

HOW TO TALK TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESS



**ABOUT THE
DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST
AND THE TRINITY**

HOW TO TALK TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ABOUT THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRINITY

Have you ever felt dismay after presenting the standard Biblical Scripture proof texts for the Deity of Jesus Christ and the Trinity, only to find your Jehovah's Witness friend unconvinced? There are three reasons for this:

- 1. MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING THE TRINITY:** Jehovah's Witnesses have several misconceptions about what Christians believe regarding the Deity of Christ and the Triune God. We must address their misconceptions and deal with the verses they rely on to support their position, before they can adequately grasp the Biblical support we have for our position.
- 2. FALSE AUTHORITY:** Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the leaders of their Watchtower organization are appointed by God to act as His supreme representatives on earth. In order to maintain good standing with the organization, they are required to accept, without question, all beliefs and policies presented by their leaders. So, when the plain reading of a Scripture passage contracts a doctrinal belief held by their leaders, they will question their own ability to understand the meaning of that Scripture passage before they will question the belief itself. We must undercut their trust in their leaders before they will be free to accept the plain and simple interpretation of Scripture passages that differ from what they have been taught.
- 3. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS:** Satan, "the god of this world," has blinded the minds of Jehovah's Witnesses so that they cannot see "Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). We must remember that we are engaged in a spiritual battle for their minds and hearts. This battle transcends mere intellectual understanding. We must implore the Spirit of the Living God to free them so that they can say, "Jesus is indeed Lord, Jehovah!" (See 1 Corinthians 12:3).

The following steps will guide you to effectively present the Deity of Jesus Christ in terms your Jehovah's Witness friends will be able to grasp. Although there is no guarantee that they will be convinced by the concepts we present here, in our ministry to Jehovah's Witnesses, we have found the following steps essential to break the faulty reasoning most Jehovah's Witnesses have embraced on this issue.

- Step 1: Explain how the belief that Jesus is God affects salvation.
- Step 2: Articulate an accurate understanding of the Trinity doctrine.
- Step 3: Emphasize that Jesus is not the Father.
- Step 4: Remove the Watchtower proof texts against the Deity of Jesus Christ.
- Step 5: Discuss the limitations of Jesus' humanity as they relate to His Divine Person.
- Step 6: Prove how submission to authority does not affect nature.
- Step 7: Present Scriptural proof texts for the Deity of Christ and the Trinity.
- Step 8: Remove the Watchtower Authority Barrier.

STEP 1: EXPLAIN HOW THE BELIEF THAT JESUS IS GOD AFFECTS SALVATION.

Belief in the Trinity cannot save a person. It is the Gospel of Christ that "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Salvation is God's job, not ours. No amount of arguing about the Deity of Christ can save or convince anyone of the truth of the Trinity because Scripture plainly says:

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“...no one can say, ‘**Jesus is Lord,**’ except by the Holy Spirit.”— 1 Corinthians 12:3

Jehovah's Witnesses do not have the Holy Spirit. The Watchtower Society has taught them that spiritual “adoption” and the privilege of being “born again” are reserved only for 144,000 people. Since the majority of Jehovah's Witnesses are not part of this group, it is likely that your Jehovah's Witness friends do not think they can be born again. As long as they reject the New Covenant, they exclude themselves from eternal life (John 6:53). Furthermore, Romans 8:8-9 and 14, demonstrate that without the Holy Spirit which is received by “adoption”, people cannot be led by the Spirit of God and without the Holy Spirit's leading, your friends literally cannot say “Jesus is Lord / Jehovah” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Can you see the predicament your Jehovah's Witness friends are in?

So to keep discussions over the Trinity doctrine from becoming a stumbling block to the salvation of your Jehovah's Witness friends, use it as a spring-board into presenting the Gospel first. You can do this by explaining **how the Watchtower belief that Jesus is not God keeps your Jehovah's Witness friends from salvation**. Here is a simple step-by-step approach to presenting the Gospel:

1. **JOHN 17:3 - Remind your Jehovah's Witness friends that Jesus clearly taught that eternal life consists of knowing Him (John 17:3).**
2. **JOHN 5:39-40 - Declare that Jesus said we must “come to” Him (John 5:39-40) for salvation and the gift of eternal life (John 10:27-28).**
3. **1 CORINTHIANS 1:9 - Ask your Jehovah's Witness friends if their Watchtower teaching that Jesus is not God allows them to pray directly to Jesus.** They will likely say “no” because prayer is a form of worship reserved only for God. Once they admit to this fact that they do not pray directly “to” Jesus, ask them **how they can personally “know” someone (John 17:3) or have “fellowship” (1 Corinthians 1:9) with that person if they are not allowed to speak to that person.**
4. **MARK 2:7-11 and JOHN 6:45 - Emphasize that going “through” Jesus to get to God the Father as He commands us to in John 14:6, requires that we pray directly to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and deal with Him first before we can go to the Father with our requests.** Remind them that this is Jehovah God's arrangement for life and the forgiveness of sins because He is the One who has given all the authority to forgive sins to Jesus (Mark 2:7-11). So, since **Jehovah God commands that we come “to” Jesus in prayer for forgiveness (John 6:45)**, this is why we must believe Jesus is God because only God can forgive the sins we have committed against Him (Mark 2:7).

Finally, declare to Jehovah's Witnesses that Scripture teaches that we are to wash away our sins by “calling upon” the name of Jesus (Acts 22:16). So that in the same way that we “call upon” Jehovah's name in prayer (Romans 10:13, NWT), we must direct our prayers to Jesus because it is only in His name that we receive salvation (Acts 4:12). Point out that until we receive forgiveness from Jesus (Mark 2:10-11), we cannot call God “Father.” This is why Jesus taught his disciples to pray “our Father” (Matthew 6:9), because they already had their sins forgiven by Christ at John 13:10. But your Jehovah's Witness friends do not have this privilege of calling God “Father” because they have refused to come to Christ for forgiveness. Remind them that until they come “to” Jesus in prayer for salvation, they will not receive eternal life, no matter how much Bible study they do (John 5:39-40). That is how you start your discussion on the Deity of Christ with an emphasis on the

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Gospel. For more information on the Scriptural support for the practice of worshiping Jesus and praying to Him, see the following chapters from the *Yes, You Should Believe in the Trinity* book:

- **CHAPTER 8: "WORSHIP GOD ON HIS TERMS"**
<https://www.4jehovah.org/worship-god-on-his-terms-chapter-8-yes-you-should-believe-in-the-trinity/>
- **CHAPTER 9: WHO SHOULD WE PRAY TO? – The Father or the Son?**
<https://www.4jehovah.org/who-should-we-pray-to-the-father-or-the-son/>

STEP 2: ARTICULATE AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRINITY DOCTRINE.

Before we can adequately defend the doctrine of the Trinity and the Deity of Jesus Christ, we must have an accurate understanding of what the Trinity is and what it is not.

The Trinity is the view that the three persons mentioned in the Bible: Father, Son (i.e., Jesus) and Holy Spirit are one God. This Triune God is called "Jehovah" in the Old Testament and "Lord" in the New Testament. Each person of the Godhead is distinct in His Personhood, yet each is equal in nature and eternal in uncreated substance. Together as the one and only true God, they co-exist, co-create and co-rule this present world. There is a functional hierarchy that exists within the members of this Triune God. The Father, being the supreme person in authority, sends His "Son" Jesus Christ to redeem mankind, and the Son sends the Holy Spirit to indwell Christian believers. During the incarnation (Christ's coming to earth), Jesus added a human nature to His Divine person. Thus, it was when He operated under the limitations of His humanity that He was unable to do things that He would otherwise have been able to do as God.

Misconceptions regarding the Trinity doctrine occur when the doctrine is misdefined in Modalistic or Tritheistic terms. Modalism is the view that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit operate not only as one God, but as one Person manifesting Himself in various modes at different times and places. In this view, the Person of God may appear as the Father. At other times, He appears as the Son and then again as the Holy Spirit, but always as one Person. The problem with this view is that if God is only "one person," He would be unable to manifest as Father, Son and Holy Spirit at one time. Thus, we would have to discount Scriptural passages such as Matthew 3:16 where at the baptism of Jesus, all three persons manifested Themselves, and Genesis 1:26 where God refers to Himself in the plural pronouns of "Us" and "Our."

Tritheism is the direct opposite of Modalism. It teaches that the three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) are not only distinct in their Personhoods, but are separate "Gods." In the third and fourth centuries, the Church soundly defeated this view in favor of the clear teaching of Scripture that there is only one true God (John 17:3).

This is how this single Being we call the Triune God came to be defined as three distinct Persons in one substance. During the fourth century, in an attempt to prevent Modalistic and Tritheistic views of God from being promulgated in Christian Churches, this belief was codified into the Creed of Athanasius. Throughout the centuries, the Athanasian Creed has served as the accepted standard by which Christians define the Trinity doctrine. So when a person is witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses, it is often necessary to appeal to this creed in order to counter the Modalistic views of the Trinity presented in Watchtower literature.

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Details of the Watchtower's misrepresentation of the Trinity doctrine and how to answer common objections to it by quoting Scripture and the Athanasian Creed can be seen throughout our *Yes, You Should Believe in the Trinity* book, but here are a few specific examples found in the Watchtower's Trinity brochure:

“Here Jesus shows that he and the Father, that is, Almighty God, must be **two distinct entities**, for how else could there truly be two witnesses? ...**Was God saying that he was his own son**, that he approved himself, that he sent himself? No....**To whom was he praying? To a part of himself?** No....To whom was Jesus crying out? To himself or to part of himself? ...If you appear in someone else's presence, **how can you be that person?** You cannot. You must be different and separate....**Someone who is 'with' another person cannot also be that other person.**” —*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, pp. 17-19, 27

We would agree that several passages demonstrate the distinction between the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son, but such arguments have no bearing against the Trinity doctrine because it teaches,

“...there is **one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost...** For, like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge **every Person by Himself** to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic [Christian] Religion to say, there be Three Gods or Three Lords.” — *The Creed of Athanasius*

Since the Trinity teaches the distinction of each of the “Persons” of the Godhead, all arguments demonstrating this are invalid.

Another argument proposed by the Watchtower that becomes inconsequential when the Trinity doctrine is accurately defined is the claim that Jesus cannot be “equal” to the Father if He is in subjection to Him. The Watchtower asserts,

“The Bible's position is clear. Not only is Almighty God, Jehovah, a personality separate from Jesus but **He is at all times his superior**....And this is why Jesus himself said: ‘The Father is greater than I.’—John 14:28” —*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, p. 20

Here again, the Watchtower arguments fail when the Trinity doctrine is accurately defined. Concerning the nature of Jesus Christ, the *Creed of Athanasius* notes,

“Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and **inferior to the Father as touching His manhood**; Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.”

STEP 3: EMPHASIZE THAT JESUS IS NOT THE FATHER.

Because Jehovah's Witnesses have a modalistic view of the Trinity doctrine, when they hear you say, “Jesus is God,” they automatically assume you said, “Jesus is the Father.” Immediately, Scripture verses that demonstrate the distinction between the Father and the Son flood into their minds. To preempt this argument, say to your Jehovah's Witness friend:

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- I believe Jesus is God, but I DO NOT believe Jesus is the Father.

Pause, and let them ask you how you can believe Jesus is God without believing He is the Father. Because Jehovah's Witnesses are accustomed to going right into their arguments about the distinction between the Father and the Son, they may miss the point you are making about Jesus not being the same person as the Father. If this occurs, do not argue about the verses they bring up. Just repeat your statement about Jesus not being the Father until they ask you what you mean by Jesus being God, but not the Father. Once they ask, you are ready to proceed to the next point below.

Use a human analogy to explain Jesus' relationship to the Father. Jehovah's Witnesses have a hard time understanding how both the Father and the Son can co-exist as two distinct persons, yet one God. To aid in communicating this concept, we have found it helpful to draw an analogy between God's nature and human nature. Ask the Jehovah's Witness:

- Do you believe that a human son is less human than his father?
(The Jehovah's Witness will answer, "No.")
- Then, how can Jesus as God's Son be less God than His Father is God?

Just as a son is no more, no less "human" than his father, so Jesus as God's Son is no more, no less "God" than his Father is "God." This is why the Jews endeavored to stone Jesus for blasphemy. They understood Jesus' claim to be the "Son of God" as a claim that made Him "equal" in nature to the one and only true God (See John 5:18; 19:7; c.f., Leviticus 24:16). This is also why Jesus called the Father His "God" at John 20:17. His Father would always be His "God," just as our human fathers will always be our "human" ancestors.

Pointing to the fact that the angels are called "sons of God" at **Job 38:7**, a Jehovah's Witness may object to your conclusions by saying that Jesus was claiming to be an angel, rather than God Himself. To this objection, have the Jehovah's Witness read Hebrews 1:5 which says in their *New World Translation Bible*, "For example, **to which one of the angels did he ever say: 'You are my son; I, today, I have become your father'?** And again: 'I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son'?" Then, ask the Jehovah's Witness the following questions:

- Since the Bible does not contradict itself, why does Hebrews 1:5 say that God never said, "You are My Son" to any of His angels?
 - Doesn't this mean that Jesus is called the "Son of God" in a different sense than angels are called God's sons?
- What does the Bible mean when it says that Jesus is the "Son of Man" at Matthew 26:64?
 - Since God is not a man (Hosea 11:9), could it be that Jesus is the "Son of Man" because He possesses the nature of man, being fully human?
 - Since Jesus is called the "Son of Man" because He is 100% man, what do you think Scripture means when it calls Jesus the "Son of God"? He must be 100% God, right?

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For an example of how to use this analogy to respond to Jehovah's Witness objections, see the following mock dialogue between Cindy, who is a Jehovah's Witness, and Karen who is a Christian, from our book, *Christian Conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses: Biblical Answers to Questions Jehovah's Witnesses Ask*:

MOCK DIALOGUE ON JOHN 1:1: How Can Jesus Be "With" God and at the Same Time Be God? - <https://www.4jehovah.org/dialogue-5-how-can-jesus-be-with-god-and-at-the-same-time-be-god/>

STEP 4: REMOVE THE WATCHTOWER PROOF TEXTS AGAINST THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

Jehovah's Witnesses point to a number of Scriptures that they use as proof texts for their claim that the Bible does not teach that Jesus is God. Until you expose the faulty reasoning behind their use of these Scriptures, Jehovah's Witnesses will not be open to the strong Scriptural evidence for the Deity of Christ. The most common Scriptural proof texts used against the Deity of Christ are Colossians 1:15, Revelation 3:14 and Proverbs 8:22. You can respond to these Scriptures by explaining the following:

- **Colossians 1:15** - "Firstborn" does not mean Christ is "first-created," but rather that Christ is preeminent over creation.
- **Revelation 3:14** - "Beginning" does not mean that Christ is part of the creation which He began, rather it means that He is the "Beginner" of Creation.
- **Proverbs 8:22** - Wisdom is brought forth to take part in Creation and just as wisdom is as eternal as God is, so Christ is the eternal God.

A detailed exposition of these Scriptures is found in Chapter four of the *Yes, You Should Believe in the Trinity!* book at this link: <https://www.4jehovah.org/trinity-in-the-bible-chapter-4-yes-you-should-believe-in-the-trinity/>

STEP 5: DISCUSS THE LIMITATIONS OF JESUS' HUMANITY AS THEY RELATE TO HIS DIVINE PERSON.

Common objections Jehovah's Witnesses raise against the belief that Jesus is God are the facts that no human has seen God (John 1:18), but Jesus was seen (John 1:14); God cannot die (Habakkuk 1:12), but Jesus died (Philippians 2:8); God cannot be tempted (James 1:13), but Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:1); God knows all things (1 John 3:20), but Jesus did not know the day or hour of His return (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32).

To answer these objections, explain to the Jehovah's Witness that because God, in His very nature, cannot be seen, tempted, nor physically die to pay for the sins of mankind, it was necessary for Jesus to add a human nature to His Divine person so that He could redeem mankind. Philippians 2:5-10 explains how Jesus continued to exist in God's "form" (i.e., nature), but relinquished His right to enjoy equality with God so that He could limit Himself to the human nature he had adopted in order to redeem mankind. Thus, by adding a human dimension to His Divine person, Jesus became the visible "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15).

