

Does the Trinity ever make sense?

(By: Lesriv Spencer, 08/14/2013 || Updated: August, 2020)

(Bible citations are taken from the *Revised Standard Version* unless otherwise noted. Other quoted versions: *American Standard Version* – ASV; *Common English Bible* – CEB; *Complete Jewish Bible* – CJB; *Contemporary English Version* – CEV; *Douay-Rheims* – D-R; *English Standard Version* – ESV; *Jerusalem Bible* – JB; *King James Version* – KJV; *New American Standard Bible* – NASB; *New Century Version* – NCV; *New Jerusalem Bible* – NJB; *New International Version* – NIV; *New Life Version* – NLV; *New Living Translation* – NLT; *New Revised Standard Version* – NRSV; *Simple English Bible* – SEB; *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot* – ABP; *The Clear Word* – TCW; *The Message* – TM; and *Today's English Version* – TEV.)

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Introduction: In Christendom, the Trinity teaching has been considered the "central dogma of Christian theology". (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., Cross & Livingstone, Reprint 1989)

And truly, most of its followers claim belief in it. Most religious colleges and universities teach the doctrine. The majority of scholars accept the dogma, and most Bible translations correspondingly support it as well. If you are among the minority who rejects the Trinity doctrine, you will likely be looked upon as an "odd" individual, and even "ignorant" by "orthodox" standards. Pejorative terms such as "sect" or "cult" are often associated with any group of people not embracing orthodox doctrine.

Since the Trinity doctrine has such widespread acceptance, it brings up the following question: Does the Trinity doctrine really have Scriptural support? Could it be instead a *deviation* of Christian teaching? Does the Trinity ever make sense?

Can the Trinity doctrine be understood and explained? Trinitarian advocates often claim that it *can* be. But in practice, this does not turn out to be so. Don Fleming, a Trinitarian, tells us: "Any attempt to define the Trinity is difficult and dangerous, as it is an attempt to do what the Bible does not do." (*The AMG Concise Bible Dictionary*, ©2004, AMG Bible Publishers, p. 445) "Precisely what that doctrine is, or rather precisely how it is to be explained, Trinitarians are not agreed among themselves." (*Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, Lyman Abbott, editor, 1885, "Trinitarians". Unless noted, underlines and **bold** letters used for emphasis throughout.) Dr. Theodore M. Hesburgh wrote: "We are not saying that there are three gods, and still one God. We say there are three persons in one nature. Hence, we cannot even begin to know what we are talking about." (*One God*) Another source even warns: "The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind. But he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul." (*A Handbook of Christian Truth*, Harold Lindsell & Charles J. Woodbridge)

** Trinitarians often complain that anti-trinitarians fail to understand the doctrine, and therefore, misquote them, or distort their statements. And understandably, that is true in some cases, since Trinitarians too are not agreed among themselves, and find it a challenge to explain it. When Catholic, Protestant or secular works are quoted here, it is not my intention to imply that the authors do not support the Trinity doctrine in any form, or that they don't believe in it, because for the most part, they do. In fact, in some cases, they make an honest effort to persuade the reader in favor of the Trinity. Nonetheless, when the time comes to explain the doctrine in detail, Trinitarians themselves frequently caution their readers of numerous uncertainties around the Trinity doctrine, and of its controversial foundation. Should these be ignored? Considering the subject, I think it is highly relevant to point out some of these published statements. **

Definition of "TRINITY": That said, here are some attempts to define the Trinity doctrine:

The most accepted definition by orthodox Christians and which "fairly claims the merit of the fullest harmony and most comprehensive consistency with the various statements of Scripture"

is "that there are in the Godhead three persons, one in substance, coeternal, equal in power, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." (*Encyclopedia Americana*, "Trinity Doctrine," 1957, p. 69, Vol. 27)

"And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal ... The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited ... And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal ... So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty ... So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God." ("Athanasian Creed", *The Creeds of Christendom*, Philip Schaff, New York: Harper Brothers)

"The term 'Trinity' is not a Biblical term, and we are not using Biblical language when we define what is expressed by it as the doctrine that there is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence." (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 3012, Vol. IV, Eerdmans, ©1984)

"The most sublime mystery of the Christian faith is this [Trinity]: 'God is absolutely one in nature and essence, and relatively three in Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who are really distinct from each other.'" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 584, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, 1976)

"The trinity of God is defined by the Church as the belief that in God are three persons who subsist in one nature." (*Dictionary of the Bible*, John L. McKenzie, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1965; p. 899)

"Each of the three persons is fully God, yet there is only one God, not three. [...] No one person [of the Trinity] is inferior to, or superior to, any other. [...] Christians cannot fully understand the mysteries of the Godhead, but they should try to learn all they can about God; for the life they have in Christ depends on God being the sort of God he is – a Trinity." (Fleming 2004, pp 445-447)

Whether these definitions of the Trinity doctrine are simple enough for the layperson is debated. The matter is further complicated when someone tries to reconcile the above statements with those found in the Bible. For one thing, the terms often used to explain the Trinity do not appear in the Bible at all, such as: "Godhead"; "God the Son"; "God-Man"; "God the Holy Spirit"; "Coeternal"; "Coequal"; "Eternal Son"; "Three in one"; "Three Persons", etc. Even the word "trinity" is nowhere found in Scripture. So, right off the bat, the Trinity subject provokes a formidable challenge when its adherents claim the doctrine is not only of *biblical* origin, but in fact, "the central doctrine of Christian religion." (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*) Considering the lofty claims of divine origin made by trinitarian supporters, it is very strange indeed that the language itself used to explain the Trinity - a major dogma- is *not* in the Bible.

Of course, some may say in response that just because the word "trinity" is not in the Bible does not mean that the concept is not there. They might say that the word "Bible" itself is not in it. Yes, but the concept of a collection of smaller books is *in* the Bible. Who is going to argue with that? The same with the word "theocracy." The term is not found in the Bible, but the idea of a rule or government of God, or by God, *is found inside* its pages. But, the "Trinity" is another story. Even trinitarian advocates admit it is not explicitly stated anywhere in Scripture. Those who defend the doctrine talk about the "elements"; "rudiments"; "building materials"; "insinuations"; "theoretical possibilities"; "speculations," etc., found within the Bible, from which theologians have "formulated" or "crystallized" the "later doctrine." For instance, the *Zondervan All-In-One Reference Guide* says: "The dogma of the Trinity found in the Nicene Creed may be said to be the systematic presentation of the implications of the Trinitarian suggestions, hints, and patterns of the NT, against the background of the OT." (Kevin Green, p. 622. ©2008) Now, does this justify calling it "the central doctrine of Christian religion"?

Origin of the Trinity doctrine:

Christian Doctrine: "The language of the [Trinity] doctrine is the language of the ancient church taken from classical Greek philosophy." (Shirley Guthrie, Jr., Professor of theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, 1994, pp. 76-77)

A Statement of Reasons: "We can trace the history of this doctrine, and discover its source, not in the Christian revelation, but in the Platonic philosophy." "The trinity is not a doctrine of Christ and his apostles, but a fiction of the school of the later Platonists." (Andrew Norton)

Nouveau Dictionnaire Universel: "The Platonic trinity, itself merely a rearrangement of older trinities dating back to earlier peoples, appears to be the rational philosophic trinity of attributes that gave birth to the three hypostases or divine persons taught by the Christian churches. . . . This Greek philosopher's [Plato, fourth century B.C.E.] conception of the divine trinity . . . can be found in all the ancient religions." (Edited by M. Lachâtre, Vol. 2, p. 1467, Paris, 1865-1870)

The Paganism in Our Christianity: "In the Fourth Century B.C. Aristotle [Greek philosopher, and student of Plato] wrote: 'All things are three, and thrice is all: and let us use this number in the worship of the gods; for, as the Pythagoreans say, everything and all things are bound by threes, for the end, the middle, and the beginning have this number in everything, and these compose the number of the Trinity.' The ancient Egyptians, whose influence on early religious thought was profound, usually arranged their gods or goddesses in trinities: there was the trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, the trinity of Amen, Mut, and Khonsu, the trinity of Khnum, Satis, and Anukis, and so forth. The Hindu trinity of Brahman, Siva, and Vishnu is another of the many and

widespread instances of this theological conception. The early Christians, however, did not at first think of applying the idea to their own faith." (Arthur Weigall, p. 198)

Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought: "It is an undoubted fact that more or less all over the world the deities are in triads. This rule applies to eastern and western hemispheres, to north and south. Further, it is observed that, in some mystical way, the triad of three persons is one. The first is as the second or third, the second as first or third, the third as first or second; in fact, they are each other, one and the same individual being. The definition of Athanasius, who lived in Egypt, applies to the trinities of all heathen religions." (James Bonwick, p. 396, 1878)

Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature: "Towards the end of the 1st century, and during the 2d, many learned men came over both from Judaism and paganism to Christianity. These brought with them into the Christian schools of theology their Platonic ideas and phraseology." (John McClintock and James Strong, 1891, Vol. 10, "Trinity," p. 553)

The New Encyclopædia Britannica: "The [Trinity] doctrine developed gradually over several centuries and through many controversies. . . . By the end of the 4th century . . . the doctrine of the Trinity took substantially the form it has maintained ever since." (1976, Micropædia, Vol. X, p. 126)

Not taught in Scripture:

The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism: "Today, however, scholars generally agree that there is no doctrine of the Trinity as such in either the OT [Old Testament] or the NT [New Testament] . . . It would go far beyond the intention and thought-forms of the OT to suppose that a late-fourth-century or thirteenth-century Christian doctrine can be found there . . . Likewise, the NT does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity." (Richard McBrien, general editor, 1995, "God," pp. 564-565)

Wikipedia: "Some scholars dispute the idea that support for the Trinity can be found in the Bible, and argue that the doctrine is the result of theological interpretations rather than sound exegesis of scripture." ("Trinity"; Alister E. McGrath, *Understanding the Trinity*. Zondervan 9789; Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*. Mayfield Publishing: 2000. pp. 427-428)

Christian Doctrine: "The Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Neither the word 'trinity' itself nor such language as 'one-in-three,' 'three-in-one,' one 'essence' (or 'substance'), and three 'persons,' is biblical language." (Shirley Guthrie, Jr., Professor of theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, 1994, pp. 76-77)

Encyclopedia International (1978): "The doctrine of the Trinity did not form part of the apostles' preaching, as this is reported in the New Testament. In its final form it is a product of many factors....Behind other strands in the development of the doctrine are considerations at least

partly philosophical....And this in turn implies a Platonic view of universals and predication."

The Oxford Companion to the Bible: "Because the Trinity is such an important part of later Christian doctrine, it is striking that the term does not appear in the New Testament. Likewise, the developed concept of three coequal partners in the Godhead found in later creedal formulations cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the [Scriptural] canon." (Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan, editors, 1993, "Trinity," page 782)

Martin Luther: "It is indeed true that the name 'Trinity' is nowhere to be found in the Holy Scriptures, but has been conceived and invented by man." (Conceded the German priest who initiated the Protestant Reformation. Reproduced in *The Sermons of Martin Luther*, John Lenker, editor, Vol. 3, 1988, p. 406).

The New Encyclopædia Britannica: "Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Old Testament: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord' (Deut. 6:4) It was not until the 4th century that the distinctness of the three and their unity were brought together in a single orthodox doctrine of one essence and three persons." (1976, Micropædia, Vol. X, p. 126)

Encyclopedia Encarta: "The doctrine is not taught explicitly in the New Testament, where the word God almost invariably refers to the Father. [...] The term *trinitas* was first used in the 2nd century, by the Latin theologian Tertullian, but the concept was developed in the course of the debates on the nature of Christ [...]. In the 4th century, the doctrine was finally formulated."

