

# THE ONLY TRUE GOD

## *A Scriptural Study On The Trinity*

The Bible reveals that there is only one God:

Mark 12:29, Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.’” (Here Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:4.)

1 Timothy 2:5, For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, a man Jesus Christ.

An almost universal belief among Christians is that this “one God” is a Trinity of three divine Persons called God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each Person separate, yet fully God. Even so, there are not three Gods, but one God. Most of those who believe in the Trinity feel inadequate in comprehending this concept, and incapable of explaining it to others. Therefore, a scriptural examination of this doctrine is in order to clarify the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Toward this purpose, this booklet will consider 27 propositions put forth by trinitarians to prove and explain the Trinity. This information is of the utmost importance. Each Christian should examine this evidence carefully and prayerfully.

**Proposition # 1: Though Deuteronomy 6:4 says that God is one, *one* is often used in Scripture for a compound unity. Therefore, the one God must be a multiple in some sense, that being revealed by other passages of Scripture as a Trinity.**

Response: The language in which this was originally written was the native tongue of the Jews, yet they do not have, and have never had, the concept of either a multiple or triune God. So, what was their understanding of the *one* God? The God of Israel was not like the gods of the surrounding nations. They had a god for this and a god for that; but Israel had one God for everything. In this sense we might say He is many gods in One; and only in this sense might we say that He is a compound unity and still be congruent with historic Jewish beliefs. Notice what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “You [Samaritans] worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.” If God were triune when the Jews held no such concept, wouldn’t that have made Jesus’ statement to the Samaritan woman inaccurate? — John 4:22

Jesus himself clearly identified who the ‘one God’ is. In John 17:1-3 Christ is recorded as praying, “Father,... this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” In Greek the pronoun *you* has both singular and plural forms. Here the singular form is used. Jesus addressed this prayer to his Father, used the singular form of the pronoun, and described this “You” as “the only true God.” Thus, according to Jesus, the Father alone is God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> If God were a trinity how might Jesus have worded his prayer? He could not have used the plural form of the pronoun *you* because he was addressing only one person, the Father. He might have said, ‘that they know Us the only true God’ except that this would still have excluded the holy spirit. But he could have omitted the word *only* in the phrase “You the only true God.” Or he could have omitted the pronoun, saying, ‘...that they know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.’ This would have allowed other passages to define exactly who the “only true God” is. Phraseology such as this would have affirmed the truth of monotheism without casting doubt as to a triune nature for God. [Proposition # 1]

Doesn't the fact that almost all Christians accept the doctrine of the trinity prove that it is true? Consider, two thousand years ago the vast majority of the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah; did this prove that he was not the Messiah? No, it did not. What is important is what the Bible does — or does not— say, not what the majority choose to believe. The Bible explicitly states that the Father is the one God; and Jesus explicitly identified his Father as our Father and his God as our God.<sup>2</sup> He also explicitly said that the Father is the “only true God.”<sup>3</sup> Nowhere does the Bible explicitly say that God is a trinity.<sup>4</sup>

**Proposition # 2: If Jesus Christ is not literally God then his death could not save us; no mere human<sup>5</sup> can provide atonement for the sins of another. Also Acts 20:28 speaks of “the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” (KJV)**

Response: Paul drew a correspondence between Adam and Jesus at 1 Corinthians 15:21, “For as by a man came death, by a man has come the resurrection of the dead.” Was Adam a God-man? Concerning the resurrected and ascended Christ, note what Paul wrote at 1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, a man Christ Jesus.” Hebrews 2:14, 17 says, “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil. / Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect... to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

These verses show that the value of Christ's sacrifice lay in his human nature. So to insist that Jesus had to be God for his sacrifice to have value flies in the face of Paul's writings. Isaiah 55:8, 9 tells us, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’ declares Yahweh. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” If it is within the purposes of God to provide salvation by His Son (or, for that matter, by anyone or anything

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:6, “...yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist...” / Ephesians 4:4-6, “There is... one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.” / John 20:17, “Jesus said to her, ‘...go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” [Prop #1]

<sup>3</sup> Trinitarians argue that the Father was the only *true* God at this time because Jesus had divested himself of some divine attributes upon his incarnation; even so, he did not divest himself of his identity as God. So was he or was he not God when he said this? According to trinitarians the death of anyone *less than* God could not have effected our salvation. So if Jesus was not *truly* God when he said this, he was not *truly* God a few hours later when he died, and we are not saved. Trinitarians cannot have it both ways. Also, why was the Holy Spirit, the supposed third-person of the trinity, not truly God when Jesus made his statement? If it be argued that the Holy Spirit did not *truly* become God until the outpouring on Pentecost; then why do trinitarians say that God is immutable, that is, unchangeable. If the claims of trinitarians are correct, *true* God is very changeable. [Prop #1]

<sup>4</sup> According to trinitarians the trinity doctrine is formed in connection with two observations: “(1) The Bible teaches that there is only one true God, and (2) the Bible teaches that Jesus is God, the Father is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.... The doctrine states that God is one in essence (or being) and three in person.” [This is a quote from trinitarian literature; emphasis added.] The doctrine may state this, but where does the Bible say that God is one in essence and three in person? [Prop # 1]

<sup>5</sup> It needs to be noted that Jesus was no “mere human;” God is, quite literally, his Father. An angel told Mary, “Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the holy one being born will be called Son of God.” Thus Luke 1:35 links Jesus' conception and birth with his being called the Son of God, a conception that took place by God's holy spirit, with no human father being involved. So Jesus truly is one of a kind: literally the only-begotten, only-born Son of God. [Notice that according to this verse the “Holy spirit will come upon” Mary, causing her pregnancy. So who is Jesus' Father, the first person of the trinity (the Father) or the third person of the trinity (the Holy Spirit)?] [Prop # 2]

that pleases Him), how can we whose thoughts are beneath His thoughts question and challenge His way of doing things? [See Appendix]

Consider too, the book of Acts presents nine major sermons to unbelievers, not one of which reveals that God is a trinity or that Jesus is literally God in the flesh. If such a teaching were vital Christian truth and the cornerstone of salvation surely Peter would have mentioned it in his Pentecost sermon and in his sermon to Cornelius and friends. — Acts 2:14-40; 10:34-43; 13:12-26; 17:2-56; 13:16-41; 17:22-31; 22:1-21; 24:10-21; 26:2-23

Trinitarian translators have difficulty in translating Acts 20:28. The main text of the Revised Standard Version reads, “the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son.” Admittedly, the word “Son” is interpolated by the translators. But the footnote reads, “with the blood of his Own, or, with his own blood.” Should one throw away clear statements of Scripture on the basis of passages where even trinitarian translators acknowledge dubious translating possibilities?