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OUR RESPONSE TO A LETTER FROM A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS WHO ASKED "HOW CAN JESUS BE GOD? "

A few years ago our ministry received the following letter from a Jehovah's Witness whose Christian friend had been discussing the Trinity and the Deity of Jesus Christ with him. Like many Jehovah's Witnesses we have encountered, he held many of the typical objections against the doctrine that are discussed in this book. So we replied to him with the answers he needed and later we learned that he accepted Jesus as the True Jehovah God after reading our answers below. Praise God!

LETTER FROM ONE OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

"Hi! I'm one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Yet, before studying with Jehovah's Witnesses, I found the Bible to teach that Jesus is not Almighty God, nor part of a Trinity. I don't see the equality of the Father and Son. The Son was tempted by the Devil (Matthew 4:1), whereas God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13). If the Son were God, how could there be any real temptation in offering God something back that He Himself had already given to Satan (Matthew 4:8-9)? The Son doesn't know the day or hour, only the Father knows (Matthew 24:36). The Son's will is distinct and can be different from the Father's will (Matthew 26:39). The Son can only do what He sees the Father do (John 5:19), whereas God can do all things (Matthew 19:26). The Son only has the power and authority "given" to Him by the Father (Matt 28:18), and the Son will relinquish that power in the future (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Above all, the Son says that the Father is "greater" than him and that his Father is his "God." If the Son has a God, how can he be God Himself? There is much more I could write, but this is certainly a conviction beyond a responsible doubt. Isn't it? May the "King over all [other] gods," Jehovah bless you. – Psalm 95:3."

OUR RESPONSE:

Thank you for taking the time to contact us with your conviction that Jesus is not God. It is indeed an admirable task to seek to be a true "witness" of Jehovah by studying to accurately defend the identity of this only true God (John 17:3; 1 John 5:20). Your studious examination of Scripture in this regard is to be commended.

In response to your concerns, let's start by first discussing what traditional Christians mean when they/we say that "Jesus is God." We believe that as God (John 1:1), Jesus possesses the full nature of the only true God (Colossians 1:19; 2:9), yet **we DO NOT believe that Jesus is the Father**. As you correctly note when you mentioned how the Son's will is distinct from the Father's will, Scripture makes a clear distinction between the person of the Father and the person of the Son.

We view Jesus' relationship to the Father in much the same way that one would view the relationship between a human father and son. While the son is a distinct person from his father and is subordinate to his father's will, so Jesus as God's Son is a distinct person from God the Father and is subordinate to God the Father's will. **Yet, just as a human son possesses just as much "human" nature as his father, so Jesus as God's Son possesses just as much "God" nature as His Father.** This is why the Jews endeavored to stone Jesus for blasphemy. They understood Jesus' claim to be the "Son of God" as a claim that made Him "equal" in nature to the one and only true God (See John 5:18; 19:7; c.f., Leviticus 24:16). This is also why Jesus called the Father His "God" at

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John 20:17. His Father would always be His “God,” just as our human fathers will always be our “human” ancestors.

In the same way that **one would not argue that a human son is an inferior “human” simply because his father is in a “greater” position as leader of the family**, so it is incorrect to argue that Jesus is an inferior “God” simply because His Father is in a “greater” position of authority (John 14:28). At Luke 2:51, we read that Jesus “continued in subjection” to Mary and Joseph as they were in a greater position of authority over Him at that point in His earthly life. Are we to argue that Jesus was inferior to them? I’m sure by now you see our point that **submission to authority does not denote an inferior nature**. Thus, Scriptural references to this affect (i.e., John 5:19; Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 11:3 and 15:24-28) do not have any bearing on whether or not Jesus is an inferior “God.”

We will now address your concern over the Scripture passages that show Jesus’ limited abilities compared to God the Father. God in His very nature cannot be seen (John 1:18), tempted (James 1:13), nor physically die (Habakkuk 1:12). Yet, all these things were necessary for Jesus to do in order to pay the ultimate price to cover the sins of mankind (Hebrews 9:22). So, the solution was for Jesus to add a human nature to His Divine person. Philippians 2:5-10 explains how Jesus continued to exist in God’s “form” (i.e., nature), yet **He relinquished His right to enjoy equality with God so that He could limit Himself to the human nature he had adopted**. In this, He experienced everything we experience (Hebrews 4:15), and He died to pay the price for mankind’s sins. Thus, by adding a human dimension to His Divine person (Colossians 2:9), Jesus became the visible “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).

You asked, **“If the Son were God, how could there be any real temptation in offering God something back that He Himself had already given to Satan (Matthew 4:8-9)?”** Let’s turn this question around. Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jehovah created Jesus and that Jesus created everything else, right? In the previous temptation, Satan commanded Jesus to turn the stones into bread (Matthew 4:3-4). Using your logic, how could there be any temptation in inviting Jesus to turn the stones into bread if He really is the One who created the stones in the first place? Do you see the problem with this logic? Your argument assumes that Jesus was not God because Satan was trying to tempt Him with the kingdoms of this world that God already had authority over. But if we were to use this reasoning, we would also have to argue that Jesus could not be the Creator because Satan was trying to tempt Him with the stones that Jesus already had authority over as Creator of them. Of course, we know this argument can’t be true because Scripture is clear that Jesus is the Creator (Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:3), just as Scripture is clear that Jesus is God. So, the real test wasn’t whether or not Jesus was God or Creator. **The real test was whether Jesus would put aside the limitations of His human nature and operate as God before it was time for Him to do so**. Indeed, this was a real test because as God, He could have easily put aside His human nature and taken the kingdoms back from Satan before it was time (see Acts 17:31).

Finally, in conclusion, I would like to address your concern over the fact that Jesus didn’t always “know” everything that was going to happen – specifically the day or the hour of His return (Matthew 24:36). Here again, Jesus was operating under the limitations of His humanity. But as God, we see many other examples where Jesus did “know all things” (John 2:24-25; 16:30). The following chart illustrates how Jesus limited Himself to the finiteness of His human nature at certain times, but expressed the God-attributes of His Divine nature at others. Thus, Jesus was both 100% Man (being the “Son of Man” - Matthew 26:64) and 100 % God (being the “Son of God” - John 5:18; 19:7) unified in His very Person.

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DIVINE QUALITIES	HUMAN QUALITIES
OMNIPOTENCE (All Power): Mark 2:7-12; 14:62-64; John 2:7-11	HUNGER & WEARINESS: Luke 4:2; John 4:6; Matthew 8:24
OMNIPRESENCE (Present Everywhere): John 1:48; Matt. 18:20; 28:20	LIMITED PHYSICAL BODY: Mark 3:9; John 11:32
OMNISCIENCE (All Knowledge): John 2:24-25; 6:64; 16:30	LIMITED KNOWLEDGE: Mark 13:32; John 11:34

STEP 6: PROVE HOW SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY DOES NOT AFFECT NATURE.

Jehovah's Witnesses struggle with the concept that Jesus can submit His will to the will of the Father and yet remain "equal" in nature to the Father. They also question how Jesus can be "equal" to God, yet proclaim at John 14:28 that the Father is "greater" than Him. Here again, our human analogy comes into play to explain how this is the case. Ask the Jehovah's Witness:

- In God's design for the family, doesn't the human father hold the greatest authority within the family? Although the father may share his authority with the mother, would you not agree that he is in a "greater" position than anyone else in the family and is the ultimate one in charge?
(The Jehovah's Witness should agree.)
- Does the fact that the human father is in a "greater" position of authority than anyone else in the family prove that his wife or his son or daughter are inherently inferior to him? If so, are we to argue that they are less human than their father is simply because they submit to his "greater" authority and obey his rules and guidelines?
(The Jehovah's Witness should understand your point and agree with you that a person having less authority than another person does not make that person inferior or "less human" than the other person with greater authority.)
- Then, why argue that Jesus is inferior to God simply because He submits His will to the Father? At Luke 2:51, we read that Jesus "continued in subjection" to Mary and Joseph. Does this mean that Jesus was inferior to them?

For an example of how to explain this concept to Jehovah's Witnesses, see the following mock dialogue between Cindy, who is a Jehovah's Witness, and Karen who is a Christian, from our book, *Christian Conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses: Biblical Answers to Questions Jehovah's Witnesses Ask*:

MOCK DIALOGUE ON JOHN 14:28 - Why is the Father "Greater" Than Jesus?

<https://www.4jehovah.org/dialogue-4-why-is-the-father-greater-than-jesus/>

STEP 7: PRESENT SCRIPTURAL PROOF FOR THE DEITY OF CHRIST AND THE TRINITY.

By this point, your Jehovah's Witness friends should understand what you believe concerning the Deity of Christ. Your friends should understand that Jesus is not the same person as the Father, but yet possess God's

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nature as the only true God. They should understand that as the Son of God, Jesus is equal in nature to God the Father, but He chose to be confined to the limitations of His humanity while on earth so that He could purchase mankind's redemption. Finally, your friends should agree with you that submission to one in "greater" authority does not prove an inferior nature.

Having laid the foundation for an accurate understanding of Jesus' Deity, you are now ready to present your Scriptural proof that Jesus is indeed God. There are many passages one can present to prove that Jesus is God, but we have found that some of the best Scriptures are those that demonstrate how both the Son and Holy Spirit possess God's attributes and perform actions that only Jehovah God is able to perform. See the following chart that is combined from two charts in chapter four of our *Yes, You Should Believe in the Trinity* book:

DIVINE QUALITY	THE FATHER	THE SON	THE HOLY SPIRIT
OMNIPRESENCE	Jeremiah 23:24; 1 Kings 8:27	Matthew 28:20; 18:20; John 1:48	Psalms 139:7
OMNISCIENCE	Psalms 147:5; 1 Kings 8:39	John 16:30; 2:24-25	1 Corinthians 2:10-11
OMNIPOTENCE	Jeremiah 32:17,27; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37; Psalms 135:6	Matthew 28:18; John 16:15; Hebrews 1:3	Romans 15:19
HOLINESS	Revelation 15:4	Acts 3:14	Romans 1:4
ETERNITY	Psalms 90:2; Romans 16:26	Hebrews 7:3; Isaiah 9:6; John 8:58	Hebrews 9:14
THE TRUTH	John 7:28	John 8:32,36; 14:6; Revelation 3:7	John 16:13; 1 John 5:6-7
LORD	Luke 1:32; 10:21	Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:11	2 Corinthians 3:17
GOD	1 Peter 1:2; Philippians 2:11	2 Peter 1:1; Titus 2:13; John 1:1; 20:28; Hebrews 1:8	Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
ALMIGHTY	Genesis 17:1	Revelation 1:8; 22:12-13, 20	Zechariah 4:6
RESURRECTION	1 Thessalonians 1:10; Eph 1:20	John 10:17-18; John 2:18-22	Romans 1:4; 8:11

To guide you in how to use some of these Scriptures that prove the Trinity and the Deity of Jesus Christ when you are discussing this topic with Jehovah's Witnesses, see the following list of step-by-step questions found in chapter ten of our *Yes, You Should Believe in the Trinity* book:

- **CHAPTER 13 - Presenting the Deity of Christ and the Personhood of the Holy Spirit**
<https://www.4jehovah.org/questions-for-jehovahs-witnesses-on-the-true-god-and-the-trinity/>

STEP 8: REMOVE THE WATCHTOWER AUTHORITY BARRIER.

Although your Jehovah's Witness friends may better understand your beliefs at this point, they may not be ready to agree with you that Jesus is indeed God. This is because not only have your friends been blinded by Satan but they are committed to following the Watchtower organization, and as long as your friends wish to remain associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, they will not be able to embrace beliefs contrary to this religion. So, to be effective in helping your friends come to the real Jesus for salvation, you must help them divorce the false authority this counterfeit religion has set up in their minds. When it comes to discussing the Trinity doctrine, we have found the best way to attack this false authority is to focus on how the Watchtower Society distorts and misrepresents facts in their *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* brochure. You will find the photocopied documentation provided at the end of this packet which is from Christina (Harvey) Darlington's *Yes, You Should Believe in the Trinity* book and the following list of step-by-step points in "Explaining the Deity of Jesus Christ" (next article) helpful in breaking the Watchtower's hold upon Jehovah's Witness minds.

HOW TO TALK TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ABOUT THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRINITY: EXPLAINING THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST STEP-BY-STEP

1. DEFINING THE “TRINITY”:

“Neither **confounding** the Persons; nor **dividing** the Substance. For there is **one** Person of the Father, **another** of the Son, and **another** of the Holy Ghost....So the Father is God, the son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are **not three Gods**: but **one** God...The **Son is of the Father** alone: not made, nor created, but **begotten**....For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord **Jesus Christ**, the **Son of God**, is God and Man....**Equal** to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and **inferior** to the Father, as touching his Manhood.”—*Creed of Athanasius* (See Photocopy Pages DP 1-2 in the back of this packet.)

- Not **MODALISM**: three persons in one person
- Not **TRITHEISM**: three Gods in one God
- It is **three** distinct **persons** in **one God**.

4 Pillars of the Trinity Doctrine:

1. Father is called God at 1 Peter 1:2
2. Son is called God at John 20:28
3. Holy Spirit is called God at Acts 5:3-4
4. There is only **one** true **God** — John 17:3

2. IS THE “TRINITY” DOCTRINE FROM PAGANISM?

- In the Watchtower Trinity publication, the Society quotes various individuals to try to prove that the Trinity doctrine in Christianity is an infiltration of paganism. They state: “Historian **Will Durant** observed: ‘Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted....’ ”—*Should You Believe in the Trinity?: Is Jesus Christ the Almighty God?*, p. 11 (DP 3)
- In the context of this quote, Will Durant said: “It seems incredible that the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel should have come from the same hand. The Apocalypse is Jewish poetry, the Fourth Gospel is **Greek philosophy**.... Just as Philo, learned in Greek speculation, had felt a need to rephrase Judaism in forms acceptable to the logic-loving Greeks, so **John**...sought to give a **Greek philosophical tinge** to the mystic Jewish doctrine that the Wisdom of God was a living being, and to the Christian doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah. Consciously or not, he continued **Paul’s work** of **detaching** Christianity from Judaism....Now the **pagan world**—even the anti-Semitic world—could accept him as its own. Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it.”—*The Story of Civilization: Part III, Caesar and Christ*, p. 594-595 (DP 4-5)
- ❖ Do you believe that the writers of Scripture, such as John and Paul, incorporated “Greek philosophy” into their writings because they used terms and ideas that were identical to those found in pagan false religion? Do you agree with this historian that the Watchtower quotes? Do you believe that the Bible is the source of paganism in Christianity and that Christianity “adopted” paganism because the Bible is from paganism?
- “And in the book *Egyptian Religion*, Siegfried Morenz notes: “The trinity was a major preoccupation of Egyptian theologians...**Three gods** are combined and treated as a **single being**, addressed in the

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singular. In this way the spiritual force of Egyptian religion shows a direct link with Christian theology.” —*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, p. 11 (DP 3)

- Siegfried Morenz actually teaches: “...the doctrine of creation through the word ...was one of the **principal** elements in the Egyptian cosmogony....Less important, but more readily comprehensible, is the **influence** of the **Egyptian** court chronicle upon the literary form of the Israelites’ chronicle account of **David and Solomon**....**Isaiah’s** famous list of appellations for the Prince of Peace....is probably derived from the fivefold titulary of the **Egyptian** king....**Other passages** can, however, be claimed as **Egyptian in inspiration**: for instance, the Egyptian...lists of knowledge, which were the **basis** of the **proverbs** which King Solomon spoke....religious forms of the land of the Nile also had an effect upon the New Testament and so upon early Christianity....a concept that figures in the New Testament has been taken to be ultimately of **Egyptian origin**, **Jesus’s parable** of Dives and Lazarus....the association between ship and tongue in the **Epistle of St James**, which was **originally Egyptian**. **Romans**: the proverbial ‘coals of fire’ which were to be heaped upon one’s enemy - **derived** from a Late Egyptian penitential rite....the acclamation... ‘**God is One**’...is **derived** from one employed in the service of Sarapis....and this in turn comes from the early Egyptian theologians’ form ‘**One is Amon**.’ ” — *Egyptian Religion*, 1973, pp. 251-254 (DP 6-8)

- ❖ Do you believe that the “doctrine of creation through the word” was derived from “Egyptian cosmogony”? Do you believe that Israel’s “chronicle account of David and Solomon” was derived from the “Egyptian court chronicle”? What about Jesus’ “parable of Dives and Lazarus” and James’ “association between ship and tongue” which are identical to religious concepts in Egypt that existed prior to the writing of these Biblical ideas? Are we to argue that these concepts in the Bible had their origin in pagan false religion simply because these concepts existed prior to the Scripture’s exposition of these thoughts? Are we to argue that the Biblical doctrine that “God is One” is “derived” from “the early Egyptian theologians’ form ‘One is Amon’ ” because it existed in this pagan culture prior to Moses’ writing of Exodus and Deuteronomy? Then how can one tenably argue that the Trinity doctrine is derived from paganism simply because similar concepts existed in pagan culture prior to the formulation of Christian creeds—such as the creed of Athanasius?