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: "The term 'Trinity' is not a Biblical term, and we are not using Biblical language when we define what is expressed by it as the doctrine that there is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence." (Vol. IV, p. 3012, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984)

H. G. Wells: "We shall see presently how later on all Christendom was torn by disputes about the Trinity. There is no evidence that the apostles of Jesus ever heard of the Trinity, at any rate from him." (*The Outline of History*, p. 284)

Reasonable Belief: A Survey of the Christian Faith: "It is a waste of time to attempt to read Trinitarian doctrine directly off the pages of the New Testament." (Theology professors Anthony and Richard Hanson, 1980, p. 171)

Why the Trinity doctrine does not make biblical sense:

"We challenge any one to produce a single writer of any note, during the first three ages, who

held this [Trinity] doctrine in the modern sense." (*The Church of the First Three Centuries*, by Alvan Lamson, 1869, pages 75-6, 341)

As shown previously, the doctrine of the Trinity is often defined in the following terms: "The holy trinity is one Supreme being existing in three persons, all co-equal and in eternity and having the same substance, all united in one Godhead."

We are told that 'no one person of the Trinity is inferior to, or superior to, any other.' If true, this would mean that all three persons should get the same recognition and attention in the Bible. After all, what is good for one is good for the other. All praise and glory given to one is as good as giving it to the other two. This brings to mind the analogy of a "chain" with its various links. It is clearly a literal fact that "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link." All links must be equally strong and able to sustain equal amounts of pressure to resist breakage. The conversion of that notion into a figurative phrase was established in the language by the 18th century. Thomas Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, 1786, included this line: "In every chain of reasoning, the evidence of the last conclusion can be no greater than that of the weakest link of the chain, whatever may be the strength of the rest." Let's see how this analogy can be applied to the Trinity doctrine as generally taught, to determine if its links are able to sustain full Scriptural scrutiny, and retain its whole; or encounter instead, a "weak" link in the chain that could potentially break away under the weight of evidence. We will start with a consideration of the "Holy Spirit," the so-called third person of the Trinity.

The "Holy Spirit" addressed:

Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishop of Constantinople (380 AD): "Of our thoughtful men, some regard the Holy Spirit as an operation (*energeia*), some as a creature and some as God; while others are at a loss to decide, seeing that the Scripture determines nothing on the subject." (*Oratio 38: De Spiritu Sancto*)

- The significance of Bible names:

Let's start by looking at one aspect of the trinity, the *names* of its constituents or lack of: Everything around us has a name: household items, clothing, cars, tools, etc. Such names are *common names*: a shirt, a dress, a tie, a pot, a bus, a hammer, a nail, a meal, dad, mom, etc. We use common names everyday to distinguish all sorts of things when we communicate with others. It would be difficult to get by in this world without using these. More importantly, another method of identifying people or objects is by their *personal* name. We talk about Tom, Dick and Harry. Or: Patricia, Mary, and Sally. Biblically, we have Abraham, Moses, David, Sarah, Martha, Abigail, and so on for personal names. In retail stores, a consumer buys alcoholic *spirits*

by brand names, not just by saying, "vodka," "whisky," "brandy," or "spirit." At home, *our* pets are given distinctive names. Even Ancient pagan trinities assigned names to their triad members. Names are definitely important in our culture. It was even more so in Bible times.

Says *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* regarding names: "Names carry more value and importance in biblical than in modern usage. Not only may a name identify, but it frequently expresses the essential nature of its bearer; to know the name is to know the person (cf. Ps. 9:10 [MT 11])." (Bracket theirs. 1987, Page 747) And *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* adds: "The people of the Bible were very conscious of the meaning of names. They believed there was a vital connection between the name and the person it identified. A name somehow represented the nature of the person."

Since names and their significance were so vital to people in Bible times, in the interest of the subject under consideration, we must look at the individual *personal* names of the three "persons" of the "trinity": The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We know the distinct name of God, the Father, "Jehovah" (Or, "Yahweh"), which appears in the original text nearly 7,000 times in the Bible. (Isaiah 42:8) We also know the well-publicized name of his Son, "Jesus", which appears more than 900 times in the Inspired Scriptures. (Matthew 1:21, etc.)

Now, when we look for the name of the "Holy Spirit" in Scripture, the so-called "third person" of this trinity, we find that there is *no* mention whatsoever of any personal name for the "holy spirit." "Spirit" is a common noun, not a personal name. Interestingly, we find in the Bible various names of God's angels: "Michael"; "Gabriel". We even have one angel turned rebel, who came to be known as "Satan." Do you not find it strange that the Bible *names* a prominent rebellious angel, but does not assign a personal name to an entity that is said to be even *greater* than Satan? It is odd indeed, since we are told that all "three persons" of "the holy trinity" are 'equally' important, and are uniquely "distinct" from each other. If a couple were to have three children, would they name *two* of them, but not the *third*? The lack of a *personal* name for one of the three "persons" would be enough to raise the eyebrows of any sincere truth seeker. If we don't have a name for the "third person" of the trinity, which we are told is 'just as great' as the other two, how can we really "*know*" that person? Hence, there is already a palpable weak link in this threefold chain. But that is not all! I kindly ask the reader to carefully read the following two scriptures in order to determine if there is anything unusual in the picture presented below:

2 Timothy 4:1: "I charge you [I solemnly charge you, NASB] in the presence of **God** and of **Christ Jesus** who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom."

1 Tim 5:21: "In the presence of **God** and of **Christ Jesus** and of **the elect angels** I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality."

Did you catch it? There is no mention of the "Holy Spirit" as a third witness. In the first scripture listed, only two individuals, God and Jesus Christ, are mentioned as witnesses for the solemn command from Paul to Timothy to preach and evangelize the gospel. (See vv. 2,5.) In the second scripture of Paul's command, God and Christ Jesus are mentioned as witnesses along with "the elect [Or, "chosen"; "holy"] angels." The "third person of the trinity" was left out of the picture. Why? If the "Holy Spirit" is the "equal" of the other two persons of the *trinity* as we are asked to believe, why leave "him" out? Was it disrespectful of Paul, the writer above, in this solemn occasion, to give more prominence to "angels" by acknowledging their presence as Witnesses, and totally ignore the role of the "Holy Spirit" as one, if Paul really believed in the "holy trinity" as it is claimed? If anything, if we go by the text of 1 Tim. 5:21 alone, we could not hold anyone back from fancifully claiming that the Trinity is composed of the three subjects mentioned in the text: God, Christ Jesus and the angels. Right?

Were the scriptures above of 1 Tim. 5:21 and 2 Tim. 4:1 of Paul, whimsical pickings taken out of context? No. Let us look at Paul's 'standard' salutation when he wrote his letters. Keep in mind the importance these letters had for Paul. See how many persons are spoken of in these inspired greetings:

– *Standard greeting of the apostle Paul – How many individuals did he mention?*

Romans 1:7, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. 1:3, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Cor. 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort."

Galatians 1:3, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ephesians 1:2, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Philippians 1:2, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Colossians 1:2, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you."

1 Thessalonians 1:1, "To the church of the Thessalo'nians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace."

2 Thessalonians 1:2, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Tim. 1:2, "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

Titus 1:4, "Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior."

Philemon 1:3, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Did Paul mention a Godhead "trinity" anywhere in these greetings? No. Paul only spoke of *two* persons in his salutations, God and Jesus Christ.

In similar vein, other Christian Writers mentioned only two individuals in their greetings. (See: James 1:1; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:3; 2 John 3; Jude 1:1) Surely, if "the holy spirit" were really a third "person" sharing equality in a "trinity," he would have been mentioned all the same, would it not? The biblical authors did mention the "spirit" in their letters, but *not* as a *person*. Should we not then teach instead what the Inspired Authors taught us to?

– *Heavenly descriptions portray a non-trinitarian picture:*

If the Trinity doctrine were true, one would reasonably find descriptions of three entities in heavenly visions. But, that is not what we find.

At Daniel 7:9,13 there is a prophetic vision of God, the Ancient of Days, and the Son of man [Christ] seated at his right hand of power, coming with the clouds of heaven. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him." This vision speaks of *two* entities, not three.

Furthermore, according to Acts 7:55,56, Stephen, right before his death (for defending the truth, i.e.), and full of holy spirit, looked into heaven and saw the glory of God*, and Jesus standing next to God, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." (*"God's majesty," CEB; "God's splendor," *An Understandable Version*; "the shining-greatness of God," NLV) Here, the Bible Writer relates that Stephen did see God's splendor in heaven, but only *two* individuals, God, and the Son of man, Christ Jesus, standing next to God.

Similar heavenly visions are reported throughout Scripture: Psalm 110:1; Matthew 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33,34; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22. That is far too many incidents where the "Holy Spirit" is left out of the biblical picture. It would make sense to see the "Holy Spirit" along with God and Jesus if it were truly an *equal* member of the Trinity. Is the Bible unfair then to "the third person of the Trinity"?

– *What is "holy spirit"?*

Although mainstream religious organizations commonly teach that the "holy spirit" is a person, some of their leaders acknowledge that Scripture indicates it is something else: The holy spirit is basically God's power, his divine invisible force.

"The Jews never regarded the spirit as a person; nor is there any solid evidence that any Old Testament writer held this view ...The Holy Spirit is usually presented in the Synoptic gospels (Matt., Mark, Luke) and in Acts as a divine force or power." (Edmund Fortman, *The Triune God*, pp. 6, 15)

"The Spirit of God is the divine principle of activity everywhere at work in the world, executing the will of God." (*The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, by John D. Davis. Rev. by Gehman, p. 253. ©1944)

"Nowhere in the Old Testament do we find any clear indication of a Third Person." (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912, Vol. 15, p. 49)

Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: "The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity was not clearly and directly revealed in the O.T. There is no reference to the Holy Spirit as a Person really distinct from the Father and the Son." (1959, New York)

"Although this spirit is often described in personal terms, it seems quite clear that the sacred writers [of the Old Testament] never conceived or presented this spirit as a distinct person." (Edmund Fortman, *The Triune God*, p. 9)

"The Holy Spirit in Judaism generally refers to the divine aspect of prophecy and wisdom. It also refers to the divine force, quality, and influence of the Most High God, over the universe or over his creatures, in given contexts. [Alan Unterman and Rivka Horowitz, *Ruah ha-Kodesh, Encyclopedia Judaica* (CD-ROM Edition, Jerusalem: Judaica Multimedia/Keter, 1997)] It is not considered a separate person of God, but rather God's divine wisdom, breath, or moving power." (*Wikipedia*, Nontrinitarianism, under *Judaism*.)

"The Old Testament clearly does not envisage God's spirit as a person...God's spirit is simply God's power. If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly...The majority of New Testament texts reveal God's spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God." (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967, Vol. 13, pp. 574, 575)

"The word 'spirit' (Hebrew *ruah*, Greek *pneuma*) is the word used from ancient times to describe and explain the experience of divine power working in, upon, and around men, and understood by them as the power of God." (*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol 1. Page 986. Edited by Walter A. Elwell)

"On the whole the New Testament, like the Old, speaks of the spirit as a divine energy or power." (W.E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary*, 1960, p. 810)

- *What do Scriptures say of the Spirit?:*

The best data on the "holy spirit" can be found within the Bible, which shows the spirit to be God's invisible power (or, God's powerful force), not a person.

Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

Acts 2:4,16,17: "And they were all **filled** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 16. but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17. 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will **pour out my Spirit** upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters

shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.' "

Ephesians 5:18, 'Be **filled** *with* the Spirit.'

Acts 1:5, 'Before many days you shall be **baptized** *with* the Holy Spirit.'

Acts 10:38, 'God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth *with* the Holy Spirit and with power.'

1 Corinthians 12:7, "To each is given the **manifestation of the Spirit** for the common good."

Do any of these Scriptures reveal the existence of a "trinity"? Or, that the spirit is a person? No. Whatever the spirit is, one can receive *it* as a "power" and "manifestation." It can be '*poured* upon all flesh.' Humans can be "*filled*" by it, "*anointed*" and "*baptized*" with it. These descriptions are incompatible with the idea of the spirit being an actual person.

But someone may reply: "That can't be, because the Bible speaks of the holy spirit as a person." A typical expression of belief of the spirit is found here (<http://voices.yahoo.com/the-holy-spirit-does-things-only-person-can-4299775.html>), where the writer, Ana Melissa A. Rapi, says: "We believe that He [the Spirit] is a Person because He possesses all the necessary qualities of intellect, emotion, will, knowledge and actions. Let us never insult him by calling the Spirit 'it' but always honor Him properly."