### **Proposition # 3: Isaiah 9:6 prophetically refers to Jesus as “Mighty God.”<sup>6</sup>**

Response: In understanding Jesus’ relationship to God it would be incorrect to say he, personally, is God, or that he, literally, is a god. But he is God in a representative sense. A ruler can commission a representative with full executive authority. Pharaoh did this with Joseph; his being given the signet ring was like being given the ability to sign Pharaoh’s signature. Nebuchadnezzar did similarly with Daniel. (Genesis 1:39-44; Daniel 2:47-49) And God has done this with His Son. This is proven at Matthew 28:18 where Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”<sup>7</sup> And this is what is meant at Colossians 2:9 where it says that in Christ “all the fullness of the Deity dwells bodily.” The meaning of this verse is best demonstrated by an illustration: Suppose that the President of the United States became temporarily incapacitated so that he could not perform the duties of his office, the presidency. The Vice President would take over those duties and have the full power of the presidency at his disposal. However, when history records the roster of Presidents, the Vice President’s name would not be included because he was never actually President. Similarly, Jesus has been granted the full power of Deity, the office of God; but he is not literally God.<sup>8</sup>

Under the Jewish concept of agency, one’s agent is as oneself. To understand this concept, compare Luke 7:2-10 to Matthew 8:5-13. Luke gives the account as it literally happened. Matthew tells the account as though the centurion himself approached Jesus, but in literal fact he did not. The Jews did not consider such a re-telling a lie as their way of thinking allowed this.<sup>9</sup> So as God’s foremost representative, able to ‘sign His name,’ Jesus

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<sup>6</sup> Some trinitarians also use Jesus’ being called Everlasting Father in this verse as proof of trinity. Most, though, clearly distinguish between the persons of the trinity, even as the official trinity doctrine says to do. A person receives life through his father. Accordingly, Isaiah calls Jesus “Everlasting Father” because it is through him that we receive everlasting life. [Prop # 3]

<sup>7</sup> That he “has been given” this authority shows that he did not always have it and, therefore, could not have been God. [Prop # 3]

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 3:19 speaks of Christians being “filled with all the fullness of God.” Here the more personal word ‘God’ is used (not the impersonal term ‘Deity’ (or ‘Godhead’) used in Colossians 2:9). When a Christian becomes ‘filled with all the fullness of God’ does he become God? If not, why conclude that Jesus’ being filled with all the fullness of the office of God means that he is God literally? Colossians 2:9 means that he is functionally like God; it does not mean that he is God personally. [Prop # 3]

<sup>9</sup> In the Hebraic way of thinking, a person’s agent can be spoken of as the person himself. (Compare Luke 10:16.) Failure to appreciate this concept of agency explains a good many misunderstandings by trinitarians,

can figuratively be called “Mighty God.” But this does not mean that Jesus is literally God.

Is Jesus equal to God? Go back to our comparison with Joseph and Pharaoh: Joseph was functionally equal to him, but not positionally equal; people had to obey him as if he were Pharaoh, but he was not Pharaoh. Likewise, Jesus is functionally equal to his Father, but not positionally equal. Consider John 5:23.

**Proposition # 4: Christ demonstrated attributes that only God can possess.**

Response: God has the right, the authority, and the ability to endow anyone whom He chooses with those attributes that He wants him to have. We have no right to question or challenge His doing of this.

One such attribute is that Christ forgave sins. Interestingly, trinitarians wishing to support their claim that Christ could only forgive sins if he were God point to the words of Jesus’ enemies who reasoned, “He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:5-7) At John 5:30 Christ said, “I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of Him who sent me.” So when Christ forgave sins, was it really he doing the forgiving, or was it actually God? That the Jews who did not oppose Jesus did not conclude he was literally God by his ability to forgive sins is proven in the parallel account at Matthew 9:2-8 which closes with the comment, “they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.” Again, if it is within the purposes of God to give this authority to Jesus or anyone else, who are we to question or challenge His way of doing things? We simply cannot!

The same is true when Jesus performed miracles. Peter resurrected Dorcas, was able to read Ananias’ heart, and healed a lame man. (Acts 9:36-41; 5:1-5; 3:2, 6, 7) We automatically understand that Peter could not do these things under his own ability. Notice 1 Kings 17:1, “Now Elijah... said to Ahab, ‘As Yahweh the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.’” No dew or rain except by Elijah’s word!!! Should we now construe that he, too, is a person in a multiple Godhead? At John 5:19 Jesus is quoted as saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise.” As Peter explained to Cornelius and those assembled with him, Jesus was able to do the things he did because “God was with him.” Nothing was said about Jesus’ being God . — Acts 10:38

**Proposition # 5: John 5:18 says, “For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill [Jesus because he] ...was calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.” And at John 10:30, 38 Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” and “the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” This shows that he is with the Father in a triune God.**

Response: Paul helps us to get the proper sense of John 5:18 at Galatians 4:1 where he wrote, “the heir ...is owner of all the estate.” By claiming to be God’s Son, the Jews understood Jesus to be claiming to be God’s heir, and therefore, making a claim to His authority; but they did not construe this to mean that he was literally God.

As for Jesus’ being in the Father and the Father’s being in him and Their being one,

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though it is known to some. It is mentioned in chapter 7 of Lee Strobel’s book *The Case For Christ*, under the subheading “I and the Father Are One” where Strobel quotes professor Ben Witherington, III. Both Strobel and Witherington are trinitarians. [Prop # 3]

consider Jesus' prayer at John 17:20, 21, "I do not pray for these only but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one: even as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us." So if John 10:38 means that the Son is one person in a multiple Godhead, then John 17:20, 21 means that believers are also persons in that Godhead, a conclusion which would contradict Jesus' statement that the Father is the only true God. Being "one" means being in harmony, united in thought and purpose. — Romans 15:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 1:10

But notice who Jesus did claim to be in the context of these verses. John 10:30-36 records: [Jesus said,] "'I and the Father are one.' The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?' The Jews answered him, 'It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy because you, being a man, make yourself God.' Jesus answered them, '...do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"?' This would have been the perfect opportunity to declare himself to be God the Son, if he truly were. Did he? No, he claimed to be the Son of God!

**Proposition # 6: At John 14:9 Jesus proves he is God when he says to Philip, "He who has seen me has seen the Father."**

Response: If this verse proves anything along the lines of trinitarian thinking, it proves that Jesus is the Father; something which they do not teach. Rather, they clearly distinguish between the persons of the Godhead. This shows the inconsistency of trinitarian logic.

There are at least three ways in which something can be seen. First is, of course, the literal way, visually perceiving something which is physically tangible. Secondly, something can be seen in a vision, similar to watching a motion picture. In Acts 10:9-12 Peter saw 'something like a sheet' containing various animals. Was there a sheet with animals descending from heaven? No, it was a vision; he visually perceived something that was not physically tangible or literally present.

Finally, something can be seen in a representative way. God is representatively seen at Judges 13:21, 22, "The angel of Yahweh appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. And Manoah said to his wife, 'We shall surely die, for we have seen God.'" It is clear from the context that Manoah knew that he had literally seen an angel, and not God, yet he spoke of having seen God because this angel was acting as His representative.

Trinitarians suggest that this angel and other theophanies (sightings of God) were actually pre-incarnate visitations of the second person of the Godhead. However, John said that "no man has seen God at any time." He is talking about literally seeing God. So if people have seen the second person of the Godhead, especially in a pre-incarnate form, then they have literally seen God. Trinitarians want to limit who John means to simply the Father, but if trinitarianism is the truth John would have had to specifically say the Father to be accurate. — John 1:18

**Proposition # 7: The Hebrew word most often used for God is *Elohim* which is a plural noun, thus denoting the plurality in the Godhead. Also God [*Elohim*] used plural first-person pronouns as in Genesis 1:26, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."**

Response: It is true that in a few verses the first-person plural pronoun is used, but in the vast majority of verses the first-person singular pronoun is used, even though its antecedent is plural! This is a significant grammatical anomaly. To whom might God be talking at Genesis 1:26? Let's note what two trinitarian commentators have to say about this verse. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary says:

"26. Let us make man. The supreme moment of creation arrived as God created man. The narrative presents God as calling on the heavenly court, or the other two members of the Trinity, to center all attention on this event. Some commentators, however, interpret the plural as a 'plural of majesty,' indicating dignity and greatness. The plural form of the word for God, *Elohim*, can be explained in somewhat the same way. The LORD is represented as giving unusual deliberation to a matter fraught with much significance." [Emphasis added.]

