

Rediscovering the Trinity

The Biblical Basis for
Proclaiming the Deity of the
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit



Robin Olav Vogsland

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Dedicated

To Larry K. without whose challenges to orthodoxy
the research would never have been done.

and

To Brian P. without whose conversion to the Jehovah's Witnesses
the book would never have been written.

May God in his grace show you the truth.

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The author has not obtained any endorsement of this book from these men and any mis-statements of Bible doctrine that remain are the fault of the author alone.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

INTRODUCTION	1
The Athanasian Creed	9
PREFACE.....	10
I. WHO IS JEHOVAH?	11
1. WHO IS JEHOVAH?.....	12
Jehovah is a Jealous God	12
Jehovah's Supremacy and Glory	14
Jehovah is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent	16
Jehovah is Eternal and Unchanging.....	17
Jehovah is Holy and Perfect	18
Jehovah's One-ness	18
II. THE FATHER IS JEHOVAH!.....	20
2. THE FATHER IS JEHOVAH	21
III. CHRIST IS JEHOVAH!.....	23
3. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION.....	24
Introduction.....	24
The Pre-existence of Christ and the Incarnation.....	27
Humility & Humiliation Then Glory & Exaltation	29
Why Does it Seem So Hard To Determine Whether Christ is Jehovah?	40
The Obvious Question: Why Did God Become a Human Being?.....	42
More About the Messiah Who is More Than a Servant	43
Equal Glory and Honor for the Father and the Exalted Son.....	44
The Marvel of the Incarnation	46
4. CHRIST ADDRESSED AS GOD/SON OF GOD.....	48
"And the Word was God"	50
More References to God and Son of God	52
The God of the Church Shed His Blood	55
A Jehovah's Witness' Favorite.....	55
The Rule of Granville Sharp	58
5. PROOFS THAT CHRIST IS JEHOVAH.....	62
The Father Speaks to the Son in the Old Testament:	64
Again the Distinctions Between Christ and Jehovah are Blurred.....	66
An Undeniable Proof	67
We Shall All Worship Christ as Supreme Lord Jehovah	67
Who is The Lord of Lords (and Our Lord)? The King of Kings (and Our King)? God of Gods (and Our God)?	68

Hebrew Poetic Parallelism	70
Who is the Great God?	70
Jehovah, the One Who is Pierced.....	72
6. OTHER PROOFS AND INDICATIONS.....	74
Whom May We Bow to, Worship, and Serve?	74
The First and the Last, The Beginning and the End, The Alpha and the Omega	76
I AM	78
“My Father and Your Father”	78
Who is the King of Glory?.....	79
Whose Book of Life is it?.....	80
Maker of a New Covenant / Forgiver of Sins	81
Judge of All Nations.....	82
Only Jehovah Knows Our Hearts—and so Does Jesus!.....	85
Jesus Does What Jehovah Does.....	86
Jesus’ Works are Jehovah’s Works	89
The Father Withholds Nothing from the Son	90
“Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit”	90
Who is the Creator?.....	92
7. CHRIST’S NAME IS JEHOVAH’S NAME.....	95
The Name of Jehovah	95
Worship Jehovah, Not Jehovah’s Name	95
The Father’s Name is the Son’s Name	98
Faith in Jesus’ Name is Faith in Jehovah’s Name	99
Jesus’ Name is Literally “Jehovah Our Righteousness”.....	100
Good and Bad Arguments.....	102
The Father and the Son Share One Throne, One Face, One Name	103
Christ’s Nature: The Trinitarian Hypothesis -Versus- The Unitarian Hypothesis.	104
He is Light	107
Jehovah—the Rock of Believers.....	108
He is the Rock, the Solid Foundation Stone	109
The Stumbling Stone.....	110
The Spiritual Rock in the Wilderness	110
The Gathering Hen.....	114
Who is Our Redeemer and Savior?	115
8. JEHOVAH’S ATTRIBUTES ARE CHRIST’S ATTRIBUTES	120
Jesus’ Word, Like Jehovah’s Word, is Eternal	120
Like Jehovah, Christ is Eternal and Unchanging	120
Omnipresence and Omniscience.....	122
Christ, as Jehovah, is Holy and Perfect	123
9. JEHOVAH, THE HUSBAND OF BELIEVERS	124
The Bridegroom in the Old Testament is Jehovah.....	124
The Bridegroom in the New Testament is Christ	131
The Necessary Questions	134
10. CHRIST’S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FATHER.....	136
Introduction.....	136
In the Bible, Apparent Paradoxes are the Key to Deeper Understanding	137
Miscellaneous Themes.....	138
The Humiliation and Exaltation of the Son.....	138
The Eternal Son of God.....	138

How Is the Adopted “Sonship” of Believers Related to Christ’s “Sonship”?.....	139
The Word of God is Wisdom Incarnate.....	142
IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS JEHOVAH	147
11. WHAT IS A SPIRIT?	148
Knitting Together a Concept of “Spirit”	150
The Physical Connection	151
Contemplations of the Spiritual Universe.....	152
12. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	158
Introduction to Four Proofs at Once	158
A Note on Interpreting Relationship Words	160
Note: Use of “He” in the New Testament to Refer to the Spirit.....	161
Four Proofs at Once.....	163
The Mind and Will of the Spirit	167
Whose Spirit is the Holy Spirit?.....	168
V. THE TRINITY: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT	173
13. THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT	174
The Trinity in Creation.....	174
The Father and the Incarnate Son	176
During the Exodus.....	177
14. THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT	179
Proclamations and Benedictions	180
Between the Resurrection and the Ascension	181
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Giver of Gifts.....	183
15. SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.....	185
Communion	190
Koinonia	191
Bonds Within the Trinity.....	194
“The Father is Greater Than I”	196
Final Note	199
16. REPRISE AND CONCLUSION.....	200
APPENDICES	202
A. THEOPHANIES AND CHRISTOPHANIES	203
Appearances of the Son of God in the Old Testament	203
Appearances of Jehovah and of the “Angel” of Jehovah.....	205
Appearances In Visions.....	212
B. WHAT IS THE HUMAN SPIRIT?	215
A Jehovah’s Witness Controversy Examined	215
The Practical Side of Apologetics	225
INDEX.....	227
Index of Scripture Passages	227
General Index.....	230
Bibliographic Index	231

* * *

I NTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to show clearly the solid basis in the Bible for the Christian doctrine (teaching) of the Trinity. It is a challenge to unitarians^[1] to reconsider their position. It is a help to Christians who are discussing the matter with unitarians. Most of the material presented here was compiled over the course of 2 years of discussions with a man who was trained by the Jehovah's Witnesses. It should be especially striking to the Jehovah's Witnesses since it addresses some of their specific arguments and interpretations. Other unitarian groups such as The Way International have similar beliefs.

In dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity, Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses often communicate poorly because many basic theological assumptions held by each are not shared by the other. To reach a common ground it is helpful for the Christian to temporarily put aside Trinitarian terminology and the traditional arguments we use when among other Christians and approach the issue fresh, using only the Bible as a source. That is the goal of this book.

First, the Christian's theological position must be made clear. It is certainly true that the word "Trinity" is a man-made term; it is not contained in the Bible. BUT, we believe that the Christian understanding of God as a Trinity flows directly from God's Word and can be convincingly defended from it. Second, this proof rests not on just a few verses but rather on a host of proof passages and literally hundreds of supporting passages which reveal the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Christian understanding of God, the reason we believe God is Triune, consists of four parts, each of which must be proved from the Bible, if the Trinity is to be accepted as a true representation of God:

1. The Father is Jehovah
2. Jesus Christ, the Son, is Jehovah (and is not the Father)
3. The Holy Spirit is Jehovah (and is not the Father or the Son)
4. Jehovah is ONE God

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, however it is expressed, is no more than a restatement of these four points. That is, the Father, Son and Spirit are distinct "persons"^[2] but are at the same time one God,

[1] Unitarian are those who deny that the true God is Tri-une, i.e. is three (tri-) persons in one (-une) God. They deny the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit or deny that they are distinct from God the Father.

[2] As used by Christians, the word "person" is a technical term, i.e. it has a specific meaning when used this way. The term is not intended to imply that the Father, Son, or Spirit is a human "person." In this case, "person" is being applied to someone who is not by nature human, not even physical, but rather a spirit. The term "person" was chosen to convey the idea that the Father, Son and Spirit each have their own consciousness, are each individuals, yet the three are, and have always been, together in a communion or a union so thorough that they are only one "being." This is indeed a very peculiar thing, not paralleled in our normal experience. Yet it is not so strange that it is inconceivable, even to the mind of fallen man. Consider this: science fiction authors for many years have peopled their tales with beings made up of more than one separate-but-perfectly-bonded entities (persons). I mention this foolish example only to point out that SF
(continued)

Jehovah. Some unitarians will stumble on this, saying that it is nonsense or a contradiction. But such an objection is NOT a Biblical argument, it is an argument from human reason (i.e., common sense) and is not adequate—only a Biblical argument will do. All that need be said is that, IF the Bible DOES teach these four things, then this “common sense” objection is wrong and we must retrain our common sense to look at things in a different, more Biblical way. We should not be surprised to find out that God, the un-common Creator of the Universe (and of all its biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics—all its truths), is more complicated, and harder to understand, than our common sense might expect. God proclaims that His ways are higher than our ways, and they appear as foolishness to us until our eyes have been opened by His Word. Always we must let our reason and our beliefs be dictated by the word of God, rather than allow them to stand in judgment over God because what he says is hard (or even impossible) to understand.

When faced with a sound Biblical proof that contradicts our preconceived notion, we must be willing to humble ourselves and cast aside our opinion if we are to truthfully say that the Bible is the real source of our doctrine.

A CHALLENGE TO JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES AND OTHER UNITARIANS

If you are a Jehovah’s Witness, or a member of another unitarian group, you may be reluctant or unwilling to place at risk what you believe by even looking at something that goes against the things you have been taught—especially since you probably feel that your own studies have already established that this Christian teaching is bunk. It is indeed unwise to tempt God by always reconsidering things that have been firmly established. The only question is whether you really have seen the Trinity doctrine debunked. It is unlikely that you have ever seen a presentation of the Biblical basis of the Trinity teaching as thorough as you will find here. In fact if you are a typical Jehovah’s Witness or Way International member, you have seen only a watered down presentation of the Christian doctrine. The very fact that you may think the Trinity is such a foolish idea and you cannot understand how Christians are able to believe in it, suggests that you do not really know what it is we believe or the reasons why we believe it.

So, do not say, there is no reason to go through this all again because you have heard it all before. I am claiming that you have never, ever, seen what is in this book. So how can you deny what you have never examined? You too should be willing to start afresh, with the Bible as our only source book, or you should admit to yourself **that you do not have the Bible as your real source of doctrine and faith**. Even though there is some risk involved in contending with those who hold beliefs contrary to your own, the truth is that to *test the spirits to see whether they are from God* (1 John 4:1), it is necessary to hear what they say and test them against the Scriptures. *So search the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so* (Acts 17:11). And if the proof described above is made successfully, you should be willing to change your allegiance and leave your current teachers—just as you now hope a Trinitarian will do to his or her teachers when you present your case—even if this means separating from church, friends, and family who try to hold you back. The Truth of God should be our only goal.

And even if you set this book aside, you will still know that it’s claims exist, and that they are unanswered.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

As the Bible portrays him, our God, Jehovah, is a very specific God, not some generic supreme being. The word “Jehovah,” translated “*the LORD*” in most Bibles, is the *proper name* of the true God; it is not a

authors write of such things without experiencing nearly so many “intellectual” objections from “modern people” as do those who defend the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

title like “Lord” or “God.”^[3] God chose for himself the name “Jehovah” as his *personal name*. Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is all-powerful. All glory and supremacy belong to him since he is the creator of all things. He is a jealous God; he allows no other god or created being to receive worship or glory that is due him. To allow such false worship would be to allow a lie and Jehovah cannot abide lies, for He is perfectly pure and holy and righteous. The first step in our adventure is to make clear the Biblical description of Jehovah’s attributes, especially his oneness. This is crucial for us to be able to distinguish whether Christ is Jehovah or whether he is merely a created being—some sort of super angel, as Jehovah’s Witnesses believe—or a specially gifted man, as the Way International teaches.

Second, we will look at what the Bible says about the Father being Jehovah, about the Son being Jehovah, and about the Holy Spirit being Jehovah. Few dispute that the Father is Jehovah, so that section is short (and that is a good, because there is far less evidence for it). The section on Christ is the longest since this is most often the center of the controversy. The section on the Holy Spirit has an intermediate length; for our purposes the main points are to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is an individual, a personal being, rather than a force or manifestation of the Father, and that the Holy Spirit is God, linked as an equal with, yet distinct from, the Father and the Son.

Finally, we will explore briefly the relationships between the Father, Son, and Spirit in the Old and New Testaments. This can help our human minds learn to deal with the admittedly uncommon idea of the Trinity and to be able to speak of it in a sound, Biblical way.

This material constitutes the body of the “proof” presented in this book.

Unitarians have many objections to the doctrine of the Trinity that are based on specific verses in the Bible. These are legitimate concerns in that, if there was no Biblical answer to them, Christian doctrine would indeed be on a shaky footing. This work touches on many of these objections. I hope this will ease any concern that we Christians are not telling the whole truth or are hiding some flaw that would bring the Christian doctrine crashing down. We have nothing to hide.

The Christian Church was racked by a great controversy in the 4th century. The dispute was over the nature of Christ. A man named Arius began teaching that Christ was a created being and was not Jehovah God. Those that did not follow Arius viewed this as a departure from the teachings received from Christ and the Apostles. The Nicene Creed was formulated as a rejection and repudiation of the Arian (unitarian) teaching. The Nicene Creed was the first formally accepted, overt affirmation of the Trinitarian view by the Christian church. Most unitarian critiques of the Trinity doctrine seek to portray the Nicene Creed, adopted at the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., as invented to suit certain political expedencies of the Roman Emperor Constantine. They do not consider the possibility that the respected and learned Christian leaders who attended convened with the intent of defining the correct Scriptural teaching so that the Church would not be split by a false teaching. The Nicene Creed was built upon the same structure as the older Apostles Creed, including its sequential articles pertaining to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[3] Most English Bibles translate the personal name, Jehovah, as “the LORD” or “GOD” (note small capital letters), which tends to obscure the fact that it is a proper name. The original pronunciation/spelling of the name of “Jehovah” is itself a matter of dispute. The word “Jehovah” is an attempt to render the Hebrew name of God in English and was first used several centuries ago. The rendering “Yahweh” is favored by many who think it more closely approximates the original pronunciation. Others use an intermediate form “Yehovah.” This is a linguistic issue, not a doctrinal one, and as such it is not only allowable but required that each of us tolerate the preferences of others in this matter. In this work I will use “Jehovah” since much of the recent controversy between Trinitarians and unitarians has been generated using this rendering of God’s name.

The Athanasian Creed (written 400-500 AD) is the most detailed, universally accepted formal statement of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. When I first read this creed, I thought that it was presumptuous and added to the Scriptures by giving details about the Trinity that I did not recognize as coming from the Bible. Now I see that this is not the case; it **is** a bold, unequivocal statement but it **did not** come from men's imaginations. It is derived from the same Scriptures that we will cover. The reader would do well to review the text of this creed carefully (it is presented at the end of the introduction), and keep it in mind throughout the study of this book to either confirm or refute the claim that it is a correct presentation of Bible doctrine and so worthy of full acceptance.

Note: The words of this Creed, as with my words, and the words of the other authors occasionally quoted in this work are not quoted because I presume that they have some AUTHORITY (*argumentum ad verecundiam*). But rather they are given so that they can be evaluated against the Bible—the only norm for our teaching—and proved either False or True. If they are thus proved True, then even such words of men can be useful as teaching aides and as an anchor against aimless doctrinal drift.

The usual way of presenting the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Sunday Schools, adult instruction classes, and sermons is to present the doctrine as a summary of what the whole Bible teaches. The teacher gives a sampling of proof texts that are sufficient to convince the majority of students that it is indeed a Biblical doctrine. Those who are not so easily convinced would, ideally, pursue the matter further with a pastor or knowledgeable teacher. In practice, this area of theology and dogmatics is not a hotbed of study. Indeed, except for the activities of the Witnesses and a few other unitarian groups who respect the authority of the Bible, there might be almost no practical reason to study this area deeply (we should thank these unitarians for motivating us to such study). The unfortunate result is that the “demand” for in-depth instruction is low and even many ordained pastors and teachers of the Word never get the extra training or spend the extra time in study that is needed to give an adequate defense against the Witnesses, who specialize in “refuting” certain Christian doctrines—including the Trinity doctrine. Thus, it is frequently the case that at the crucial moment when an inquiring soul is prompted (by the Witnesses) to investigate these matters, the Jehovah's Witnesses are the only ones around who present a well thought-out case. I think it is safe to say that the ranks of the Jehovah's Witnesses have been swollen by people who originally had very nominal Christian instruction in the Trinity doctrine and who were no match for the focused attack of a well-prepared Jehovah's Witness. The Witnesses teach “about” the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in a manner designed to make it easy for them to disprove it and ridicule it. They do present some of the basic Christian proof passages which Christians use to summarize the doctrine, and they have worked up very clever arguments against them. However, the Witnesses never address the whole Biblical basis for the doctrine of the Trinity. Indeed, most Witnesses have never heard a grown-up, serious presentation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. So, having created this “straw man” to battle against, they have no problem knocking him down, and they portray this as a *proof* that the doctrine of the Trinity is a heresy. But in fact they have only refuted a malnourished caricature of the real Christian doctrine. This book presents the Biblical basis for the Trinity doctrine in a more extensive and thorough way than most Jehovah's Witnesses, and even most Christians, have ever seen.

The proper response to the challenge presented by the Jehovah's Witnesses is NOT to ignore them and let them do as they wish as long as they do it somewhere else. Peter commands us to be ready to give a defense for the faith that is in us (1 Peter 3:15). To be able to do this requires that we be well grounded in the Scriptures and in Scriptural teaching (doctrine). It is a real danger that each new generation will take for granted its scriptural heritage and eventually become unable to pass it on. It is necessary that through hard work and diligent study each new generation **rediscover** for itself the riches hidden in God's word.

I set out with the expectation that every point that I made would be unoriginal, that it would be only **rediscovery**. I still do not think that I have gone beyond or improved in any significant way upon what had already been discovered and expounded by the great Bible scholars of previous years. Such a work as this

is done by standing near the feet of giants who came before (I would not presume to say I was standing on their shoulders). But, I am not ashamed to labor in a field that has been plowed before, for a field must be worked every year to remain productive. It is a noble thing merely to apply what has been the unchanging faith of the Christian Church to a new time, to my place, and in a new way—to play a small part in preserving in a living, ever-reborn form our treasury of faith. The subject is the word of God, which can never become stale by reuse. It is the study itself, it is the probing and questioning and the discovery of answers from God’s own mouth that is the reward of such an effort as this. I recommend that all Christians rediscover for themselves the doctrines of the faith in the eternal word of our God. This knowledge cannot be fully absorbed by passive learning; the truth is, it is when we face a tough adversary who may best us if we falter that the learning is the best, the insights are the keenest, and the joy is the sweetest. So let us happily gird up for the fight!

Some may wonder why anyone would spend so much time in a study that is so “simple” and maybe even irrelevant—far better to go out and spend ones time evangelizing! But there is no need to make such a choice—we can do both—and one will help the other. Exploring the Bible exhaustively on a particular subject is like climbing a mountain. You cannot imagine the view you will find at the top and once you get there, it is easier to see how all the rest fits together and to choose the next path with a sense of continuity and direction and competence. As you gets past the basics, you are forced to tackle the harder material, to chuck away the immature reasoning, and to learn the spiritual and technical skills and disciplines which are needed for other areas of serious study and application. To know the Scriptures, is the way to know their Author and to receive from Him spiritual wisdom. Far from being dry, the subject of the deity of the Father, Son, and Spirit is exciting and fundamental—it brings you face to face with God in His Word—all to the end that we may know and serve Him better.

FOR THOSE IN A HURRY

The “meat” of this study is contained in Part 3—CHRIST IS JEHOVAH and for those who do not have the time or the inclination to read through the material on other related subjects, I would cautiously suggest reading the first Bible verse discussed in Chapter 1 (called the “key verse” of this study) and then going directly to Part 3. Such an approach will work if the reader already has some background in this subject or has specific questions in mind. I do not recommend this, however. I believe the most benefit will be received by taking the time to go slow. There are many subtleties to this issue. It is impossible to instantly pick up a sound understanding by skimming through. Take some time, ponder the issues, savor the Scriptures. This is an opportunity to learn some very good things from God’s word.

NOTES ON EDITORIAL METHODS

In the body of this work, the author's comments are in a distinct typeface {For example} to distinguish them from the scriptural references that make up the bulk of the document. I have added underlining and other emphases to highlight key words in Bible passages. The reader will note that the highlighting methods are not completely consistent, but generally, if there is more than one kind of underline, it is to show degrees of emphasis: lesser, great, greater. In some cases, parallel ideas in two or more passages are given the same style of underlining to bring out the similarities. *Italic* and **bold** are used for emphasis or, as explained in the text, to tag certain ideas or persons for special notice. These typographical devices take the place of me standing beside you and pointing to the phrases and saying, "look at this" or "notice this interesting point." These subtle typographic distinctions are there especially for those who wish to study a particular point in depth, so if all of this gets confusing, do not hesitate to ignore these devices—just read the text and let all of these marks serve only to highlight words that you should not skip over or miss. Such an approach will be sufficient.

I have tried to stay on a straight course by keeping the more obscure, technical, and speculative discussions in footnotes. Some longer diversions from the main topic appear in separate chapters that I describe as *speculative* in the introduction of the chapter. Not everyone will find these interesting—that is all right. Part 5, in particular Chapters 13 through 15, gets into things that are not central to proving that God is Triune and get a little "deeper"—not all readers will find them as helpful. I have also included analyses of the original Greek texts for certain key passages for those who are interested. Do not be intimidated by this—no prior knowledge of Greek is required, though a knowledge of English grammar will be useful. These passages have been important in the historical debate of this subject and therefore are included for the sake of those who will want to delve more deeply into these matters.

All Scriptures are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. In Old Testament passages that contain the name of God (JHVH), the NIV translates it as "the LORD" or "GOD" (note small capital letters). A liberty has been taken with the NIV text because of the nature of this study: I have rendered God's name as "Jehovah" here. Also the name "the LORD Almighty" (Jehovah Sabaoth in Hebrew) has been rendered "Jehovah of hosts" which is more literal and perhaps less subject to misinterpretation by English-speakers. *Host* refers to an army or to the whole mass of God's people or creation.

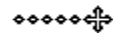
In presenting Bible passages I have attempted to use adequately large excerpts to convey the applicable context. I have included relevant material even when it *seems* to weaken my argument. I have no intention to deceive. The case will stand up to the most critical scrutiny. However, in some passages it would be beneficial to read more, even one or more chapters or a whole book, to verify that the presentation is faithful to God's intent. So I encourage readers to search these and other Scripture passages to determine the truth in this very important matter. Indeed the identity of our God is so important that it is no surprise that, as we will find, the existence of the Trinity permeates the Scriptures. I have attempted to avoid the programmed learning approach that is 20% Scripture and 80% commentary (or reinterpretation). But it is unavoidable that when one gets into things deeply, more explanation is needed to get the point across. It is probable that in some cases I have been too brief and my point may not be intelligible. I apologize for this in advance.

I have deliberately avoided keeping a narrow focus because the most convincing thing about the Trinitarian position is how a multitude of major themes in the Bible fit with and are illuminated by this truth. That is, the study of this subject will enhance our understanding and answer questions about many of the Bible's teachings: creation, salvation, the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures (a detailed study like this will convince any honest person that the Bible is consistent, even at a microscopic level—miraculously so), idolatry, judgment day, the gifts of the Spirit, etc. All of these things are related to the identity and

activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is unfortunate that the doctrine has usually been taught only as a summary—there are so many aspects of the Trinity revealed in Scriptures that are passed over by Christians for the sake of keeping it simple. Because of this, we have gained a reputation among unitarians as being childish people who believe in a three-headed God. I want to portray the Trinity with all the subtlety, depth, and, most importantly, clarity that the Scriptures contain, so that none can trivialize or misrepresent the Christian position.

I have generally not capitalized pronouns referring to God. If I were to do so, it would be necessary to capitalize those referring to Christ also. Because of the nature of this work, it would be distracting to the presentation of the Biblical case for the deity of Christ to bias the format of the presentation by following a spelling convention that is not found in the Bible itself. I otherwise favor this God-honoring practice; Christians in their general writing are under no obligation to function as if the matter of Christ’s deity is not settled.

I have tried to avoid cheap shots and pointless attacks against unitarians. I do not claim to be unbiased, but I have tried to be fair. A Jehovah’s Witness or other unitarian should be able to read this work without feeling that they have been insulted. If I have misrepresented any of the Witness’ teachings, I apologize for doing so and would welcome corrections.

Most chapters are divided into “sections”; each has its own theme and a boxed title. The symbol:  is used to mark a break in the stream of thought between sections and between chapters (sometimes a thought will continue over several sections).

AUTHOR’S FINAL NOTES

I am a layman whom God has blessed with a chance to spend much time studying the Bible and thinking about this subject. God and you will judge the quality of the work.

Before reading a work such as this, I would want to know where the author is coming from theologically.

Let me summarize. I am a *confessional Lutheran*;^[4] one who tries to adhere to the truths of Scripture as rediscovered during the Reformation. Confessional Lutherans are rare and should not be confused with the bulk of Lutherans who tend (not all of them of course) toward unscriptural, “modern”^[5] theological

[4] Adhering to the “Lutheran Confessions.” The Lutheran Confessions are formal statements of Biblical doctrine formulated at the time of the Reformation, they are collected in the *Book of Concord*. I heartily recommend the modern translation of the *Book of Concord*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, Fortress Press, Philadelphia.

[5] I have nothing against being “modern” in the temporal sense. By “modern” I mean the so called “scientific” *historical-critical* theological movement which has come to dominate much of mainstream theology (especially among Lutherans) over the last century or so. This approach attempts to achieve *objectivity* by doing theology *ut si Deus non daretur* (as if there were no God). What a perversion! It is a theology of unbelief. A basic tenet of this theology is that each Bible writer wrote independently (without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) and hence each book should be interpreted independently in terms of the author’s historical, political, and cultural context—the goal is to explain why the author wrote what he wrote rather than to understand and apply what he wrote as authoritative over us. In this methodology, direct comparison of the content of scriptural books (what is said) is considered pointless and invalid for *modern* people, since the prophets and apostles were only backwards men fumbling around, making up things as they searched blindly for God. These theologians believe only they are equipped to sort out the wheat from the voluminous chaff so that mankind can progress in understanding “matters of the divine.” This movement is an anti-Christian abomination that has put millions into spiritual darkness by claiming to be “normal” Christianity (by virtue of a large membership and its “scientific” basis). It makes claims to promulgate profound truths even as it repudiates the orthodox faith held by true Christians for the last 2000 years. God will be their judge.

systems. I hold without any wavering that all of the Bible is inspired and inerrant—down to the individual words used by the authors in the original languages. This study has amply convinced me of that. The Scriptures are the only means by which God has chosen to reveal his identity to us. The Bible reveals the one way of salvation, Jesus Christ, to sinful mankind. Unlike a “modern” theologian, I have attempted to employ the most powerful of all interpretive tools, *let Scripture interpret Scripture*.

I have tried to be brief and avoid dealing with minor or overly obscure points, but there are some difficult things here. If the reader does not see my point, try rereading it, or just go on. Not everything here is equally important and not everything must be understood the first time through. And, I confess that I have allowed myself to go off on tangents that were of personal interest in several places (the speculative items I mentioned above).^[6] I hope these are not too distracting. I welcome comments, questions, and especially corrections from readers.

To those who would try to persuade unitarians that God is Triune: Resist the temptation to approach this as an intellectual debate, for inevitably it will become a matter of your reason and debating skills against theirs, and even if you “win,” no opponent will be persuaded to believe in what you say. Spreading the gospel is a spiritual activity, not an intellectual one. The goal should be to let God speak to that person through the Scriptures. God has said, “*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it*” (Isaiah 55:11-12). God does not guarantee that *our* words will have such beneficial effects, and if we depart from the approach of Scriptures we may actually end up hindering the Holy Spirit, who alone can turn a heart from error to truth. We have our role in this battle: to testify, instruct, encourage, challenge, and refute, but we are not battling against flesh and blood or brain and intellect. We are in a spiritual battle in which the only effective weapons are the ones that God supplies—only his Spirit, working through the Word will prevail. Pray that the Spirit will lead you in this battle.

I pray that by God’s grace those who read on may benefit from this work.

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[6] By “speculative,” I mean not fully worked out or confirmed. These items are, I hope, still tied to the Scriptures rather than being mere idle (vain) philosophizing.

The Athanasian Creed
(Named after Athanasius, an early defender
against the ARIAN or UNITARIAN Teaching)

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the one Christian faith. Unless he keeps this faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the one Christian faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, Neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. [*“to confound” means to mingle together or to confuse one for the other*]

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead [*Godhood*] of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal.

As there are not three Uncreated nor three Incomprehensibles, but one Uncreated and one Incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty.

And yet not three Almighty, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

And yet not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Christian religion to say, There are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts;

And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and coequal, so that in all things, as has been said above, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He, therefore, that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, subsisting of a reasoning soul and human flesh. [*Note: “subsisting of” = truly existing as...*]

Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood;

Who, although He is God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ:

One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God;

Completely One ; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

For as the reasoning soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;

Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead;

He ascended into heaven; He sits on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead;

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give an account of their own works.

And they that have done good shall go into everlasting life; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the one Christian faith; which unless a man believe it faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.



PREFACE

The Bible definitely does not present the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as exactly the same. Whenever two or three of the persons are mentioned together, they are distinguished from each other in some way—different names, different roles in bringing about action, different roles with respect to believers. For example, Jehovah is called “Savior” in the Old Testament. The New Testament gives additional details, yet it does not speak of Christ as the sole “Savior,” to the exclusion of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called our Savior because he died that we might be eternally saved from the consequences of our sins; the Father too is our Savior, for he is the one who sent the Son so that the Father might justify (declare not guilty) man, and the Holy Spirit is the person who is actually our most immediate savior, for he is the one who goes out into the world to draw men and women to faith in Christ—without the Holy Spirit, none would be saved. Thus, each person of the Trinity is legitimately called our Savior; but they are our Savior in different, complementary senses.

Well into this book, in the section on the Holy Spirit, a phrase is introduced that may be helpful in expressing this aspect of the Bible’s treatment of the Trinity. Speaking a little anthropomorphistically (too much so for this term to be used without explanation), I refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as “Coequal Coworkers” in doing the work of Jehovah.

By “Coequal” I simply mean that the Bible does not present the Trinity as a head (the Father) directing two subservient persons (Son and Spirit) but rather as three persons who in some unknown way each know what to do spontaneously and who act as members of a perfectly joined team. In the Bible, the work of the three persons is always a harmonious, rankless, joint action—the Father, Son, and Spirit are never in conflict, and indeed always complement each other perfectly in their actions.

By “Coworkers,” I refer to the idea that all are active in performing all the works of God. No single person ever does any work independent of, or to the exclusion of, the other persons. The example of the Savior given above demonstrates the coworker idea; so do all of Jehovah’s acts; as Creator, as sender of the Old Testament prophets, as the giver of spiritual gifts, in the events of judgment day, and so on. We could say (speaking crudely) that each has a different role in or relationship to these jointly undertaken works, but each is essential for the works to be done.

Unfortunately, the term “coequal coworkers” is imperfect in that it could be taken to imply that the Three Persons are separate beings who get together to cooperate. The Scriptures know of no such separation, or independent existence, for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This phrase can only be useful if one does not add such a connotation to it.

This idea may be helpful and I am previewing it up front so that the reader can be watching to see if the Scriptures quoted in this book justify thinking of Jehovah in this way.



PART I

Who is Jehovah?

CHAPTER 1

WHO IS JEHOVAH?

Jehovah (or Yahweh) is the personal name of God. Only the true God is entitled to use that name. The Bible has some very definite things to say about Jehovah. This chapter will review some of those attributes which distinguish Jehovah from any other.

Jehovah is a Jealous God

Webster's New World Dictionary gives the following definitions of the word jealous:

Jealous 1. very watchful or careful in guarding or keeping [*jealous* of one's rights] 2. a) resentfully suspicious of a rival or a rival's influence [a husband jealous of other men] b) resentfully envious c) resulting from such feelings [a jealous rage] 3. [Now rare] requiring exclusive loyalty [the Lord is a jealous God]

The first and third definitions, which are closely related, represent a basically good jealousy. That is, it is entirely appropriate to guard and keep those things which are rightfully yours or to demand the loyalty of those who dutifully owe it. The second definition, referring to marital jealousy or jealousy of another's abilities, is the one most frequently seen in everyday usage and is basically a sinful sentiment or a sinful excess of proper sentiments. This second definition describes an inordinate or twisted degree of guarding and keeping, notably where the threat is more imagined than real. For example, it would be just (holy) for a person to be alarmed by and act to thwart another's attempt to entice away his or her spouse. But it is a result of our fallen, sinful nature that a person resents innocent contact and interaction between his or her spouse and one of the opposite sex.

In English the same word "jealous" is used for both the justified and unjustified sentiment and this can result in some confusion, i.e. some mistakenly think that it is unfitting (even sinful) for God to be jealous. This is not so. It is because we were created by Jehovah for his purposes that we are obligated to acknowledge him as creator, anything else is untruthful, i.e. sinful. Therefore God is justified in rejecting those who would (contrary to the facts) perversely worship a created thing/being as creator. Moreover, being an entirely Holy God, his will is synonymous with right and good, and so it is fitting (holy) for us to always do the will of God; anything less is sick and perverse (whether we admit it or not). Therefore, God should be regarded as our one, ultimate lord and master with regard to the conduct of our lives. It is right, and therefore God has the

right, to reserve for himself our ultimate obedience and loyalty. Moreover, when God reaches the point where he will no longer tolerate sin polluting the universe he created, he is within his rights to judge and remove (to Hell, the place prepared for their containment) those whose sins are not forgiven, those who do not through faith in Christ's payment for their sin, repent and turn from their sins to serve the real, living God. So it can be seen that God's jealous actions are not done because he is insecure (definition 2), but because he knows what it is right and true (definitions 1 & 3).

Having made clear this distinction, let us go on to see what the Bible says about God's holy jealousy.

Key Verse:

ISAIAH 42:8

**“I am Jehovah; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”**

This is a theme passage in this study and will be mentioned at various points. We will see that Jehovah is a jealous God, and yet, we will also see that the Bible gives Jesus Christ the same glory and praise and honor and preeminence that Jehovah has reserved for himself.

This verse is NOT crucial to prove Christ is Jehovah, but it does bring into focus, the real issue at hand. In the light of this key verse and others which indicate that Jehovah is a jealous God, there should be no ambiguity about whether Christ is Jehovah or not. If Christ receives a half, or even a quarter of the glory of Jehovah, it can only mean that he is Jehovah, for no creature can rightfully receive ANY of the glory and praise that is due Jehovah. And, as this verse tells us, Jehovah WILL NEVER delegate ANY of his claim to glory or his right to be praised to any created being.

Likewise, if there is even one irrefutable proof that Christ and the Holy Spirit are “Jehovah,” then the case is made, for Jehovah tells us here that he will not share the glory that goes with his name with anyone else.

The following verses emphasize that Jehovah is indeed a jealous God:

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-14 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one. ⁵Love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. ¹⁰When Jehovah your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹²be careful that you do not forget Jehovah, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹³Fear Jehovah your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you;

EXODUS 20:1-6 And God spoke all these words: ²“I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³You shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

EXODUS 34:12-14 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. ¹³Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. ¹⁴Do not worship any other god, for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

ISAIAH 48:11-13 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. ¹²Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. ¹³My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.

NAHUM 1:1-2 An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. ²Jehovah is a jealous and avenging God; Jehovah takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. Jehovah takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies.



Jehovah's Supremacy and Glory

1 CHRONICLES 16:27-36 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy in his dwelling place. ²⁸Ascribe to Jehovah, O families of nations, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength, ²⁹ascribe to Jehovah the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship Jehovah in the splendor of his holiness. ³⁰Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. ³¹Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, “Jehovah reigns!” ³²Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them! ³³Then the trees of the forest will sing, they will sing for joy before Jehovah, for he comes to judge the earth. ³⁴Give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good; his love endures forever. ³⁵Cry out, “Save us, O God”

our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, that we may glory in your praise.” ³⁶Praise be to Jehovah, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said “Amen” and “Praise Jehovah.”

Jehovah's name stands for Jehovah himself. Throughout this study try to notice the way the Bible refers to the name of God. The significance of God's name is discussed further in Chapter 7.

JOB 39:26—40:2 “Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom and spread his wings toward the south? ²⁷Does the eagle soar at your command and build his nest on high? ²⁸He dwells on a cliff and stays there at night; a rocky crag is his stronghold. ²⁹From there he seeks out his food; his eyes detect it from afar. ³⁰His young ones feast on blood, and where the slain are, there is he.” ¹Jehovah said to Job: ²“Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!”

PSALM 44:8 In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever. Selah

PSALM 83:18 Let them know that you, whose name is Jehovah—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

PSALM 96:7 Ascribe to Jehovah, O families of nations, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength.

PSALM 115:1 Not to us, O Jehovah, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.

ISAIAH 42:12 Let them give glory to Jehovah and proclaim his praise in the islands.

JEREMIAH 13:16 Give glory to Jehovah your God before he brings the darkness, before your feet stumble on the darkening hills. You hope for light, but he will turn it to thick darkness and change it to deep gloom.

PSALM 9:1-20 I will praise you, O Jehovah, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. ²I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. ³My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you. ⁴For you have upheld my right and my cause; you have sat on your throne, judging righteously. ⁵You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. ⁶Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished. ⁷Jehovah reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. ⁸He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice. ⁹Jehovah is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Jehovah, have never forsaken those who seek you. ¹¹Sing praises to Jehovah, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done. ¹²For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted. ¹³O Jehovah, see how my enemies persecute me! Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death, ¹⁴that I may declare your praises in the gates of the Daughter of Zion and there rejoice in your salvation. ¹⁵The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. ¹⁶Jehovah is known by his justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands. Higgaiion. Selah ¹⁷The wicked return to the grave, all the nations that forget God. ¹⁸But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish. ¹⁹Arise, O Jehovah, let not man triumph; let the nations be judged in your presence. ²⁰Strike them with terror, O Jehovah; let the nations know they are but men. Selah.



Jehovah is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent

Omnipotent - All powerful, able to do anything, cannot be resisted

Omniscient - Aware of everything, able to perceive everything and anything; possessing all knowledge

Omnipresent - Existing or acting in all places at the same time

GENESIS 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Jehovah appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless." {"God Almighty" is El Shaddai in Hebrew} —

Omnipotent

PROVERBS 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from Jehovah. — Omniscient and Omnipotent

JOB 34:20-24 They die in an instant, in the middle of the night; the people are shaken and they pass away; the mighty are removed without human hand. ²¹ His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step. ²² There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide. ²³ God has no need to examine men further, that they should come before him for judgment. ²⁴ Without inquiry he shatters the mighty and sets up others in their place. — Omniscient and Omnipotent

JOB 38:37-41 Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens ³⁸ when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together? ³⁹ Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions ⁴⁰ when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? ⁴¹ Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food? — Omniscient

JEREMIAH 23:23-24 "Am I only a God nearby," declares Jehovah, "and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares Jehovah. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares Jehovah. — Omnipresent

1 JOHN 3:19-20 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰ whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. — Omniscient

ISAIAH 40:12—41:4 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³ Who has understood the mind of Jehovah, or instructed him as his counselor? ¹⁴ Whom did Jehovah consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? ¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. ¹⁶ Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. ¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. ¹⁸ To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ¹⁹ As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple. ²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²² He sits enthroned above the circle

of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, “My way is hidden from Jehovah; my cause is disregarded by my God”? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? Jehovah is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹but those who hope in Jehovah will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. ¹Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment. ²Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow. ³He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before. ⁴Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah—with the first of them and with the last—I am he. — Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent



Jehovah is Eternal and Unchanging

LAMENTATIONS 5:19 You, O Jehovah, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. — Eternal

PSALM 90:1-4 Jehovah, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ²Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. ³You turn men back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.” ⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. — Eternal

PSALM 102:25-28 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. ²⁷But you remain the same, and your years will never end. ²⁸The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you. — Eternal, Unchanging

MALACHI 3:6 I Jehovah do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. — Unchanging

JAMES 1:17-18 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. — Unchanging

ISAIAH 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah—with the first of them and with the last — I am he. — Eternal

ISAIAH 48:11-13 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. ¹²Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. ¹³My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together. — Eternal



Jehovah is Holy and Perfect

The gods of the Greeks and Romans and other pagan nations generally are not portrayed as being holy or even as being concerned with being holy. Rather, being the products of men's imaginations, they were fashioned in man's sinful image. They were held to be superior beings, but they were merely super-sinners. The gods of the East are concerned with enlightenment but not with holiness. It remained for Jehovah to reintroduce (centuries after Adam and Eve's fall put mankind on the wrong track) fallen man to the concept of a sinless, holy Deity by revealing himself. The True God is the only one whose holiness is palpable and uncompromised, and an essential aspect of his nature.

LEVITICUS 19:1-2 Jehovah said to Moses, ²“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.’”

DEUTERONOMY 32:3-4 I will proclaim the name of Jehovah. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! ⁴He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.



Jehovah's One-ness

Jehovah's one-ness is closely related to his righteous jealousy. He has no peer or rival. He is in a class by himself. Whenever, we speak of God, we must not violate this principle.

DEUTERONOMY 6:4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one.

DEUTERONOMY 4:39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

ZECHARIAH 14:7-9 It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to Jehovah. When evening comes, there will be light. ⁸On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter. ⁹Jehovah will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Jehovah, and his name the only name.

1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-7 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), ⁶yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. ⁷But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

MATTHEW 23:6-12 “they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’ ⁸But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth ‘father’, for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called ‘teacher’, for you have one Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”



PART II

The Father Is Jehovah!

CHAPTER 2

THE FATHER IS JEHOVAH

There is hardly any reason to have a section to prove that the one whom Jesus calls his Father is Jehovah. But for the sake of completeness a few verses are included. Do note however, that even though the Father is called "God" in the New Testament and surely is the God of the Old Testament, the New Testament introduces names that were hardly used in the Old Testament: "the Father" and "the Son of God"^[7]. With a new revelation comes a new way of speaking about God. More on this in Chapters 4-6.

JAMES 1:17-18 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

DEUTERONOMY 32:6-9 Is this the way you repay Jehovah, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you? ⁷ Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you. ⁸ When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. ⁹ For Jehovah's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance.

JOHN 8:54-58 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. ⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" ⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

[7] It is worthwhile to note, that even though the Father is the God of the Old Testament, the New Testament does not ever say or show that the Father exclusively is Jehovah. Indeed, apart from the fact that the Father is usually called simply "God" (θεός / theos in Greek), one could have a hard time proving to a skeptic that the Father really is the Jehovah revealed in the Old Testament. It is only when you include the Son and the Holy Spirit, that the New Testament picture looks like the Old Testament portrait of Jehovah. From beginning to the end, Jehovah is portrayed in the New Testament as these three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who between them, and only between them, are doing everything that Jehovah's did in the Old Testament times.

The Jews recognized that the one whom Jesus called "Father" was their God. (As for who Christ was, they had no idea; they thought he was just a man; in this they would not agree with either Jehovah's Witnesses or Christians).

LUKE 2:49 {The 12 year old Jesus speaks to his parents about the temple (of Jehovah) in Jerusalem ...} "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

LUKE 10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

LUKE 11:1-4 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come." ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."



PART III

Christ is Jehovah!

CHAPTER 3

CHRIST'S HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Introduction

To understand what the Bible says about the identity of Jesus Christ—it is utterly essential to understand what the Bible teaches concerning “the Humiliation” and “the Exaltation” of Christ.

The material that follows reflects a Christian understanding of what the Bible teaches on the subject of Christ's human nature and is a critical foundation to the Trinity doctrine. It admittedly presupposes the Trinity (which we have not yet proved). But it seems more efficient to make the reader aware of the Christian position at the start so that many of the questions that will arise about Christ's human nature in the course of proving that Christ is Jehovah, will have been answered in advance.

Christ's Pre-existence

Christ was unlike other men in that he existed prior to his birth as a human being. The Apostle John calls the pre-incarnate Son “the Word” (“logos” in Greek) and speaks of him becoming flesh in John 1. In this and other passages we will see what the Bible says concerning the preexistence of Christ. This doctrine is denied by the Way International, who teach that Christ did not exist before his birth in Bethlehem.

The Incarnation

Christ's "coming down" and entering into creation is called by theologians "the Incarnation"^[8] The Incarnation was the taking on of a human nature in addition to the Divine nature which he already had. So Christians speak of Jesus Christ as being the "God-man." The God-man Jesus Christ is unlike anything in creation—he is the Creator who entered into his creation without ceasing to be Divine.

The Incarnation and Christ's Humiliation.

Now, Christ could have become a man and come with his divine glory, power, and other attributes displayed for all to see. He could have come to live and actively reign on earth in divine majesty even while being fully human.^[9]

But it did not serve his purposes to initially come as an almighty king (that was for later, at his second coming). For his first advent, he came not only as a man, but he came as a lowly man—he came as a servant of men rather than as a ruler of men. He set aside the use of the visible power and glory and right to worship which is due God, to become a servant (Philippians 2:5-7 above). It is this setting aside of the use of outward glory and attributes, it is this living as an ordinary man in order to serve his rightful servants, which is called the "humiliation" of Christ.^[10] The service that the Son had in mind was to live and die as a perfect man, in order to be a substitute for imperfect men. And this giving up was real, not just symbolic; part of humbling himself was to obligate himself to live like other men, to be a substitute for other men. So like other men he really became obligated to obey the Laws of Moses; he really became obligated to worship God (even though he was God); he really became obligated to defer glory from himself (even though that glory was his by right) because he was the substitute for other men who were under the law and who were obligated to be humble and subject to God in all things.

Thus, we speak of Christ's state as "humiliation" because of the lowness of that state compared to that to which he was entitled. The word in this usage does not refer to the fact that Christ was also humiliated by being insulted and ridiculed during his life on earth. This distinction is

[8] The word Incarnation is from two root words: I N- meaning "into" and CARNI S meaning "flesh." INCARNATE (adjective) simply means "having become flesh." INCARNATION (noun) simply means the event of becoming flesh. [The English word reincarnation (re-incarnation) refers to the Hindu belief that a human soul may "become flesh" more than once.]

[9] In no sense does becoming a human being require a diminution of his attributes as Jehovah, as one might at first think. On the contrary, this voluntary act of the changeless God, by which he melds the human and divine nature into one being, 100% human and 100% divine, is a remarkable demonstration of his divine, omnipotent power. To look at it another way, being God and being man simultaneously is no more impossible or contradictory than for a rock to be both a sandstone and a cornerstone at the same time. In both cases we are speaking of unrelated natures, i.e. natures which are different but not innately contradictory, and which therefore can co-exist together.

[10] To understand properly the word humiliation as applied to Christ, we should tie it to its root word humble, as used in a phrase such as: a person of humble means.

important because humiliating ridicule is something that is done to us by others. The humiliation of Christ is something he did to himself; it is a **self-humbling** (see Philippians 2:5-7 above). The humiliation of Christ was his voluntary act of giving up the full, continuous use of his glory and power to become a humble (ordinary) person. The (other type of) humiliations which followed are only the result of this preceding act. But the voluntary endurance of the scorn and ridicule by the Son of God is a testimony to Christ's determination (as God and as man) to complete the work of our salvation.

The Incarnation and Christ's Exaltation

The period of humiliation was for a specific purpose, and for a limited time. After his work of redemption was finished, Christ the God-man returned to God's right hand and his human nature "received" what his divine nature alone had had before the incarnation: the unlimited, continuous use of inconceivable power and glory. During the humiliation, these two natures were inseparably bonded, and shared their attributes, but the human nature had not yet experienced the full use of Jehovah's attributes. The stripping away of the servant nature of the God-man Christ when he finished his work of redemption as our substitute is referred to as "the exaltation" of Christ. "Exaltation" means to raise on high, elevate, lift up in status, dignity, power, honor, wealth, etc., i.e. to glorify (to give glory to). This exaltation is a comparison of Christ's humbled state to Christ's state following his ascent into heaven. It is not a comparison of his pre-incarnate state and his post-ascension state, because those two states are the same (apart from the addition of the human nature).^[11]

It is very important to recognize that this elevation of Christ is not the exaltation or promotion of the Son as an obedient creature who was rewarded by God, but rather, a restoration to his previous condition—he is again recognized as Jehovah himself and he again fully and continuously exercises his divine powers. And there is a marvelous thing to note: Christ remained a true man even in his exaltation. The Incarnation continues in Christ's exaltation. In fact it was his human nature (alone) that was exalted. For the first time ever, the perfect God-man sits on the throne of God. All of this is what the Athanasian Creed refers to when it says "by taking the manhood into God" (i.e. adding a human nature to a divine nature), "Not by conversion of the Godhood into flesh" (i.e. Jesus did not cease to be divine while incarnate).