Some, like the person above, who sincerely believe the spirit of God is a "person," by reason of human attributes being ascribed to it, are overlooking one important element. It is this: The Bible employs a large variety of expressive writing styles, and figures of speech, such as: poetry, symbolism, metaphors, similes, hyperboles, euphemisms, proverbs, parables, analogies, visions, and many others. So much in fact, that entire books have been written on the subject. Therefore, we cannot take *everything* we read in the Bible literally.

Two examples: One scripture warns us to, "Look out for the *dogs*." (Philippians 3:2) The author of those words was not here talking about literal dogs, he was *figuratively* warning his readers of individuals who manifested aggressive opposition to the Christian gospel, causing havoc wherever they went, as if they were animals - "dogs."

In another instance, the Bible reports Jesus Christ as saying to one of his disciples, Peter: "Get behind me, Satan!" (Mark 8:33) If we take this literally, it would mean that Peter was not a human, but "Satan" himself inside Peter. But that is not the case. Jesus had just finished telling his disciples that soon he would be facing suffering and death, and could say those words to Peter - who was apparently the spokesman for the group of disciples - that he was keenly aware that they were trying to prevent his imminent death. Although the disciples had the best intentions, they were actually advocating Satan's work, not God's. Hence the words to Peter as "Satan."

– *Personification of “Holy Spirit” in Scripture:*

One figure of speech often used in the Bible is, *personification*. “Personification” is the representation of a thing or abstraction in the form of a person. For instance, the Holy Spirit is said, in personal terms, to: “teach,” “guide,” “speak,” and “hear” (John 14:16, 26; 16:13); “bear witness (or: “testify”)” (John 15:26); and even be “grieved.” (Ephesians 4:30) This use of personal terms, coupled with trinitarian tradition, have led to some believing in the “Holy Spirit” as a distinct Person from God. But, as indicated, it is not unusual for something to be personalized in Scripture. There are many biblical examples, as follows:

Sin ‘*couches*’ at the door; has “*desire*”; *can be ‘mastered.’* (Genesis 4:7)

Heavens, Trees, Mountains, Hills, Forest, Depths of earth, are said to “*sing*,” and “*shout*.” Trees and Floods “*clap their hands*.” (1 Chronicles 16:33; Psalm 96:12; 98:8; Isaiah 44:23; 49:13; 55:12)

The Red Sea ‘*looks*’ and ‘*flees*’; and the Jordan River ‘*turns back*.’ (Psalm 114:3)

“Sun and moon”; “shining stars”; “highest heavens”; “waters”; “all deeps”; “fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind”; mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,” all are asked to *praise* the name of the LORD [Jehovah]. (Psalm 148)

Wisdom *cries* aloud; *raises her voice*; *cries out*; *speaks*. Stretches her *hand*; *laughs* and *mocks*. Has *insight* and strength, *mouth* and *lips*; gives out counsel and reproofs; *instructs* and *loves*. (Proverbs 1:20,21,24-26,30; 8:6,7,10,14,17)

Wilderness and Dry land show *gladness*; and Deserts *rejoice*. (Isaiah 35:1)

Justice ‘*turns back*,’ and righteousness “*stands*” at a distance; truth *falls* in the public squares, and uprightness *can enter* the city. (Isaiah 59:14)

Wisdom has “*children*.” (Luke 7:35)

Sin, Grace and Death are portrayed as ‘*kings*.’ (Romans 5:14,21)

Blood *cries* out. Blood “*speaks*.” (Hebrews 12:24)

Water and blood along with the spirit are said to “*bear witness*.” (1 John 5:6-8)

The altar *cries* before heaven. (Revelation 16:7)

With the above in mind, how could anyone in their right mind claim the subjects and abstract qualities above are all *personal beings*, just because language normally associated with humans are applied to them?

Consider these other verses of the New Testament:

Mark 4:39, "And [Jesus] awoke and *rebuked* the wind, and *said* to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

Luke 4:39, "And [Jesus] stood over [Peter's mother-in-law] and *rebuked* the fever, and it left her; and immediately she rose and served them."

Mark 4:39, Instead of "rebuked," other Bible translations say that Jesus "scolded"; "commanded"; "gave orders"; "ordered"; "spoke sternly" to the wind.

Luke 4:39, "spoke to the fever, rebuking it"; "gave a command to the fever"; "told the fever to leave" (TCW).

Luke 15:18 (The prodigal son, speaking): "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.'"

In the biblical verses above Jesus *speaks* to the wind and to the sea... *rebukes* the wind, and *orders* the winds to cease. Does this mean that the wind and the sea are real people with "ears" to *hear* voices, ready to obey? Of course not. The same applies to Jesus '*rebuking* the fever.' Fever is not a literal person capable of physically listening to Jesus' voice. When the prodigal son says: "I have sinned against heaven," must we conclude that the physical heaven is a person? It is obvious that *heaven* here represents God's divine will.

All these Scriptures refer to inanimate things as if they were people. All items or abstract ideas listed above cannot *literally* do all the things a person can. But speaking *figuratively*, they *can*. The Bible is good at that. It indicates that the Bible prominently employed in writing literary effects, prose and poetry, illustrations, analogies, comparisons, similes, etc. 'Qualities of intellect, emotion, will, knowledge and other actions,' normally ascribed to humans, were expressed above of inanimate things by using a figure of speech. However, none of them are actually "human" or spiritual beings. The same with the spirit. The spirit can *figuratively* "teach," "guide," "speak," "hear," and be "grieved" without being a real person. It is a lively way of communicating God's message to common people. With good reason, the Bible is considered by many to be a 'literary masterpiece.'

Nonetheless, if we take Mrs. Rapi's argument that the "Holy Spirit" must be a person merely because "the holy spirit does things that only a person can," then, we must conclude by using the same argument that *all* the subjects listed above are consequently real *people* too. But that is not the case, is it?

One issue which has contributed to the misunderstanding of the role of God's spirit, is that Bible translations by Trinitarians misleadingly *capitalize* terms dealing with "Holy Spirit" and frequently *add* the definite article "the" to the expression (i.e., "*the* Holy Spirit") to it in instances where the original text does *not*, and the context does not require it. (See: Luke 2:25; 11:13; Acts 1:5; 8:15; 19:2)

The purpose of doing so is to convince the reader that the spirit is a “person,” the “third person of a holy trinity.” Please be aware of this tactic!

Let's consider Acts 1:5 as an example of how this is done in various Bible versions:

Acts 1:5: “Before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (RSV, and others.)

Acts 1:5: “so you will be baptized in holy spirit.” (21st Century New Testament. Also: Concordant Literal Version; The Emphatic Diaglott; Paul R. McReynolds Interlinear)

Which of the two readings above better reflects the original text? The second one does!

Incidentally, in this text, baptism “in holy spirit” is contrasted with ‘baptism *with water.*’ “For just as John baptized in water,’ he said, ‘so you will be baptized in holy spirit no many days hence.” (21st CNT) The comparison between the two does not make sense one bit if we interpret the holy spirit to be a person.

In another place, at Matthew 1:20, it is said that Jesus was *conceived* by holy spirit. Was the holy spirit Jesus' father then? No. Jesus called God his Father, not the holy spirit. (John 14:16) Trinitarian explanations are often conflictive, they make no sense. These words about Jesus' birth only make sense if we understand the “spirit” to be God's power, or invisible force which in fact made Jesus' conception possible.

– *Did Jesus not speak of the Holy Spirit as a “He”, “Him,” and as a “Counselor”?*

Yes, he did, but only in a few places, where the spirit is referred to with a masculine pronoun as in John 14:26 and 16:13-14, and for good reason. Jesus also made reference to the spirit as a “Counselor.” (Other versions: “a Comforter”; “a Helper”; “an Advocate.”) Perhaps because of these references, Mrs. Rapi, mentioned earlier, exclaimed: “Let us never insult him [“the Holy Spirit”] by calling the Spirit ‘it’ but always honor Him properly.” This statement too, is in error.

There is good reason to believe that Jesus here, as indicated previously, was speaking *figuratively*, when he made reference to the holy spirit as a person, as a “Counselor,” or, “Helper.” (John 14:16) Jesus Christ employed *a figure of speech*, an effective teaching method to describe the promised “holy spirit” as a real person. It is a common device in Scripture to use *comparisons* in teaching. In fact, Jesus himself used them all the time in his teaching. ‘Indeed he said nothing to them without a parable [or: *without illustrations*].’ (Matthew 13:34; Mark 4:34; Greek: *parabolēs*)

Most notably, in the *same* chapter of John's Gospel where Jesus spoke of holy spirit as a “Helper”, he said, a few verses later: “**I've been using figures of speech* with you.** The time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in such analogies*. Instead, I will tell you plainly about the Father.” (John 16:7-14; 25, CEB; *Greek: *paroimiais* = a figure of speech, or comparison.) This scripture

makes it clear that Jesus was using a figure of speech, an analogy, when he spoke of 'spirit' as a "helper." But trinitarian advocates often fail to mention this very important statement of Jesus which appears in the very same chapter they commonly cite for support of a *personal* spirit.

The record shows that it was only on those few occasions where "holy spirit" was being compared to a *person* in a figurative sense (as was done in chapters 14 and 16 of John), that we find a reference to the spirit as a "he," or "him." But why would Jesus do so? Consider: Jesus' departure was imminent. He promised his disciples a heavenly place for them where he would be. In the meantime, the disciples' faith would be severely tested, and they needed much comfort during his absence, and full assurance that Jesus would support them. (Matthew 28:20) What better way could there be than to convey his utmost concern for them by portraying God's "holy spirit" as a *personal agent* sent as a "Helper" to accomplish powerful things for them? Short of Jesus' continuous physical presence, the operation of God's spirit, or power, among them, *as it were*, a personal agent, would be the next best thing that could happen to them, strengthening and comforting them through the impending tribulations.

Understandably, Jesus could say: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) It was through God's spirit that Jesus Christ was able to do that, as he pointed out in John 14:16,17: "And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Helper to be with you always. It is the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot obtain that Spirit, because it does not see it or recognize it; you recognize it because it stays with you and is within you." (Edgar J. Goodspeed *New Testament*. Underline added.) Please observe that Dr. Goodspeed's translation correctly reflects the Greek original by describing God's spirit as an "it," not a "him." Compare with the following translations which do likewise at John 14:16,17:

Concordant Literal Version; A Conservative Version; The Bible in Living English; Joseph Bryant Rotherham's Translation; The Emphatic Diaglott; George R. Noyes New Testament; New Simplified Bible; Julia Smith Translation; Laicester Ambrose Sawyer New Testament Translation; 21st Century New Testament; James L. Tomanek New Testament; A New Translation, by E.V. Rieu; The Four Gospels, by Richmond Lattimore; The Unvarnished New Testament, by Andy Gaus; and the New American Bible.

Hence, if God's spirit can make *wisdom* 'cry aloud'; *mountains* and *trees* 'sing' and 'shout'; *water* and *blood* 'bear witness'; and even make a *donkey* 'talk,' it could surely do no less than powerfully act on behalf of Jesus' followers for ages to come, just *as if a person* sent from God was right there among them. (Numbers 22:22-40; Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:33; Romans 8:34)

Equally important, Scripture says that "holy spirit" *speaks*, but other texts show that it did so *through* angels, or men. (Acts 1:16; 4:24, 25; 28:25; Matt. 10:19,20; Compare Acts 20:23 with 21:10,11; 28:25) Since the "spirit" originates *from* God, interchangeable references are often made about

God and 'his spirit.' (Matthew 1:22; Acts 5:3,4; 8:26,29; Exodus 16:7 with Hebrews 3:7-9; Matthew 10:20; 2 Peter 1:21)

Here is something else to consider: In Greek there are three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. These do not always correspond to English gender, since the neuter gender, although often applied to inanimate things, it is sometimes used in reference to animals or people of both sexes. Thus, the gender of a noun cannot be used as a strict rule to determine if something is personal or impersonal. However scholars Hansen and Quinn noted: "Gender in Greek is a grammatical category and is not identical with sex. Usually, however, words that refer to living beings of the male sex are of masculine gender, and those which refer to living beings of the female sex are of feminine gender. (*Greek - An Intensive Course*, ©1979 by Hardy Hansen & Gerald M. Quinn, p. 17. ©1992 by Fordham University Press, New York)

The Elements of New Testament Greek declares something similar: "[In Greek] Nearly all nouns denoting men or male animals are masculine, and nearly all those denoting women or female animals are feminine; but other nouns may be either masculine, feminine or neuter. (J. W. Wenham, 1965, Cambridge Univ. Press)

This holds true in Modern Greek as well. A Grammar, *Greek - An essential Grammar of the Modern Language* writes: "Every Greek noun belongs to one of three gender classes: masculine, feminine or neuter. These do not correspond to the division between male, female and inanimate. Nevertheless, most nouns denoting humans are masculine if the person is male, and feminine if the person is female. [...] Nouns denoting animals, inanimate objects, substances, natural phenomena and abstract concepts may be masculine, feminine or neuter." (©2004, David Holton, Peter Mackridge and Irene Philippaki-Warburton. Routledge, Oxon, p.22)

What does this mean? Although there is no hard rule on Greek gender in the Bible, it is to be noted that both the Father (God) and Jesus Christ, his Son, are *generally* referred to in Scripture in masculine terms, that is, as a "he," not an "it." This is so because Greek has a *dominant* gender, and that is the *masculine* gender. On rare occasions the Father and the Son are contrasted to, say, "Wisdom," in which the reference may then be in another gender, like the feminine gender. Nonetheless, the general rule is that both God and Christ are mentioned in the Bible in the masculine gender throughout. But, what about the "holy spirit"? If the Trinity were biblical doctrine, one would expect the *spirit*, if it were a third "person," to be *equally* described in the Greek dominant gender, masculine, as is the case with both the Father and Son.