F.F. Bruce's International Bible Commentary says:

"...there is an act of God to which He draws attention: Let us make man (26). Leupold still argues for the traditional Christian view that the plural refers to the Trinity. This should not be completely rejected, but in its setting it does not carry conviction. The rabbinic interpretation that God is speaking to the angels is more attractive, for man's creation affects them (Ps. 8:5; 1 C. 6:3), cf. Job 38:7. But there is no suggestion of angelic cooperation. Probably the plural is intended above all to draw attention to the importance and solemnity of God's decision." [Emphasis added.]

Of course, these trinitarian commentators do not reject the trinitarian view of this pronoun usage. But they do show alternative views, and the trinitarian view is presented as secondary, or even tertiary.

Notice that after saying, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness," verse 27 says, "So God created man in His [not 'Their'] own image, in the image of God He [not 'They'] created him; male and female He [not 'They'] created them." Notice, too, that Isaiah 45:5 reads, "I am Yahweh, and there is none else, there is no God [*Elohim* (plural noun)] besides Me [singular pronoun]." This is one verse where the use of a plural pronoun should be expected [i.e., *there is no God besides Us*] if such were meant to have theological ramifications.

Recall the comment quoted above from the Wycliffe Bible Commentary, "Some commentators, however, interpret the plural as a 'plural of majesty,' indicating dignity and greatness. The plural form of the word for God, *Elohim*, can be explained in somewhat the same way." Therefore, *Elohim*, the Hebrew plural for *God*, is used because the word expresses dignity and majesty. Aaron called the molten calf he made *elohim* attaching dignity and majesty to it, thereby exciting reverence in the minds of its worshipers. For the same reason, the Philistines called their idol Dagon *elohim*. Each of the idols Chemosh, Milcom, Baalzebub, and Nizroch is called *elohim*, though each is singular. Those idol worshipers expressed their particular idol in the plural, because of its supposed dignity, majesty, and excellence. (Exodus 32:4,8; Judges 16:23, 24) Genesis 24:9, 10 refers to Abraham as *adonim*, the plural form of the Hebrew word for *lord* or *master*; and Potiphar is called Joseph's *adonim*. In all these places the plural is used for the singular to express dominion, dignity, and greatness. — Genesis 39:20

**Proposition # 8: Jesus' use of the divine title "*I AM*" [Gk., *ego eimi*] in John 8, verses 24 and 58 proves his deity.**

Response: Interestingly, someone other than Jesus uses this exact same Greek phrase only ten verses later. At John 9:9 a man whom Jesus had healed also says "*I am.*"<sup>10</sup> [Gk., *ego eimi*] Should we conclude that this man is part of a triune God? So the simple statement "*I am*" does not have to prove deity.

At John 8:58 Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." Trinitarians relate this statement to the account of Exodus 3:14 where "God said to Moses, '*I AM WHO I AM.*' And He said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, '*I AM* has sent me to you.'"" Notice that in that context God was not talking to Abraham, the one mentioned in Jesus' statement, but to Moses. In saying "*I am*" Jesus was simply expressing the continuity of his purpose in the plan of God. To draw any conclusion beyond that is unwarranted. Why, then, did the Jews want to stone him for what he said? Jesus' statement was a claim to greater importance in the plan of God than that of Abraham. To the Jews this self-exaltation by someone they considered a nobody was a blasphemous degradation of Abraham's position as a prophet, and they wanted to stone him for it. [Compare to the situation at Acts 6:11.]

In John 8:24 Jesus proclaimed, "If you do not believe that I am, you shall die in your sins." Was he now alluding to the divine title? No, twelve verses earlier he said, "*I am* the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." So what Jesus meant in verse 24 was simply, 'If you do not believe that I am [who I claim to be, namely, the light of the world], you shall die in your sins.'

**Proposition # 9: John 18:3-6 reports that when they came to arrest Jesus, he asked them for whom they sought. They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Verse 6 says that when Jesus responded, "*I AM* [he].' they drew back and fell to the ground." This shows that Jesus was using the divine title, the *I AM* of the Hebrew Scriptures; otherwise why would the men have drawn back and fallen to the ground?**

Response: If this were a case where the power of the divine title bowled over the mob that came to arrest him, we must wonder concerning the other occasions that Jesus supposedly used the divine title, why was the crowd not knocked over? Did a mob understand that Jesus was using a divine title, yet others, including religious leaders, failed to do so? And, would a mob continue in their course of action after being knocked over by some unseen power evoked by Jesus' use of the divine title? Wouldn't it be more likely that they would have withdrawn, leaving Jesus alone?

To understand why the mob drew back and fell to the ground, we must discern what they expected might happen when they encountered Jesus. At Matthew 16:13, 14 Jesus "asked his disciples, 'Who do men say that the Son of man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'" Notice that the disciples said nothing about their believing that he was God in the flesh; but it was rumored that he might be one of the prophets resurrected back to life! When soldiers came to arrest Elijah, he called down fire from heaven to kill them. (2 Kings 1:9-12) So those coming to arrest Jesus expected that, if he truly were a prophet, especially Elijah, he might call down fire from heaven to consume them. No wonder they recoiled in fear when he

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<sup>10</sup> In this verse most English translations read either 'I am the man' or 'I am he.' Neither *the man* nor *he* appear in the Greek text. [Prop # 8]

replied, “I am [Jesus.]”! However, finding themselves not struck dead, the mob was emboldened in their course of action, arresting him and handing him over to his enemies.

**Proposition # 10: Jesus is called *God* at Hebrews 1:8 where it reads, “But of the Son He says, ‘Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.’”**

Response: Hebrews 1:8 is quoting Psalm 45:6. Concerning this Psalm F.F. Bruce writes in his commentary:

“It is impossible, however, to identify the king for whom this particular song was originally composed — probably by a court poet or prophet ... ‘Your throne, O God’ is supported by the ancient versions (cf. Heb. 1:8). Although the Israelite king was not regarded as divine (as the kings of Egypt were), it is possible that he would be addressed as ‘God’ either in a form of Oriental hyperbolic language or as a representative of God (cf. Exod. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28; Ps. 82:6).” [Emphasis added.]

In the column and a half that Bruce devotes to this Psalm no mention is made of trinity by this trinitarian!

Many modern English Bibles give an alternate reading to these verses in their footnotes: “Your throne is God for ever and ever.” In any case, as stated before, Jesus can be called *God* in a representative sense.

**Proposition # 11: At John 20:28 Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, called Jesus “God.” For a Jew this would be blasphemy unless Jesus truly were God.**

Response: Imagine yourself as Thomas: you followed a man who taught as no one else had ever taught; you saw miracles take place in abundance, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead, the casting out of demons, etc.; and you came to the conclusion that this man must be the promised Messiah of the Scriptures, the one expected to liberate Israel from Gentile domination. Then, suddenly, in a period of 24 hours this man is arrested by the Jewish religious authorities, turned over to the very Gentiles from whom you anticipated liberation, and executed! Had you been duped; was this just another false messiah?