Even as a man, Christ occasionally did exercise his divine attributes in a limited way: his miracles, his prophesying, his knowledge of people's hearts, his control of nature, and his transfiguration all

[11] The humiliation of Christ is not due to the Incarnation per se. As stated above, Christ could have (and will) appear as the God-man in the flesh, without being in the least bit limited in the exercise of his infinite divinity. His humiliation consisted of emptying himself of and not using freely and continuously his divine power and glory. The very fact that Christ remains a man after he was exalted to God's right hand proves that his humiliation was not caused by his taking on the human nature. The Bible has a lot more to say about this than we can go into here. For a much more complete exposition of what the Bible says about Christ's humiliation and exaltation, I recommend John Schaller's small, enjoyable, and well written book, *Biblical Christology* (Northwestern Publishing House) or F. Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* (Concordia Publishing House).

testify to his retention of divinity during the incarnation. The limited use of his powers allowed and even complimented Christ's development as a true human baby, youth, and finally adult, in order that he would ransom us from sin.

With this introduction, we will look at what the Bible says of these matters.

The Pre-existence of Christ and the Incarnation

These passages give us some of the irrefutable evidence of the pre-existence of Christ.

MICAH 5:2-5 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel, His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." ³ Therefore, He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel. ⁴ And He will arise and shepherd his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And this One will be *our* peace. {New American Standard translation. Translations of the latter half of this difficult, poetic passage vary significantly.}

JOHN 1:1-18 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" ¹⁶ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

In chapters 5 and 6 of his gospel, the same apostle John recounts Christ's discourses on his having entered into the world from heaven. For brevity, only portions of John 6:37-68 are included below. The whole section is instructive, the reader would do well to read all of it to get a better sense of what Christ was saying.

JOHN 6:37-68 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

... ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

... ⁶⁰ On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" ⁶¹ Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶² What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³ The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

JOHN 8:21 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." ²² This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?" ²³ But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

The long passage below is Jesus' prayer for his disciples prior to his crucifixion...

JOHN 17:1-26 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. ⁶ I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ Al I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. ²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

The writer to the Hebrews explains at some length the difference between Jesus and mere angels in chapters 1 and 2. In chapters 2 and 3 of Hebrews, the writer discusses the Incarnation of Christ.

HEBREWS 2:9-18 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰ In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." ¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

1 PETER 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

COLOSSIANS 1:17-18 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

John 8:54-58 and other passages below also which touch on Christ's preexistence and incarnation.



***Humility & Humiliation
Then
Glory & Exaltation***

***Jesus' Personal Humility
and Subsequent Exaltation by the Father***

Jesus had some very specific things to say about the proper degree of humility to be displayed by a person before other people and also before God. During his earthly ministry prior to his crucifixion, Jesus applied these requirements to himself. This was part of his self-humbling.

LUKE 14:7-11 {Jesus teaches the people about humility ...} When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: ⁸When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. ⁹If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you

will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

MATTHEW 23:6-12 {Jesus criticizes the Jewish religious leaders while teaching his disciples...} they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.' ⁸ "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. ⁹ And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰ Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:17-18 {Paul writes ...} But, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." ¹⁸ For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

This concept of humility, of letting *God* give a person the glory or honor he or she deserves, is central to Christ's teaching. And Christ, as the Son of Man, applied it to himself as well as teaching it to his disciples and to us. *THIS IS WHY*, in the New Testament, when Christ speaks of his glory and supremacy and power he *ALWAYS* speaks of it being bestowed on him by his Father. Christ leaves it to the prophets and to his Father to testify to his identity—he would not boast.

JOHN 8:54-58 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me." ⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" ⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

JOHN 5:24-46 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me {i.e. Jesus is claiming that when he speaks we are hearing directly the word of the Father. In this case the Father is speaking, testifying of himself, the Son} has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man {The Father will not judge us, the Son is the one designated to judge men, because he is also a man. The point of this passage is not, as unitarians claim, to indicate that Jesus is not the true God but rather simply to emphasize that Jesus is more than God, he is also true man.} ²⁸ "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. ³¹ If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. ³² There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. ³³ You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵ John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. ³⁶ "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me." ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸ nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. ³⁹ You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life. ⁴¹ "I do not accept praise from men, ⁴² but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³ I have come in my

Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵"But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me."

Here we see clearly the one and only perfect man, giving all glory and credit and authority to his heavenly Father, just as all men ought. This humility almost completely obscures who he is himself. But it had to be so! Whether Christ is Jehovah or whether he is a created being like an angel, he would have acted just this way as a Man. Thus, this passage cannot be used by unitarians to prove their case by claiming that only a created Christ would act this way. Such an argument may be appealing but it is not sound, because it is quite possible for the Incarnate Jehovah, Christ Jesus, to have acted this way too. In verse 30 Christ says, "I can do nothing by myself ... for I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me." Unitarians make a big point out of the words, "I can do nothing by myself," and ignore context by leaving out the rest of the verse which tells *WHY* he could do nothing by himself. Christ acted as he did because he had been sent, sent to perform a specific mission—to be a man, to be a humble servant. And to be a man and a servant meant he had to act like one; this is what we see here. It is not a denial of divinity. It is only fair to note also that this passage does nothing to establish that Christ is Jehovah; it neither supports or denies the claim that Christ is Jehovah.

LUKE 22:25-29 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸You are those who have stood by me in my trials. ²⁹And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, {i.e. the fulfillment of this was made manifest after his death.}

Christ's humiliation was limited in time. It had a specific beginning (at his conception) and it had a specific end (at his death and ascension). And during that time his purpose was to be the perfect Man who was the substitute for other men. At his death, Christ the Man was released (and believers with him) from the obligation to keep the law of God.^[12] The relationship of the Man

[12] It is beyond the scope of this book to expound at length the Bible's teaching concerning the way in which Christ's death worked our salvation. But, lest anyone misinterpret these words about the law, let me state that the law still tells us what is right and wrong, what is pleasing and displeasing to God. So even though we are saved by grace and are freed from the law, a true Christian is always still very much interested in doing what the moral law prescribes—but he/she does it voluntarily, that is, by the Holy Spirit rather than as a requirement to be saved. We believe that our justification (God declaring us not guilty, innocent, pure) is by grace (gratis—free). We recognize that our efforts toward keeping the law provide no merit toward appeasing God or earning his forgiveness, or favor. Only the perfect life and sacrificial death of Christ in our place provides such merit, merit which is transferred to us and which covers us like a garment—obscuring from consideration our good deeds as well as our sins—thus our salvation is unassisted by any works on our part. This salvation is a gift, which is offered freely to every human being, but which is received only by those who believe in Christ—believe, not in the sense of a *(continued)*

Jesus to the Father did change at his death; he went from being the substitute and the bearer of our sins (further self-humiliation by the sinless Son of God) to being released from the guilt of the law and restored to perfection after his death (as a necessary step in his exaltation), as Paul explains


ROMANS 7:1-6 Do you not know, brother—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ²For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. ⁴So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Jesus himself marks the end of his humiliation and his work of redemption. When John recorded Jesus' words on the cross he ties Jesus' words to the completion of the work of the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures.

JOHN 19:28-30 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The Phases of the Life of the Messiah *Glory → Humility → Glory*

The prophet Isaiah knew all about the entry into humble servanthood of the Messiah and also of his subsequent exaltation by God. (These are marked with single and double underlining,

respectively, up to the  mark.)

ISAIAH 42:1-9 "**Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.** ²He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." ⁵This is what God Jehovah says—he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: ⁶"I, Jehovah, have called you in righteousness; **I will take hold of your hand.** I will keep you and **will make you** to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. ⁸**"I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.** ⁹See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."

head knowledge, but in the sense of having a heart which by the Holy Spirit repents of its sin and trusts in Christ as savior. Now back to the subject.

ISAIAH 49:1-8 Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: **Before I was born Jehovah called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name.** ² **He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.** ³ **He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.”** ⁴ But I said, “I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. **Yet what is due me is in Jehovah’s hand, and my reward is with my God.**” ⁵ And now Jehovah says—**he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of Jehovah and my God has been my strength**—⁶ he says: **“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept... I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”** ⁷ This is what Jehovah says—the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—**to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: “Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of Jehovah, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”** ⁸ This is what Jehovah says: **“In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances**

ISAIAH 52:13—53:12 **See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.** ¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness—¹⁵ so will **he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.** For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. ¹ Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed? ² **He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.** ³ **He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.** Like one from whom men hide their faces **he was despised, and we esteemed him not.** ⁴ Surely **he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows,** yet we considered him **stricken** by God, **smitten** by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was **pierced** for our transgressions, he was **crushed** for our iniquities; the **punishment** that brought us peace was upon him, and by his **wounds** we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.** ⁸ **By oppression and judgment he was taken away.** And who can speak of his descendants? **For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.** ⁹ He was **assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.** ¹⁰ Yet it was **Jehovah’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though Jehovah makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of Jehovah will prosper in his hand.** ¹¹ **After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied;** by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² **Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.** For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

A Psalmist below likewise recognized the three different phases of the life of the Messiah (glory→humiliation→glory) as the writer to the Hebrews explains:

PSALM 8:4-6 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ **You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings** {glory→humiliation} and **crowned him with glory and honor** {humiliation→glory}. ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

HEBREWS 2:6-10 {The writer to the Hebrews applies the Psalm to Christ in his humiliation ...} But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁷You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor ⁸and put everything under his feet.” In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. ⁹But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels {glory→humiliation}, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death {humiliation→glory}, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

The Messianic prophecies foretold it all; there would be a Suffering Servant Messiah and there would be a King Messiah. Unfortunately, most of the Jews of Jesus time did not recognize these as chronologically separate phases in the life of the Messiah. In their confusion, they focused on the more pleasant King Messiah image. Jesus did not fit these expectations and so was rejected by most of them. As a direct consequence of their rejection and in accordance with the plan of Jehovah, Jesus was then made to become the suffering servant, the innocent lamb sacrificed for the sins of all people. (All things do indeed work for good to those who love God.)

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



Christ, the author of our salvation, tasted death for us as a Man and also as God, in humility and in suffering—things that were alien to his divine nature. Even though he was God, he was willing to humble himself, “he did not count equality with God to be a thing to be clutched and paraded (as booty)” (amplified translation of Philippians 2:6) when he determined that becoming a man was the proper way to redeem his creation. And when it was finished, the man Jesus resumed the free and continuous use of the glory and honor of the Son and was no longer lower than the angels, no longer a servant, but rather, the Lord of all.

Is there really such a distinction between Christ living as a Man and Christ the resurrected? Let us examine these passages ...

LUKE 24:25-27 { Christ speaks to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus on Easter Sunday...} He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. {humiliation} ⁸And being found in

appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! {humiliation} ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name {exaltation}, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord {exaltation}, to the glory of God the Father.

HEBREWS 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins {i.e. after the humiliation}, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. {Exaltation}

PSALM 110:1-7 {After his death and exaltation, Christ sat down at God's right hand. The Psalmist, tells how God will then subjugate all to the Christ...} Jehovah says to my Lord {Adonai}: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ²Jehovah will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. ³Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. ⁴Jehovah has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." ⁵The Lord {Adonai} is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. ⁶He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. ⁷He will drink from a brook beside the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

Christ spoke of his upcoming exaltation before his death. From the following passage we can see that this position at the right hand of God is not a new gift for the Son, but rather a return to a position which the Son previously held. The new thing is that now the Son has a human name and a human nature, and it is Jesus Christ, as a man who sits at God's right hand. This is an important point.

JOHN 17:1-5 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

From these verses we see that Christ's humiliation was a temporary state. As a man he gave up the use of his glory and supremacy while he redeemed us, and then he assumed it again. The way Christ speaks and is spoken of before and after his humiliation is quite different from during the time of his humiliation. It is a misreading of Scripture to ignore this distinction; just as it is to ignore the context of any Scripture.

Jehovah's Witnesses speak of Christ's humanity as meaning only that Christ had a disposable human body, created for the occasion and then discarded (like a garment) when Christ returned to heaven. This is completely different from the Christian view that Jesus truly and permanently became a human being; he retains his human body (though changed and glorified) in heaven. Jesus who appeared to his disciples, nail marks and all, in the locked room after his resurrection, is the same one who will return as a glorified man to judge the living and the dead and to elevate believers to glory with him as stated in Acts:

ACTS 1:11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus**, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Other passages also speak of the glorification of the human nature of Christ.^[13]

[13] Let us look further at this "elevation" of the human nature in Christ

PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

This glorified man Jesus is the same one whose dwelling place will be among men in the new heavens and the new earth. The old prohibition on flesh and blood not being able to see God does not apply to the glorified flesh and blood of Jesus who after his resurrection can and did return to the presence of God. Likewise after our resurrection we too shall have bodies which can see God face to face.

REVELATION 21:1-3 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

When Christ's human body was resurrected and he returned to heaven, his human nature was elevated to God's right hand, taking us with him in a spiritual sense, so that we too will be glorified because we share that nature with him. This is not some far-fetched fantasy but rather the clear teaching of the scriptures:

EPHESIANS 4:7-11 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹ (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

ROMANS 8:17-19 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

All of this hints at the significance of Christ's having a human nature. It is one of the greatest wonders of the New Testament revelation that God the creator assumed the nature of part of his creation in order to redeem it—what a marvel! Yes, our infinite God does boggle the finite mind! Unitarianism on the other hand, dispenses with such mystical things—it simplifies God and God's salvation plan for creation in order to match man's small imagination.

Here are additional passages which speak about Jesus' victory over Satan and about the glorification and accompanying changes (exaltation) which occurred AFTER he said, "It is finished."..

COLOSSIANS 2:13-15 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

JOHN 16:7-11 {Jesus speaks to his disciples before his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven...} But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

JOHN 7:38-39 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." ³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

JOHN 12:14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, ¹⁵"Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." ¹⁶At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.


JOHN 12:23-36 {Jesus, the Son of Man (emphasizing his human nature), speaks on the evening of his arrest of the coming events, culminating in his crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification...} Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies {i.e. he humbled himself unto death and burial}, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds {i.e. children of the kingdom}. ²⁵The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. ²⁷"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" ³⁵Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. ³⁶Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

JOHN 13:30-33 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. ³¹When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. ³³"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

JOHN 17:1—18:1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.⁶ “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you.⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one.¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.¹³ I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.”^[14] May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation

[14] Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the unity or oneness of the Father and the Son is a unity of purpose, not the unity of a shared nature. They point to this passage and say that because the Father/Son unity is compared to the unity of believers, their unity must be a unity of purpose only, for we are not like God. While it is certainly true that there is a complete unity of purpose between the Father and Son (they do not ever disagree), there is more to this unity, and to the unity of believers, than just unity of purpose and will. Jesus is indeed comparing the unity of believers with the unity of the Father and Son; so let us look at what the unity of believers is and perhaps shed some light on the nature of the unity of the Father and Son.

The unity between believers which Christ is praying for is not a mere *unity of purpose*, but a *unity of spirit*. Jesus is referring to the spiritual connection between all believers that exists because the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us simultaneously. It is because our God dwells in us and gives us a **NEW NATURE** (a nature characterized by our being connected to him and to each other) that the Bible says we are members (organs, parts) of the "body of Christ" even though we are certainly not physically connected together or to Christ. So this body which we are part of, and this unity that we have, is not only a unity of purpose as the Witnesses suggest; rather, it is a unity of a connect nature—of a partially shared nature. Chapter 15 goes into this at some length.

Note that the giving of the Holy Spirit into the bodies of men and women in New Testament times mysteriously seems to be linked to Christ having assumed human form and having gone in human form back into heaven. If you are interested in this idea, reread the last few pages, starting at the  symbol and you will see hints of this.

of the world. ²⁵“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” ¹When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have much to say about how John 7:21 does not prove that Christ and the Father are united as Christians profess. But I believe these arguments are not based on sound premises (see footnote). Contrary to what some would think, the Christian case will be strengthened further by considering John 7:12 above. We see that Christ has the same *NAME*, the same identity as Jehovah. The whole passage is spoken from the position of the humbled Son of God who was a true man and a servant. And when Jesus the man spoke of himself being given the *NAME* (as opposed to always having it), he is only noting that the *NAME* was given to a human being for the first and only time when Christ was conceived in Mary's womb. When Jesus said he had the same name as his Father, and that he was one with his Father, the Witnesses claim that he is only speaking of a unity of purpose with his creator Jehovah. This interpretation is contradicted by the exclusive claim that Jehovah has to his own name—remember our key verse “**I am Jehovah, that is MY name.**” In other words, it would be blasphemous (if Christ is not Jehovah) for Christ to say this, no matter how elevated a servant he is. Being united in purpose with Jehovah or being Jehovah's agent on earth would not give him the name, Jehovah. He can only have Jehovah's name if he is by nature Jehovah.

* * *

Jesus had problems making his disciples understand that he had this uniquely intimate relationship with the Father, that he had pre-existed with God and was returning to him...

JOHN 16:22-33 {Jesus speaks to his disciples...} So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. ²⁵“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming {after his ascension into heaven} when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. {Because after the resurrection (when Christ's atonement was accepted) and after a glorified Man sat down at the right hand of the Father and as he intercedes for us, the barrier of sin for all people is removed and we can become by faith the Father's beloved, adopted children. And like the only begotten Son, we the Father's adopted children are acceptable to him and are allowed to speak directly to him as our own Father.} ²⁷No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” ²⁹Then Jesus' disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. ³⁰Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.” ³¹“You believe at last!” Jesus answered. ³²“But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. ³³“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Verse 28 explicitly indicates that the period before the incarnation and the time after his stay on earth are comparable—Christ is with the Father. Before the incarnation, Christ was with the Father as God, now as the God-man.



***Why Does it Seem So Hard
To Determine Whether Christ is Jehovah?***

In looking at Christ's identity as revealed in the Scriptures, it becomes clear why the Bible always retains this apparent ambiguity about who Christ is. In the Bible Christ is portrayed as a unique bonding of two different, seemingly opposing natures—Creator and Creature. Our Savior is both our brother and our God; both God's servant and God's Son. He is simultaneously 100% God and 100% man. This dual nature in one person cannot help but result in confusion because there are no familiar words or concepts (except those developed specifically to describe the Trinity) which can adequately describe such a thing. There is also no parallel in our everyday experience. There is nothing in our studies of nature or of human beings to prepare us to swallow in one bite this bit of knowledge—that God became flesh and dwelt among us, as John says in his gospel. But the mere fact that it is unfamiliar does not mean it is untrue or that God does not want us to believe it. We only follow the lead of St. Paul when we acknowledge that Christ has two natures:

ROMANS 1:1-4 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—²the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³**regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,** ⁴**and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead:** Jesus Christ our Lord.

Consider for a moment how to the non-Christian mind there is a built-in prejudice against the very concept. They would say, "Nothing like this ever happened before; it does not make sense; it's against common sense" (which just means it is against our previous experience). If you are assigned to teach someone the truth of the Trinity and the student feels this way, how do you do it? You must start with part of the truth, teach it a little bit at a time, teach them first things about Christ that are easier to accept but which prepare them to grasp the whole truth. Likewise, you would teach them progressively about the nature of Jehovah; first you teach about who Jehovah is, and how exclusively unique He is, and after the student has appreciated that truth, then you unveil the added complexity of his nature. Eventually, when the student has learned to plumb the depths of the Scriptures, they will have the knowledge to see for themselves (without commentaries or directed study guides) the Bible's full answer to the question of the nature of Christ and of Jehovah. It is not possible to speed up this process very much, especially if the student starts out skeptical. Let God speak through his word and it will not return void, but will accomplish God's purposes—to be a light to enlighten the paths of those who read it in search of the truth. He who has ears to hear, let him hear; in the end the Scriptures are clear, but faith is required to discern the truth in it.

If we look at Bible history we can see that God did just this, but on a grander scale. He began by slowly by first calling out the Jews as his special people and teaching them who Jehovah is (it took centuries to teach a whole race about it). He sent prophets to hint at the truth, to prepare the people to understand that this Messiah that was coming was no ordinary man, nor an angel. Then He sent the Son himself to gently testify to his identity, to lay out all the facts. The testimony was written in the Scriptures but it was deliberately presented in a way that was indirect and non-systematic so that believers would have to work through all the subtleties of the issue under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By doing so, they would come to accept this mystery at their own speed, and having understood it, they were required (as in a school lesson) to explain it in words of their own choosing, so that it would be both clear to them and palatable (swallowable—believable) to them—thus words like “Trinity,” “persons,” “dual natures,” etc. had to be invented.

So we find that the Bible does after all convey in the best way possible all the facts we need about this dual nature of Christ. It does it by combining the two descriptions of the two natures, intertwining these descriptions to form one unified picture of Christ. By repetition, by stating the facts in a myriad of different ways, with some poetic language thrown in to capture what prose cannot convey, the Bible gradually nails down the truth. If we study God's word carefully, we see that it paints a picture so sublime, so perfect, that in the end we are convinced of the strange and wonderful truth. And in following this course we can learn much more about our Triune God than if God had just handed the Athanasian creed^[15] to Moses on Mount Sinai. In the end Christians have concluded that you cannot talk about the Man Jesus without talking about the God Jesus, except by doing gross violence to the Scriptures.

Indeed, if we study the Scriptures in this matter, the doctrine of the Trinity as summarized by theologians, while a convenient shortcut, is in many ways an inadequate expression of the whole subtle truth. And it is to a certain extent a mistake for us to rely so much on shortcut, human descriptions of the Trinity in our religious instruction. It is a mistake because there are many who are just unable to accept the whole thing in one chunk. And, because we sometimes do not take the time to teach a full understanding of the applicable Scriptures, many have ended up going over to the unitarian camp. Indeed, it is likely that some of these have become unitarians not so much out of rebellion against God as out of honest difficulty with a very hard concept, about which the Christian church did not fully instruct them.

Consider the next passages where the subtlety of the Scriptures in this matter reveals itself.



[15] Full of unfamiliar, undefined terms which would have been unknown to Hebrew thought of the day.

***The Obvious Question:
Why Did God Become a Human Being?***

The Bible does answer this question:

***GOD COULD NOT FIND A SINLESS HUMAN TO SAVE US,
SO HE DID IT HIMSELF!***

Bold refer to Christ as the servant of Jehovah:

ISAIAH 41:27—42:13 I was the first to tell Zion, ‘Look, here they are!’ I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings. ²⁸I look but there is no one—no one among them to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them. ²⁹See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.

¹“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ²He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.” ⁵This is what God Jehovah says—he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: ⁶“I, Jehovah, have called **you** {the servant of verse 1} in righteousness; I will take hold **of your hand**. I will **keep you** and will **make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles**, ⁷**to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.**

⁸“I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. ⁹See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.” ¹⁰Sing to Jehovah a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them. ¹¹Let the desert and its towns raise their voices; let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice. Let the people of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the mountaintops. ¹²Let them give glory to Jehovah and proclaim his praise in the islands. ¹³Jehovah will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.

Notice that the domain of the Messiah: the earth and the islands, is the domain of Jehovah. But Isaiah also in verse 8 says that Jehovah does not share his glory. Jehovah would not give his glory to his servant if he were only a servant. This tension is relieved because Jesus is not only a servant but a serving Son, fully entitled to the glory of Jehovah. In verse 8 Jehovah is saying, “I will not give the glory of being the Savior of the world to another, I will do it myself.”

Carefully Compare:

The servant in the previous passage was the Messiah; the passage was a prophecy of Christ. In the next passage Christ wipes away the apparent distinctions between Messiah the servant and Jehovah that are suggested in Isaiah. The single underlined phrases suggest his servant-hood and are in contrast to the double underlined words which proclaim that the servant functions as an equal of the Father.

JOHN 17:1-5 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus spoke these words the day before his death, when the task he had humbled himself to do was nearly complete; the serving time was almost over. A short while earlier in John 13:3-17 Jesus showed he was indeed aware of his temporary "lower place" by teaching us to be willing to humble ourselves to do lowly work as he was when he washed the disciples' feet.

***More About the Messiah
Who is More Than a Servant***

MATTHEW 3:16-17 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

A Son is more than a servant, even though he may serve until the time of his majority. Matthew quotes from Isaiah 42:1-3 which we examined previously in this chapter. Isaiah is proclaiming the words of Jehovah:

MATTHEW 12:18-20 "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory."

The servant is the delight of Jehovah and he has the Spirit of Jehovah to perform his mission.

MATTHEW 17:2-5 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. ⁴ Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here... If you wish, I will put up three shelters... one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

The Father interrupted Peter's inappropriate ranking (comparison) of Christ with Moses and Elijah. The Father set him straight by saying: "This is my Son."

In the following remarkable Psalm, King David prophesies of his unique eternal offspring, the royal son who would reign supreme, the one who was to fulfill the promise first given to Abraham: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (compare this to verse 17 below).

PSALM 72:1-20 Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness. ² He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice. ³ The mountains will bring

prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. ⁴ He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. ⁵ He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations. ⁶ He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth. ⁷ In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more. ⁸ He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ⁹ The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust. ¹⁰ The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts. ¹¹ All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him. ¹² For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. ¹³ He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. ¹⁴ He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. ¹⁵ Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be given him. May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long. ¹⁶ Let grain abound throughout the land; on the tops of the hills may it sway. Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon; let it thrive like the grass of the field. ¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed. ¹⁸ Praise be to Jehovah God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. ¹⁹ Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. ²⁰ This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.



Equal Glory and Honor for the Father and the Exalted Son.

In a setting where Christ's Humiliation is over, we see that the Glory and Honor and Worship that are given to the Father and the Son are EQUAL:

REVELATION 4:2—5:14 {John sees a vision...} At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. ⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. ⁶ Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸ Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." ⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." {This is the Father}

¹ Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals." ⁶ Then I saw a Lamb

{Jesus} , looking as if it had been slain, **standing in the center of the throne**, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the *seven spirits of God* sent out into all the earth. ⁷ He {Jesus} came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne {the Father}.

⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive **power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!**"

¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be **praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!**" ¹⁴ The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

There are a number of things to observe in this passage:

Solid underline: None but the Father and the Son may seal and unseal the scroll. No one else may look upon it—only the Father and the Son are worthy to look upon it—they are complementary and coequal in this work.

Double underline:

- v. 4:9 The Father: the living creatures give him "**glory, honor and thanks**"
- v. 4:10 The Father: the elders fall down to worship him
- v. 4:11 The Father: is "**worthy** to receive **glory, honor and power**"
- and v. 5:8 The Son: the living creatures and the elders fall down and worship him
- v. 5:12 The Son: is "**worthy** to receive **power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise**"
- and v. 5:13 The Father and the Son: are given "**praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever**"

Clearly, Jesus is worshiped and Jesus is literally given the same glory as the Father.^[16] The Humiliation is over, Jesus' true nature is revealed. Jehovah's true nature is revealed for all to see.

Italic & Underline: Notice also the "seven Spirits of God" mentioned twice—verse 4:5 and 5:6. The Spirit of God is right on the throne too. Even though this plural

[16] Some may suggest that Jesus is merely being rewarded for being a faithful servant. But it is impossible for a created being to "become worthy" of such praise; remember what Jehovah said: "**I will not give my glory to another, or my praise to idols.**" I saiah 42:8.

representation of the Holy Spirit is unusual, it is very likely that it represents the Holy Spirit.^[17]

Thus Jehovah's Tri-Une (three persons in one Jehovah)
nature
is revealed on that eternal throne.



The Marvel of the Incarnation

Our God does not hold himself aloof from us, even though he has every right to do so—he is infinitely greater than us and he is perfectly holy, while we are rebellious sinners, bent on self-destruction. Instead of rejecting us, God made himself one of us and associated himself with us. More than that, He substituted himself for us, even the very worst of us, to bear our sins in order to redeem us! He took on himself rejection, humiliation, punishment and shame that he could never deserve so that we could escape from what we do deserve. This is an awesome kind of love; we have an awesome kind of God. In the light of this revelation, God's glory is even more evident. How can we not admire and praise and emulate one who was willing to lower himself so far for beings who, if left to themselves, would only hate and reject Him. Jesus Christ our redeemer is Jehovah himself, the most worthy redeemer there can be.

On the other hand, the God of the unitarians is not nearly so marvelous—in the theology of the Jehovah's Witnesses, God sent a kind of super-angel to redeem us, while Jehovah himself remains aloof from us.



[17] The seven-fold Spirit of God is mentioned in Revelation 1:4 and 3:1 as well. The "seven" may be a tie-in to the fact that the Spirit was sent to seven churches in Revelation 1. In the New Testament, this seven-fold picture representation of the Holy Spirit is found nowhere outside of Revelation. This sort of number symbolism is very common throughout the book of Revelation, and it is very likely that the seven imagery "added on" to the Spirit has no meaning other than the numerological significance of "7" as used throughout Revelation—i.e. the perfect, complete number, a number closely associated with God's perfection. In the Old Testament, Zechariah 4:1-6 has some parallels to Revelation and in a vision the Spirit is seen as 7 flames on a candlestick. Isaiah chapter 11 also has some Revelation imagery and in verse 2 gives a seven-part name or description of the Holy Spirit—i.e. Spirit... ..of Jehovah; ...of wisdom; ...of understanding; ...of counsel; ...of might; ...of knowledge; ...of the fear of Jehovah).

This chapter has gotten ahead of the proof outlined in the Introduction of this book. We still have to establish that Christ is Jehovah for all of this to hold together. The next chapters will return to the proof and will address the specific question at hand, Is Christ Jehovah? The intent of this chapter was to explain what Christians believe the Bible teaches about the nature of Christ, the Son of God. It will be useful to recall this information in later chapters to see how Trinitarians fit all the Biblical clues together into a coherent picture of Jehovah and of Christ.



CHAPTER 4

CHRIST ADDRESSED AS GOD/SON OF GOD

There are a number of important passages where the Bible states that Christ is GOD and the SON OF GOD. This chapter will examine these. We will also deal with specific counter-arguments that are offered by unitarians. These issues get rather technical in their treatment of some fine points of grammar and usage. Do not be discouraged by this, it is all leading up to chapters 5–7 which are not so technical.

Christ Called GOD

Unitarians such as the Jehovah's Witnesses casually dismiss all references to Christ being God as being inconclusive because the Hebrew words *EI* (GOD) and *Elohim* (GOD or GODS) have the basic meaning "mighty one." They point out, quite factually, that *EI* and *Elohim* can be used, and have been used in the Bible, to refer to created beings, even men.^[18] The Greek word *θεὸς* / *theos* is also used in this way.

The unitarian argument is that since the term *GOD*^[19] can be applied to a created being, when it is applied to Jesus it doesn't mean anything—other than that Jesus is powerful. They are willing to concede the Son is special and that he is powerful, but they do not accept that he is Jehovah-God, the Supreme God, the God of gods.

This unitarian argument glosses over some important considerations. The term *GOD* is used to refer to men very rarely. Likewise the term is rarely, if ever, used to refer to angels except the fallen angels. Satan is called the god of this world and other such names. And fictitious deities are called false gods (*GODS*) (the Bible also equates these with demons/devils in Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 106:37, 1 Corinthians 10:37, and Revelation 9:20). Note that, in those passages which refer to men and to devils, the context is such that there is no possibility of thinking that the words refer to Jehovah God, they are clearly meant to refer to lesser or false "gods." But

[18] A favorite reference of the Jehovah's Witnesses is John 10:34 where Christ refers to Psalm 82. More on this later in this chapter.

[19] Neither Hebrew nor the Greek used capitalization to distinguish between God and god. Therefore, remember that the upper case has been added by the translator for clarity, and cannot be used to prove anything either way.

references to the Son being GOD are not like this. They are relatively frequent and are without the qualifications (limitations) that always accompany references to gods who are less than Jehovah. Unless you presume from the start that Christ is not Jehovah, you would not clearly get that impression from these passages. Christ's deity is held up as just plain deity, it is not stated to be limited deity or false deity. The Witnesses' objection is further weakened by the fact that whereas worship of the false gods and of men is condemned, worship of both the Father and the Son is accepted and even demanded!

By the above argument unitarians try to render impotent the many passages where Christ is called GOD and remove them from the discussion, for these passages are very powerful. It is not good to concede to unitarians their point without discussion. It is worthwhile to carefully review the passages where Christ is called God. The reader should evaluate the Biblical language; read it for its plainest sense. See for yourself whether or not the language simply refers to Christ with terms of unconditioned deity (just plain deity—not false deity or lesser deity). And then consider whether such unconditioned, unlimited deity is not in reality the supreme deity which (only) Jehovah has.

A second point: The equal "God-hood" of the Father and the Son is obscured somewhat by the fact that when the New Testament writers speak of both the Father and Son at the same time, they use two different terms or names, e.g. God and Son of God; God and Word (of God); or, most frequently, God and Lord. Unitarians may see a great significance in this, but I believe it is simply the Biblical writers' way to make it clear that the Father and Son are distinct—that they are not just different manifestations of one Person.^[20] The Biblical writers are trying to avoid encouraging this error, as well as the horrible confusion that would arise if the same name was used for both at the same time. Throughout the New Testament the Father is most often called God, and Jesus is most often called Lord. But if we look at the whole Bible, both the Father and the Son are called God and Lord and are given various names which indicate God-hood and Lordship and supremacy. When the Bible writers use different names they are not saying that Jesus is less divine than the Father but rather, are simply trying to make the proper distinction between the Father and the Son. And just as we would not expect the Bible writers to call them "God and God" we would also not expect that they would feel obliged to explicitly define the relationship between the Father and Son every time the Father and Son are mentioned together (for example by saying "God the Father and God the Son, co-equal, both True God, one in being, etc., etc." or some such awkward creed). Instead they defer their outright proclamations that Christ is Jehovah the True God to certain specific passages, and there is no lack of these. The rest of the time they use different and unambiguous names for each person. So let the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures and let us read all the pertinent passages before we jump to conclusions based on the names given to Jesus Christ. We must go by what the Bible does say and not by its failure to say what we expect or wish.

[20] The false teaching that Christ is just another "form" of God, i.e. that he is actually the "Father in disguise," has been followed at various times in spite of the Bible's lack of support for it.

Christ Called SON OF GOD

The significance of Christ being “the only begotten Son of God” should not be overlooked. All of creation (including Satan and his angels) was made; only the Son was begotten. Just as an earthly son is of the same genetic material as his father and mother, so also Christ is of the same “stuff” as his Father, (i.e. uncreated, sovereign God) and as his mother (i.e. a human being). To use the terminology of the creeds, Christ is “of the same substance as the Father” and is “True God” as well as “True Man.” Christ frequently used two names for himself. He called himself “Son of Man” when he spoke of his human nature and his relationship to other men. He called himself the “Son of God” when he spoke of his relationship to the Father. The Apostle John calls Christ the “only begotten” son in John 1:15 & 18 ; John 3:16 & 18; and 1 John 4:9^[21]. His sonship to God is not of the same nature as the adopted-sonship of believers to God.

“And the Word was God”

The following passage from the first chapter of the gospel of John has been the center of a major battle between Christians and unitarians throughout the centuries. In the very literal King James II translation, John’s gospel reads:

JOHN 1:1-5, 14, 18 In (the) beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² This One was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and without Him not even one (thing) came into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. ... ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us; and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten from (the) Father, full of grace and of truth, ... ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He reveals (Him).^[22]

[21] “Only-begotten” is a translation of the Greek word: μονογενής / monogenees which the NI V paraphrases as “one and only.” The same word is applied to Abraham’s only son, Isaac, in Hebrews 11:17.

[22] The John 1:1 controversy: the Greek & literal English of John 1:1 are:

ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος	: Greek
ho logos ayn pros ton theon kai theos ayn ho logos	: Trans-literated
the word was with the GOD and GOD was the word	: Word-for-Word Translation

The second phrase above (in bold) is literally “GOD was the word” and has the form:

Predicate nominative (GOD) was subject (the word).

A predicate nominative is a noun which is being equated to the subject by the verb “to be” (is, was, am, etc.). Here the subject follows the verb and the predicate nominative precedes it. This order of words is allowed in English but is not typical; it is used mostly in poetic passages, e.g. I could say: “The author was I” meaning, “I was the author.” Thus translators usually reverse the word order to say in English: “the Word was God,” rather than “God was the Word.” This is not controversial.

(continued)

The footnote for the passage above explains in detail the debate over whether the word “GOD” in verse 1 means “the God” as Christians hold or “a god” as unitarians hold. The footnote analyzes the Greek phrase: θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος / theos ayn ho logos, (literally: “GOD was the word”). Jehovah’s Witnesses argue that the lack of ὁ / ho (“the”) preceding θεός / theos (“GOD”) in the Greek of John 1:1 requires that the verse be translated “The Word was a god” or “the Word was a divine one.”

The unitarian argument is not backed up by the rules of Greek grammar. But even if it was, John 20:28 below is a similar construction except that it does have the definite article; Thomas said literally: “the Lord of me and the God of me.” And the apostle John is the writer of both.

JOHN 20:26-28 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”^[23]

The great debate concerning this verse between Christians and unitarians is about whether the phrase should be translated “the Word was God” (taking “theos” (GOD) to mean the true God) or “the Word was a god” i.e. taking “theos” to mean a being less than the True God Jehovah. The rest of John 1 makes it clear that “The Word” refers to Christ. The proper interpretation of this verse is important because the first interpretation says that Christ is Jehovah and the second interpretation says that Christ is god-like but not Jehovah. The basic problem then is that because of the lack of the definite article (the) in these somewhat poetic words of John, the verse can be taken two ways. The Greek language is not precise enough to rule out either and we must rely on the context to properly translate. Unfortunately there are two camps with two different ideas of what the context is. Greek scholar E.C. Colwell in 1933 explained how this ambiguity exists: when a predicate nominative precedes the verb, the definite article “ho” (or “the”) may be omitted from the predicate nominative without losing the definite meaning of that noun, that is, “theos” in the second phrase can still refer to the God as it did in the first phrase. The definite article is left on the subject so that the reader can tell it is the subject, otherwise, the predicate nominative and subject are indistinguishable and the statement becomes really ambiguous.

In spite of the legitimacy of the traditional Trinitarian translation, the bottom line is that this verse is simply not accepted by unitarians as a proof of the Trinity. So, beyond defending the Christian interpretation as legitimate, I do not recommend much time be spent discussing this. In the end the ones who are wrong will be ashamed of their hard-headedness when they face The God in judgment, if they do not repent of their error. I will not say any more on this verse because the next passage discussed, John 20:28, pretty thoroughly undercuts the unitarian argument. See the footnote in the section below entitled The Rule of Granville Sharp for information about sources of documentation of Colwell’s Rule.

[23] In John 20:28 the Apostle John quotes Thomas:

ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου	: Greek
ho kyrios mou kai ho theos mou	:Trans-literated
the lord of me and the GOD of me	:Word-for-Word Translation

The definite article, "the," preceding "GOD" whose absence unitarians make such a point of in John 1:1, is present here in the Greek. Therefore either:

- Thomas was an idolater and Christ accepted Thomas' idolizing of him, or
- Christ is indeed "the God" and the orthodox Christian interpretation of John 1:1 is correct. Taking both of these passages into account, it is clear that Colwell was correct, and that John was simply following normal (and less ambiguous) Greek usage in John 1:1 which can retain the sense of "THE" even when the definite article is omitted.

Both of these passages were written by John years after the resurrection of Christ, and it is unreasonable to think that he did not realize the implications of what he was saying, or that he allowed these two passages in his gospel to contradict each other. The most obvious conclusion is to believe that John in verse 1:1 meant to convey the same news, the same revelation, he had heard years before from Thomas' lips and accepted by his Lord, i.e. that Christ is THE God, Jehovah. In fact John of all the Bible writers is the most explicit in revealing the deity of Christ.

More References to God and Son of God

In the passages below Christ is called God or Son of God. Also many of the attributes and actions of Jehovah are credited to Him.

TITUS 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

HEBREWS 1:8 But about the Son he {The Father} says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

2 PETER 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

The following passage is from the very literal King James II translation:

1 JOHN 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given to us an understanding that we might know the true (one), and we are in the true (one), in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and the life everlasting.

At first it seems impossible to determine from the grammar of this verse alone whether "the true God and life everlasting" refers to the Father or to the Son. The following verses precede the passage above in this same letter by John, and clarifies the matter considerably. A careful rereading of the following two passages (ending with verse 5:20), again in the NIV, leaves little doubt that it is Christ rather than the Father who is being referred to. Notice that "eternal life" is used by John almost like a name:

1 JOHN 1:1-7 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. {John uses the same names for Christ, Word and life, that he used in the introduction of his gospel}[24] ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father {i.e. Christ was with the Father} and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

In this context, the subsequent passage in John 5 takes on a clearer meaning:

1 JOHN 5:11-13, 20 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ... ²⁰ We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

So John has previously defined who he means by the name, “eternal life.” This one, who is “eternal life” and whom he also calls the “True God,” is the one in whom we have life and in whose name we are to believe to have that life—Jesus Christ. The true God and eternal life in 1 John 5:20 seems to refer to Christ, rather than to the Father.

[24] Reading the whole epistle of 1 John will give further insight into the complex ideas John is presenting, and will bring out even more parallels with the beginning of John’s gospel (verses 1:1-14 below). Notice that the terminology and tone of the Gospel of John is very similar to this epistle—e.g. word, light, life, truth, message/testimony about Christ, belief in Christ’s name, his appearance on earth, and more:

JOHN 1:1-14 In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was **God**. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ **In him was life, and that life was the light of men**. ⁵ The **light** shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a **witness to testify** concerning **that light**, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only **as a witness to the light**. ⁹ **The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world**. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who **believed in his name**, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and **made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory**, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and **truth**.

ISAIAH 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,^[25] Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

As suggested above, the names the Father and Son receive from the Bible writers are not “absolute” and invariable; rather they are related to the context where they are used. Here the one whom we usually call the Son of God is called “Father,” not because he is God the Father, but because he is the Father (head, origin, and nurturing parent) of all believers.

ROMANS 9:4-5 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

HEBREWS 1:5-6 For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? ⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

Here the writer to the Hebrews states that the Father himself is demanding that the angels worship his Son. If Christ is not Jehovah, then the Father is commanding them to commit idolatry.

MARK 1:1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

JOHN 1:32-34 Then John {the Baptist} gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

LUKE 22:66-71 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. ⁶⁷“If you are the Christ,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸and if I asked you, you would not answer. ⁶⁹But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.” ⁷⁰They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied, “You are right in saying I am.” ⁷¹Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

The Jews knew the meaning of Christ’s claim to be the Son of God—that it was a claim to be Jehovah. If his claim was not factual, if he was only a created being, then the Jews would have been completely justified in their actions—they would have been correct to condemn Jesus for blasphemy! Even if Jesus was the most pre-eminent and most honored of the angels, the Jews would have been correct to punish Jesus for blasphemy. But in fact the Jews were wrong, for it is not blasphemy when Jehovah proclaims himself to be God or to be the Son of God.

[25] The Hebrew term used here for Mighty God is el gibbor. This is the same term used in other Old Testament passages such as:

ISAIAH 10:21 A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God.

1 TIMOTHY 3:14—4:1 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶ Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: **He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.** ¹ The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

The God of the Church Shed His Blood

ACTS 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

The verse above deserves to be reread a couple of times.

A Jehovah's Witness' Favorite

JOHN 10:11-40 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as **the Father knows me and I know the Father**—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason **my Father** loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from **my Father.**” ¹⁹ At these words the Jews were again divided. ²⁰ Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?” ²¹ But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

²² Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴ The Jews gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? **If you are the Christ,** tell us plainly.” ²⁵ Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in **my Father's** name speak for me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ **My Father,** who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of **my Father's** hand. ³⁰ **I and the Father are one.**”

³¹ Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, ³² but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many great miracles **from the Father.** For which of these do you stone me?” ³³ “We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods’? ³⁵ If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken—³⁶ what about **the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God's Son’?**” ³⁷ Do not believe me unless **I do what my Father does.** ³⁸ But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that **the**

Father is in me, and I in the Father.” ³⁹ Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. ⁴⁰ Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days.
...

Verse 35 contains a reference to Psalm 82. In that Psalm Jehovah called the Jewish rulers “GODS” (which is permitted because the Hebrew word *elohim* (GODS) has the root meaning of “mighty ones.”)

PSALM 82:1-8 God presides in the great assembly; **he gives judgment among the “gods”**: ² “How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Selah ³ Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. ⁴ Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. ⁵ They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. ⁶ **I said, ‘You are “gods”’; you are all sons of the Most High.’** ⁷ **But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.”** ⁸ Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance. Selah [26]

Jehovah's Witnesses use this single passage (John 10:34-36) to claim that the many times that the term “GOD”, is applied to Christ in the New Testament, mean nothing toward proving that Christ is Divine (in the sense that Jehovah is Divine).

The Jehovah's Witness' interpretation of John 10:35 is that Christ is offended that the Jews think he is claiming to be God. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim that Jesus' response (double underline) to the accusation recorded above supports this view, i.e. they say Jesus was rebuking the Jews for interpreting his claim to be the Son of God as a claim to be Jehovah God. The Witnesses say that Jesus was explaining to them that he was not blaspheming **because** he was not claiming to be God except in the limited sense used in Psalm 82.

At first glance, the Witnesses' position seems a plausible interpretation, **BUT**, a closer look will show that it relies entirely upon the **PRESUMED** presence in Christ's voice of a certain “tone” of rebuke and of backing away in horror from this accusation that he was equating himself with God. Such a “tone” cannot be proved from the text, and presuming it distracts us from considering the full meaning of what the words actually say.

- Jesus was indeed using Psalm 82 as a precedent for a man to be called a “god.” In the Psalm God himself had called these ancient men “gods,” and “sons of the Most High” and God certainly would not have the Psalm writer blaspheme Himself!
- But Jesus was not equating his name to the Psalmist's term for those Jewish rulers—it was not his intent to claim that he was one of those judges, one of these “gods.” In verse 35 & 36 he says, If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came,...what about the one whom the

[26] Psalm 82 does indeed use the term “god” of men. In this poetic and sarcastic passage God condemns the pretensions of these rulers who exercise their authority as if it were their own rather than a trust given by Jehovah, a trust for which he will demand an accounting. Jesus reference is subtly apt because the Psalm is a condemnation of the judges and rulers of Israel, who perhaps took their offices as God's appointed rulers as a license to exercise their own sinfulness, just as did those who were his opponents at that very moment.

Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? It is clear that Jesus considers his claim different (one could argue, better^[27]) than those who were merely called "gods." Being called a "god," is not the same as being "the Son of God," and being the one whom God "set apart as his very own."

Jehovah's Witnesses argue that Christ's claim was only that "I am a god too, just like them" in truth Christ's argument was, "Those men were allowed to be called gods, how much more so should I be called the Son of God."

- We should consider another question which the Jehovah's Witnesses might rightfully ask: "If Jesus was Jehovah, why didn't Jesus make his claim at this point—the situation virtually begs for him to do so?" This is indeed the time and place for such a claim to be made and the answer to the question is *HE DID!*—but in his usual subtle way. Immediately following, in verse 37 Jesus says, Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that **the Father is in me, and I in the Father**. The Jews had no word (and perhaps no concept) for what we call "the Trinity," Jesus had to make his claim to Godhood descriptively. The words Jesus spoke (in bold above) are as clear a description of the Trinitarian view of the Son's relationship to the Father as there could be.

A recap: Jesus had started out his defense with a simple, mechanical argument ("give me the same privilege as these other ancient guys" to be ranked as "god")—an argument that would be easy for even his enemies to understand. It was enough of a Scriptural argument to stop them from stoning him immediately and would allow him to say more—that was the only purpose of Jesus' reference to Psalm 82.

Next Jesus points out the strong testimony of the Father (in the miracles) that are backing up what Jesus has been doing and saying (and is about to say)—i.e. "you know I am not an idle crackpot, God is behind me so listen to what I am saying." At least some of the Jews would see some validity in this argument also.

Finally, Jesus makes his amazing claim to be one with Jehovah. The majority of the Jews were not willing to believe him or even to listen to him any longer. It is at this point that they attempt to seize him, and Jesus departs.

Jesus has just claimed openly to his enemies
that he is Jehovah!
And they reacted accordingly.

[27] The Psalm 82 rulers who were called "gods"—mighty ones—could not from that office go on to claim to be the "Son of God who was set apart as his very own." But Jesus who is the Son of God set apart as his very own could rightly be called a might one, a "god."