Although holy spirit is *personified* as a "helper" in the masculine gender with corresponding masculine personal pronouns in John 16:7,8 (Greek: paráklētos. Cp. John 14:26; 16:13-14), it does so to conform to grammatical rules, not to express a doctrine.

Aside from those few texts the Greek New Testament commonly refers to the "holy spirit" in the neuter gender, as an "it," or, "which," not as a "he," or a "who." See listed translations of John 14:16,17 above. Why is the spirit described differently in gender from the Father and Son?

The New American Bible acknowledged: "The Greek word for 'Spirit' is neuter, and while we use personal pronouns in English ("he," "his," "him"), most Greek MSS [manuscripts] employ 'it.'" (Saint Joseph Edition, 1970. John 14:17 footnote. Note: Later editions obscure this clear, factual statement.)

A scholar explains: "Later Christian theology also applied the technical status of a 'person' on the Holy Spirit, which has lead modern translators and readers to think of the Holy Spirit in human terms as a 'who,' even a 'he,' rather than as an 'it' that transcends human measures of personhood. [...] But even though the 'personal' category is larger in Greek than in English, the 'Holy Spirit' is referred to by a 'neuter' noun in Greek. Consequently, it is never spoken of with personal pronouns in Greek. It is a 'which,' not a 'who.' It is an 'it,' not a 'he.'"

" This is a case, then, where the importance of the principle of following the primary, ordinary, generally recognized meaning of the Greek when translating becomes clear. To take a word that everywhere else would be translated 'which' or 'that,' and arbitrarily change it to 'who' or 'whom' when it happens to be used of 'the holy spirit' is a kind of special pleading. In other words, it is a biased way to translate. And because this arbitrary change cannot be justified linguistically, it is also inaccurate." (*Truth in Translation - Accuracy and Bias in English Translations of the New Testament*, Jason BeDuhn, pp. 136, 140. ©2003, University Press of America,® Inc.)

Furthermore, the expression "holy spirit" frequently appears without the Greek article "the" before it (45x) , that is, plainly as "holy spirit." In some contexts, it is disingenuous to *add* the definite article to "holy spirit" when there is no justification to do so, misleading readers into believing that God's spirit is a person. (See: Luke 2:25; 11:13; Acts 1:5; 8:15; 19:2) Those who do so in such texts have an interest in promoting the Trinity.

- *Scriptures said to affirm the personality of the Spirit* (John 15:26; John 14:26; 16:13-14; Eph. 1:14; 2 Thess. 2:6-7).

Let's have a grammarian, Daniel B. Wallace, explain this one for us:

"John 15:26: [...] "whenever the Comforter comes, whom I am sending to you from the Father-the Spirit of truth which/who proceeds from the Father - that one will testify concerning me.

" The use of ἐκεῖνος [ekeinos, "that one"] here is frequently regarded by students of the NT to be an affirmation of the personality of the Spirit. Such an approach is based on the assumption that the antecedent of [ekeinos] is πνεῦμα [pneuma]: [Says Young, another grammarian]: 'the masculine pronoun [ekeinos] is used in John 14:26 and 16:13-14 to refer to the neuter noun [pneuma] to emphasize the personality of the Holy Spirit.' (Footnote: "Young, *Intermediate Greek*, 78 ... The view is especially popular

among theologians, not infrequently becoming the mainstay in their argument for the personality of the Spirit...")

" But this is erroneous. In all these Johannine passages, [*pneuma*] is appositional to a masculine noun. The gender of [*ekeinos*] thus has nothing to do with the natural gender of [*pneuma*]. The antecedent of [*ekeinos*], in each case, is [*paráklētos*], not [*pneuma*].

" [John 14:26] [*pneuma*] not only is appositional to [*paráklētos*], but the relative pronoun ὃ [*hó*] that follows it is neuter! This hardly assists the grammatical argument for the Spirit's personality. In John 16:13-14 the immediate context is deceptive: [...text...] The [*ekeinos*] reaches back to v 7, where [*paráklētos*] is mentioned. Thus, since [*paráklētos*] is masculine, so is the pronoun. Although one might argue that the Spirit's personality is in view in these passages, the view must be based on the nature of a [*paráklētos*] and the things said about the Comforter, not on any supposed grammatical subtleties. **Indeed, it is difficult to find any text in which [*pneuma*] is grammatically referred to with the masculine gender.**"

(Footnote: Besides the Johannine texts, three other passages are occasionally used for this: Eph 1:14; 2 Thess 2:6-7 and 1 John 5:7. All of these have problems." – *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pp. 331-32)

" On **Eph 1:13-14**: "The reading ὃς [*hós*], which is doubtful on text-critical grounds, is sometimes invoked as grammatical proof of the Spirit's personality ... Neither in Eph 1:14 nor in any other text is there clear syntactical evidence for the personality of the Spirit. There are, of course, many lines of evidence that demonstrate this, but the attempt to use Greek grammar in such a manner is facile and often creates theological problems that are greater than the cure." (Ibid, p. 338. Italics his. Underlines and bold letters added for emphasis.)

Those who feel as Mrs. Rapi does (quoted previously), when she said: "Let us never insult him ["the Holy Spirit"] by calling the Spirit 'it' but always honor Him properly" should pay heed to the argumentation presented by no less than a prominent grammarian who happens to be a trinitarian defender. The facts are not on Mrs. Rapi's side. According to Daniel Wallace, author of the *Grammar* being quoted, those who attempt to use grammar to affirm the personality of the Spirit 'are in error.'"

He concluded: "Indeed, it is difficult to find *any* text in which [*pneuma*] is grammatically referred to with the masculine gender." "Neither in Eph 1:14 nor in any other text is there clear syntactical evidence for the personality of the Spirit." (Ibid, p. 332, Wallace. Italics his.)

In another place, Wallace wrote: "But if grammar cannot legitimately be used to support the Spirit's personality, then perhaps we need to reexamine the rest of our basis for this theological commitment. I am not denying the doctrine of the Trinity, of course, but I am arguing that we need to ground our beliefs on a more solid foundation." (*Greek Grammar and the Personality of the Holy Spirit*, Bulletin for Biblical Research 13.1 97-125 [© 2003 Institute for Biblical Research], Daniel B. Wallace, Dallas Theological Seminary)

According to Wallace, one must look *elsewhere* other than grammar to find the “many lines of evidence” that demonstrate the personality of the Spirit. However, when those perceived “lines of evidence” are checked closely against the background of Bible context, they reveal instead numerous hairline fractures in a main link of the trinitarian chain. No “solid foundation” there either.

Other scholars admit the personal reality of the Spirit is not explicit in Scripture, and the various texts quoted as support for the personality of the Spirit, when taken by themselves, do not prove the spirit is a person. For instance:

Dictionary of the Bible: “What is less clear about the Spirit is His personal reality; often He is mentioned in language in which His personal reality is not explicit.” (Jesuit John L. Mckenzie, S.J.)

Of the Holy Spirit. – There are many texts of this class, but none from which, taken by themselves, the personality of the Holy Spirit can be proved.” (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, John Mc Clintock, D.D. & James Strong, S.T.D. Page 551. A Protestant work.)

Thus, if one cannot prove the personality of the holy spirit by grammar, or from citing various Scriptural texts from the Bible, where does that leave a person? An option would be to find it from Greek philosophers, and from ancient pagan trinities. But then again, we would not be talking about the dubious origin of the Trinity doctrine, would we?

– *What about scriptures where ‘holy spirit’ is mentioned along with the Father and the Son?*

There are some Bible texts where “holy spirit” is mentioned along with God and Christ. They are said to indicate a trinity. But, do they? Here is a sample:

2 Cor 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship [“participation in,” or “sharing”] of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

1 Pet 1:2: “chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

Eph 4:4-6: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

Matt 3:13,16-17: “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. [...] And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”

A few observations should be made here. First, do these Scriptures say anything remotely to what is read in standard definitions given for the Trinity, that they are all “persons,” “coequal,” “coeternal” belonging to a holy trinity? Do they say each one is God? No, they do not. Just

because "the spirit" is grouped together with God and Christ does not mean that it must be the third person of a trinity. Using such reasoning alone for Ephesians 4:4-6 for instance, we could, the same, arrive at the conclusion that "the body," "one hope," "one faith," "one baptism," are all *persons* belonging to a Godhead, since they are grouped together with God and Christ within the context.

Expectedly, if someone is brought up indoctrinated with the Trinity doctrine, such person may see insinuations of a "trinity" in those Scriptures. A good example of this is seen in a declaration made by the author of the "Holy Spirit" article in the *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*: "Scripture places the Holy Spirit on a par with the Father and the Son (II Cor 13:14; Mt 28:19; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2). Accordingly, the works of God always involve all three persons of the Trinity." (Page 804) That is an amazing statement, considering there is not *one* verse in the Bible that explicitly teaches or even suggests a Trinity doctrine, or that the holy spirit is part of a Trinity, or equal with God and Christ! Not even in the four texts the writer cites for support, which clearly lack the explicitness he was hoping for.

No wonder *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* states: "One does not find in the NT the trinitarian paradox of the coexistence of the Father, Son, and Spirit within a divine unity." (Edited by David Noel Freedman, Yale University Press / 2007)

And *A Catholic Dictionary* concedes: "On the whole the New Testament, like the Old, speaks of the spirit as a divine energy or power." "The third Person was asserted at a Council of Alexandria in 362...and finally by the Council of Constantinople of 381." (W.E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, 1960, pp. 810, 812) This is also confirmed by *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Cross & Livingstone, Revised Edition, 661.)

Interestingly, some 350 years went by from the time of Christ before God's spirit was made to be a "person." It is a fact that Scripture does *not* place "holy spirit" on a par with the Father and the Son. Such belief is instead a product of tradition, or wishful thinking. The salutation samples alone, shown previously, by the Christian authors, proves that the spirit is not "on a par" with the Father and the Son. As a matter of fact, not even the Son is "on a par" with the Father. (1 Cor. 11:3; 15:28)

– *Does Matthew 28:19 prove a "trinity"?*

If anyone text of the Bible has any remote resemblance to the language used by Trinitarians would be this one at Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing

them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Isn't this enough evidence for the Christian to believe in a trinity? Again, no. And here is why.

