

On the Deity of the LORD Jesus Christ

The understanding of a single simple basic rule of Greek grammar demonstrates the certainty with which the New Testament Greek text teaches that Jesus the Christ is Deity – that He is the Creator, the God of the Old Testament come in the flesh. This rule centers on the Greek word “*kai*” (kii), a conjunction usually meaning “and”.¹ The rule is as follows:

When two nouns in the same case are connected by the Greek word “and”, and the first noun is preceded by the article “the”, and the second noun is *not* preceded by the article, the second noun refers to the same person or thing to which the first noun refers, and is a further description of it.²

This rule applies, for example, to passages where the names “God” and “Father” are in the same case and are connected by the Greek word “and”, whereas the word “God” is preceded by the article and the word “Father” is not, viz.:

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. (II Cor. 11:31)

The Greek word for God in the above verse is “*Theos*” and the Greek from whence we translated Father is “*pater*”. Both Greek nouns are nominative case singular. Thus, by our rule “the God and Father” are not two persons but one and the same. The word “Father” is a further description of the Person called “God”.

Other verses in which the same phenomenon may be found are Romans 15:6; I Cor. 15:24; II Cor. 1:3; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:20; Philippians 4:20; Col. 3:17 and I Thes. 1:3, 3:11, 3:13.

Now let us consider the Greek rule with reference to verses that deal with the person of Jesus Christ.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:11)

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. (II Peter 2:20)

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. (II Peter 3:18)

Attention is called to the phrase “Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Although the definite article “the” does not appear in the English translation in the first and last of the above three passages, that construction **is** contained in the Greek text from which these verses were translated. The definite article being present and all the underlined nouns being in the genitive case, the same rule of Greek grammar applies. Therefore, the “Lord” and the “Saviour” are one and the same Person. The word “Saviour” is thus a further description of the Person described as “Lord”. This speaks of the deity of Jesus Christ because the Greek word “*kurios*” translated Lord was used as a name of Deity. It is the Greek rendering for the Old Testament name of God, Jehovah.

¹ Depending upon the context in which it is found, the Greek word “*Kai*” may also be rendered by the English “even” or “also”. Whichever word is actually used is of no real consequence as this conjunction connotes equivalence.

² Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 3, section 3 - “Treasures etc.” p. 31. This rule is further explained in: (1) Alexander Buttman, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 360 ff., (2) S.G. Green, *Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 403, 3, (3) G.B. Winter, *Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, p. 53, 1-4.

The name “Lord” was used in the Roman Empire as an appellation for the ruling Caesar who in turn was worshipped as one of the gods. Christianity challenged the imperialism of the Caesars by announcing that there was born “in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). The word “Lord” was an accepted title of Deity in the terminology of Israel, the Roman empire, and Christianity. Thus, a simple elementary rule of Greek grammar confirms the many Scriptures that proclaim the deity of Christ Jesus.

But the case for the deity of Jesus the Christ is much stronger and even much more certain than demonstrated by the preceding. Applying the previously stated principle to a specific verse will clarify both the meaning of the rule and its application with regard to the deity of Jesus.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13)

The phrase “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” is composed of two nouns in the same case³ (i.e., God and Jesus Christ) supported by the adjectives “great” and “Saviour” with the possessive pronoun “our” preceding the word “Saviour”. These nouns are connected by the Greek word “*kai*” which is translated “and” in the above King James rendering of Titus 2:13.

Also we note that the words “great God” are preceded by the definite article “the” whereas our second noun – Jesus Christ – is not preceded by the article. According to our previously stated rule of Greek grammar, the name “Jesus Christ” refers directly back to the word “God” and is a further description of it! An example of a similar construction in English grammar would be “Here comes the President and our Commander-in-chief, Ronald Reagan.” We are not referring to two distinctly different men. We are alluding to the same person. He is so described in this manner so as to provide information that reflects his various faceted positions. It serves to remind the hearer that the person being so represented “wears many hats.”