The Rule of Granville Sharp

The rules of Greek grammar have been studied by scholars for centuries in order to capture the subtleties of meaning that accompany word order, voice, tense, etc.. In 1798 English philanthropist and philologist (language scholar) Granville Sharp published a paper identifying a "new" rule of grammar that had long been unrecognized. It is useful to go into this because there are four New Testament passages related to the deity of Christ which appear ambiguous and inconclusive when considered without Granville Sharps Rule, but which become significant passages testifying to his deity if Sharp's Rule is considered. The rule concerns the use of the Greek definite article ("the") preceding "personal nouns" (terms which refer to a person) which are separated by a copulative *καί* / *kai* ("and"). The concept is simple and the construction is very basic to language, but the matter can get somewhat technical. We will not talk about the details more than necessary.

Granville Sharp stated his rule as follows:

When two personal nouns of the same case are connected by the copulative *καί* (*kai*), if the former has the definite article, and the latter has not, both personal nouns relate to the same person. Proper names and plural nouns are excluded from the application of this rule.

The phrases of interest have the form:

<definite article <personal noun <copulative <omitted definite article <personal noun

or, more concretely (using the English definite article and copulative),

the <personal noun and <personal noun

examples:

the Lord and God
the Savior of us and king
the great God and savior

Granville Sharp used the term "personal noun" to mean any substantive (noun, adjective, or participle that functions as a noun) which refers to a person and which describes them by means of personal relations, qualities, office, rank, and so on. For example: king, lord, god/God, teacher, friend, neighbor, honest (one), evil (one), etc. are all "personal nouns" in the sense intended by Sharp.

It is important to know that the Greek definite article is used differently than the English word "the." It is possible or even normal to use the definite article in places we would not, and to use or not use the article at the writer's discretion. Translating mechanically we might see any of the following constructions in Greek:

I saw the	friend	and	neighbor	friend = neighbor (according to Sharp's Rule)
I saw <u>the</u>	friend	and	<u>the</u> neighbor	friend & neighbor could be 1 person or 2
I saw	friend	and	<u>the</u> neighbor	friend & neighbor could be 1 person or 2
I saw	friend	and	neighbor	friend & neighbor could be 1 person or 2

Thus the Greek writer has four options to choose from when writing this two member list, and, according to Sharp's Rule, the use or non-use of the second article modifies the sense of the phrase. The later three constructions above must use context to determine the meaning, whereas, according to Sharp's Rule, the first construction has an unambiguous meaning, and would be the most clear of all possibilities for the Bible writers to use.

The reason for bringing up Sharp's Rule here is the interpretation of four new testament passages which have the form to which Sharp's Rule applies, but which have not always been translated according to that rule. The result is that the passages are often viewed as ambiguous when, according to Sharp's Rule, they should be considered clear New Testament statements which call Christ "GOD."

Sharp's study of the Greek New Testament covered every occurrence of this construction, and in the great majority of those cases it was possible to tell the intended meaning (whether it referred to the same or different persons). *IN EVERY CASE* where we can tell what the writer meant, this rule holds true, there was not even one exception. Included in the few cases whose intended meaning was not clear (without the use of the rule), are the four controversial verses below. Because there is no exception, it is virtually obligatory that Sharp's Rule be applied to these verses also.

The four passages follow from the NIV translation. The phrase in **bold** is the one which fits Sharp's criteria and to which his rule applies. Alternate translations of the underlined phrase, which more clearly convey the sense in English, are given in the second column.

<u>NIV Bible Passage</u>	<u>Alternate translations of phrase employing Sharp's Rule—clarifying words in ()</u>
EPHESIANS 5:5 ' For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the <u>kingdom of Christ and of God.</u>	kingdom of the Christ and God kingdom of (Jesus,) the Christ and God, kingdom of Christ, (even) of God
2 THESSALONIANS 1:12 We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.	grace of the God and Lord of us, Jesus Christ grace of Jesus Christ, our God and Lord

TITUS 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

appearing of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ

2 PETER 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

*righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ
righteousness of Jesus Christ, our God and Savior*

Notice that the NIV translations are ambiguous or even misleading in the light of Sharp's Rule. This is due to the fact that some modern grammarians do not recognize the validity of the rule and so regard these passages as ambiguous with regard to whether "Christ" and "God" are the same person. They generally do not deny that it is grammatically possible, but they give various arguments (not based on grammar) why the general rule should not apply in these cases even though it did apply in other, less doctrinally important cases.

When grammarians are not in agreement, translators try to reproduce in the English the same ambiguity that they perceive in the original language, with the results that we see here. However, in the case of these passages an excellent case can be made that they should be translated unambiguously using the insight provided by Sharp's Rule.

C. Kuehne in a review of the controversy of Sharp's Rule through the centuries, uncovers the following facts from works of scholars contemporary to and following Sharp.^[28]

1. Sharp's Rule had been previously articulated by the writer Beza (1519-1605), but his finding was neglected and eventually forgotten.
2. In New Testament passages which fit the form for Sharp's Rule, in cases where the intended sense of the passage can be determined, all of the passages conform to the rule.
3. The most ancient, Greek-speaking church fathers^[29] (300-500 A.D.), in the great majority of cases where they comment on these passages in their writings, take the meaning in the sense suggested by Sharp's Rule.
4. Of the most ancient Latin-speaking church fathers, the majority oppose Sharp's Rule and see these passages as referring to two person, the Father and to the Son. The reason for this appears to be that, since Latin has no definite article at all, the sense of this idiom was lost to users of the Latin Vulgate. It is significant that Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate and two other Latin writers who knew the Greek do support the sense of Sharp's Rule in their

[28] A series of articles from Professor C. Kuehne in the 1973-4 issues of the Journal of Theology (published at Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin by the Church of the Lutheran Confession), examines at length Sharp's Rule and also briefly the more famous Colwell's Rule (which applies to the use of the definite article in John 1:1 as discussed at the beginning of this chapter). If anyone is interested and does not have access to that Journal, they may write or call me.

[29] "Church fathers" is the term traditionally given to the men who were accepted as orthodox leaders in the early Christian church and whose writing have survived into modern times for our study.

references to these passages. Later grammarians inherited the legacy of the Latin interpreters, and this error was eventually propagated into the English translations.

5. The fact that these passages support the deity of Christ was lost in part because there was no interest in them as proof passages. I.e. none of the controversies facing the Greek-speaking church benefited much from looking at this aspect of these passages. This is a fascinating point, since the Arian (unitarian) controversy was raging at that time. In defending against the contemporary Arians, these facts were not emphasized because the Arians were quite willing to concede that Christ was “a god.” Thus, merely establishing that Christ was called god/God was not effective in swaying the Arian audience. The Arian debate therefore ended up focusing on other areas, much as this book does. Thus, without written documentary support of the proper interpretation, the true sense of these passages was not discussed and was eventually lost.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses today take the same position as the Arians. They are willing to concede that Christ is a “god,” but they reject the argument that passages in which Christ is called “GOD” can suggest that Christ is Jehovah God. They reason this way because they presume from the start that Christ just cannot be Jehovah.

Of these passages, those who argued against the Arians did make use of Titus 2:13 where Christ is called “the Great God.” But even this was not enough to convince a determined unitarian who is unable to see it as a contradiction of Jehovah’s jealous supremacy for a created being to be called “the Great God.”^[30] And if this is one’s perspective, then it is likely that none of the passages above will be sufficient to prove that Christ is the True God, Jehovah. But for a Christian these passages can be understood in their proper light, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Sharp.

Therefore, for those who wished to oppose the Arians—and modern unitarians—it was and is not enough (in the opinion of the unitarian) to show that Christ is “God,” it becomes necessary to prove directly that the Bible teaches that the Son of God is Jehovah, not just God.

This is what we shall do in the next two chapters!



[30] “It was probably, in allusion to this verse, that we find the Arians, in their Discourse, a short tract answered by St. Augustine, speaking thus of the Father: ‘et magno major et bono melior est manifestatus’ (He is manifested both Greater than the Great, and Better than the Good). By this specious argument the Arians apparently sought to evade the clear force of our passage—that Jesus Christ is Himself ‘the Great God’”—C. Kuehne.

CHAPTER 5

PROOFS THAT CHRIST IS JEHOVAH

The purpose of this chapter is to show that Jesus is Jehovah of the Old Testament. Bear in mind that we are NOT trying to prove that Jesus is Jehovah and the Father is not. Rather we will show that both the Father and Son share the name equally. We will show that the Old Testament name, Jehovah, is applied to Jesus by cross-referencing New Testament and Old Testament passages.

***Who Comes After the Forerunner of Jehovah?
Who Does Jehovah's Forerunner Reveal?
(Who Else But Jehovah!)***

ISAIAH 40:3-5 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for Jehovah; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵And the glory of Jehovah will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken."

MALACHI 4:5 {Jehovah speaks of these last days in the last words in the Old Testament ...}
"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of Jehovah comes."⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Compare

In the verses below it is revealed that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of the prophecies above, he was "Elijah," the one who was to go before Jehovah to prepare his way and reveal him to Israel. But, we will see also that John claimed it was Christ whom he was preceding and it was Christ whom he was to reveal to Israel. John was the forerunner of Christ Jehovah.

MARK 1:1-4 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²**It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"**—³"a voice of one calling in the desert, '**Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.**'"⁴ And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

LUKE 1:13-17 But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. ¹⁶ Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Below, Zechariah, by the Holy Spirit, knew the truth about his son, John the Baptist, and spoke of the Christ who was to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah: Jehovah coming to redeem his people.

LUKE 1:67-80 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: ⁶⁸ “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. ⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), ⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—⁷² to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham: ⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. ⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, ⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven ⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” ⁸⁰ And the child {John} grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Below, Jesus himself says that John is the fulfillment of the two prophecies of the forerunner. Notice also that Jesus quotes from Isaiah in a unique way, he says: “... send my messenger ahead of you”, “...prepare your way for you.” He was hinting that this prophecy from the Father applied to him, even though it was specifically applied to Jehovah in the Old Testament.

MATTHEW 11:7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. ⁹ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will **send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.**’ ¹¹ I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. ¹⁴ And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears, let him hear.”

JOHN 1:6-37 {Note: Below, references to Jesus are marked with **Bold** } There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that **light**, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true **light** that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ **He** was in the world, and though the world was made through **him**, the world did not recognize **him**. ¹¹ **He** came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive **him**. ¹² Yet to all who received **him**, to those who believed in **his** name, **he** gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ **The Word** became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the **One and Only, who** came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testifies concerning **him**. He cries out, saying, “This was **he** of whom I said,

'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ¹⁶ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through **Jesus Christ**. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but **God the One and Only**, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. ¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" ²⁴ Now some Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands **one** you do not know. ²⁷ **He** is the one **who** comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing. ²⁹ The next day John saw **Jesus** coming toward him and said, "Look, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know **him**, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on **him**. ³³ I would not have known **him**, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, '**The man** on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is **he** who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'" ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is the **Son of God**." ³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw **Jesus** passing by, he said, "Look, the **Lamb of God!**" ³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed **Jesus**.

In verse 31 we see that the one to be revealed (unhidden) by John, the one whom the Old Testament calls Jehovah, is Christ.

In this and the passages below, we will see why Christians claim to know a truth which was shrouded in Old Testament times but which is clearly revealed under the new covenant—the one Jehovah is manifest to us as God and Lord and Spirit.



The Father Speaks to the Son in the Old Testament:

Quote #1

PSALM 45:1-7 {A song for King David (and also for the Son of David) ... } My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. ² You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.^[31] ³ Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty.

[31] Verse 45:2 is a reference to God's promise to David that his descendants would rule Israel forever. David's worldly dynasty has long since ceased to propagate itself with documented genealogies and to rule. Thus this prophecy is fulfilled only by Christ, the Son (descendant) of David who has been and is ruling over God's people forever. Hence this passage applies as a type (or by way of prefiguration) to David but more literally to Christ.

⁴In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. ⁵Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet. ⁶Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁷You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Quote #2

PSALM 102:1-28 {See whether you agree that this is a prayer to Jehovah ... } Hear my prayer, O Jehovah; let my cry for help come to you. ²Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly. ³For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers. ⁴My heart is blighted and withered like grass; I forget to eat my food. ⁵Because of my loud groaning I am reduced to skin and bones. ⁶I am like a desert owl, like an owl among the ruins. ⁷I lie awake; I have become like a bird alone on a roof. ⁸All day long my enemies taunt me; those who rail against me use my name as a curse. ⁹For I eat ashes as my food and mingle my drink with tears ¹⁰because of your great wrath, for you have taken me up and thrown me aside. ¹¹My days are like the evening shadow; I wither away like grass. ¹²But you, O Jehovah, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. ¹³You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. ¹⁴For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity. ¹⁵The nations will fear the name of Jehovah, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. ¹⁶For Jehovah will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory. ¹⁷He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea. ¹⁸Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise Jehovah: ¹⁹"Jehovah looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, ²⁰to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death." ²¹So the name of Jehovah will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem ²²when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship Jehovah. ²³In the course of my life he broke my strength; he cut short my days. ²⁴So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations. ²⁵In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. ²⁷But you remain the same, and your years will never end. ²⁸The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you."

Compare

(Below **bold** marks key references to the Father; *italic* marks key references to Christ)

HEBREWS 1:1-12 {The writer to the Hebrews is contrasting Christ with the angels by quoting Old Testament passages—some referring to angels and others referring to Christ} In the past **God** spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days **he** has spoken to us by his *Son*, whom **he** appointed heir of all things, and through whom **he** made the universe. ³*The Son* is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by *his* powerful word. After *he* had provided purification for sins, *he* sat down at the right hand of the **Majesty** in heaven. ⁴So *he* became as much superior to the angels as the name *he* has inherited is superior to theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did **God** ever say,
"You are *my Son*; today I have begotten *you*?"

Or again, "I will be his Father, and *he* will be *my Son*?"

⁶And again, when **God** brings his firstborn into the world, **he** says,

“Let all **God’s** angels worship *him*.”

⁷In speaking of the angels **he** says,
“**He** makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire.”

⁸But about the *Son* he says,
“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” {same as Quote #1 above}

¹⁰**He** also says,
“In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹²You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.” {Same as Quote #2 above}

About Quote #2: Here the writer of the book of Hebrews is revealing by inspiration something which we may not have guessed if God had not revealed it. Psalm 102 is addressed to Christ. In fact, he reveals that this psalm addressed to Jehovah was inspired in the psalm writer by the Father who wishes to glorify Jehovah the Son.

About Quote #1: Here the writer of the book of Hebrews is revealing that Psalm 45 is addressed to Christ as well as to David and that it was the Father who moved the psalm writer to address Christ, the Son of David, as “king”



***Again the Distinctions Between
Christ and Jehovah are Blurred***

PSALM 34:8 Taste and see that Jehovah is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Compare:

1 PETER 2:1-5 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ²Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We see the fulfillment of an Old Testament reference to Jehovah being applied to Christ—to come to Christ is to taste Jehovah. The unique worship/love that is due Jehovah alone is being applied to Christ while at the same time Peter affirms that the Father loves Christ to receive this

honor. I.e. the Father is freely sharing his glory with the Son—this would contradict our key verse unless Christ is Jehovah.



An Undeniable Proof

ISAIAH 6:1-10 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴“At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. ⁶“Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for. ⁸“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” ⁹He said, “Go and tell this people: “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’ ¹⁰Make the heart of this people callused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

Compare:

JOHN 12:37-41 Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” ³⁹For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.” ⁴¹Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

Thus we see clearly that the authors of the Bible (John here, as well as Paul and the writer to the Hebrews in the previous passages) accepted Christ as the Jehovah of the Old Testament. How apt the words of I saiah 6:9-10 still are today!



We Shall All Worship Christ as Supreme Lord Jehovah

ISAIAH 45:21-23 Declare what is to be, present it—let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, Jehovah? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. ²²“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. ²³By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. ²⁴They will say of me, ‘In Jehovah alone are righteousness and strength.” All who have raged against

him will come to him and be put to shame. ²⁵ But in Jehovah all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult.

How utterly, how solemnly Jehovah reserves all worship and devotion to himself!

Compare:

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the Old Testament Jehovah swore by his own name that he would receive this glory and worship, but in the New Testament we see that Christ will receive it, and when he receives it, the Father is not diminished but rather is glorified.

ROMANS 14:8-12 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. ¹¹It is written: “As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.” ¹²So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

And here the same words are applied to the Father. All of this simply affirms that both Father and Son have a complete right to be honored as Jehovah—the Bible makes no distinction.



***Who is
The Lord of Lords (and Our Lord)?
The King of Kings (and Our King)?
God of Gods (and Our God)?***

Remember that the word “Lord” means master or ruler. The word “God” means mighty one. Also remember that believers have only one TRUE King, one TRUE Lord, one TRUE God. Who is that one? Certainly the Bible will be clear in this?

PSALM 10:16 Jehovah is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land.

ISAIAH 43:10-15 “You are my witnesses,” declares Jehovah, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. ¹¹I, even I, am Jehovah, and apart from me there is no savior. ¹²I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,”

declares Jehovah, “that I am God. ¹³Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?” ¹⁴This is what Jehovah says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride. ¹⁵I am Jehovah, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator, your King.”

DEUTERONOMY 10:17 For Jehovah your God is **God of gods** and **Lord of lords**, the **great God**, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. {The Hebrew word for Lord used here is adonai}

DANIEL 2:46-47 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the **God of gods** and the **Lord of kings** and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

1 TIMOTHY 6:13-16 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the **King of kings** and **Lord of lords**, ¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Compare:

REVELATION 17:12-14 “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is **Lord of lords** and **King of kings**—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”

REVELATION 19:11-16 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. {The same name used by John for Jesus in John 1:1} ¹⁴The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

If Jesus is not Jehovah we might see him called a god, a lord, or a king, but we see that he is King of kings and Lord of lords, titles that only Jehovah properly can have.

1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), ⁶yet for us there is but **one God, the Father**, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but **one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Hebrew Poetic Parallelism

Let me anticipate a question that some will ask. This passage juxtaposes (places side by side) our Lord and our God. Doesn't this exclude Jesus from being the true God? Not necessarily, there is another possibility. Consider this: if calling the Father "the one God" excludes the Son from being our one God, then calling Christ "the one Lord" would exclude the Father from being our one Lord. But we certainly know that it is permissible for us to call the Father "our Lord" (master), and even Lord of lords. So how are we to understand this seeming paradox? These statements can only be reconciled to each other if you accept that the Father and Son together are One Lord and One God, and that when Paul wrote this he was not dividing two titles between two entities but rather he was using a form of the very common Hebrew figure of speech called "poetic parallelism." This figure of speak is very common in the Psalms. It repeats a statement twice using different words but the same meaning; the second amplifies and clarifies the first, rather than contrasts with it.^[32] In this way the words "Lord" and "God" are being used here as interchangeable terms for the Father and Son—conventionally applied to one, but also applicable to the other.

If you accept this, then it follows that whenever Jesus is called "Lord," the Bible is affirming him to be Jehovah, our TRUE LORD, our LORD OF LORDS, just as referring to the Father as "God," affirms him to be Jehovah, our TRUE GOD, our GOD OF GODS.



Who is the Great God?

The **Bold** words below emphasize our personal relationship with the Great God.

DEUTERONOMY 10:17 For Jehovah **your** God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

PSALM 96:4 For great is Jehovah and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

[32] An example of this Hebrew poetic parallelism is found in our key verse, I saiah 42:8:
 "I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols."
 The two underlined clauses are restatements of the same concept in different terms—Jehovah's praiseworthiness and his glory are not two different things; they are the same thing. And likewise, any other whom we glorify/praise is an idol. So, the terms "Lord of Lords" and "God of Gods" are two names for the same Being; they both mean "the one who is supreme over all—Jehovah, the "only ruler" as 1 Timothy 6:15 above says. They are not two separate titles denoting differences of rank, since both are applied to Jehovah. Hence calling the Father "God of gods" while calling Jesus "Lord of lords" did not make Jesus some kind of lesser "god" in the Hebrew thinking, but treats him as parallel to and equal to the Father.

PSALM 99:1-2 Jehovah reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. ²Great is Jehovah in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations.

PSALM 135:5 I know that Jehovah is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods. {Note the poetic parallelism, where Jehovah is also called “Lord” (Hebrew: Adonai).}

PSALM 95:1-3 Come, **let us** sing for joy to Jehovah; **let us** shout aloud to the Rock of **our** salvation. ²**Let us** come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. ³For Jehovah is the great God, the great King above all gods. {Jehovah is called “King”.}

JEREMIAH 32:17-18 “Ah, Lord Jehovah, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. ¹⁸ You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers’ sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is Jehovah of hosts.

NEHEMIAH 9:32 “Now therefore, O our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come upon us, upon **our** kings and leaders, upon **our** priests and prophets, upon **our** fathers and all **your people**, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today.

ISAIAH 10:20-21 In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹ A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God.

Compare:

TITUS 2:12-14 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify **for himself** a people that are **his very own**, eager to do what is good.

ISAIAH 9:6-7 {A prophecy of Christ ...} For **to us** a child is born, **to us** a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Jehovah of hosts will accomplish this.

So we see that Jesus too is called the Great God and Mighty God, the same names with which Jehovah is acclaimed in the Old Testament.

Note also that the **bold** text above emphasizes the custom of God’s people to claim Jehovah as their own God, i.e. they belong to him alone. Likewise in the New Testament passages, believers are the saved to be Christ’s, to be his possession.



Jehovah, the One Who is Pierced

ZECHARIAH 12:1—13:1 This is the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Jehovah, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: ² “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. ³On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. ⁴On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares Jehovah. “I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. ⁵Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because Jehovah of hosts is their God.’ ⁶ “On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. ⁷ “Jehovah will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem’s inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. ⁸On that day Jehovah will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of Jehovah going before them. ⁹On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. ¹⁰ And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him^[33] as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. ¹¹ On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹² The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, ¹³ the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, ¹⁴ and all the rest of the clans and their wives. ¹ “On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

We see in Zechariah 12:1 and 10 that Jehovah declares, “They will look on me, the one they have pierced.” The one pierced is an obvious reference to Christ, and yet Jehovah is in this passage saying: “They will look on me, the one they have pierced.” (If there was any doubt that the one who is pierced is Christ, Revelation 1:4-7 below establishes it clearly.) Zechariah continues speaking (of the same person) and in verse 13:1 makes a (poetic) reference to Jesus, the Messiah, who by dying on the cross to pay for the sins of the world has **opened a fountain to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity.**^[34]

[33] The switch from first person “me” to the third person “him” in the middle of a passage is strange in English usage but it is fairly common in Hebrew, especially in the writings of the prophets like Zechariah where the writer is writing the words of Jehovah partly from Jehovah’s perspective and partly from his own.

[34] Zechariah 14:1 also has water of life imagery like that used in Revelation:

REVELATION 7:17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them **to springs of living water.** And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

REVELATION 21:6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is **thirsty** I will give to drink without cost **from the spring of the water of life.**

REVELATION 22:1, 16-17 Then the angel showed me the **river of the water of life**, as clear as crystal, **flowing** from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ... ¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is **thirsty**, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him **take the free gift of the water of life.**

Compare: {The words in *Italics* below refer to Christ}

REVELATION 1:4-7 John, to the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To *him* who loves us and has freed us from our sins by *his* blood, ⁶and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to *him* be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. ⁷Look, *he* is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see *him*, even those who pierced *him* ; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of *him*. So shall it be! Amen.



CHAPTER 6

OTHER PROOFS AND INDICATIONS

The previous chapter looked at the application of the Divine Name, Jehovah, to Christ. This chapter will look at other names, accolades, glories, and privileges that are reserved for Jehovah and which are also given to Christ.

Whom May We Bow to, Worship, and Serve?

The Hebrew and Greek words translated as “worship” in the Bible literally mean “bow down to” or “do homage to.” Jehovah has forbidden us to so much as bow down to, to do homage to, or to serve in any way, any god but Jehovah. It is permitted to bow to an earthly ruler, as long as our loyalty and homage remain that appropriate to a person and not like that due God.

EXODUS 34:14 Do not worship any other god, for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

EXODUS 23:24-25 Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces. ²⁵Worship Jehovah your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you,

DEUTERONOMY 6:13-16 Fear Jehovah your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; ¹⁵for Jehovah your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. ¹⁶Do not test Jehovah your God as you did at Massah.

DEUTERONOMY 8:19 If you ever forget Jehovah your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

DANIEL 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.”

This is Reaffirmed in the New Testament Also ...

...With Regard to Satan

MATTHEW 4:8-10 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹“All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” ¹⁰Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

...With Respect to Angels

REVELATION 22:8-9 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

...With Respect to Men

ACTS 10:25-26 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

But Jesus is Different!

MATTHEW 2:11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

MATTHEW 8:2 A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

MATTHEW 9:18 While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.”

MATTHEW 14:32-33 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

JOHN 9:35-38 {Christ speaks to the blind man he had healed.} Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” ³⁶“Who is he, sir?” the man asked. “Tell me so that I may believe in him.” ³⁷Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” ³⁸Then the man said, “Lord, I believe, and he worshiped him.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

HEBREWS 1:6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.”

REVELATION 5:8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” ¹¹Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹²In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” ¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” ¹⁴The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Father and the Son receive equal honor, worship, and praise. Only Jehovah is worthy of such praise and worship.

JOHN 5:22-23 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

To honor Jehovah, it is necessary to honor and worship both the Father and the Son.



***The First and the Last,
The Beginning and the End,
The Alpha and the Omega***

In the passages below, a link is made between Jehovah being referred to as the first and last and his being the true God.

ISAIAH 41:4 “Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.”

ISAIAH 44:6 “This is what Jehovah says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”

ISAIAH 48:11-13 {The prophet Isaiah speaks the words of Jehovah ... }

For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. ¹²“Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. ¹³My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.”

It is not surprising that the unchanging Jehovah, who exists eternally, both from eternity and to eternity, calls himself “the first” and “the last.” Unitarians may acknowledge that Christ will

endure to eternity but since they believe that Christ is a created being, they usually object to the idea that Christ has existed from eternity, has no beginning, and has no predecessors as the Bible teaches is true of Jehovah. In Chapter 3: Christ's Humiliation and Exaltation we showed conclusively that Christ existed before his birth in Bethlehem, but we still need to show that he has existed eternally—these titles First and Last and Beginning and End can help in this.

Compare

These passages speak of Christ ...

REVELATION 2:8 “To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.

REVELATION 21:4-6 “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”⁶ He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. {The next passage follows a few verses later and makes clear the identity of the speaker in the passage above.}

REVELATION 22:6-20 {An angel speaks to John in his vision. We see however that the angel in verse 6 speaks for himself, and in verse 7 speaks for another. The identity of the one who speaks through the angel is revealed in verse 16.} The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”⁷ “Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book.”⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me.⁹ But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!” {I.e. worship the God of the spirits of the prophets—the God mentioned in verse 6}¹⁰ Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near.¹¹ Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy. Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ...¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Jehovah is the only uncreated being. If you agree that when Jehovah calls himself the first and the last he is referring to his beginningless and endless existence, then it is clear that Christ is also without beginning and without end. If you agree that only Jehovah is rightly called the First and the Last, then Christ is Jehovah.



I AM

The following is one of the most remarkable statements in the Bible about the nature of God. Jehovah, the endless and beginning-less God is timeless in a way that his creation is not. Jehovah, the source of all creation, is dependent on no one, is unique, and is higher than his creation. For these reasons it is appropriate for God to coin a name for himself that is a simple statement of his self-existent nature—"I AM."

EXODUS 3:13-14 {God and Moses speak to each other at the burning bush...} Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I am has sent me to you."

Compare

JOHN 8:56-59 {Jesus is speaking to the Jewish leaders ...} Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" ⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Jesus is not merely using bad grammar to speak of himself. He is deliberately using the present tense to refer to himself, just as God did from the burning bush. Again the Jews recognized Jesus' claim as a claim to Deity for they immediately attempted to punish him as a gross blasphemer. For a closer look at the burning bush, see Appendix A.



"My Father and Your Father"

In his book Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell quotes Hilarin Felder's book Christ and the Critics.^[35]

As often as Jesus speaks of His relation with His Father He uses constantly and without exception the expression 'My Father'; and as often as He calls the attention of the disciples to their childlike relation to God, there is the equally definite characterization, 'Your Father'. Never does He associate Himself with the disciples and with men by the natural form of speech, 'Our Father'. ...

[35] Hilarin Felder, Christ and the Critics, translated by John L. Stoddard, 1924, London: Burns, Oates & Washburn Ltd., quoted by Josh McDowell in Evidence that Demands a Verdict, revised edition, 1979, Campus Crusade For Christ.

Even on those occasions in which Jesus unites himself with the disciples before God, and when therefore it would be certainly expected that He would use the collective expression, 'Our Father,' there stands, on the contrary, 'My Father': 'I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it with you new in the kingdom of My Father' (Matthew 26:29). 'Come ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matthew 25:34). Thus and similarly does Jesus distinguish unequivocally between His divine sonship and that of the disciples and men in general.

One time Jesus did say "our Father" but he was not including himself; he was teaching his disciples what they should say to their Father:

MATTHEW 6:6-9 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to **your Father**, who is unseen. Then **your Father**, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for **your Father** knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹"This, then, is how **you** should pray: "**Our Father** in heaven, hallowed be your name, ...

Another time, Christ went to even greater verbal lengths to keep distinct his relationship with the Father compared to that of other men.

JOHN 20:17 {After his resurrection, Jesus appears and speaks to Mary Magdalene...} Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"



Who is the King of Glory?

PSALM 24:7-10 Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ⁸Who is this King of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle. ⁹Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ¹⁰Who is he, this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts—he is the King of glory. Selah

Compare

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-8 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Readers must decide for themselves the significance of the two different terms used here, "Lord of Glory" (Greek = kyrios) and "King of Glory" (Hebrew = melek). If the distinction seems significant, remember that we have already seen Christ called King and also King of kings. Remember also our key verse: Isaiah 42:8: "I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols" which prohibits any creature from being the Lord of (Jehovah's) glory. We see the fulfillment of the psalmist's command when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on Palm

Sunday as recorded in Matthew 21:8-11. Note: Psalm 118:19-29 contains another Messianic prophecy regarding the gates of Jerusalem.



Whose Book of Life is it?

EXODUS 32:30-35 The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to Jehovah; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” ³¹ So Moses went back to Jehovah and said, “Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” ³³ Jehovah replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.” ³⁴ Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin.” ³⁵ And Jehovah struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

Compare

REVELATION 3:3 {Jesus is speaking to one of the seven churches ... }

Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. ⁴ Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

REVELATION 21:22—22:1 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. ¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

We see in Exodus that Jehovah picturing himself as one who records the names of those who are saved and blots out the names of those who are lost, and we see that it is his book. In Revelation we see this same book, and we see that it is Jesus who blots out names from the book of Life and that it is his book. This is not a contradiction; it reveals something profound—what was said of Jehovah in the Old Testament was being said of Christ. (We also infer that the Father and the Holy Spirit share in this since they are included in other things attributed to Jehovah.)



Maker of a New Covenant / Forgiver of Sins

JEREMIAH 31:33-34 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares Jehovah. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know Jehovah,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares Jehovah. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Compare

The new covenant (or new testament) is a reference to the arrangement by which Christ would die for the sins of all and those who believe in Jesus would be saved for eternity.

MATTHEW 26:26-29 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” ²⁷Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

We can see that throughout his ministry, Jesus claimed and exercised the right to forgive men’s sins.

MARK 2:5-12 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷“Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’ ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...” He said to the paralytic, ¹¹“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Unitarians see in verse 7 and 8 a denial by Christ that he is Jehovah. They say that here Christ vehemently rejects any attempts to make him out to be Divine. Trinitarians see something else altogether. Christ is not denying his right to exercise Jehovah’s authority, indeed, he affirms that he has it. In asking “Why are you thinking these things,” he is not showing indignation concerning their conclusion (that he is claiming Divine authority); rather, his subsequent words show he was critical of their reasoning (he miracle worker but he is opposed to God).

Note also that Christ’s response is very specific and very limited; he is not affirming the statement as the Son of God. The incarnate Son of God says the following:

that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ...

He does not try to establish that the Son of God has such authority, or even that he is the Son of God. Rather he addresses their real objection—the use of this authority by a man. Christ defends the right of this particular son of man, himself, to forgive sins. He defends it by performing a miracle which demonstrates that he has the full approval and backing of his Father.

(Or to say it another way, Christ proved that he has Divine authority to forgive sins by demonstrating that he had Divine power to heal physical illness.) He left it to his audience to draw the final conclusion, that his miracle was proof that he was indeed the God who could heal sins (Jehovah). By doing this Jesus confirmed that he is Jehovah (to the ones who could discern it), but at the same time he properly fulfilled the obligations of a true “son of man” who would not boast of his own position and whose main task at that time was to keep the law perfectly in our place by remaining subject to the Father at all times (see Chapter 3: Christ’s Humiliation and Exaltation). This is one of the rare occasions where we can see both parts of Jesus’ dual nature at the same time—he speaks with the authority of the Son of God concerning his office and his nature as the Son of Man.

ACTS 5:28-32 {The high priest addresses Peter — Note: pronouns in *italic* refer to Christ}
 “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” ²⁹Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—*whom* you had killed by hanging *him* on a tree. ³¹God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ³²We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.

It is because (“that” in v. 31) Jesus has his position again at God’s right hand that he is continually exercising, on behalf of all believers everywhere, his divine power and authority to forgive sins. (In his humiliation he could and did forgive sins, but he did not do it to the extent he does now as the exalted redeemer.) And again as our key verse indicates, it is unscriptural to claim as the Jehovah’s Witnesses do that this happened because God chose to delegate his authority to some lesser (created) being in this way. The Old Testament (and the New Testament) reserves to Jehovah alone such names and powers as are mentioned here in connection with Christ, i.e. Christ is exalted, a Prince, a Savior, giving repentance, forgiving sins. Others may indeed be agents of God, but this passage is speaking of someone who is more than just an agent acting in a limited way on behalf of God.



Judge of All Nations

PSALM 9:4-20 For you have upheld my right and my cause; you have sat on your throne, judging righteously. ⁵You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. ⁶Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished. ⁷Jehovah reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. ⁸He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice. ⁹Jehovah is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Jehovah, have never forsaken those who seek you. ¹¹Sing praises to Jehovah, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done. ¹²For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted. ¹³O Jehovah, see how my enemies persecute me! Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death, ¹⁴that I may declare your praises in the gates of the Daughter of Zion and there rejoice in your salvation. ¹⁵The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. ¹⁶Jehovah is known by his justice; the wicked are ensnared by the

work of their hands. Higgaion. Selah ¹⁷The wicked return to the grave, all the nations that forget God. ¹⁸But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish. ¹⁹Arise, O Jehovah, let not man triumph; let the nations be judged in your presence. ²⁰Strike them with terror, O Jehovah; let the nations know they are but men. Selah.

JOEL 3:8-33 I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away." Jehovah has spoken. ⁹Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. ¹⁰Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, "I am strong!" ¹¹Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O Lord! ¹²Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. ¹³Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the winepress is full and the vats overflow—so great is their wickedness!" ¹⁴Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of Jehovah is near in the valley of decision. ¹⁵The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. ¹⁶Jehovah will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But Jehovah will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. ¹⁷"Then you will know that I, Jehovah your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill {Zion is the hill in Jerusalem where the temple was located}. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her. ¹⁸"In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of Jehovah's house and will water the valley of acacias.

Compare the Parallel Imagery in the New Testament

MATTHEW 25:31-33 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

REVELATION 21:1-5 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "**Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.**" ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life." ⁷He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." ⁹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

There are several points of similarity between these two sets of passages in the Old and New Testament.

- Jehovah says he will judge the nations on every side -vs- Christ will gather all people to judge them, separating them onto his right and his left..

- Jehovah will dwell in "Zion" (i.e. Jerusalem) -vs- The bride of Christ is the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-10). The new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven to be with Christ. And thus the dwelling of God is with men.

It is Christ who will live with believers, in the new Jerusalem, on the new earth, like a husband dwelling with his wife. The inevitable conclusion is that either:

1. Jehovah will dwell on or visit the new Jerusalem only as a "spirit," as he does now, and most believers will never literally "see" God. (Perhaps a unitarian interpretation.)
- or 2. The Son will dwell visibly in Jerusalem while the Father remains an invisible "spirit." Thus believers will all see God in the form of Christ and that will be the only literal fulfillment of the promise that believers will see God. (A possible Christian interpretation.)
- or 3. Both the Father and the Son will dwell visibly in Jerusalem—the Father perhaps not in a human form. (A possible Christian interpretation.)
- or 4. These prophecies will be fulfilled in some other, unimaginably glorious way.

As a final point, in Joel 3:12 Jehovah says "I will judge the nations on every side" but Christ in Matthew 25:31-33 says that it is the Son, not the Father, who will be the judge those on his right and on his left (v. 33). John says in his gospel:

JOHN 5:21-30 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life **to whom he wills** to give it. ²²For the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son. ²³that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. {the Son is to be the judge so that none may fail to recognize he is Jehovah} He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. ²⁴"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me {i.e. Jesus is claiming that when he speaks we are hearing the Father. In this case the Father is speaking and testifying of him, the Son} has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man {The Father will not judge us, the Son receives the right to judge men because he also is a man—the point of this passage is not, as unitarians claim, to indicate that Jesus is not the true God but rather simply to emphasize that Jesus is more than God, he is also true man.} ²⁸"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. ³¹If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid.

Notice that there is no division in the God-head. One cannot say, the Son is the judge and the Father is not, and that therefore the Father is inferior to the Son in this particular work of Jehovah. The Son does not usurp the position of judge from the Father; the Father gives it to him.

Finally, we look at two passages from Isaiah which contain similar imagery but which also speak of Jehovah as exalted and raised up. The odd thing about this is that Jehovah God is always supreme, he cannot be raised up to a higher position. For this reason, it appears that this is an Old Testament reference to the exaltation of the Jehovah-Christ's human nature.

ISAIAH 2:1-2,9-21 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: ²In the last days the mountain of Jehovah's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. ... ⁹So man will be brought low and mankind humbled—do not forgive them. ¹⁰Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of Jehovah and the splendor of his majesty! ¹¹The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; Jehovah alone will be exalted in that day. ¹²Jehovah of hosts has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), ¹³for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan, ¹⁴for all the towering mountains and all the high hills, ¹⁵for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, ¹⁶for every trading ship and every stately vessel. ¹⁷The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; Jehovah alone will be exalted in that day, ¹⁸and the idols will totally disappear. ¹⁹Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of Jehovah and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. ²⁰In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. ²¹They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of Jehovah and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.

ISAIAH 33:1-10 Woe to you, O destroyer, you who have not been destroyed! Woe to you, O traitor, you who have not been betrayed! When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed; when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed. ²O Jehovah, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress. ³At the thunder of your voice, the peoples flee: when you rise up, the nations scatter. ⁴Your plunder, O nations, is harvested as by young locusts; like a swarm of locusts men pounce on it. ⁵Jehovah is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. ⁶He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of Jehovah is the key to this treasure. ⁷Look, their brave men cry aloud in the streets; the envoys of peace weep bitterly. ⁸The highways are deserted, no travelers are on the roads. The treaty is broken, its witnesses are despised, no one is respected. ⁹The land mourns and wastes away, Lebanon is ashamed and withers; Sharon is like the Arabah, and Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves. ¹⁰"Now will I arise," says Jehovah. "Now will I be exalted; now will I be lifted up."



Only Jehovah Knows Our Hearts—and so Does Jesus!

1 KINGS 8:37-40 and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel—each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple—³⁹then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men), ⁴⁰so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our fathers.

Compare

LUKE 9:46-47 An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greater.
⁴⁷ Jesus, knowing their hearts,^[36] took a little child and had him stand beside him ...

ACTS 1:21-25 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." ²³ So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴ Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

JOHN 2:23-25 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. ²⁴ But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. ²⁵ He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Jesus' insight into human hearts apparently exceeds that which can be achieved by natural means. He, like his Father, can perceive directly what is in the heart.



Jesus Does What Jehovah Does

There are many, many instances where Christ acts in a manner that parallels the actions attributed to Jehovah in the Old Testament. And Christ himself said that he was doing what he saw the Father doing (John 5:17-20); thus both the Father and the Son do the work of Jehovah equally, not just the Father!

JOHN 5:16-23 {Jesus heals a paralytic on the Sabbath...}

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

Jesus is claiming the Father's work is his work.

¹⁸ For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

He is the Son (the only begotten Son), i.e. the Father is Christ's father in a different way than he is a father to us. Thus he can be more than a creature—he can even be equal with God.

[36] I have modified the NIV text slightly to use the word "heart" instead of "thoughts." The Greek words used are *διαλογισμὸν τῆς καρδίας* / *dialogismon tas kardias* which are literally translated as: "debate of the heart."

¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing from himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he does.

Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he wills to give it.

²² For the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not **honor** the Son does not **honor** the Father, who sent him.

The second half of v 19 & v 20 establishes the parallel claim: *AND THE FATHER CAN DO NOTHING WITHOUT THE SON.* (Otherwise the Son would not be doing *WHATEVER* and seeing *ALL* that the Father does).

just as → Greek: ὡσπερ γὰρ / hosper gar = For as; like as; in the same way as ... The Son's power to do what he wills is at an equal level with the Father's in this.

Jesus knew what he would say would shock the Jews, just as it shocks unitarians—in some things the Son of God has a more pre-eminent role than the Father.

just as → Greek: καθὼς / kathos = like; in the same manner as... Note also that the Greek root word translated as **honor**: τιμάω / timao, is the same one everywhere in verse 23. The Father and Son share in the honor of Jehovah.

If the Son knows everything the Father does and does it himself, it is difficult to conclude that the Son is inferior in nature to the Father. The truth is that the Father and Son never do anything independently (from each other); indeed they cannot, for they are one God. Now, the way the incarnate Christ went about doing them was different in appearance from the way the Father did them, since Christ was flesh and blood and the Father was not, but the goals and results were the same.

Jesus continues...

JOHN 5:24-46 ²⁴ "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. ...

Jesus "has jurisdiction" over mankind, and the Father has given his jurisdiction up in favor of Christ because Christ is a Man.

...²⁸ "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

³¹ "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. ³² There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. ³³ "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴ Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵ John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

³⁶ “I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. ³⁷ And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸ nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.”

John 5:36 shows why the Father “gave” work to the Son: The Father did it as a testimony that the Father was in complete agreement with Jesus. After all, how could anyone tell Jesus was in accord with God if he did things differently than the Father? In John 5:19-20 Christ speaks of his imitation of his Father’s acts; this is another way of saying that there was some causal link between the deeds of the Father and those of the Son of David, Jesus, that the Father caused Jesus to do it, i.e. the Father sent him.

³⁹ “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

⁴¹ “I do not accept praise from men, ⁴² but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³ I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴ How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?”

⁴⁵ “But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶ If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.”

In verses 24-36, Jesus is speaking about his relationship to his father as it applied to his mission on earth and as (he wished it to be) viewed from the vantage point of his audience, the Jews. He says the purpose of his miracles was to establish his credentials—his miracles were to be a sign that he really was the Messiah. Likewise the Scriptures (Moses) testified and John the Baptist testified that Jesus was the Messiah and the Savior of the world. Jesus’ purpose in saying in verse 30: “By myself I can do nothing”; in verse 31: “If I testify about myself,” and in verse 36, “the very work that the Father has given me to finish...” etc. is to establish for the Jews the idea that he is not just a man out on his own, making up some false teaching, but rather that the Father is backing him up 100%, that it is God who is authorizing all of his actions. Yet unitarians see in these words only a limit on Christ’s deity; they see an implication that Christ is less than the Father. Jesus’ purpose in the context was to elevate his authority from earthly to divine (in the eyes of the Jews). Unitarians see Jesus’ purpose as denying his divine nature. This just does not fit, he was not talking about his nature, only about his credentials as the Son of Man, as the Savior of the world. Jesus was not limiting his nature/position at all. He was, if anything, hinting at its greatness in that he had the authority to speak so boldly.



Jesus' Works are Jehovah's Works

A minor example...

PSALM 89:8-9 O Jehovah God of Hosts, who is like you? You are mighty, O Jehovah, and your faithfulness surrounds you. ⁹You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.

Compare

MATTHEW 8:24-27 Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" ²⁶He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ²⁷The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

MATTHEW 14:25-33 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" ³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

This may be a minor indication that Jesus is Jehovah, but it points to another field of study that is too large to go into here. As C.S. Lewis pointed out there is a certain "family resemblance" between the Father and the Son, meaning that they go about things in the same way and they avoid the same things.^[37] Most notably this family resemblance can be seen in that both the Father and the Son act like God, accepting glory and worship that is due to Jehovah alone and exercising authority over men and nature.



[37] Lewis notes that in Jesus' miracles he is doing (but at high speed) things that happen in the nature that God designed. For example: turning water (rain) into wine in wine jars at Cana instead of in the grape vine and vat; multiplying fish (fish) and bread (grain) in a basket, directly, instead of in the lake and the grain field; raising the dead (we have not yet seen this as a part of nature, but we will) during his ministry in Israel versus judgment day; and healing diseases of the body miraculously versus naturally through our immune systems. For further reading on this subject I recommend the wonderful book: *God in the Dock, Essays on Theology and Ethics* by C.S. Lewis edited by Walter Hooper—see the essay entitled *Miracles* (pp. 29-33 of the William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company edition).

The Father Withholds Nothing from the Son

In this chapter we have seen several examples of things which are shared by the Father and the Son. Unitarians would concede that the Son as a created servant has been given much authority and power over the things of Jehovah, but they would probably say that the Father reserves certain things to himself that are unique to Jehovah. This is not the case.

JOHN 16:7-15 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ¹²"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

Verses 14-15 deserve a close inspection. Jesus says that the Holy Spirit "will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." But then Jesus pauses and explains how it can be that he, Jesus, has these wondrous gifts to give (the last sentence indicates that the beginning of verse 15 is indeed an explanation). The reason that the Spirit of God is revealing what belongs to Christ is that the Spirit reveals what is the Father's and that Jesus owns everything that is the Father's. Jesus owns these things BECAUSE they belongs to the Father, i.e. Christ automatically owns everything that belongs to the Father. This would be a very bold, presumptuous claim for Christ to make if he is a created being. He is saying: "The Holy Spirit of Jehovah will glorify ME, by revealing MY ownership of everything that is Jehovah's." This is not something that any created being could say, no matter how honored by Jehovah, because Jehovah always reserves ultimate glory and authority to himself. Christ is here revealing himself to be the Father's equal.



"Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit"

ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"—²before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; ³when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; ⁴when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; ⁵when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets. ⁶Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, ⁷and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!"

PSALM 49:14-15 Like sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions.¹⁵ But God will redeem my life {Hebrew: soul} from the grave; **he will surely take me to himself**. Selah

The Jews considered Jehovah to be the originator of their spirits as well as the one who took them back.

LUKE 23:34, 44-46 Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**" And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. . . .⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶Jesus called out with a loud voice, "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**" When he had said this, he breathed his last.

ACTS 7:55-60 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." ⁵⁷At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**" ⁶⁰Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "**Lord, do not hold this sin against them.**" When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Stephen was "full of the Holy Spirit." There can be no doubt that during his execution Steven was imitating the attitude of his Lord, Jesus Christ—but he was not imitating Christ's actions. The two petitions that Jesus made on the cross to his Father, Stephen also made. But this man, who was speaking by God's Spirit, did not imitate Christ by making his petitions to the Father (as if Christ was a created being, like Stephen). Rather, seeing both the Father and the Son together, he directed his petitions to the Son, Jesus Christ. Stephen perceived that Christ had the authority and hence deserved the glory which his words conveyed. Stephen directed his words to the one who is caretaker of our souls just as he is the one who made them and owns them—Jehovah. Likewise, Stephen knew that the one who forgives sins is Jehovah. For Stephen, Jesus was Jehovah, his maker and redeemer.

Some may argue that Jehovah can delegate his authority and use an agent to perform such actions; pointing to the Father's presence beside Jesus. But if one looks at Stephen's words it is clear that they are acts of worship directed to Christ personally, in a way that is appropriate only to Jehovah. Isaiah 42:8 I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols; our key verse clearly indicates that while many things may be done in Jehovah's place by his creatures, Jehovah in fact never delegates the right to receive glory and praise and worship. No intermediary is ever treated like Jehovah and at the same time named as anyone other than Jehovah. [38]

[38] In the Old Testament, "angels" sometimes appeared to believers in order to do God's bidding. When a believer spoke to one of these he did not call him an angel, he called him Jehovah—i.e. the believer spoke directly to Jehovah (perhaps) ignoring the identity of the angel. Those believers considered themselves to be in the presence of Jehovah himself. But Stephen's actions are not like that. When he commended *(continued)*



Who is the Creator?

