoic thought. He filled the expression with a new, different meaning, thus correcting and challenging his readers’ worldview.**

A Complicated Lexical Study

In the beginning was the Word...

“*Was*” in the Greek is (*ēn*), and it is mentioned three times in this one verse. It is the imperfect tense of the verb “to be” (*eimi*). The imperfect tense thus emphasises continuous existence – eternal existence (“in (the) beginning”).

...and the Word was with God

“*With*” in the Greek is (*pros*). Out of the several prepositions in the New Testament that mean ‘with’, John chooses an especially strong one which suggests “close proximity” or “in company with.”

...and the Word was God

It will be helpful at this point to give a brief explanation of the Greek article to help us further along in our study of this text. Definite articles in the Greek specify **particular** persons or objects. Its basic construction and function is to point and emphasise **individual identity**. When the article is absent (*anarthros*), the emphasis shifts from the particular person or object to the **character, quality, or kind of person or object**.

In the Greek text it has (*Ó Logos*), (*the Word*). The article therefore, specifies a particular object or points to and emphasises their **individual identity**. The Greek text literally reads in

concluding this verse, “God was the Word.” There is no article before God, meaning that the **character** or **quality of person** or **object** is emphasised. The Word therefore is of the same character and quality as God and is indeed God. God is placed first in the sentence for the sake of emphasis. God in the beginning was (imperfect continuous tense) the Word, who became flesh and made His dwelling among us (v.14).

John, therefore, takes the force, Reason, the impersonal rational principle that Philo and the Stoics said governed the universe, personalised it, and declared it to be Jesus Christ, thus correcting and challenging his readers’ worldview.

MY RESPONSE TO “YOUR THRONE O GOD IS FOREVER”

The author makes another blasphemous attempt from Hebrews 1: 8 to disprove Jesus’ deity. In this verse, the author of Hebrews understands these words that he quotes from Psalms 45: 6, as a divine utterance. God addresses the Son as God. It reads, “*But to the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom...”*” (NIV). By questioning the deity of Jesus Christ from this verse the author has suggested that God is a liar. This is the height of blasphemy. It is exactly what the wicked serpent did to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

A Presumed Contradiction

The author’s argument on this verse clearly shows that he has no revelation of Scripture and merely interprets from an intellectual view point. He writes,

Denominational traditions identify Jesus as the subject of “*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever*”. However, this interpretation leads to confusion later where it states:
[in the next verse] “*Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You...*”

The argument put forward by the author is, “Who is the God of God?” Simply stated, If Jesus is God, whose throne will last forever and ever, how can He have a God? How can the One spoken

of be hailed as God on the throne and in the next verse is addressed as an inferior? How can the same person be both supreme and subordinate? Divine things are always foolishness to the natural person. This presumed contradiction can easily be clarified.

A Simple Explanation

Was not Jesus both one hundred per cent God and one hundred per cent man at the same time? Was He not King and servant at the same time? Was He not, according to Philippians 2: 6 - 8 in very nature God and took the very nature of a servant in human likeness at the same time? Is He not referred to as the Lion and the Lamb? Was He not the High Priest who offered up the atoning sacrifice and was that sacrifice at the same time? There is often this dual reference to Jesus as supreme and subordinate at the same time in Scripture. This will be explained further as we look closer at the context of these seemingly contradictory verses. There are several instances where Jesus, though God, is referred to as a man in His redemptive role. Jesus is here spoken of in His role as Mediator, as the God-man, the One who came into the world as God's servant to reconcile us to God. He is the One who, for redemptive purposes, acknowledged God as His God while on earth. He lived by His Word and was entirely dependent on Him. In His earthly function as Mediator, Servant, Redeemer, Lamb, etc, He always acknowledged God as His God but it never diminished His equality with God.

The texts which the author assumes are contradictory, when taken in wider context will reveal that the first two chapters of Hebrews are concerned with angels, but after 2:16 they are only mentioned twice in the latter chapters of the book. After the warning of 2: 1-4 the rest of the chapter concerns Jesus' subordination to angels during the period of His human life on earth (2: 9a).

The first two chapters of Hebrews depict the divine identity of Jesus in distinction from angels and His human identity in distinction from them as well. In His divine identity He is distinguished from the angels placing Him far above them. Hebrews 1: 6 reads, "*And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'*" In His temporary humiliation, for redemptive purposes, He is placed below the angels so that He

can establish His affinity and solidarity with humankind. It is in this context that the reference to Jesus, as having a God, appears to be a contradiction.

Further Evidence of Deity

In conclusion to this polemic, Hebrews 1: 2a and 3 will be briefly explained to bring further clarity to the truth of Jesus' deity. Verse 2a reads, *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son (NIV)*. There are two things that must be noted about this verse as it relates to the original Greek text. Firstly, the word 'His' is omitted. By its omission the verse is very obscure and is even more difficult to understand when, secondly, we realise that the word 'by' should really be 'in' as the Greek word *en* (ἐν) should be translated. Literally it should read, "God has spoken to us in Son." And so we understand why our English translations, for grammatical reasons, would read otherwise.

To make sense of this, we must refer to the absence of the Greek article mentioned earlier. There is no article before "Son", which obviously points to the character or quality of the individual. 'In Son', therefore, has reference to the quality of the 'Son' and emphasises the exalted status of God's final messenger. God's entire revelation of Himself is now in Christ, who is of the same character and quality of God Himself. Jesus Christ not only delivered God's message, but He Himself was and is God's message.

That is to say, God now speaks to us 'Sonwise'. He spoke in times past in various ways (Heb.1: 1): 'almightywise' at Mount Sinai which terrified and overwhelmed the people, He also spoke 'judgewise' which condemned them, He spoke through types and symbols but these were too impersonal. Only a personal revelation of a person can be a perfect revelation. Christ is that perfect revelation of the quality and character of God. In other words, God's quality and character is now revealed in His Son's character.

V. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being.

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory". The brightness issuing from the sun is the same nature as the sun. Therefore, since that is so in the natural, whatever excellency is in God the Father, the same is in the Son.

“Exact representation”. Jesus as the *exact representation* of God is made clearer in this phrase. It is one word in the Greek, **“*charactēr*”**. It first meant a tool for engraving, then a stamp, a mark or impression placed on an object, especially on coins or seals. It is that by which a person or thing is recognised. Jesus, therefore, bears the very stamp of God’s nature.

“His being”. The Greek word used here for *“Being”* is ***Hypostasis***, which has to do with the essential or basic structure/nature of an entity; in this context it signifies the substance or real essence. Here it refers to the being of God. Jesus, then, is the exact representation, the embodiment of God, as He really is. His being is made manifest in Christ, so that to see the Son is to see what the Father is like. So the author of Hebrews is saying that Christ is not some secondary copy, or some hazy, inaccurate reflection. Old Testament saints did not perfectly express God, nor can angels, for they are finite creatures, hazy, inaccurate reflections. All that God is in nature and character is expressed and manifested, absolutely and perfectly, by, through and in Jesus (Col. 1: 9; 2: 9).

In order for the Son to be the kind of direct, authentic, and compelling expression of the Father described in these phrases, He must participate somehow in the being of God itself, that is, He must Himself be deity to accomplish the mission of revealing who God is. One cannot, therefore, drive a wedge between God the Father and God the Son.

Some Scriptures for further study: John 1:18; Romans 9: 5; 1John 5: 20