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DEITY AND DIVINITY

In the New Testament the word for "God" is THEOS. This word is used 1343 times in the N.T.. From this word we get 3 other words in the N.T. They are: THEIOS, THEOTES and THEIOTES. These words need to be examined more closely.

The word THEOS is also used in 7 compound words in the N.T., each of these compound words being used only once. They need not concern us here, but we can briefly look at these occurrences:

-THEODIDAKTOS = taught of God; used in 1 Thessalonians 4:9

-THEOMACHEO (verb) = to fight against God; used in Acts 23:9

-THEOMACHOS (adj.) = to fight against God; used in Acts 5:39

-THEOPNEUSTOS (adj.) = inspired by God; used in 2 Timothy 3:16

-THEOSEBEIA = godliness; used in 1 Timothy 2:10

-THEOSEBES (adj.) = worshipper of God; used in John 9:31

THEOSTUGES (adj.) = hater of God; used in Romans 1:30.

The Greek words THEOS, THEOTES and THEIOTES are all nouns! The Greek word THEIOS is an adjective!

The adjective THEIOS is used three times in the New Testament, once it is translated as "Godhead" and twice it is translated as "divine". Here are these scriptures:

> Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that THE GODHEAD (theios) is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. (Acts 17:29)
>
> According as his DIVINE (theios) power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the DIVINE (theios) nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

This adjective THEIOS has been used by the Greeks from the time of Homer down to denote THE DIVINE NATURE, POWER and PROVIDENCE OF DEITY! It is also used with this meaning by PHILO and by JOSEPHUS.

The noun THEIOTES is used only once, and it is translated as "Godhead":

> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood

> by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20)

This noun means DIVINITY, DIVINE NATURE.

The noun THEOTES is also only used once, and it is also translated as "Godhead":

> For in him dwelleth all the fulness of THE GODHEAD bodily. (Colossians 2:9)

This noun means DEITY, THE STATE OF BEING GOD, GODHEAD.

To summarize: there are three different Greek words in the New Testament which are each translated one time into English as "Godhead". Since these three words are in fact different from each other, this translation as "Godhead" obscures the different meanings these words have.

THEIOS is an adjective and should be correctly translated as DIVINE. "Godhead" in Acts 17:29 is not the best way to translate it; and so the New King James has rendered it more accurately as "the Divine Nature".

Now the word THEOTES means DEITY, and the word THEIOTES means DIVINITY. And there is a difference between these words!

"DEITY" means: the rank or essential nature of God. It refers to "essence".

"DIVINITY" means: relating to deity, proceeding from deity. It refers to "quality or attribute" rather than "essence".

The word THEOS is a general word for "deities" which have "divine" qualities and attributes. But THEOS is NOT the word for "divine" ... that meaning is covered by THEIOS and THEIOTES.

Now let's look at these last two scriptures again:

THEOTES = DEITY = COLOSSIANS 2:9

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of THE GODHEAD bodily. (Colossians 2:9)

This verse tells us that Jesus Christ has THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GOD THE FATHER. He has the rank of being a God, rather than the rank of a lower being.

THEIOTES = DIVINITY = ROMANS 1:20

> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20)

This verse tells us that even God's eternal power and THE THINGS RELATING TO GOD and proceeding from God can be understood, so that people are without excuse.

As a matter of interest:

- our English word "deity" comes from the Latin "deus", meaning "god";

- our English word "divinity" comes from the Latin "divus", also meaning "god".

So to summarize: in Greek the word "THEOS" means "God", or "gods" or "deity" or "deities", BEINGS that have (or have attributed to them) the essential nature of a God.

The word "THEOTES" refers to the state of being such a "God".

THEOS does NOT mean "divine" or "divinity". Those meanings are covered by the adjective "THEIOS" and by the noun "THEIOTES" ... and these words refer to the attributes or the qualities of "God".

It follows that when any claims are made about "the nature of God" and about scriptures referring to "divinity", then we need to first examine the scriptures involved, to see which meaning is actually intended in the Greek text of the verse in question.

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