Have you ever seen a counterfeit \$3.00 bill? Obviously, since no U.S. \$3.00 bill exists, one will search in vain to find a counterfeit \$3.00 bill, for it would be easily recognized. Because the purpose of the counterfeit is to deceive people into substituting the counterfeit for the genuine, counterfeit money is designed to resemble only authentic bills. This same principle applies to the spiritual realm. Simply because one can find numerous similarities between Biblical doctrines and pagan religions, this does not prove that such doctrines are derived from paganism. Rather, on the contrary, such resemblance actually proves the deceitful tactics of Satan in counterfeiting God’s truth.

3. THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS AND THE TRINITY DOCTRINE:

- On page 7 of the Watchtower *Should You Believe in the Trinity* brochure, the Watchtower misrepresents what the “Ante-Nicene Fathers” taught concerning the identity of Christ. Their point is that “the testimony of Bible and of history makes clear that the Trinity was unknown through Biblical times **and for several centuries thereafter**.”—*Should You Believe in the Trinity*, p. 7 (DP 9)

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- On example of the deception of the Watchtower is what they say about Clemet of Alexandria. They say that: “Clement of Alexandria, who died about 215 C.E., called God ‘the uncreated and imperishable and only true God.’ **He said that the Son** ‘is next to the only omnipotent Father’ but **not equal to him.**” — *Should You Believe in the Trinity*, p. 7 (DP 9)
- But Clement actually taught: “...the Divine Word, **He that is truly most manifest Deity, He that is made equal to the Lord of the universe**; because He was His Son, and the Word was in God....**I understand nothing else than the Holy Trinity to be meant**; for the third is the Holy Spirit, and the Son is the second, by whom all things were made according to the will of the Father....There was, then, a Word importing an **unbeginning eternity**; as also the Word itself, that is, the Son of God, who being, by **equality of substance, one with the Father**, is eternal and **uncreate.**”—*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, pp. 202, 468, 574 (DP 10-13)

4. THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST: “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.”

- At **JOB 38:7** angels are called “**sons of God**” but yet we read at Hebrews 1:5 that **no** angel is called God’s “Son”.
- **HEBREWS 1:4-6**: “So he has become **better than the angels**, to the extent that he has inherited a name more excellent than theirs. For example, to which one of the angels did he **ever** say: ‘**You are my son**; I, today, I have become your father....and let **all God’s angels** do obeisance to him.’”¹
 - **NOTE**: The Greek word προσκυνεω, *proskuneo*, translated “obeisance” in the *New World Translation* of this passage means “worship” that belongs only to God. (See **Acts 10:25-26** in the *NWT*.)
- ❖ If angels are called “sons of God” and Jesus is another “son of God” like all the other angles, why would the writer of Hebrews say “to which of the angels did he **ever** say: ‘You are my Son’”? Why would he ask such a question when all angels are called “sons”? Could it be that he is indicating that Jesus’ relationship to the Father as “Son” is different than the relationship angels have as “sons of God”?
 - At **John 6:62** Jesus is called the “Son of Man”? Was Jesus born of a “man”? Is God a Man?²
- ❖ In what way is Jesus’ relationship to the Father as His “Son” different from the angels?
- **JOHN 19:7**: “The Jews answered him: ‘We have a law, and **according to the law** he ought to **die**, because he made himself **God’s son.**’”
- ❖ What “Law” did the Jews understand Jesus to break by his claim to be the “Son of God”? Note the cross-reference in the *NWT* to Leviticus 24:16: “So the **abuser of Jehovah’s name** should be put to death without fail....”
- ❖ Why was Jesus’ claim to be the “Son of God” considered blasphemy?

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The Jewish people in Jesus' day understood the term "son of..." to mean "of the order or nature of..." Therefore, when Jesus claimed to be the "Son of God," the Jews understood Him to be claiming to be "of the order or nature of God." Note the following passages:

- **1 KINGS 20:35:** "Sons of the prophets" means "of the order of the prophets."
- **NEHEMIAH 12:28:** "Sons of the singers" means "of the order of the singers."
- **EPHESIANS 2:2:** "Sons of disobedience" means "having a disobedient nature."
- **JOHN 6:62:** "Son of Man" means "of the order and nature of Man."
- **JOHN 5:18:** "Son of God" means "of the order and nature of God."

"For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was **calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.**"—John 5:18

5. THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST: "The Son is of the Father alone: not made, **nor created**, but **begotten....**"

- **JOHN 1:18:** "No man has seen God at any time; the **only-begotten god** who is in the bosom [position] with the Father is the one that has explained him."

"It was thought that the term came from *μονος* (*monos*), meaning 'only' and *γενναω* (*gennao*), meaning 'begotten.' **However, further research has determined that the term is derived not from *γενναω* but from *γενος* (*genos*), meaning 'kind' or 'type.' Hence the better translation, 'unique' or 'one of a kind.'**" —*The King James Only Controversy*, p. 259 (DP 14)

- ❖ The Greek word (*γεγεννηκα*, *gegennaka*) for "become your father" at Hebrews 1:5 is often translated "begotten." If "begotten" means that Jesus was "created" (as the Watchtower claims), why does the writer of Hebrews indicate that Jesus is the only "Son of God" who was "begotten"? Doesn't this prove that "begotten" cannot refer to a so-called creation event, but rather to Jesus "uniqueness" as the only "Son of God" by nature and the one who became the "Son of Man" at the incarnation (coming to earth) event that took place in Mary's womb?

But some may ask, "How can Jesus be God if John 1:18 says that 'No man has seen God at any time...' Since no man has seen God and Jesus was seen by many men, doesn't this prove He can't be God?" Those who assert such argument forget the fact that it was said of Jesus at Colossians 1:15: "...He is the **image of the invisible God....**" The reason no man has seen God the Father is because He is "invisible" and "...dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see." (1 Timothy 6:16). This is why when Philip asked Jesus "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus replied, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8-9) Since no one can see the Father, Jesus (the only begotten God = one and only unique God) "has explained Him" or made Him manifest. Thus, we see that the Jehovah who appeared to Isaiah is indeed Jesus Himself!

- **ISAIAH 6:1, 5:** "In the year that King Uzziah died I, however, got **to see Jehovah....** 'Woe to me!...for my eyes have **seen** the King, **Jehovah of armies**, himself!'"

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- **JOHN 12:35, 37-38, 41-42:** “Jesus therefore said to them: The light will be among you a little while longer...they were not putting faith in him, so that the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled....**Isaiah** said these things because he **saw his glory**, and he **spoke about him**. All the same, many even of the rulers actually **put faith in him**....”

NOTE: The footnote reference "e" in the margin of the Jehovah's Witnesses 1984 edition of the *New World Translation Bible* for John 12:37 references this passage back to Isaiah 6:1. Again confirming that Jesus is the Jehovah referred to in that passage. (DP 15)

WHO IS JEHOVAH? No man has ever seen God (John 1:18). God is **not** a man (Hosea 11:9), but He is “spirit” (John 4:24). **Who is this Jehovah** who appears as a “man,” has “hands” and “feet,” “eats” food and speaks to men visibly and “face-to-face”? He is the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ!

- **GENESIS 32:24, 28-30:** “Finally Jacob was left by himself. Then a man began to grapple with him until the dawn ascended....for you have contended with God.... ‘I have **seen God face to face** and yet my soul was delivered.”
- **GENESIS 18:1-5, 8, 33; 19:1:** “Afterward **Jehovah** appeared to him....When he raised his eyes, then he looked and there **three men** were standing....then he said: ‘**Jehovah**, if, now I have found favor in your eyes, please do not pass by your servant.... Let a little water be taken, please, and you must have **your feet washed**. And let me get a piece of **bread**, and refresh your hearts.... Then he himself kept standing by them under the tree as **they** were **eating**....Then **Jehovah** went his way....Now the two angels arrived at Sodom by evening....”
- **GENESIS 16:13:** “Then she began to call the name of **Jehovah, who was speaking to her**: You are a **God** of sight, for she said: ‘Have I here **actually looked upon him** who sees me?”
- **ZECHARIAH 14:3-5:** “And **Jehovah** will certainly go forth and war against those nations....And **his feet will actually stand** in that day upon the mountain of the olive trees....**Jehovah my God** will certainly come, all the holy ones being with him.”
- **ZECHARIAH 11:13:** “At that, Jehovah said to me: ‘Throw it to the treasury—the majestic value with which **I have been valued** from their standpoint. Accordingly I took the **thirty pieces of silver** and threw it into the treasury at the house of Jehovah.”

COLOSSIANS 1:15: “He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of all creation.”

❖ “FIRST BORN” = SUPREMACY OF POSITION:

- **PSALM 89:27:** David who was the last born son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:11) is called “first-born.”
- **JEREMIAH 31:9:** Ephraim, who was born after Manasseh (Genesis 41:51-52), is called “first-born.”
- **EXODUS 4:22:** Israel is called God’s “first-born” son.
- **JOB 18:13:** An illness is called “the first-born of death.”
- **COLOSSIANS 1:18:** Jesus is called “the firstborn from the dead.”

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- ❖ If “firstborn” means first-created, why did the apostle Paul use the term *prototokos* which means “firstborn” or “preeminent one,” rather than the term *protoktistos* which means “first-created”? (DP 16)

The whole context of Colossians chapter one is speaking about the **supremacy of Christ** as being the Creator rather than being of the creation. It is in this sense that Christ is called the “firstborn” or preeminent one of creation. Indeed, “...He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that he might become the one who is **first in all things**; because [God] saw good for **all fullness to dwell** in him.” —Colossians 1:18-19

COLOSSIANS 2:9: “For in Him **all the fullness of Deity** dwells in bodily form.”—*New American Standard Bible*

JEHOVAH GOD	JESUS CHRIST
ISAIAH 44:24: “This is what Jehovah has said, your Repurchaser and the Former of you from the belly: ‘I, Jehovah, am doing everything, stretching out the heavens by myself, laying out the earth. Who was with me?’ ”	JOHN 1:3: “ All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence.”

- ❖ **NOTE:** At **Romans 11:36** and **Hebrews 2:10** all things are said to be created “through” the Father. Since it is untenable to argue that the Father is not the Supreme Creator because all things were created “through” Him, it is untenable to argue that Jesus is not the Supreme Creator simply because all things were created “through” Him.

THINGS THAT “CAME INTO BEING” (WERE CREATED) THROUGH CHRIST:	THINGS THAT NEVER “CAME INTO BEING” BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALWAYS EXISTED:
ALL CREATION: UNIVERSE • Time: Past, Present, Future • Space: Length, Width, Height • Matter: Energy, Movement, Phenomenon	THE TRIUNE GOD: • THE FATHER: Psalm 90:2 • THE SON: John 8:58; Isaiah 9:6; Heb. 7:3 • THE HOLY SPIRIT: Hebrews 9:14

- **ISAIAH 9:6:** “For there has been a child born to us...and his name will be called...Mighty God, **Eternal Father....**”
- ❖ Since Jesus is not the same person as the Father, in what way is Jesus called the “Eternal Father”? Some Hebrew translations of the passage have rendered this phrase as “Father of eternity.” Since Jesus has “no beginning of days” (Heb 7:3), He is indeed the “Father of eternity” as the One who possesses eternity.
- **PROVERBS 8:22-23:** “Jehovah himself **produced me** as the beginning of his way, the earliest of his achievements of long ago. From **time indefinite** I was installed, from the start, from times earlier than the earth.”
- ❖ If wisdom had to be created (was “produced”) are we to conclude that **Jehovah God had NO wisdom** until He created it?³

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It is obvious that God wouldn't be God if there was a time when He was without wisdom. Therefore, we must recognize that wisdom is just as eternal as God is. In fact, the same Hebrew word translated "everlasting" or "time indefinite" (*owlam*) which is used to express God's eternal nature at Psalm 90:2 is used to express the eternal nature of wisdom at Proverbs 8:23. Thus, if Jesus is "wisdom" personified, then Jesus must be as "eternal" as Jehovah God is!

According to Hebrews 7:3, Melchizedek, who was a picture of Christ, had "**neither beginning of days nor end of life...like the Son of God.**"⁴ Indeed, our eternal High/Priest Mediator, Jesus Christ, has no "beginning of days," for nothing that was created came into being "apart from Him." (John 1:3)

- **REVELATION 3:14:** "And to the angel of the congregation in Laodicea write: These are the things that the Amen says, the faithful and true witness, the **beginning of the creation by God....**"

" 'Beginning' [Greek, *ar-khe*'] cannot rightly be interpreted to mean that Jesus was the 'beginner' of God's creation. In his Bible writings, John uses various forms for the Greek word *ar-khe*' more than 20 times, and these **always** have the common meaning of 'beginning.' Yes, Jesus was created by God as the **beginning of God's invisible creations.**"—*Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, p. 14

- ❖ The Society says that John's use of the word "beginning" "always" has the meaning of "beginning." But at **Revelation 21:6 and 22:13**, John quotes God Almighty as stating that He is "the beginning and the end."⁵ Why is Jehovah God called the "beginning"?
- ❖ Since this passage teaches that Jehovah God is the "beginning," does this mean that Jehovah God had a "beginning"? Obviously, Not! So, what is Jehovah God the "beginning" of? Isn't it obvious that He is the "beginning" of the whole created universe? Since Jehovah is the "beginning" of His creation, does this prove that Jehovah Himself had a "beginning"?
- ❖ If Jehovah God is called the "beginning" of the created universe and He **is not** regarded as being **part of** what He began (**Rev. 21:6**), why can't Jesus be called the "beginning" of creation and He **not** be regarded as being **part of** the creation which He began? If the Greek word "*arche*" is used to indicate Jehovah's power and authority as the originator or "beginner" of creation, is it tenable to argue that *arche* cannot be applied to Christ to indicate His power and authority as the "beginner" of creation?

Contrary to the Society's claims, the Greek word *arche* (αρχη) is used to denote not only someone who is an originator, but also someone who is a ruler or magistrate. In fact, it is from this Greek word that our English words "architect" and "archbishop" are derived. Notice how *arche* is translated in the following passages found in the *King James Version* of the Bible:

ARCHE = RULER OR MAGISTRATE:

- **LUKE 12:11:** "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* **magistrates**, and powers...."
- **LUKE 20:20:** "...so they might deliver him unto the **power** and authority of the governor."
- **1 CORINTHIANS 15:24:** "...when he shall have put down all **rule** and all authority and power."
- **COLOSSIANS 2:10:** "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all **principality** and power...."

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As far as *arche* being used to refer to the originator of something, notice how *archegos* (αρχηγος) a derivative of *arche* is translated in the following passages found in the *New American Standard Bible*:

ARCHE = ORIGINATOR:

- **ACTS 3:15**: “but put to death the **Prince** of life....”
- **HEBREWS 2:10**: “...to perfect the **author** of their salvation through sufferings.”
- **HEBREWS 12:2**: “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the **author** and perfecter of faith....”

As is evident by the way *arche* is translated in these passages, the Society's assertion that *arche* cannot be applied to Christ as the “beginner” of God's creation” is entirely without merit. At Revelation 3:14, Scripture is actually teaching that Jesus Christ is the Architect and Ruler of creation, for **all creation began with Christ**.

6. THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST: “Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.”

- **JOHN 14:28**: “The Father is **greater** than I”
 - ❖ At John 14:12, Christians are said to do “greater” works than Jesus. Does this mean that our works are “better” than Jesus' works?
 - ❖ An “elder” is in a “greater” position than a “ministerial servant,” does this mean that the “elder” has a “better” human nature?

We can see how “as touching his Manhood”, Jesus is “inferior to the Father” as the Father was in a “greater” position (being in Heaven) than Jesus was here on earth. But this does not prove that Jesus was an “inferior” God simply because the Father is in a “greater” position of authority while Jesus was here on earth.

- **1 CORINTHIANS 15:28**: “....the Son himself will also **subject** himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone.”
 - ❖ At **LUKE 2:51**, we read that Jesus “continued in subjection” to Mary and Joseph. Does this mean that He was inferior to them?
 - ❖ **1 CORINTHIANS 11:3** states that just as God the Father is the “head” of Christ, the “head of a woman is the man.” Does this mean that the woman is “inferior” to the man because she operates under the authority of her husband?

Just as submission in a marriage relationship brings unity and harmony into the marriage, so there is a functional subordination that exists between the Father and the Son. But this subordination does not prove that Jesus is any less God in His nature than the Father is God.

- **JOHN 20:17**: “...I am ascending to **My Father** and your Father, and to **my God** and your God.”
 - ❖ Why was Jesus always so careful to distinguish His relationship with the Father from the relationship that His followers have with the Father? Why did He say, “I go to **My Father** and **your**

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Father” instead of saying, “I go to **our** Father”? Jesus is God’s Son **by nature**, whereas we are God’s sons by **adoption** (John 1:12).

As the Son of God, Jesus possesses the **same nature** as God (John 5:18, 19:7), but in the incarnation, Jesus took on the nature of man and thus became the “Son of Man” (John 6:64). While in His Divine nature, Jesus still possesses the power and authority of God, **it is in his human nature that Jesus refers to the Father as His God.**

- **MARK 13:32:** “Concerning that day or hour **nobody knows**...nor the Son, but the Father”

From the vantage point of His humanity, Jesus did not “know” certain things, but from the vantage point of His Deity, Jesus knows “all things” (**John 16:30**).

JEHOVAH GOD	JESUS CHRIST
1 KINGS 8:39: “then may you yourself hear from the heavens, your established place of dwelling, and you must forgive and act and give to each one according to all his ways, because you know his heart (for you yourself alone well know the heart of all the sons of mankind .”	JOHN 2:24-25: “But Jesus himself was not entrusting himself to them because of his knowing them all and because he was in no need to have anyone bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man .”

- **JOHN 16:30:** “Now we know that you **know all things**....”
- **JOHN 18:4:** “Jesus therefore, **knowing all the things** coming upon Him, went forth....”
- **MATTHEW 9:4:** “And Jesus, **knowing their thoughts** said....”
- **JOHN 21:17:** “...So he said to him, ‘Lord, **you know all things**; you are aware that I have affection for you.’ ”

JEHOVAH GOD	JESUS CHRIST
JEREMIAH 17:9-10: “The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it? I, Jehovah, am searching the heart, examining the kidneys, even to give to each one according to his ways, according to the fruitage of his dealings. ”	REVELATION 2:18, 23: “...the Son of God says... ‘So that all the congregations will know that I am he who searches the kidneys and hearts, and I will give to you individually according to your deeds. ’ ”

7. JESUS RECEIVES WORSHIP ALONG WITH THE FATHER:

- **REVELATION 5:8-9, 11-14:** “And when he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders **fell down before the Lamb**, having each one a harp and golden bowls that were full of incense, and the [incense] means the **prayers** of the holy ones. And they **sing a new song**, saying: ‘**You are worthy**....’ And I heard a voice of many angels....and the elders...saying with a loud voice: ‘The **Lamb** that was slaughtered is **worthy** to receive the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And **every creature** that is in heaven and on earth and underneath the earth and on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying: ‘To the One sitting on the throne **and to the Lamb** be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever and ever.’ And the four

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living creatures when saying: 'Amen!' and the elders **fell down and worshiped.**"—*New World Translation*

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD: JOHN 14:14

"If you **ask Me** anything in My name, I will do it."

KINGDOM INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION	NEW WORLD TRANSLATION
JOHN 14:14: "If ever anything you should ask me in the name of me this I shall do."	JOHN 14:14: "If You ask anything in my name, I will do it."

- ❖ **NOTE:** The Society's *New World Translation* **leaves out** the "me" in "ask Me" in this verse because Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that Jesus should receive worship by prayer. Not only does Jesus encourage His followers to pray directly to Him, but Jesus also is the one who answers the prayers!⁶
- **ACTS 7:59:** "And they went on casting stones at Stephen as **he made appeal** and said: '**Lord Jesus**, receive my spirit.' "
- ❖ **NOTE:** Stephen made his prayer (appeal) to Jesus **AFTER** his vision of Jesus at verses 54-55. Immediately after Stephen's vision of Jesus, the Jews "rushed upon him" and "after throwing him **outside** the city, they began casting stones at him." (vs 57-58) Thus, Stephen **DID NOT PRAY TO JESUS DURING HIS VISION** but afterward just before his death.
- **2 CORINTHIANS 12:8-9:** "In this behalf I **three times** entreated the **Lord** that it might depart from me; and yet **he really said to me:** My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; **for [my] power** is being made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, will I boast as respects my weakness, **that the power of Christ** may like a tent remain over me."
- ❖ Here we see that Paul prays to Jesus "three times" and Jesus is the one answering the prayer. Thus, Paul realizes that it is Jesus' "power" that is his strength.
- **MATTHEW 4:10:** "Then Jesus said to him:... 'It is Jehovah your God you must **worship**, and ti is to him **alone** you must render sacred service.' "
- ❖ Since Jehovah God is the **ONLY** one we are to worship, doesn't the fact that Jesus is "worshipped" along with the Father and receives and answers prayers, prove that Jesus is God Almighty?
- **JOHN 5:23:** "in order that all may **honor the Son just as they honor the Father**. He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

8. JESUS PLACES HIS NAME ON GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT:

- ❖ Are there two "Holy Spirits"? Is the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit or Jesus' Spirit?
- **ACTS 16:6-7:** "Moreover, they went through Phrygia and the country of Galatia, because they were forbidden by the **holy spirit** to speak the word in the [district of] Asia. Further, when getting down to Mysia they made efforts to go into Bithynia, but the **spirit of Jesus** did not permit them."

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- **ROMANS 8:9:** “However, you are in harmony, not with the flesh, but with the spirit, if **God’s spirit** truly dwells in you. But if anyone does not have **Christ’s spirit**, this one does not belong to him.”

9. JESUS POSSESSES THE AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS:

❖ Since only God has the authority to forgive sins, who is Jesus revealing Himself to be?

- **MARK 2:5-9, 10:** “And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic: ‘Child, your sins are forgiven.’ Now there were some of the scribes there...reasoning in their hearts: ‘...He is blaspheming. **Who can forgive sins except one, God?**’ but Jesus having discerning immediately by his spirit that they were reasoning this way in themselves, said to them: ‘Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts?...But in order for you men to know that the **Son of man has authority to forgive sins**...he said to the paralytic: “I say to you, Get up, pick up your cot, and go to your home.” ’ ”

10. JESUS POSSESSES THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE ETERNAL LIFE:

❖ Have you “come to Jesus” by asking Him to give you eternal life?

- **JOHN 10:28:** “And **I give them eternal life**, and they will be not means ever be destroyed, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”
- **JOHN 5:39-40:** “You are searching the Scriptures, because you think that by means of them you will have everlasting life; and these are the very ones that bear witness about me. And yet you do not want to **come to me** that you may **have life**.”

11. JESUS IS THE GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR:

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD: TITUS 2:13

“looking for the blessed hope and the **appearing** of the glory of our **great God and Savior**, Christ Jesus;”

KINGDOM INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION	NEW WORLD TRANSLATION
TITUS 2:13: “awaiting the happy hope and manifestation of the glory of... του μεγαλου θεου και σωτηρος ημων χριστου Ιησου”	TITUS 2:13: “while we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of Savior of us of Christ Jesus,”

GRANVILLE SHARP’S GREEK GRAMMAR RULE:

In the case where **TWO NOUNS** which are **DESCRIBING A PERSON** are **CONNECTED** by the word “AND,” and the **FIRST NOUN HAS THE ARTICLE** (“the”) while the **SECOND NOUN DOES NOT**, **BOTH NOUNS ARE REFERRING TO THE SAME PERSON**. Sharp’s rule is valid *only for singular nouns*—not plural nouns, and it is *not intended to be applied to proper names*.

ISAIAH 43:11; 45:21: “I—I am Jehovah, and **beside me there is no savior**...Is it not I, Jehovah, **besides whom there is not other God**, a righteous God and a **Savior**, **there being none excepting me?**”—*New World Translation*

HOW TO TALK TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ABOUT THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRINITY: EXPLAINING THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST STEP-BY-STEP

JESUS CHRIST	JEHOVAH GOD
1 PETER 3:14b-15a: "...However, the object of their fear do not you fear, neither become agitated. But sanctify the Christ as Lord [κυριον] in your hearts...."	ISAIAH 8:12-13: "...A conspiracy! and the object of their fear you men must not fear, nor must you tremble at it. Jehovah of armies—he is the One whom you should treat as holy ."

12. JESUS IS THE ALMIGHTY JEHOVAH:

REVELATION 1:7-8: "Look! **He is coming** with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him. Yes, Amen. **'I am the Al'pha and the O-me'ga,'** says **Jehovah God**, **'the One** who is and who was and **who is coming, the Almighty.'**"—*New World Translation*

REVELATION 22: 12-13: " 'Look! **I am coming quickly**, and the reward I give is with me, to render to each one as his work is. **I am the Al'pha and the O-me'ga, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.'** " —*New World Translation*

REVELATION 22:20: "He that bears witness of these things says, 'Yes; **I am coming quickly.**' 'Amen! **Come, Lord Jesus.'** "—*New World Translation*

ISAIAH 44:6; 48:12: "This is what **Jehovah has said**, the King of Israel and the **Repurchaser** of him, Jehovah of armies, **'I am the first and I am the last**, and beside me there is no God.' '...Listen to me, O Jacob, and you Israel my called one. **I am the same One. I am the first. Moreover, I am the last.'** "—*New World Translation*

REVELATION 1:17-18; 2:8: "And when I saw him, I fell as dead at his feet. And he laid his right hand upon me and said: 'Do not be fearful. **I am the First and the Last**, and the living one, and **I became dead**, but, look! I am living forever and ever'....These are the things that he says, 'the First and the Last,' who became dead and came to life [again]"—*New World Translation*

1. **REVELATION 1:7-8:**

- Jesus is coming.
- Jehovah God, the "Alpha and Omega," is coming.
- There are not two beings, but only "one...who is coming."

2. **REVELATION 22:12-13, 20:**

- The "Alpha and Omega" is coming "quickly."
- The "Alpha and Omega" is "the first and the last," the "beginning and the end."
- He who is coming "quickly" is the "Lord Jesus."

3. **ISAIAH 44:6; 48:12:**

- Jehovah is the "first" and the "last."

4. **REVELATION 1:17-18; 2:8:**

- The "First and the Last" is Jesus "who became dead and came to life [again]."

HOW TO TALK TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ABOUT THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRINITY: EXPLAINING THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST STEP-BY-STEP

WHO IS JESUS?

Numerous titles and attributes of Jehovah found in the Hebrew Scriptures are applied directly to Jesus in the Christian Greek Scriptures.⁷

- Jehovah **knows “all things.”** (1 John 3:20; Psalm 147:5) Jesus knows “all things.” (John 16:30)
- Jehovah is the **only one who knows the hearts of all men.** (1 Kings 8:39; Jeremiah 17:9-10) Jesus knows the hearts of all men. (John 2:24-25; Rev. 2:18, 23)
- Jehovah is our **sanctifier.** (Exodus 31:13) Jesus sanctifies us. (Hebrews 10:10)
- Jehovah is our **peace.** (Judges 6:23) Jesus is our peace. (Ephesians 2:14)
- Jehovah is our **righteousness.** (Jeremiah 23:6) Jesus is our righteousness. (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- Jehovah is our **healer.** (Exodus 15:26) Jesus heals us. (Acts 9:34)
- Jehovah God **dwells** in us. (2 Corinthians 6:16) Jesus is in us. (Romans 8:10)⁸
- Jehovah is the **giver of life** who will not allow His people to be “**snatched**” out of His hand. (Deuteronomy 32:39) Jesus is the giver of life who will not allow His people to be “snatched” out of His hand. (John 10:28)
- Jehovah’s voice is “like the roar of **rushing waters.**” (Ezekiel 43:2) Jesus’ “voice was like the sound of rushing waters.” (Revelation 1:15)
- Jehovah is **present everywhere.** (Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:24; 1 Kings 8:27) Jesus is omnipresent. (John 1:48; Matthew 18:20; 28:20)
- Jehovah’s **nature does not change.** (Malachi 3:6) Jesus’ nature does not change. (Hebrews 13:8)
- Jehovah is the **only** God we are to “**serve.**” (2 Kings 17:35) Jesus is to be served. (Col. 3:24)
- Jehovah is the **only** God to be “**worshipped.**” (Exodus 34:14) Jesus receives the same honor and “worship” that the Father receives. (John 5:23; Revelation 5:11-14 compare with Rev. 4:10-11)⁹ No angel can receive “worship.” (Revelation 22:8-9)
- Jehovah the Lord is to be **set apart as holy.** (Isaiah 8:12b-13) Jesus as Jehovah is to be set apart as holy. (1 Peter 3:14b-15a)
- Jehovah’s **glory** is not to be given to another. (Isaiah 42:8) Jesus shares Jehovah’s glory. (John. 17:5)
- **God’s name** is Jehovah (or Yahweh—YHWH). (Isaiah 42:8) Jesus has Jehovah’s name. (John 17:11; John 16:14-15)
- Jehovah is the **only God** to be mentioned in **prayer.** (Exodus 23:13) Christians are to pray to Jesus. (John 14:14)
- **Calling upon Jehovah** (Joel 2:32) is the same as calling upon Jesus. (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:9-13)¹⁰
- Jehovah “the true God” is called “**eternal life.**” (1 John 5:20) Jesus is called “the eternal life.” (1 John 1:2)
- Jehovah is the “**mighty God.**” (Jeremiah 32:17-18; Isaiah 10:20-21) Jesus is the “mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6) who is “Almighty.” (Revelation 1:7-8) **THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. (1 Timothy 1:17; Isaiah 44:8)**
- Jehovah is an “**everlasting light.**” (Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 60:19-20) Jesus is the light of men and the everlasting light of the future city. (John 1:4-9; Revelation 21:23)
- Jehovah is “**the first and the last.**” (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12) Jesus is the “first and the last.” (Revelation 1:17-18; 22:12-13, 20)
- Jehovah is the “**Alpha and the Omega.**” (Revelation 1:8; Revelation 21:6-7) Jesus is the “Alpha and the Omega.” (Revelation 22:12-13, 20)
- Jehovah’s title is “**the Holy One.**” (Isaiah 47:4) Jesus is “the Holy One.” (Acts 3:14; John 6:69)
- Jehovah is the “**stumbling stone**” of Israel. (Isaiah 8:13-15) Jesus is the “stumbling stone” of Israel. (1 Peter 2:6-8)
- John the Baptist was to **prepare the way** for Jehovah. (Isaiah 40:3) The Jehovah who came was Jesus. (Mark 1:1-4; John 1:6-7, 23)
- Jehovah is the one who was “**pierced.**” (Zechariah 12:10)¹¹ Jesus is the pierced Jehovah. (Rev. 1:7-8)

HOW TO TALK TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ABOUT THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE TRINITY: EXPLAINING THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST STEP-BY-STEP

- The Jehovah who was **sold for 30 pieces of silver** (Zechariah 11:13) is Jesus. (Matthew 27:2-6)
 - Jehovah is **Lord of the elements**. (Psalm 89:8-9) Jesus is Lord of the elements. (Matthew 8:26-27; John 2:7-9)
 - Jehovah is the **great Judge** who gives life to whom he wishes and who renders to each man “according” to his “deeds.” (Psalm 98:9; Deuteronomy 32:39; Jeremiah 17:9-10) Jesus is the **only judge** who gives life to whom he wishes and renders to each man “according” to his “deeds.” (John 5:21-22; Revelation 2:18, 23)
 - Jehovah is the **only** one who can **forgive sins**. (Mark 2:7; Daniel 9:9) Jesus forgives sins. (Mark 2:10-11; Luke 24:46-47)
 - Jehovah is the **great “shepherd”** who leads his people to “the spring of the **water of life**.” (Psalm 23:1-2; Revelation 21:6-7) Jesus as the “shepherd” of His people, leads them “to springs of the water of life.” (John 10:11-18; Revelation 7:17) **THERE IS ONLY ONE SHEPHERD —John 10:16.**
 - Jehovah is “**Lord of Lords**.” (Deuteronomy 10:17) Jesus is “Lord of Lords.” (Revelation 17:14; 19:16) The Father is **Lord of all**. (Matthew 11:25; Acts 17:24) Jesus is “Lord of all.” (Acts 10:36) **THERE IS ONLY ONE LORD. (Jude 4)**
 - Jehovah is the **Savior**. (Isaiah 45:21-22) Jesus is the Savior. (Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1) **THERE IS ONLY ONE SAVIOR. (Isaiah 43:11)**
 - Jehovah **created the universe**. (Psalm 102:25-27) Jesus created the universe. (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-19;¹² Hebrews 1:10-12)¹³ **THERE IS ONLY ONE CREATOR. (Isaiah 44:24)**
 - **Isaiah saw Jehovah**. (Isaiah 6:1-5) The Jehovah that Isaiah saw was Jesus. (John 12:41)
- ❖ Could it be that Jehovah gave Jesus all these qualities, and therefore, Jesus is a “lesser God” under Jehovah? No! For Jehovah declares: “For I am God, and there is **no other**; I *am* God, and there is **no one like Me**.”—Isaiah 46:9

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the Watchtower's *New World Translation (NWT)*

² Jesus was not begotten by a man. God is not a Man (Hosea 11:9), and Mary was a “virgin” (Matthew 1:23-25). Therefore, Jesus is called the “Son of Man” in the sense that He has the nature of Man.