This text does mention three subjects, but does it say they are three "persons," "coequal," and "coeternal." Does it say each one is "God"? No, it does not. The Bible does show that the Father and the Son are spiritual beings of the highest order, with corresponding personalities. But it does not portray 'spirit' as being a person. The reference to the expression, "in the name...of the holy spirit" is no guarantee of that. Even in our times, we use expressions such as: "in the name of *the law*"; "in the name of *justice*"; "in the name of *peace*," etc., without ever inferring they apply to living persons. We use them for what they stand for and what they represent. In the case of the spirit, it is God's invisible force which emanates from him to do his will. And baptism 'in the name of the holy spirit' is simply the acknowledgment of its divine source and authority. A distinguished Protestant source (trinitarian) stated:

"[Matt. 28:19] proves only that there are the three subjects named, [...] but it does not prove, by itself, that all the three belong necessarily to the divine nature, and possess equal divine honor ... This text, taken by itself, would not prove decisively either the personality of the three subjects mentioned, or their equality or divinity." (McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 1987, Vol. X, p. 552)

Another problem with arriving at a trinitarian understanding in the text, is that the context does not fit the trinitarian mold. In the book of Matthew, Jesus is always depicted as the subordinate Son of God, always willing to do the will of his Father. (Matthew 4:10; 16:16; 20:23; 26:39; 27:43,46) This was brought out by Karl Rahner, a leading Roman Catholic spokesman, who, within the New Testament context stated: "What, however, is said of his life and functions as the celestial Christ neither means nor implies that in divine status he stands on a par with God Himself and is fully God. On the contrary, in the New Testament picture of his heavenly person and ministry we behold a figure both separate from and subordinate to God." (*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 1967-68, Vol. 50, pp. 258, 259)

In the Gospel of Matthew alone, he self-designated the title "the Son of man" some thirty times, a title the Jewish people associated with the Messiah, not with God. Can we imagine the Eternal and Almighty God calling himself "the Son of *man*"? By the way, the Bible clearly states that God sent forth his *Son* as a ransom for mankind, not that he himself would do so. (John 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:5,6)

The Matthew account tells us that after Jesus Christ was resurrected from death *by God*, he approached the eleven disciples, and said to them (Just one verse prior to the statement being

discussed at Matt. 28:19): "All* authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (28:18) If Jesus was the equal to God in every way, why was it incumbent for Jesus to reveal to others that whatever power and authority he had, 'was given to him' by his Father, God? If Jesus *received* God-given authority, then it would mean there was a time when he did *not* have such authority.

(*"All": A Trinitarian boldly asserted in a radio program that the word "all" in 'all authority' proved without a doubt that Jesus was God.)

Does it? What he did not say is that the Greek term for "all" does not always include "everything" in the strict sense of the word. The word may allow for an exclusion in certain descriptions. In other words, it was the Father who *gave Christ* the authority in the first place, so the Father of Jesus Christ was never devoid of authority. It was the Father who raised Jesus Christ from death. Bible translator Jonathan Mitchell renders: 'All authority (or: Every right) is given to me.' (*The New Testament*, ©2009) The *Revised English Bible* conveys the sense well: "Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me." Having 'every right' or 'full' authority to do something would not rule out someone else from having even greater authority, as John 14:28 shows. No wonder *The Message Bible* freely renders this part, hence: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you...."

Furthermore, a similar use of the term is also found in this account, where Jesus sends his followers to 'make disciples of *all* nations.' Must this mean that *everyone* would be converted to Christianity? Not likely, since other Scriptures clearly indicate that some will reject the Good News of the Kingdom and suffer destruction. The intended meaning of the Commandment is indicated by *The Simple English Bible*: 'Make followers for me *from* all nations.' [Footnote: *every cultural group*.] Or: "make disciples out of people from all the nations," *An Understandable Version*. See also: *International Standard Version*)

In harmony with Jesus' words at Matthew 28:18, the writer of Acts 2:32,36 reports: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." The Bible therefore indicates Jesus at one time did *not* have all the power and authority and lordship he now possesses. After completing God's will on earth, Jesus was further glorified, and now appears 'sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.' (Acts 2:33; Phil. 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3)

The words at Matthew 28:19 sound unlike any other scripture, so much in fact, that some scholars question if the triadic formula in the present text was ever there in the first place. The suggestion is not surprising if one considers the history of textual copying and transmission of these manuscripts, and the various attempts by some unscrupulous scribes to corrupt the text

at a later date to favor a particular religious agenda in not a few places. Fortunately for us, many of the corruption attempts have been culled out to the public conscience by textual experts.

For instance, G.R. Beasley-Murray (professor emeritus of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, and former principal of Spurgeon's College, London), acknowledges: "A whole group of exegetes and critics have recognized that the opening declaration of Matt. 28:18 demands a Christological statement to follow it: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me' leads us to expect as a consequence, 'Go and make disciples unto Me among all the nations, baptising them in My name, teaching them to observe all things I commanded you.' In fact, the first and third clauses have that significance: it looks as though the second clause has been modified from a Christological to a Trinitarian formula in the interests of the liturgical tradition." (*Baptism in the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962, 83)

Peake's Commentary on the Bible: "The command to baptize into the threefold name is a late doctrinal expansion. Instead of the words baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' we should probably read simply, 'into my name'. (Page 723)

The Catholic Encyclopedia, II, stated: "The baptismal formula was changed from the name of Jesus Christ to the words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by the Catholic Church in the second century." (Page 263)

And the *Dictionary of the Bible* notes: "The chief trinitarian text in the NT (going beyond such suggestive summary formulae as 2 Co 13.14) is the baptismal formula in Mt 28.19 ... This late post-resurrection saying not found in any other Gospel or anywhere else in the NT, has been viewed by some scholars as an interpolation into Matthew. It has also been pointed out that the idea of 'making disciples' is continued in 'teaching them,' so that the intervening reference to baptism with its trinitarian formula was perhaps a later insertion into the saying ... Nevertheless, though an integral part of the original text of Matthew, this does not guarantee its source in the historical teaching of Jesus." (James Hastings/Revised by Frederick C. Grant and H. H. Rowley, 1963, p. 1015, T&T Clark and Charles Scribner's Sons)

Some actually believe the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew. An early edition of Matthew in Hebrew does not contain the triadic formula. Even if we accept the triadic formula at Matthew 28:19 as an integral part of the original biblical canon, it serves no proof of a holy trinity as commonly defined by theologians.

- *Is lying to the "Holy Spirit" at Acts 5:3,4 evidence of its personality?*

Acts 5:3,4 says: "But Peter said, 'Anani'as, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' "

Traditionalists, in particular, the Pentecostals, like to quote this scripture as proof of the personality of the spirit. But, is it? Well, if one starts with the notion that the "Holy Spirit" is a person, this scripture could admittedly be used to indicate so.

However, as considered elsewhere, the Bible frequently uses figurative language to communicate its message. The same here. The spirit is God's. This is made clear a few verses later, at Acts 5:9 where we read: "But Peter said to her [Sapphi'ra, Anania's wife], 'How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'" The 'breath-effect' spirit of God (per Bible translator, Jonathan Mitchell) is thus, *his* dynamic force through which he accomplishes everything. If his creatures resist *its* function and manifestation, they are in essence, resisting God. This does not mean though that the spirit is a person. When the holy spirit does become active in the congregation, and someone takes on a course of defiance against God's commands by *lying* in the process against his holy will, it could rightly be said that such person is *lying against God*, the source of this spirit.

At Acts 5:3,4, according to various Bible translations, Anani'as is said to have 'lied to the holy spirit' (*The Unvarnished New Testament*); or, made to "play the holy Spirit false" (Hugh J. Schonfield); "to play false and lie to the Set-apart Breath-effect (or: Holy Spirit)." (Mitchell 2009) Anani'as was told: "You have not lied to men but to God." Or: "you did not play false and lie to humans (people), but rather ...to God." (Ibid, Mitchell)

A similar expression appears in James 3:14 where various Bible versions* employ comparable language to that of Acts 5:3,4. In James 3:14, the subject is "the truth" whereas in Acts 5:3,4 is "the holy spirit." Christians are warned against 'telling lies against the truth'; 'playing false to the truth'; or just 'being false to the truth.' (*RSV: Do not "be false to the truth"; TEV: "...tell lies against the truth"; KJV: "...lie not against the truth"; *The Modern Language Bible*: "do not...play false to the truth.")

Therefore, when Christians are warned at James 3:14: "Lie not against the truth"; or, 'Don't play false to the truth,' are we to conclude that "the truth" must be a person? Again no! Here, "the truth" represents or stands for *the truth of the gospel*, not a person.

Another scripture which presents a dilemma to those who believe that God, Christ and the spirit are all one and the same, is this one at Matthew 12:32: "Anyone who speaks a word against the

Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." (NIV)

If Christ and the holy spirit were coequal as Trinitarians claim, why would speaking against each results in a different outcome? Why is not "God" mentioned here? Trinitarians do not offer sensible explanations. This text would only make sense if we accept the plain Bible statement that 'the Father [God] is greater than Jesus, and that the holy spirit which springs from God, is his dynamic force through which he get things done. This text only confirms what the Bible declares elsewhere, 'that God is above Christ.' The act of speaking against Christ (being 'below God'), might be forgiven, but speaking against God as 'the source of the spirit,' will never be. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that the spirit is the third person of the Trinity. That idea came from a foreign source.

Does mentioning three subjects together constitute a "Trinity"?

Some suggest that it does. But does it? A careful Bible reader will consider whether the mention of three subjects together is enough to warrant a belief in a trinity. The *Eerdman's Bible Dictionary* properly calls attention to this: "Triadic formulas in the New Testament [and in the O.T.] are often regarded as implying a developed doctrine of trinity, but this is to read too much into them." Are they right? Yes, they are. See for yourself:

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are mentioned together numerous times. (Ex. 2:24; 6:3, etc.)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed'nego. (Daniel 3:19,20)

Peter, James, and John are often named together. (Matthew 17:1; 26:37; Mark 5:37; 9:2;14:33; Luke 9:28)

Son of man [Christ], the Father and angels. (Matthew 16:27)

Son of man, the Father and the holy angels. (Luke 9:26; 12:8)

God, Christ Jesus and angels. (1 Timothy 5:21)

God, Christ Jesus and Pontius Pilate. (1 Timothy 6:13)

Spirit, Water, and Blood. (1 John 5:8)

None of the subjects above constitute a holy trinity! In fact, using such reasonings alone would lead someone to believe that God, Christ Jesus, and angels (mentioned in 4 texts above) are more of a trinity than the trinity of God, Christ and the holy spirit. Why? Simply, because there *is* biblical evidence that God, Jesus, and angels are all *personal* beings, while there is no evidence that the spirit is one. Grouping "spirit, water and blood" together as is done in 1 John 5:8 does not make the water and blood "persons" anymore than the spirit is. For good reason a scholar noted: "The Bible lacks the express declaration that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are of equal essence..." (Karl Barth, cited in the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. p. 84) A "holy trinity" in the Bible is an illusion. We certainly do not want to become a victim by 'reading too much in such triadic formulas.' Do we?

Does the creation narrative in Genesis prove a trinity?

Trinitarians claim that the Genesis creation account reveal the Trinity. Some use the plurality of the Hebrew word for "God" ("Elohim"), as proof of the concept. Others make note in the creation narrative of 'the Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters,' in Genesis 1:2. Still, others point to God's own words at Genesis 1:26, where "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" Let's examine these three claims:

1. Is the Hebrew plural '*elo·him*' in the Genesis account any indication of a trinity?

No. "Elohim," in the plural is simply the Hebrew word for excellence, "the plural of majesty." (*New American Bible Revised Edition* [NABRE], St. Joseph Edition, Bible Dictionary, p. 416)

'In some contexts, the term can be used to indicate a plurality of gods (Exodus 12:12; 18:11; Deuteronomy 10:17), and in others, in a singular sense for one definite god (Judges 11:24).' (*The New World Dictionary-Concordance to the New American Bible*, p. 211.) '*Elo·him*' is used in the Bible with reference to Yahweh himself, to angels, to idol gods (singular and plural), and to men. (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 7:1; Judges 16:23, 1 Kings 11:5, Psalm 82:1,6; 89:6; and John 10:34,35)

At Genesis 42:30, Joseph is spoken of as the "lord" (*'adho·neh'*, a plural) of Egypt. Joseph was not a trinity. But he could be spoken of as "lord of Egypt" because he held a position of excellence over others in Egypt. Obviously, '*adho·neh*' is the plural of majesty, dignity, or excellence. The same with '*elo·him*' when reference is made of God. The idea of a trinity in '*elo·him*' is *read into* the text. According to the *The New World Dictionary-Concordance to the New American Bible*, "The biblical use of the term [*'elo·him*] has no trace of polytheism." (Page 211)

A scholar summed it up thus: "That the language of the O[ld] T[estament] has entirely given up the idea of plurality in . . . [*'Elo·him*'] (as applied to the God of Israel) is especially shown by the fact that it is almost invariably construed with a singular verbal predicate, and takes a singular adjectival attribute. . . . [*'Elo·him*'] must rather be explained as an *intensive plural*, denoting *greatness* and *majesty*, being equal to The Great God." (Aaron Ember, *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. XXI, 1905, p. 208) And the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* declares candidly: "It is exegesis of a mischievous if pious sort that would find the doctrine of the Trinity in the plural form *elohim* [God]." (Under, "God")

The Greek language, on the other hand, does not have a plural of majesty, hence, references to the True God appear in singular, not plural, indicating the oneness of God. (Mark 12:29)

2. Genesis 1:2 says: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters."

As indicated before, one method Trinitarian translators employ to make the reader believe the spirit of God is a person is to capitalize the word "spirit" as "the **S**pirit of God" as RSV does above. The original biblical languages did not distinguish between capital and lowercase letters. So, using capital letters for "Spirit of God" here is misleading, because it gives the impression that the spirit of God is a person. Other translators go further by actually *changing* the meaning of the Hebrew to make the spirit appear to be a person.