PSALM 95:6-7a Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker; ⁷for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

ISAIAH 40:12—41:4 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? ¹³Who has understood the mind of Jehovah, or instructed him as his counselor? ¹⁴Whom did Jehovah consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? ¹⁵Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. ¹⁶Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. ¹⁷Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. ¹⁸To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? ¹⁹As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple. ²¹Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²²He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, “My way is hidden from Jehovah; my cause is disregarded by my God”? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? Jehovah is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹but those who hope in Jehovah will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. ¹Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment. ²Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow. ³He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not traveled before. ⁴Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah—with the first of them and with the last—I am He.

ISAIAH 48:11-13 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. ¹²Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. ¹³My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.

his spirit, he spoke to Christ and not to the Father even though the Father was there. If Christ is not Jehovah, this would have been at best un-Jewish (unlike the Old Testament examples), and at worst idolatrous. (For more on appearances of the angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, see Appendix A.)

Verse 13 above states quite clearly that Jehovah did the work himself (without assistants who might then claim some of the glory of creation for themselves).

Compare

COLOSSIANS 1:15-19 {A passage referring to Christ...} 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For **by him all things were created**: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, **whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities**; all things were created by him **and for him**. 17 **He is before all things**, and **in him all things hold together**. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that **in everything he might have the supremacy**. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,

That is, it pleased Jehovah for his fullness (that is, himself) to dwell in the body of a man (in the person of the Son). Our key verse prohibits any other explanation:

ISAIAH 42:8 “I am Jehovah; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.”

Note these things from the **Bold** phrases above:

1. No creature (created being) can create all things. (There is always at least one created thing a created being could not create—himself.)
2. No creature can be the creator of all created thrones, powers, or rulers or authorities (even his own).
3. No creature can be the one for whose use and glory all things were created (that one is Jehovah alone).
4. No creature can exist before all created things (even himself).
5. No created being can have supremacy (only Jehovah is over all)

JOHN 1:1-18 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. 6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 **He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him**. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us**. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘**He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me**.’” 16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 **No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known**.

HEBREWS 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 1:2 in simple language tries to explain how both the Father and Son can be the Creator. The Father made the universe through the Son. I.e. The Son made the universe for the Father. Unitarians attempt to portray Christ's role as lesser than the Father's (i.e. the role of a created worker bee (agent) rather than as of Jehovah), with the creative impulse originating in the Father and the Son merely following orders. But this does not agree with Isaiah 48:13 above which says that Jehovah made the earth and heavens with his own hand. There is really nothing in the words of Hebrews 1:2 that require that Christ was a created agent in his role in the creation. The verse equally well gives a sublime description of the equality of the Father and Son in creation—they are both creator yet distinct from each other. See Chapter 13 for passages dealing with the participation of the Holy Spirit in creation.

Creator Incarnate:

According to COLOSSIANS 1:15,19: He {Christ} is the image of the invisible God ... For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

According to JOHN 1:1,3,14: The Word was God ... all things came into being through him and without him not even one thing came into being ... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

According to HEBREWS 1:3: The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

There it is, in plain language.

Jesus Christ is Jehovah, the Creator of all, in the flesh.



CHAPTER 7

CHRIST'S NAME IS JEHOVAH'S NAME

The Name of Jehovah

The writers of the Bible held the NAME of God in reverence. Especially in Old Testament usage, a name represents the very person named. To speak the name of Jehovah is to invoke Jehovah himself; to misuse his name is to attack Jehovah himself; to praise his name is to worship Jehovah himself. The following verses are a few of the many passages that use the "name" of Jehovah in this way.

1 CHRONICLES 16:27-29 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy in his dwelling place. ²⁸ Ascribe to Jehovah, O families of nations, ascribe to Jehovah glory and strength, ²⁹ ascribe to Jehovah the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship Jehovah in the splendor of his holiness.

DEUTERONOMY 32:3-4 I will proclaim the name of Jehovah. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! ⁴ He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

EXODUS 20:7a You shall not misuse the name of Jehovah your God.

ZECHARIAH 14:7-9 It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to Jehovah. When evening comes, there will be light. ⁸ On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea, in summer and in winter. ⁹ Jehovah will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Jehovah, and his name the only name. {That is, the names of other gods will not be mentioned in false worship any more.}



Worship Jehovah, Not Jehovah's Name

The use of such phrases as "the name of Jehovah" or "my name" and "your name" applied to Jehovah in the Old Testament are idioms, i.e. figures of speech. The Hebrew writers, perhaps out of deference to God's holiness or to emphasize and direct the hearers to focus on the True God,

would use such phrases when we modern English writers would just put in God's name or refer to God directly. For example, the "temple of the name (of Jehovah)" is properly understood to mean the temple of Jehovah himself. The Jews (at least the prophets who wrote the Bible) did not idolize God's name by believing that the Jerusalem temple had been built to enshrine his name, as if the word "Jehovah" were a god in itself. The temple was to enshrine Jehovah himself who had chosen to manifest himself there.^[39]

Jehovah's Witnesses believe the use of Jehovah's name is important in and of itself and that the use of it is essential for true worship. I, and I think most Christians, believe the great emphasis on God's proper name, Jehovah, in the Bible, and also the extensive use of the above-mentioned idioms do proclaim the unique greatness and holiness of Jehovah, but the point is not to make us center on the name of Jehovah, but rather on Jehovah himself—the God behind the name, so to speak. Our God uses many names, but he chose to go by the name which is translated "Jehovah" in order to make it clear that the true God is a particular God and is different from the gods of the nations. The Jews did not believe that the point of their worship was to exalt the name Jehovah (as a name), but rather to exalt Jehovah; and they did this by using such poetic expressions as "praise your name." To prove this, look at I Kings 5:3 below, where the phrase "name of Jehovah" is used. This is an important distinction because Jehovah's Witnesses suggest that the focus of Jewish worship was the use of Jehovah's name, (to praise it, seek it, fear it, etc.). The Witnesses teach that one of the main reasons that their organization, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, was called into being by God was to restore the use of God's name to a proper prominence. Christians deny such ideas.

To show yourself that the emphasis on the name of God in the Bible reflects a figure of speech, a way of emphasizing Jehovah's specialness, rather than a key to a special doctrine of God's Name. Read each of the following verses, including 1 Kings 5:3, and mentally substitute "Jehovah" or "you" for the phrases "your name" or "Jehovah's name"—only with such a substitution will the verses have a valid meaning.

The **bold** below denotes this figure of speech where the word "name" denotes Jehovah himself, not the literal word which is his name. The underlined words prove this is the proper interpretation.

2 SAMUEL 22:50 Therefore I will praise you, O Jehovah, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name {meaning, "to You." This is an example of Hebrew poetry which displays "poetic parallelism," the first and last half of the sentence say exactly the same thing in different words: I will praise you = I will sing praises to your name.}

[39] Another way of understanding this idiom is to view God's "name" as meaning a reflection, or a dim image of the real thing. Thus to give this great praise to his name is to imply an even greater, amplified praise to Jehovah himself. To extol the virtues of his mere name is to attribute greater, even inexpressible, virtue to Jehovah himself.

1 KINGS 5:2-3 Solomon sent back this message to Hiram: ³“You know that because of the wars waged against my father David from all sides, he could not build a temple for the Name of Jehovah his God {meaning, “for Jehovah”} until Jehovah put his enemies under his feet.

1 KINGS 8:26-30 {Solomon speaks at the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem...} And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true. ²⁷“But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ²⁸Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, O Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. ²⁹May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘**My Name** {meaning “I, Jehovah”} **shall be there,**’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. {A word does not hear, but Jehovah does.} ³⁰Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

1 KINGS 8:43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, {know you and fear you} as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name. {meaning, “is Jehovah’s house”}.

1 CHRONICLES 29:13 Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. {We do not praise the word “Jehovah,” we praise Jehovah. More parallelism: give you thanks = praise your name}

PSALM 22:22 I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. {meaning, “declare all that Jehovah is,” which is to praise him. More parallelism.}

PSALM 54:1 Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might. {meaning, “by your name and by your might.” More parallelism.}

PSALM 74:7 They burned your sanctuary to the ground; they defiled the dwelling place of your Name. {meaning a dwelling place for you, a name does not “dwell,” but Jehovah does. More parallelism.}

PSALM 75:1 We give thanks to you, O God, we give thanks, for your Name is near; men tell of your wonderful deeds. {meaning, “You are near”}

PSALM 83:16 Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O Jehovah. {meaning, “seek you”; there is no merit or purpose or command to seek the word which God chose as his name.}

JEREMIAH 10:6 No one is like you, O Jehovah; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. {meaning, “you are mighty in power”; the word Jehovah is not a talisman to bring about God’s blessing, or appropriate His power by its mere use. More parallelism.}

MICAH 6:9 Listen! Jehovah is calling to the city—and to fear your name is wisdom—“Heed the rod and the One who appointed it. {meaning, “to fear you.” We do not fear or worship the word “Jehovah”}

God's name represents everything he has revealed about himself. His name stands for Jehovah himself, including all his attributes, actions, past deeds, promises, etc.. To direct our adoration, trust, love or life's emphasis to this word "Jehovah" is to steal these things from their rightful object—Jehovah himself. To do such things is nothing less than idolatry.



The Father's Name is the Son's Name

The Jehovah's Witnesses are correct to point out that the name of Jehovah is used as more than just a name or identifier. In the Bible's usage, Jehovah's name is used as a symbol to stand for the whole nature and power and presence of Jehovah himself. Jehovah's name is indivisible from Jehovah himself; no other being may use it. It is the name above all names. Consider then what Jesus said about his Father's name.

JOHN 17:1-15 {Jesus prays to his Father shortly before his crucifixion.} After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. ⁶I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."

Jehovah's most holy name, the symbol of his supreme deity is not only the Father's name but also the Son's name. Remember our key verse, I saiah 42:8, asserts that Jehovah's glory (and his name) CANNOT be "given" to any created thing, it can only be "given" to Him who is Jehovah. Therefore it is unBiblical to say that the Father alone is Jehovah. The Son, Jesus Christ, is also Jehovah! As a servant, as a humble man, Jesus did not appropriate the name of Jehovah for his own use (though as the Son of God he had the right). The man Jesus' mission was to be a servant of Jehovah in our place. When the substitutionary life and death were over, at the man Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of the Father, then the Holy name is given to and applied to the man. Jehovah became a man at the incarnation and was fully acknowledged to be Jehovah at his ascension. So Christ was given the name Jehovah, not in the sense that the name was transferred to one who was not Jehovah, but in the sense that it was applied for the first time to the One

(Jehovah) who now was a human being. Remember, that in the Biblical language, being given a name is not just being given a label for purposes of identification; getting a name is the actual, official assumption of the powers and prerogatives and glory befitting that name.



Faith in Jesus' Name is Faith in Jehovah's Name

PSALM 79:6 Pour out your wrath on the *nations that do not acknowledge you*, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name;

MICAH 6:9 Listen! Jehovah is calling to the city—and to fear your name is wisdom—“Heed the rod and the One who appointed it.”

JOEL 2:30—3:1 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ³¹The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah. ³²And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as Jehovah has said, *among the survivors whom Jehovah calls*. ¹“In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem.” {See also Psalm 79:6-13 [40]}

Compare:

JOHN 1:9-12 {The Apostle John writes...} The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, **the world did not recognize him**. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, *but his own did not receive him*. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

ROMANS 10:9-17 {The Apostle Paul writes...} That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” {Isaiah 28:16 below} ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” {Joel 2:32 above} ¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of

[40] The work of our Lord as Savior and as judge of the world is also mentioned in the Psalm:
 PSALM 79:6-13 **Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you**, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name; ⁷for they have devoured Jacob and destroyed his homeland. ⁸Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. ⁹Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake. ¹⁰Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” Before our eyes, make known among the nations that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants. ¹¹May the groans of the prisoners come before you; by the strength of your arm preserve those condemned to die. ¹²Pay back into the laps of our neighbors seven times the reproach they have hurled at you, O Lord {Adonai}. ¹³Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.

whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” ¹⁶ *But not all the Israelites accepted the good news.* For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Notice the sequence of underlined passages. In the last of these, v. 13, Paul instructs us that we are to call upon the Lord Jesus, and he implies (by virtue of his quoting Joel) that in so doing we are fulfilling Joel’s instruction to “call upon the name of Jehovah”.

The ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures known as the Septuagint, which was commonly used in Christ’s time, routinely translated the Hebrew “Jehovah” as “kyrios” (Lord). It is very significant then that Paul applies this passage to Christ who is routinely called “kyrios” (Lord) in the New Testament Scriptures.

It is belief (trust) in someone that results in our calling upon his name in time of trouble. In the light of what the prophet Joel wrote, it would be idolatrous to turn to Christ first and to trust in him if he were not Jehovah. Paul and John who wrote these epistles would surely recognize this and avoid this wording if it was not the intended message.

Notice also that in Joel and John and Paul’s words there is a reference (see words in *ITALIC* above) to the fact that not all who are called to faith (faith in Jehovah according to Joel, and to faith in Jesus according to John and Paul) accept the good news. This parallel also suggests that Joel, Paul, and John were writing about the same one: Jesus, Jehovah.

Finally, notice that in verse 11 Paul refers to a passage in Isaiah below.

ISAIAH 28:16 So this is what the Sovereign Jehovah says: “See I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.”

Paul is here recalling the Scripture and he adds the clarifying words, “in him” to specify who it is that we are to trust. We have already seen that this cornerstone is Christ. Therefore, in him in Romans 10:11 refers to Christ and so parallels the idea in Romans 10:13 that the one we are to trust enough to call on is Christ.



***Jesus’ Name is Literally
“Jehovah Our Righteousness”***

JEREMIAH 23:5-6 “The days are coming,” declares Jehovah, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: Jehovah Our Righteousness.”

In ancient Israel people were sometimes given names which in Hebrew had a meaning which was intended to honor God for some great blessing. In this prophecy Jeremiah gives a name of the Messiah who was to come. While the words are clear, the intended meaning of the name can be understood two ways:

1. his name is a statement of credit to Jehovah: "Jehovah our Righteousness"
(meaning, "Jehovah is our Righteousness")

Or

2. his name is literally Jehovah; his name is: "Jehovah, our Righteousness"

The Hebrew text does not exclude either reading. You the reader must judge for yourself, but the following verse may be a helpful reference:

Compare:

1 CORINTHIANS 1:27-31 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

This is not a mere poetic or declarative name. Christ did not just bring us or give us wisdom and righteousness and holiness and redemption—as a human being might give us some "thing." Rather, he **IS** those things, and he gives us himself. When we receive him (in a spiritual union), we have righteousness, holiness and redemption HIMSELF, dwelling in us. The closeness of the link between Christ's person and our righteousness is the reason Isaiah named Christ, Jehovah our Righteousness.^[41]

[41] On a Tangent: There may seem to be an uncertainty of meaning of the words in 1 Corinthians 1:27-31. Here we see Jesus is "Our Righteousness" but he is also "from God" and the Trinitarian/unitarian question seems unanswered. I propose that there really is no ambiguity. Let me explain how a Trinitarian might untangle the meaning of the name: **Jehovah, our righteousness**. If they are both Jehovah, then the Father and Son always have all of God's attributes and partake in all of God's actions, but each has a different relationship to (role in) manifesting the attributes and performing the actions because one is the Father and one is the Son. Thus a statement about Jehovah will be true of both the Father and the Son, but it will not necessarily be true in exactly the same way. What I mean can be made clear by a specific example:

- Jesus is Jehovah, who became our Incarnate Savior.
- The Father is Jehovah, who sent us the one who could save us and who then accepted the Messiah's sacrifice as a sufficient atonement.

After understanding that Jesus and the Father are Jehovah, one can see how both had a crucial role in our salvation, both can be called "**Jehovah our Righteousness**" (i.e. Jehovah, our Source of righteousness), both are called our savior. But we cannot say that the Father died on the cross for us and we cannot say that the Son went on his own without the Father sending him. The point is that neither the Father or the Son is any less our savior from sin and death than the other is. To use a profane analogy, in the
(continued)

Isaiah also gives a similar "ambiguous" name for the Messiah:

ISAIAH 7:14 Therefore the Lord {Adonai} himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. {which means "God with us"}.

This can be taken to mean that the Messiah's name will be a sign that:

1. Jehovah is invisibly with us, and Jesus is a visible reminder of Jehovah's invisible presence.

Or

2. Jehovah is literally, physically "descended" to be with us.

Most Christians go with the second, more literal sense, not because we merely prefer to, but because of all the other Bible passages which establish Christ as Jehovah.



Good and Bad Arguments

Jehovah's Witnesses frequently object that it makes no sense for the Father of speak to the Son (as if he was a separate person) if they are both Jehovah. This is a fallacious argument. If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Jehovah, and if for their own reasons they wish to speak to or about each other verbally or through the writing of the prophets (rather than merely in silent communication with each other), who can give a Biblical reason as to why they cannot do so? Such objections are from human "reason," not from the Scriptures.

Any argument that has the form, "Such and such interpretation of passage X is absurd or ridiculous (or contrary to common sense)" is simply an ASSERTION of opinion and as such is a very weak argument. On the other hand, a Biblical argument could have the form, "Such and such interpretation of passage X is contrary to passages W, Y, and Z, and hence cannot be correct." Or "passages W, X, Y and Z all fit together to teach us so and so, and this interpretation rings truer (is a better fit) than the proposed interpretation because it does not ignore such and such." Not all such arguments are sound either, but they can at least be evaluated.

The Jehovah's Witness argument is also undone by passages which show Jehovah speaking to himself, even in the Old Testament, as in the following Old Testament passage, where Jehovah

liberation of Europe after World War II, an officer who "fought" at headquarters and an officer who "fought" at the front are both rightly called "liberators of Europe."

In a similar way, Father and the Son can both be equally the True God and our Savior without being exactly the same "person."

speaks of himself in the third person. For an in-depth look at the context of this passage see Appendix A.

Zechariah 3:2a **Jehovah** said to Satan, "**Jehovah** rebuke you, Satan! **Jehovah**, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you!"

We human beings certainly talk (and listen) to ourselves in a simple fashion, according to our simple nature. How then can we presume to say that the One whose ways are far above our ways, cannot speak to Himself, and that when he speaks to himself, he is not doing it in a more Real way as befits his nature—which is also far above ours (= different from ours). Trinitarians merely believe that when God speaks to Himself, there is a Person who is listening!

Indeed, it may even be correct to view this passage as Zechariah prophetically recording the words of the eternal Son of God rebuking Satan by the authority of his Father.



***The Father and the Son Share
One Throne, One Face, One Name***

The passages below use the picture of a name on our foreheads as a mark of ownership by our master.

REVELATION 14:1 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

The passage above could be considered ambiguous as to what exactly is written on their foreheads, i.e. whether it is one name or two; but the next passage is even more so.

REVELATION 22:3-5 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The verse above speaks of the name on the foreheads as one name ("his name"), yet the only object of this reference seems to be the one who sits on "the throne of God and the Lamb." Apparently then we are to understand that "his name" and "his face" are those of the Father and the Son simultaneously. Likewise we see that their servants serve (worship) one master in worshipping "him." Passages like these require a considerable stretch to be explained using the unitarian belief.

The passage below, however, seems to speak of several names.

REVELATION 3:11-13 {Christ is speaking ... } I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹²Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

It is not logically necessary, that because the Christ's name is "new," we must take this verse to mean that the Son of God is being elevated to a position that he never had before. We have seen previously that the name Jehovah belonged to the eternal Son even before his incarnation. Jesus' new name is the name which no man had ever had before, but which is now applied to the man Jesus Christ—the name Jehovah. As we have seen elsewhere, Trinitarian hypothesis that Christ has two natures—Jehovah from eternity to eternity, and man from his conception—removes the confusion of this passage. That is, the newness of the name arises because the name is assumed by a man at a particular time, and before that no man had the name Jehovah. The time it became his name was (in reality) at his incarnation but it was publicly associated with him at his exaltation—it is hence, "new."

***Christ's Nature: The Trinitarian Hypothesis
-Versus-
The Unitarian Hypothesis.***

Trinitarians sees the Scriptures as speaking of Christ from a shifting point of view; sometimes they speak of the Son as the Messiah, the Christ, who is a man. Sometimes they speak of the Son as God, and a few times they speak of him as both, as the God-man.[42]

These points of view are reconciled by the hypothesis that the Son of God in his Incarnation took on a human nature and became 100% man while remaining 100% God. This single hypothesis reconciles and brings into focus what the Bible says from these seemingly conflicting points of view. This principal may not be as simple as we would perhaps like, but I believe that keeping this duality in mind when reading the Bible does fit all the facts and does make clear many things which the unitarian approach must shrug off as unexplainable and supposedly insignificant.

The truth is that the unitarian hypothesis—that Christ is a special being created by Jehovah and is not Jehovah—is no simpler than the Trinitarian hypothesis; the complexities just arise in different places. Trinitarians are challenged to explain those passages which speak of Christ as a man, but unitarians must explain away (or ignore) all of the passages that indicate that Christ is

[42] This "ambiguity of identity" of Christ we are speaking of is not some verbal trickery read into the Scriptures by Trinitarians. Rather, it really is the approach taken by the Scriptures themselves in order to convey a subtle truth to us—that Christ has both a human nature and a Jehovah nature, that he has a human office as Messiah and a Divine office as the eternal Son of God.

Jehovah. Any argument that the Jehovah's Witnesses position is simpler and is therefore stronger, is simply ignoring these difficulties and is not an honest argument.

Fortunately, we do not have to rely on indirect, hard to interpret passages like those above from Revelation to prove the deity of Christ; there are plenty of clear, unambiguous passages establishing that Jesus is Jehovah.

We will now look again at verse Revelation 22:5 above ...

REVELATION 22:5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

This is similar to ...

REVELATION 21:22-23 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Note that the verses from Revelation chapter 21 do speak of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb; some would say this indicates that the Lamb is not the Lord God Almighty. But rather than a list of two beings; I believe that verse 22 and especially verse 23 are another case of poetic repetition or poetic parallelism being used to convey a stronger, subtler meaning, i.e. look at it as saying: "Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty (the undivided God known by all from the Old Testament) and Jesus, Jehovah Incarnate (Son of Man, redeemer of mankind) are its (one) temple." They are not two Jehovahs but two names of Jehovah, two aspects of Jehovah's being, that is, Jehovah the invisible spirit and Jehovah the incarnate/physical Savior.

Just as there are not going to be two temples; there is only going to be one being on whom our worship is centered, and that Being is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Similarly, the words, the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp are not saying there are two sources of light in paradise, but rather are saying in two ways that there will be a (single) source of light paradise. This is a New Testament example of Hebraic poetic parallelism: the Glory of God gives it light = the Lamb is its lamp. The glory of the Father and the Son will illumine heaven.

REVELATION 3:21-22 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Again verse 21 pictures the God-man's return to heaven to sit on his Father's throne. It is important to remember that this is picture language and represents more than sitting on chairs in heaven. The sitting on a throne embodies the assumption of power, office, and glory. Notice also that two thrones are mentioned, "my throne" and "my Father's throne." Christ is not saying that mankind and the Son and the Father will all sit on Jehovah's throne—a jealous God would not allow any other to sit on his throne. Believers will not be elevated to deity, to sit on the throne of

Jehovah. Rather, we are going to be elevated to the throne of Christ which is the Throne of David, the throne of the human Messiah, in order to rule with him as the Bible often promises. We see here clearly that Christ sits on two thrones; as the Son of Man he sits on his human throne (with us) and as God also sits as an equal on the throne of his Father.

The sharing of each of these thrones involves a sharing of power, office, and glory by the ones sitting on the throne. Believers will exercise the authority of the Messiah, and Jesus exercises the authority of Jehovah. Notice also that neither is really an elevation to a new authority but rather a restoration of glory previously held. For mankind, there is a restoration to perfection and to kingship that is similar to the dominion over creation that was originally given to Adam. This is doubly convincing since the first one on the throne, Christ, is called the new Adam, for the very reason that he lived the perfect human life required of, but not attained by Adam. Adam was bumped from the throne by sin and, the sons of Adam are restored to it by becoming the heirs of the new Adam, the savior from sin. As discussed in the chapter 3 The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ, Jesus' return to heaven is also not the elevation of a creation to Deity, but Deity's resumption of the continuous and unrestrained use of power, office, and glory set aside when he entered into his creation as a humble man and servant savior.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he {Messiah} must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself {Messiah} will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

In verse 27 we see that the Father is not subject to the authority (throne) of the Messiah, which is a human authority. The reign of Christ, the Messiah, will continue until the old things all pass away. Then even the throne of Messiah will be subjected to the Father. The Son of God will be subject, as he always is, to the will of the Father. The text appears to speak of a change between the times before judgment and the time after everything is subjected to Christ, but we must be careful in trying to define what this change consists of. Does this change necessarily say anything about the nature of the Son, or is it merely a predictable unfolding of the Father and Son's current relationship, complicated by the Son's assumption of human nature? Before this final event, Christ is reigning while the Father is subjecting all creation to the Son's reign. Afterwards, the Father will reign as the Son subjects himself and all creation to God. There does appear to be a "consolidation" or ordering of authority, with the eternal Father over the eternal Son over all creation. This is coincident with other cosmic changes: the permanent elimination of death and sin (and even the possibility of sin), and the eternal banishment of Satan and all unbelievers. A truly new order will come harmoniously into place, including, it seems, a new or renewed physical universe.

But the meaning of all of this with regard to the relationship of the Father to the Son is too indefinite to serve as a foundation for proving the unitarian position. It does not, for example, require that the Son be considered part of creation; neither does it say anything that would require that we deny that Christ is Jehovah (even though unitarians will leap to this conclusion). It does suggest that even in eternity the Son will be subject to the Father in some way. But this is no more than we have seen before, Christ has always been subject to the Father's will. Moreover, the very reason that Jesus Christ is called the Son is that he is "son-like" relative to the Father. And sonship brings certain duties, including deference to one's father. But this does not require us to consider the Father alone to be uncreated Jehovah, for, even here, the Son is over (not in the same classification as) the creation.

I leave it to the reader to explore further.^[43]



He is Light

PSALM 27:1 Jehovah is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

1 JOHN 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

Compare:

JOHN 1:3-5 {John speaks of Jesus ...} Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

JOHN 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

[43] Martin Luther writes of this passage: "Christ will deliver the Kingdom to God the Father, i.e. he will set aside faith and concealment, and will openly present his own people before God the Father, and will thus visibly place us in that Kingdom which he had established and exercises daily at present, so that we shall see him without a veil or dark word, in the clearest manner. It will then be called a Kingdom, not of faith, but of glorious, visible existence. And though it is the same Kingdom, that of Christ (who became man for the purpose of establishing faith) and that of God (for whosoever hears the Son, hears God himself); yet it is now properly called the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, because God is now hidden {veiled} in his majesty and has given all power to Christ, that he might bring us to God through word and baptism. Moreover, he has hidden himself in Christ so that we shall not seek nor know God elsewhere than in Christ. But over there it will properly be called the Kingdom of God after Christ shall have achieved all that he is to achieve, and shall no more rule under infirmity and troubles, but shall have put away death and sin, and all that is opposed to God, so that we shall see him with the Father in his divine glory, and shall no longer need to be concerned with the gospel, baptism, and forgiveness of sins, nor with learning to know him; nor shall we fear any disaster whatever, but nothing besides God, everlasting righteousness, blessedness, and life will abide with us in visible presence, and he will bestow all this upon us, so that we shall be even as he is." [From Sermon on 1 Corinthians 15:24, quoted from Luther's Works, Concordia Publishing House, in John Schaller's Biblical Christology, Northwestern Publishing House, page 205]



Jehovah—the Rock of Believers

Jehovah is given the name “Rock” in many places in the Old Testament. As Alexander Cruden wrote in a note in his well known concordance of 1769:

The name of Rock is also given to God, by way of metaphor, because God is the strength, the refuge, and the asylum of his people, as the rocks were in those places, whither the people retired in case of an unforeseen attack or irruption of the enemy: The LORD is my rock and my fortress; who is a rock, save our God? (Psalm 18:2,31). Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation (Deuteronomy 32:15).

Notice as you read the passages below that the name “Rock” is often associated with the names “Redeemer” and “Savior” and certainly with the name Jehovah.

DEUTERONOMY 32:15-18 Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior. ¹⁶They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. ¹⁷They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. ¹⁸You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.

PSALM 18:1-2 I love you, O **Jehovah**, my strength. ²Jehovah is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my **salvation**, my stronghold.

PSALM 18:30-31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of **Jehovah** is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him. ³¹For who is God besides the Jehovah? And who is the Rock except our God?

PSALM 19:14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer.

PSALM 31:2 -3 Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. ³Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

PSALM 78:34-35 Whenever God slew them, they would seek him; they eagerly turned to him again. ³⁵They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their **Redeemer**.

PSALM 89:26 He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.’

PSALM 95:1-3 Come, let us sing for joy to **Jehovah**; let us shout aloud to the **Rock** of our **salvation**. ²Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. ³For **Jehovah** is the great God, the great King above all gods.

ISAIAH 26:4 Trust in **Jehovah** forever, for the Lord Jehovah is the Rock eternal.

The following sections deal with other specific aspects of the Rock theme in the New and Old Testaments. After that, the identity of the Redeemer and Savior mentioned in the above passages is also explored.

Note: In the New Testament, the word rock is rendered with one of several Greek words. In the passages below, the use of these three Greek words are marked with one of the following letter codes for the reader's information.

One word for rock can occur in either masculine or feminine forms; the use of each gender conveys a slightly different meaning:

- m = masculine πέτρος / petros = rock (piece of rock, stone) [also the apostle Petros/Peter]
- f = feminine πέτρα / petra = mass of rock (from which a stone might come)

The Greeks also had another family of words for a stone.

- L λιθάζω / lithadzo = piece of rock, a stone. E.g. a building stone.
- λίθος / lithos = piece of rock, a stone. E.g. millstone, stumbling stone.

He is the Rock, the Solid Foundation Stone

“ROCK” is a special name of Jehovah in the Old Testament; it is exclusively his name. The previous and the following passages illustrate that he is to be our only rock. This metaphorical exclusiveness reflects the required actual exclusiveness in daily life of our reliance on Jehovah, the jealous God, for protection and support:

ISAIAH 44:6-8 “This is what Jehovah says—Israel's King and Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. ⁷Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let him foretell what will come. ⁸Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

PSALM 62:1-2 My soul finds rest in God alone; my **salvation** comes from him. ²He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

Compare:

MATTHEW 7:24-25 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock {f}. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock {f}.

MATTHEW 16:16-18 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter {m}, and on this rock {f} I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

The sections below explore further the theme of Jehovah, "the Rock."

The Stumbling Stone

ISAIAH 8:13-14 Jehovah of hosts is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread, ¹⁴ and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel **he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.** And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.

Notice that the passage is speaking only of Jehovah. Jehovah himself is the stone who will make men to stumble.

Compare:

1 PETER 2:4-8 As you come to him, the living Stone{L}—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones {L}, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone {L} in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ⁷Now to you who believe, this stone {L} is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone {L} the builders rejected has become the capstone," ⁸ and, "A stone {L} that causes men to stumble and a rock {f} that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

ROMANS 9:33—10:4 As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone {L} that causes men to stumble and a rock {f} that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." ¹Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Thus we see that Isaiah in verses 8:13-14 above was speaking specifically of the Christ when he was proclaimed, "Jehovah ..., he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." It is Christ (as Jehovah) who is the stumbling block, the one in whom we are to take sanctuary in or else to fear and to dread. He is the one in whom the righteous will believe and in whom the unrighteous will be unable to believe (1 Peter 2:8b above).

The Spiritual Rock in the Wilderness

We have seen that throughout the history of Israel Jehovah is called the Rock. The following analysis of Israel's historical Rock during the exodus from Egypt and the trek to the Promised Land, is given by Paul:

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-5 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock {f} that accompanied them, and that rock {f} was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

We see three points that Paul is making about Christ, Israel's spiritual Rock in the wilderness of Sinai:

- They ate spiritual food from him.
- They drank spiritual water from him.
- Christ accompanied them for the whole 40 years in the wilderness.

We also see that although Christ accompanied them, the Israelites through their disobedience were not pleasing to God, and they spent 40 years of exile with the Rock, to learn obedience. During this time almost all of those who had left Egypt died and were buried along the scattered course of their wanderings. As we look at the following passages from the Old Testament, I believe we can see that Paul was actually thinking of these passages when he made these statements to the Corinthians. Paul saw hidden in the Old Testament accounts a description of both Christ and the Father, and as we will see, both roles were attributed to Jehovah.

Compare:

EXODUS 13:21-22 By day Jehovah went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²² Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

Later a reference is made to the "angel of God" whose movements parallel those of the pillar ...

EXODUS 14:19—15:21 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night Jehovah drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night Jehovah looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! Jehovah is fighting for them against Egypt."

Then Jehovah said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and Jehovah swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived. ²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day Jehovah saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ And when the Israelites saw the great power Jehovah displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared Jehovah and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

¹ Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to Jehovah:

"I will sing to Jehovah, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. ²Jehovah is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. ³Jehovah is a warrior; Jehovah is his name. ⁴Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. ⁵The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone. ⁶Your right hand, O Jehovah, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Jehovah, shattered the enemy. ⁷In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble. ⁸By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood firm like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. ⁹The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.' ¹⁰But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. ¹¹Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? ¹²You stretched out your right hand and the earth swallowed them. ¹³In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. ¹⁴The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia. ¹⁵The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away; ¹⁶terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone—until your people pass by, O Jehovah, until the people you bought pass by. ¹⁷You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—the place, O Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Jehovah, your hands established. ¹⁸Jehovah will reign for ever and ever. ¹⁹When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, Jehovah brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground."

²⁰Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. ²¹Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to Jehovah, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea."

In the next passage Jehovah speaks directly to Moses about the relationship between this "angel" and Jehovah himself.

EXODUS 23:20-24 "See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. ²¹Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. ²²If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. ²³My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out. ²⁴Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces.

It is likely that Paul was equating this angel with Christ; we know that the Hebrew word for angel was not restricted to "angelic beings" but could mean a messenger or agent of any kind—spirit being, human, or Son of God. The proposition that this is Christ is supported by the close parallels between verses Exodus 14:20-21 and New Testament themes:

²⁰See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.

Christ is sent by the Father; Christ is often likened to our shepherd who guards and guides us.

²¹Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion,

We are instructed to listen to, obey, and be faithful to Christ;
since my Name is in him.

The name of Jehovah is possessed by Christ.

This last statement is particularly significant; Jehovah says, "My name is in him." In The Old Testament Jehovah's name is used in many ways as was seen in the beginning of this chapter, but it is not said to be "in" anyone else, except this "angel." And as we have seen the New Testament passages above, Christ has the same special claim to the name of God. For more on the "Angel of Jehovah," see Appendix A.

NEHEMIAH 9:10-21 {The Jewish leader Nehemiah speaks to Jehovah of the days of Moses and the Exodus...} You sent miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. ¹¹ You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. ¹² By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take. ¹³ You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. ¹⁴ You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. ¹⁵ In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them. ¹⁶ But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. ¹⁷ They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, ¹⁸ even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, 'This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,' or when they committed awful blasphemies. ¹⁹ Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. ²⁰ You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. ²¹ For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

In verses 15 & 20 we see the basis for Paul's statement above in 1 Corinthians 10:1-5; we see that the miraculous food and water given by Jehovah was food and water from Christ, the Rock of Israel who went with them throughout the 40 years. In verses 17-21, we see the Father's dissatisfaction with them but also his continuing sustenance of them through Christ during those 40 years.

ISAIAH 48:16b—49:5 And now the Lord Jehovah has sent me, with his Spirit. ¹⁷ This is what Jehovah says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am Jehovah your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. ¹⁸ If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. ¹⁹ Your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like its numberless grains; their name would never be cut off nor destroyed from before me." Leave Babylon, flee from the Babylonians! Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth; say, "Jehovah has redeemed his servant Jacob." ²¹ They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and water gushed out. ²² "There is no peace," says Jehovah, "for the wicked." ¹ Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born Jehovah called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name. ² **He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,** in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. ³ He said to me, "**You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.**" ⁴ But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in Jehovah's hand, and my reward is with my God." ⁵ And now Jehovah says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of Jehovah and my God has been my strength.

Here we see in a more explicit form a prophetic revelation of the Christ in the wilderness events. The description of the acts of Jehovah, of the Rock of Israel, is followed immediately in Isaiah 49:1-5 by description of the Messiah or Christ.^[44] It may be that this Messianic passage in Isaiah's words about the wilderness Rock confirmed for Paul that it was indeed Christ who was the Rock who was caring for the Israelites. So even in the Old Testament exodus the future role of the incarnate Christ was foreshadowed.^[45]

In this passage we see the same separation/distinction between the Father (who speaks of the servant savior) and the servant-Son (who is being spoken of) that we have seen throughout the Bible. And we see the same subtlety, the same indistinctness of expression if you will, that arises whenever the Bible speaks of things related to the dual nature of Christ, the God-man.



The Gathering Hen

Another look at the Isaiah passage above...

ISAIAH 48:16b—49:5 And now the Lord Jehovah has sent me, with his Spirit. ¹⁷This is what Jehovah says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am Jehovah your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. ¹⁸If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. ¹⁹Your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like its numberless grains; their name would never be cut off nor destroyed from before me.” Leave Babylon, flee from the Babylonians! Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth; say, “Jehovah has redeemed his servant Jacob.” ²¹They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and water gushed out. ²²“There is no peace,” says Jehovah, “for the wicked.” ¹Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born Jehovah called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name. ²He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. ³He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.” ⁴But I said, “I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in Jehovah’s hand, and my reward is with my God.” ⁵And now Jehovah says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of Jehovah and my God has been my strength.

[44] “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “mashiyach” (messiah). Both mean “anointed one,” referring to the anointing with oil by which a priest or king was ordained in Old Testament times. Note also verse 49:2 (**bold**) pictures one who, like Christ in Revelation 1:16; 2:16; and 19:13-15, 21, has a mouth like a sword.

[45] The double underlined passages remind us of John 6:30-58 where Christ speaks at length to the Jews of the limited benefits of the manna during the exodus compared to the greater benefits resulting from his death on the cross. He tells them that he is the true (better) bread from heaven and that his blood is true (better) drink.

Above, the Messiah, the Son of David (and of Israel), speaks from the Old Testament of his mission and his rejection.

The incarnate Christ's words in the following New Testament passages echo the themes of the verses from Isaiah.

MATTHEW 23:37-39 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. ³⁸ Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

And a parallel account in Luke:

LUKE 19:41-44 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."



Who is Our Redeemer and Savior?

The name Rock is closely associated with the names Redeemer and Savior. Here are passages which speak of Jehovah as Savior and Redeemer. The verb "to redeem" means "to pay the price for," or "to pay the ransom for" in the sense of paying off the debt or ransom price of another. An unpaid debt in Biblical times could result in a person losing everything and being sold as a slave; a redeemer was one who through compassion or duty paid the price to save someone from this fate.

ISAIAH 43:1-12 But now, this is what Jehovah says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ³For I am Jehovah, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. ⁴Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." ⁸Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf. ⁹All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true." ¹⁰"You are my witnesses," declares Jehovah, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. ¹¹I, even I, am Jehovah, and apart from me there is no savior. ¹²I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares

Jehovah, “that I am God.” {Notice the strong link between Jehovah being the Savior and his being God.}

ISAIAH 41:13-14 For I am Jehovah, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, “Do not fear; I will help you. ¹⁴ Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you,” declares Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

ISAIAH 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will be drunk on their own blood, as with wine. Then all mankind will know that I, Jehovah, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

HOSEA 13:4-14 “But I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me. ⁵ I cared for you in the desert, in the land of burning heat. ⁶ When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me. ⁷ So I will come upon them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk by the path. ⁸ Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart. ⁹ You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper. ¹⁰ Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes’? ¹¹ So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away. ¹² The guilt of Ephraim is stored up, his sins are kept on record. ¹³ Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him, but he is a child without wisdom; when the time arrives, he does not come to the opening of the womb. ¹⁴ I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? I will have no compassion”

Jehovah's words spoken through the prophet Hosea proclaim that there is no other savior and no God but Jehovah. No other one but He redeems us from sin; no one but Jehovah ransoms us from death. It is Jehovah who paid the price of our sin for us. This has a familiar, New Testament sound to it!

PSALM 130:6—131:2 My soul waits for Jehovah more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. ⁷ O Israel, put your hope in Jehovah, for with Jehovah is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. ⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. ¹ My heart is not proud, O Jehovah, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. ² But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Jehovah did not plan to have one of his creations redeem us; he was not going to send a stand-in to do it—he would do it himself, in the future! We see here a clear prophecy of who the savior of the world was to be.

JOB 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

The double underlined phrases in the passage above appear to refer to the same person. Job's hope for the resurrection lay in seeing his Redeemer Savior who also was his God. And Job's God would Himself stand on the earth; He would have a bodily form. God would be visible for Job's and others' eyes to see at the resurrection.

TITUS 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

This is not someone else, this is not a substitute for Jehovah; it is Jehovah who came to earth as its God and its Redeemer. In words similar to those of Job, Paul above proclaims Jesus to be that God and Savior.

2 PETER 1:1-4 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: ²Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Again we see the link between God and Savior. In fact both the New Testament and the Old Testament are explicitly clear—our God is our Savior. The distinctive Christian insight, based on the Scriptures, is that Jehovah himself paid the price of our redemption. He did not do it by creating Jesus and sending a created being to die as a payment. What Christians believe the Scriptures show is that Jehovah himself will redeem Israel from their sins (PSALM 130:8).^[46] And Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us (TITUS 2:14) is in fact Jehovah, for the Bible says here and elsewhere that Christ gave himself; he was not only given by his Father.

None of this leaves the Father out of the picture. While Christ is the sacrifice of atonement—the very currency which bought our atonement. The Father made the sacrifice, paid the ransom, so that our enslaving debt might be paid off:

JOHN 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (KJV)

ROMANS 3:22-26 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God {and need redemption}, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

[46] and Gentile believers as well:

GALATIANS 3:13-14 Christ **redeemed** us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ¹⁴He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

v. 25, 26: The Father was both the holy judge demanding just punishment for every sin and also the merciful one who arranges a way out by presenting the payment. He is also the one who received the payment and so declares just (justifies) those who believe in Christ the Redeemer. This is our Father, our Redeemer.

Additional Passages

A few of the many additional passages dealing with "Savior" and "Redeemer" are listed below. These passages make it clear that the work of the Father and Son in salvation are intimately and inseparably interwoven.

ACTS 13:23 {Paul refers to David...} "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised."

LUKE 1:67-69 His {John the Baptist's} father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: ⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. ⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David."

LUKE 24:20-21 {On the road to Emmaus...} ²⁰ "The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place."

REVELATION 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

JOHN 4:40-42 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

In the following passage, references to Christ are in **bold**:

EPHESIANS 1:4-10 For he {the Father} chose us in **him** {Christ} before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through **Jesus Christ**, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the **One** he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in **Christ**, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

1 PETER 1:17-21 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

COLOSSIANS 1:12-15 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

1 TIMOTHY 2:3-6 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.

TITUS 1:3-4 and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, ⁴ To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

HEBREWS 9:9-15 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. ¹⁰ They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. ¹¹ When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place {like the Jewish priests entered the Most Holy Place of the Jerusalem temple once a year to sprinkle animal blood to atone for sin} once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! ¹⁵ For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

2 TIMOTHY 1:9-10 {God} who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

TITUS 3:4-7 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

ACTS 5:29-31 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.



CHAPTER 8

JEHOVAH'S ATTRIBUTES ARE CHRIST'S ATTRIBUTES

Jesus' Word, Like Jehovah's Word, is Eternal

Chapter 1 identified some of Jehovah's attributes. Subsequent chapters have established that Christ's shares Jehovah's supremacy and glory. This chapter collects a few passages which compare Christ's other attributes to the attributes of Jehovah found in the Old Testament. These are not proofs, but they are included to support the deity of Christ, since parallels between Christ's nature and Jehovah's nature will be evident if Christ is indeed Jehovah.

Jehovah

ISAIAH 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.

Christ

MATTHEW 24:34-35 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.



Like Jehovah, Christ is Eternal and Unchanging

Jehovah

GENESIS 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

ISAIAH 57:15-16 For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. ¹⁶I will not accuse forever, nor will I always be angry, for then the spirit of man would grow faint before me—the breath of man that I have created."

ISAIAH 48:11-13 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another. ¹²Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. ¹³*My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens*; when I summon them, they all stand up together.

PSALM 90:1-4 Jehovah, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. ²Before the mountains were born or *you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.* ³You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." ⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

ISAIAH 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, Jehovah—with the first of them and with the last—I am he.

LAMENTATIONS 5:19 You, O Jehovah, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation.

MALACHI 3:6 I Jehovah do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

From the beginning of creation to the end of time, Jehovah exists, ageless and unchanging.

The Father

JAMES 1:17 Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. {Revised Standard Version}

Christ

JOHN 1:1-3,10,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* ... ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ... ¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

MICAH 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins {NIV footnote: Hebrew: goings out} are from of old, from ancient times {NIV footnote: "or from days of eternity"}.

HEBREWS 1:8-12 But about the Son he {the Father} says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." ¹⁰He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. ¹²You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

HEBREWS 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

From the beginning of creation to the end of time, Jesus Christ exists, ageless and unchanging. See also the following: Chapter 6, section: The First and Last, The Beginning and the End, The Alpha and Omega and Chapter 10, section: Wisdom Incarnate.



Omnipresence and Omniscience

Omnipresence—being everywhere at the same time. Behind this abstract theological term is an issue that we should not ignore. Only God is everywhere, created beings cannot be everywhere at one time. Certainly this is true of human beings, but what about created spiritual beings—angels or devils? Though Satan wishes us to think he can be everywhere, and he and his assistant demons try to make it appear so, there is nothing in the Bible that would indicate that the Devil can be everywhere at once. On the other hand, both Jehovah and Christ are explicitly credited with being everywhere at once. No other being in the Bible is described in this way; it appears to be a unique attribute of God.

Jehovah

JOB 34:20-23 They die in an instant, in the middle of the night; the people are shaken and they pass away; the mighty are removed without human hand. ²¹ His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step. ²² There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide. ²³ God has no need to examine men further, that they should come before him for judgment.

1 KINGS 8:27, 29-30 {Solomon prays in poetic language at the dedication of the first Temple in Jerusalem...} “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ... ²⁹ May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall dwell there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. ³⁰ Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place and when you hear, forgive.”

JEREMIAH 23:23-24 “Am I only a God nearby,” declares Jehovah, “and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares Jehovah. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares Jehovah.

Jehovah is everywhere, he “fills the heavens and the earth.”

Christ’s Omnipresence

MATTHEW 28:20b “... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 18:20 “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Christ definitely has to be in many places at the same time to be continually with all believers.

EPHESIANS 4:7-10 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” ⁹ (What

does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

The exalted Christ is doing what Jehovah does, filling the whole universe.

Christ's Omniscience

COLOSSIANS 2:1-5 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. ² My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

JOHN 2:24-25 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. ²⁵ He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:3-5 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.



Christ, as Jehovah, is Holy and Perfect

Jehovah

LEVITICUS 19:1-2 Jehovah said to Moses, ²"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.'"

DEUTERONOMY 32:3-4 I will proclaim the name of Jehovah. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! ⁴He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Christ

ACTS 3:14-15 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

1 JOHN 3:4-6 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

HEBREWS 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.



CHAPTER 9

JEHOVAH, THE HUSBAND OF BELIEVERS

We have looked at numerous short proofs that Christ is Jehovah. There are also more complex and subtle evidences that such is true. This chapter examines one of these, and illustrates how the whole Bible proclaims the Deity of Christ!

The Bridegroom in the Old Testament is Jehovah

In the Old Testament Jehovah likens his people to his bride and wife. This metaphor/comparison occurs in many contexts and is often elaborated by a sequence of actual events. That is, the central theme of being a bride or wife to Jehovah is elaborated by several sub-themes. The sequence of events/themes can be summarized as follows:

- Jehovah has betrothed and loved *his people* as a *bridegroom* does a *bride*.
- Those who turn from Jehovah to worship false gods are “playing the *harlot*” and are “*adulterous*.”
- Jehovah *abandons* the unfaithful wife for a time (leaving her *Desolate* and *Deserted*).
- But Jehovah always calls his unfaithful wife to *turn* from her sin and *return* to him—but she does not do this on her own.
- In the end, *Jehovah will himself bring about* a reconciliation and *restoration* and cleanses her of her *iniquity* and *impurity*. In this he is referred to as a *Savior* or *Redeemer*.
- Jehovah will establish an *everlasting covenant* with his wife; it shall *never* again be broken by *sin*.
- With the reconciliation, the *riches* and *honor* of the *gentiles* (“the *nations*”) will be given to her.
- With the reconciliation, she shall continue in *peace* and *joy* and *righteousness* forever.

Paralleling the comparison to a bride or wife, is another, closely related metaphor:

- Jehovah’s people are called “*Jerusalem*,” “*Zion*,” “*the city*,” etc..
- The city was *deserted/abandoned/desolate* but it will be *restored* as an *inheritance/heritage* from God.
- The city will then be ornamented with *jewels* and *gold*.
- And the *nations/gentiles/peoples/foreigners/aliens* will come to that city.