³ The *New American Translation* better translates these passages as it states that God “possessed” wisdom, rather than “produced” wisdom. These passages reveal how God brought forth wisdom to take part in His creation.

⁴ Melchizedek king of Salem was a high priest of God to whom Abraham bestowed his tithe (Genesis 14:18-20). Melchizedek's name means “Righteous King” Priest of Salem (Peace). Thus, he is one of the people in the Old Testament that God used to be a picture of Christ to the Israelites. Just like Jesus Christ as God has always existed, so Melchizedek was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” in the sense that this information **was not recorded** in Scripture so that Melchizedek would better represent the eternal nature of Jesus Christ our High Priest/Mediator.

⁵ At Revelation 1:8, Almighty God is revealed to be the “Alpha and the Omega.” At Revelation 21:6, the “Alpha and the Omega” states that He is the “beginning and the end.” Thus, it is Almighty God who is speaking here at Revelation 21:6 and 22:13.

⁶ Note there is a textual variance in the manuscripts of this passage. Some manuscripts do not have the “me” in this passage (like the KJV and NKJV bibles), however the **oldest** and **best** Greek manuscripts that we have available today (including Papyrus 66 – the oldest manuscript of the book of John at about 125 C.E. and the Society's manuscript of the Westcott and Hort manuscripts—Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) contain the “me.”

⁷ The following list of verses was prepared from the *New American Standard Bible* but most of the verses parallel the same in the *NWT*.

⁸ Every place where Jesus is said to dwell “in” someone, the Watchtower Society's *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* mistranslates it to read “Christ is **in union** with you.” However, note that the correct translation of “in you” can be found in Romans 8:10 of the Society's *Greek/English Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*.

⁹ Also compare Isaiah 45:23 with Philippians 2:10-11.

¹⁰ The *New World Translation* inserts the word “Jehovah” for “Lord” 237 times into their Christian Scriptures without the support of a single Greek manuscript of the Christian Scriptures. This is the case with Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13. Note, however, the correct translation of “Lord” can be found in the Society's *Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*.

¹¹ While the best Hebrew manuscripts available render Zechariah 12:10 as, “look upon **Me** whom they have pierced,” the *New World Translation* mistranslates it to read, “look to **the One** whom they have pierced.”

¹² In this passage of Colossians, the *New World Translation*, adds the word “other” four times against all Greek manuscripts available. Note the correct translation of this passage can be found in the Society's *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

¹³ Paul quotes Psalm 102:25-27 which speaks of Jehovah and applies this passage directly to Christ in Hebrews 1:10-12

DP 1

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THE NICENE CREED (continued)

process, a variety of creeds were developed. The most important, because of its gaining almost universal acceptance among the major Christian groupings, was the Nicene Creed. It was first promulgated by the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. and later expanded by the Council at Constantinople in 381. It became the standard creed of both the Eastern and Western Churches during the early middle ages and is integral to their liturgies. The creed is considered the unitive statement of faith by the organizationally separate Eastern Orthodox bodies. Like the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed is formally recognized as a doctrinal standard by some Protestant bodies and informally recognized by most others. For example, it is printed as an optional confession of faith to be used in worship services in both the Hymnal and the Book of Worship of the United Methodist Church.

There is only one major variation in the text of the Nicene Creed. A theological difference between the Eastern and Western Churches at the time of the Great Schism of 1054 underlies the Roman Catholic Church's addition of the so-called "filioque clause," which affirmed that, within the mystery of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son, not just the Father. Generally, churches deriving from the Roman Catholic Church have kept the clause in their reprinting of the creed. During the nineteenth century, the filioque (i.e., Latin for "and the Son") clause became a major item of discussion for the Old Catholics.

* * *

THE CHALCEDONIAN FORMULA

Following the holy fathers, we all unanimously teach that one and same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be confessed:

Perfect in Deity and perfect in Humanity,
Truly God and truly Man,
Of a rational soul and body,
Consubstantial with the Father according to his Deity,
Consubstantial with us according to his Humanity,
Like us in all respects, apart from sin;
Before the ages begotten of the Father according to his Deity,
And in these last days for us and for our salvation was born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [Theotokos] according to his Humanity,
One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten,
To be acknowledged in Two Natures
without confusion or change
without division or separation;
The difference of the Natures being by no means removed by the union,
but rather the property of each Nature being preserved and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence,
Not parted or divided into two Persons,
but one and the same Son and Only-begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ;
According as at first the prophets, then the Lord Jesus Christ himself, taught us concerning him,
And as the Creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

Notes: Largely confined to theological textbooks today, the Chalcedonian Formula promulgated in 451 C.E. represents the culmination of the major controversies that occupied the Christian Church leaders during the early centuries. It defined the orthodox solution to the problems of the Trinity, the dual nature of Jesus Christ, and the role of the Holy Spirit. The importance of its determinative theological role cannot be underestimated, though its popularity for liturgical use has never approached that of the Nicene Creed.

Because the Chalcedonian Formula has not been utilized as a liturgical confession and the Greek words used in it continue to provoke theological discussions, no standard accepted English text exists, such as exist for the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds. The formula's several translations vary from extremely literal to free flowing and interpretive. The text presented here tends toward the literal. Notice should be taken of the formula's affirmation of Mary as "theotokos" [mother of God], an implication of Jesus's divinity that had significant influence on the latter development of understanding the Virgin Mary in the life of the Church.

The Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Chalcedonian Formula were by no means the only creeds of the early church. They are the ones that continue to have the most direct effect upon contemporary church bodies by their use and theological impact.

* * *

THE CREED OF ATHANASIUS (SYMBOLUM QUICUNQUE)

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic [true Christian] faith,
2. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the Catholic [true Christian] faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
4. Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Substance.
5. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory Equal, the Majesty Coeternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.
8. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate.
9. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.
10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal: and the Holy Ghost eternal.
11. And yet they are not three Eternals: but one Eternal.

2
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Vol. 1, J. Gordon Melton, Editor (Gale Research Company, 1988)

DP 2

Ancient Creeds of the Christian Church

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|---|---|
| <p>12. As there are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles: but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.</p> <p>13. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty.</p> <p>14. And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty.</p> <p>15. So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.</p> <p>16. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.</p> <p>17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.</p> <p>18. And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.</p> <p>19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the Catholic [Christian] Religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.</p> <p>20. The Father is made of none: neither created nor begotten.</p> <p>21. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.</p> <p>22. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.</p> <p>23. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.</p> <p>24. And in this Trinity none is before, or after other: none is greater, or less than another;</p> <p>25. But the whole three Persons are coeternal together, and coequal: So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.</p> <p>26. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.</p> <p>27. Furthermore, it is necessary to Everlasting Salvation; that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>28. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;</p> <p>29. God, of the Substance of the Father begotten before the worlds: and Man of the Substance of his mother, born in the world;</p> <p>30. Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.</p> | <p>31. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.</p> <p>32. Who although he be God and Man: yet he is not two, but one Christ;</p> <p>33. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking the Manhood into God;</p> <p>34. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by Unity of Person.</p> <p>35. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ;</p> <p>36. Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.</p> <p>37. He ascended into heaven; he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.</p> <p>38. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies: and shall give account for their own works.</p> <p>39. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.</p> <p>40. This is the Catholic [true Christian] faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.</p> |
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Notes: Although now thought to have been written sometime between the fourth and eighth centuries, this creed was for centuries ascribed to Athanasius (299?-373 C.E.), the fourth-century bishop who championed what became the orthodox Christian position on the nature of Christ. Even though the creed was never officially accepted by a church council (resulting in a variety of texts with different renderings, rather than one standard text), it became a widely accepted church document. Rendered into liturgical form, it was chanted in both the Roman Catholic Church and Church of England several times per year.

The creed has lost popularity in the contemporary era, although it is still accepted and used in the Roman Catholic Church. The Lutherans included the creed in their doctrinal material as part of their broader case for catholic orthodoxy. The text reproduced here is taken from the Lutheran Book of Concord. The creed is also found in the official materials of other churches, such as the Psalter Hymnal of the Christian Reformed Church. The Protestant Episcopal Church deleted the creed from its prayer book in 1785.

The words in brackets have been inserted into the text by the Lutheran translators to explain their understanding of the word "catholic," which differs considerably from the common meaning of Roman Catholic.

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RELIGIONS: RELIGIOUS CREEDS, First Edition
Vol. 1, J. Gordon Melton, Editor (Gale Research Company, 1988)



▲ 3. Palmyra.
Triad of moon god,
Lord of Heavens,
sun god, c. 1st
century C.E.



▲ 5. Kampuchea.
Triune Buddhist
godhead, c. 12th
century C.E.

mce.
Y. c. 14th
C.E.



▲ 10. Germany.
Trinity, 20th
century C.E.

What Influenced It

THROUGHOUT the ancient world, as far back as Babylonia, the worship of pagan gods grouped in threes, or triads, was common. That influence was also prevalent in Egypt, Greece, and Rome in the centuries before, during, and after Christ. And after the death of the apostles, such pagan beliefs began to invade Christianity.

Historian Will Durant observed: "Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. . . . From Egypt came the ideas of a divine trinity." And in the book *Egyptian Religion*, Siegfried Morenz notes: "The trinity was a major preoccupation of Egyptian theologians . . . Three gods are combined and treated as a single being, addressed in the singular. In this way the spiritual force of Egyptian religion shows a direct link with Christian theology."

Thus, in Alexandria, Egypt, churchmen of the late third and early fourth centuries, such as Athanasius, reflected this influence as they formulated ideas that led to the Trinity. Their own influence spread, so that Morenz considers "Alexandrian theology as the intermediary between the Egyptian religious heritage and Christianity."

In the preface to Edward Gibbon's *History of Christianity*, we read: "If Paganism was conquered by Christianity, it is equally true that Christianity was corrupted by Paganism. The pure Deism of the first Christians . . . was changed, by the Church of Rome, into the incomprehensible dogma of the trinity. Many of the pagan tenets, invented by the Egyptians and idealized by Plato, were retained as being worthy of belief."

A *Dictionary of Religious Knowledge* notes that many say that the Trinity "is a corruption borrowed from the heathen religions, and ingrafted on the Christian faith." And *The Paganism in Our Christianity* declares: "The origin of the [Trinity] is entirely pagan."

That is why, in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings wrote: "In Indian religion, e.g., we meet with the trinitarian group of Brahmā, Siva, and Viṣṇu; and in Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus . . . Nor is it only in historical religions that we find God viewed as a Trinity. One recalls in particular the Neo-Platonic view of the Supreme or Ultimate Reality," which is "triadically repre-

SHOULD YOU BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY?

sented." What does the Greek philosopher Plato have to do with the Trinity?

Platonism

PLATO, it is thought, lived from 428 to 347 before Christ. While he did not teach the Trinity in its present form, his philosophies paved the way for it. Later, philosophical movements that included triadic beliefs sprang up, and these were influenced by Plato's ideas of God and nature.

The French *Nouveau Dictionnaire Universel* (New Universal Dictionary) says of Plato's influence: "The Platonic trinity, itself merely a rearrangement of older trinities dating back to earlier peoples, appears to be the rational philosophic trinity of attributes that gave birth to the three hypostases or divine persons taught by the Christian churches. . . . This Greek philosopher's conception of the divine trinity . . . can be found in all the ancient [pagan] religions."

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge shows the influence of this Greek philosophy: "The doctrines of the Logos and the Trinity received their shape from Greek Fathers, who . . . were much influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Platonic philosophy . . . That errors and corruptions crept into the Church from this source can not be denied."

The Church of the First Three Centuries says: "The doctrine of the Trinity was of gradual and comparatively late formation; . . . it had its origin in a source entirely foreign from that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; . . . it grew up, and was ingrafted on Christianity, through the hands of the Platonizing Fathers."

By the end of the third century C.E., "Christianity" and the new Platonic philosophies became inseparably united. As Adolf Harnack states in *Outlines of the History of Dogma*, church doctrine became "firmly rooted in the soil of Hellenism [pagan Greek thought]. Thereby it became a mystery to the great majority of Christians."

The church claimed that its new doctrines were based on the Bible. But Harnack says: "In reality it legitimized in its midst the Hellenic speculation, the superstitious views and customs of pagan mystery-worship."

In the book *A Statement of Reasons*, Andrews Norton says of the Trinity: "We can

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from their graves, and the drowned will be drawn up out of the seas. On that dread day all "whose names are not found in the Book of Life" will be "flung into . . . a burning lake of fire and brimstone."⁸⁰ The faithful will "gather for God's great banquet, and will eat the bodies of kings, commanders, mighty men . . . the bodies of all men, slaves or freemen, high or low,"⁸¹ who have not heeded the call of Christ. A new heaven and earth will be formed, and a New Jerusalem will come down from the hand of God to be a paradise on earth. It will have a foundation of precious stones, buildings of translucent silver or gold, walls of jasper, and each gate a single pearl; through it will run a "river of living water," on whose bank will grow the "tree of life." The reign of evil will be ended for all time; the faithful of Christ will inherit the earth; "there will be no death any longer, nor night, nor any grief or pain."⁸²

The influence of the Book of Revelation was immediate, enduring, and profound. Its prophecies of salvation for loyal believers, and of punishment for their enemies, became the sustenance of a persecuted Church. Its theory of the millennium solaced those who mourned the long delay in the second coming of Christ. Its vivid images and brilliant phrases entered into both the popular and the literary speech of Christendom. For nineteen centuries men have interpreted the events of history as fulfillments of its visions; and in some recesses of the white man's world it still gives its dark colors and bitter flavor to the creed of Christ.