One example of this is seen in *The Clear Word*, a paraphrase version by a Seventh Day Adventist, Jack J. Blanco, Th.D., who rendered the latter part of the text this way: "But the Holy Spirit was there watching over it." This is a bold tampering of the original statement, which literally says: "And the spirit of God [was] *hovering* over the surface of the waters." (Other renderings for "hovering" = moving; fluttering; brooding; sweeping; vibrating; waving) Where then did Dr. Blanco get the idea of "*watching* over it"? I would like to know. This seems to be another instance of 'wishful thinking,' of 'reading too much into the text' by an avid trinitarian.

The Hebrew word for "spirit" is *ru'ach*, which basically means "breath, wind, spirit," according to the *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance*. Compare with NABRE footnote. What does this mean? Various sources explain:

The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary: "In the Old Testament, then, the Spirit is first and foremost the power of God, the agent or agency by which God gets things done." (497)

The International Bible Commentary: "The sense [of *ru'ach*] is excellently given by 'the power of God' (GNB)." (F.F. Bruce, General Editor)

The Companion Bible: "The one root idea [of *ru'ach*] running through all the passages is invisible force." (Appendix 9, p. 13)

Accordingly, Bible translations have rendered the Hebrew word "*ru'ach*," (that is, besides "the spirit of God," JPS and "God's Spirit," TM) at Genesis 1:2 as:

"a wind from God sweeping over" (*Tanakh*)

"an awesome wind" (*Anchor Bible Commentaries*)

"rushing-spirit of God" (*The Five Books of Moses*, Everett Fox)

"God's wind swept over the waters" (*Common English Bible*)

" a mighty wind that swept" (*New English Bible*)

"a tempestuous wind raging over" (*An American Translation*)
"God's active force was moving about over" (*New World Translation*, 2013)
"a wind from God swept" (*New Revised Standard Version*)
"the power of God was moving over" (*Today's English Version*)
"a mighty wind that swept" (*New English Bible*)
"with a divine wind sweeping" (*New Jerusalem Bible*)
"and God's breath hovering over the waters" (*The Five Books of Moses*, Robert Alter)

And the Greek reading in the *Septuagint* (*pneúma theoú*) as:

"a breath of God was brought on above the water." (*Charles Thomson Translation*)
"a divine wind was being carried along over the water." (NETS)
"the spirit of God" (*The Lexham English Septuagint*)

The NET Bible has "the Spirit of God" at Genesis 1:2, but adds: "Elsewhere in the OT the phrase refers consistently to the divine spirit that empowers and energizes individuals [...]." Thus, nowhere in this account, or in other parts of the Bible, does it say that the Spirit of God is a "person."

It was centuries after Christ that the idea of holy spirit being a person was developed. It was an apostitizing of Christian doctrine and an assimilation of pagan ideas that led to the spirit being personalized as the third partner of a "trinity." (1 Timothy 4:1)

Anglican churchman and Oxford University lecturer K. E. Kirk revealingly writes of the adoption of the doctrine of the Trinity:

"The theological and philosophical vindication of the divinity of the Spirit begins in the fourth century; we naturally turn to the writers of that period to discover what grounds they have for their belief. To our surprise, we are forced to admit that they have none . . .

" This failure of Christian theology . . . to produce logical justification of the cardinal point in its trinitarian doctrine is of the greatest possible significance. We are forced, even before turning to the question of the vindication of the doctrine by experience, to ask ourselves whether theology or philosophy has ever produced any reasons why its belief should be Trinitarian." (*"The Evolution of the Doctrine of the Trinity,"* published in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, A.E.J. Rawlinson, editor, 1928, pp. 221-222)

3. Another argument brought up in favor of the Trinity in the creation narrative are the words that God spoke at Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" Who was God speaking to, when he spoke those words? Some traditionalists whimsically say that God was speaking to the other *two* individuals of the Trinity. Really?

Technically speaking, by saying “us” the divine speaker could have been speaking to *one* other person, *two*, *three*, *five*, *twenty*, or even *millions* of other celestial beings, like the angels. The account says nothing of the number, not necessarily “three” as Trinitarians often imply. As a matter of interest, in obvious disapproval of that notion, the NABRE and the NIV Bible versions (both trinitarian) interpret the words at Ge. 1:26 as God addressing a heavenly court or assembly of countless heavenly beings. Likewise, *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* wrote: “The Old Testament can scarcely be used as authority for the existence of distinctions within the Godhead. The use of ‘us’ by the divine speaker (Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7) is strange, but it is perhaps due to His consciousness of being surrounded by other beings of a loftier order than men (Isa. 6:8).” (A. B. Davidson, “God,” Vol. II, p. 205)

Further, the *Word Commentary* states: “From Philo onward, Jewish commentators have generally held that the plural [Gen. 1:26, ‘Let us make man....’] is used because God is addressing his heavenly court, i.e., the angels (cf. Isa. 6:8). From the Epistle of Barnabas and Justin Martyr, who saw the plural as a reference to Christ, Christians have traditionally seen this verse as foreshadowing the Trinity. It is now universally admitted that this was not what the plural meant to the original author.” (Gordon Wenham, on Genesis, p. 27)

Although these explanations are conceivable, the Scriptures elsewhere, do however, provide us with a more likely answer. John chapter 1 tells us that, “In the beginning the Word [Jesus Christ] was with God,” and that ‘*through* him, all things were made.’ (John 1:1-3) Hebrews 1:2 further confirms this.

Colossians 1:15 expands on this by saying that Christ is “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created.” Another Bible translation expresses it this way: “Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He was born before creation began, for it was through him that everything was made.” (*The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Student Edition, by J. B. Phillips, 1972) Since Scripture tells us that Christ is “the firstborn of all creation”; “the beginning of the creation of [by] God” (Revelation 3:14); and “the only begotten Son” of God (John 3:18, KJV), it is reasonable to conclude that Christ was the first and only *direct* creation by God. Everything else being made *through* Christ, by the power of God. Christ himself attributed the creation to God, including his own existence. (Matthew 19:4-6; John 6:57)

Hence, the conclusion that God in Genesis 1:26 was speaking to Christ, when he said: “Let us make man in our image,” is most fitting. The concept of a “trinity” is totally absent in the creation narrative. Accordingly, God’s words at Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” offers no proof of a “trinity.”

Trinitarians do not really worship a trinity:

“And so to our triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and to his people, we offer our work of creating and publishing the ESV Study Bible.” (*Introduction – English Standard Version Study Bible*, p. 12)

Trinitarian supporters emphasize the importance of the Trinity doctrine in the Christian faith. They insist that all three entities of the trinity are *equal* in every way and in power.

Notwithstanding, when one examines general trends among Catholics and Protestants, it is found that in practice they worship *one* entity of the trinity, Jesus Christ, above the Father, and the Holy Spirit. Christendom is “Christ-centered.” In essence, they have weakened the threefold chain, where one link is made stronger than the other two. To start, with few exceptions, Catholics and Protestants have shown a clear aversion to the name of the Father, Jehovah, or Yahweh, and even belittle anyone else bold enough to use that name. They have *removed* the divine name in most of their translations from the Hebrew Text, even though God's personal name appears there over 6,800 times.

Why would they remove the name of the Father, if they truly believed there were three *distinct* persons in the Trinity, all *equally* powerful? These translators relegate the holy name to a “covenant name.” Is this a small matter? One Bible version which fearlessly kept the divine name in their translation, says at Psalm 83:18: “Let them [God's enemies] know that you alone bear the name of Yahweh, Most High over all the earth.” (NJB) Surely, we do not want to be in the opposite side of God by refusing to acknowledge the True God Yahweh (Or, “Jehovah”), as “Most High over all the earth,” by implying the Name was only a local name with no universal implication whatsoever.

The Trinity doctrine does not help a Christian acknowledge Yahweh as the “Most High.” Jesus Christ has taken over in prominence, at least in their view. Psalm 83:18 speaks of the “Most High,” implying that Jehovah is ‘higher’ than others ‘over all the earth,’ a problem for the trinitarian faithful. Is it “heresy” to imply that Jesus is below the “Most High” Yahweh, in position and authority? Well, what does the Bible say? Luke 1:32 is clear enough when it confirms Jesus as “Son of the Most High,” not “the Most High.” Who is this “Most High” then? It is a common belief that Jesus Christ in the New Testament is the Yahweh of the Old. However, Luke 1:32 clearly shows this is not the case.

Translators who dislike God's name frequently appeal to an ancient Jewish tradition of not pronouncing the divine name, out of pious sacredness. The fact that Jesus Christ himself condemned those holding fast to many Jewish traditions does not seem to matter one bit in their decision to drop the Name. (Mark 7:8) Translators who appeal to Jewish tradition for replacing the divine name with surrogates, should ask themselves: Why reject the divine name on such basis, but not go along with the Jewish traditional rejection of the Trinity doctrine? The Jewish Encyclopedia states: “...The Jews have always regarded the doctrine of the Trinity as one irreconcilable with the spirit of the Jewish religion and with monotheism.” (1906, Vol. 12, p. 261)

One certainly does *not* have to accept the Trinity dogma to accept Jesus Christ.

Another indication of uneven Christian worship in this Trinity is seen by the fact that overall, Jesus Christ receives more prominence than the Father or Holy Spirit. Most available “Christian” music centers around the life of Jesus Christ. Most Christian religious books focus on the personage of Christ. When was the last time you saw a movie advertised about the *Father* of Jesus Christ, or of the *Holy Spirit* for that matter? But movies about Jesus Christ are plentiful. Many religious organizations and church buildings include the name of Jesus Christ in their title names. Most preaching by religious pastors concentrates on the life of Jesus Christ. It is very telling that Bible translators often treat Jesus with more prominence than the other two entities. Some Bible versions offer separate sections on the life of Jesus Christ, but not for the Father or Holy Spirit. Other Bibles are sold with distinctive lettering (typically, red letters) to accentuate every reference where Jesus is the Speaker, but the practice is not applied to the Father God, which is very odd. So too, pronouns referring to the Deity are *capitalized* in various versions, which translators hastily extend to Christ as well. This creates an inaccurate picture of the Inspired Record.

By doing all this, they create the impression that Christians should worship Jesus alone as Lord, and not someone else. They figure that if one worships Jesus, all bases are covered. The trinitarian Father, and Holy Spirit do not remotely get the same focus. Only one name matters in this trilogy: the name of “Jesus Christ.” The name Yahweh, the Father of Jesus, is expendable. And they do not worry themselves to the fact that “the Holy Ghost” *has no name* to show for. Trinitarians in practice, do not worship the Father, nor the Holy Spirit. There is no tangible *equality* in their trilogy. What they say in word only contradicts what they practice.

Keep in mind that Christ declared unambiguously that ‘the Father was *greater* than him.’ (John 14:28) And whatever emphasis is placed on Jesus Christ, it should be “to the glory of God the Father,” as the Inspired Christian author pointed out. (Philippians 2:11) It is inconceivable how these words in the Bible have so little significance to the typical trinitarian supporter. In fact, in Scripture, it always ends with the Father, who is Supreme, not with Christ or holy spirit.