Thomas, whose faith in Jesus was shaken by this turn of events, began to have his doubts about God! Upon seeing the resurrected Jesus, Thomas’ faith was not only restored in his Messiah, but in his God. (Consider John 14:1) Is it any wonder that he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”?<sup>11</sup>

On one occasion Jesus was charged with blasphemy for having called himself the Son of God. In response Jesus cited Psalm 82:6 where God refers to Israelite judges as “gods” [Heb., *elohim*].<sup>12</sup> If God can call human judges who were supposed to act as His representatives “gods” without meaning it literally, why couldn’t Thomas call the one who has been appointed as God’s representative to judge all the earth “God” without meaning it

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<sup>11</sup> Three verses later John wrote, “these things have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” If Thomas or John meant that Jesus was literally God, why didn’t John say so here? — John 20:31 [Prop #11]

<sup>12</sup> In the book *HARD SAYINGS OF THE BIBLE* Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. wrote in his article on Psalms 82:6: “[God] is addressing the earthly judges and administrators of his law whom he has set up to represent him... But there is no hint of a belief in many gods and goddesses. Nor does God thereby imply they have the divine nature exclusive to the Trinity. It is simply a case where one term, *elohim*, must do double duty, referring not only to God but also to his special servants appointed for the unique tasks described in these contexts.” As can be noted from this quote, Kaiser is a trinitarian, yet he subscribes to the usage of this term in the manner we have utilized. [Prop # 11]



literally?<sup>13</sup> — John 10:33-36

**Proposition # 12: The passages of Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1 clearly call Jesus Christ “God.”**

Response: Let’s note the entire passage of Titus 2:11-13, “For the Grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passion, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the Glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

What has appeared “for the salvation of all men”? Not “God,” as many suppose, but the “Grace<sup>14</sup> of God,” the personification of which is Jesus Christ. Further along he is called the “Glory of our great God and Savior.” In Titus 3:4 he is called the “Goodness and Loving-kindness of God, our Savior.” In 2 Peter 1:1 he is called the “Righteousness of our God, and Savior.” So in these passages Jesus is not being called *God*.

**Proposition # 13: Philippians 2:6 says that Jesus “was in the form of God” and Colossians 1:15 calls him “the image of the invisible God.”**

Response: If Paul meant to say that Jesus was *God* in Philippians 2:6 he could have simply written that Jesus ‘was God,’ and omitted the phrase ‘in the form of.’ What did Paul mean by this expression?

At Exodus 4:16 God tells Moses that Aaron “shall be a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God,” and at 7:1, “See, I make you as God to Pharaoh.” God even gave Moses miraculous powers to prove that He had sent him. Jesus was sent by God as His chief representative, one even greater than Moses. He, too, was given miraculous powers, and authority to control the weather and to command legions of angels. So he was “in a form of God”<sup>15</sup> while he was on earth; yet, he “emptied himself,” that is, he did not use these powers and authority to save himself from degrading treatment by sinners and a horrible death. Having servanted himself to God and to humankind, he glorified his Father and bought salvation for us, even at his own expense. — Matthew 8:26, 27; 26:53, 54; Philippians 2:7, 8; Matthew 20:28

Jesus’ being an image of the invisible God does not make him one person of a trinity any more than Adam’s being made in the image and likeness of God made him part of a triune God. When you look at your image in the mirror, are you actually looking at your body, or are you looking at the reflection of your body? Colossians 3:10-15 shows that the ‘image of God’ refers to certain qualities among which are compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance, the willingness to forgive, and “above all... love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” Jesus perfectly reflected these qualities of God.

**Proposition # 14: Jesus shares titles with God. Among these are “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” and “Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last.” The Bible**

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<sup>13</sup> Later, if the apostles had been preaching to the Jews that Jesus was God in the flesh, there would have been huge controversies concerning the claim. The Christian Testament reports no arguments on the subject. (By way of contrast, circumcision for Gentile believers was hotly debated!) [Prop # 11]

<sup>14</sup> Capitalization and punctuation are decisions of the translator as the original writings did not differentiate in letter size or contain punctuation. [Prop # 12]

<sup>15</sup> The Greek text does not contain the definite article in either phrase. The texts could have been translated “in a form of God” and “is an image of the invisible God.” [Prop # 13]

**calls Jesus our Savior and says that besides God there is no Savior. (Acts 5:31; Isaiah 43:11) Also, there are passages of Scripture which are applied to God in the Hebrew Scriptures, yet applied to Jesus in the Christian Testament.**

Response: Daniel, a prophet of God, called Nebuchadnezzar “king of kings.” (Daniel 2:37) Does this make Nebuchadnezzar one person of a triune God? In ancient empires it was common that the emperor had vassal kings under him. Herod the Great was one of the vassal kings under Caesar. So Caesar was a king of kings. Revelation 20:4 speaks of those who ‘reign with Christ.’ So wouldn’t he be a King of kings? King David of Israel called God his King. So isn’t God also a King of kings? Indeed, God was the King over all the kings of Israel and Judah, including that descendant of David, King Jesus Christ. — Psalm 5:2

What about “Lord of lords”? In American English *lord* has come to have an almost exclusively religious connotation which other languages do not have.<sup>16</sup> Sarah referred to Abraham, her husband, as “lord” and the apostle John called one of the elders in Revelation “my lord.”<sup>17</sup> Jesus is the one God has made Lord over all others, yet God is Lord above him. — 1 Peter 3:6; Revelation 7:14; Acts 2:36; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:27

Concerning the use of the title “Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” God compared Himself to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, thereby emphasizing that before Him ‘there was no God formed, neither shall there be after’ Him a God who is able to declare ‘the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done.’ He has the first and last word — words being composed of letters — on what is going to happen. Consequently, the Father ‘is’ God and ‘was’ — that is, always has been — God and ‘is coming’ to execute judgment against all false gods and their followers. — Isaiah 43:10; 46:10; Revelation 1:8

It is fitting that Jesus refers to himself by the Greek letters Alpha and Omega because he is the ‘Word made flesh,’ the embodiment of the prophetic Word and God’s chief spokesman, representing Him fully before the world. — Revelation 22:13; John 1:14,18; Revelation 19:13

Jesus was the ‘first’ to be resurrected from the dead to immortal life and the ‘last’ to be so resurrected by God Himself; all others are resurrected through him. Jesus was the ‘beginning’ of God’s promises to the world, the Seed destined to bruise that old serpent in the head. And he is the ‘end’ of all God’s promises for it is through him that all of them are fulfilled. — John 11:25; Genesis 1:15; 2 Corinthians 1:19, 20

As for the title *Savior* notice Nehemiah 9:27, “Therefore You [God] gave them [Israel] into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer; and in the time of their suffering they cried to You and You heard them from heaven; and according to Your great mercies You gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies.” Should we conclude that these saviors are persons in a multiple Godhead? Or should we understand that God provided freedom through these people? Likewise, Jude 25 (RSV) speaks of “the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Trinitarians cross-reference such passages as 1 Peter 2:4, 7, 8 with Isaiah 8:13, 14. Isaiah speaks of God as “a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over” and Peter speaks of Christ as “a living stone, rejected by men” and “a stone of stumbling and a rock of

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<sup>16</sup> For example, both *lord* and *mister* are translated into Spanish as *Senor*. [Prop # 14]

<sup>17</sup> Literal Greek; the KJV translates this phrase as *sir*. Most people fail to appreciate that *kyrios* (the Greek word translated *Lord*) was also a commonly used title of respect in the first century. [Prop # 14]

offense.” The Jews stumbled over the things Christ taught and the things he did. But notice Jesus’ words at John 12:49, “For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has Himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak” and at John 5:19, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise.” So were the Jews stumbling over the words and works of Christ, or were they in reality stumbling over the words and works of the Father? (Yet, trinitarians do not construe from this that the Son is the Father.)

