

The Bible, however, also says that Jesus is *God*.

Response: True, there are a few verses that refer to Jesus as *God*. Trinitarians assume –incorrectly-- that there are only two options: Jesus must be true God or he is a false god. However, the Bible reveals a third option. In the NET Bible, a translation made by trinitarians, Exodus 7:1 reads, “*So the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet.’*” In the Hebrew text the word “*like*” does not appear in this verse, so here the LORD is calling Moses “*God*.” The footnote for this verse reads,

The word “*like*” is added for clarity, making explicit the implied comparison in the statement “*I have made you God to Pharaoh*.” The word ‘*elohim*’ is used a few times in the Bible for humans (e.g. Pss. 45:6; 82:1), and always clearly in the sense of a subordinate to GOD – they are his representatives on earth. The explanation here goes back to [Exodus] 4:16. If Moses is like God in that Aaron is his prophet, then Moses is certainly like God to Pharaoh. Only Moses, then, is able to speak to Pharaoh with such authority, giving him commands. -- www.netbible.com. [Emphasis added.]

At Psalms 82:6 God Himself refers to Israelite judges as *gods* [Heb., *elohim*]. Concerning this verse Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., a trinitarian, wrote,

[God] is addressing the earthly judges and administrators of his law whom he has set up to represent him... But there is no hint of a belief in many gods and goddesses. Nor does God thereby imply they have the divine nature exclusive to the Trinity. It is simply a case where one term, *elohim*, must do double duty, referring not only to God but also to his special servants appointed for the unique tasks described in these contexts. --HARD SAYINGS OF THE BIBLE [Emphasis added.]

In understanding Jesus’ relationship to God it would be incorrect to say he, personally, is God, or that he, literally, is a god. But he is God in a representative sense. A ruler can commission a representative with full executive authority. Pharaoh did this with Joseph; his being given the signet ring was like being given the ability to sign Pharaoh’s signature. Nebuchadnezzar did similarly with Daniel. (Genesis 1:39-44; Daniel 2:47-49) And God has done this with His Son. This is proven at Matthew 28:18 where Jesus said, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*”² And this is what is meant at Colossians 2:9 where it says that in Christ “*all the fullness of the Deity dwells bodily.*” The meaning of this verse is best demonstrated by an illustration: Suppose that the President of the United States became temporarily incapacitated so that he could not perform the duties of his office, the presidency. The Vice President would take over those duties and have the full power of the presidency at his disposal. However, when history records the roster of Presidents, the Vice President’s name would not be included because he was not actually President. Similarly, Jesus has been granted the full power of Deity, the office of God; but he is not literally God.³

2 That Jesus “*has been given*” this authority shows that he did not always have it and, therefore, could not have been God. [Prop # 2]

3 Ephesians 3:19 speaks of Christians being “*filled with all the fullness of God.*” Here the more personal word ‘*God*’ is used (not the impersonal term ‘*Deity*’ --or ‘*Godhead*’-- used in Colossians 2:9). When a Christian becomes ‘*filled with all the fullness of God*’ does he become God? If not, why conclude that Jesus’ being filled with all the fullness of the office of God means that he is God literally? Colossians 2:9 means that he is functionally like God; it does not mean that he is God personally. [Prop # 2]

Under the Jewish concept of agency, one's agent is as oneself. To understand this concept, compare Luke 7:2-10 to Matthew 8:5-13. Luke gives the account as it literally happened: Jewish representatives of a centurion approached Jesus with his request. Matthew portrays the centurion himself as approaching Jesus, but in literal fact he did not. The Jews did not consider such a re-telling a lie as their way of thinking allowed this.⁴ As God's foremost agent, able to 'sign His name,' Jesus can figuratively be called *God*. But this does not mean that he is literally God.

Is Jesus equal to God? Go back to our comparison with Joseph and Pharaoh: Joseph was functionally equal to him, but not positionally equal; people had to obey him as if he were Pharaoh, but he was not Pharaoh. Likewise, Jesus is functionally equal to his Father, but not positionally equal. Consider John 5:23.

Please note, any verse which calls Jesus *God* should be understood in this representative sense.

⁴ In the Hebraic way of thinking, a person's agent can be spoken of as the person himself. Consider Luke 10:16 and Matthew 25:40, 45. This concept of agency is known to some trinitarians. It is mentioned in chapter 7 of Lee Strobel's book *The Case For Christ*, under the subheading "I and the Father Are One" where Strobel quotes professor Ben Witherington, III, both of whom are trinitarians. Failure to appreciate this concept's application to Jesus explains a good many misunderstandings by trinitarians. [Prop # 2]