I will give you a couple of examples taken from the *The NIV Study Bible*, reproduced below, which show the absurdity of the practice of applying distinctive lettering to Christ alone.

In the two instances, *both* the Father and the Son Jesus speak out, but *only* Jesus' words are highlighted in light red:

John 12:27-30:

“Now my soul 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. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice [the Father's] came from heaven, “I have glorified it,

and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine."

Here, Jesus gets distinguished letters in red. Why not the Father? Is it because the Father's voice is of little consequence? Not at all, because according to Jesus, the Father's voice was for the crowd's *benefit*, not his. The *Contemporary English Version* says: "Then Jesus told the crowd, 'That voice spoke to help you, not me.'" If the Father's voice was spoken for the crowds "benefit," in order 'to help them' understand the importance of Jesus' presence before them *in relation to the Father*, can we not also benefit by paying attention to both Jesus and his Father who sent him? Trinitarians needlessly confuse the matter by making Jesus appear Supreme, when he is not. The Father's voice made that clear.

The same thing is manifested in *The Transfiguration* account at **Matthew 17:1-9** (NIV):

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 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 covered them, and a voice [the Father's] from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. 7 But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." 8 When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. 9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Both accounts clearly show the Father being in a *superior* position over that of Christ. The importance of the Father's words are virtually lost because of the distraction of the red letters for Christ. The anomaly of it all is seen in the transfiguration account where Jesus' private words ("Get up"; "Don't be afraid.") receive more prominence in such format than the Father's *public* command: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" Jesus instructed his disciples, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." As per instruction, which words were likely to have the most relevance for everyone at the later event of the Son's resurrection: Jesus' prior *private* words in red, "Get up," "Don't be afraid"? Or, the Father's message *to the world*: "Listen to him!"? The answer is obvious. What a paradox!

If the Father was equal to Jesus as claimed, why display Jesus words in distinctive letters, but not those for the Father? Oh, those Bible versions which employ the distinctive letters for Jesus and not for God, overlook the fact that Christ himself asked "that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father." (John 5:23, NIV) Does giving preference to Christ over what his Father says and does really "honor the Father," as Jesus asked? Think about it! The more powerful Father, fully capable to *save* his Son from 'the hour' of peril and to "glorify" the Son after resurrecting him, is

not seemingly considered “worthy” of having distinctive letters in his Word, where the submissive Son, does. Strange, is it not? Hence, in practice, Trinitarian partners are not given *equal* status. Is this not folly?

The third example appears in **John 4:19**, where a Samaritan woman addresses Jesus, and the second person pronoun “you” is capitalized by various translations to imply Deity. (“PERSONAL PRONOUNS are capitalized when pertaining to Deity.” – Preface: *New American Standard Bible*. “Reverence for God in the present work is preserved by capitalizing pronouns...” – Preface: *New King James Version*.) Granted, Trinitarians capitalize pronouns related to God, but, without hesitation, apply the practice to the Son as well. The overall effect, is most disturbing. See for yourself. Here, a Samaritan woman happens to cross Jesus' path at Jacob's well, a man until then unknown to her. Shortly afterwards, she says to him:

“I perceive that You are a prophet” (*New American Standard Bible*)

“Are You a prophet?” (*The Clear Word*)

“I perceive that You are a prophet.” (*New King James Version*)

Capitalizing pronouns to suggest “Deity” is a very bad idea. It could suggest the translators want to stand out (a *'holier-than-thou'* attitude) from others who choose not to do so. Not only is it unnecessary and distracting, it is *misleading* as well. In the context of John 4:19, the Samaritan woman did not know for certain who Jesus was, for they had just met incidentally. It should be noted too that Samaritans and Jews historically did not get along. As a conversation ensued, Jesus, empowered by God's spirit, was able to reveal some facts about her personal life, to her astonishment, when the Samaritan woman exclaimed the words above. (Acts 10:38) Samaritans rejected most of the Hebrew Scriptures, with the exception of the first five books of the Bible, and perhaps the book of Joshua. Based on those Writings alone, the Samaritans came to expect a Prophet greater than Moses, a Messiah. But overall, their level of biblical knowledge was not on par with that of the Jews. So, the Samaritan woman did not likely have a great base of knowledge to start with for her to determine in a few minutes that Jesus was “Deity,” per NASB. Actually, godship or deity was not the issue here at all.

The issue here, from the woman's standpoint, was: “How was this male stranger able to know personal secrets about my life?” “Why was he speaking to me, a Samaritan, about ‘the gift of God,’ and, of his capability of giving ‘living water’ able to quench thirst forever, leading to eternal life?” “Who is he?” “Is he a prophet?” (John 4:10-15)

There is no proof that this woman was calling out Jesus as “*the* Prophet,” the Messiah, at that point of the conversation. Notice the indefinite article “*a* prophet,” indicating that the woman recognized Jesus' special prophetic ability, but was not identifying Christ as “*the*” One “greater

than Moses" Prophet. Otherwise, the Greek article ("the") would have been employed before the word "prophet" to indicate so. Could anyone rightfully claim that the Samaritan woman of John 4:19 was acknowledging she had just found the long-awaited Messiah at that point? Furthermore, was she confessing Jesus' *deity* at this very moment?

Actually, it was *later* in the conversation, when the Samaritan woman said to Jesus: "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things," when Jesus revealed to her, "I who speak to you am he." (John 4:25,26)

"So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?' " (Vv. 28,29)

Finally, in the same chapter, it was reported that other Samaritans had the opportunity to see and hear Jesus personally. It was then, that those Samaritans came to the conclusion that Jesus was the promised Messiah, "the Savior of the world," not God. (John 4:39-42)

It is evident from the context of John chapter four, that the Samaritan woman reacted inquisitively to Jesus' prophetic aptitude and promising preaching, pondering his words, "I who speak to you am he [the Messiah]." She thus wondered: "Can this be the Christ?"; Notice she *did not* say, "Can this be 'the God?'" (Verses 25, 26, 28) The Samaritans were strict monotheists. It would be preposterous to suggest that the Samaritan woman would set aside her long traditional upbringing in monotheism, and, in turn, quickly embrace the idea that a stranger in front of her was "Deity," a God-man, the second person of a Holy Trinity, in pagan style. In fact, Jesus clearly implied something else: "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him." (John 4:23) Honestly, was Jesus Christ, the *Son* of God seeking people to worship him as "deity," as a "God-man"? Or, was it not rather "the Father" that Jesus sought others to worship? (cp. Matthew 4:10)

Therefore, it is inaccurate and confusing to capitalize "you" in the text to imply "Deity," as those three versions have done above. It places the emphasis where it does not belong. In contrast, the *Douay-Rheims* Bible and the NIV convey a more accurate rendering by having the woman say to Jesus: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." (D-R) And: "I can see that you are a prophet." (John 4:19, NIV) The "trinity" is a fiction of theologians mixing worldly philosophy with biblical notions.

- Does not John 5:23 prove that Jesus and the Father are equal, when it says "that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father"?

When one considers the full context of Scripture, it does not. L. L. Paine, professor of

ecclesiastical history, explains: "There is no break between the Old Testament and the New. The monotheistic tradition is continued. Jesus was a Jew, trained by Jewish parents in the Old Testament scriptures. His teaching was Jewish to the core; a new gospel indeed but not a new theology...And he accepted as his own belief the great text of Jewish monotheism: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God." (*A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism*, Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1900, p. 4)

The Jewish nation *already* believed, and sought 'to honor' the Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This monotheistic culture adhered to the Mosaic Law as they worshiped the true God. But, many prophecies which appeared in the Hebrew code identified the Messiah as 'emancipator' of their bondage to sin. The majority of the Jews were hoping the foretold Messiah would rescue them from the Roman yoke. Instead, Jesus avoided getting involved in earthly politics, and spoke of 'God's kingdom' repeatedly, hence, comparatively, few put faith in him. In contrast to the few who believed in Jesus as being "sent" by God, the majority of Jews could look no further from the man they considered their Father, Abraham. They were blind in their self-sufficiency.

Hence, there was a need to communicate to the Jewish people that exercising faith in Christ was essential to their salvation. But, how would one do that? One could start by making them see that Jesus Christ was greater than any man, even greater than Abraham and David. (John 8:58; Matthew 22:41-45) That Christ is superior to angels in heaven (Hebrews 1:4), and far superior to any human philosophy that men could ever devise. (Colossians 2:8-10) They needed to comprehend that Jesus is the "only begotten Son" of God (John 3:16); "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) Yes, even acknowledge him as "Mighty God." (Isaiah 9:6) To gain salvation, the Jews, like the rest of the world, needed to understand that Christ is 'the exact representation of God,' and that obedience to Him was now necessary. (Hebrews 1:3, NIV; 5:9)

By means of Christ, everyone could finally see what God is like. (John 5:19; 10:30) 'Anyone who looks at Jesus, is like looking at God himself,' since Christ, being in God's image, is the only one that can make 'the Father known.' (John 14:9; 1:18; Col. 1:15) "Everything of God gets expressed in him, so you can see and hear him clearly." (Colossians 2:9, TM) There is no doubt then, that this Logos, or 'God's Word,' was himself "divine." (Revelation 19:13) When glorified, this Jesus was placed 'at the right hand of God' himself, becoming the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Timothy 2:5), much greater indeed than the admired Moses. This of course meant, that if they wanted to be on God's side, they had to *learn* to 'honor the Son *just as* they honored the Father.' By no means, did Jesus imply that he was the Father in flesh. He immediately made that clear by stating: "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father *who sent him*." (John 5:23)

Even after intense Christian efforts were spent trying to convince the Jewish people to accept Christ as "Son of God," "the Messiah," and as their "Savior," for the most part, they rejected him. To this day, Jews overall have not accepted Christ as their Messiah. With so much emphasis placed on Christ in the New Testament, *later* "Christian" followers picked up on this, and influenced by Greek philosophers, who eloquently spoke of "threes," ended up giving Christ equal status with God himself. Not long after that, they introduced the "holy spirit" into the trinitarian equation.

– *Praise the Lord! Praise who...?*

Today, it is common among Christian followers to say: "Praise the Lord! Or: "Hallelujah!" (Revelation 19:1) Now, if a typical churchgoer was asked, Who is this Lord?, most likely we will get this answer: "Of course, Jesus!" The question, "Who is the Lord?," is just as valid today as it was in Jesus' time, when he himself brought up the subject to religious leaders:

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet?' " (Matthew 22:41-44)

Yes, Who is the Lord? Various Bible versions, conscious of the potential confusion caused by the two instances of "Lord" together in Matthew 22:44, make an effort to make a distinction between the two by fully capitalizing the first occurrence of Lord, as "LORD," or by replacing "Lord" with "Jehovah." (See: *King James Clarified; Analytical Literal Translation; The 21st Century New Testament; The Sacred Scriptures*, Bethel Edition. Others render as: "the Lord said to my lord..." (*Young's Literal Translation; Byington; Goodspeed*)

In the Trinity doctrine, the identity of God and Christ are purposely blurred. Trinitarian adopters have difficulty explaining why the second "lord" in this scripture would receive in practice more prominence than the first mentioned "Lord," who admittedly is "God," according to Trinitarians. Furthermore, Jesus by quoting Psalm 110:1 pointed out his corresponding place in relation to God to religious leaders. Just as the Pharisees could not give Jesus a suitable answer, so too, theologians today cannot come up with a clear and credible answer to the question of who is the "Lord" of Matthew 22:44. This account further shows the spirit as "something," not "someone," since David was described as being "inspired by" it, or as others put it: "under inspiration," or "by inspiration."

By way of explanation, Psalm 110:1, quoted in Matthew 22:44, and translated with the correct sense, says in the *American Standard Version*: "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psalm 110:1 in its original Hebrew, makes it very clear who is the first "Lord" in the statement "The Lord said to my Lord" which appears in Matt.

22:44 and other places. However, many translators hide this fact from their readers in their explanations of this often quoted prophetic psalm in the New Testament. (Matthew 26:64; Mark 12:36, 14:62; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33,34; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22) Why do you think many translators remove the divine name from Psalm 110:1? Because this psalm, together with their corresponding NT quotes correctly interpreted, demonstrates the irrationality of the Trinity concept. How is Psalm 110:1 to be interpreted?