There are, in fact, a number of passages in the Hebrew Scriptures which speak of Yahweh God, yet the passage is recognized to be Messianic. The trinitarian conclusion that Jesus is Yahweh is arrived at because they have failed to comprehend the Hebraic way of thinking, particularly the concept of agency mentioned earlier. But to prove a point let’s examine three other passages of Scripture (KJV):

“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me... I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the LORD do all these things.” (Isaiah 45:5-7) While keeping this verse in mind; compare 2 Samuel 24:1, “Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.” to the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 21:1, “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.”

In these three passages we find that the LORD creates evil, and that both the LORD and Satan are said to have caused David to number Israel. From this do trinitarians conclude that Satan is one person in a multi-personned LORD?

**Proposition # 15: Matthew 1:22, 23 applies the term *Emmanuel*, which means *God with us*, to Jesus. Compare Isaiah 7:14.**

Response: The Jews had long hoped for the appearance of the Messiah who would, they thought, deliver them from Gentile domination. Nearly six hundred years before Christ the Jews lost their Davidic kingdom when they were overrun by Babylon. They were able to return to their homeland after Babylon fell, but the Davidic throne was not restored, nor were they free of their Gentile overlords. About 160 years before Christ, they did temporarily establish their freedom, but the Davidic throne was not restored at that time either. To make matters worse, until John the baptist there had not been a true prophet of God since Malachi, a period of about 400 years. Had God forgotten the Jews? Had God forgotten all the Messianic promises? With the appearance of Jesus Christ the answer to these questions became self-evident, *God was still with them!* Compare this to Luke 7:16 where the raising of a great prophet is equated to God’s visitation.

**Proposition # 16: The Bible speaks of Jesus’ being prayed to, and even worshipped. This proves that he is God.**

Response: When Jesus’ disciples asked him to teach them to pray, he instructed, “When you pray, say: ‘Father...’” (Luke 11:2) So normally prayer should be addressed to the Father. In Acts 7:59 the NKJV says that “they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus,...’” First, it needs to be noted that the word *God* is not in the Greek text but has been inserted by the translators. Is this really a case of praying, is it praying when one can see the person to whom one is speaking? Verses 55 and 56 show that Stephen could see Jesus, so as far as he was concerned Jesus was personally present.

In 2 Corinthians 12:8 Paul wrote, “Three time I besought the Lord about this [his thorn in the flesh, v. 7], that it should leave me.” Paul could mean God by the word *Lord*; and Christ, as the mediator between God and man, gives the response recorded in verse 9. But it could also be that Paul, having had the personal experience with Christ on the Damascus road, and other revelations in which Jesus may have personally appeared to him, felt Jesus’ presence in a very personal way. Or his requests may have been made during these personal encounters. In these situations, this case is similar to Stephen’s — 1 Timothy 2:5

*Sahah* [Strong’s # 7812] is the Hebrew word most commonly translated as *worship*. But this is not the only way it is rendered into English. It also means to *bow down* and is used in reference to kings or others of superior rank. (See 1 Samuel 24:8; 25:23, 41.) *Proskuneo* [Strong’s # 4352] is the Greek word used for *sahah* in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made before the time of Christ. So it, too, has a broader meaning than *worship*, even though most English translations use only this word where that Greek term appears in the Christian Testament.<sup>18</sup>

Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father, but by me,” so we cannot render worship to God if we do not recognize the place the Son holds in His scheme of things. Besides, John 5:23 says “that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.” So those who make an issue of the Son’s being worshipped —and therefore he must be God— or not worshipping the Son —because he is not God— do not know their Scriptures well.

**Proposition # 17: Quoting Joel 2:32 Paul wrote at Romans 10:13 about Jesus, “All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” But Joel was speaking about Yahweh God. This proves that Jesus is God.**

In Acts 2:21 Peter also quoted Joel 2:32 in a sermon to Jews who had not accepted Jesus as the Christ (Messiah). At this point in his sermon he had not yet mentioned Jesus; so his audience would have had to understand “the Lord” to mean Yahweh God. In verse 22 in his first reference to Jesus Peter calls him “a man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.” Next Peter accused, “you killed [Jesus] by nailing him to a cross by the hands of lawless men.” Peter’s audience would have understood that their action of crucifying a prophet of God was the same as rejecting God, the opposite of calling upon His Name. Those convicted by Peter’s words understood that they were in danger of judgment and repented of their wrongdoing, accepting Jesus as Lord and Christ. — Acts 2:14-36

Unlike Peter, Paul was not addressing unbelievers, but Roman Christians. They already understood that ‘calling upon the name of the Lord’ God included accepting Jesus as Lord and Christ. Jesus said that “no one comes to the Father, but by me.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, one has to

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<sup>18</sup> On page 479 of DAYS OF VENGEANCE David Chilton, a trinitarian wrote: “...the term *worship* (in Greek, *proskuneo*) simply means the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garment, the ground, etc., and can be used not only for the homage paid to God (or, sinfully, to a false god), but also for the proper reverence due superiors (see, e.g., the LXX usage in Gen. 18:2; 19:1; 23:7, 12; 33:3, 6-7; 9-10; 42:6; 43:26, 28; 49:8). It was completely appropriate for Lot to *worship* the angels who visited him, and for the sons of Israel to *worship* Joseph. Matthew uses the word to describe a slave’s obeisance before his master. (Matt. 18:26), and St. John employs it to record Christ’s promise to the faithful Philadelphians, that the Jews would be forced to come and bow down (*proskuneo*) at their feet (Rev. 3:9)” [Emphasis added] [Prop # 16]

<sup>19</sup> Acts 4:12 reads, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given

call upon Jesus (the name means *Yahweh Saves*) to call upon Yahweh God. So while there appears to be a blurring of the scriptural application in Romans 10:13, there is no warrant for trinitarian conclusions. — John 14:6

**Proposition # 18: First John 5:20 reads, “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” Concerning this verse the renowned Bible commentator Albert Barnes wrote:**

“There has been much difference of opinion in regards to this important passage, whether it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, the immediate antecedent, or to a more remote antecedent —referring to God, as such... Without going into an extended examination of the passage, the following considerations seem to me to make it morally certain that by the phrase *this is the true God*, etc. he did refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. (1.) The grammatical construction favors it. Christ is the immediate antecedent of the pronoun *this*. This would be regarded as the obvious and certain construction so far as the grammar is concerned, unless there were something in the things affirmed which led us to seek some more remote and less obvious antecedent.... There is no instance in the writings of John, in which the appellation *LIFE*, and eternal *LIFE*, is bestowed upon the Father, to designate him as the author of spiritual and eternal life; and as this occurs so frequently in John’s writing as applied to Christ, the laws of exegesis require that both the phrase *the true God*, and *eternal life*, should be applied to him.” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, volume one, p. 1497) [Emphasis his.]