- There will be eternal *feasting, peace, and glory*.

Throughout this chapter, words related to the themes above will be in **bold**.

* * *

God uses the first metaphor in the third book of Moses:

LEVITICUS 20:1-2, 5 Jehovah said to Moses, ²“Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. ... ⁵I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in **prostituting themselves to Molech**.”

Jehovah speaks at length through Isaiah of being a husband to his people. He also speaks of “the afflicted city,” and of the other images listed above.

ISAIAH 54:1—55:11 **“Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,”** says Jehovah. ²“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. ³For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. ⁴“Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. ⁵**For your Maker is your husband—Jehovah Of Hosts is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;** he is called the God of all the earth. ⁶Jehovah will call you back as if **you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,**” says your God. ⁷“For a brief moment **I abandoned you,** but with deep compassion **I will bring you back.** ⁸In a surge of anger **I hid my face from you** for a moment, but with **everlasting kindness** I will have **compassion** on you,” says Jehovah your Redeemer. ⁹“To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now **I have sworn** not to be angry with you, **never to rebuke you again.** ¹⁰Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my **unfailing love** for you will not be shaken nor my **covenant of peace** be removed,” says Jehovah, who has compassion on you. ¹¹“O **afflicted city,** lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you **with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires.** ¹²**I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones.** ¹³All your sons will be taught by Jehovah, and great will be your children’s **peace.** ¹⁴In **righteousness** you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. **Terror will be far removed;** it will not come near you. ¹⁵If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. ¹⁶“See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc; ¹⁷no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the **heritage** of the servants of Jehovah, and this is their vindication from me,” declares Jehovah. ¹“**Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;** and you who have no money, **come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk** without money and without cost. ²Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the **richest of fare.** ³Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. **I will make an everlasting covenant** with you, **my faithful love promised to David.** ⁴See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. ⁵Surely you will summon **nations** you know not, and **nations** that do not know you **will hasten to you,** because of Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has **endowed you with splendor.**” ...

The metaphor is now dropped and Jehovah tells his people directly what to do to receive this heritage.

...⁶Seek Jehovah while he may be found; call on him while he is near. ⁷Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to Jehovah, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. ⁸“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares Jehovah. ⁹“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

ISAIAH 61:1—62:12 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because Jehovah has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ²to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of Jehovah for the display of his splendor. ⁴They will **rebuild the ancient ruins** and **restore the places long devastated**; they will **renew the ruined cities** that have been devastated for generations. ⁵**Aliens** will shepherd your flocks; **foreigners** will work your fields and vineyards. ⁶And you will be called priests of Jehovah you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the **wealth of nations**, and in their **riches** you will boast. ⁷Instead of their **shame** my people will receive a **double portion**, and instead of **disgrace** they will **rejoice in their inheritance**; and so they will inherit a **double portion** in their land, and everlasting **joy** will be theirs. ⁸“For I, Jehovah, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an **everlasting covenant** with them. ⁹Their descendants will be known among the **nations** and their offspring among the **peoples**. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people Jehovah has **blessed**.” ¹⁰I delight greatly in Jehovah; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Lord Jehovah will make **righteousness and praise spring up before all nations**. ¹For **Zion’s** sake I will not keep silent, for **Jerusalem’s** sake I will not remain quiet, till her **righteousness shines** out like the dawn, **her salvation** like a blazing torch. ²The **nations** will see your **righteousness**, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of Jehovah will bestow. ³**You will be a crown of splendor in Jehovah’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.** ⁴No longer will they call you **Deserted**, or name your land **Desolate**. But you will be called **Hephzibah**, and your land **Beulah**; for **Jehovah will take delight in you**, and **your land will be married**. ⁵As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; **as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you**. ⁶I have posted watchmen on your walls, **O Jerusalem**; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on Jehovah, give yourselves no rest, ⁷and give him no rest till he **establishes Jerusalem** and makes her the **praise of the earth**. ⁸Jehovah has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: “Never again will I give your grain as food for your enemies, and never again will foreigners drink the new wine for which you have toiled; ⁹but those who harvest it will eat it and praise Jehovah, and those who gather the grapes will drink it in the courts of my sanctuary.” ¹⁰Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the **people**. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. **Raise a banner for the nations**. ¹¹Jehovah has made proclamation **to the ends of the earth**: “Say to the **Daughter of Zion**, ‘See, your **Savior** comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.’” ¹²They will be called **the Holy People, the Redeemed of Jehovah**; and you will be called **Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted**.

Through Jeremiah, Jehovah emphasizes His call for His People/Wife to repent and return to Him, and as He did through Isaiah, God again promises those great blessings if they do.

JEREMIAH 3:1—4:2 “If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and marries another man, should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled? But **you have lived as a prostitute**

with many lovers—would you now return to me?” declares Jehovah. ²“Look up to the barren heights and see. Is there any place where you have not been ravished? **By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers**, sat like a nomad in the desert. **You have defiled the land with your prostitution and wickedness.** ³Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a **prostitute**; you refuse to blush with shame. ⁴Have you not just called to me: ‘My Father, my friend from my youth, ⁵will you always be angry? Will your wrath continue forever?’ This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can.”

⁶During the reign of King Josiah, Jehovah said to me, “Have you seen what **faithless Israel** has done? **She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there.** ⁷I thought that after she had done all this she would **return to me but she did not**, and her **unfaithful sister Judah** saw it. ⁸**I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries.** Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister **Judah** had no fear; **she also went out and committed adultery.** ⁹Because Israel’s **immorality** mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and **committed adultery with stone and wood.** ¹⁰In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense,” declares Jehovah. ¹¹Jehovah said to me, “Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. ¹²Go, proclaim this message toward the north: **“Return, faithless Israel,”** declares Jehovah, ‘I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,’ declares Jehovah, ‘I will not be angry forever. ¹³**Only acknowledge your guilt**—you have rebelled against Jehovah your God, you have scattered **your favors to foreign gods** under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,” declares Jehovah. ¹⁴**“Return, faithless people,” declares Jehovah, “for I am your husband.** I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion.

¹⁵Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶**In those days**, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,” declares Jehovah, “men will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of Jehovah.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. ¹⁷At that time they will call **Jerusalem** The Throne of Jehovah, and **all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of Jehovah.** No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. ¹⁸**In those days** the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance. ¹⁹“I myself said, “How gladly would I treat you like sons and **give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance** of any nation.’ I thought you would call me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following me. ²⁰**But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me**, O house of Israel,” declares Jehovah. ²¹A cry is heard on the barren heights, the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel, because they have perverted their ways and have forgotten Jehovah their God. ²²“Return, **faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding.**”

“Yes, we will come to you, for you are Jehovah our God. ²³Surely the idolatrous commotion on the hills and mountains is a deception; surely in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel. ²⁴From our youth shameful gods have consumed the fruits of our fathers’ labor—their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters. ²⁵Let us lie down in our shame, and let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against Jehovah our God, both we and our fathers; from our youth till this day we have not obeyed Jehovah our God.”

¹“If you will return, O Israel, return to me,” declares Jehovah. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and **no longer go astray**, ²and if in a truthful, **just** and **righteous** way you swear, ‘As surely as Jehovah lives,’ then **the nations will be blessed by him and in him they will glory.**”

In Ezekiel Jehovah tells of the nurturing of his bride from birth, through maidenhood, and, after she turned to adultery, how the Lord will eventually rescue her and restore her and establish an everlasting covenant of faithfulness. Again, this is the story of the nation of Israel (and of all believers) told in picture language.

EZEKIEL 16:1-63 The word of Jehovah came to me: ²Son of man, confront **Jerusalem with her detestable practices** ³and say, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says to **Jerusalem**: Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴On the

day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. ⁵No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. ⁶Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, 'Live!' ⁷I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels. Your breasts were formed and your hair grew, you who were naked and bare. ⁸Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine. ⁹I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. ¹⁰I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put leather sandals on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. ¹¹I adorned you with jewelry: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, ¹²and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³So you were adorned with gold and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was fine flour, honey and olive oil. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. ¹⁴And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign Lord. ¹⁵**But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by** and your beauty became his. ¹⁶You took some of your garments to make gaudy high places, where **you carried on your prostitution**. Such things should not happen, nor should they ever occur. ¹⁷You also took the fine jewelry **I gave you**, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and **you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them**. ¹⁸And you took your embroidered clothes to put on them, and you offered my oil and incense before them. ¹⁹Also the food **I provided for you**—the fine flour, olive oil and honey **I gave you to eat**—you offered as fragrant incense before them. That is what happened, declares the Sovereign Lord.

²⁰"And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough? ²¹**You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols.** ²²In all your detestable practices and your prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood. ²³Woe! Woe to you, declares the Sovereign Lord. In addition to all your other wickedness, ²⁴you built a mound for yourself and made a lofty shrine in every public square. ²⁵At the head of every street you built your lofty shrines and degraded your beauty, **offering your body with increasing promiscuity to anyone who passed by.** ²⁶You engaged in **prostitution with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and provoked me to anger** with your increasing promiscuity. ²⁷So I stretched out my hand against you and reduced your territory; I gave you over to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were shocked by your lewd conduct. ²⁸**You engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians too, because you were insatiable;** and even after that, you still were not satisfied. ²⁹Then you increased your promiscuity to include Babylonia, a land of merchants, but even with this you were not satisfied. ³⁰How weak-willed you are, declares the Sovereign Lord, when you do all these things, acting like a brazen prostitute! ³¹When you built your mounds at the head of every street and made your lofty shrines in every public square, **you were unlike a prostitute, because you scorned payment.**

³²**You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!** ³³**Every prostitute receives a fee, but you give gifts to all your lovers,** bribing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favors. ³⁴So in your prostitution you are the opposite of others; no one runs after you for your favors. You are the very opposite, for you give payment and none is given to you.

³⁵"Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word of Jehovah! ³⁶This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you poured out your wealth and exposed your nakedness in your promiscuity with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols, and because you gave them your children's blood, ³⁷therefore I am going to gather all your lovers, with whom you found pleasure, those you loved as well as those you hated. **I will gather them against you from all around and will strip you in front of them, and they will see all your nakedness.** ³⁸**I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood; I will bring upon you the blood vengeance of my wrath and jealous anger.** ³⁹**Then I will hand you over to your lovers, and they will tear down your mounds and destroy your lofty shrines. They will strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry and**

leave you naked and bare. ⁴⁰They will bring a mob against you, who will stone you and hack you to pieces with their swords. ⁴¹They will burn down your houses and inflict punishment on you in the sight of many women. I will put a stop to your prostitution, and you will no longer pay your lovers. ⁴²**Then my wrath against you will subside and my jealous anger will turn away from you; I will be calm and no longer angry.**

⁴³“Because you did not remember the days of your youth but enraged me with all these things, I will surely bring down on your head what you have done, declares the Sovereign Lord. Did you not add lewdness to all your other detestable practices? ⁴⁴Everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb about you: ‘Like mother, like daughter’. ⁴⁵You are a true daughter of your mother, who despised her husband and her children; and you are a true sister of your sisters, who despised their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. ⁴⁶Your older sister was Samaria, who lived to the north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you with her daughters, was Sodom. ⁴⁷You not only walked in their ways and copied their detestable practices, but in all your ways you soon became more depraved than they. ⁴⁸As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done.

⁴⁹“Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. ⁵⁰They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen. ⁵¹Samaria did not commit half the sins you did. You have done more detestable things than they, and have made your sisters seem righteous by all these things you have done. ⁵²**Bear your disgrace**, for you have furnished some justification for your sisters. Because your sins were more vile than theirs, they appear more righteous than you. So then, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous. ⁵³However, I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and her daughters, and your fortunes along with them, ⁵⁴so that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you have done in giving them comfort. ⁵⁵And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to what they were before; and you and your daughters will return to what you were before. ⁵⁶You would not even mention your sister Sodom in the day of your pride, ⁵⁷before your wickedness was uncovered. Even so, you are now scorned by the daughters of Edom and all her neighbors and the daughters of the Philistines—**all those around you who despise you.** ⁵⁸You will bear the consequences of your lewdness and your detestable practices, declares Jehovah. ⁵⁹This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I will deal with you as you deserve**, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. ⁶⁰**Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you** in the days of your youth, and **I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.** ⁶¹Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both those who are older than you and those who are younger. **I will give them to you as daughters**, but not on the basis of my **covenant** with you. ⁶²So I will establish my **covenant** with you, and you will know that I am Jehovah. ⁶³Then, **when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation**, declares the Sovereign Lord.”

God commanded the prophet Hosea to act out, step-by-step, in his own life, with his own wife, the relationship of Jehovah to his chosen people. Hosea reenacted the initial marriage covenant, bearing his wife's harlotry, and accepting her back. (This is an example of “symbolic action.” Hosea and other later prophets were sometimes commanded by God to carry out certain actions as a means to graphically publicize Jehovah's message to his people.)

HOSEA 1:1—3:3 The word of Jehovah that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel: ²When Jehovah began to speak through Hosea, Jehovah said to him, **“Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from Jehovah.”** ³So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴Then Jehovah said to Hosea, “Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵In that day I will break

Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel.” ⁶Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then Jehovah said to Hosea, “Call her Lo-Ruhamah,^[47] for **I will no longer show love to the house of Israel**, that I should at all forgive them. ⁷Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will **save** them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by Jehovah their God. ⁸After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son.” ⁹Then Jehovah said, “Call him Lo-Ammi,^[48] for **you are not my people, and I am not your God**. ¹⁰Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. **In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people’, they will be called ‘sons of the living God’**. ¹¹The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be **reunited**, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel. ¹Say of your brothers, ‘My people,’ and of your sisters, ‘My loved one’. ²**Rebuke your mother, rebuke her, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband. Let her remove the adulterous look from her face and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts**. ³Otherwise I will strip her naked and make her as bare as on the day she was born; I will make her like a desert, **turn her into a parched land, and slay her with thirst**. ⁴I will not show my love to her children, because they are the children of adultery. ⁵Their mother has been unfaithful and has conceived them in disgrace. **She said, ‘I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink’**. ⁶Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. ⁷She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. **Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now’**. ⁸She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold—which they used for Baal. ⁹Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens, and my new wine when it is ready. I will take back my wool and my linen, intended to cover her nakedness. ¹⁰So now I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers; no one will take her out of my hands. ¹¹**I will stop all her celebrations: her yearly festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts**. ¹²**I will ruin her vines and her fig trees, which she said were her pay from her lovers; I will make them a thicket, and wild animals will devour them**. ¹³**I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot,**” declares Jehovah.

¹⁴“Therefore **I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her**. ¹⁵There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. ¹⁶“**In that day,**” declares Jehovah, “**you will call me ‘my husband’; you will no longer call me ‘my master.’**” ¹⁷I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their names be invoked. ¹⁸In that day **I will make a covenant** for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety. ¹⁹**I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion**. ²⁰**I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge Jehovah**. ²¹“In that day I will respond,” declares Jehovah—“I will respond to the skies, and they will respond to the earth; ²²and the earth will respond to the **grain, the new wine and oil**, and they will respond to Jezreel. ²³I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ **I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’**”

¹Jehovah said to me, “**Go, show your love to your wife again**, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. **Love her as Jehovah loves the Israelites**, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.” ²So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley. ³Then I told her, “You are to live with me **many days**; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you.”

[47] Lo-Ruhamah means “She has not obtained compassion.”

[48] Lo-Ammi means “Not my people.”

Jehovah wants a faithful wife—a faithful people. But instead they are unfaithful and adulterous, following other gods. But Jehovah will not allow this to continue endlessly; he conceived a way to overcome the sinful rebellion of his wife. Jehovah again restores his bride to faithfulness, but contrary to Israel's past tendency to relapse into idolatry, this new relationship (covenant) will last forever. And "All of Israel"—all true believers, both Jew and Gentile—will be swept up in joyous eternal life. The reason that this new state will last is that it is founded on a new basis, the basis found in the New Testament—God's mercy in Christ rather than on man's ability to keep the Law. We can rejoice, for our weakness will not make God's grace falter, now or in eternity.

Yes, it is clear what Jehovah wants:

- Metaphorically: His wife is to reject other lovers and be faithful to her husband Jehovah.
- Concretely: His people (every individual) is to reject other gods, to worship and serve only Jehovah.



The Bridegroom in the New Testament is Christ

The same imagery is used in the New Testament, and Christ is the bridegroom and husband. The same metaphor and the same concrete meaning are repeated. And we also see clearly what was only hinted at in the Old Testament—not only Israel and Judah (the faithful remnant), but also Gentiles who believe will be included in the Bride of Christ, the Church.^[49]

MATTHEW 25:1-13 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out **to meet the bridegroom**. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶At midnight the cry rang out: ‘**Here’s the bridegroom!** Come out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ⁹‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. ¹¹Later the others also came. ‘**Sir! Sir! they said. ‘Open the door for us!’** ¹²**But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you’.** ¹³Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

This is an outsider's experience with the Bridegroom and with salvation; these virgins never get to see the Bride and Bridegroom together.

[49] Christian theologians (following the example of the New Testament writers) use the name “the Church” to mean the body of all true believers, wherever and wherever they are. This is not to be confused with any particular church denomination or external organization. To emphasize the fact that membership in this Church is spiritual rather than material and outwardly visible, the Church is sometimes called the “Invisible Church.”

MARK 2:18-20 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"
¹⁹ Jesus answered, "**How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?** They cannot, so long as they have him with them. ²⁰ But the time will come when **the bridegroom will be taken** from them, and on that day they will fast.

Above, Jesus is obviously speaking of himself.

John the Baptist knew of the coming Bridegroom and that he, John, was an eager friend attending to the affairs of the Bridegroom and waiting for his appearance. In the underlined passage below John shows that he recognized Christ as the Bridegroom and that, at his coming, John's own role was finished.

JOHN 3:26-33 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."
²⁷ To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.'
²⁹ **The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.** ³⁰ **He must become greater; I must become less.** ³¹ **The one who comes from above is above all;** the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. **The one who comes from heaven is above all.** ³² He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³ The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful.

Paul also uses the marriage metaphor:

2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-4 I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. ² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. **I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.** ³ But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

Paul knew of the Bridegroom and he knew the Bridegroom was Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:21-33 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the **Savior**. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her **holy, cleansing** her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and **to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.** ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—³⁰ for **we are members of his body**. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Paul draws on the profound example of Christ and the Church to encourage earthly husbands and wives to emulate the love and self-sacrifice demonstrated by Christ. Verse 32 is included so that no one reverses the order. The relationship of Christ to his people precedes and underlies earthly marriage.

The next passage, from the book of Revelation, parallels many of the thoughts in Isaiah 54 above. This is not surprising, since this passage pictures the culmination, the fulfillment, of the “marriage” of Jehovah and his people that was foretold by Isaiah.

REVELATION 20:15—22:21 If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. ¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw **the Holy City, the new Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband**. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. **They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God**. ⁴He will **wipe every tear** from their eyes. There will be **no more death or mourning or crying or pain**, for the old order of things has passed away.” ⁵He who was seated on the throne said, “**I am making everything new!**” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is **thirsty** I will give to **drink without cost from the spring of the water of life**. ⁷He who overcomes will inherit all this, and **I will be his God** and he will be my son. ⁸But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

⁹One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb**.” ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me **the Holy City, Jerusalem**, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious **jewel**, like a **jasper**, clear as **crystal**. ¹²It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve **tribes of Israel**. ¹³There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. ¹⁷He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man’s measurement, which the angel was using. ¹⁸The wall was made of **jasper**, and the city of **pure gold**, as pure as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of **precious stone**. The first foundation was **jasper**, the second **sapphire**, the third **chalcedony**, the fourth **emerald**, ²⁰the fifth **sardonyx**, the sixth **carnelian**, the seventh **chrysolite**, the eighth **beryl**, the ninth **topaz**, the tenth **chrysoprase**, the eleventh **jasper**, and the twelfth **amethyst**. ²¹The twelve gates were twelve **pearls**, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of **pure gold**, like transparent glass. ²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴**The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it**. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶**The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it**. ²⁷**Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful**, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. ¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of **fruit**, yielding its **fruit** every month. And the leaves of the tree are **for the healing of the nations**. ³**No longer will there be any curse**. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the

sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And **they will reign for ever and ever.** ⁶The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place." ⁷"Behold, **I am coming soon!** Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" ¹⁰Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. ¹¹Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." ¹²"Behold, I am coming soon! **My reward is with me,** and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴"Blessed are those who **wash their robes,** that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the *Offspring of David*, and the bright Morning Star." ¹⁷The Spirit and **the bride** say, "**Come!**" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. ¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and **in the holy city,** which are described in this book. ²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. **Come, Lord Jesus.** ²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Thus the "Bridegroom" of the body of all believers is Christ. At the Judgment he will restore his bride in the eternal covenant which is characterized by joy and no lack of any good thing.



The Necessary Questions

All of the passages above bring us naturally to the following questions:

Does Jehovah share his wife with another (even figuratively)?

Does the God who said: "*I AM JEHOVAH, THAT IS MY NAME, I WILL NOT GIVE MY GLORY TO ANOTHER OR MY PRAISE TO IDOLS,*" do this? After condemning Israel for centuries for its unfaithfulness in following after other gods, would this Jehovah now give his bride to another for eternity?

Or would he picture the wedding of another to his bride as the ideal fulfillment of his promise to restore his bride to himself?

Does our God use a surrogate lover to represent himself?

NO WAY! It is grotesque to even think such a thing.

The only acceptable, Biblical explanation is that *CHRIST IS JEHOVAH!* And, what we are seeing pictured in Revelation is indeed the literal fulfillment of Jehovah's Old Testament promise.

By way of confirmation, we can see that even in the Old Testament the role of the Son of Man, Jehovah Incarnate, is pictured. The following verse quoted at the beginning of this chapter confirms this is not a mistake or misinterpretation.

ISAIAH 55:1-3 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. ² Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David."

The promise of Jehovah that the Son of David, the Messiah, would rule his people forever is identical in meaning to the picture of Christ as the husband of his people. And Jehovah does indeed promise his Bride to the Christ as the Son of David. The passage from Revelation (repeated below) reminds us that the Bridegroom is indeed the Son of David...

REVELATION 22:16 I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.

Thus Jehovah who is the root (origin) of David is also the offspring of David and as such is the perfect bridegroom of those who believe.

We see here the Father and the Son and the Spirit, each doing his part in this Divine Love Story. The Father promises the Bride to the Son (the Christ), and the Spirit invites (and enables) people to join/become the bride. And in the consummation of this relationship, the Bride has been rescued by and has been married to the one True God Jehovah. No created being; no outsider; no lesser (i.e. false) god can be involved in this relationship. In marrying Christ, believers are indeed marrying Jehovah.

There is no surrogate love here,
Christ is not a corporeal stand-in for the Father (as the perverse may say).

No indeed ...

Christ is Jehovah in human flesh!



CHAPTER 10

CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS FATHER.

Introduction

This purpose of this chapter is not to prove the deity of Christ; that has already been addressed in previous chapters. Once we understand that the Son of God is Jehovah, we can go on to a secondary question: What can we glean from the Bible about the relationship between the Son and the Father within the Godhead?^[50] A clear understanding of the Biblical Trinity doctrine does allow us to sort out things that are totally hidden if we reject the Son of God's Deity. If the reader has not already been convinced that Christ and the Father are both Jehovah, this chapter will be of no interest and may appear to be gibberish. To such an unconvinced reader, the author would recommend rereading the previous material or going on to the next chapter. All of this material is on the "second floor" of Trinitarian theology, and if you do not believe the first floor exists, these discussions will seem to have no foundation, and indeed, will appear absurd—simply because we have ceased communicating in mutually understandable terms.

This chapter could be a book in itself. It would be meaningful to look again at all of the passages previously listed and many others from the point of view suggested by this theme: Christ's relationship to His Father. Such a major effort would be necessary to extract and understand all of the relevant information that the Bible contains. But, even if we did this we could not expect in this life to achieve a perfectly clear understanding of how the Father and Son relate to each other; how they share a nature; how they are different persons yet are one being, one God. However, the Bible does contain much information in this area that is understandable and which has not been well explored or digested by most of us. While a thorough study is too great an undertaking for this book, this chapter will touch informally on a few themes or ideas which the author believes will be helpful, or essential, to understanding the relationship of the Father and the Son. Admittedly, this chapter does not really develop any of these ideas or explore properly their Biblical foundation. Some of these ideas may turn out to be dead ends or even incorrect. The reader should keep this in mind. Therefore, this material is presented "as is" to the reader, who is encouraged to explore these matters more fully on his or her own.

[50] The word "Godhead," is a variant of spelling of "Godhood." As a theological term it simply means everything which has Godhood; for a Christian it refers to God-consisting-of-three-persons.

***In the Bible, Apparent Paradoxes
are the Key to Deeper Understanding***

A note before we begin:

Recall the point made previously that when the Bible writers refer to the Father and the Son together, they use different names to distinguish between them. Unitarians see such differences in the names given and in the roles played by the Father and Son as proofs of their inequality and hence as justification to reject the doctrine of the Trinity. Only if the reader has been convinced that both the Father and the Son are Jehovah, can progress be made to figure out why the Bible speaks of them as it does. In fact, these very passages which seem to carry a message which is unclear or even opposes the Trinity are the very passages which are the proper starting point to explore the question of their relationship; for these different names and different roles serve to emphasize their relationship (as two distinct persons), rather than emphasize their unity alone.

C.S. Lewis in his essay, *The Weight of Glory* (collected in the book of the same name) writes;

If our religion is something objective, then we must never avert our eyes from those elements which seem most puzzling or repellent; for it will be precisely the puzzling or the repellent which conceals what we do not know and need to know.

As Lewis indicates, it is always an important principle to remember in Bible study and interpretation that the places that seem confusing or paradoxical in the Bible are the very places where we can learn something new if we persevere, if we do not settle for a rationalistic explanation that answers one half of the paradox and ignores the other. (Such fallacious rationalism is simply the substitution of fallen men's wisdom in place of God's perfect and deeper wisdom, and unfortunately such arguments can be made to sound quite correct and convincing if we do not look carefully enough. And these easier explanations can prevent us from continuing to look until we find the whole truth.) The reason that we must dig into paradoxes and apparent problems is obvious: it is the very fact that we do not yet understand something that makes it seem paradoxical or confusing. The very existence of each apparent paradox or problem is a clue that there is something more we need to learn. It is only rationalistic man's pride that makes him jump to the conclusion that the Bible must be in error or be self-contradictory in such areas, rather than admit that man may not have it all figured out yet!

In this way, unitarians conclude that because they do not find the Trinity to be simple and can make no sense out of it, then the doctrine must be wrong. They conclude that they must discard the orthodox Christian doctrine which was recognized from the Scriptures by early Christians and which has been confirmed by each succeeding generation of Christians for the last 20 centuries. Indeed unitarians' haughtiness in doing so is amazing. Jehovah's Witnesses say that it is the Christian church, consisting of believers throughout the last 2000 years, that has been deceived by Satan, and that only the Witnesses have been restored to the truth. To this idea Christians can only say that the Bible speaks for itself and that God in fact has not allowed his word to be as badly obscured as that. The ones in error are this small group that has tried yet again to establish Arianism (unitarianism), a heresy that was rejected collectively by the first Christians

who ever heard it and by all Christians since. It seems that Satan delights in trapping souls in errors which would be long dead if human beings were less prone to sin-obscured, fuzzy thinking.



Miscellaneous Themes

The Humiliation and Exaltation of the Son

As stated in Chapter 3, having an understanding of the “humiliation and exaltation of Christ” is extremely important to properly understand the significance of the Incarnation of Christ. The life of Christ, who forsook voluntarily the continuous use of his divine powers to live as a humble man, was visible for the world to see. And his life was recorded for us to know him better also. In this way we receive from the gospels a view of Jehovah that is unparalleled by anything in the Old Testament for clarity and accessibility. Here is the man in whom the fullness of deity dwells bodily; and we see day by day how Jehovah would live in our place. The Incarnation complements (gives us additional insight), but also complicates our viewing of the Sonship of Christ to the Father. To say it another way, studying the “descent” of Jehovah “into” his creation as a man, and the subsequent “elevation” of his human nature to the right hand of God helps show what kind of God we have, but it turns out that the kind of God we have is not so simple that we can sort things out as easily as we would perhaps like. And, the addition of a human nature to the Incarnate Son means that we must distinguish between statements that pertain specifically to his human nature and those that pertain to his divine nature.

The Eternal Son of God

One of the ideas that would be most fertile for study is the real significance of Fatherhood and Sonship in the Trinity. Jesus is NOT called the Son of God because of his becoming a man. Rather, the Bible indicates that he is eternally the Son. In the inner depths of God’s nature there really is and has always been a “person” of the Godhead who is a Son to another “person” who is a Father. Thus the Nicene Creed speaks of the Son “begotten of the Father before all worlds.” Biological and social Sonship and Fatherhood as we humans know them are a reflection of this relationship, but it is a limited and finite reflection. It is not “full” enough to match exactly the relationship between the eternal Father and the eternal Son. Therefore we must expect that our analogies derived from our earthly experience with fathers and sons must break down at some point when we use them to understand the infinite God. It is important to keep in mind that the Sonship of Christ and the Fatherhood of the Father are more than their earthly equivalents. The divine relationship is the original; it is the thing that was copied. On the other hand, the earthly relationship is the copy; it is a simplified parallel of the original. Earthly sonship is but a shadow or type of the heavenly. Other writers have dealt with this subject at least briefly^[51]; some

[51] C.S. Lewis in the collection of his essays entitled, *God in the Dock*, has many interesting things to say on the relationship of God to man and on the Incarnation. Essays of interest in this area, include:
(continued)

perhaps have given it a more full treatment. This is a deeper area of theology and thought, which some may wish to pursue at greater length. Keep it in mind and think about these things as you read the Bible.

***How Is the Adopted “Sonship” of Believers
Related to Christ’s “Sonship”?
(Or, How Does His Sonship Make Possible Our Sonship?)***

It seems probable that there is some specific reason why it was the Son who was incarnate rather than the Father. Again, in this life we may never know the reason with certainty. But it is perhaps reasonable to speculate that the reason it was the Son who was incarnate is that he is a Son. I.e. that he is in some way most like (but not really like) the creation that had to be entered (assumed) and redeemed. So the sonship of believers to their God parallels in an earthly way the relationship between the eternal Son and the eternal Father. But we must be careful, for it is possible to take the analogy too far. For example, the proper deference that we as creatures have to the Creator is “like” the deference of the Son to the will of the Father, but it is not the same, because we are not begotten sons as the Son is.^[52] Speaking simply, we have two reasons to defer to the Father, while the Christ has only one; we are children to the Father and we are his creation. For both reasons we must be defer to the Father. The fact that we are created makes us inferior by nature to God. The fact that we are adopted sons makes us want to serve God. Christ on the other hand is a Son, but he is not created. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus Christ voluntarily humbled himself to do the work of the Father, which is indeed what a good “son” will do. But the Bible never says that he was created and, even more convincing, perhaps is that the Christ that we see in the Gospels did not act and speak as though he was a created being, his deference was of a different kind, a more noble, elevated kind. Thus it is possible for the only-begotten Son to defer to the Father without being inferior in nature to the Father.

We may conclude that while son-ship carries a duty (or an opportunity) of deference; the inferiority of a created being carries with it the additional duty of a more extreme form of submission—even servitude. One of the exciting things in the Bible is that as human beings, redeemed by Christ through faith, we are joined to Christ sufficiently that we can call his Father, “our Father” (Abba), and we cease being slaves. We are full-fledged sons and daughters (albeit adopted, created ones) because of God’s graciousness. The double underlined words in the passages below foretell a glorious future for us who are the adopted sons and daughters of God.

ROMANS 8:10-25 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he

Part I: 2-Miracles; 5-Myth Became Fact; 9-The Grand Miracle; 19-What Are We To Make Of Jesus Christ?; and 21-Is Theism Important? In Part II: 4-On the Reading of Old Books; and 11-Priestesses in the Church?

[52] Unitarians and others wish to portray this aspect of the Son's relationship to the Father as a point of error and weakness in Christian theology and seek to exploit it by saying that Christ's subservience proves Jesus was not Jehovah. But if we accept that it has been established previously that Jesus is Jehovah, it becomes possible to see that Christ's submission, his deference to his Father, is an expression of love from an equal, not an expression of inferiority.

who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. ¹² Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

GALATIANS 3:22—4:7 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. ²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. ²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. ¹ What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ² He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. ⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

REVELATION 3:17-22 “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. ²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹ To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

LUKE 22:25-30 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶ But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸ You are those who have stood by me in my trials. ²⁹ And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

REVELATION 1:4-6 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the

earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

PSALM 8:3-6 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: {This applies to Christ first of all, but also to us as joint heirs with him.}

We, as heirs with Christ, as adopted daughters and sons, shall receive glory. We shall enter into a new relationship to nature and to God. This is what Paul in the passage below referred to when he told the Ephesians that the Lord God had descended into creation and returning with redeemed humanity in tow—lifting us higher than Adam was in the beginning.

EPHESIANS 4:1-16 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: **“When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.”** ⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he {Christ} also descended to the lower, earthly regions? {a reference to the incarnation, culminating in Christ’s death, burial, and “descent into hell”} ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. {Christ’s exaltation into heaven and his bringing us to rule with him}) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

The double underlined passages in this section (above) foretell a glory which we will receive as adopted children of God and joint heirs with the eternal Son. It is a future wonderful beyond anything we can imagine, and ours because the Son of God “took manhood into God” as the Athanasian Creed says.



The Word of God is Wisdom Incarnate

The following is a Messianic prophecy, which says a little in verse 7 about where the Son of God came from and of his closeness to the Father. It is included here because of some themes similar to those in the succeeding passage from Proverbs.

PSALM 2:1-12 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ²The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against Jehovah and against his Anointed One.^[53] ³“Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.” ⁴The One enthroned in heaven laughs; Jehovah scoffs at them. ⁵Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ⁶“I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.” ⁷I will proclaim the decree of Jehovah: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.” ⁸Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.” ¹⁰Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. ¹¹Serve Jehovah with fear and rejoice with trembling. ¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Verse 11 and 12 is an example of Hebrew poetic parallelism: Serve Jehovah,... Kiss the Son—two expressions for the same thing.

Now on to the main theme of this section, Wisdom Incarnate—or—the Wisdom of God made flesh. The following is an interesting passage in Proverbs. One could read this as merely a poetic personification of “wisdom.” But it seems likely from what is contained in verses 22, and following, that there is more to it. I.e. that it is actually a prophecy pertaining to Jesus, the Messiah, even though it is stated to apply to one called “Wisdom.” This passage and those that follow suggest very strongly that the Bible writers through the Holy Spirit were giving Jesus another name: the Wisdom of God. The coining of special names for Jehovah and for Christ is common in both the New and Old Testaments. This Wisdom of God had a major role in creation.

Note: The Gospel of John gives Christ the name, Word of God (a name that may parallel the name Wisdom), and attributes to him creation: John 1:1-3 (In the beginning was the Word and ... All things were made by him). In Genesis 1:1-3 (In the beginning God created ... and God said let there be light ...) the creation is also brought about by the Word spoken by God.

PROVERBS 8:1-36 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? ²On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; ³beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud: ⁴“To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. ⁵You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding. ⁶Listen, for I have worthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right. ⁷My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. ⁸All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. ⁹To the discerning all of them are right; they are faultless to those who have knowledge. ¹⁰Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, ¹¹for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. ¹²“I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. ¹³To fear Jehovah is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. ¹⁴Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and

[53] Anointed one (English) = מָשִׁיחַ / mashiyach (Messiah) (Hebrew) = Christ (Greek). These terms have the same meaning.

power. ¹⁵ By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; ¹⁶ by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth. ¹⁷ I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. ¹⁸ With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. ¹⁹ My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. ²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, ²¹ bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full. ²² **“Jehovah brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; ²³ I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. ²⁴ When there were no oceans, I was given birth {or brought forth}, when there were no springs abounding with water; ²⁵ before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth {or brought forth}, ²⁶ before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world. ²⁷ I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. ³⁰ Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, ³¹ rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. ³² “Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. ³³ Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. ³⁴ Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. ³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from Jehovah. ³⁶ But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death.”**

Note that the Hebrew text is not precise and various translations are possible, depending on the interpreter's opinion. I think that many of both Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses believe that this passage is referring to Christ and his role in creation, but their conclusions about what it says about the origin and nature of Christ differ. Unitarians find in the use of the terms translated "birth" or "brought forth" the implication that this Wisdom was created, but the passage actually only says that Wisdom is brought forth in some unspecified way. In verse 22, the statements Jehovah brought me forth...before his deeds of old (i.e. before his deeds in Genesis 1) and I was appointed from eternity are curious. We see ordinary language being used to describe something very much outside of ordinary experience. But again we see poetic repetition, i.e. the later phrase repeats the thought of the former (and clarifies it). Hence this "appointment" (to office) in eternity and his bringing forth before creation mean the same thing. Thus we see the answer to the question, how long before creation was wisdom brought forth? In eternity. Neither of these phrases suggests that this Wisdom has any beginning or creation in time.

Because of its highly poetic and allegorical form, this text alone is not a strong proof passage concerning the deity or non-deity of Christ. But if the question of the deity of Christ has been settled elsewhere, this passage can perhaps give us more insight into the relationship of the Father and Son, especially their interaction in creating the universe.

Even when not personifying Wisdom, the writer of the book of Proverbs still uses the word "wisdom" in a special way. Wisdom is not used to mean cleverness or intelligence or even learning, but, rather, godly wisdom, spiritually given insight. One who fears the Lord is considered wise, regardless of how intelligent he/she is.^[54] Verse 13 above suggests this also.

[54] The following passages from the Proverbs illustrate the equation of wisdom (and its synonyms: knowledge, understanding, and insight) with the fear of Jehovah. Note the poetic parallelism.
(continued)

The following passages from other parts of the Bible support the conclusion that Christ is referred to as the Wisdom of God.

JEREMIAH 10:10-12 But Jehovah is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath. ¹¹ "Tell them this: 'These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.'" ¹² But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

Verse 12 above contains an example of triple parallelism in three statements about creation. The double underlined phrase parallels Proverbs 8 and John 1 where the role of Wisdom/Word of God in creation is mentioned. These names (Wisdom & Word of God) suggest that there are more aspects of the Son's relationship to the Father than just Sonship. He is in some integral way part of Jehovah's mind. Even Jehovah's intellect is shared somehow by the three persons. The mind of Jehovah is inseparable from God the Father, from Christ and from the Spirit.

LUKE 11:47-51 "Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. ⁴⁸ So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹ Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.' ⁵⁰ Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, ⁵¹ from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all."

PROVERBS 1:7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

PROVERBS 1:28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. ²⁹ Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear Jehovah,"

PROVERBS 2:2-6 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, ³ and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, ⁴ and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, ⁵ then you will understand the **fear** of Jehovah and find the **knowledge of God**. ⁶ For Jehovah gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

PROVERBS 9:9-10 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. ¹⁰ "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

PROVERBS 15:33 The fear of Jehovah teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

The Incarnate Son of God, whose knowledge and fear (respect) for God was perfect, was of course the perfect embodiment of this spiritual Wisdom.

{Above, the reason this seemingly plain figure of speech, "in his wisdom," can be taken to be more significant can be seen in the section entitled Gathering Hen, in Chapter 7: Christ's Name Is Jehovah's Name.[55]}

1 CORINTHIANS 1:17—2:16 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. ¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. ²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." ¹ When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. ⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: ¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

If we take this wisdom to be Christ, verse 7 states plainly that the very existence of his Son within the Godhead was "hidden" in that it was not recognized by the rulers of this age (even among the Jews). Yet God destined this wisdom for glory. Those who by the Spirit receive the mind (wisdom) of Christ have the mind (wisdom) of the Lord Jehovah. And these same ones will also receive glory.

[55] Especially MATTHEW 23:37 {Jesus weeps over Jerusalem...} "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.



We can see even from the few examples in this chapter that an incorrect assessment of the identity of Christ will multiply into a different reading of many passages of Scripture. These are relatively minor doctrines of Scripture. Issues of Justification and Salvation are even more affected. Indeed, the whole character of faith is modified by where we stand in the Trinitarian/unitarian controversy. While we may not need to understand all of these technical details to be saved, not knowing the true identity of the one who died in our place and who took away the guilt of our sins is a very serious matter. It is not excessive to say that faith in a misconception of God is an insult to God and is nothing other than idolatry. It is for this reason that the Athanasian Creed says,

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the one Christian faith. Unless he keeps this faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the one Christian faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. ...



PART IV:

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS JEHOVAH

CHAPTER 11

WHAT IS A SPIRIT?

As stated in the introduction of this book, the purpose of this Part is to show that the Holy Spirit is Jehovah and that the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son. Before we embark on that course, it is necessary (for me) to consider in this chapter some fundamental questions—chiefly, what is a spirit? The Bible has a lot to say about spirits, but it does not come out and explain what a spirit is. The Bible treats the existence of spirits as self-evident and assumes that the reader already has some idea of what the word spirit means. We will have to be content to mull over the facts that the Bible presents and to cautiously speculate about what it all means. In the end we will not arrive at a rigorous definition or an explanation of what a spirit is, but, hopefully, we will have at least a better grasp of this matter than when we started. The reader should treat this entire chapter as a speculative footnote which may turn out to be helpful or may not. Note also that Jehovah's Witnesses will disagree with much that is in this chapter and will claim that it is a misinterpretation of the Bible. It is beyond the scope of this book to debate their views on "spirit," but Appendix B does address one aspect of the topic—the nature of the human spirit.

The Hebrew word רוּחַ (ruach), and the Greek word πνεῦμα (pneuma) correspond to the English word "spirit." Ruach and pneuma are used in the Bible to designate several different, but related, things: breath and wind as well as spirit. And even when ruach or pneuma are best translated by the English word "spirit," in some cases we can see from the Biblical context that one of these other meanings could still fit. One can speculate that for the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, etc. the meaning of "spirit" was drawn from and encompassed the concepts of breath (of life) and wind (invisible force), but we should not fall into the mistake of thinking them ignorant and crude in their analyses.^[56]

[56] Some modern "theologians" and philosophers (and, following their lead, the man on the street) too often suffer from temporal bigotry, assuming that that which is old is inferior, ignorant, and naive. It is a pitiable mistake to assume that ancient peoples were less thoughtful and observant than we. Admittedly they lacked knowledge of recent scientific advances, but we are not talking about scientific things or of things that can be approached well by science. We should not take the ancients' reuse of the word for wind/breath as the word for spirit as a sign that the ancients could not tell the difference between spirits and the wind etc. or that they were mixing all these things together helter skelter in their minds. The truth is that we moderns are no better off than the ancients. Our language is just as ambiguous and unsuitable and naive when speaking of these things. We too have to make our everyday vocabulary do double duty. And even though we use the word "spirit" very glibly and we have different words for *(continued)*

Like us, they recognized that breath and wind were not spirit, they were only like spirit. And it is this poetic attempt to capture the essence of an invisible power by reusing everyday physical terms that has resulted in this multifaceted meaning of “spirit,” whether expressed in English, Greek, or Hebrew.

Even when not speaking of wind or breath, the Biblical words for “spirit” can have more than one meaning as illustrated below (King James Version):

- An attitude or emotion (or seat thereof) [ECCLESIASTES 10:4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee]
- An outside influence which would change our attitude/opinion [1 JOHN 4:1 Believe not every spirit]
- A ghost or apparition [MATTHEW 14:6 When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it is a spirit.]
- The will or mind or soul of a man [MATTHEW 26:41 The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak]
- The essence of a human being [ACTS 7:59 Lord Jesus, receive my spirit]
- A spirit being, like an angel [HEBREWS 1:14 {Referring to angels...} Are they not ministering spirits?]
- A spirit being like a devil [unclean spirits/evil spirits, see Mark 5:13, Luke 7:21]
- God's nature [JOHN 4:24 God is a Spirit...]
- God's Holy Spirit [EPHESIANS 4:30 Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.]

Additionally the word spirit is used in various figures of speech, e.g. COLOSSIANS 2:5 “Though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit,” meaning, with you in thought, affection and concern—all of which arise in/from our spirit.

Exploring the nature of the Holy Spirit or any spirit is difficult. As shown above, the Bible uses the word “spirit” in several ways and does not give much explanation. Christ did make a few statements about spiritual matters which are more direct, but these are still too few to build up a systematic understanding—Christ's words mostly just hint at matters that we cannot at this time know. We know that God is a Spirit, we know that some created beings (devils/demons and angels) are spirits, and we know too that human beings have a spirit.^[57] We see that evil spirits/demons can take possession of human and non-human life. We know that there are more than one type of

wind or breath; we really have no better idea what we are talking about when we speak of “spirit” than the ancients did. In fact one could make a good case for the proposition that the ancients, who devoted more time to observing life and nature in its simple forms and who were not so deeply prejudiced toward a mechanistic view of the universe, had deeper and truer insights than most moderns.

[57] There is considerable dispute between Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses about what a human spirit is. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the human “spirit” is no more than the breath, i.e. physical life or animating principle, that we have. Thus, they do not believe a human spirit can exist apart from the living, physical body—i.e. there is no such thing as a disembodied human spirit. They do not associate the spirit with our personality or our essence; these things arise purely from our body when it is animated by an impersonal (non-individual) power from God which is called “spirit.” The Witnesses believe that any other use of the term spirit in connection with humans should be seen as a figure of speech. See Appendix B for more on this subject.

demon, each type with its own characteristics and vulnerabilities.^[58] There are many such facts which we can identify, but the overall understanding must elude us, at least until we have some more first-hand knowledge, as we will when we see God face to face:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:12 Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall fully know, even as I am fully known. (*composite translation*)



Knitting Together a Concept of “Spirit”

Above, we have seen that the Hebrews and Greeks used the same word for such diverse things as “breath,” “wind,” “mood,” and in several other ways. Did they ascribe these various meanings to the same word because of some superficial resemblance between them (for example, did they view spirit to be anything invisible which results in action)? Or is there some deeper, actual or essential (essence-ial) connection or commonality between these things. That is, could it be that some physical processes actually arise from a more subtle, invisible realm—a spirit world? And of course, regardless of what the ancients thought, what are the actual facts of the matter?

Let us look at two particular senses of the word “spirit.” In everyday speech and also in the Bible—in English as well as Greek and Hebrew—there appear to be two commonly used, different senses of the word “spirit”:

1. A spiritual being (for example, we are told that angels are spirits and so is God himself).
2. An attitude or mood (for example, the spirit of that ruler, a joyful spirit, the spirit of the age, etc..)

It may seem that these two meanings are definitely different, but is this necessarily so? Or is there an actual/essential link between these two types of “spirit” which justifies (and originated) the use of the same word for both? In reading the Bible, one can get the definite impression that the two things—spiritual beings and attitude/mood—are intimately related, in fact, that one is perhaps another aspect of the other. We know that a Christian obtains strength to be optimistic in the face of pain, trial, and death and to be loving toward our enemies from the Holy Spirit who we are told lives within us; in fact all distinctly Christian attitudes are attributed in the Bible to the working of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, we also know that temptation often comes to us by way of feelings: we feel forsaken by God and helpless even though our faith tells us it is no so. At other times we are overwhelmed by our fleshly lusts so that our remembrance of the truths of

[58] For example: MARK 9:25-29 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. “**You deaf and mute spirit,**” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” ...
²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “**Why couldn't we drive it out?**” ²⁹ He replied, “**This kind can come out only by prayer.**”

God's will and of our eternal reward is temporarily obscured. We have those thoughts which pop into our head from somewhere, unsummoned and unwelcome, to suggest that we partake of all manner of ungodly thoughts and deeds. The Bible calls these "temptations" and attributes them at least in part to external spiritual beings who tempt us. In extreme cases the influence of these spiritual beings is so great that the victim can no longer resist, and we call it demon possession. Therefore, it is certainly correct and Biblical for us to conclude that the workings of spirit beings manifest themselves indirectly in us as thoughts and as changes in attitudes and moods. To put it another way, at least one of the interfaces, or links between the spirit world and the physical world is in each human being—in our thoughts, attitudes, and emotions—all of which are closely associated in the Bible with the human "spirit." It is for this reason that philosophers and theologians have long spoken of humans as having a material and a spiritual component, fused together in one being. The spirit part is sensitive to spiritual things and in turn affects our physical being. Whether this is an exactly correct way of looking at human nature is really not known, it is only a man-made "model" for human nature and so we should be careful to stick with the known facts when to talk to those who believe otherwise.

On Pentecost day, the Holy Spirit manifested himself by causing winds to blow, strange tongues of flame to appear (physical effects), Jesus followers were transformed in attitude and mood into bold evangelists, and they spoke in languages they did not know (mental effects). In John 3:34, Jesus was said to be filled with the Holy Spirit "without measure" (without limit) and this was manifested in physical healings, walking on water, withering of trees, and other physical effects. Jesus himself said that through faith (a spiritual thing) great physical acts could be accomplished, even uprooting of trees and mountains, in Matthew 17:14-20 and 21:19-22.