It seems incredible that the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel should have come from the same hand. The Apocalypse is Jewish poetry, the Fourth Gospel is Greek philosophy. Perhaps the apostle wrote Revelation in justifiable wrath after Nero's persecution, and the Gospel in the mellow metaphysics of his old age (A.D. 90?). His memories of the Master may by this time have faded a bit, so far as one could ever forget Jesus; and doubtless in the isles and cities of Ionia he had heard many an echo of Greek mysticism and philosophy. Plato had set a theme by picturing the Ideas of God as the patterns on which all things were formed; the Stoics had combined these Ideas into the *Logos Spermatikos* or fertilizing wisdom of God; the Neo-Pythagoreans had made the Ideas a divine person; and Philo had turned them into the Logos or Reason of God, a second divine principle, through which God created, and communicated with, the world. If we reread the famous exordium of the Fourth Gospel with all this in mind, and retain the *Logos* of the Greek original in place of the translation *Word*, we perceive at once that John has joined the philosophers:

In the beginning was the Logos; the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. . . . All things were made by the Logos; without

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The Story of Civilization: Part III, Caesar and Christ
by Will Durant, 1944, p 594

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THE APOSTLES

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him nothing was made that was made. It was by him that all things came into existence. . . . So the Logos became flesh and blood, and dwelt amongst us.

Just as Philo, learned in Greek speculation, had felt a need to rephrase Judaism in forms acceptable to the logic-loving Greeks, so John, having lived for two generations in a Hellenistic environment, sought to give a Greek philosophical tinge to the mystic Jewish doctrine that the Wisdom of God was a living being,⁸³ and to the Christian doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah. Consciously or not, he continued Paul's work of detaching Christianity from Judaism. Christ was no longer presented as a Jew, living more or less under the Jewish Law; he was made to address the Jews as "you," and to speak of their Law as "yours"; he was not a Messiah sent "to save the lost sheep of Israel," he was the coeternal Son of God; not merely the future judge of mankind, but the primeval creator of the universe. In this perspective the Jewish life of the man Jesus could be put into the background, faded almost as in Gnostic heresy; and the god Christ was assimilated to the religious and philosophical traditions of the Hellenistic mind. Now the pagan world—even the anti-Semitic world—could accept him as its own. Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the Church; the Greek language, having reigned for centuries over philosophy, became the vehicle of Christian literature and ritual; the Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. From Egypt came the ideas of a divine trinity, the Last Judgment, and a personal immortality of reward and punishment; from Egypt the adoration of the Mother and Child, and the mystic theosophy that made Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, and obscured the Christian creed; there, too, Christian monasticism would find its exemplars and its source. From Phrygia came the worship of the Great Mother; from Syria the resurrection drama of Adonis; from Thrace, perhaps, the cult of Dionysus, the dying and saving god. From Persia came millenarianism, the "ages of the world," the "final conflagration," the dualism of Satan and God, of Darkness and Light; already in the Fourth Gospel Christ is the "Light shining in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."⁸⁴ The Mithraic ritual so closely resembled the eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass that Christian fathers charged the Devil with inventing these similarities to mislead frail minds.⁸⁵ Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient pagan world.

The Story of Civilization: Part III, Caesar and Christ
by Will Durant, 1944, p. 595

about the Egyptian saviour hero Imhotep was translated into Greek. The account of this culminates in the characteristic words: 'The entire Greek language will relate thy tale and every Greek will worship Imouthes [Imhotep], son of Ptah.'⁹³

In conclusion we may single out from the overwhelming material at least one other point which in its way also demonstrates the main lines of religious development: Grecianizing influence, dissemination abroad, and the bond with the individual in need of salvation. In this case we are thinking not of a deity but of an institution: the mysteries associated with Isis and Osiris, or to be more precise their form and function in the Hellenistic world. These afford impressive proof of the radical transformation which took place in Egyptian custom, despite the many formal parallels between the ancient Egyptian burial ceremonies (in which the deceased becomes Osiris and enters into God by the performance of the funerary rites) and the Hellenistic mysteries (which sought to elevate the mystic to the divine plane by associating him with Isis and Osiris). This transformation consists in the following: in Egypt it was the *dead*, whereas in the Hellenistic world it was the *living* who were so consecrated and thereby saved from their state of worldly terror.⁹⁴ Admittedly, it will probably be no coincidence, but rather the effect of Egyptian tradition, that even in the hellenized Isis mysteries the person to be initiated has to traverse the realm of the dead symbolically.⁹⁵ As regards the dissemination of the Isis-Osiris mysteries, our chief witness Apuleius suggests that such celebrations took place in Rome as well as Corinth (Kenchreai);⁹⁶ indeed, the worship of Egyptian gods is corroborated by many other sources. Finally, the bond with the individual in distress becomes evident from the rite itself, which endeavours to bring the person to be initiated into communion with the deity through acts of a most personal kind.⁹⁷ The peculiar charm of the history of these Egypto-Hellenistic mysteries lies in the curious fact of their revival at the time of classical freemasonry – as will be familiar to those who are well acquainted with Mozart's *Magic Flute*. It has remained alive up to the present time, so that one can draw a line connecting Egypt, through Antiquity, with the modern West.

Egyptian Religion,

by Siegfried Morenz

Contribution to Old and New Testaments

The impact of a historical phenomenon may thus be temporal as well as spatial, as our last example shows. The influence of Egyptian religion on posterity is mainly felt through Christianity and its antecedents. Egypt's contribution to the Old Testament is actually a product of that country's relations with Syria; its contribution to the New Testament, indeed even to early Christian theology, must be seen as a special instance of that general influence exerted by Egypt upon the Hellenistic world. It was only when these two religions became established that the Egyptian influences contained within them could be transmitted to later generations. We know that there were major differences between Egyptian religion on the one hand and Judaism and Christianity on the other, since both the latter were scriptural religions, deemed by their adherents to have been revealed by God (see pp. 31 ff., 214 ff.); we therefore cannot expect the Egyptian influence to be very marked. It is rather a matter of certain details which were taken over ready-made by the younger and less developed neighbours of the land on the Nile. Yet such details are not to be despised; the transmission and adoption of minor details accounts for much of the historical continuity between different peoples and ages. In expounding this principle it is to be hoped that we have left no room for any suspicion on the reader's part that in what follows we are either depreciating the role of Judaism or Christianity in the history of religion or overestimating the importance of trivia.

Let us begin with the Old Testament. In the first place we may refer once again to the possibility that a sentence in the Instruction of Ptah-hotep was conceived in a later period of Egyptian history in the following way: 'Take no word away, and add nothing thereto, and put not one thing in the place of another',⁹⁸ and that this sentence found its way to Palestine together with Egyptian wisdom literature. There it may have led to the formulation, in an admittedly most effective way, of the central concern of a scriptural religion: the safeguarding of the text against omissions, additions or alterations.⁹⁹ Keeping to such rigorous interpretation of the evidence, we may go on to recall the doctrine of creation through the word, which as we know (see pp. 163–6) was one of the principal

elements in the Egyptian cosmogony; this was not published again until the eighth century, and so became relevant for the Late period. It had an effect upon the account of the creation contained in the priestly writing, and thus upon one of the chief elements in the concept of God entertained by the Jews - and passed on by them to the Christians.

Less important, but more readily comprehensible, is the influence of the Egyptian court chronicle upon the literary form of the Israelites' chronicle account of David and Solomon.¹⁰⁰ Here we may mention the traces left by Egyptian royal ritual upon the courts of Israelite rulers,¹⁰¹ which affected even Isaiah's famous list of appellations for the Prince of Peace. For this, although mutilated, is probably derived from the fivefold titulary of the Egyptian king.¹⁰² The similarity of genres in this case extends even to Mesopotamia. It is also found in the familiar parallels between Egyptian and Israelite wisdom literature, which in general may be regarded as a gift of Egypt. From the standpoint of subject-matter, i.e. judged with an eye to specific points of Old Testament religion, we have here another instance of texts losing some of their significance in transmission. For the Chokma literature, which has a supranational character because it is located in the general area between the Nile and Tigris, does not take us to the heart of Old Testament prophecy. The best known links of this character are those between the Instruction of Amenemope and the Biblical Book of Proverbs. However, in this one case we may not be dealing with an original Egyptian work; the sentences attributed to Amenemope may have been composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, in which case the verses in the Book of Proverbs would be derived in the last instance from Semitic tradition.¹⁰³ Other passages can, however, be claimed as Egyptian in inspiration: for instance, the Egyptian (and Mesopotamian) lists of knowledge, which were the basis of the proverbs which King Solomon spoke on all manner of things, ranging from the cedar to the hyssop,¹⁰⁴ or the various Egyptian influences upon the mood, concepts and diction of the so-called 'preacher of Solomon' (Kohleth). We may recall here only the *carpe diem*, recommended on the Nile from the time of the Songs of the Harpers onward (see p. 195), and the concept of *καρπός*, which we now know to have been common currency in Egypt (see pp. 76 ff.).¹⁰⁵ Finally, examples may be

mentioned which show that Biblical texts had 'local colour' from Egypt, without this involving any borrowings from Egyptian religion. These passages are naturally to be found most frequently where the Old Testament story takes place upon Egyptian soil and where it relates to Egyptian conditions: most notably in the narratives about Joseph.¹⁰⁶

Here we can do no more than point out the range of influences transmitted, from major religious values down to minor matters of merely cultural interest. Unfortunately the degree to which this influence is perceptible stands in indirect proportion to the significance of the facts.¹⁰⁷ A few words may be added on the Greek translation of the Old Testament made at Alexandria and known as the Septuagint on account of the seventy translators employed on it. This eventually became almost a kind of holy writ for Christians. It can be demonstrated that the place of translation left its mark on many passages. Certainly these were not of crucial importance; nevertheless it is in the Septuagint that we find an invocation unknown to Israelite or Judaic theology: 'Lord, lord, king of the gods.'¹⁰⁸ In my view this may be explained without difficulty if one assumes that the translators had in mind a designation of God which combined two proper names (*κύριος* also renders the proper name of Yahveh) with the title 'king of the gods'. This is precisely the case with Amon-Rasother, i.e. 'Amon-Re, king of the gods', who at that time was still important.¹⁰⁹

Egypt's links with the religion of the Old Testament have been known and studied for a long time. But hardly any consideration has been given to the fact that the religious forms of the land of the Nile also had an effect upon the New Testament and so upon early Christianity. Such lack of interest can scarcely be due to dogmatic reservations, for if this were so such a ban would also have affected investigations into the contributions of Greek philosophy and the Hellenistic mystery religions, which have long since been recognized. It is rather the case that scholars have failed to appreciate the influence which Egypt had exerted upon the entire Hellenistic world in which Christianity was destined to take shape. By putting matters in this way we wish to make it clear that the contributions which Egypt made to Christianity in its formative stage of evolution should not be seen simply as direct contacts between a particular form developed in Egypt and some-

Egyptian Religion, by Siegfried Morenz

thing morphologically akin in Christianity. It is most important that this point should be properly understood and appreciated. In one of the few cases where a concept that figures in the New Testament has been taken to be ultimately of Egyptian origin, Jesus's parable of Dives and Lazarus, it has quite correctly been assumed that this transmission took place by way of Jewish material.¹¹⁰ How complex the process may be within the Egyptian tradition itself, and how large a part was played by Greek elements (Stoic diatribes), emerged some years ago from an analysis of the association between ship and tongue in the Epistle of St James, which was originally Egyptian.¹¹¹ The way in which Egyptian influence made itself felt is fairly clear in those cases where it first affected images in the Old Testament (including the Apocrypha) which were later taken over by New Testament writers. This seems to me to be the case with two passages in the Epistle to the Romans: the proverbial 'coals of fire' which were to be heaped upon one's enemy – derived from a Late Egyptian penitential rite¹¹² – and, much more significantly, the Apostle's words on the absolute power of the Creator to confer honour and dishonour, so making a quite arbitrary distinction between his creatures; here St Paul is giving universal currency to a formula that we first hear of with Amenemope.¹¹³

Finally, the path taken by Egyptian influence can also be followed where the Christian form can be traced back first to an Egyptian-Hellenistic one, and this in turn traced back to Egypt itself. This is the case with the acclamation εἰς θεός ('God is One'), used by the earliest Christian communities: this is derived from one employed in the service of Sarapis ('One is Zeus-Sarapis'), and this in turn comes from the early Egyptian theologians' form ('One is Amon', etc.).¹¹⁴ In most cases, however, intermediary stages cannot as yet be identified. Attempts to establish the lines of transmission must be based upon the fundamental principle which we have formulated above: namely, that Egyptian religion passed on its forms to the Hellenistic world and so enlarged the range of expression available to the latter. In our view this influence makes itself felt, for example, in the much-cited 'second death' in the Revelation of St John, which may owe something to the widely disseminated Egyptian concept of a second mortality.¹¹⁵ It is also present in the notion of a 'crown of life', or in those of

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righteousness and glory; in elucidating these concepts one must draw not only upon Greek material but also upon the 'crown of righteousness' to which there were so many references during the last centuries of Egyptian paganism.¹¹⁶

Egypt's significance for early Christian theology

These few examples must suffice.¹¹⁷ The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a cursory examination of Egypt's significance for early Christian theology. When considering Egyptian religious thought we learned of the phenomenon whereby three gods were combined to form one. Various motives led to the evolution of this concept, which allowed for many shades of interpretation between the two poles of monism and triadism; as we have seen, the trinity was a major preoccupation of Egyptian theologians (see pp. 142 ff.). The evidence quoted above extended down to the Late period; here we may add that we also find such evidence in Greek only one generation before the beginnings of Christian theological speculation on such matters. An amulet dating from the period around A.D. 100, now in the British Museum, bears a distich which forms the accompanying text to a rendering, on the reverse side, of three Egyptian deities: a falcon-headed Bait,¹¹⁸ a frog-headed Hathor and a winged serpent by the name of Akori.¹¹⁹ It runs, in prose translation: 'One is Bait, one is Hathor, one is Akori – to these belongs one power. Be greeted, father of the world, be greeted, God in three forms (τρίπορος θεός).'¹²⁰ This distich contains the εἰς θεός acclamation just mentioned, which goes back at least to the Amon theology of the Ramesside period; the one God (father of the cosmos) has as his attributes (to use the Egyptian terminology) three *hprw* or *bzw*, 'forms' or 'appearances'; thus three gods are combined and treated as a single being, addressed in the singular. In this way the spiritual force of Egyptian religion shows a direct link with Christian theology.

In order to avoid any gross misunderstanding, we must at once emphasize that the substance of the Christian Trinity is of course Biblical: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The three are mentioned alongside one another in the New Testament, probably for liturgical reasons.¹²¹ But one essential point is still lacking for the Trinity in the proper sense: the concept or notion of such a combination. Indeed, there is no sign as yet of an awareness of

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THE TRINITY?

Testament] and other early Christian writ-
ings."—*Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

"The formulation 'one God in three Persons'
was not solidly established, certainly not fully
assimilated into Christian life and its profession
of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century. . . .
Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been
nothing even remotely approaching such a
mentality or perspective."—*New Catholic En-
cyclopedia*.

What the Ante-Nicene Fathers Taught

THE ante-Nicene Fathers were acknowl-
edged to have been leading religious teach-
ers in the early centuries after Christ's birth.
What they taught is of interest.

Justin Martyr, who died about 165 C.E., called
the prehuman Jesus a created
angel who is "other than the
God who made all things." He
said that Jesus was inferior to
God and "never did anything ex-
cept what the Creator . . . willed
him to do and say."

Irenaeus, who died about
200 C.E., said that the prehuman Jesus had a
separate existence from God and was inferior
to him. He showed that Jesus is not equal
to the "One true and only God," who is "su-
preme over all, and besides whom there is no
other."

Clement of Alexandria, who died about
215 C.E., called Jesus in his prehuman existence
"a creature" but called God "the uncreated and
imperishable and only true God." He said that
the Son "is next to the only omnipotent Father"
but not equal to him.

Tertullian, who died about 230 C.E., taught

the supremacy of God. He observed: "The Fa-
ther is different from the Son (another), as he is
greater; as he who begets is different from him
who is begotten; he who sends, different from
him who is sent." He also said: "There was a
time when the Son was not. . . . Before all things,
God was alone."

Hippolytus, who died about 235 C.E., said
that God is "the one God, the first and the only
One, the Maker and Lord of all," who "had noth-
ing co-eval [of equal age] with him . . . But he
was One, alone by himself; who, willing it,
called into being what had no being before,"
such as the created prehuman Jesus.

Origen, who died about 250 C.E., said that
"the Father and Son are two substances . . . two
things as to their essence," and that "compared
with the Father, [the Son] is a
very small light."

