

**Excerpt From:**  
**Jesus as Θεός: A Textual Examination**  
**by**  
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**Begin Excerpt:**

No one contests that the NT usually reserves the title θεός for God the Father. Yet this usage, though dominant, is not exclusive. The textual proof of the designation θεός as applied to Jesus in the NT merely confirms what other grounds have already established. In fact, the title θεός only makes explicit what is implied in other Christological titles such as κύριος and υἱὸς θεοῦ. Harris adds:

Even if the early Church had never applied the title θεός to Jesus, his deity would still be apparent in his being the object of human and angelic worship and of saving faith; the exerciser of exclusively divine functions such as creatorial agency, the forgiveness of sins, and the final judgment; the addressee in petitionary prayer; the possessor of all divine attributes; the bearer of numerous titles used of Yahweh in the OT; and the coauthor of divine blessing. Faith in the deity of Christ does not rest on the evidence or validity of a series of ‘proof-texts’ in which Jesus may receive the title θεός but on the general testimony of the NT corroborated at the bar of personal experience.

The question now before us is not whether the NT explicitly ascribes the title θεός to Jesus, but how many times he is thus identified and by whom. Therefore, with *at least* one text that undoubtedly calls Jesus θεός in every respect (John 20.28), I will conclude by answering my initial question: When did this boldness to call Jesus θεός begin? It began in the first century. It was not a creation of Constantine in the fourth century. It was not a doctrinal innovation to combat Arianism in the third century. Nor was it a sub-apostolic distortion of the apostolic kerygma in the second century. Rather, the church’s confession of Christ as θεός began in the first century with the apostles themselves and/or their closest followers and therefore most likely from Jesus himself.

**End Excerpt.**