The Physical Connection

Metaphysics is the study of that which is beyond or higher than the physical, it is the study of the ultimate nature of things. There are a number of metaphysical views or theories; some are Christian, some are atheistic, and some derive from other religions. Unlike Christian metaphysics which acknowledges the "spiritual," most modern "scientific" thought about ultimate nature of the universe (metaphysics) has tended toward a purely materialistic point of view. They attribute the source of every event to purely physical processes. Traditional materialistic thinkers have extended this to include every event in our brains and, by inference, every event in our minds. Thus thought, emotion, and attitude are portrayed as arising purely from physical processes within our bodies. It is not permitted to suggest that there is anything other than the physical which determines the events in the physical world. For these folks, human beings may be complex, but they are ultimately purely mechanical.

In general the traditional Christian metaphysical theories have treated, the "spiritual" and the "physical" as separate and as interacting only in certain limited ways. They treat man as consisting

of a physical body and a spiritual soul, two parts that are tied together normally, but which can be separated both conceptually and literally.

Some recent scientific work has uncovered problems with the mechanical view and has suggested that some things, such as the mind, are fundamentally not mechanical. To read some of this secular work, a Christian would immediately feel at home, for it begs to have the words “God” and “spirit” applied to some of the things that are identified. Based on these studies, one could conclude that the created spiritual universe and the physical universe intertwine very tightly, that they complement each other synergistically, and that perhaps one cannot even exist without the other (i.e. God created them together and linked them together). We can conclude that the creation consists of spiritual and physical elements intimately bound up with each other and inseparable as to cause and effect (both initiate changes in the other). To say it another way, there may be spiritual aspects to things that we normally consider to be purely physical. This is not too far removed from the traditional Christian position.

What we are getting at with all of this is that the materialistic view which compartmentalizes the spiritual and the physical (and then dismisses the spiritual compartment as bunk, as if “invisible” means “unreal”) is not supported by the most modern insights of the physical sciences. There is no reason whatsoever, from the physical sciences, to deny that what we call the spiritual realm is possible and real. It is a wrong view to attribute a different, “less real” reality to the spiritual world. Indeed it is a crippled philosophy which distinguishes between “scientific truth” and “spiritual truth” and relegates the one to scientific types and the other to church types. It is self-evident and fundamental that for someone who really knows the Truth, all Truth fits together without contradiction. It is only our limitations as a sinful fallen race that make us doubt this. The materialist philosophers have philosophized themselves to be blind to what the most primitive savage (as well as some of the most brilliant scientists) know, that not everything can be explained or understood by mechanical philosophies.

Contemplations of the Spiritual Universe.

Most of us tend to think of spirit beings as invisible people, with arms and legs and wings... But it is a mistake to anthropomorphize^[59] spirits so much. We ought not think of them as invisible people who breathe, laugh, walk, carry things, etc.. The truth is they are not like people at all. They exist in a completely different way than us and in a completely different realm from us—a realm which is linked to and interacts with our physical universe in ways which are

[59] Anthropomorphism (anthropo-“of man” + morph-“the form” + ism/izing-“applying”) is the act of thinking or treating non-human things as though they had more human traits that they really do, or ascribing human motivations to beings which are not human and may have different motivations or no motivations at all. The anthropomorphic error can be made with regard to inanimate objects, to plants and animals, and, of course, to spiritual beings.

undetected/unrecognized by the physical sciences (i.e. supernatural ways) but ways which are used daily by every person who is alive. Angels and devils are not made of some kind of invisible, intangible matter; the truth (as far as we know) is that they have no physical or spatial component at all; they are incorporeal (without spatial bodies) and their mode of existence is very unlike ours. For example, it might be more correct (or more wrong) to view them as invisible, living waves buzzing about a multi-dimensional universe; we really do not know.

And we must always keep in mind that God has not revealed to us in the Bible the full complexities of the spiritual realm. For example, it is possible (if not necessary) that angels, while called spirits (Hebrews 1:14), are not much like God in nature, even though God is also called a spirit. God's nature may be as alien and inscrutable to the angels as an angel's nature is to us. If so, the word "spirit," should be taken as a kind of generic word, covering a multitude of incorporeal things, rather than as a word designating a specific "plane" of existence or a type of "pseudo-substance." That is, we cannot consider the word "spiritual" to always refer to one type of thing or only to things of one nature and one composition. It is possible that the spiritual life forms that God created are just as diverse as organic life is on the earth. There may even be non-living objects that are entirely spiritual.

Remember also that, although these spirit beings are alive in some sense (they have a "personality," are conscious, and can be at least semi-rational), they are still very different from us. Their life must be defined in a different way from any life which we know. We nearly always think of life (especially sentient life) in terms of bodies and minds and our kinds of senses. But spirit beings have no bodies at all and they do not have the same senses we have. They may not even have minds in the same sense that we do. Consider also that notions of time and space, locality and motion do not necessarily apply to them in the same way that they do to us.

Perhaps most interesting of all is that we too have spirits. We are not simply physical beings. We are not cut off from this spiritual realm. Indeed we straddle the physical world and the spiritual—we are in a sense amphibians in the physical/spiritual universe. It is our "spirit" within us which is able to receive and sense things originating in this incorporeal, supernatural "realm" and to transfer this knowledge into physical action. And conversely, our physical actions send out ripples in the fabric of the spiritual realm which are picked up by spiritual beings and by other people (usually by means of physical cues). So while our senses may not allow us to perceive spirits clearly, we are not totally deaf and blind (metaphorically speaking) to them either.

So let us keep in mind the subtleties of the nature of spiritual things and carefully consider what the Bible says about spirits and about the Holy Spirit, neither discounting the truth to make the matter simpler than it is, nor confusing speculation for sound doctrine to fill in what God has left unsaid. We should not ignore and dismiss these matters nor consider them unknowable simply because they are supernatural and unfamiliar. Like it or not, these things do affect us in big ways (even for eternity) and they will leave their mark on us, whether we "believe" in them or not. To be oblivious to the spiritual realm is to be defenseless against the real dangers it presents. And God certainly did not intend that we should remain totally ignorant or oblivious to these things. God has given us means to deal with spiritual reality, as Paul explains:

EPHESIANS 6:10-18 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of **righteousness** in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the **gospel of peace**. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of **faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of **salvation** and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**. ¹⁸ And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Amazing! These things: righteousness, the gospel of Christ, faith, salvation, God's word and prayer, which seem to have so little clout in the physical world, turn out to be weapons of great power in the spiritual realm. And the more we use them and face the spiritual realities in the universe, the more palpable and clear our enemies—and God's spiritual assistance—will become to us.

If we want to learn more about these things, there is only one way to discover what God has revealed to us about spirits in general and about the Holy Spirit in particular—study the Bible. And we really do need to resist the impulse to “fill in” what God has left out or to try to force his revealed truth to conform to our presuppositions. If we speculate, we must keep our speculations grounded in the word of God; we dare not change its meaning to pursue an idea we feel interesting.

I do not believe that it is forbidden or that it is useless to apply also our limited extra-Biblical experience and knowledge to these matters. God has left a certain testimony about the nature of his creation in nature itself. But this is dangerous ground; our flesh always wishes to run off and find the quick, and easy and titillating answer. It will fool us every time unless we are very sober and disciplined. Such extra-Biblical knowledge must always be kept subjugated to and used in the service of God's word. Some truth may be discovered by scientific and philosophical means, but the resulting conclusions are not to be confused with Biblical doctrine or taught with the authority of the revealed Scriptures. (I sincerely hope that in this chapter I have not in fact improperly blurred this distinction so as to do a disservice to the reader.)^[60]



Biblical Revelations of Spiritual Things

Not only the Holy Spirit, but also the Father and the Son are spirits. Now, in the case of the Son we have the benefit of Christ's having lived in the form of a man to give us some insights into his

[60] For anyone who wishes to seriously explore these things I recommend you first chastise your foolish reason with the wonderful book: *The Foolishness of God (The Place of Reason in the Theology of Martin Luther)* by Siegbert W. Becker, Northwestern Publishing House.

spiritual nature. As a man, Christ lived out visibly, in the form of familiar human life, a picture which surely reflects his spiritual nature. When we look at Christ's life in the gospels we see one who is more than a man, more than an angel; we see one who is unique, one whom we can indeed believe is God in human flesh.^[61]

The human Jesus spoke of his Father and introduced him to us in parables, etc. so that the Father also has become more understandable to us. Both Christ and the Father are revealed as holy and as loving of humanity and as concerned about our moral actions and thoughts, etc. These traits are spiritual traits, not physical ones.

But one thing about Christ's parables of the Father is striking: the many parable pictures are disjointed; they do not all fit together into a neat picture. The truth is that each portrayal of the Father in parable focuses on a specific view of his nature. In each parable we view him from a specific point of view, and often the point of view is different from parable to parable. These snapshots, by their diversity, succeed in giving us a sense of God's "personality" and his attitude toward us, etc. but his "personality" is so complex that we cannot really take it in. What Jesus' parables reveal about his Father should encourage us to trust in God's goodness. But it also should remind us not to oversimplify and anthropomorphize God's nature. Who has not seen the sad case of the inexperienced Christian who is trying to fit all the parables of the king and the wedding feast together, as accounts of a single literal party. Or worse yet, the case of an unbeliever who cannot believe that God is good because he/she cannot get past the fact that God lets us kill and maim each other—even though God has unequivocally proved that he really does love us with an overwhelming, unshakable love and has provided a means of salvation that renders null (for the Christian) the killing and maiming, and which makes believers stop maiming and killing. Even though these snapshots are beneficial in many ways, we do not get from them the big picture view that we think we want—the insight that will allow us to understand what God is. But for now, until we see him face to face, we must be content to know who God is.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-12 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish

[61] Although Napoleon Bonaparte was no theologian and was certainly a prideful man, his conclusions concerning Christ are thoughtful:

"I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity. ... Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. Between Him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him. ... He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things. ... The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above me—everything remains grand, of a grandeur which overpowers. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man. ... One can absolutely find nowhere, but in him alone, the imitation or the example of his life. ... I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, not the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I may be able to compare it or to explain it. Here everything is extraordinary."

ways behind me. ¹² **Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.**

Jesus, as well as the inspired New Testament writers, give us portrayals of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is represented as a "counselor," a "teacher," a "guide" and other things, but these portrayals are, at least for me, less concrete and also less intimate than those of "Father," "Savior," and "Lord." Paradoxically however, the Holy Spirit is the one with whom we interact the most. The Holy Spirit is the one we are getting to know when we get to know God. It is clear from the New Testament that it is the Holy Spirit who interacts with us. And this Holy Spirit is called at some times "the Spirit of God" and at other times "the Spirit of Christ" because he is conveying both the Father and the Son by his presence. He is their spirit (as each human being has a spirit). Every believer experiences within his own spirit a communion with God's Holy Spirit which is intimate and powerful; it is this communion which convinces us that we know God and that we can trust in Him for everything as our Father, our Savior and our Lord.

For some reason we often fail to think and speak as much or as concretely about the Spirit as the believers from apostolic times did. For them the Holy Spirit was not an abstraction, not a figure of speech, but someone tangible and close by. It is in this context that the early Christians (as recorded in the Bible) called the Holy Spirit sometimes "Spirit of Christ" and at other times, the "Spirit of God," thereby closely linking the three persons together. We will see more on this in the chapters that follow.

There is something interesting to observe in the actions of the Father, Son, and Spirit. During Christ's time on earth the Father remains (at least superficially) always what some of the Jews thought God was: far above and aloof, as when he speaks from the clouds. And then there is the incarnate Son who forsakes the use of his glory and joins us on the earth in humility, but he does occasionally acknowledge and use the divine glory and the rights that are his own. The Holy Spirit by comparison is unfailingly "shy." He is mute with regard to himself. He wishes only to convey to us the Father and the Son. If you look at the New Testament, the Holy Spirit literally has no physical voice of his own, whereas the Father and Son speak "out loud." But when the Father and Son speak physically, their voices are less close and friendly than the voice of the Holy Spirit which we hear from the word of God. I.e. the Father is God of the Heavens and the Son is the Messiah and our perfect teacher (and our loving shepherd), but the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the pens of the apostles in each epistle in passionate terms filled with a rich and tender love for us. If we only had the Father and Son's words we would have some idea of the love of God for us; but the Holy Spirit is the one who carries the message of the gospel home to us. And not surprisingly, each of these same modes of address and modes of approach by the persons of the Trinity are exhibited in the Old Testament at different times and situations. God has not changed since he first revealed himself—he has always had these ways of working, which in the New Testament are revealed as coming from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.^[62]

[62] Lest anyone think I am splitting God up too much in this point, let me say that my real view is that the communication of God by all these means is a unified whole, just as the Father, Son and Spirit are a *(continued)*

We must always remember too, that trying to express in facts, propositions, and doctrines the nature of the Holy Spirit is not the proper way to find out about the Holy Spirit at all. It is not how the Bible says we are to approach God. In the end we will find that, though Bible-based doctrine about the Spirit may help guide us, communion with Him through God's means of grace (Word and Sacrament)—wherein our God, who is a Spirit, chose to come to his physical creatures through physical means—is the more profitable way to understand who the Holy Spirit is, if not what he is.



Conclusion

I hope that this diversion has not been misleading or confusing or dull. I certainly do not have all of these things figured out, so please excuse the vagueness, speculation, and unanswered questions in this chapter. I felt it would be helpful to step back and look at the bigger picture before trying to sort out what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. The underlying issues that are brought up in the material above do have some relevance to the material that follows. At the very least they remind us how little we really know and also how much there is to know.

Let us now go on to find out what the Bible reveals about the Holy Spirit.



unified whole—they cannot really be separated. So while it is helpful to “divide up” the work of God in this way in order to see clearly that the three persons have distinct “personhoods,” it is at the same time utterly misleading to think of the Father Son, and Spirit as being divided in any way. So if you do find it helpful to think of the three persons as separate for a few minutes, always remember to “put them back together” in your mind when you are finished, lest you be drawn into erroneous views.

CHAPTER 12.

THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

How does the Bible talk about the Holy Spirit? This chapter will look at who (unitarians would say, what) the Holy Spirit is. The Bible refers to the Holy Spirit many times and we must rely on these passages to understand what the truth is concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. There are two possibilities which will be focused on in this chapter:

1. A common unitarian belief is that “the Holy Spirit” is just an alternate expression for “the Spirit of the Father.” That is, since God (the Father) is a Spirit, when he works in the world in an invisible, spiritual way, the name Holy Spirit is used for the Father. Thus there are not two persons, but one—the Father—and the Holy Spirit is just a different name or a different mode of action for that person. Unitarians also speak of the Father sending out this spirit, like a force or an appendage of himself.
2. The Christian view is that the Holy Spirit is a person with a will (and person-hood) of his own and the Spirit’s will is distinct from those of the Father and Son (but always in agreement with both). Moreover, the Father, Son, and Spirit together constitute our one God, Jehovah, and they work together, without differences in rank to accomplish God’s work.

Introduction to Four Proofs at Once

Four points or aspects of the Holy Spirit’s nature are touched on in the passages in this chapter. To keep clear these four separate threads of thought, each verse has been marked with **G**, **C**, **D**, and/or **P** to indicate that they have a part in demonstrating the truth of the four points below:

G: The Holy Spirit is God.

C: The Holy Spirit is a Coequal Co-worker with the Father and the Son.

D: The Holy Spirit is Distinct from the Father and from the Son.

P: The Holy Spirit is a Person

Further explanation will be helpful to clearly recognize the reason a passage is marked with each code:

G: The Holy Spirit is God.

In these passages the Bible writers (by inspiration) refer to and act toward the Holy Spirit as if “the Holy Spirit” was simply their God Jehovah—not an intermediate agent and not an external power used by God. Some unitarians would be willing to say that the Holy

Spirit is divine, i.e. is part of God, not a created thing, but they would say the Spirit is not a personal deity, separate from the Father. See **P** below.

C: The Holy Spirit is a Coequal Co-worker with the Father and the Son.

This is similar to, but not quite as strong as **G**. In these passages the Bible writers (by inspiration) refer in some way to the Holy Spirit as a co-worker with the Father and the Son. These passages make this connection by mentioning, often with a verb, some aspect of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Father and/or to the Son, for example: "the Holy Spirit is sent by them." Each such statement may be taken or interpreted in two ways:

1. Unitarians are quick to insist that such passages imply subservience of the Holy Spirit the Father, as if the Father was commanding the Spirit or even that the Holy Spirit is just an extension of the Father. But this is not justified by the rules of grammar and usage as is made clear in the boxed note below. We should be careful not to read into a statement an undertone which is not there.

2. Christians do not believe that such passages were written to define subservience and dominance between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Rather, the very essence of these passages is to show the close cooperation and intimate relationships between them, and how they together accomplish the work of God. Indeed if you do not read into these passages ideas of rank, one comes away with a picture of three co-workers who think nothing of matters of authority or rank between them—in other words they act like co-equal co-workers rather than creator and creation. There is no hint of the jealous God who abides no equals when we are look at the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit interacting.

A Note on Interpreting Relationship Words

It is very easy to read into words more than is intended, especially if the words are being applied to something new. Our preconceived ideas about how the words are usually used often shade our understanding even when they are applied in a different circumstance. With regard to the Trinity, when we read how the Father, Son, and Spirit cause each other to act, it is tempting to read into the text ideas of rank as if the three are members of the military or some other hierarchy. That is, words of motivation are read as "orders." This is not justified.

For example, in John 15:26 Jesus says, "When the counselor (the Holy Spirit) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father ..." . The fact that Jesus "sends" the Spirit does not tell us (in Greek or in English) that the Holy Spirit is subservient to Jesus. For comparison, if we heard someone we do not know say, "I will send a doctor," and we later see the doctor arrive, we are not justified in deciding whether or not the speaker is superior to the doctor. We only know that when the speaker requested, the doctor was willing to go. In fact such statements say more about the nature of the one being sent (his willingness) than about the authority of the one who sends. The fact is that the proper definition of "send" is not "to order someone to go" but rather is to "to cause someone to go." The unitarian interpretation adopts the sense of "ordering" without justification.

Likewise, if I say, "I come from Mr. Doe," one may infer that Mr. Doe asked me to come, and that I came for that reason, but you cannot say whether I am Mr. Doe's underling, co-equal, or even superior. The use of such words cannot by themselves establish the relative authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we must look at all that the Bible says about them and fit it all together into a complete picture.

D: The Holy Spirit is Distinct from the Father and from the Son.

In these passages the Bible writers (under inspiration) referred to and acted towards the Holy Spirit as if he was distinct from (not the same as) the Father and from the Son (though he is closely linked to the Father and Son).

P: The Holy Spirit is a Person [63]

In these passages the Bible writers (under inspiration) refer to and act towards the Holy Spirit as if he is a “person” with a will, consciousness, or other attributes of an individual, and that the Holy Spirit acts in parallel with the other “persons” who are called Jesus Christ (the Son of God) and God (the Father).

Some readers may wonder about the purpose and significance of claim **P**, that the Holy Spirit is a person. Some unitarians, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, teach that the Holy Spirit is only a name or expression for the force or power of the Father acting in the world—i.e. the Holy Spirit is a thing, an emanation from the Father. To them the “Spirit of the Lord” is a figure of speech with a sense and usage much like the expression, “the arm of the Lord,” (which IS a figure of speech). They do not think of the Holy Spirit as a personal being in his own right. That is, they do not believe the Holy Spirit is conscious, that he thinks and acts of his own will—a will which is distinguishable from that of God the Father (even while it is in agreement with the Father’s will). They do not think it proper to call the Holy Spirit “He” any more than they would call the arm of the Lord “He.” But, we can see in the Bible that many passages do, by usage, attribute personality and a distinct identity to the Holy Spirit and do so in language which is very hard to read as metaphor.

[63] Here the word “person” is used in the technical, theological sense; that is, a separate “person” is not meant to imply a separate “being”—the usage presupposes that separate persons can make up a single being. This usage is admittedly different from ordinary speech; early theologians picked these terms for describing God to get the most out of everyday language when describing something which is not seen in everyday life. They had to “invent” new shades of meanings for terms to describe our amazing, unique God; but inventing terms to describe the Trinity is not the same as inventing the Trinity—contrary to what unitarians like to claim Christian theologians have done. Just remember the word “person” is not being used to refer to a human being and so we must be permitted to allow for some surprising differences from human persons—if the Bible text justifies them.

Note: Use of “He” in the New Testament to Refer to the Spirit

A note on the word “*he*” in New Testament passages: We must always keep in mind that our Bibles are translations and that Greek grammar does not translate directly into English grammar. In the original Greek of the New Testament, words have one of three genders: masculine, feminine, or neuter. The corresponding pronouns are: *αὐτός, αὐτή, αὐτό* / *autos, autay, auto*. In English, on the other hand, nouns themselves do not have a grammatical gender. Their “gender” usually comes from the actual nature of the object to which the noun or pronoun refers: either male, female, or inanimate. Thus to always translate “*autos* [m],” “*autay* [f],” and “*auto*” [n] as “*he*,” “*she*,” and “*it*” is incorrect if we wish to translate the intended meaning. In Greek, nouns and pronouns of any grammatical gender may be applied to subjects of any actual gender; for example I might say in Greek (translating mechanically):

- “My wife is a gentle spirit (*pneuma* = neuter). And I appreciate this spirit because it (*auto* = neuter) never gets angry at me.”
- “My wife is my comforter (*paraclete* = masculine). And I appreciate the advice of him (*auton*=masculine).”

It is clear that this kind of mechanical translation does not work. In the first example, “*auto*” (n) is used because “spirit” is a neuter word, but there is no intent to attribute neuter-ness to my wife. And in the second example, the masculine “*auton*” (m - objective case of *autos*) is used because “counselor” is a masculine word, regardless of the actual gender of the person referred to, and so it would be an abuse of grammar to conclude that my wife is male. To avoid these problems when translating Greek into English, it is the normal and necessary practice to use the pronoun applicable to the actual gender of the subject (according to English usage), rather than to mechanically “translate” the grammatical gender of the Greek pronoun. In English “*he*” is the customary pronoun to use of a person of unknown or indeterminate sex, and so “*he*” is used to represent the Holy Spirit.

In Greek the use of *auto* (*it*) does not imply the subject is a non-living thing as “*it*” does in English. Similarly, *autos* and *autay* (*he* and *she*) do not imply that the subject is living or personal as “*he*” and “*she*” do in English.

Various Greek terms, with various genders, are used to refer to the Holy Spirit:

Pneuma (Spirit) (same word as wind or breath) is neuter and uses the neuter Greek pronoun—an associated personal pronoun is translated as “*he*” because the Christian translators believe that the Holy Spirit is a personal entity, not an “*it*.”

Paracletos (Counselor/Comforter) is masculine, and uses the Greek masculine pronoun—an associated personal pronoun is translated as “*he*” for the same reason as *Pneuma*—not because the pronoun is masculine (see John 14:26, 15:26, and 16:7-15).

So, obviously the occurrence of the word “*he*” in our English Bibles in the verses referring to the Holy Spirit cannot then be used to “prove” that the Holy Spirit is a person. The word “*he*” in these cases simply reflects the fact that the translator believes that the Bible as a whole treats the Spirit as a “person” and so the translator uses “*he*” which in English is the correct pronoun to use of a person of indeterminate sex. A unitarian translator naturally prefers to use “*it*” as a translation of the Greek pronoun—as seen in the New World Translation produced by the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Thus, to be fair, whatever translation we read, we must look at the context and what is being said about the Holy Spirit; we cannot look merely at the presence of the English pronouns “*he*” or “*it*”.

Summary of Codes:

- G**: The Holy Spirit is God.
- C**: The Holy Spirit is a Coequal Co-worker with the Father and the Son.
- D**: The Holy Spirit is Distinct or Different from the Father and from the Son.
- P**: The Holy Spirit is a Person



Four Proofs at Once

MATTHEW 3:16-17 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ and a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- D** This shows the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit embodied/manifested in three different physical locations at the same time. One must be careful in drawing conclusions about spirits from their physical embodiments, but this passage at least suggests that they are distinguishable from one another, that the Holy Spirit is as distinct from the Father as the Son is.

MATTHEW 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

- C** The Spirit, Son, and Father are given equal treatment here and it is on this foundation that the Christian church is to be built. This passage gives powerful and eloquent testimony to the validity of the Christian doctrine that these three are co-equal and are to be worshiped together.

LUKE 12:10-12 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ¹¹ "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

- P** A person has the volition and mind to teach us the right words to say.
- G** v10. Christ says that speaking impiously against the Son of God is more forgivable than speaking impiously against the Holy Spirit, this supports the God-nature of the Spirit. v12,

The intended meaning is clearly “Jehovah will teach you...” So, if the Spirit is a person, then the Holy Spirit is Jehovah.^[64]

JOHN 7:33-39 Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. ³⁴You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.” ³⁵The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? ³⁶What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come?’” ³⁷On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸**Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.**” ³⁹**By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

C Whoever believes in Christ becomes a receptacle and wellspring of the Holy Spirit. Belief in Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are thus intimately connected. (This verse is also interesting in that it explains the meaning of the picture language term “streams of living water” which is used in various forms and places in the Bible. If we did not have John’s explanation of Jesus’ words, we might not realize that the living waters are the Holy Spirit.)

JOHN 14:26-28 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ²⁸“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.”^[65]

P A person counsels, teaches, and reminds.

C We see the works of the Spirit, Father, and Son, are intimately linked together—“Whom the Father will send in my name.” The Father sends the Spirit, but he does it “in the name of (i.e. on the authority of, or for the glory of) Christ, rather than in “his own” name. As noted above, if we put aside erroneous preconceptions about the implications of “send,” there is no basis in this verse for thinking one is superior to either of the other two; on the contrary, they are united in working together, with no caveats or restrictions.

D Though they all work together so closely, they each have a distinct role in the work of Jehovah: the Father sends the Spirit, by Jesus’ authority, and the Spirit goes and does the counseling, teaching, and reminding.^[66]

[64] Most unitarians would agree the Holy Spirit is Jehovah’s spirit, but they would say that in this verse the name “Holy Spirit” should be considered just an expression (figure of speech) referring to an emanation of, or the spirit of the Father working, not to a person apart from the Father.)

[65] The last verse is a favorite of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 15 in the light of what we know about Christ’s humiliation.

[66] This argument for distinctness is conclusive only if the Holy Spirit is a person. If the Spirit is just an “emanation” from the Father, it would be distinct, but we would not care. If the Holy Spirit is a person, the Father could not “send” the Spirit unless it is distinct from him. One can “send” a thing that belongs
(continued)

JOHN 15:25-27 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'
²⁶“When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

P The Holy Spirit’s testimony is compared to that of the disciples—to the testimony of PEOPLE; the testimony of the Spirit is not compared to that of an inanimate witness such as, “the testimony of the Scriptures.”

C Here Jesus sends the Spirit *AND* the Spirit comes from the Father.^[67]

D The one whom Christ sends is not Christ and the one who goes out from the Father is not the Father himself.

JOHN 16:7-15 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ¹²“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

P v.8: A person can convict (convince) a person of his guilt. v.13: A person guides, speaks, hears, tells.

C v.14-15: The Spirit brings glory to Christ by revealing Christ’s “things” which are the Father’s “things.” He convicts hearts of sin, of the reality of Christ’s reign on high, and of the coming judgment. It is the role of the Holy Spirit to speak the truth and tell us what we need to know. There is no hint here of the Son or the Holy Spirit being superior to the other. They each do their “own thing.” All that the Father has is Christ’s, and the Holy Spirit takes it and shows it to us—remarkable!

D v.7: The Spirit & Jesus “traded places” on the earth. Also v:13-15: the Spirit is an intermediary between the Father/Son and the disciples—i.e. after “hearing” the knowledge which is the Father’s and the Son’s, the Spirit conveys it to the disciples.

G v.13: “he speaks only what he hears.” The question, Hears from whom? is answered in v 13-15. After hearing the knowledge which is the Father’s and the Son’s, the Holy Spirit speaks it to the disciples. In fact we are told that he will not speak anything but the words of the Father and Son (“He will not speak on his own”), i.e. any words the Holy Spirit

to one and one can send another (distinct) person, but one does not “send” the person who is oneself, i.e. the person of the Holy Spirit is not the person of the Father.

[67] In the words of the Nicene Creed, the Spirit is the one “who proceeds from the Father and the Son.”

speaks are the words of Jehovah.^[68] Again, if the Spirit is a person distinct from the Father, then the Holy Spirit is divine; he is Jehovah. Note also that the Father and Son share the voice of the Spirit—he cannot be an emanation of only the Father.

ACTS 5:3-9 {Acts contains the story of Ananias and Sapphira who sold land for the use of the church. They kept part of the money for their own use and instead of being honest about their dealings, they lied and made a show of pretending to give it all to the Church.} Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.” ⁵When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. ⁷About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?” “Yes,” she said, “that is the price.” ⁹Peter said to her, “How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

P v3: One cannot lie to a figure of speech or to an emanation. We lie to a person. All would agree that we would not say, “you lied to the arm of the Lord,” yet it is proper to say, “you lied to the Holy Spirit of God.” This is proper only because the Spirit is a person, in his own right.

G v3-4: They lied to the Holy Spirit = They lied to God.
And in v. 9 Note the similarity to Matthew 4:7, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God”

ACTS 13:1-2 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ²While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

P The Holy Spirit is credited with communication.

C/G They worshiped the Lord and the Holy Spirit answered.

ACTS 8:26-29, 38-40 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” ... ³⁸And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

There are two ways to relate the Spirit and the angel: 1. Luke, the author of Acts regarded the voice spoken by the angel (the word angel means messenger, and can be applied to a human or to a

[68] We are not told that the Holy Spirit cannot speak on his own (literally “from himself”), only that he does not.

spirit), to be a communication directly from the Holy Spirit. or 2. The angel spoke first and then left and then the Spirit spoke in some other way. In either case ...

C The Spirit communicates for God.

P The Spirit, like an angel, is one who communicates—a person.

It is likely that Luke intended to equate the angel and the voice. See Appendix A.

The Mind and Will of the Spirit

ACTS 15:22-29 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. ²³With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings. ²⁴We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

P v 28: “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” An identical decision or judgment—an act of will—is attributed to both the Holy Spirit and to the human leaders. The Christian leaders said this because they were convinced that the Holy Spirit was in agreement with them and had even led them to this decision.

G The meaning is, “It seemed good to Jehovah and us,” they had received a mandate from God.

ROMANS 8:24-28, 33-34 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. ²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.^[69] ²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ... ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he that

[69] Verse 27 in the NIV is not as clear as it could be: A literal translation of verse 27: and the one searching the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because according to God he intercedes on behalf of the saints. The NIV replaces a Greek pronoun (he) with the word “Spirit” in an attempt at clarity but this is not necessarily the correct meaning. The more literal translation makes it more clear that it is Jesus who is the one searching hearts as well as knowing the mind of the Spirit, all according to the Father’s will.

condemns? **Christ Jesus**, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is **at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

P v.27: The Spirit has a mind. One cannot say that a feeling within people, or a manifestation of God's power "has a mind" (v.26) A person helps.

C v.26: (see footnote) Paul mentions that he who searches the hearts of men knows the mind of the Spirit because he (Christ, see footnote) is interceding, pleading on our behalf to the Father. In v. 34 we see also that it is Christ who is with the Father interceding for us. Hence both the Son and the Spirit are working together on the same work, interceding for us.



Whose Spirit is the Holy Spirit?

In the following passages, in addition to the same four attributes of the Spirit we have been looking at, we will consider the question: Is the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Father or is the Holy Spirit the Spirit of the Son? Remember we have seen that the New Testament writers usually referred to the Father as simply "God" and refer to Jesus with other names or titles such as "Son of God" or "Lord" or "Christ," etc..

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus:

ACTS 16:4-8 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. ⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

P A person guides us.

The "Holy Spirit" would not allow them to go southwest and then a little later the "Spirit of Jesus" would not allow them to go northeast—so they continued northwest. There were not two different Spirits guiding Paul; Luke, the author of Acts, is here revealing that he considered these two names to be interchangeable. If you doubt that the Spirit of Christ does things associated with the Holy Spirit, read on.

1 PETER 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God the Father:

EPHESIANS 4:28-31 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. ²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

P A person grieves.

JOHN 15:26 “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

MATTHEW 10:19-20 {Jesus warns his disciples of coming persecution...} But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

***The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the God the Father
and the Spirit of Christ:***

ROMANS 8:8-16 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. ¹² Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

P A person lives/dwells and leads (v 14) and testifies to our spirits.

Here Paul tells us (v 8-9) that believers must have the Spirit of God (the Father) living in them. In the next breath (v 9-10) he says we must have the Spirit of Christ in us. Then he repeats (v 11 & v 14 & 16) that the Spirit of the Father lives in believers and communicates with them. There are two ways to interpret this. Either there are two Holy Spirits or there is one Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of two persons. It is not surprising then that Paul says that it is the Spirit of God within us which instills in us the nature of a son—“we received the Spirit of sonship”—since the Father’s Spirit is also the Son’s Spirit, i.e. the Holy Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:13—14:6 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, even as from the Lord, the

Spirit.^[70] ¹Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but **Jesus Christ as Lord,** and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

C Verses 18, 4, and 5 tell us that the "Lord" being spoken of is Jesus Christ—the very image of God, even while the Lord's glory of verse 18 is a reference to the glory of Jehovah reflected in the face of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai. Verse 17 is a curious verse and at first seems to be in opposition to a Trinitarian idea of the distinctness of the persons. Verses 17-18 equate the Holy Spirit with the Lord of Jesus! If we did not have other verses showing the distinction between them we might think from this verse that the Holy Spirit was just Jesus in another form, but then we would have problems understanding how the Holy Spirit could be the Father's Spirit. It seems perhaps that Paul's purpose in writing this section is to minimize the distinctions between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is trying to pull them together so that his readers are not tempted to place the three in some hierarchy as human reason is always tempted to do. He says, the Lord (Jesus) is the Spirit—meaning that when you see the Spirit working, it is Christ working, not someone else separate from Christ (and even superior to him). Then after linking the Son and the Spirit together, Paul makes sure that we do not leave out God the Father; in verses 4-6 Paul ties the Father and the Son together, by speaking of the glory of Christ who is the image of God and the glory of God in the face of Christ. Better scholars have analyzed this passage in much more depth.^[71]

[70] This phrase in bold has been retranslated more literally than the NIV. The NIV text which reads: **from the Lord, who is the Spirit.** The Greek is;

καθάπερ	ἀπὸ	κυρίου	πνεύματος	: Greek
kathaper	apo	kyriou	pneumatōs	: Transliterated Greek
even as	from	(the) lord,	Spirit	: Word-by-word translation

Note: apo + genitive form of noun (possessive) means "from." That is, kyriou is the genitive form.

[71] R.C.H. Lenski in his Commentary on the New Testament says regarding verses 17 and 18... (the parallel Greek text and the notes in { } are inserted by this author):

17 ὁ δὲ κύριος	τὸ πνεῦμα	ἐστίν	οὐ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα	κυρίου	ἐλευθερία	: Greek
ho de kyrios	tow pneuma	estin	ou de tow pneuma	kyriou	eleutheria	: Transliteration
Now the Lord	the Spirit	is	where↔but	the Spirit	of the Lord (is)	(there is) freedom : Word Tr.

v 17 The statements of this verse are transitional, preparatory to the climax which is reached in v.18. **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit (is, there is) liberty.** In the phrase *πρὸς κύριον* (v.16) {pros kyrion, to the Lord} no article is needed, but when it is the subject of the sentence, and when it is mentioned a second time, the article is in place: ὁ κύριος {ho kyrios, the Lord}. This Lord is Christ. The Greek usually indicates the predicate by omitting the article; but *πνεῦμα* {pneuma, spirit} would then mean only that "the Lord is spirit," i.e., has spirit nature as this is said about God in John 4:24. Paul, however, means that "the Lord is the Spirit," the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead. So Paul writes τὸ πνεῦμα {ta pneuma, the spirit.}

(continued)

Other Verses Speak of the Spirit of Christ:

PHILIPPIANS 1:18b-19 Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

1 PETER 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Jesus promised to be with us until the end of the age. Jesus' presence is not a visible presence, but rather a invisible one. That is, his Spirit^[72] dwells with us. Paul, below, refers to Christ's spiritual presence with him, and asks the Lord that Timothy may have this blessing also. And as seen above, unless there are two Holy Spirits, Paul's references to the Holy Spirit and his references to Christ being with our spirit are interchangeable formulas.

The fact that Paul is not fusing the two persons of the deity into one is at once apparent when he writes "the Spirit of the Lord." (in v.17b) They are two persons but of identical essence and do the same work. Where the Lord is, there is his Spirit, and where the Spirit is, there is the Lord. In the presence of the Spirit we see the glorification of the Lord, and in the presence and the glorification of the Lord we see the Spirit and his work, John 16:14. This is what Jesus told Philip about himself and about the Father." John 14:9-11; 12:45; or still stronger: "I and my Father are one," John 10:30. This is true also with regard to the Lord and the Spirit. ...

But why mention the Spirit, why not ascribe this liberty to the Lord alone? We have the answer in John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26-27; 16:7. The Lord ever works through his Spirit. The graven letters of Moses have no power to convert and to give liberty, only the Lord's Spirit can do that. Those letters bind and condemn so that we may flee to Christ and to his Spirit and be freed. ...

18	...	καθάπερ	ἀπὸ	κυρίου	πνεύματος	: Greek
	...	kathaper	apo	kyrion	pneumatos	: Transliteration
	...	even as	from	(the) Lord	(the) Spirit	: Word for Word Translation

18) ... "As from the Lord (who is) the Spirit" = as one might expect from such a source or agent. The work corresponds to the workman. καθάπερ {kathaper, even as from} = κατά + ἅ + πέρ: "fully in accord with what things" come from the Lord, ἀπὸ {apo, from} indicates derivation. The Lord is not called the agent: ὑπο {hypo, by} but rather the source and fountain of our transformation. To be sure, ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος {apo kyrion pneumatos} can be construed in several ways, but here only the construction indicated in v.17 is proper, namely that of apposition: "from the Lord, the Spirit."

This phrase and its two nouns, together with v.17, have produced a good deal of discussion. We need note only this, that here more is said than *das Geist-Sein Christi* (the Spirit-being of Christ), for then τὸ πνεύματος {tow pneumatos, the spirit} in v.17 ought to be only πνεύματος {pneumatos, (a) spirit}, and the third person would not be referred to; nor is dynamic union of Christ and the Spirit all that is here expressed, a union of their power and their work. Unless the union is one of the divine essence in the Trinity so that one divine person is *in* the other, the full import of Paul's brief expressions is not fully understood. We might indeed, translate, "from the Lord's Spirit," yet we hesitate because in v.17b, where this is said, Paul writes τὸ πνεύματος κυρίου (the article, the nouns in reversed order from that found in the phrase). Our whole transformation is the work of the Lord in and by and through the Spirit. All Scripture agrees in regard to that.

[72] The Spirit of Jesus Christ is in us and with us. And where Spirit of Jesus Christ is, there is Jesus Christ dwelling. Thus Jesus Christ as the God-man dwells in us and with us invisibly also. (Where Christ is as God there he is also as a man.)

2 TIMOTHY 4:16-22 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. ¹⁹ Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰ Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. ²¹ Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers. ²² The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

The passage above does not explicitly say, "the Spirit of Christ," but clearly verses 17 and 22 are speaking of Christ's invisible, i.e. spiritual, presence with us. That there is indeed only one divine spirit dwelling within us and binding us into one body—the body of Christ—is explicitly stated by Paul to the Corinthians:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.



There is no way to separate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And there is no way to blur them together either. They are distinct persons, yet one God.

PART V

The Trinity:
Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit

CHAPTER 13

THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Trinity in Creation

GENESIS 1:1-28 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ...

⁶ And God said, “Let there be...

⁹ And God said, “Let the...

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the...

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be...

²⁰ And God said, “Let the...

²⁶ Then God said, “**Let us make man in our image**, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

JOHN 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him {the Word} all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Concerning John’s words: Church history and tradition hold that John lived to an old age and that he wrote his gospel near the end of his life—the capstone of his life as an apostle, a life full of the Spiritual insight. I used to wonder where John got the opening words of his gospel, and what they meant. They appeared to be an utterly new revelation from the Spirit and to have a rather mysterious meaning. But, it is not so obscure after all! Indeed, you can “see” the wheels turning in John’s head as he sat down to choose suitably momentous words, to begin his gospel account. Where would he find words befitting his great Lord? He had studied the Scriptures for decades, looking with New Covenant eyes for signs of Christ’s presence, and by the Spirit he recognized Christ in a place hardly anyone would suspect. The Creation account in Genesis, where God created through his words, was a reference to Christ! With this insight in mind he coined a new name for the Son of God—the Word of God. So, it was settled, he would start his gospel with the same thought as the first chapter of the Bible! He would go back to the very beginning and build

the foundation of his New Testament book on the same foundation as the whole Old Testament Scripture—on creation—and on Christ's role in it.

Truly, John's words are a significant amplification and clarification of the Genesis 1 account, given to us in these last days. By revelation John shows us clearly that all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in Genesis 1, and that Christ being the creator is not a contradiction of Genesis, or even a change to Genesis.^[73] John's words "the Word of God ... through him all things were made" are a direct restatement of Genesis 1 which lists each thing that was spoken into existence by the word of God on the six days of creation. Thus it is that John can say, "without him nothing was made that has been made."

John's case is powerful, for he we cannot treat the Word that God speaks to create, as part of creation. Jehovah is indeed one—Jehovah is God, Word, and Spirit, inseparable in creation and in all his deeds. The Jehovah's Witness idea that Christ was a created servant who heard the words of God and obeyed them is contradicted by John's insight that Christ was those very creative Words of God! It is beyond our understanding, but it is the truth.

Additional passages...

PSALM 33:6 By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath {or Spirit.—this is a form of ruach, the Hebrew word for spirit/breath} of his mouth.

PSALM 104:30 When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are our creator. See also: Who is the Creator? in Chapter 6.



[73] John is building on the facts of Genesis to indicate that the Son was with the Father and himself created all things. Here we see an interesting picture of the relationship between the Father and Son that confounds any preconceived notions we might have had. The Father speaks/commands to create the universe, but it is not the Son who hears/obeys, for the Son himself is the word/command spoken. It is the universe which hear, obeys, and is summoned into existence. The words spoken by God are not like our words, which are mere vibrations of matter. The very words of God are so potent that they themselves are a person. Neither do they leave their originator and die out as our words do. They persist eternally and are bound forever (as a person) to the Father who spoke them. And, this name, Word of God, does not exhaust their relationship, for the Word of God is also the "only begotten Son of God," and many other things. There are many points to ponder concerning these names, for example: as the changeless Father spoke in creation, so also he has spoken from eternity; thus we can say that the only begotten Son was begotten from eternity (with no beginning). And just as there was no time when the Father did not speak, there is no time when he did not have a Son. Indeed, the Father bereft of His Son and bereft of his ability to speak would be less than Jehovah, the God of the Bible.

The Father and the Incarnate Son

The Old Testament often speaks prophetically of the Incarnate Son who is the Messiah (“the Christ” in Greek). Literally hundreds of passages pertain to the Messiah, many of them bringing out the servant nature of Jesus. Several of those passages are listed below:

ISAIAH 49:6-10 he says: **“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”** ⁷This is what Jehovah says—the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—**to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: “Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down,** because of Jehovah, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, **who has chosen you.”** ⁸This is what Jehovah says: **“In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people,** to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, ⁹**to say to the captives, ‘Come out,’ and to those in darkness, ‘Be free!’** “They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. ¹⁰**They will neither hunger nor thirst,** nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them **beside springs of water.**

EZEKIEL 34:22-24 I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another. ²³I will place over them **one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd.** ²⁴**I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them.** I, Jehovah, have spoken.

EZEKIEL 37:22-28 **“I will make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them** and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. ²³**They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.** ²⁴**My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd.** They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. ²⁵They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and **David my servant will be their prince forever.** ²⁶I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and **I will put my sanctuary among them forever.** ²⁷**My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.** ²⁸**Then the nations will know that I, Jehovah, make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.”**

One could get the impression that the Shepherd/King is someone else, someone less than, Jehovah. The Incarnate Son is here referred to as “David” (i.e. the Son of David), which emphasizes his human nature. But if we are not swayed purely by the mere fact that the Messiah is a human being, and we look at this passage closely, we see the same ambiguity about the nature of the Messiah that is seen throughout the Bible. When the Messiah, the human king, is referred to prophetically, he is indeed distinguished from the Father, but we see again that this King Messiah is treated as an honored coworker by the Father, not as a creation. The passages articulate dramatically how we will be ruled over by both the Father and Son in eternity. Here the word “servant” harkens ahead to the role Jesus was to play during his humiliation, when he became “David.” It refers to the perfect obedience that he practices AS OUR SUBSTITUTE. In eternity the Incarnation continues; Jesus remains “David,” and so the Servant title remains applicable and is used with pride by our Good Shepherd who was not ashamed to become irrevocably and forever one of us.

DANIEL 7:13-14 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

That the Son of David will rule forever is taken by Christians to indicate that the eternal Son took on flesh forever, i.e. that the incarnation should not be looked at as ending with his exaltation. Other passages indicate this also: Christ’s emphasis on his fleshly reality after his resurrection and Paul’s words about Christ’s glorified body support this (see Chapter 3 and Appendix B). The promise below, that on judgment day they shall look on him whom they have pierced, suggests that even the scars on Christ’s body will still be there on that day.

REVELATION 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.



During the Exodus

NEHEMIAH 9:19-20 “Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. ²⁰You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst.”

This passage shows the Holy Spirit’s presence in the wilderness. We have seen previously that Christ was in the pillar of fire, which showed the presence of Jehovah, and was called the angel of Jehovah. See *The Spiritual Rock in The Wilderness* in Chapter 7 and also in Appendix A.

ISAIAH 63:8-10 {Jehovah speaking of his people Israel ...} He said, “Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me”; and so he became their Savior. ⁹In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. ¹⁰Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

The Bible in Basic English (BBE), and other translations give quite a different, but very interesting, alternate rendering of verse 9.

"For he said, Truly they are my people, children who will not be false: so he was their saviour out of all their trouble. ⁹**It was no sent-one or angel, but he himself who was their saviour: in his love and in his pity he took up their cause, and he took them in his arms, caring for them all through the years.** ¹⁰But they went against him, causing grief to his holy spirit: so he was turned against them, and made war on them."

This passage is not a proof passage for the Trinity, but it illustrates how the Trinity is subtly revealed in the Old Testament. The first underlined phrase contains a reference to “sons” and so

points to a Father. “He became their savior” points to all three persons, but particularly to the Son who became a man to save us. Whichever reading of verse 9 is taken is a clear reference to Christ, we have already seen that “The angel of his presence” is a name associated with the pre-incarnate Christ and so points to the Son. The alternate rendering also sees the savior as something more than a (created) angelic being also. (See also Appendix A for more on the use of the name angel of Jehovah for Christ.) The “Holy Spirit” is mentioned directly.



CHAPTER 14.

THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In this chapter, the underlined phrases speak of the Father and the Son or of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in proximity. The main purpose of this chapter is to look at the way the Bible speaks of them together. Secondly we will also see how the Biblical writers give them parallel treatment befitting the equality of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 3:16-17 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is **my Son**, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Above, at this inauguration of Christ's ministry, all three persons are acknowledged. Likewise at the end of his ministry before his ascent into heaven...

MATTHEW 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The parallel treatment of the three persons in Matthew 28:19 implies equality and is incompatible with the idea that the Father is the creator and the Son is mere creation and the Holy Spirit is an impersonal power. All three are personal and distinctive and equal. Even more telling is the fact that even though they are three, they have only one name. This verse contradicts powerfully the unitarian view of Jehovah when we remember that Jehovah is a jealous God.

The Father and Son are often mentioned together:

2 THESSALONIANS 1:6-9 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord {Christ} and from the majesty of his power.

2 JOHN 1:9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have **God**; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

Ephesians 4:4 gives parallel treatment to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

EPHESIANS 4:4-6 There is one body {Christ's body of believers} and **one Spirit**—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—⁵ **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ **one God and Father of all**, who is over all and through all and in all.



Proclamations and Benedictions

The New Testament writers like Paul, coming out of a Jewish culture, found a new application for a form of poetic parallelism—to praise the Triune God and to praise the Father and Son. The following double and triple proclamations and benedictions emphasize the equality and the distinctiveness of the persons of the Godhead:

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-14 Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All the saints send their greetings. ¹⁴ May the **grace of the Lord Jesus Christ**, and the **love of God**, and the **fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all**.