**This proves that Jesus “is the true God.”**

Response: Barnes is incorrect. Is there something which should lead “us to seek some more remote and less obvious antecedent”? Yes, there is. First John 5:20 says that the “Son of God... has given us understanding, to know Him who is true....” To whom does the pronoun *Him* refer in this verse? Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; and John 1:18; 17:4, 6, 25, 26 show that Jesus came to make the Father known. The laws of exegesis require that we apply *the Father* to the pronoun *Him*.

The rules of grammar allow that a pronoun can be replaced by the noun to which it refers without changing the meaning. Let’s do that with 1 John 5:20, “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know *the Father* who is true, and we are in *the Father* who is true, in *the Father’s* Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

Through this substitution we can see that the correct antecedent of the phrase “This is the true God and eternal life” is not so remote or less obvious that we are required to conclude that Jesus is the one to whom John is alluding. What of his claim that “there is no instance in the writings of John in which the appellation *LIFE*, and eternal *LIFE*, is bestowed upon the Father”? Once again Barnes is incorrect. At John 17:1, 3 Jesus prayed, “Father,... this is eternal LIFE, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” Clearly, this Bible scholar is in error in his commentary on this verse.

**Proposition # 19: John 12:41 says that Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory and spoke of him. This refers back to Isaiah 6 which opens, “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.” And in verse 5 Isaiah says, “My eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.” This proves that Jesus is God.**

Response: Since one cannot literally see God, this sighting must have been in a non-

literal sense. (John 1:18) Upon *seeing* God Isaiah was moved to dread as he was of “unclean lips.” One of the seraphim cleansed Isaiah’s lips with a burning coal from the altar. Then God inquires, “Whom shall I send, and who shall go for Us?” Isaiah, having been cleansed, is qualified to respond to God’s call. (The remaining verses in Isaiah 6 speak of the response to Isaiah’s ministry, and, as John shows, prophetically to Jesus’ ministry.) — Isaiah 6:1-8

What does this have to do with Isaiah’s *seeing* Jesus’ glory? Hebrews 2:14, 17 shows that Jesus had to be born into the human family to fulfill his ministry. Yet to respond to God’s call to be His unique representative and our Savior, he had to be born sinless. This is what is pictured by the cleansing of Isaiah’s lips: by a special act of God, the sinner Mary (Romans 3:23) was able to give birth<sup>20</sup> to the sinless Jesus, ‘the Word made flesh.’ — Hebrews 4:15; John 1:14

**Proposition # 20: Colossians 1:16, 17 tells us that Jesus created the universe; yet in Isaiah 44:24 God says that He created “all alone” and “by Myself.”**

Response: The apostle Paul, the writer of Colossians 1:16, 17, certainly did not have the understanding that Jesus was the Creator. In his speech at the Aeropagus he spoke of “God who made the world and everything in it.” In closing he added, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed, and of this He has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead.” It is evident from this passage that Paul believed that the God who made all things is someone distinct from the man whom He has resurrected and appointed. — Acts 17:24, 30, 31

Colossians 1:16, 17 says that “in [the Son] were created all things, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth... all things through him and for him have been created. And he is before all things and all things in him have stood together.” Yet, as noted above, God (the Father) clearly states in the Bible that He created “all alone” and “by Myself.” — Isaiah 44:24; see also Job 9:8

What is meant when the text says that all things were created “in,” “through,” and “for”<sup>21</sup> Jesus? And in what sense does this context mean that he is “before” all things? God created other intelligent life-forms as free moral agents; that is, they can think independently of His way of thinking if they wish. That at some point in time such intelligent, free-thinking beings would act contrary to His moral standards was highly probable. Knowing that a *fall* would likely take place within the created order, God designed a way to restore it to the quality of His righteous standards. This means of restoration, or plan of salvation, has as its foundation the Savior, Jesus Christ. Hence, he

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<sup>20</sup> The connection might be more easily seen when one considers that the Latin word for *lips* is *labia* which also refers to the external female genitalia. Whether the same holds true for Bible Hebrew and Greek words, I do not know, but this illustrates the connection of concepts the reader may have perceived. [Prop # 19]

<sup>21</sup> The prepositions used in these verses by the KJV are “by,” “by,” and “for.” The NKJV and some other translations use “by,” “through,” and “for.” Some translations use “in,” “through,” and “for.” The Greek text reads “*en*,” “*dia*,” and “*eis*.” All translations I checked translate *dia* as *through* except for the KJV; and all translate *eis* as *for*. How should *en* be translated since translations are split on this point? In this same verse the phrase “in the heavens” occurs. The Greek preposition used here is *en* and is translated as *in* by all translations including the KJV. So the KJV translates the same preposition with two different words in the same verse. Therefore, we are compelled to accept the English preposition *in* as the best translation of the Greek *en*. Hence, Paul does not write that ‘all things were created by’ Jesus. [Prop # 20]

existed within the plan of God “before” the creation, and the plan of creation existed “in” him, and came into being “through” [because of] him, though he did not personally “create” the universe. As a reward for his faithfulness, God planned on giving him full control over creation, so in this way it was created “for” him. — 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 1:19, 20

**Proposition # 21: John 1:1 says that the Word is God. Revelation 19:13 identifies Jesus Christ as the Word of God; therefore Jesus is God.**

Response: Because of Revelation 19:13 most identify the Word as being Jesus Christ. Yet Revelation 20:4 speaks of those who were beheaded “for the witness of Jesus, and for the word [Gk., *logos*] of God.” So while we must recognize some connection between the Word and Jesus, we also must recognize some distinction.

Psalms 33:6, 9 read, “By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth. / For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded and it stood forth.” Here we see that it was through the *spoken word* of God that the creation took place. At Isaiah 55:11 God adds, “so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Therefore, God’s spoken word reflects His plans and purposes, which then become His expressed will. So the Word of John 1:1 refers to His *spoken word, expressed will, plans, and purposes*.<sup>22</sup>

Then what does the text mean when it says that “the Word was God”? Note that the literal Greek phrase does not read *the Word was the God*, even though the phrases before and after do contain the definite article [*the*] before the word *God*. Without the definite article the predicate nominative [*God* in this case] takes on a descriptive function.<sup>23</sup> In what way has the *Word* described God? It is only through *divine revelation* that we can secure any detailed knowledge about God. And, the outworking of His Word in our fallen world has allowed Him to demonstrate the many facets of His personality. How else could we have come to know the depths of His love, mercifulness, patience, righteousness, justice, and wisdom?