**"There is no evidence that
any sacred writer even sus-
pected the existence of
a [Trinity] within the
Godhead."—The
Triune God**

Summing up the historical
evidence, Alvan Lamson says
in *The Church of the First
Three Centuries*: "The modern
popular doctrine of the Trinity
. . . derives no support from the
language of Justin [Martyr]: and this observa-
tion may be extended to all the ante-Nicene
Fathers; that is, to all Christian writers for three
centuries after the birth of Christ. It is true, they
speak of the Father, Son, and . . . holy Spirit,
but not as co-equal, not as one numerical es-
sence, not as Three in One, in any sense now
admitted by Trinitarians. The very reverse is
the fact."

Thus, the testimony of the Bible and of histo-
ry makes clear that the Trinity was unknown
throughout Biblical times and for several centu-
ries thereafter.

How Did the Trinity Doctrine Develop?

AT THIS point you might ask: 'If the
Trinity is not a Biblical teaching, how
did it become a doctrine of Christen-
dom?' Many think that it was formulated at
the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E.

That is not totally correct, however. The

Council of Nicaea did assert that Christ was
of the same substance as God, which laid the
groundwork for later Trinitarian theology. But
it did not establish the Trinity, for at that
council there was no mention of the holy spirit
as the third person of a triune Godhead.

SHOULD YOU BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY?

7

DP 10

THE
ANTE-NICENE FATHERS

TRANSLATIONS OF

The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325

THE REV. ALEXANDER ROBERTS, D.D.,

AND

JAMES DONALDSON, LL.D.,

EDITORS

AMERICAN REPRINT OF THE EDINBURGH EDITION

REVISED AND CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED, WITH BRIEF PREFACES AND
OCCASIONAL NOTES,

BY

A. CLEVELAND COXE, D.D.

VOLUME II

FATHERS OF THE SECOND CENTURY:

→ HERMAS, TATIAN, ATHENAGORAS, THEOPHILUS, AND CLEMENT OF
ALEXANDRIA (ENTIRE).

T&T CLARK
EDINBURGH

WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN--

EXHORTATION TO THE HEATHEN.

characters impressed on them, ought, I think, to regard wisdom as a fair port whence to embark, to whatever lot in life they turn; and likewise to deem it the calm haven of salvation: wisdom, by which those who have betaken themselves to the Father, have proved good fathers to their children; and good parents to their sons, those who have known the Son; and good husbands to their wives, those who remember the Bridegroom; and good masters to their servants, those who have been redeemed from utter slavery. Oh, happier far the beasts than men involved in error! who live in ignorance as you, but do not counterfeite the truth. There are no tribes of flatterers among them. Fishes have no superstition: the birds worship not a single image; only they look with admiration on heaven, since, deprived as they are of reason, they are unable to know God. So are you not ashamed for living through so many periods of life in impiety, making yourselves more irrational than irrational creatures? You were boys, then striplings, then youths, then men, but never as yet were you good. If you have respect for old age, be wise, now that you have reached life's sunset; and albeit at the close of life, acquire the knowledge of God, that the end of life may to you prove the beginning of salvation. You have become old in superstition; as young, enter on the practice of piety. God regards you as innocent children. Let, then, the Athenian follow the laws of Solon, and the Argive those of Phoroneus, and the Spartan those of Lycurgus: but if thou enrol thyself as one of God's people, heaven is thy country, God thy lawgiver. And what are the laws? "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not seduce boys; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt love the Lord thy God."¹ And the complements of these are those laws of reason and words of sanctity which are inscribed on men's hearts: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; to him who strikes thee on the cheek, present also the other;"² "thou shalt not lust, for by lust alone thou hast committed adultery."³ How much better, therefore, is it for men from the beginning not to wish to desire things forbidden, than to obtain their desires! But ye are not able to endure the austerity of salvation; but as we delight in sweet things, and prize them higher for the agreeableness of the pleasure they yield, while, on the other hand, those bitter things which are distasteful to the palate are curative and healing, and the harshness of medicines strengthens people of weak stomach, thus custom pleases and

tickles; but custom pushes into the abyss, while truth conducts to heaven. Harsh it is at first, but a good nurse of youth; and it is at once the decorous place where the household maids and matrons dwell together, and the sage council-chamber. Nor is it difficult to approach, or impossible to attain, but is very near us in our very homes; as Moses, endowed with all wisdom, says, while referring to it, it has its abode in three departments of our constitution—in the hands, the mouth, and the heart: a meet emblem of this of truth, which is embraced by these three things in all—will, action, speech. And be not afraid lest the multitude of pleasing objects which rise before you withdraw you from wisdom. You yourself will spontaneously surmount the frivolousness of custom, as boys when they have become men throw aside their toys. For with a celerity unsurpassable, and a benevolence to which we have ready access, the divine power, casting its radiance on the earth, hath filled the universe with the seed of salvation. For it was not without divine care that so great a work was accomplished in so brief a space by the Lord, who, though despised as to appearance, was in reality adored, the expiator of sin, the Saviour, the clement, the Divine Word, He that is truly most manifest Deity, He that is made equal to the Lord of the universe; because He was His Son, and the Word was in God, not disbelieved in by all when He was first preached, nor altogether unknown when, assuming the character of man, and fashioning Himself in flesh, He enacted the drama of human salvation: for He was a true champion and a fellow-champion with the creature. And being communicated most speedily to men, having dawned from His Father's counsel quicker than the sun, with the most perfect ease He made God shine on us. Whence He was and what He was, He showed by what He taught and exhibited, manifesting Himself as the Herald of the Covenant, the Reconciler, our Saviour, the Word, the Fount of life, the Giver of peace, diffused over the whole face of the earth; by whom, so to speak, the universe has already become an ocean of blessings.⁵

CHAP. XI. — HOW GREAT ARE THE BENEFITS CONFERRED ON MAN THROUGH THE ADVENT OF CHRIST.

Contemplate a little, if agreeable to you, the divine beneficence. The first man, when in Paradise, sported free, because he was the child of God; but when he succumbed to pleasure (for the serpent allegorically signifies pleasure crawling on its belly, earthly wickedness nour-

ished for fuel to the serpent, and by disobeying God. Such was the influence of the serpent, that he had been free by reason of his being fettered to sins. Release him from his chains with flesh—O the serpent, and the most marvellous of creatures, deceived by pleasure, had his hands unloosed from the mystic wonder! The man rose up; and receives as the reward greater [than Paradise]. Wherefore, since thou art to us from heaven, any more in search of the rest of Greece, have as our teacher with His holy energy beneficence, legislation, have the Teacher come; and the whole of Greece, has already received the Word. For you, who which designated Minister of Zeus, will not who have become received the only true the chiefs of philosophy, disciples of Christ have proclaimed. And the divided: "There is neither Greek, neither man," transformed by the other counsel, important, and respect for example, if one may in affairs, beget children that is universal, and existence, at all times tends to the highest of all that is necessary, for ever, being that we it. Philosophy, however, a long-lived exhortation of wisdom; while the Lord is far-shining, Receive Christ, receive

"In order that you may know
"Sweet is the Word
precious above gold and
desired above honey."

¹ [See above, p. 201, and below, the command "thou shalt love thy neighbour."]

² Ex. xx. 13-16; Deut. vi. 5.

³ Luke vi. 29.

⁴ Matt. v. 28.

⁵ [Good will to men made emphatic. Slavery already modified, free-schools established, and homes created. As soon as persecution ceased, we find the Christian hospital. Forster ascribes the first foundation of this kind to Ephraim Syrus. A friend refers me to his *Mohammedanism Unveiled*, vol. i. p. 283.]

¹ [The Catholic instinct is here its characteristic, not worldly end.]
² Gal. iii. 28, vi. 15.
³ [He seems to be thinking of] *Wind*, v. 128.
⁴ Ps. xix. 10.

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Clement of Alexandria

Again, with the Lord's saying, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay nay," may be compared the following: "But to admit a falsehood, and destroy a truth, is in nowise lawful." With the prohibition, also, against swearing agrees the saying in the tenth book of the *Laus*: "Let praise and an oath in everything be absent."

And in general, Pythagoras, and Socrates, and Plato say that they hear God's voice while closely contemplating the fabric of the universe, made and preserved unceasingly by God. For they heard Moses say, "He said, and it was done," describing the word of God as an act.

And founding on the formation of man from the dust, the philosophers constantly term the body earthy. Homer, too, does not hesitate to put the following as an imprecation:—

"But may you all become earth and water."

As Esaias says, "And trample them down as clay." And Callimachus clearly writes:—

"That was the year in which
Birds, fishes, quadrupeds,
Spoke like Prometheus' clay."

And the same again:—

"If thee Prometheus formed,
And thou art not of other clay."

Hesiod says of Pandora:—

"And bade Hephaestus, famed, with all his speed,
Knead earth with water, and man's voice and mind
Infuse."

The Stoics, accordingly, define nature to be artificial fire, advancing systematically to generation. And God and His Word are by Scripture figuratively termed fire and light. But how? Does not Homer himself, is not Homer himself, paraphrasing the retreat of the water from the land, and the clear uncovering of the dry land, when he says of Tethys and Oceanus:—

"For now for a long time they abstain from
Each other's bed and love?"¹

Again, power in all things is by the most intellectual among the Greeks ascribed to God; Epicharmus—he was a Pythagorean—saying:—

"Nothing escapes the divine. This it behoves thee to
know.
He is our observer. To God nought is impossible."

And the lyric poet:—

"And God from gloomy night
Can raise unstained light,
And can in darkness gloom obscure
The day's refulgence pure."

He alone who is able to make night during the period of day is God.

In the *Phenomena* Aratus writes thus:—

¹ *Iliad*, xiv. 206.

"With Zeus let us begin; whom let us ne'er,
Being men, leave unexpressed. All full of Zeus,
The streets, and throngs of men, and full the sea,
And shores, and everywhere we Zeus enjoy."

He adds:—

His offspring; . . . "For we also are

that is, by creation.

"Who, bland to men,
Propitious signs displays, and to their tasks
Arouses. For these signs in heaven He fixed,
The constellations spread, and crowned the year
With stars; to show to men the seasons' tasks,
That all things may proceed in order sure.
Him ever first, Him last too, they adore:
Hail Father, marvel great—great boon to men."

And before him, Homer, framing the world in accordance with Moses on the Vulcan-wrought shield, says:—

"On it he fashioned earth, and sky, and sea,
And all the signs with which the heaven is crowned."²

For the Zeus celebrated in poems and prose compositions leads the mind up to God. And already, so to speak, Democritus writes, "that a few men are in the light, who stretch out their hands to that place which we Greeks now call the air. Zeus speaks all, and he hears all, and distributes and takes away, and he is king of all." And more mystically the Boeotian Pindar, being a Pythagorean, says:—

"One is the race of gods and men,
And of one mother both have breath;"

that is, of matter: and names the one creator of these things, whom he calls Father, chief artificer, who furnishes the means of advancement on to divinity, according to merit.

For I pass over Plato; he plainly, in the Epistle to Erastus and Coriscus, is seen to exhibit the Father and Son somehow or other from the Hebrew Scriptures, exhorting in these words: "In invoking by oath, with not illiterate gravity, and with culture, the sister of gravity, God the author of all, and invoking Him by oath as the Lord, the Father of the Leader, and author; whom if ye study with a truly philosophical spirit, ye shall know." And the address in the *Timæus* calls the creator, Father, speaking thus: "Ye gods of gods, of whom I am Father; and the Creator of your works." So that when he says, "Around the king of all, all things are, and because of Him are all things; and he [or that] is the cause of all good things; and around the second are the things second in order; and around the third, the third," I understand nothing else than the Holy Trinity to be meant; for the third is the Holy Spirit, and the Son is the second, by whom all things were made according to the will of the Father.³

² *Iliad*, xviii. 483.

³ [On the Faith, see p. 444, note 6, *supra*.]

And the same, *public*, mentions E. is Zoroaster. Zoro were composed by nius, a Pamphylian battle, and been in gods." This Zoro placed on the funeral twelve days. He al rection, or perchance for souls to ascension signs of the zodiac the descending path the same way we at labours of Hercules, release from this ent

I do not pass over thus physically of consisting in a trans fire, which is to take of the same opinion who considered that ing, and recognised its arrangement, ne former, viewed in he knew the imperish the universal essence tain nature, he mak "The same world the gods, nor any on was, and is, and will according to measure to measure." And t erated and perishable "There are transme sea; and of the sea ti vapour." For he say of power. For fire is governs all things, ch ure, which is, as it w change; and this he c is produced earth, an tain. How, again, th he shows clearly in d diffused and measur rule which subsisted Similarly also respect same is to be underst of the Stoics teach s in treating of the com ment of the world, an properly so called, a our souls.

Plato, again, in the *public*, has called "th I suppose, on account this darkness;"² and

¹ *Métra* is the reading of: *μέτρον*, which is the reading of 1 Eph. vi. 12.

the spirit; that is, the spirit which is by faith, which supervenes through the practice of righteousness.

"But ye, beloved," he says,¹ "building up yourselves on your most holy faith, in the Holy Spirit." "But some," he says,² "save, plucking them from the fire;"³ "but of some have compassion in fear," that is, teach those who fall into the fire to free themselves. "Hating," he says,⁴ "that spotted garment, which is carnal;" that of the soul, namely; the spotted garment is a spirit polluted by carnal lusts.⁵

"Now to Him," he says,⁶ "who is able to keep you without stumbling, and present you faultless before the presence of His glory in joy." In the presence of His glory: he means in the presence of the angels, to be presented faultless, having become angels.⁷ When Daniel speaks of the people and comes into the presence of the Lord, he does not say this, because he saw God: for it is impossible that any one whose heart is not pure should see God; but he says this, that everything that the people did was in the sight of God, and was manifest to Him; that is, that nothing is hid from the Lord.

Now, in the Gospel according to Mark, the Lord being interrogated by the chief of the priests if He was the Christ, the Son of the blessed God, answering, said, "I am;"⁸ and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power.⁹ But powers¹⁰ mean the holy angels. Further, when He says "at the right hand of God," He means the self-same [beings], by reason of the equality and likeness of the angelic and holy powers, which are called by the name of God. He says, therefore, that He sits at the right hand; that is, that He rests in pre-eminent honour. In the other Gospels, however, He is said not to have replied to the high priest, on his asking if He was the Son of God. But what said He? "You say."¹¹ Answering sufficiently well. For had He said, It is as you understand, he would have said what was not true, not confessing Himself to be the Son of God; [for] they did not entertain this opinion of Him; but by saying "You say,"¹² He spake truly. For what they had no knowledge of, but expressed in words, that he confessed to be true.

¹ Ver. 20.

² Ver. 22.

³ Ver. 23.

⁴ Ver. 23.

⁵ By a slight change of punctuation, and by substituting "maculata" for "macula," we get the sense as above. *Animæ videlicet tunica macula est* is the reading of the text.

⁶ Ver. 24.

⁷ We have here with some hesitation altered the punctuation. In the text, "To be presented" begins a new sentence.

⁸ Mark xiv. 62. There is blundering here as to the differences between the evangelists' accounts, as a comparison of them shows.

⁹ Virtutes.

¹⁰ Virtutes.

¹¹ Matt. xxvi. 64: "Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

¹² I.e., it is as you say.

III. — COMMENTS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

Chap. i. 1. "That which was from the beginning; which we have seen with our eyes; which we have heard."

Following the Gospel according to John, and in accordance with it, this Epistle also contains the spiritual principle.

What therefore he says, "from the beginning," the Presbyter explained to this effect, that the beginning of generation is not separated from the beginning of the Creator. For when he says, "That which was from the beginning," he touches upon the generation without beginning of the Son, who is co-existent with the Father. There was, then, a Word importing an unbeginning eternity; as also the Word itself, that is, the Son of God, who being, by equality of substance, one with the Father, is eternal and uncreate. That He was always the Word, is signified by saying, "In the beginning was the Word." But by the expression, "we have seen with our eyes," he signifies the Lord's presence in the flesh, "and our hands have handled," he says, "of the Word of life." He means not only His flesh, but the virtues of the Son, like the sunbeam which penetrates to the lowest places, — this sunbeam coming in the flesh became palpable to the disciples. It is accordingly related in traditions, that John, touching the outward body itself, sent his hand deep down into it, and that the solidity of the flesh offered no obstacle, but gave way to the hand of the disciple.

