

Questions About Greek Word Theotes in Colossians 2:9

By Pastor Ed Anderson

In Colossians 2:9 there is a Greek word "Theotes"...it's only used here in the New Testament...I need help understanding this Word

Answer:

Colossians 2:9 contains a deeply rich and important theological term:

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

(Colossians 2:9, KJV)

At the heart of this verse is the rare Greek word:

θεότης (Theótēs)

Pronounced: *theh-AH-tays*

Meaning: Deity, Divine nature, or The state of being God

Let's break it down carefully.

1. What Does “Theotes” Mean?

θεότης comes from the root θεός (Theos) = *God*, but it doesn't just refer to *a divine being* — it refers to **the essence or nature of God Himself**.

- **Theótes = the totality of who God is** — not just His attributes, but His essential being.
- It's not saying Jesus *had divine traits* — it's saying **He is fully God**.

Lexical Definition:

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon and BDAG:

Theótēs: “Deity, the state of being God. The essential and personal Godhood.”

It differs from **θειότης (theiôtēs)** found in *Romans 1:20*, which means “divine nature” or “divine qualities.” The word in Romans refers to **divine attributes**, but the word in Colossians 2:9 refers to **divine essence**.

2. Why Is It So Important?

Paul is responding to **early Gnostic teachings** in Colossae that claimed:

- Jesus was not fully God.
- God’s fullness was distributed among various spirit beings or emanations (aeons).
- The physical body was evil, so God could never dwell in human flesh.

Paul **confronts these errors directly** by saying:

“In Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness (πλήρωμα / plērōma) of the Godhead (θεότης / Theótēs) bodily.”

He’s saying:

- **Jesus didn’t just reflect God — He IS God.**
- The **entire divine nature** — Father, Son, and Spirit — **resides bodily in Christ.**
- He affirms the **incarnation**: Jesus was **100% God** and **100% man** — in one Person.

3. Biblical Support & Parallels

Here are other verses that align with **Theótēs** in Colossians 2:9:

Verse	What it says
John 1:1,14	“The Word was God... The Word became flesh...”
Hebrews 1:3	“He is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being...”
Philippians 2:6	“...being in very nature God...” (Greek: <i>morphē theou</i>)
Titus 2:13	“...our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...”

Isaiah 9:6	“...His name shall be called... Mighty God...”
------------	---

4. Ellen White on Colossians 2:9

Ellen White strongly affirms the **full divinity of Christ** in harmony with this verse:

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He is the **express image of the Father’s person**, and the brightness of His glory. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

— *Evangelism*, p. 615

“As a man, He was the **equal of God**, and His arm brought salvation to the human family.”

— *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 337

Summary

Greek Word	θεότης (Theótēs)
Used	Only in Colossians 2:9
Meaning	Deity in its absolute fullness
Implication	Jesus is not partially divine — He is fully God
Contrast with Romans 1:20	Romans = divine attributes, Colossians = divine essence
Doctrine Affirmed	Incarnation, Trinity, Christ’s full divinity