1 PETER 1:2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

The Father and Son

In the next passage we see the three persons related in the work of the Messiah, and at the end a benediction mentioning the Father and Son.

ROMANS 1:1-7 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the **gospel of God**—² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ⁶ And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. ⁷ To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:2-5 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who **comforts** us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

GALATIANS 1:1-5 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—² and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia: ³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

2 TIMOTHY 1:2b & 2 THESSALONIANS 1:2b Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul was not overturning the religion of the Old Testament by proclaiming another as the equal of the Father. Rather Paul reveals a secret hidden from the beginning of time until Christ—that Jehovah is and has always been three in one.



Between the Resurrection and the Ascension

The following passages record the words spoken by the resurrected Christ who was preparing for the next step in his exaltation and in our redemption—his ascent to the right hand of the Father. There is a lot to ponder here. Our purpose is to see how Christ's relationship to the Father and to the Spirit is portrayed more openly when his humiliation ends. Note also the themes in **bold** in the passages below which make certain events conditional on Christ's return to his Father.

LUKE 24:49 {Jesus speaking of the Holy Spirit...} **I am going to send you what my Father has promised;** but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

JOHN 15:26—16:15 {Christ is speaking...} "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷ And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. ¹ "All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. ² They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. ³ They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴ I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

⁵ "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. ⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. **Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.** ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because **I am going to the Father**, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹²“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

Below, in Peter’s words on the day of Pentecost, we see the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit on and after Pentecost...

ACTS 2:29-39 “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³ **Exalted to the right hand of God, he {Christ} has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.** ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’ ³⁶ Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Each step in Christ’s birth, life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and ongoing rule over the Church is an integral part of the Jehovah’s salvation plan, worked out in every harmonious detail before the world was made. The verses Luke 24:49, John 16:7, and Acts 2:33 (bold verses above) all speak of a particular step in that plan. All refer to the exaltation of the Christ as a necessary predecessor to the day of Pentecost. The risen Savior, Jesus Christ, was to ascend as the God-man to the right hand of the Father. After this happened, the next step was for Christ, the Son of Man, to give, as his own, the Holy Spirit of God to those who were part of his Church. This was, in a sense, the first official, public act of the exalted God-man after his enthronement in Heaven. I.e. after he, according to his human nature, assumed the continuous, full, and public use of his divine powers.

In John 16:12 above, Jesus makes the receiving of full insight and knowledge by believers conditional on his return to the Father and his giving of the Holy Spirit. All of these things, the intimate contact, the work of the Counselor, and the spiritual knowledge were all conditional on Christ’s return to the Father and in fact were awaiting Christ’s giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (and after). This use of the Holy Spirit as a replacement for his physical presence was to be the new way that Christ would work with us, his brothers and sisters, after his full exaltation to the right hand of the Father.



Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Giver of Gifts

EPHESIANS 4:1-13 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” ⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he {Christ} who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. {God’s people = the body of Christ, and per 1 Corinthians 12:13 below, that body is entered/joined by means of the Spirit.}

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-13 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. ¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

The two passages above have many parallels to each other. In verses 4-6 (of both passages) we see first a triply parallel reference to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the source behind our Christian life. In verses 7 and 11 (of the first passage) Christ is the one who gives the Gifts. Verses 7 and 11 (of the second passage) emphasize the one Spirit behind all gifts—followed by statements that it is the Spirit who brings about the creation of Christ’s body, the Church, through baptism into that body and by the believers’ “drinking” in of the “water”—the Spirit. (John previously stated that the “living water” was the Holy Spirit. See John 7:38-39 in Chapter 12.)

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-14 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The passage above speaks of the Father and the Holy Spirit, distinguishing them, but also elaborating on their intimate union.

LUKE 11:13 “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”



The Source of Salvation and of Sanctification

Even though it is Paul's (and his companions') preaching that is the means that brought the Corinthians to faith in the gospel, Paul below acknowledges that it is not his own doing. Paul likens the fact of the Corinthian believers' conversion and changed hearts to a letter written in human heart and flesh by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Paul then reiterates that the power (competence) behind his ministry (i.e. the power which does this writing) is God and the Holy Spirit, not himself. Thus this new covenant is "from Christ," "from God," and done "with the Spirit."

2 CORINTHIANS 3:2-6 **You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody.** ³You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴Such confidence as this {for Paul to be so bold in describing the sure results of his ministry as the direct work of God} is ours through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

In the passage below also, we see that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all are tightly bound together in Jehovah's work in our hearts.

EPHESIANS 3:14-21 For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Paul, the former Pharisee, via a construction reminiscent of Hebrew poetic parallelism in verses 16 and 17 above, equates God's strengthening through his Spirit in our inner being with Christ dwelling in our hearts. In verses 18-19 Paul relates experiencing the love of Christ to being filled with the fullness of God.

We see that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have a role in our conversion, in the preservation of our faith, and in our successful sanctification in the Christian life. None can be dispensed with; all three interlock and inextricably overlap in their actions and in the honor we owe them.



CHAPTER 15

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

In the previous chapter we started to look at the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and between them and us. The purpose of this chapter is to examine these relationships more closely, to try to grasp better the nature of the connection between the three Holy persons. Surprisingly, the relationship that they have to us may give us some clues to their relationship to each other. In addition to considering these bonds in a positive sense to understand what holds us together, we will see better how wrong is the idea that the unity of the Father and Son is only a "unity of purpose" as taught by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

We will lay the foundation for this examination by first looking at the little preposition "in" (ἐν / en in Greek) and related concepts related to these matters. We will see that words about being "within," or being "in" or being "given" someone, are used a lot in the New Testament. Now we should say at the start that these are metaphorical statements, i.e. they are talking about a spiritual relationship using a preposition ("in") that is usually used to denote the physical/positional relationship of inside-ness. We must be careful that we form our opinions carefully. The Jehovah's Witnesses interpret these metaphors as figures of speech that basically mean "in agreement" or "in solidarity with," i.e. as statements about the will of the parties involved. Christians on the other hand interpret them as statements about the spirits of the parties involved. Appendix B gives a brief description of the Witnesses' views concerning the nature of the human spirit which underlies their downplay of spiritual relationships.

After we look at the concept of "in," we will discuss whether a spiritual "communion" (a sharing of the spirit) is a better way to interpret the "in" metaphor. The footnote quoting R.C.H. Lenski in chapter 12 also mentions this significant word "in," as a clue to the true relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Bible says that:

The Holy Spirit is In the Father

1 CORINTHIANS 2:11-12 For who among men **knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within** {Greek "en"} **him?** In the same way no one **knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.** ¹²We have not received the spirit of the world but the **Spirit who is from God**, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

The comparison above takes for granted that the Holy Spirit is within (in) God.

The Holy Spirit is In the Son.

JOHN 3:34 For the one whom God has sent {Christ} speaks the words of God, for God **gives** {Christ} **the Spirit without limit.**

*The Father is In the Son and
The Son is In the Father
(and We In Them)*

COLOSSIANS 1:19 For God was pleased to have **all his fullness dwell in him,**

JOHN 17:11, 20-26 {Jesus prays...} I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ... ²⁰“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

v 21 “May they also be in us” to be a sign to the world.

v. 26 The love the Father has for the Son to be in believers (so that we love the Son as the Father does), is what we would expect if the Father is in them.

JOHN 14:16-26 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” ²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” ²³Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” ²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

***The Holy Spirit is Given to be In Us
The Father and Son and Spirit are With us
Christ is In the Father and We In Christ
and Christ In Us***

JOHN 14:16-26 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” ²² Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” ²³ Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ²⁵ “All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

***The Holy Spirit—the Spirit of the Father
and the Spirit of the Son—is In Believers***

Here, the (Holy) Spirit, who governs believers, is called by two other names: the “Spirit of God” and the “Spirit of Christ.”

ROMANS 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

The Holy Spirit of the Father is In Believers

MATTHEW 10:19-20 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.^[74]

[74] There is a Jehovah’s Witness teaching that “being united with God” is a figure of speech meaning “being in agreement with God,” or “having a common purpose with God.” They also, teach that “the Holy Spirit” is a figure of speech referring to the power of God to influence people and objects in the world. Taken together with these verses, these doctrines rings hollow. The Christian claim is that “having the Holy Spirit inside” is the same as being “united with Christ” (and with God). This possessing of the Spirit and being united with God are not two separate things, but two different ways of expressing one thing, that God joins himself to us—in a literal, but invisible way. If God is not really in us, is not really united to us through his Holy Spirit, then the words above, “you will be given what to say” are really a figure of speech meaning “*it will be like* you will be given what to say.” And “for it will not be you speaking” must really mean “for it will *like* you are not speaking” and “but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” must mean, “but *it will be like* the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” To argue like this robs language of its meaning.

The Holy Spirit of the Son is In Believers

As John reports, the prophets (and other believers) have a relationship with the Son, through the Spirit.

1 PETER 1:10-11 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.^[75]

Believers are to be Full of the Father and Son

EPHESIANS 3:19, 4:13 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be **filled to the measure of all the fullness of God**. ... until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Believers can be Filled with the Spirit

LUKE 1:15 {Speaking of John the Baptizer ...} for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be **filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth**.

LUKE 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was **filled with the Holy Spirit**.

LUKE 1:67 His father Zechariah was **filled with the Holy Spirit** and prophesied:

ACTS 2:4 All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

ACTS 4:8 Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

ACTS 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and spoke the word of God boldly.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-20 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his

[75] This passage is not speaking of a unity of purpose, or of us being "in God's will." It is not men who are "in" the Spirit, but the Spirit who is "in" them! A unity of purpose with God (in the ordinary sense) speaks only of an inner condition in us, and as such has no power to bring knowledge and supernatural inspiration from God to us. (These things come from outside of us, from God, and for us to have them, they must come INTO us. Now, all of this does not speak to whether the Spirit is a person, but this talk of our unity with Christ and with God as being only a unity of purpose—a condition of our will—is clearly unsound. Nor is it adequate to say that the chief effect of the Holy Spirit is to create a unity of purpose. These verses speak of a much more intimate effect of God's Spirit—a spiritual communion (sharing or mutual participation) between us and God. More on this below.

own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you**, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

It is common to speak of the indwelling Holy Spirit, but the whole truth is that believers are filled, or indwelt by the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In fact one could state this same idea from a different perspective by saying that the presence of the Father and Son is communicated through (comes right along with) the reception of the Holy Spirit^[76]. There are several things which support this idea. First of all, the Bible does not elaborate separate steps for the indwelling of the three persons, nor does the Bible give different reasons (i.e. different functions) for the three persons to live in us—they are simply Jehovah dwelling in and with us. Also, the indwelling of one is not claimed to be more important than the presence of the others (even though the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is mentioned more frequently). Finally there is never a case where we can say that one is received while the other two are withheld. The Bible only indicates that if someone believes, then that person has all three persons. Though the various spiritual gifts are ascribed specifically to the Holy Spirit, the Bible also says that it is the Son and the Father who are giving those very gifts. (See the section entitled Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as Givers of Gifts in the previous chapter.)

LUKE 11:13 “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him!”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6 **There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.** ⁵ **There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.** ⁶ **There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men**

We have previously examined the idea that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are coequal co-workers, in that the relationship between the three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—show a clear lack of structure and hierarchy. This lack of distinction in rank between the persons is very significant and it is very compatible with the idea that where one goes, the others automatically

[76] Some might argue that the reception of the Holy Spirit, for example at Pentecost and later by various groups of believers, belies the idea that the reception of the Holy Spirit is coincident with the reception by faith of Christ and the Father (at the moment one believes). The manifestation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost should most properly be seen as receiving a greater measure of the Holy Spirit. As proof of this consider John 20:22 where, after the resurrection and previous to Pentecost, Christ appeared to those same disciples. He breathed on them and said, **Receive the Holy Spirit**, prior to the Pentecost outpouring. And even this event should not be viewed as their first internal experience with the Holy Spirit for we know that those disciples who had long called Jesus “Lord” in faith could not have done so except that the Father had drawn them (John 6:44 below) through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3 below). So it is best to consider Pentecost and such events as the reception of a greater, or special, measure of the Spirit, i.e. as the reception of particular additional spiritual gifts and powers, not as the first reception of the Holy Spirit.

JOHN 6:44 “**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and **no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.**

go. The way the Bible portrays our God, we should not imagine that Jehovah ever manifests himself in a way that leaves out any of the three persons, for He is one God!

Especially in the human "heart," you cannot have one without the others. It is unBiblical to suggest that we could be indwelt by the Spirit and not also have Christ and the Father, or that we could be in Christ and not have the Father and the indwelling Spirit, or that the Father could fill us without involving the Son and the Spirit. The Bible closely links the work of the three persons in us. The Bible only speaks of them being there jointly or else none of them are there and we are lost. There is no license in the Bible for other possibilities. Jehovah is a jealous God who abides no equals and has no peers, the tight association between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit present a great difficulty for Jehovah's Witnesses who believe that only the Father is Jehovah.

Communion

The New Testament uses the Greek word *κοινωνία* / *koinonia* in several relevant contexts. *Koinonia* (sometimes translated "communion") is defined as "a sharing or possessing in common or a participation in an intimate relationship with deep understanding." Communion denotes the deepest level of relationship between persons.

A husband and wife could be said to commune or have a communion—recall the passage in Genesis which speaks of this:

GENESIS 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

From the sharing of flesh, arises a bond that exists even when their flesh is not in contact. And this communion/bond continues to exist even when husband or wife are in disagreement, i.e. when there is temporarily no unity of purpose or will. Because this unity exists, regardless of our will or feelings, it is clear that this unity (which arises from the union of flesh) cannot itself be merely a unity of purpose or mind or will—though it will usually be accompanied by such outward signs of unity (one-ness).

Note also that this bond can even be sinfully created with a prostitute, where no unity of purpose, will or even enduring sentiment exists:

1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-20 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

The question remains though—is this union only a union of flesh? Anyone who has been married will testify that the sharing between husband and wife involves much more than that—it touches all aspects of our physical, mental, and emotional lives.^[77]

Moreover, we note that close human bonds exist in several forms: between husband and wife; between parent and child; between other blood relations; even between good friends. These bonds manifest themselves in many ways. These bonds can have a physical element, but key parts of them involve non-physical elements (e.g. love). But such bonds are more than emotions alone or even will and emotions; they are spiritual connections^[78] between two or more individuals. That this is so, notice above where Paul compares the relationship between husband and wife to that between believers and Christ. Then, in verse 17, Paul explicitly says that this later relationship is to be “one with him in spirit.”^[79]

Koinonia

Communion corresponds to the word *κοινωνία* / *koinonia* in Greek. The English word SHARING (keeping in mind that there are many ways and degrees of sharing) captures pretty well the sense of *koinonia*. In the following passages of this section, the translation of the Greek word *koinonia* is in **bold**. The various English words used by the NIV translation succeed in bringing out subtleties of the meaning, but try to see how a single meaning, a single sense—of a spiritual SHARING—underlies each phrase.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **fellowship of the Holy Spirit** be with you all.

In the parallelism of the above benediction, our *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit is grouped with the grace of Christ and the love of the Father.

ACTS 2:42 {After Pentecost...} They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

[77] To the Jehovah's Witnesses, a human being consists of only the body and the processes that arise in it due to some impersonal life-force (spirit) given by God. That is, we have no personal “spirit,” no “immortal soul.” They might agree with this statement about the marriage bond, but they would understand it in a different way.

[78] Again, the Jehovah's Witnesses might agree with this statement but would have a different understanding of what “spiritual connection” means.

[79] Jehovah's Witnesses read verse 17 very differently; they might paraphrase the double underlined phrase: “he who joins up with Christ is united with him in purpose and sentiment (spirit)”—implying that that is the extent of the bond between husband and wife also. One wonders why Paul would bother to make such a trivial (tautologous) statement, if all he meant was that **he who unites himself with the Lord** is one with him in purpose.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:9-10 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. ¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16-17 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

GALATIANS 2:9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

EPHESIANS 3:6-9 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

PHILIPPIANS 1:4-5 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ...

PHILIPPIANS 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ...

PHILIPPIANS 3:8-10 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

PHILEMON 1:6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

1 JOHN 1:3-8 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

2 PETER 1:3-10 His divine power has given us everything {see the promises below} we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁶ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall

1 CORINTHIANS 10:18-20 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? ¹⁹ Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

1 PETER 5:1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

The Bible speaks of bonds between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit using the word "in." It also speaks of bonds between believers and the three persons using the word "in." We have just looked at the communion in Christ that believers share. These bonds are (I believe) not unlike and can be better understood by considering the examples of the inter-human bonds mentioned in the previous section. In saying these bonds are all similar, I mean that each is a spiritual connection or interaction, a communion—a communion which is deeper than matters of mere will or purpose or emotion. The very word "in ..." reveals this, for to say that one person is "in" another is surely not speaking of a mere accidental or transitory relationship—it is a bond which binds the participants together in a supernatural, i.e. spiritual, way. They are two becoming one; they are the bonding of two persons to make one pair or three Persons to make one Trinity. We see only the outward signs and so can convince ourselves if we wish that it is only a unity of purpose or will, but the reality is much richer and mysterious than that. This communion, this linking of spirits, is unity indeed.

The nature of each communion and the product of each communion is determined by the nature and capacities of those in the communion:

- A communion between finite creatures is one thing. It produces friends or husband/wife, etc.
- A communion between a man and the infinite God [who is also incarnate (human) in one of his persons] is another thing. It produces sinless (forgiven) humans who will be kings (or a kingdom) and priests over creation and who are filled with wholesome dependency, fear, trust, awe, and worship for their creator as they are gifted with unquenchable love and holiness. And by virtue of our common bond to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are also bound to each other in a worldwide, timeless family of believers, whose love for each other is not of nature, but is supernatural.
- A communion between the infinite persons of the Trinity is something else again. The product of this communion is the One who calls himself Jehovah.

End of **bold** to mark the word koinonia.



Bonds Within the Trinity

1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-11 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

JOHN 10:29-30 "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰ **I and the Father are one.**"

JOHN 17:11, 20-26 {Jesus prays...} I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—**so that they may be one as we are one.**" ... ²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.** ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one:** ²³ I in them and you in me. **May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.** ²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and **that I myself may be in them.**"

Jehovah's Witnesses say that the unity of the Father and Son is a unity of purpose, not the unity of a shared spirit. They regard in the same way the bond which links us to the Father and to Christ, and also the bond between Christians. The Witnesses will argue that, since John 7:23 implies the same relationship exists between Christ and his Church as between the Father and Christ and since we are not divine, then our unity with Christ is not a unity of nature or of spirit. They conclude that John meant that the unity between us and Christ (and also between the Father and Son) is a lesser type of unity than a unity of spirit, i.e. a unity of purpose and will. The passages from John 14 and 17 which we will look at later in this chapter will refute this idea, but first let us consider the following points:

- John 17:23 above speaks of Christ being in the Father and the Father being in the Son. It is a reciprocal relationship, it goes both ways.
- John 17:23 speaks of the church being brought to a complete unity in order to testify , i.e. the unity exists first and then comes the agreement which serves as a testimony. And this spiritual unity will result in these acts of testimony only if the conditions are right to achieve a degree of outward unity of purpose so that we can work together. This outward agreement is not guaranteed (Christ had to plead for it) and in fact it has not been fully achieved in Christendom. Yet even though Christians are outwardly (i.e. in will and purpose) divided, we cannot escape our new natures by which all Christians everywhere remain mutually united in the body of Christ. Here is another mystery, the Christian church is in fact united, even though there is the appearance of disunity; one might say we have an "invisible unity. It is reminiscent of a husband and wife who remain bonded even when there are severe outward (i.e. will and purpose) divisions between them.
- The indwelling of Christ (and the Father and the Holy Spirit) in believers and believers in them (John 17:21 above) is indeed related and compared to the indwelling of the Father, Son, and Spirit in each other, but there is no reason to say that the comparison is of exact

equality in every aspect. I.e. the relationship of Father and Son is like that between believers in some ways, but it is certainly not the same bond. Thus we cannot say that Christ being one with us makes us divine—but it does say that Christ is human. This comparison does not say that the Father is human because he is one with Christ—but it does testify that Christ is divine like the Father. The points that need to be made are, first of all, that there are different levels or types of unity brought about by the same Spirit. And secondly, that these unities have real parallels (even though the nature and capacity of the participants means that the unities (bonds) are different in some ways as well.

GALATIANS 3:26-29 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The result of the one-ness of believers derives from being “one in Christ” (i.e. by being one through being mutually in Christ) produces something which is more than unity of purpose. It is a unity of nature—a new, remade nature—that we share, brought about by each of us individually sharing in the Holy Spirit. Being united in purpose does not cover over and eliminate race, social status or sex, but the communion or common sharing of the Holy Spirit by each of our own individual sexless, race-less, status-less spirits can do this.

PHILIPPIANS 1:25—2:8 Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. ²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. ¹ If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Verse 27 speaks directly of our one-ness of Spirit and does indeed associate it with a united action in the world. Then verse 1 elaborates some of the other benefits of this unity (which is from being “united with Christ” and from “having communion of spirit” (Greek: “koinonia pneumatos”): being encouraged, conformed, partaking in fellowship with the Spirit, and receiving tenderness and compassion. And then Paul says, if you have these benefits, then make my joy

complete (then go on to be) “like-minded” (or one in thought) and “one in spirit” (or soul)^[80] and have the love of the same things and have the same purpose. It is clear, the unity of purpose derives from (follows after) the spiritual unity, it is not the spiritual unity itself. It is only after the Spirit remakes us with a new nature that the unity of believers may also reflect itself in outward matters such as social and doctrinal harmony.

1 PETER 3:8-10 Finally, all of you, **live in harmony with one another**; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. ⁹Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.”

“The Father is Greater Than I”

We are now ready to look at the following passage which deals with the relationship between the Incarnate Christ and his Father. Verse 28 in the third paragraph below is a favorite verse of Jehovah's Witnesses, who see in it a straightforward refutation of the equality of the Father and the Son. Christians see it in a different light. The first two paragraphs provide context often overlooked in discussions of verse 28.

JOHN 14:1-31 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” ⁹Jesus answered: “Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” ¹⁰Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ¹²I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. {to send the Holy Spirit so that Christ could do his work in a new way—as we have seen} ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. ¹⁵“If you love me, you will obey what I command.

¹⁶“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father,

[80] The Greek word which in Phillipians 2:2 is translated in the NIV as “one in spirit” may be a little misleading in this context in that it involves a different Greek word than pneumatos (spirit) which was used in verse 1:27. The word here is σὺμψυχοι / .sympsychoi which could be translated: “one-souled.”

and I too will love him and show myself to him.” ²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” ²³Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and **we will come to him and make our home with him.** ²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

²⁷“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ²⁸“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, ³¹but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me {i.e. to die, a seeming victory for Satan}. Come now; let us leave.”

Christ says some remarkable things to his disciples,

- v. 1 Trust in God, trust also in me. (These are synonymous, for Jehovah is a jealous God.)
- v. 8-9 Philip: “show us the Father.” Christ: “Don’t you know me, Philip? ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”
- v. 10 I am in the Father and the Father is in me. (It is not will or authority being discussed here, for the relationship is the same in both directions. The Son is to the Father as the Father is to the Son. The Son does not obey the will of the Father, just as the Father does not obey the Son—theirs is a relationship without rank.)
- v. 23 We {Father and Son} will come to him and make our home with him.

Paul E. Kretzman in his Popular Commentary on the Bible eloquently explains verses 27-31 as follows:

This was the last talk of Jesus with His disciples, the last opportunity for speaking with them at length. And so He made a verbal request. He not only said His farewell by wishing them the blessings of peace, but He actually gave them, bequeathed to them as their possession, the peace which He was about to earn for them through His suffering and death, peace with God through His blood, Romans 5:1. This was not a peace after the manner of the world, a mere external, temporal blessing. It is a peace which will insure quietness and security in the midst of turmoil and trouble. It will take the terror out of the hearts of believers, even when the enemies are threatening murder and every form of abuse. The person that has the peace of a good conscience in the full assurance of God’s grace and mercy will be unmoved in the midst of upheavals that threaten the very foundation of the universe, Psalm 46. And Jesus testifies to the disciples that His announcement of His going away, far from filling their hearts with sorrow, should rather rebound to their joy. Sorrow and grief in this case are indications of selfishness and lack of understanding of His purpose in leaving them for a time. The Master is going to His Father, and that Father is greater than He in His present form, in the person and in the guise of a servant. By going to the Father, He will be given the full use of the divine power and majesty. And the benefit of this would come to them in a very short time. He could then give them a much better protection, could care for His whole Church in a much better way than at present. And all of these things the Lord told His disciples in advance, for the fulfillment of the prophecy would tend to confirm their faith; and in the mean time, when all things seemed to speak against the fact of Christ’s divinity, they would have the certainty of this promise as an anchor for their faith. {Emphases added.}

In v. 31 Jesus’ encouragement to the disciples was a prophecy—a promise—because he knew that they would need strong encouragement through the hours that followed, through his crucifixion.

The content of his promises were two-fold: first, they are to remember and understand the spiritual peace arising from their justification via the cross, and secondly, that he was going to the Father and would be temporarily unseen. He then explains how it is that this relocation is a blessing (in spite of how it looks); the reason is: “for {because} the Father is Greater than I.” Verse 28: “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. Note that “the Father is greater than I” is the **REASON** Jesus says it is good that he leaves. At first glance the event and the reason seem unrelated, but I propose that it is quite reasonable to see in this that by going to the Father he will again be like the Father, rather than languishing in the soon to be fulfilled humiliation and servant-hood. When he is again glorified, it is only then (in accordance with Jehovah’s prearranged plan) that he and the Father can send their Spirit, and all three persons can indwell us who believe—in accordance with the New Testament covenant. Verse 12 also expresses the same idea: I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

Verse 23 points out how complete the Father and Christ’s unity will be— “we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Verses 7-11 go as far as Jesus ever went to directly explain his relationship to his Father. He is claiming the literal equivalence of himself and the Father, except that Jesus is in flesh and can be seen by the disciples, whereas the Father cannot be seen. Or to use a biological metaphor, Jesus is describing a “symbiotic” relationship between himself and the Father; they are integrally hooked together, they are inseparable by nature. I.e. knowing one is knowing the other, seeing one is seeing the other, the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son, the words and work of the one are those of the other. When Christ said: ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves, he was appealing very clearly for these Jewish disciples of his to accept a startling truth. If this unity were simply a matter of unity of purpose as Jehovah’s Witnesses say, the disciples would have had little difficulty believing that Jesus was a Godly person, or that he was a prophet, or even that he was the Messiah, the great king foretold of old. Indeed, they already knew all of these things and believed they were true. Jesus would not have appealed to supernatural proofs (miracles) to establish these facts. No, the miracles testify to something much more amazing, that Christ is one with Jehovah (and no one is one with Jehovah the jealous God except Jehovah himself). Christ is Divine, Christ is Jehovah—that is Christ’s testimony and that is the testimony of his Father through the miracles. The secret plan kept hidden from the foundation of the world was revealed—the Messiah would be Jehovah made flesh.



Final Note

There is another, very important ramification of our bond to Christ:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:45-55 So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. ⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

What glory it will be! Lord Come Soon!
I hope to see YOU there!



CHAPTER 16

REPRI SE AND CONCLUSI ON

In this book we have poured over the details of the proof outlined in the Introduction: that the Father is Jehovah, the Son is Jehovah, and the Holy Spirit is Jehovah, yet there is only one Jehovah, and still the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons. We have also looked at many issues related to the work of the three persons and their relationships to each other and to us. As we conclude it would perhaps be helpful to start at the beginning and summarize in a slightly different way, the chain of Biblical evidence that brings Christians to the remarkable conclusions that are expressed in the Trinity doctrine.

The Bible presupposes and states repeatedly that there is only one true God, Jehovah. Jehovah is a jealous God, who insists that his creation worship and serve no other god (any created thing). There is no uncertainty that God the Father is Jehovah, but who then are the Son of God and the Holy Spirit of God as taught by the Bible? In studying all that the Bible says about the Son, we see many things that make us recognize that he is a true Man. BUT there are certain things that indicate he is Divine (not just god-like, but Jehovah himself). These things cannot be explained away by saying that Jehovah has delegated to Christ certain powers, authority, and privileges, for some of these things (glory, worship, and the Divine name, Jehovah) are things which Jehovah himself says he will never delegate. Moreover, the Bible knows no separation or division between the Father and Son as there would be if they were Creator and creation. Christ displays a familiarity with God and presumes a standing with his Father that would be grossly impertinent (even blasphemous) for anyone but Jehovah himself. Therefore, strange as it may seem, we are **FORCED**, in conformity with the Scriptures, to believe that Jehovah includes both the Father and Son, even while we continue to utterly rejecting polytheism. The Father and Son are, together, only one God.

The second question: having expanded our concept of God this far, do Christians carry it too far (perhaps in a foolish attempt at consistency), to elevate the Holy Spirit also to the status of Divine Person—on par with the Father and Son? No. The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit in person-al terms. He has a will, he speaks, teaches, guides, grieves, and he resides in us as do the Father and Son. He can be blasphemed and lied to. The Holy Spirit has the attributes of a person in his own right. Moreover, we cannot escape this clear command: to baptize and disciple all nations "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This command would be unintelligible and contrary to the rest of scripture if the Spirit was not person-al or if the Son and the Holy Spirit are not co-equal with the Father. No, it is the Bible, not us that puts the three persons on par with each other, one God with one name, Jehovah.

We are left then with few options. The unitarians have portrayed Christ as a creature, something not in evidence in the Bible. They have portrayed the Holy Spirit as the active force of the Father and call the personification of the Holy Spirit in the Bible a metaphor, a figure of speech only. On the other hand, the doctrine of the Trinity which is held by orthodox (straight-believing) Christians fully satisfies the demands of the Scriptures and ties up the loose ends that the unitarian hypothesis do not. The only thing remaining that is not settled is how our minds is to grapple with these awesome facts. But we, the finite creations of an infinite God, do well not to reject revelation from God simply because it is "hard to understand." Every day we deal with secular matters arising from our dealings with man and with the natural world which are "hard to understand." How much more so our God! If we do not find God inscrutable in significant ways, we should have to question whether we have the truth and not something that was invented by the mind of man.

Without a doubt, we do not know it all yet. God does not intended to answer all of our questions in the Bible. He has given us enough to know who our God is and how we are to serve him. His grace is sufficient for us and we will have to rely on faith for the rest—at least in this life. It was not an oversight or a mistake on God's part (nor on the part of mythical, human inventors of religion as unbelievers suppose), that there exists what Christians call "Mysteries." These Mysteries, including the Trinity; the Incarnation; predestination; how the loving God consigns some to the eternal punishment of hell; how the good God permits evil to exist and seemingly to prosper; and other doctrines and facts which resist the reason of man, are Biblical and they are real and they cannot be avoided by anyone who wishes to be a Christian. On the contrary, such Mysteries are used by God to sharpen our faith, and to remind us that it is not by reason or understanding or human wisdom that we get to heaven. It is faith, based only on the testimony of God given through his frail human servants, that is required.

We must take our minds captive to Christ and permit God's word to be the starting point of every discussion of our religion. We must not try to resolve apparent paradoxes by denying either side of what the Bible says is so—even if some accuse us of irrationalism. We ought not be ashamed to admit that we believe some things that we do not understand; indeed, we should glory in that, for it is the essence of faith. Remember, the wisdom of God is foolishness to men and the wisdom of men is foolishness to God. This is not just a catchy phrase, it is the literal truth. Even the most brilliant, clever, and learned person who pursues these matters in an attempt to "figure it all out" will fail and in the end must either rest on his or her faith, or must break themselves on the rocks of unbelief. But faith and reason-held-captive-to-Christ together are a formidable combination, well suited to serving God in many ways.

May God grant you and me the grace to believe. Lord help our unbelief, however small.

May the peace of God, and the Love of Christ and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you forever, and fill you with all joy and peace in believing. AMEN



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Appendices

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APPENDIX A.

THEOPHANIES AND CHRISTOPHANIES

Appearances of the Son of God in the Old Testament

The word "Christophany" is from two Greek words, *Christos* and *phanein* which together literally mean "appearances of Christ." The word is used to refer to special, supernatural appearances of Christ, as when he appeared physically to his followers after the resurrection. The word "Theophany" similarly incorporates the Greek word *theos* and means "appearances of God."

There is an interesting question in Bible interpretation that arises in connection with these words. There are a number of occasions where the Old Testament says that God appeared in human or in some other physical form. This is in spite of the fact that Jehovah said, "no one may see me and live," and John said, that "No one has seen God at any time."^[81] There is another wrinkle that makes some of these appearances even more complicated—the "man" or other form in which God appears is sometimes called both "Jehovah" (or God) and the "angel of Jehovah" (or of God). And a number of these passages have overtones of Messianic prophecy, and make it clear that it is Christ that is being referred to; in other cases the context does not clearly state which person of the Trinity is spoken of.

The questions arise: Would Jehovah take on one fleshly, human identity in the New Testament Incarnation and a different identity in these "mini-incarnations" of the Old Testament? Secondly, if no man has ever seen the Father as John says, does this require that all visible manifestations of Jehovah must be the Son? These questions are at best weak arguments, since the Scripture does not ask not answer these questions. However, some of these Theophanies are clearly identified as Christophanies by context. This contextual evidence and the questions above, have lead some students of the Bible to propose that all or most of these

[81] EXODUS 33:17-20 {Moses speaks with Jehovah on Mt. Sinai...} And Jehovah said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." ¹⁹ And Jehovah said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, Jehovah, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

JOHN 1:18 **No one has ever seen God**, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Old Testament Theophanies were actually Christophanies. This explanation is one way to reconcile the Old Testament appearances of God with John's words in John 1:18 (see the first footnote in this appendix). Since the Scriptures do not give a definitive answer on all of these appearances, we must avoid a dogmatic statement that they are all Christophanies. It does matter for our purposes whether it is only Christ that appears in the Old Testament Theophanies, the Scriptural point is clear that some Old Testament appearances of God are in fact appearances of Christ. The reader may benefit from being aware of this theological debate as they read the material below.

The fact that Christ is called the angel of God and angel of Jehovah in some of these cases bears some examination. Unitarians may claim that these passages support the assertion that Jesus is "only an angel." But there is one major problem with this—many of these passages call the person who appears by the name "angel of Jehovah" (or "angel of God") and "Jehovah" (or "God") interchangeably. That is, in the same passage this person is called both Jehovah (or God) and the angel of Jehovah (or angel of God). Such apparent mixing in the names used can be explained in various ways, including:

- 1) Some have suggested that when God used a spokesman he allowed the spokesman to speak in the first person and to be addressed as Jehovah because it was clear from the context that the real communication was with Jehovah and the angel was just a mouthpiece. They mention that fact that the Prophets often did speak in the first person when they spoke the words of Jehovah.^[82] This explanation could be used by unitarians to deny that Christ is being called Jehovah.
- 2) Some have suggested that the Son of God, who is rightfully called Jehovah, when serving in the office of a messenger to men, can properly be called an "angel" without implying any denial of his divine nature. On this basis Trinitarians deny that Christ is a (mere) angelic being, while acknowledging that he can be called and can act as an angel (a messenger).

We know that the word "angel" when used in the context of communication does not by itself imply an angelic (spirit creature) nature for the speaker. The word "angel" is used in the Bible of men who bring messages, as well as of the spirit beings normally thought of as angels. There is no inherent problem with thinking that Jehovah could serve as his own messenger. Indeed, when one reads some of the passages below, where the term "angel of Jehovah" is used, one could get the impression that "seeing the angel of Jehovah," to the people of that time, simply meant seeing a physical manifestation of Jehovah, i.e. a Theophany, and that they did not believe that there was any intermediary involved. I.e. they used the word "angel" simply to mean the physical manifestation of Jehovah himself, as he came to speak with them. They recognized that the material form was not Jehovah's true form and that his full glory was veiled, but it was Jehovah nevertheless.

[82] This explanation seems somewhat strained in some of the passages below. The people in the passages who saw and spoke to this angel, afterwards said that they had seen God and were amazed that they were permitted to live. Their reaction upon seeing this "angel" is quite different from that of people who saw mere prophets, even though the physical appearance of this "angel" seems to often have been that of an ordinary man.

The first section below deals with the physical appearances of this angel of Jehovah or simply Jehovah, as a man or in other physical forms, such as the pillar of cloud or the burning bush.

The last passage in section one and the entire second section list occasions where Christ (or simply Jehovah) appears in the form of a man in visions seen by the Old Testament prophets.

We will not go into the discussion of the purpose or significance of Christ's appearances in the Old Testament (for example, that it perhaps somehow pre-figured the Incarnation). We will just look at the bare evidence that the eternal God and/or the eternal Son of God was active in physical form in the world in Old Testament times.



Appearances of Jehovah and of the "Angel" of Jehovah

A single underline below indicates that the one who is seen is the angel of Jehovah. A double underline indicates that "theos" one who is seen is Jehovah, or is speaking or acting as Jehovah. Note, that these refer to the same person in many of the passages below.

GENESIS 16:7-15 **The angel of Jehovah** found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. ⁹ **Then the angel of Jehovah told her**, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." ¹⁰ **The angel added**, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." ¹¹ **The angel of Jehovah** also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for **Jehovah** has heard of your misery. ¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." ¹³ **She gave this name to Jehovah** who spoke to her: "You-are-the-God-who-sees-me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me." ¹⁴ That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi;^[83] it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered. ¹⁵ So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.

GENESIS 18:1—19:1 Jehovah appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. ² Abraham looked up and saw three men {the passage below shows that one of these "men" was Jehovah and the other two were simply "angels"} standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. ³ He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say." ⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread." ⁷ Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree. ⁹ "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There, in the

[83] These words mean, Well of the Living One Who Sees.

tent," he said. ¹⁰ Then Jehovah said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" ¹³ Then Jehovah said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for Jehovah? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." ¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh." ¹⁶ When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. ¹⁷ Then Jehovah said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" ¹⁸ Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing what is right and just, so that Jehovah will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." ²⁰ Then Jehovah said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous ²¹ that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." ²² The men {two of the three "men" mentioned in verse 18:2 above and verse 19:1 below} turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before Jehovah {the third "man"). ²³ Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ Jehovah said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, ²⁸ what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it." ²⁹ Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." ³¹ Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." ³³ When Jehovah had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. ¹ The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city.

GENESIS 22:6-18 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷ Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" ⁸ Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. ⁹ When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the angel of Jehovah called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ¹² "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." ¹³ Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called that place **Jehovah Will Provide**. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of Jehovah it will be provided." ¹⁵ The angel of Jehovah called to Abraham from heaven a second time ¹⁶ and said, "I swear by myself, declares Jehovah, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

GENESIS 32:24-32 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵ When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was

wrenched as he wrestled with the man. ²⁶ Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” ²⁷ The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered. ²⁸ Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.” ²⁹ Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.” But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there. ³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” ³¹ The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. ³² Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon.

The prophet Hosea 1100 years later mentions this event.

HOSEA 12:2-5 Jehovah has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds. ³ In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel; as a man he struggled with God. ⁴ He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there—⁵ Jehovah God Almighty, Jehovah is his name of renown!

GENESIS 48:15-16 {Jacob gives a final blessing to his son Joseph....} Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, ¹⁶ the Angel who has delivered me from all harm—may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth.”

The three underlined phrases above all refer to the same person as shown by the word he in verse 16, i.e. the three phrases are appositives. We note then that Jacob calls his benefactor both “God” and “angel.”

EXODUS 3:1-6 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of Jehovah appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” ⁴ When Jehovah saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” ⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Above, when God spoke from the burning bush, he was called by three different names: the “angel of Jehovah”, “Jehovah”, and “God.” Note also that this place was holy ground; we will see this same expression in Joshua 5:15 later.

The “angel of Jehovah accomplished the exodus and accompanies Moses and the Israelites out of the land of Egypt:

NUMBERS 20:15-16 Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, ¹⁶ but when we cried out to Jehovah, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. “Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory.

EXODUS 14:19-25 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them,

²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night **Jehovah drove the sea back** with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night **Jehovah looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud** at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! **Jehovah is fighting for them against Egypt.**"

Above, the One in the pillar of cloud is called, "the angel of God" and "Jehovah."

The pillar of cloud stayed with them on the way to the promised land:

EXODUS 23:20-24 "See, **I am sending an angel** ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. ²¹ Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. **Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him.** ²² **If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say,** I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. ²³ **My angel will go ahead of you** and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, **and I will wipe them out.** ²⁴ Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces.

EXODUS 32:34—33:2 Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and **my angel will go before you.** However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin." ³⁵ And **Jehovah struck the people with a plague** because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made. ¹ Then **Jehovah said to Moses,** "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' ² **I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.**

See Chapter 7, the section: The Spiritual Rock in the Wilderness, for further evidence that this angel in whom is the name of Jehovah, is Christ.

EXODUS 24:1—25:2 {Jehovah speaks to Moses...} Then he said to Moses, "Come up to Jehovah, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. **You are to worship at a distance,** ² but **Moses alone is to approach Jehovah;** the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him." ³ When Moses went and told the people all Jehovah's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything Jehovah has said we will do." ⁴ Moses then wrote down everything Jehovah had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to Jehovah. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything Jehovah has said; we will obey." ⁸ Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that Jehovah has made with you in accordance with all these words." ⁹ **Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up ¹⁰ and saw the God of Israel.** Under his feet was something like a **pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.** {See Revelation 4:2-8 below} ¹¹ **But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.** ¹² Jehovah said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction." ¹³ Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. ¹⁴ He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them." ¹⁵ When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, ¹⁶ and the glory of Jehovah settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the

cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day Jehovah called to Moses from within the cloud. ¹⁷ To the Israelites the glory of Jehovah looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. ¹⁸ Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. ¹ Jehovah said to Moses, ² “Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give.

NUMBERS 12:5-8 Then **Jehovah came down in a pillar of cloud**; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, ⁶ he said, “Listen to my words: “When a prophet of Jehovah is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. ⁷ But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. ⁸ **With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of Jehovah.** Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

Below, the “commander of the army of Jehovah” appeared as a man and spoke as Jehovah. As at the burning bush in Exodus 3:5 above, the place where this occurred was holy ground, and sandals were to be removed.

JOSHUA 5:13—6:2 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” ¹⁴ “Neither,” he replied, **but as commander of the army of Jehovah I have now come.** Then Joshua fell face down to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” ¹⁵ The commander of Jehovah’s army replied, **Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.** And Joshua did so. ¹ Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. ² Then Jehovah said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men.

Below, the angel of Jehovah speaks as Jehovah:

JUDGES 2:1-5 **The angel of Jehovah went up** from Gilgal to Bokim and said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, ‘I will never break my covenant with you, ² and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.’ Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? ³ Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.” ⁴ When the angel of Jehovah had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud

JUDGES 6:11-23 **The angel of Jehovah came and sat down** under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹² When the angel of Jehovah appeared to Gideon, he said, “**Jehovah** is with you, mighty warrior.” ¹³ “But sir,” Gideon replied, “if Jehovah is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not Jehovah bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now Jehovah has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.” ¹⁴ **Jehovah turned to him and said**, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” ¹⁵ “But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” ¹⁶ **Jehovah answered**, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.” ¹⁷ Gideon replied, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. ¹⁸ Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you.” And **Jehovah said**, “I will wait until you return.” ¹⁹ Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. ²⁰ **The angel of God said to him**, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And Gideon did so. ²¹ With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, **the angel of Jehovah touched the meat and the unleavened bread.** Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of

Jehovah disappeared. ²² When Gideon realized that it was **the angel of Jehovah** {i.e. that this had not been a mere man}, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign Jehovah! I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face!" ²³ But Jehovah said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

JUDGES 13:3-23 {Samuel's mother-to-be receives a visitor...} **The angel of Jehovah** appeared to her and said, "You are sterile and childless, but you are going to conceive and have a son. ⁴ Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean, ⁵ because you will conceive and give birth to a son. No razor may be used on his head, because the boy is to be a Nazirite, set apart to God from birth, and he will begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines." ⁶ Then the woman went to her husband and told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't ask him where he came from, and he didn't tell me his name." ⁷ But he said to me, 'You will conceive and give birth to a son. Now then, drink no wine or other fermented drink and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death.'" ⁸ Then Manoah prayed to Jehovah: "O Lord, I beg you, let the **man of God** you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born." ⁹ **God** heard Manoah, and the **angel of God** came again to the woman while she was out in the field; but her husband Manoah was not with her. ¹⁰ The woman hurried to tell her husband, "He's here! The man who appeared to me the other day!" ¹¹ Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the **man**, he said, "Are you the one who talked to my wife?" "I am," he said. ¹² So Manoah asked him, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy's life and work?" ¹³ **The angel of Jehovah** answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. ¹⁴ She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her." ¹⁵ Manoah said to the angel of Jehovah , "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you." ¹⁶ **The angel of Jehovah** replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to Jehovah." (Manoah did not realize that it was **the angel of Jehovah**.) ¹⁷ Then Manoah inquired of the angel of Jehovah , "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?" ¹⁸ He replied, "Why do you ask my name?... It is beyond understanding... {this single Hebrew word means: wondrous or remarkable or beyond understanding, and probably was intended as a name, not an excuse for not giving a name (as the NIV treats it here)}." ¹⁹ Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to Jehovah. And Jehovah did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: ²⁰ As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of Jehovah ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. ²¹ When the angel of Jehovah did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of Jehovah. ²² "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" ²³ But his wife answered, "If Jehovah had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this."

Above, the angel's name, "Wondrous," is derived from the same Hebrew root as the name given to the Messiah in Isaiah 9:6.

ISAIAH 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called **Wonderful** Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

DANIEL 3:17-28 {The three young men of Israel speak to King Nebuchadnezzar before being punished for refusing to bow to an idol...} If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." ¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰ and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were

bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²² The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³ and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. ²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king." ²⁵ He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." ²⁶ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, ²⁷ and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. ²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

The passage below is filled with meaning. The angel of Jehovah foretells in symbolic action the coming of the Messiah to pay for the sins of the world on one fateful day. Notice also in verse 2, that Jehovah speaks to himself in the third person. This is of interest to those who try to claim in passages above, that the fact that Jehovah speaks to the angel of Jehovah proves that the angel of Jehovah is separate from Jehovah. If we applied that logic here, we would have to conclude that Jehovah is separate from Jehovah.

But wait... in the Trinitarian view, that is correct; the person of the Son and the person of the Father are distinct and can speak to each other. Verse 2 hints that this is going on within the Godhead (Jehovah said,... "Jehovah rebuke you"). We really have to conclude that the angel of Jehovah is Jehovah (the Son) and yet is also distinct from Jehovah (the Father).

ZECHARIAH 3:1-9 {An angel is Zechariah's guide in a vision. He sees three persons: the angel of Jehovah, Satan, and Joshua...} Then he {the angel} showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. ² Jehovah said to Satan, "Jehovah rebuke you, Satan! Jehovah, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" ³ Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴ The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." ⁵ Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of Jehovah stood by. ⁶ The angel of Jehovah gave this charge to Joshua: "This is what Jehovah of Hosts says: 'If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here. ⁸ "Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. ⁹ See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it, 'says Jehovah of Hosts, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

The passage above is similar to the New Testament image of Christ as intercessor with the Father on behalf of believers against the accusations of Satan. Jehovah who intercedes in verse 2 is evidently the angel of Jehovah mentioned in verse 1, 4, etc..

ZECHARIAH 12:8 On that day Jehovah will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of Jehovah going before them.

God and the angel of Jehovah are equated in this parallel/appositive construction—the first phrase, like God, is restated in different words in the second phrase, like the angel of Jehovah.



Appearances In Visions

In addition to physical appearances by Christ or by Jehovah in the Old Testament, there are a number occasions where a prophet saw a vision of God in human form. Much of the imagery in these visions reoccurs in the vision seen by John in the book of Revelation, but there it is clearly applied to Christ. Single underline will be used here for references to a human form. Double underline indicates the identity of the one seen is Jehovah. Notice the description of the glory of the one near the throne.

EZEKIEL 1:22—2:5 Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. ²³ Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. ²⁴ When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, **like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty**, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings. ²⁵ Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. ²⁶ Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like , and **high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man**. ²⁷ I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah.** When I saw it, I fell face down, and I heard the voice of one speaking. ¹ He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.” ² As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. ³ He said: “Son of man {even though the speaker had the appearance of a Man, he was more than a mere man}, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. ⁴ The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Lord Jehovah says.’ ⁵ And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.

DANIEL 10:5—11:2 I looked up and there before me **was a man dressed in linen**, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. ⁶ His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and **his voice like the sound of a multitude.** ⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. ¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, “Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.” ¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶ Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, “I am

overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. ¹⁷ **How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord?** My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe.” ¹⁸ **Again the one who looked like a man** touched me and gave me strength. ¹⁹ “Do not be afraid, O man highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.” When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.” ²⁰ So he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. ¹ And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.) ² “Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. ... {The vision continues for several chapters.}

John sees a similar vision and the identity of the ones seen by Ezekiel and Daniel is made clear—it is Christ.