Does John 1:14 prove that the *Word* is Jesus Christ personally? This verse reads, “And

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<sup>22</sup> Comprehending the non-personal use of “the Word” [Gk., *logos*] in John 1:1-14 is probably the most difficult point for the trinitarian. (This is partly due to the use of the pronouns *he* and *him* in this passage. Keep in mind that the Greek pronouns could have been rendered *it*, thus allowing for a non-personal antecedent.) The word study for *logos* provided in the EXPERIENCING THE WORD NEW TESTAMENT [HCSB] makes these interesting comments, “[T]he noun *logos* most often refers to either oral or written communication. It means *statement* or *report* in some contexts, but most often in John’s Gospel (and in the NT in general) *logos* refers to God’s Word (that is, the Old Testament) or to Jesus’ words. Thus the primary use of *logos* is to denote divine revelation in some form or another.” [Emphasis added] (The word study then applies the term to Jesus in a trinitarian fashion.) Let’s quote John 1:1-4 replacing *Word* with the phrase *divine revelation* and adjusting the pronouns accordingly. “In the beginning was the *divine revelation* and the *divine revelation* was with God, and the *divine revelation* was God. *It* was in the beginning with God. All things were made by *it*; and without *it* was not any thing made that was made. In *it* was life; and the life was the light of men.” We hope that this helps the reader to better apprehend the non-personal usage of the *Word* in John 1. [Prop # 21]

<sup>23</sup> The footnote for the New American Bible says that the “lack of a definite article with *God* in Greek signifies predication rather than identification.” Trinitarians counter that the rules of Greek grammar do not require the definite article with a predicate nominative when the subject has it. However, their claim is made suspect three verses later. Verse four literally reads, “the life was the light.” Here we find a subject and a predicate nominative with the same verb as verse one, and each having the definite article. [Prop # 21]

the Word became flesh, and tented among us...; we beheld his glory, glory as of an only-begotten from [his] Father.” The *Word* expressed in Genesis 3:15 and other Messianic passages of Scripture “became flesh” with the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, and he lived temporarily [“tented”] among sinful mankind to fulfill his ‘glorious’ mission of reconciliation which he received ‘from his Father’ and which only he could accomplish.<sup>24</sup>

**Proposition # 22: Acts 5:3 says that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and verse 5 says that he lied to God. So the Holy Spirit must be a Person in the Godhead.**

Response: Jesus called the holy spirit the “finger of God;”<sup>25</sup> so the holy spirit is God’s instrument of activity, and the Bible associates God’s spirit with His power.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the holy spirit should not be regarded as a person, whether as part of a trinity or as a totally separate person; but it is reflective of Personality, and that Personality is God (the Father). There is a point expressed in the Athanasian Creed, the trinitarian statement of belief, with which patertheists<sup>27</sup> can agree: “The Holy Spirit is of the Father... neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding....” Since the holy spirit is a part of God, lying to it is the same as lying to God.<sup>28</sup>

Also, Jesus, having received from his Father all authority in heaven and earth, has been granted exercise over the holy spirit. He can use it, direct it, distribute it, and communicate through it as he will. Therefore, the holy spirit can be reflective of his personality as well.

**Proposition # 23: In Acts 13:1-5, the Holy Spirit acts as a Person. He spoke to the leaders of the church at Antioch. He instructed them, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (v.2) Notice the personal references “to Me” and “I.” The Holy Spirit, along with the Antioch leaders sent out the missionaries. (vss. 3, 4) There are many other contexts in which the Holy Spirit is shown to be a Person.**

Response: Here the holy spirit is being used as a means of communication by the Lord. I might say, ‘The radio said that there is going to be rain today.’ Do you conclude from this that the radio is a person? Or that a person is utilizing this mode of communication?

In the incident of the burning bush the text says at Exodus 3:2, 4, 6, “And the angel of Yahweh appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush... God called to him out of the bush... ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’” So here the angel is uttering the words, “I am the God” etc. as God’s representative, not that he is personally God. Also, consider the account of Moses’ receiving of the Law. (Exodus 20 ff.) It appears that God was personally speaking to him.

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<sup>24</sup> Even if one insists that the *Word* refers specifically to Jesus in John 1:1, no significant change in understanding is necessary. He personally demonstrated God’s many qualities during his earthly minis-try, and it is in this representative sense that it can be said that he *was God*. [Prop # 21]

<sup>25</sup> Compare Matthew 12:28 to Luke 11:20. [Prop # 22]

<sup>26</sup> Compare Genesis 1:2 to Jeremiah 32:17; John 14:16 to Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8. [Prop # 22]

<sup>27</sup> Patertheism (from the Greek *pater* for *Father*, and *theos* for *God*): the monotheistic belief that the Father is the only true God. The patertheist doctrine is based on three observations: (1) That the Father is the only true God as Jesus himself stated in John 17:1-3, (2) that Jesus is quite literally the Son of God, Luke 1:35; 3:22, and (3) that, in the Hebraic way of thinking, a person’s agent can be spoken of as the person himself. — Compare Luke 10:16 [Prop # 22]

<sup>28</sup> Consider this, Peter also said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie... How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?” Because of the parallels in Peter’s words here, do trinitarians teach that Satan is Ananias or that Ananias is one person of a triune Satan? — Acts 5:3, 4 (RSV) [Prop # 22]



Yet Acts 7:53 says that the Law was delivered by angels. So to portray the holy spirit as speaking in the first person in behalf of the Lord is consistent with Biblical usage.

Trinitarians might counter that even as the angels who spoke on behalf of God are persons, so the holy spirit must also be a person. But do trinitarians believe that the angels constitute a multi-personned God? As for proving the holy spirit's personality by its ability to speak and the use of the personal pronoun, consider Luke 11:49, "Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute.'" Here the Wisdom of God is portrayed as speaking and using the pronoun *I*. Should we now conclude that there is a fourth person in the Godhead, namely, God the Wisdom?

**Proposition # 24: An essential relationship is implied by the fact that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are drawn together in the baptismal command given by Jesus at Matthew 28:19 in a manner and under the same singular designation of authority. Also there are other passages of Scripture where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mentioned together.**

Response: That there are a Father, and Son, and holy spirit, we do not contest. That there is an important relationship between Them, we do not contest. But that this relationship is trinitarian, we do contest. First John 5:8 reads, "And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." Do trinitarians conclude that there is a triune entity composed of spirit, water, and blood? Or that persons are indicated here because they are in agreement?

As for the three being mentioned together in some passages, consider Matthew 24:36 and 25:31-45 of which only a small portion is quoted here:

(24:36) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." / (25:31) "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne... (34) Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world....'"

Here the Son is mentioned, the angels are mentioned, the Father is mentioned, even believers are mentioned. Why in these verses is the holy spirit never mentioned if *he* is a co-equal, co-eternal person of a trinity?

Note also John 5:23 which reads, "that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." If the holy spirit is a co-equal, co-eternal person of a triune God, why is *he* left out? In Revelation 7:10 the great multitude cry out, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" Why do they not ascribe salvation to the holy spirit if *he* is a person of the trinity? In verses 15-17 of this same chapter both God and the Lamb [Jesus Christ] are spoken of, yet the holy spirit is not mentioned. In Revelation 14:1 the "hundred and forty-four thousand" have the Lamb's "name and his Father's name written on their foreheads." Why do they not have the holy spirit's name written on their foreheads? In Revelation 21:22, 23 God and the Lamb are each mentioned twice, yet the holy spirit is not mentioned. Why, if *he* is one person of the Godhead?

**Proposition # 25: First Corinthians 12:11 says that the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to all Christians "as He wills."**

Response: Notice verse 6 in conjunction with verse 11, "and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. / All these [manifestations

of the spirit listed in verses 7-10] are inspired by one and the same spirit apportioning to each one individually as He will.” The *He* refers back to God (the Father), not to the holy spirit.