"And our hands have handled of the Word of life;" that is, He who came in the flesh became capable of being touched. As also,

Ver. 2. "The life was manifested." For in the Gospel he thus speaks: "And what was made, in Him was life, and the life was the light of men."¹³

"And we show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto you."

He signifies by the appellation of Father, that the Son also existed always, without beginning.

Ver. 5. "For God," he says, "is light."

He does not express the divine essence, but wishing to declare the majesty of God, he has applied to the Divinity what is best and most excellent in the view of men. Thus also Paul, when he speaks of "light inaccessible."¹⁴ But John himself also in this same Epistle says, "God is love:"¹⁵ pointing out the excellences of God, that He is kind and merciful; and because He is light, makes men righteous, according to the advancement of the soul,

¹³ John i. 3, 4.

¹⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

¹⁵ 1 John iv. 16.

through charity. in respect of His: "And in Him is, no passion, no any one, [He] de vation to all. Li the precepts of t Darkness is the o as if there were: only one way acco For the work of G else that exists, exc sity of life.

Ver. 7. "And the Son," he says, "cle of the Lord, which His blood.

Ver. 10. "If we: we make Him a liar His doctrine, that is

Chap. ii. 1. "An: "we have an advoc Christ." For so th: the Father for us.

cate, whom, after Hi: to send. For these: virtues are unchang along with subordin whose names they sh: Thus also Moses na: Michael, by an angel grade. The like als: ets; but to Moses a: at hand. Moses ha: manifestly, face to fa: through the agency o: made, as of beings h:

On this account a: they alone saw; as a: Samuel.² Elisæus als: which he was called. open and common, it: all. In this instance: in whom the impres: worked.

Ver. 2. "And not o: for those of the faithfu: tiator, does he say, world." He, indeed, saves], converting ther: however, who follow with dignity of hono: should bow to Him, things on earth, and th: that is, angels, men, a: advent have departed:

¹ Consolatore.

² 1 Sam. iii. 3, 4.

³ 1 Kings xix.

⁴ Phil. ii. 10.

μονογενὴς θεός	ὁ μονογενὴς θεός
φ⁶⁶ N¹ B C* L sy¹ p¹ m¹ geo² Origen^{62/64} Didymus Cynl^{1/4}	φ⁷⁵ N² 33 cop^{1b} Clement^{2/3} Clement^{6m} Theodas 1/2 Origen^{62/64} Eusebius³⁷ Gregory- Nysa Epiphanius Serapion Cyril^{2/4}

We note that when the definite article is passed over, the reading "only-begotten God" or more properly, "unique God,"⁵ is found in the two oldest manuscripts, φ⁶⁶ and φ⁷⁵, as well as in both N and B. Given the great antiquity of these manuscripts and the correlation with the great uncials, this reading bears great weight. We also note that the Syrian, Georgian, and Coptic translations support this rendering. The survey of the Fathers also shows the wide-spread nature of the reading, and the fact that such notably orthodox men as Gregory, the bishop of Nyssa, a staunch defender of the doctrine of the Trinity, knew this reading and found no objection to it; rather he utilized it often in his writings as evidence of the glory of Christ.⁶

The evidence for the reading ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός is very great indeed. It is, obviously, the majority reading of both the manuscripts, the translations, and the Fathers (though some Fathers show familiarity with more than one reading). The last two variants, μονογενὴς υἱός θεοῦ and ὁ μονογενὴς obviously arose from the preceding variants. They command little manuscript support.

The question that immediately faces the person desiring to know John's original wording is plain: given that both readings have ancient attestation, one commanding the earliest papyri (φ⁶⁶ and φ⁷⁵) and the other the majority of the manuscript tradition, how can we account for the rise of a variant at this point? Which reading gives us the most logical reason for the existence of the other?

It is difficult to see how the reading θεός could arise from υἱός. The terms are simply too far removed from one another in form to account for scribal error based upon morphology. However, it is easily understood how θεός could give way to υἱός, given the appearance of "the only-begotten Son" at John 3:16 and 18. "Only-begotten Son" is Johannine in character, and hence

⁵ The translation "only-begotten" is inferior to "unique." It was thought that the term came from μόνος (*monos*), meaning "only" and γένναος (*gennao*), meaning "begotten." However, further research has determined that the term is derived not from γένναος but from γένος (*genos*), meaning "kind" or "type." Hence the better translation, "unique" or "one of a kind." See Louw and Nida, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (1988) p. 591; Newman and Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John*, 1980, p. 24; and Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, 1930, pp. 416-417.

⁶ See relevant passages in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), V:102, 104, 125, 140, 198, 240.

JOHN 1:18 AND ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΣ ΘΕΟΣ

A key passage that goes directly to the textual choices made by scholars is found in the prologue of the Gospel of John. The KJV reads at John 1:18:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

The NASB, however, has:

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Even more interpretive is the rendering of the NIV:

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

One might well think that KJV Only advocates would welcome the modern renderings, concerned as they claim to be about the deity of Christ. Yet, this is surely not the case. One critic of most modern versions, Jay P. Green, has written under the topical heading, "EXAMPLES OF HOW THE 'BEST' MSS. ROB CHRIST OF GLORY,"

1. N in John 1:18 refers to Christ as the "only-begotten God." How can anyone claim that one that is begotten is at the same time essential God, equal in every respect to God the Father, and to God the Holy Spirit? This makes Christ to be a created Being. And it is a Gnostic twist given to the Bible by the heretic Valentinus and his followers, who did not regard the Word and Christ as one and the same; who thought of the Son of God and the Father as being one and the same Person. Therefore, they determined to do away with "the only-begotten Son" in order to accommodate their religion.⁴

We note that Mr. Green's reaction is based upon his understanding of theology, not upon the external evidence of the text. And while it is true that heretics down through the ages have appealed to this text or that, we must not allow the *misuse* of biblical texts to determine the readings we choose for the text of Scripture.

In reality we find five variant readings in the manuscript tradition at this point, two of which have obviously given rise to the others. Here is the textual evidence as given by the UBS 4th edition text:

⁴ *Unholy Hands on the Bible, An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, edited by Jay P. Green, Sr. (Lafayette, Indiana: Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, 1990), p. 12.

ler of world **1300**

re were some Greeks^a that came up to worship . **21** These, therefore, lip^b who was from Beth-lee, and they began to aying: "Sir, we want to **2** Philip came and told w and Philip came and

answered them, saying: come for the Son of man **24** Most truly I say a grain of wheat falls and dies, it remains just if it dies,^c it then bears **5** He that is fond of his t, but he that hates his rld will safeguard it for **26** If anyone would let him follow me, and re my minister* will be would minister to me, honor him.ⁱ **27** Now bled,^j and what shall I ve me out of this hour.^k his is why I have come **28** Father, glorify your e a voice^l came out of glorified [it] and will ^lm

crowd that stood about gan to say that it had rs began to say: "An an-o him." **30** In answer is voice has occurred, , but for YOUR sakes.ⁿ a judging of this world; this world^o will be cast et I, if I am lifted^a up will draw men of all **33** This he was really what sort of death he e.^s **34** Therefore the him: "We heard from Christ remains forev-t you say that the Son

h 18:32; Ac 5:30; t Ps 89:36; Ps

ife." Gr., *psy-khen'*; J¹⁷. *hoh'* (from *ne'phesh*). *di-a'konos*; Lat., *mini-ess*"; J^{18,22} (Heb.), *mesha-ant*. **32*** Or, "all men."

1301 Spoke from God. Washed disciples' feet

JOHN 12:35—13:12

of man must be lifted up?^a Who is this Son of man?"^b **35** Jesus therefore said to them: "The light will be among YOU a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness^c does not overpower you; and he that walks in the darkness does not know where he is going.^d **36** While you have the light, exercise faith in the light, in order to become sons of light."^e

Jesus spoke these things and went off and hid from them. **37** But although he had performed so many signs before them, they were not putting faith in him, **38** so that the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled which he said: "Jehovah,* who has put faith in the thing heard by us?"^f And as for the arm of Jehovah,^g to whom has it been revealed?"^g **39** The reason why they were not able to believe is that again Isaiah said: **40** "He has blinded their eyes and he has made their hearts hard,^h that they should not see with their eyes and get the thought with their hearts and turn around and I should heal them."ⁱ **41** Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory,^j and he spoke about him. **42** All the same, many even of the rulers actually put faith in him,^k but because of the Pharisees they would not confess [him], in order not to be expelled from the synagogue;^l **43** for they loved the glory of men more than even the glory of God.^m

44 However, Jesus cried out and said: "He that puts faith in me puts faith, not in me [only], but in him [also] that sent me;ⁿ **45** and he that beholds me beholds [also] him that sent me.^o **46** I have come as a light into the world,^p in order that everyone putting faith in me may not remain in the darkness.^q **47** But if anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I came, not to judge the world,^r but to save the world.^s **48** He that disregards me and does not receive my sayings has one to judge him. The word^t

Joh 12:38* See App 1b. **38*** Or, "who has believed our report?" **38**^a See App 1b. **42*** See 9:22 ftn.

CHAP. 12

a Joh 3:14
b Joh 20:9
c Da 7:13
d Jer 13:16
e Eph 5:8
f Ro 10:16
g Isa 53:1
h Ex 4:21
i Isa 6:10
Mt 13:14
Mr 4:12
Ac 28:27
J Isa 6:1
k Joh 19:38
l Pr 29:25
Joh 7:13
Joh 9:22
Joh 16:2
m Joh 5:44
Ro 2:29
n Mt 10:40
Mr 9:37
lPe 1:21
o Joh 14:9
p Joh 3:19
Joh 8:12
Joh 9:5
q Joh 12:35
r Joh 3:17
Joh 5:45
Joh 8:15
s Joh 3:16
t De 18:19

Second Col.

a De 18:18
Joh 8:38
Joh 14:10
b Joh 6:40
Joh 17:2
c Joh 3:34

CHAP. 13

d Mt 26:2
Joh 12:23
Joh 17:1
e Joh 16:28
Joh 17:11
f Joh 15:9
Joh 17:9
Ga 2:20
Eph 5:2
lJo 3:16
g Mt 15:19
Lu 22:3
Joh 13:27
Ac 1:25
h Mt 26:16
Mt 26:24
Mr 14:11
i Mt 11:27
Ac 2:36
lCo 15:27
Heb 2:8
J Joh 16:28
k Php 2:7
lGe 18:4
Lu 7:44
m Lu 9:48
lPe 5:3
n Joh 13:12
o Ps 51:2
lCo 6:11
Eph 5:26
Tit 3:5
Heb 10:22
p 2Co 7:1
Eph 4:22
q Joh 6:64

that I have spoken is what will judge him in the last day; **49** because I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak.^a **50** Also, I know that his commandment means* everlasting life.^b Therefore the things I speak, just as the Father has told me [them], so I speak [them]."^c

13 Now, because he knew before the festival of the passover that his hour had come^d for him to move out of this world to the Father,^e Jesus, having loved his own that were in the world,^f loved them to the end. **2** So, while the evening meal was going on,* the Devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Is-car'i-ot,* the son of Simon, to betray him,^h **3** he, knowing that the Father had given all things into [his] handsⁱ and that he came forth from God and was going to God,^j **4** got up from the evening meal and laid aside his outer garments. And, taking a towel, he girded himself.^k **5** After that he put water into a basin and started to wash the feet^l of the disciples and to dry them off with the towel with which he was girded. **6** And so he came to Simon Peter. He said to him: "Lord,* are you washing my feet?"^m **7** In answer Jesus said to him: "What I am doing you do not understand at present, but you will understand after these things."ⁿ **8** Peter said to him: "You will certainly never wash my feet." Jesus answered him: "Unless I wash you,^o you have no part with me." **9** Simon Peter said to him: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." **10** Jesus said to him: "He that has bathed^p does not need to have more than his feet washed, but is wholly clean. And you men are clean, but not all." **11** He knew, indeed, the man betraying him.^q This is why he said: "Not all of YOU are clean."

12 When, now, he had washed their feet and had put his outer garments on and laid himself down at the table

Joh 12:50* Or, "is." **13:2*** Or, "was being prepared." **6*** Or, "Master."

NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES With References, 1984

1:16

THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE

Israel, the Lord of heaven and earth. As **image of the invisible God** the Son is God manifest, the bearer of the might and majesty of God, the revealer and mediator of the creating and sustaining power of the Godhead in relation to the world. It is in these ancient forms of religious thinking that we must look for the roots of the thought, rather than in the abstractions of Philo or of the Stoics (for background material see G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* [tr. J. E. Turner; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1938], chs. xii-xiii).

In the O.T. the king is never called the "image" of God. The phrase has nevertheless O.T. associations of the first importance, in the creation story of Gen. 1. Here the primal man is created in God's "image" and "likeness"; and, let us note, is given *dominion* over the rest of the creation. We have therefore the triple association of creation, sovereignty, and the divine image, which we have found in our passage in Colossians. Only Christ is not *made* "after the image" (κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα—LXX) of God; he *is* the image of God. Thus he is the embodiment of true humanity, as he is the embodiment of true kingship—the reality in whom all ~~ideas and aspirations~~ are fulfilled.

The phrase first-born of all creation is likewise a title of dignity and function; it has nothing to do with relations of *time*. It certainly does not imply that Christ is himself a part of the creation, even the first part; the ancient church fathers rightly insist that he is called πρωτότοκος (first-born), not πρωτόκτιστος (first created). The word is undoubtedly to be interpreted in the light of the royal psalm, "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27); and more generally, in the light of the idea of the primacy of the first-born which is consistently assumed in the O.T. Among the nations, Israel is God's first-born (Exod. 4:22; Jer. 31:9); the first-born is the heir and destined ruler of all. As **first-born of all creation**, Christ is accorded in respect of the created universe that place of honor and of sovereignty that belongs to the eldest son in the household or in the kingdom.

tance now, but the underlying issues are the same. Paul's concern to proclaim the eternal purpose of God in Christ to minds steeped in that particular system of ideas leads him straight into this inspired passage on the centrality of Christ in the whole universe. While he makes use of current thought forms, the basic conception is of abiding significance.

The Exeg. gives in some detail the historic origins of the terms **image** and **first-born**. It is inevitable that men should think of Christ in the context of ideas which they possess. As men in Egypt had called the Pharaohs "the Living Image" of the supreme God, so the Christian, convinced in his own experience and by the witness of the Christian community that Christ was the real representation of the divine in a human life, appropriated the title for Christ. He is the true image of the invisible God. If the ideal king of Israel was given the title "Son of God," and even the tyrant emperors of Rome claimed it for their own, how much more truly was that title Christ's. If the nation of Israel was God's "first-born," how much more Christ crucified and ascended. If Messiah was the rightful title of God's expected deliverer, was not Jesus himself God's anointed—the Christ? If the deity of the pagan cults was addressed as "Lord" and "Savior"—Christians in all parts of the empire must have been familiar with this

use of the words—surely, argued the early Christians, the only real "Lord" and "Savior" is Jesus the Christ. One who had opened the gate of new life to them as only he had done could be described only by the highest and most exalted titles that they knew. It may not at first have been reasoned theology, but rather the spontaneous, inevitable tribute of those who knew the transforming love of God in Christ.

Whatever term might be used for the highest revelation of deity was claimed for Jesus. No name that could be used of anyone was too high to belong to him. For men were struggling to interpret his absolute significance for faith. . . .

In viewing these religious evaluations of Jesus we must recognize that they expressed the language of devotion rather than of systematic intellectual reflection. Theories of the person of Christ were not formulated. . . . These problems of form: Christology remained for the future. The earliest Christians were only intent on expressing the significance of Jesus for their faith. Amid all of the variety of interpretations which were followed or belief was constant: Jesus occupied a unique function in the revealing and redeeming activity of God. No one else could stand beside him. He was the "only begotten Son of God."⁵

⁵ C. T. Craig, *The Beginning of Christianity* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 194 pp. 201, 210. See all of ch. xv for a revealing analysis of the various titles that Christians early came to apply to Jesus.

THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE: The Holy Scriptures in The King James and Revised Standard Versions with General Articles and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible, Vol XI (Abingdon Press, 1955 ed.)