REVELATION 1:13-18 {John saw a vision ... } and among the lampstands was someone **“like a son of man,”** dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ **His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.** ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and **his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.** ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and **out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword.** His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

The following verse is not a vision, but parallels Revelation 1:17 above.

ISAIAH 49:1-6 {The prophet Isaiah, prefiguring the Messiah, laments his heavy burden in his humiliation and also his great mission...} Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born Jehovah called me; from my birth he has made mention of my name. ² **He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,** in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver. ³ He said to me, **“You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.”** ⁴ But I said, “I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in Jehovah’s hand, and my reward is with my God.” ⁵ And now Jehovah says—he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of Jehovah and my God has been my strength—⁶ he says: **“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant** to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Another vision:

ISAIAH 6:1-5 In the year that King Uzziah died, **I saw the Lord {Adonai} seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.** ² Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: **“Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts;** the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the

temple was filled with smoke. ⁵“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and **my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts.**”^[84]

REVELATION 4:2-8 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was **a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.** ³And **the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow** {See Ezekiel 1:28 above), **resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.** ⁴Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵**From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder.** Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. ⁶Also before the throne there was what looked like **a sea of glass, clear as crystal.** {See Exodus 24:10 in the previous section} In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,**^[85] who was, and is, and is to come.”

There is no doubt that Christ is pictured in many of the Old Testament passages above, in the same role and in human form, just as he was later revealed in the New Testament. It is no surprise that Jehovah, the eternal, changeless God, has been revealed as Son and Father in the Old Testament as well in the New Testament, and that Christ has appeared visibly throughout the history of the world. Neither is it a surprise that the same “ambiguity” or hidden-ness of Christ’s identity should be present in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament. He who has ears, let him hear.



[84] In Chapter 6, in the section entitled, An Undeniable Proof, we saw that John credits this Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, with being Christ.

[85] This English translation follows the Greek New Testament which in turn follows the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) in rendering the Hebrew name “Jehovah of Hosts” as “the Lord Almighty.” As noted in the introduction of this book, the NIV used here renders “Jehovah of Hosts” as “the Lord Almighty” throughout the Old Testament. This author has restored the more literal wording to the Old Testament passages, but has not touched the parallel New Testament passages like this one.

APPENDIX B

WHAT IS THE HUMAN SPIRIT?

A Jehovah's Witness Controversy Examined

This appendix looks at a point raised in Chapter 11. The issue is the dispute between Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses (as well as other groups) concerning the nature of a human spirit. A complete presentation of, and response to, the Jehovah's Witness' views on the nature of a spirit and the meaning of death and resurrection is beyond the scope of this book. However, these issues are sure to come up in any discussion of "spirit" with the Witnesses, so some help here is appropriate. What is presented may aide the reader who gets into such a discussion, but it does not cover the subject fully.

There is fundamental dispute between Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses about what a human spirit is. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the human "spirit" is no more than the breath, i.e. physical life, that we have. They speak of it as the "animating principle" of a human being, but at death that animating principle is withdrawn and returns to its source—God. But they are quick to add that what goes back to God does not carry away with it any attributes of the person—in itself the human spirit it is an impersonal thing, like electricity—it is not the repository of our human personality. The Witnesses believe that any other use of the term spirit in connection with humans is just a figure of speech. Thus, they do not believe a human spirit can exist apart from the living, physical body—i.e. there is no such thing as a disembodied spirit.

They do however concede that spirit beings, like angels and demons, do exist apart from physical bodies. They attempt to get around the contradiction implicit in this position by saying that spirit beings also have bodies, i.e. they have spirit bodies. Interestingly, they also believe that the select 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses who go to heaven will do so in new spirit bodies, while the rest of the saved will live eternally on a paradise earth in purely physical bodies.

They support these very detailed doctrines primarily by a clever interpretation of the following passage:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:38-57 But God gives it a **body** as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own **body**. ³⁹ **All flesh is not the same:** Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. ⁴⁰ **There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies;** but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. ⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. ⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The **body that is sown is perishable**, it is

raised imperishable; ⁴³ it is **sown in dishonor**, it is **raised in glory**; it is **sown in weakness**, it is **raised in power**; ⁴⁴ it is sown a **natural body**, it is raised a **spiritual body**. If there is a **natural body**, there is also a **spiritual body**. ⁴⁵ So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ The **spiritual** did not come first, but the **natural**, and after that the **spiritual**. ⁴⁷ The **first man was of the dust of the earth**, the **second man from heaven**. ⁴⁸ As was the **earthly man**, so are **those who are of the earth**; and as is the **man from heaven**, so also are **those who are of heaven**. ⁴⁹ And just as we have **borne the likeness of the earthly man**, so shall we **bear the likeness of the man from heaven**. ⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed**—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Other relevant passages:

PHILIPPIANS 3:18-21 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, **will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body**.

1 JOHN 3:2-3 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, **we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Christians see in these passages a clear promise to all believers that in the resurrection we will lose the mortal, sickly, sinful, natural body. It will be “recycled”—we will receive our same body again (that is what resurrection means), but changed and improved, i.e. a “glorified” or “spiritually correct” body. Our prototype is Christ, whose natural body was replaced by a super-natural body at his resurrection. This glorified body was the same body—down to the nail and spear prints. It was physical, it could eat and breath and walk. Yet it also could move in a supernatural way—bypassing locked doors when he appeared to his disciples and, between his appearances, going some place not seen at all. Most important of all, this body at his ascension was able to go to heaven to appear in the very presence of God. This is not what the Jehovah’s Witnesses believe, and they have marshaled considerable resources to support a different interpretation of the Bible in this area.

A Critique of the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Doctrine

To defend their interpretation, the Witnesses must get around the statement of Paul above in 1 Corinthians 15:51 **we will all be changed** and Philippians 3:21: **(Christ) will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body** and 1 John 3:2 when he appears **we shall be like him**. These passages deny the idea that there are two kinds of resurrection body for believers,

because they speak of all believers. The Witnesses defend their position by discovering a new Biblical doctrine: they teach that the New Testament was written as a private message addressed only to the 144,000 special elect who will go to the non-physical heaven (and any usefulness it has for other believers is secondary). Thus the promises in 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 3; and 1 John 3, that our body shall be like Christ's body, applies only to those 144,000 who will have spiritual bodies. With such a presupposition, it is easy for them to prove that no one in heaven has a physical body (not even Christ).

Although they probably would not state it quite this way, the Witnesses argument goes basically as follows. Note that the argument below can be and frequently is reversed to start out from assumptions about the nature of man's spirit to draw conclusions about the 144,000. Additionally the Witnesses have several related streams of argument which feed into this argument to bolster several of the statements below. In other words, the chain of reasoning below is not the whole argument, only a summary of key points.^[86]

- Paul's promise of a spiritual body (in the sense of 1 Corinthians 15) only applies to the special elect, i.e. those who will have a heavenly or spiritual (in the sense of non-physical) body in the heaven. {Thus the meaning of "spiritual" in this passage is derived from how the 144,000's body is presumed to be (i.e. non-physical)}.
- Since Christ's body is, in 1 Corinthians 15, also described as the same type of body—a spiritual/heavenly body—then Christ's true resurrection body must also be non-physical. What about his physical appearances? The visible body he had when he was seen after the resurrection must be something like a garment which he wore for the occasion and later discarded.)
- Thus, we have proved {by circular reasoning and equivocation^[87]} that the Bible does use the word "body" with regard to spiritual (non-physical) beings—in this case special elect humans and Christ.
- Thus, there is such a thing as a non-physical "spiritual body."
- Obviously, angels and devils must have such spiritual bodies. ☺
- Therefore, there is no logical necessity for there to be any such thing as a creature which exists as a bodiless spirit.
- Therefore, there is no such thing as a creature which exists as a bodiless spirit.

[86] I have tried not to create a straw man that is misleadingly easy to knock down. Admittedly, I have left out many of their supporting arguments. But, I believe that my presentation is a accurate representation of the Witnesses position, even though it is unflattering because it emphasizes some weak points that are glossed over in their own presentations.

[87] Equivocation is the logic error in which a word that has two or more different meanings is used in an ambiguous way so as to reach a fallacious conclusion. Here, the two meanings of "spiritual" are mixed and muddled so that the "spiritual" (non-physical) bodies of the special elect in Witness doctrine are equated with the "spiritual" bodies (glorified bodies) given in the resurrection. The fact that the same word, "spiritual" is used in these cases (by the Witnesses, not by the Bible) does not establish that the Bible equates the resurrection body with a non-physical body. The contrast given in the Bible is between spiritual versus natural, not spiritual versus physical. The circularity of the argument derives from the fact that this same Corinthians passage is also used to prove that the special elect have non-physical bodies in the first place.

Corollary: There is no such thing as a human who exists/lives as a disembodied spirit (one from whom the body has been removed).

- Therefore, a human spirit ceases to exist when the body dies.
- Therefore, we have no ongoing life of any kind after the death of our body. The human being ceases to exist, the soul is extinguished at death. The impersonal^[88] “spirit” or animating force is withdrawn and returns to God. Our only comfort is that God “remembers” us in every detail.
- At the resurrection of the dead, God will recreate our body and our life, including our memories and our consciousness, out of impersonal raw material, using only His own memories of us.

This is quite a chain of reasoning and very susceptible to challenge at several points. But be forewarned that the Witnesses will be able to point to many other passages in the Bible to support it (but none really establish their points when examined carefully).

Besides the basic assumption that the elect are non-physical after the resurrection, the chief error here is the proposition that spirit beings have bodies (B above). Witnesses “prove” this by equating the “spiritual” bodies of 1 Corinthians 15 with “bodies” of spirit beings. This is a flawed methodology, the proper way is to see how the Bible itself uses the word “spiritual.” It is invalid to define “spiritual” based upon a single passage like 1 Corinthians 15 whose meaning itself is in dispute. In general it is invalid to favor a particular interpretation if it is not supported by other passages—and the more exotic the interpretation, the more other support you must have for it.

How Does the Bible Use the Word Spiritual?

The following passages cover the range of meanings attached to the word “spiritual” in the New Testament. The single underlined words help define the double underlined words. I have tried to capture the basic sense in which the word is used. Admittedly, different shades of meaning could properly be brought out in these verses, but the basic sense of the word “spiritual” is not much affected for any reasonable (text-based) reading.

ROMANS 1:11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong {I.e. a gift which is able to bolster strength of faith, by Paul’s preaching the very words of God to them in his letter.}

ROMANS 7:14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. {I.e. pure, holy, perfected, as opposed to being tainted by sin and imperfection.}

ROMANS 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. {I.e. How do we perform this Spiritual act of worship—by applying our bodies to serve God, rather than to serve sin—that is, to be holy.}

[88] “Impersonal” in this context means, “not related to an individual person” or “not possessing the attributes of a particular person, such as an identity, a consciousness, memories, thoughts, etc.”

ROMANS 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. {I.e. fervor about spiritual things, about serving in the kingdom of God in this world.}

ROMANS 15:27 They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. {I.e. blessings pertaining to salvation and to entry into the Kingdom of God. Note, that these blessings are conveyed on earth (by missionary activity to the Gentiles).}

1 CORINTHIANS 1:7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. {I.e. gifts that are suitable for doing work in the kingdom of God on earth while we wait for Christ's return, as contrasted with political or social or other secular work.}

1 CORINTHIANS 2:13-15 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: {In verses 13-14: "spiritual" = given by the Holy Spirit; verse 15: "spiritual man" = converted man. As a member of the Kingdom of God, he is under the rule of Christ even in the world.}

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. {"spiritual" = filled with mature faith, wisdom, strength, and experience pertaining to the kingdom on earth, as opposed to infant faith that is still dominated by worldly, non-kingdom ideas.}

1 CORINTHIANS 10:3 They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. {Here are physical people partake of spiritual food and drink. Note: Christ the spiritual rock is the Holy one, the Savior of Israel, who supplied and sustained the faith for physical Israel in the wilderness.}

GALATIANS 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. {Spiritual means Holy and faithful to God, as opposed to sinful and needing restoration.}

EPHESIANS 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. {This time "spiritual" does mean pertaining to the spirit existence—but there is no hint of spirit bodies, (nor does it refer to humans who no longer have physical bodies).}

Based upon these passages we should define "spiritual" as meaning, "without sin" and "not worldly," as worked by the Holy Spirit. Yet we see that not being worldly does not mean existing in heaven, nor does it mean existing without a physical body. Indeed, we see that "spiritual" things are able to exist quite well in this material world. The spiritual can be borne into the physical by the work of the Holy Spirit. This work is carried out through physical means, especially through that very mundane, very physical activity of preaching (and through the even more physical sacraments)! Yet, this earthly work is able to create and sustain non-physical, i.e. spiritual, life (faith) by the

communication of the gospel of salvation from sin by faith in Christ. It is by God's design that in such physical things, spiritual power and reality are to be found. There is no association of the word "spiritual" here with any kind of non-physical, future existence. Believers are spiritual now, albeit not consistently or perfectly. But in the resurrection our transformation will remove our imperfections and we will be spiritual continuously and perfectly. The true definition of spiritual is found in this plain, simple usage.

Search the whole Scriptures—nowhere in the Bible is there mention of spirits having bodies. This is not a surprise, a spirit existence is the very opposite of a bodily existence. It is simple anthropomorphism to speak of spirits having bodies (see discussion of anthropomorphism in Chapter 11). The Witnesses derive this concept from their fanciful interpretation of the single passage, 1 Corinthians 15:38-57. But based upon the actual Biblical use of the word "spiritual," that is a misinterpretation.

In that it is possible for us to be "spiritual" while physically living in the world, it is evident that "spiritual" does not in itself mean having non-physical bodies. When applied to believers, "spiritual" means "Holy and close to God, saved, indwelt and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. All of these attributes will apply when the natural body is raised a spiritual body. It is a body that will be stripped of its old sin nature (inherited from Adam) and it will be made holy and perfect, as God is himself.

Holiness and perfection obtained through faith by the working of the Holy Spirit is the meaning of the word "spiritual" as used in Scripture. At the last day we will be endowed with a full measure of the Holy Spirit so that we (including our body) can entered into a full, unrestricted, person-to-person fellowship with God, who is a spirit. We who are spiritual will be able to commune with one who is a spirit.^[89]

Moreover, we are told explicitly in Philippians 3:18-21 that the bodies we have will be like those of Christ. Why would we ignore the portrayal of that body which is so clearly given in the gospel accounts of the resurrected Christ, in order to hypothesize about some unphysical body assumed later by Christ and of which the Bible says nothing?

[89] The adjective "spiritual" means "like a spirit," but it is critical to see which attributes of a spirit are the intended reference. It is typical of fallen reason to latch onto the attribute which we consider from our childish human perspective to be most important—immateriality. What we should do is seek to know what attributes of a spirit God himself wishes to communicate to us in making us "spiritual." God does not care to eliminate the physical bodies he gave us; he wishes to communicate that which is far more important and which we cannot live without—holiness, sinlessness, and indeed, spiritual life. This is a far more fundamental and important attribute of the spirits created by God than immateriality (and our reason would see this, if we were more spiritual!). We are to acquire now in part, and fully later, those attributes which are not possessed at all by those who are lost, nor by devils, nor by anything in fallen nature.

LUKE 24:36-43 {Jesus appears to his disciples after the resurrection...} While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost {= pneuma, Greek for spirit}. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. **It is I myself!** Touch me and see; a ghost {= pneuma} does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." ⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Christ went out of his way to prove the very point we are discussing—that he had a physical body and was not a spirit being. It is to this body—that was seen by his disciples and described in the gospel accounts—that Paul referred when he said, Christ will transform our lowly bodies so they will be **like his glorious body**. The Bible does not mention any other kind of body that Christ has and to which Paul would be referring. There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that Christ discarded that flesh and blood later and took another kind of body. A resurrection body is the glorified body, and it is like Christ's body described in the gospels.

More about 1 Corinthians 15:

Of the two different types of body mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15, only one of them is a resurrection body. The other, the natural body is specifically identified as a pre-resurrection body, not a resurrection body at all! There are not two kinds of resurrection body as the Witnesses conclude. The mention of the earthly man and those who are of the earth versus the heavenly man and those who are of heaven in verse 48 (see also verse 45) is a reference to fallen Adam and those like him (all sinners who cannot save themselves) versus Jesus and those like him (regenerated, spirit-filled, new-man believers). The Jehovah's Witnesses idea that this passage teaches of physical resurrection bodies and non-physical resurrection bodies is not derivable from these passages.

There is another important objection that the Witnesses will raise, and which underlies their reluctance to believe that Christ has a physical body in heaven. The Witnesses simply object to the idea that any physical body can enter into the presence of God.

EXODUS 33:18-20 {On Mount Sinai...} Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." ¹⁹ And Jehovah said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, Jehovah, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "**you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.**"

Below are the parts of the 1 Corinthians 15 passage again:

1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-44a, 50-54 ⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is **perishable**, it is raised **imperishable**; ⁴³ it is sown in **dishonor**, it is raised in **glory**; it is sown in **weakness**, it is **raised in power**; ⁴⁴ it is sown a **natural body**, it is raised a **spiritual body**.

...

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**, nor does the **perishable inherit the imperishable**. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but **we will all be changed**—⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be **raised imperishable**, and we will be **changed**. ⁵³ For the **perishable** must clothe itself with the **imperishable**, and the **mortal** with **immortality**. ⁵⁴ When the **perishable** has been clothed with the **imperishable**, and the **mortal** with **immortality**, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

The Witnesses see the words **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God** and believe this renders impossible the Christian idea that the “spiritual bodies” of 1 Corinthians are glorified, physical bodies. But the context clearly indicates that Paul was speaking of the pre-resurrection flesh and blood not being able to see God. The very verses that follow deny that Paul meant to apply this restriction to the post-resurrection body. The flesh and blood that cannot inherit the kingdom of God is the perishable stuff (verse 50,52), the stuff that was to be changed (verse 51-53), the stuff that is mortal, perishable, and weak, not to flesh and blood per se. There is conspicuously no mention or anything that will replace flesh and blood in the list given.

	Mortal	→	Immortal
	Perishable	→	Imperishable
	Dishonor	→	Glory
	Weakness	→	Power
And as far as this passage says:	<i>Flesh & Blood</i>	→	<i>Flesh & Blood</i>
	_____		_____
It all adds up to:	Natural Body	→	Spiritual body
With the result:	Cannot See God & live	→	Can See God & live

It is no more complex than this: sin is annihilated in the presence of God. But a glorified body is sinless and is not annihilated. Therefore we will see God in the body as Job said,

JOB 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

So it is true that perishable, mortal flesh and blood cannot see God, nor inherit eternal life. But these restrictions are nowhere applied to the resurrection body, which is characterized as immortal, imperishable, glorious and powerful and sinless. It is indeed necessary that the old flesh and blood be done away with at the resurrection. But this does not logically require, nor does Paul required, that flesh and blood itself be done away with. It is only necessary that this new immortal, imperishable, glorified, powerful flesh and blood be sturdy enough to see the perfectly holy God and still live. Indeed we are told in Revelation 21:3 about the New Jerusalem where “now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.” Moreover, we know that in the garden, Adam and Eve who did have sinless flesh, we able to meet and speak with God face to face.

The Witnesses themselves foresee a race of imperishable, immortal, flesh and blood people living on the new earth. So why are they unable to believe that glorified flesh and blood can be the fulfillment of Paul's prophecy? It is such an exact fulfillment; nothing is missing from the description of the heavenly body given by Paul compared to what will be true of the glorified physical resurrection body envisioned by Christians (and almost by the Jehovah's Witnesses for the bulk of the saved). This includes new abilities and powers not possessed by the old flesh and blood, like those that allowed the resurrected Christ to enter the locked room and, later, to enter heaven itself.

A Resurrection Does Not Produce a Totally Different Kind of Body

The word resurrection (anastasis in Greek) means "raising again," i.e. making the body upright again. The resurrection, the raising of the dead is the raising of the same body. The body that is raised must be substantially the same as the one that died or it is not a resurrection--though it may have new abilities. The recreation of an entirely new kind of body made of an entirely different substance is not a resurrection, and it is not what the Bible promises to us.

It is more in accord with Paul's words and the rest of the Scriptures to conclude that the terms used, glorified body, spiritual body, and heavenly body, all refer simply to the one and only kind of resurrection body. It is only their need to find a niche for the 144,000 special elect that makes the Jehovah's Witnesses develop such complex ideas when simple ones will do just as well or better.

JOHN 3:5-13 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind {pneuma} blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." ⁹ How can this be? Nicodemus asked. ¹⁰ "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man."

The birth of the flesh and the birth of the spirit are independent events, the spirit does not replace the flesh in this world—or in the next. Spiritual life is given in addition to the fleshly life. That is part of being human.

Analogies to Adam

The Witnesses make much of the idea that the (earthly) resurrection bodies MUST be bodies identical in kind to those of the sinless Adam and Eve. Whether this is true or not is uncertain, indeed it is unknowable, for the Bible does not say. We cannot say categorically that Adam did not possess the powers demonstrated by Christ's resurrection body. We do know that his flesh and blood body could and did enter into God's presence, for he walked and talked with Jehovah himself in the Garden. Nor can we say categorically, that God has not planned to improve on his

original design and raise us up above Adam, for eye has not seen nor ear hear the glories that are prepared for us (1 CORINTHIANS 2:9). Objections drawn from analogies to Adam are not valid. They come from fallacious reason rather than from the Scriptures.

Kings and Priest

The Witnesses believe that the promise that believers shall rule with Christ as Kings and Priests applies only to the special elect. Indeed they believe that the earthly, saved masses are necessary in order to have someone for the special elect to rule over and intercede for. They say, **“You cannot have kings without subjects.”** This drives them to insist that there are two levels of eternal reward: heaven and paradise, the one “spiritual” and the other physical. This objection is hollow; the example of Adam is sufficient to show us how all believers can be kings, for Adam was the king of the earth and exercised dominion over it, even when he was the only human in existence. Likewise, he was able to worship on behalf of, and even intercede for, his lower subjects when necessary. Objections based on the supposed need for two distinct hierarchical levels for humans in eternity are invalid. This is just an attempt to use a catchy play on words in place of a Biblical rationale.

Moreover, the actual wording of the passage which is most mentioned in this discussion is actually best translated: and has made us to be a kingdom, and priests to serve his God and Father (REVELATION 1:6a). See also Revelation 20:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9; I saiah 61:5-6; and Exodus 19:6.

Final Note

Note this important point; the passages presented above only address the situation of the human spirit after the resurrection. The Jehovah's Witnesses also disagree with Christians about the situation of the human spirit between death and the resurrection. We will not go into that issue here. But once the error of spiritual bodies is identified in the position of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the rest of their argument falls apart and their conclusions about the extinction of the human spirit at death are not very compelling. A thorough study will reveal that there is in fact no Biblical reason that, as their bodies molder in the grave—waiting for the resurrection, humans spirits cannot continue to exist (in a manner similar to the angels who have no spiritual bodies). There is evidence to support this common Christian view: For example, Christ said of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of whom God is their God, “God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for to him all are alive. (LUKE 20:37-38) and Christ told his disciples, “If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death” (JOHN 8:51).

At the very least, the Jehovah's Witnesses (and certain Adventists, and The Way International) proponents' who talk of "soul extinction" are not patterning their speech after the Bible—if they must speak, let them say only that the state of the dead is that the dead are alive to God. Extra-scriptural Philosophizing about what this means and teaching it as dogma, is ungodly.

So, in this issue too, the Jehovah's Witnesses' position can be shown to be flawed. It is left to the reader to pursue these questions further. Be careful, but have fun!



The Practical Side of Apologetics

The simplified treatment of the subject above does not reveal how subtle and complex and technical these doctrinal discussions can become. If you encounter a master of the Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine, it can take a while to see the flaws in their arguments. It can be very disconcerting for the typical Christian (like it was for this author) to be first faced with an un-Christian doctrine which is backed up by a very thorough analysis of the Scriptures, and for which any contrary argument is confidently rebutted (properly or not) by the defender of Witness doctrine. One will start to wonder whether the well presented, Bible-derived arguments from the Witnesses study books may be right.

Until you experience such a challenge, there is no way that you can be fully prepared for it. If you think that there is no way your faith could be challenged, you are mistaken. Your faith will either be strengthened or weakened—this is deadly serious business; it is not a game. If you get into this position do not worry or despair, and most of all do not give up. What you are feeling is just the natural confusion and pain of having to catch up with 2 millennia of Biblical dogmatics.

The typical Christian is unfortunately not as well prepared (in the areas of interest to the Jehovah's Witnesses) as the typical Jehovah's Witness missionary, and as a result the Christian is not as glib, and not as sure of where to turn. But lack of practiced glibness and temporary uncertainty do not prove we are wrong! The fact is that adequate and eloquent rebuttals and critiques of the Witnesses doctrine abound at Christian book outlets. And it is a great education in the Bible if you stick with it and learn to defend Christian doctrine for yourself. But not everyone is equally gifted in this area and so do not be reluctant to bring in some help. Note also that most pastors will go through the same growing pains to some extent too, because this really is a specialized area of study. Keep in mind also that not everyone has the temperament to winningly discuss the Bible with a heretic, and not all apologists (defenders of doctrine) will do it equally well. The ones who are best prepared to match the Witnesses are those who have done it extensively before—so if you are having trouble, find someone who has such experience. One must be made of sturdy stuff to defend against such refined heresies, but the rewards for your faith and learning will be great if you do make the effort and are able to defend your position. The words: study to show yourself approved, a workman that need not be ashamed (2 TIMOTHY 2:15), apply here.

Remember particularly that the discussion is won or lost in the presuppositions and the definitions of terms that are allowed into the discussion. Insist on clear definitions, insist on using the whole Bible to define Biblical terms. Be critical of your opponent's assumptions and arguments. Point out to them places where they presume something that is not in evidence. Insist that he/she adequately addresses every one of your objections. Be critical of your own arguments as well—it is better to throw out a weak argument yourself than for you to use it and end up beat about the head with it. Be especially cautious with arguments that are based upon disputed Biblical manuscripts or upon verses whose exact meaning is unclear even in the original languages. Do not be afraid to insist on backtracking to start again, more rigorously, if you find you took a wrong

turn with them a ways back. And always, always remember that you are presenting the Word so that the Holy Spirit can convict them of the Truth. It should not be your aim to argue interminably over these doctrines. Your purpose is to defend orthodox doctrine when it is attacked and to show the flaws in the unorthodox doctrine, in order to support the credibility of your presentation of the Gospel. Your opponent is a sinner who needs to hear from you that their only hope is the atonement Christ made 2000 years ago. And that atonement will only benefit those who believe in the real Christ. Jehovah's Witnesses, the Way International, and other unitarians, because they do not know who Christ is, have a totally incorrect and inadequate understanding of Christ's atoning work. Even if we could ignore the issue of the deity of Christ, the truth is, they cannot be saved by what they believe in, they have missed the point of Christianity!

So be patient and kind, humble but firm, and pray to God for help. Prepare yourself to give a defense of the hope that is yours in Christ Jesus our Lord!



Index

Index of Scripture Passages

- UPPERCASE references indicate that the text is reproduced, all or in part, on the quoted page.
- Lowercase references indicate that the passage is mentioned in the text, but is not reproduced.
- Page numbers for passages in footnotes are the page where the footnote starts—even if the passage itself is in a part of the footnote which continues on a subsequent page.

OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS 1:1	120	JOSHUA 5:13—6:2	209	PSALM 72:1-20	43
GENESIS 1:1-28	174	Joshua 5:15	207	PSALM 74:7	97
Genesis 1:1-3	142	JUDGES 2:1-5	209	PSALM 75:1	97
GENESIS 2:24	190	JUDGES 6:11-23	209	PSALM 78:34-35	108
GENESIS 16:7-15	205	JUDGES 13:3-23	210	PSALM 79:6	99
GENESIS 17:1	16	2 SAMUEL 22:50	96	Psalm 79:6-13	99
GENESIS 18:1—19:1	205	1 KINGS 5:2-3	97	Psalm 82:1-8	48
GENESIS 22:6-18	206	1 KINGS 8:26-30	97	PSALM 82:1-8	56
GENESIS 32:24-32	206	1 KINGS 8:27, 29-30	122	PSALM 83:16	97
GENESIS 48:15-16	207	1 KINGS 8:37-40	85	PSALM 83:18	15
EXODUS 3:1-6	207	1 KINGS 8:43	97	PSALM 89:8-9	89
Exodus 3:5	209	1 CHRONICLES 16:27-29	95	PSALM 89:26	108
EXODUS 3:13-14	78	1 CHRONICLES 16:27-36	14	PSALM 90:1-4	17, 121
EXODUS 13:21-22	111	1 CHRONICLES 29:13	97	PSALM 95:1-3	108
EXODUS 14:19—15:21	111	NEHEMIAH 9:10-21	113	PSALM 95:1-3	71
EXODUS 14:19-25	207	NEHEMIAH 9:19-20	177	PSALM 95:6-7a	92
Exodus 19:6	224	NEHEMIAH 9:32	71	PSALM 96:4	70
EXODUS 20:1-6	14	JOB 19:25-27	116, 222	PSALM 96:7	15
EXODUS 20:7a	95	JOB 34:20-23	122	PSALM 99:1-2	71
EXODUS 23:20-24	112	JOB 34:20-24	16	PSALM 102:1-28	65
EXODUS 23:20-24	208	JOB 38:37-41	16	PSALM 102:25-28	17
EXODUS 23:24-25	74	JOB 39:26—40:2	15	PSALM 104:30	175
EXODUS 24:1—25:2	208	PSALM 2:1-12	142	Psalm 106:37	48
Exodus 24:10	214	PSALM 8:3-6	141	PSALM 110:1-7	35
EXODUS 32:30-35	80	PSALM 8:4-6	33	PSALM 115:1	15
EXODUS 32:34—33:2	208	PSALM 9:1-20	15	Psalm 118:19-29	80
EXODUS 33:17-20	203	PSALM 9:4-20	82	PSALM 130:6—131:2	116
EXODUS 33:18-20	221	PSALM 10:16	68	PSALM 130:8	117
EXODUS 34:12-14	14	PSALM 18:1-2	108	PSALM 135:5	71
EXODUS 34:14	74	PSALM 18:30-31	108	PROVERBS 1:7	144
LEVITICUS 19:1-2	18, 123	PSALM 19:14	108	PROVERBS 1:28	144
LEVITICUS 20:1-2, 5	125	PSALM 22:22	97	PROVERBS 2:2-6	144
NUMBERS 12:5-8	209	PSALM 24:7-10	79	PROVERBS 8:1-36	142
NUMBERS 20:15-16	207	PSALM 27:1	107	PROVERBS 9:9-10	144
DEUTERONOMY 4:39	18	PSALM 31:2 -3	108	PROVERBS 15:33	144
DEUTERONOMY 6:4	18	PSALM 33:6	175	PROVERBS 16:33	16
DEUTERONOMY 6:4-14	14	PSALM 34:8	66	ECCLESIASTES 10:4	149
DEUTERONOMY 6:13-16	74	PSALM 44:8	15	ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8	90
DEUTERONOMY 8:19	74	PSALM 45:1-7	64	ISAIAH 2:1-2,9-21	85
DEUTERONOMY 10:17	69, 70	Psalm 46	197	ISAIAH 6:1-5	213
DEUTERONOMY 32:3-4	18, 95, 123	PSALM 49:14-15	91	ISAIAH 6:1-10	67
DEUTERONOMY 32:6-9	21	PSALM 54:1	97	ISAIAH 7:14	102
DEUTERONOMY 32:15-18	108	PSALM 62:1-2	109	ISAIAH 8:13-14	110
Deuteronomy 32:17	48			ISAIAH 9:6	54, 210
				ISAIAH 9:6-7	71
				ISAIAH 10:20-21	71
				ISAIAH 10:21	54

Isaiah 11:2	46
ISAIAH 26:4	108
ISAIAH 28:16	100
ISAIAH 33:1-10	85
ISAIAH 40:3-5	62
ISAIAH 40:8	120
ISAIAH 40:12—41:4	16
ISAIAH 40:12—41:4	92
ISAIAH 41:4	17, 76, 121
ISAIAH 41:13-14	116
ISAIAH 41:27—42:13	42
Isaiah 42:1-3	43
ISAIAH 42:1-9	32
Isaiah 42:8	45, 70, 79
ISAIAH 42:8	13, 93
ISAIAH 42:12	15
ISAIAH 43:1-12	115
ISAIAH 43:10-15	68
ISAIAH 44:6	76
ISAIAH 44:6-8	109
ISAIAH 45:21-23	67
ISAIAH 48:11-13	14, 18, 76, 92, 121
Isaiah 48:13	94
ISAIAH 48:16b—49:5	113, 114
ISAIAH 49:1-6	213
ISAIAH 49:1-8	33
ISAIAH 49:6-10	176
ISAIAH 49:26	116
ISAIAH 52:13—53:12	33
Isaiah 54	133
ISAIAH 54:1—55:11	125
ISAIAH 55:1-3	135
Isaiah 55:11-12	8
ISAIAH 57:15-16	120
ISAIAH 61:1—62:12	126
Isaiah 61:5-6	224
ISAIAH 63:8-10	177
JEREMIAH 3:1—4:2	126
JEREMIAH 10:6	97
JEREMIAH 10:10-12	144
JEREMIAH 13:16	15
JEREMIAH 23:5-6	100
JEREMIAH 23:23-24	16, 122
JEREMIAH 31:33-34	81
JEREMIAH 32:17-18	71
LAMENTATIONS 5:19	17, 121
EZEKIEL 1:22—2:5	212
Ezekiel 1:28	214
EZEKIEL 16:1-63	127
EZEKIEL 34:22-24	176
EZEKIEL 37:22-28	176
DANIEL 2:46-47	69
DANIEL 3:17-28	210
DANIEL 3:28	74
DANIEL 7:13-14	177
DANIEL 10:5—11:2	212
HOSEA 1:1—3:3	129
HOSEA 12:2-5	207
HOSEA 13:4-14	116
JOEL 2:30—3:1	99
JOEL 3:8-33	83
MICAH 5:2	121
MICAH 5:2-5	27
MICAH 6:9	97, 99
NAHUM 1:1-2	14

ZECHARIAH 3:1-9	211
Zechariah 3:2a	103
Zechariah 4:1-6	46
ZECHARIAH 12:1—13:1	72
ZECHARIAH 12:8	211
ZECHARIAH 14:7-9	18, 95
MALACHI 3:6	17, 121
MALACHI 4:5	62

AAA

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW 2:11	75
MATTHEW 3:16-17	43, 163, 179
MATTHEW 4:8-10	75
MATTHEW 6:6-9	79
MATTHEW 7:24-25	109
MATTHEW 8:2	75
MATTHEW 8:24-27	89
MATTHEW 9:18	75
MATTHEW 10:19-20	169, 187
MATTHEW 11:7	63
MATTHEW 12:18-20	43
MATTHEW 14:6	149
MATTHEW 14:25-33	89
MATTHEW 14:32-33	75
MATTHEW 16:16-18	109
MATTHEW 17:2-5	43
Matthew 17:14-20	151
MATTHEW 18:20	122
Matthew 21:8-11	80
Matthew 21:19-22	151
MATTHEW 23:6-12	19, 30
MATTHEW 23:37	145
MATTHEW 23:37-39	115
MATTHEW 24:34-35	120
MATTHEW 25:1-13	131
MATTHEW 25:31-33	83
MATTHEW 25:41	13
MATTHEW 26:26-29	81
MATTHEW 26:41	149
MATTHEW 28:16-20	179
MATTHEW 28:19	163
MATTHEW 28:20b	122
MARK 1:1	54
MARK 1:1-4	62
MARK 2:5-12	81
MARK 2:18-20	132
Mark 5:13	149
MARK 9:25-29	150
LUKE 1:13-17	63
LUKE 1:15	188
LUKE 1:41	188
LUKE 1:67	188
LUKE 1:67-69	118
LUKE 1:67-80	63
LUKE 2:49	22
Luke 7:21	149
LUKE 9:46-47	86
LUKE 10:21	22
LUKE 11:1-4	22
LUKE 11:13	183, 189
LUKE 11:47-51	144
LUKE 12:10-12	163
LUKE 14:7-11	29

LUKE 19:41-44	115
LUKE 20:37-38	224
LUKE 22:25-29	31
LUKE 22:25-30	140
LUKE 22:66-71	54
LUKE 23:34, 44-46	91
LUKE 24:20-21	118
LUKE 24:25-27	34
LUKE 24:36-43	221
LUKE 24:49	181
John 1:1	50, 51, 52, 69
JOHN 1:1,3,14	94
JOHN 1:1-3,10,14	121
JOHN 1:1-5	174
JOHN 1:1-14	53
JOHN 1:1-18	27, 93
John 1:1-3	142
JOHN 1:1-5,14,18	50
JOHN 1:3-5	107
JOHN 1:6-37	63
JOHN 1:9-12	99
John 1:15 & 18	50
John 1:18	204
JOHN 1:18	203
JOHN 1:32-34	54
JOHN 2:23-25	86
JOHN 2:24-25	123
JOHN 3:5-13	223
John 3:16 & 18	50
JOHN 3:16-17	117
JOHN 3:26-33	132
John 3:34	151
JOHN 3:34	186
John 4:24	170
JOHN 4:24	149
JOHN 4:40-42	118
JOHN 5:16-23	86
JOHN 5:21-30	84
JOHN 5:22-23	76
JOHN 5:24-46	30, 87
John 6:30-58	114
JOHN 6:37-68	27
JOHN 6:44	189
JOHN 7:33-39	164
John 7:38-39	183
JOHN 7:38-39	37
JOHN 8:12	107
JOHN 8:21	28
JOHN 8:51	224
John 8:54-58	29
JOHN 8:54-58	21, 30
JOHN 8:56-59	78
JOHN 9:35-38	75
JOHN 10:11-40	55
JOHN 10:29-30	194
John 10:34	48
JOHN 12:14	37
JOHN 12:23-36	37
JOHN 12:37-41	67
John 12:45	171
John 13:3-17	43
JOHN 13:30-33	37
JOHN 14:1-31	196
John 14:9-26	171
JOHN 14:16-26	186, 187
John 14:26	162
JOHN 14:26-28	164
JOHN 15:25-27	165
John 15:26	160, 162
JOHN 15:26	169
JOHN 15:26—16:15	181

John 15:26-27	171	1 CORINTHIANS 6:2-3	141	2 THESSALONIANS 1:12	59
John 16:7	171	1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-20	188, 190	1 TIMOTHY 2:3-6	119
JOHN 16:7-11	37	1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6	69	1 TIMOTHY 3:14—4:1	55
John 16:7-15	162	1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-7	19	1 Timothy 6:13-16	70
JOHN 16:7-15	90, 165	1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-5	111	1 TIMOTHY 6:13-16	69
John 16:14	171	1 CORINTHIANS 10:3	219		
JOHN 16:22-33	39	1 CORINTHIANS 10:16-17	192	2 TIMOTHY 1:2b	181
JOHN 17:1-5	35, 43	1 CORINTHIANS 10:18-20	193	2 TIMOTHY 1:9-10	119
JOHN 17:1-15	98	1 Corinthians 10:37	48	2 TIMOTHY 2:15	225
JOHN 17:1—18:1	38	1 CORINTHIANS 12:3	189	2 TIMOTHY 4:16-22	172
JOHN 17:1-26	28	1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-13	183		
JOHN 17:11, 20-26	186, 194	1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-6	180, 189	TITUS 1:3-4	119
JOHN 19:28-30	32	1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-13	172	TITUS 2:11-14	117
JOHN 20:17	79	1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-12	155	TITUS 2:12-14	71
John 20:22	189	1 CORINTHIANS 13:12	150	TITUS 2:13	52, 60
JOHN 20:26-28	51	1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28	106	TITUS 2:14	117
John 20:28	51	1 CORINTHIANS 15:38-57	215	TITUS 3:4-7	119
		1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-44a, 50-54	221		
ACTS 1:11	36	1 CORINTHIANS 15:45-55	199	PHILEMON 1:6	192
ACTS 1:21-25	86			HEBREWS 1:1-3	35, 94
ACTS 2:4	188	2 CORINTHIANS 1:2-5	181	HEBREWS 1:1-12	65
ACTS 2:29-39	182	2 CORINTHIANS 3:2-6	184	HEBREWS 1:3	94
ACTS 2:42	191	2 CORINTHIANS 3:13—14:6	169	HEBREWS 1:5-6	54
ACTS 3:14-15	123	2 CORINTHIANS 10:17-18	30	HEBREWS 1:6	75
ACTS 4:8	188	2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-4	132	HEBREWS 1:8	52
ACTS 4:31	188	2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-14	180	HEBREWS 1:8-12	121
ACTS 5:3-9	166		191	HEBREWS 1:14	149
ACTS 5:28-32	82	GALATIANS 1:1-5	181	HEBREWS 2:6-10	34
ACTS 5:29-31	119	GALATIANS 2:9	192	HEBREWS 2:9-18	29
ACTS 7:55-60	91	GALATIANS 3:13-14	117	HEBREWS 4:15	123
ACTS 7:59	149	GALATIANS 3:22—4:7	140	HEBREWS 9:9-15	119
ACTS 8:26-29, 38-40	166	GALATIANS 3:26-29	195	Hebrews 11:17	50
ACTS 10:25-26	75	GALATIANS 6:1	219	HEBREWS 13:8	121
ACTS 13:1-2	166			JAMES 1:17	121
ACTS 13:23	118	EPHESIANS 1:4-10	118	JAMES 1:17-18	17, 21
ACTS 15:22-29	167	EPHESIANS 3:6-9	192		
ACTS 16:4-8	168	EPHESIANS 3:14-21	184	1 PETER 1:2	180
Acts 17:11	2	EPHESIANS 3:19, 4:13	188	1 PETER 1:10-11	188
ACTS 20:28	55	EPHESIANS 4:1-13	183	1 PETER 1:10-12	168, 171
		EPHESIANS 4:1-16	141	1 PETER 1:17-21	118
ROMANS 1:1-4	40	EPHESIANS 4:4-6	180	1 PETER 1:20	29
ROMANS 1:1-7	180	EPHESIANS 4:7-10	122	1 PETER 2:1-5	66
ROMANS 1:11	218	EPHESIANS 4:7-11	36	1 PETER 2:4-8	110
ROMANS 3:22-26	117	EPHESIANS 4:28-31	169	1 Peter 2:5,9	224
Romans 5:1	197	EPHESIANS 4:30	149	1 PETER 3:8-10	196
ROMANS 7:1-6	32	EPHESIANS 5:5	59	1 Peter 3:15	4
ROMANS 7:14	218	EPHESIANS 5:21-33	132	1 PETER 5:1	193
ROMANS 8:8-16	169	EPHESIANS 6:10-18	154		
ROMANS 8:9	187	EPHESIANS 6:12	219	2 PETER 1:1	52, 60
ROMANS 8:10-25	139			2 PETER 1:1-4	117
ROMANS 8:17-19	36	PHILIPPIANS 1:4-5	192	2 PETER 1:3-10	192
ROMANS 8:24-28, 33-34	167	PHILIPPIANS 1:18b-19	171		
ROMANS 9:4-5	54	PHILIPPIANS 1:25—2:8	195	1 JOHN 1:1-7	53
ROMANS 9:33—10:4	110	PHILIPPIANS 2:1	192	1 JOHN 1:3-8	192
ROMANS 10:9-17	99	Philippians 2:5-7	25	1 JOHN 1:5	107
ROMANS 12:1	218	PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11	24, 34, 68, 75	1 JOHN 3:2-3	216
ROMANS 12:11	219	PHILIPPIANS 3:8-10	192	1 JOHN 3:4-6	123
ROMANS 14:8-12	68	PHILIPPIANS 3:18-21	216	1 JOHN 3:19-20	16
ROMANS 15:27	219	PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21	36	1 John 4:1	2
		PHILIPPIANS 20:5-11	34	1 JOHN 4:1	149
1 CORINTHIANS 1:7	219			1 John 4:9	50
1 CORINTHIANS 1:9-10	192	COLOSSIANS 1:12 -15	119	1 JOHN 5:11-13, 20	53
1 CORINTHIANS 1:17—2:16	145	COLOSSIANS 1:15,19	94	1 JOHN 5:20	52
1 CORINTHIANS 1:27-31	101	COLOSSIANS 1:15-19	93		
1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-8	79	COLOSSIANS 1:17-18	29	2 JOHN 1:9	180
1 CORINTHIANS 2:9	224	COLOSSIANS 1:19	186		
1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-11	194	COLOSSIANS 2:1-5	123	Revelation 1:4	46
1 CORINTHIANS 2:10-14	183	COLOSSIANS 2:5	149	REVELATION 1:4-6	140
1 CORINTHIANS 2:11-12	185	COLOSSIANS 2:13-15	37	REVELATION 1:4-7	73
1 CORINTHIANS 2:13-15	219			REVELATION 1:7	177
1 CORINTHIANS 3:1	219	2 THESSALONIANS 1:2b	181	REVELATION 1:13-18	213
1 CORINTHIANS 4:3-5	123	2 THESSALONIANS 1:6-9	179		
1 CORINTHIANS 6:2-3	36				

Revelation 1:16	114	REVELATION 5:8	76	REVELATION 21:4-6	77
REVELATION 1:6a	224	REVELATION 5:9	118	REVELATION 21:22—22:1	80
REVELATION 2:8	77	Revelation 9:20	48	REVELATION 21:22-23	105
Revelation 2:16	114	REVELATION 14:1	103	REVELATION 22:3-5	103
Revelation 3:1	46	REVELATION 17:12-14	69	REVELATION 22:5	105
REVELATION 3:3	80	REVELATION 19:11-16	69	REVELATION 22:6-20	77
REVELATION 3:11-13	104	Revelation 19:13-15, 21	114	REVELATION 22:8-9	75
REVELATION 3:17-22	140	Revelation 20:6	224	REVELATION 22:16	135
REVELATION 3:21-22	105	REVELATION 20:15—22:21	133		
REVELATION 4:2—5:14	44	REVELATION 21:1-3	36		
Revelation 4:2-8	208	REVELATION 21:1-5	83	AAA	
REVELATION 4:2-8	214	Revelation 21:3	222		

General Index

Analogies to Adam	223
angel of Jehovah	178
Angel of Jehovah	91, 113
anthropomorphism	10, 220
anthropomorphize	152, 155
Athanasian Creed	4, 9
begotten	9, 50, 54, 65, 86, 117, 139, 142
Begotten	121
body of Christ	194
Christophany	203
Christ's (self) humiliation	25, 26, 29, 32, 34, 43, 164
Colwell's Rule	51
creation	6
Creation	
Christ before	28, 39, 93, 119, 186, 194
Christ in	143
Father and Son in	92
The Trinity in	174
The Word/Wisdom of God in	144
Creator Incarnate	94
demon possession	151
El	48
Elohim	48
exaltation	85, 98, 141
Exaltation of Christ	177, 182
Exaltation of Christ	47
figure of speech	70, 96, 145, 161, 166
figures of speech	39, 95, 149
Godhead	9, 136, 138, 145, 180
Granville Sharp's Rule	51
human nature elevated to heaven	38
Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ	138
Humiliation of Christ	47
Incarnate Creator	25
incarnation	104
Incarnation of Christ	47
Invisible Church	131
kingdom/priests	45, 73, 76, 141
kings/priests	66, 110, 126, 193
<u>Kings/Priests</u>	224

living waters	164
materialism	151
Metaphysics	151
Nicene Creed	138
parable	155
paradox	70
Paradox	156
paradoxes as a key	137
Passover	86
poetic parallelism	70, 71, 96, 97, 105, 142, 144, 179, 180, 184
poetic repetition	143
Septuagint	100, 214
seven-fold Spirit of God	46
straw man	4, 217
symbolic action	129, 211
synergistically	152
The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ	106
Theophany	203
Tri-Una	1
Truth	152
unity of purpose	38, 39, 185, 188, 190, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198
unity of purpose and will	194
unity, invisible	194
wisdom from God, Christ	101
Wisdom Incarnate	142
Wisdom of God	142
<u>Word of God</u>	69, 142, 174

Bibliographic Index

<i>Biblical Christology</i>	[John Schaller]	26, 107
<i>Book of Concord</i>	[translator/editor Theodore G. Tappert]	7
<i>Christ and the Critics</i>	[Hilarin Felder]	78
<i>Christian Dogmatics</i>	[Franz Pieper]	26
<i>Commentary on the New Testament</i>	[R.C.H. Lenski]	170
<i>Crudens Unabridged Concordance</i>	[Alexander Cruden]	108
<i>Evidence that Demands a Verdict</i>	[Josh McDowell]	78
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<i>Luther's Works</i>	[Martin Luther]	107
<i>Popular Commentary on the Bible</i>	[Paul E. Kretzman]	197
<i>The Weight of Glory</i>	[C.S. Lewis]	137
<i>Websters New World Dictionary</i>		12

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