The same is true with regard to the manner in which the Holy Spirit is leading Paul to describe Jesus in this particular verse. “The great God” and the “Saviour” are the same person. The word “Saviour” is an additional description of the Person described as “the great God”. Moreover, it proclaims that “the great God” is also the Messiah, and that both titles are directed toward and belong to Jesus – how so? We remind our reader that “Christ” is not Jesus’ last name, rather it is His title or position of rank!

In Bible times, one’s whole name was comprised of (1) his first name (2) the place of his birth, residence, or lineage and (3) the first name of his father. Thus from the standpoint of Jesus’ humanity, His complete name would be “Jesus of Nazareth *bar* (Hebrew for “the son of”) Joseph” or “Jesus of Nazareth *bar* David.” His name from the standpoint of His deity would be “Jesus from above (i.e., heaven) son of God.”

Of course, as with us today, rarely do we find people being referred to by their entire name. Often we are called by various combinations of our three names. I am rarely acknowledged as Floyd Nolen Jones. Sometimes I am merely hailed as “Floyd”, other times as “Floyd Jones”, “Jones”, “Dr. Jones”, or even “Floyd Nolen” by family and close friends. On many occasions I am referred to as “Floyd Jones from Houston” or “Dr. Floyd Jones the Bible teacher” or even a combination of the two. That is, I am called by part of my name along with my title (or position) and/or the place in which I reside and/or from whence I came.

³ The reader may check any interlinear Greek New Testament for verification of this fact. Both nouns are in the genitive case as depicted by the “*ou*” endings i.e., God = *Theou* and Jesus Christ = *Iesou Christou* (genitive is the case expressing possession, note the word “of” preceding each underlined phrase). The definite article “the” (Greek = *tu*) will also be seen to reflect the genitive singular ending in accordance with the Greek rules of grammar.

Such is the case which is found within the Holy Writ. When we say “Jesus Christ,” we are actually saying “Jesus is the Christ”. Further, Christ is merely the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word “Messiah” which means “the anointed” (i.e., of God). Thus, the words “Jesus Christ” from the Greek equates to “Jesus Messiah” or “Jesus is the Messiah” when we consider the Hebrew.

The Titus 2:13 verse is thereby declaring in words as straightforwardly and as powerfully as language possesses that Jesus is “THE great God”, our Saviour – and that as such, He is also the long awaited Christ – the very Messiah of promise to Israel. That all this would be true concerning the Messiah is clearly revealed by the prophet Isaiah:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

This identification is confirmed by the apostle Peter:

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: (II Peter 1:1)

Again, the definite article “the” does not appear in English as it is superfluous to say “the God” insofar as normal conversation is concerned, as there is only one God. However, the article (*to*) is present in the Greek New Testament text and both underlined nouns are genitive.

Finally, Jude 4 in particular clearly depicts the force of this Greek rule of grammar and serves as the capstone of Scriptural verification for our thesis.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The eternal deity of Jesus and His person can hardly be proclaimed more certainly or more manifestly if words are to have any meaning at all.⁴

Thus God inspired His Word in the international language of Greek, it being spoken throughout the Roman world at the time of the Lord Jesus’ first advent. The grammar of that dialect of Greek testifies that Jesus Christ is Lord, the Jehovah of the Old Testament – that He is Deity, the God of the New Testament – the Creator come to earth in the flesh and born of a virgin.

The apostles uniformly testify throughout Scripture that Jesus Christ is God, and these verses are offered as further testimony of their challenge to the Imperial Cult of the Caesar – and to those of modern day cults. The Roman emperor was hailed by his subjects as their god and their saviour. Paul and Peter have proclaimed that Jesus – the carpenter of Nazareth – is the promised Messiah of Israel, the God and Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.⁵

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

⁴ The case of the underlined nouns in Jude 4 is the accusative (case of the direct object of the verb). They are masculine, singular.

⁵ I Timothy 4:10b.