At stated earlier, the holy spirit is reflective of Personality, and that Personality can be the Father’s or the Son’s. This principle applies in every context used to *prove* personality of the holy spirit. Since the holy spirit is God’s means of communication and inspiration we can grieve it or insult it when we act contrary to its leading. At Matthew 14:2 it says that the disciples’ boat was *tossed* by the waves. The Greek word used here is *basanizo* and is translated in other verses as *tormented*, *vexed*, or *pained*. (Matthew 8:6; 2 Peter 2:8; Revelation 12:2) Since it could be said that a boat can be tormented, vexed, or pained should we conclude that it is a person? If not, why are we forced to conclude that the holy spirit is a person because it can be grieved?

**Proposition # 26: Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “another [Gk., *allos*] Helper.” (John 14:16) Greek scholar Joseph Thayer states, “*Allos* generally denotes simply a distinction of individuals.” / “*Heteros* involves the secondary idea of difference of kind.” Hence, since Jesus is a Person, the Holy Spirit must be One also or Jesus would have used *heteros* instead of *allos* at John 14:16.<sup>29</sup>**

Response: In John 14:16, 18 notice what Jesus said, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another [*allos*] helper, to be with you forever / I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.” At Matthew 28:20 Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the ages.” It is through the coming of this promised helper, the holy spirit, that Jesus comes to them and remains with them (although he is physically absent), hence the use of *allos*. As said before, the holy spirit is reflective of Personality, in this case, that of Jesus Christ.

**Proposition # 27: Masculine pronouns are used in reference to the Holy Spirit despite the fact that *Spirit* [Gk., *pneuma*] is neuter. This proves the Personality of the Holy Spirit. — John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8, 13**

Response: Some foreign languages have what is called grammatical gender, which has nothing to do with personality or sexual gender. For example, in Spanish the word *mesa* means *table* and is feminine. But this does not mean that they regard it as a person or as female. The same is true for Bible Greek and Hebrew. These languages have three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. The Greek word *parakletos* (*helper*, *advocate*, or *comforter*) is masculine. In the verses cited above the masculine pronoun refers back to this masculine noun. — John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7

In the KJV Romans 8:16 uses the neuter pronoun in reference to the holy spirit. It reads, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit....” Concerning verses such as this, one trinitarian document says, “And in Greek a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in

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<sup>29</sup> Under the Law Covenant the nation of Israel was portrayed as the wife of God, and He, her Husband. (Jeremiah 31:32; Isaiah 54:5, 6) Consider what Paul wrote in Romans 7:1-4, “Do you not know, brethren—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during his life? ... Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another [*heteros*], to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.” Those spoken of here “died to the law”—hence, were no longer married to God—so that they might “belong to another [*heteros*],” namely, Jesus “who has been raised from the dead.” According to the above definitions used by trinitarians, these “brethren” could not “belong to another” person of the Godhead since *heteros* “involves the secondary idea of difference of kind.” Paul would have had to use *allos* in this passage if Jesus were the second person in a triune God. [Prop # 26]

gender and number. So it is just a matter of Greek grammar not theology.” If trinitarians can understand this argument when *it* is used to refer to the holy spirit, why can they not understand it when the word *he* is used for *parakletos*?

## Conclusion

We do not deny the tri-fold revelation of God the Father through creation (Psalms 19:1-6; Romans 1:19, 20), through inspiration (1 Corinthians 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:15-17), and through His only-begotten Son (Hebrews 1:1, 2; John 1:14, 18). But based on all Scripture we confidently deny that God is a trinity! Jesus proclaimed himself to be the unique Son of God and His most special representative; but never did he claim to be God personally. The vital question Jesus poses to every person is, “But who do you say that I am?” Our answer should be in agreement with that of Peter who replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus responded, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” — Matthew 16:15-17

*May the only true God, the Father of Jesus Christ, reveal through His holy spirit to seekers of truth everywhere that Jesus truly is His Son; that they might, by believing this truth, have life through his name! — John 20:31*

## Appendix

### How Can the Death of Jesus Christ Save Billions of Sinners?

Many people wonder, “How can the death of one person, Jesus Christ, save billions of people from their sins?” Before we answer this question scripturally, let us first examine how the human race came to be in an inherently sinful condition. There is a principle illustrated in the book of Hebrews that helps us in this regard. Hebrews 7:4, 9 and 10 read: “See how great [Melchizedek] is! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tithe of the spoils [of war]. / *One might even say that* Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was *still in the loins of* his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.”

The principle illustrated above is that a person yet unborn can be said to have done something through the actions of an ancestor. Therefore, when Adam sinned by disobeying God’s command, in principle the whole human race, as yet unborn in his loins, sinned along with him and was condemned to death. Thus the apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned / ...by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners...” — Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:6, 17-19; Romans 5:12, 19

God had created Adam sinless; but with his disobedience he became a sinner. Therefore, the sinless Adam of God’s creation no longer lived, but was, in effect, *murdered* by a disobedient Adam. The Law which God gave Israel reflected various divine principles. Among these, one which is relevant to our discussion is that a murderer must be put to death, “soul for soul” or life for life. (Exodus 21:12, 23, 24) The sinful Adam eventually died for his sin; but the life of a sinful man could not be restitution for the sinless life lost. The principle of ‘life for life’ needed to be satisfied, yet there was no one to pay the price. — Psalm 49:7-10

Through divine intervention another sinless human life came into the world as a descendant of Adam. But how did his death relieve mankind of their death sentence with no hope of resurrection? To illustrate, let’s draw an analogy:

Suppose that your father borrowed one billion dollars. After having borrowed the money he suffered financial reverses wiping him out. With no money of his own and the billion dollars gone, he is hopelessly in debt. Then he dies, and you, his child, inherit his indebtedness. A wealthy and compassionate man hears of your plight and pays off your debt. As far as the lending institution is concerned you are paid off, no longer in debt. But in reality, you are indebted to your benefactor.

Likewise, our forefather, the disobedient Adam, became indebted to divine principles, owing a sinless human life. We, his offspring, inherited that debt.<sup>30</sup> Yet not one, not even all of us combined, can repay it. (Romans 3:23) Through a miraculous conception Jesus was born into the world of mankind as a sinless human descendant of Adam (Hebrews 2:14, 17; 4:15), thereby inheriting that debt, which he alone was able to repay. Jesus explained it this way, “The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” By his paying, we became free of that indebtedness before the Universal Judge. — Matthew 20:28; John 3:17, 18

Jesus lived his entire life without committing even one sin. Though he never married or had children, he was, theoretically, capable of fathering a whole human race of sinless people, just as Adam fathered a whole human race of sinful people. Thus Paul could call Jesus “the last Adam” in 1 Corinthians 15:45. Now applying the principle found in Hebrews 7:9, 10 that we discussed above, when Jesus died on the cross, *one might even say that* the potential human race of sinless people *still in his loins* was crucified with him! This is why Paul could write, “For as by a man came death, by a man has come the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” — 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22

Hidden in Christ we become dead to the law, but alive toward God through him, and indebted to him. (Colossians 3:3; Galatians 2:19-21) Therefore, Jesus has the right to set standards for us, to forgive our errors when we fall short of his standards, but to require from any one of us repayment if we fail to acknowledge his authority in our lives. Yes, a day is coming when there will be a meting out of “vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the good news of our Lord Jesus,” a day when they “shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” Will you survive that day? — 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9

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<sup>30</sup> What about the sinless human life Eve lost; did mankind inherit that debt? First Timothy 2:14 says, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being thoroughly deceived fell into transgression.” Though she died for her own sins, the one deceiving her was ultimately responsible and owes that debt of a sinless human life.