The Jewish Annotated New Testament (NRSV) explains: "The Lord said to my Lord, in Ps 110, the first usage refers to God, the second to David. Jesus implicitly claims he is superior to David, since in his interpretation of the psalm David (presumed author of Ps 110) [in the second usage] calls the messiah 'Lord.'" (Footnote - Matt. 22:44,45)

The NIV Study Bible at Psalm 110:1 made reference to "my Lord," 'superior to David' 'sitting enthroned at the right hand of God': "The place of honor beside a king (see 45:9; 1 Ki 2:19); thus he is made second in authority to God himself. NT references to Jesus' exaltation to this position are many..." It requires honesty for a Trinitarian to admit and write those words. But Jesus being "made second in authority to God himself" runs counter to a fundamental principle of the Trinity doctrine, namely, that all three persons are coequal. Likewise, saying the "Hallelujah!" public praise which appears in Revelation 19:1 does not help the trinitarian cause, for the expression means: "Praise Jah [an abbreviated form of Jehovah]," "An exclamation, hymn, or song of praise to God [not, Christ]." (*New World College Dictionary*, Fourth edition)

Charles Bigg, D.D., discerningly wrote: "We are not to suppose that the apostles identified Christ with Jehovah; there were passages which made this impossible, for instance Psalm 110:1, Malachi 3:1." (Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Oxford, *International Critical Commentary* on Peter and Jude, T&T Clark, 1910, p. 99)

Here are some translators who have understood Matthew 22:44 correctly:

A Translation: "The Lord said to my lord..." (David Bentley Hart)

The Message: "God said to my Master..."

Easy-to-Read Version: "The Lord God said to my Lord..."

New Simplified Bible: "Jehovah said to my Lord..."

The Living Bible: "God said to my Lord..."

exeGesés Companion Bible: "An oracle of Yah Veh to my Adonay..."

Jonathan Mitchell NT: "[The] Lord [= Yahweh] said to my Lord..." (Brackets his.)

The Clear Word: "God will let my Lord use His power and sit next to Him in heaven."

The New Testament in Plain English: "The Lord God said to my Lord..." (Footnote: "In the Hebrew text of this psalm, the first 'Lord' is *Yahweh*; the second 'Lord' is *Adonai*, referring to the Messiah.")

Thus, there is no need to be a willing participant in the existing confusion of trying to

accommodate biblical teaching with man-made traditions. Psalm 110:1 has been interpreted and explained correctly by some scholars who make the proper connection with Matt. 22:44. Matthew 22:44 tells us plainly that God gives a command to our Lord Jesus Christ: "The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right side until I turn your enemies into your footstool?'" (CEB) The second lord receives the command from the first Lord, God. Almighty God would never allow anyone to tell him where to sit and what to do. That's for sure! On the other hand, Jesus Christ as God's Son, and God's appointed representative, *can*. As God's Son, Jesus *should* receive much praise and obedience from mankind, but the ultimate target for all glory and praise should be God the Father, per Scripture. (Php. 2:11) Psalm 110:1 and its NT quotes once more proves the absurdity of the Trinity doctrine.

Should Jesus be worshiped?

"One of the most vexed questions in Christian thought and language is whether or not we can directly and simply call Jesus God," so stated British scholar William Barclay, in his book, *Jesus As They Saw Him*. (©1962 by SCM Press, Ltd; 1978, Eerdmans Publishing Co., p. 20)

It is often asserted that Jesus is "God" because many Bible versions say that Christ is "worshiped," or is due "worship." Those holding such views express disapproval of Bible versions using terms which convey less than full worship.

While it is true that most Bible versions show a Christ being 'worshiped' or deserving of "worship," many people fail to realize that these very Bibles are *translations* of another language where the original term rendered "worship" may not have the same meaning in all contexts. In fact, the English language itself has changed enough throughout the centuries that many words today may have a different meaning than it did before. A good example of this is the word for "worship," where the meaning of the term is understood differently today than it did just a few centuries ago, as in the early days of English Bible translations, such as William Tyndale's New Testament and the *King James Version*.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the English word "worship" in the 16th century meant: "To honour; to regard or treat with honour or respect. To salute, bow down to. To honour with gifts. To confer honour or dignity upon." It could be used of any human lord, noble or magistrate. Vestiges of the old meaning are still seen in such things as calling certain English magistrates "your worship." In our times, people expect it to mean divine worship.

A cursory look at the meaning of the biblical terms for "worship" (*shāḥaḥ* & *proskynéō*) will reveal that it is *broader* in scope than Trinitarians are likely to admit:

*The Complete Word Study Dictionary - Old Testament: "...shāchāh: A verb meaning to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to couch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The primary meaning of the word is to bow down. This verb is used to indicate bowing before a monarch or a superior and paying homage to him or her (Gen. 43:28). In contexts such as Genesis 24:26, *šhāḥāh* is used to indicate bowing down in worship to Yahweh."* (Page 1119)

The Complete Word Study Old Testament: "Shāchāh was not used in the general sense of worship, but specifically to bow down, to prostrate oneself as an act of respect before a superior being." (Lexical Aids to the Old Testament, p. 2372. ©1994 by AMG International, Inc.)

*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament: "חָהָה (shāḥaḥ) **bow down.** [...] There are several extended meanings of *shāḥaḥ* in the Qal. One is to bow in the sense of doing obeisance before another human being. This is illustrated in Isa 60:14 and Prov 14:19, 'The evil bow down before the good.'" (Vol II, p. 915. ©1980 by The Moody Bible Institute)*

*Liddell and Scott's Greek English-Lexicon (Abridged Edition) defines *pros-kynéō* as: "1. Prostrate oneself before in token of respect, to do obeisance to. 2. of the gods, to worship." (Italics theirs)*

*The Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament: "[*prós & kynéō*, to kiss], To do reverence or homage by kissing the hand; *in N.T.*, to do reverence or homage by prostration, Mat. 2. 2, 8, 11; 20. 20. Lu. 4. 7; 24. 52; to pay *divine* homage, worship, adore, Mat. 4.10. Jno. 4. 20, 21. He. 1.6, et al.; to bow one's self in adoration, He. 11.21...." (William Greenfield. Revised by Thomas S. Green. Zondervan, 1970)*

*The Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament, by Gingrich/Danker defines *proskynéō* as: "(Fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to, welcome respectfully depending of the object -1. to human beings [...] -2. to God [...] -3. to the Devil and Satanic beings [...] -4. to angels [...] -5. to Christ." (Italics theirs. ©1983 by The University of Chicago)*

When we look at the original Bible terms for "worship" (*shāḥaḥ* & *proskynéō*) in Scripture, we find that the original terms were applied to God, Christ, men, or other. The basic meaning of *shāḥaḥ* is to bow down. In certain contexts, *shāḥaḥ* and *proskynéō* are used to indicate bowing down in worship to Jehovah. (Genesis 24:26; Matthew 4:10) In other cases, depending on the Bible version used, humans are in record doing "worship"; "homage," or "obeisance" to *human* superiors. A few instances are noted below:

Abraham "bowed himself toward to the earth ["and adored down to the ground," D-R] before three messengers who announced that Sarah would have a son. (Gen. 18:2)

Ruth 'bowed ["worshipping upon the ground," D-R]' before Boaz. (Ruth 2:10)

David "bowed with his face to the earth, and did obeisance ["worshipped," D-R] [to Saul, the King]." (1 Samuel 24:8)

Bathsheba to king David: "Bathshe'ba bowed and did obeisance ["worshipped," D-R] to the king." (1 Kings 1:16)

Nathan the prophet bowed ["did obeisance," NRSV] before king David. (1 Kings 1:23)

Jesus is to receive "worship ["homage," NJB; "obeisance," ABP]" from angels. (Heb. 1:6)

Satan asks Jesus worship: "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship ["do obeisance to," ABP] the Lord [Jehovah] your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matthew 4:10; Deuteronomy 6:13, Jesus in turn warns Satan that only the Lord Jehovah is to be worshiped.)

Servant (slave) to a king (according to Jesus): "So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him ["and worshipped him," KJV; "did obeisance," ABP], 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'" (Matthew 18:26)

Cornelius to Peter: "When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. ["did obeisance," ABP; "fell at his feet in order to honor him," CEB]." (Acts 10:25)

Unbelieving and hostile Jews ("Those who are of the synagogue of Satan," according to Jesus): "I will make them come and bow down before your feet ["and worship before thy feet," KJV; "do homage," Moffat], and learn that I have loved you." (Revelation 3:9, Jesus' promising words that opposers to the faithful ones in the congregation of Philadelphia will ultimately be subdued and brought before their feet, 'doing obeisance' to them.)

The notable *American Standard Version* says in its footnote of Matthew 2:2 of "worship" in their translation: "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (see 4.9;18.26), or to the Creator (see ch. 4.10)." It is not surprising then, that Trinitarian supporters would oppose the John 9:38* ASV footnote which implies that Christ is a "creature," not the Creator. [*The John 9:38 ASV footnote says: "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (as here) or to the Creator (see ch. 4.20).]" Some would consider these comments heretic. But what if it's true that Christ is a creature and not the Supreme creator? Would you still oppose it?

The Scriptures also mention that Satan, other gods and idols are object of such worship by prostrating before them. (Isaiah 2:20; 44:15,17; Luke 4:7; Revelation 9:20; 13:4; 14:9) Should we understand they all are deserving of worship?

Since the Bible words for "worship" are broad terms applying not only to God and Christ, but to others as well, we must rely then on Bible context to determine when those terms apply in the fullest sense to the one God, or when it applies in a restricted sense to *others* besides God.

According to Matthew's account, Jesus used the biblical term in a parable where a slave was brought up before the king to settle accounts, and the slave who owed a lot of money, implored and did "worship," or "obeisance" to the king, hoping to obtain a pardon. (Matt. 18:26) But Bible

translators often hide this from their readers in the interest of perpetuating the belief that the Greek term is used only of "Deity."

Accordingly, the act of Jesus receiving "worship (*proskynéō*)" in the biblical sense cannot be used as evidence of Jesus' equality with the Father, God. Hence, some translators prefer to use "to bow down" or "obeisance" in regards to Jesus.

- *Only the Father is to be worshiped in the fullest sense:*

1 Corinthians 8:6, "But to us there is but one God, the Father."

John 4:23, "The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."

Matthew 4:10, Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God ["Jehovah," Deut. 6:13] and him only shall you serve.'"

Significantly, traditionalists must face the fact that "the Holy Ghost [Spirit]," the so-called third person of the Trinity, is never mentioned in Scripture as receiving any "worship." Trinitarians have some explaining to do. The trinitarian chain cannot hold up under scrutiny. The doctrine itself is contradictory in nature. It is irrational at best!

Twisting Scriptures to have them say - what they do *not* say:

Although both Trinitarians and non-trinitarians have been exposed of being guilty of Scriptural twisting to sustain their viewpoints, Trinitarians in particular are notorious for the practice. As Jesus said of religious leaders of his day: "You have a clever way of rejecting God's law in order to uphold your own teaching." (TEV) Or as the *Complete Jewish Bible* expresses it: 'You have made a fine art of departing from God's command in order to keep your tradition.' (Mark 7:9) Other translators say the religious leaders were 'skillful' or "experts" at doing just that. (NLT; CEB)

I will mention some of the most glaring examples:

John 14:28, The number one victim of scriptural twisting must be this one text of John 14:28, where Jesus is recorded as saying: "The Father is greater than I." What could be simpler than that? But no, Trinitarians argue that Jesus' statement at John 14:28 does not mean what it actually says. Nelson's *Compact Bible Commentary* states: "This does not mean that Jesus is less than deity. *Greater* indicates a difference in rank. As the humble, submissive Son, Jesus submitted Himself to the authority of His Father (1 Cor. 11:3; 15:28)." This commentary illustrates the absurdity of the Trinity doctrine. On one hand, we are asked to accept the Trinity of three *coequal* persons, in power and rank, and in the other hand, we are suppose to believe that Jesus' being 'lesser' than the Father does not mean he is less than deity, but is just a description of his humanity. What is it? The idea of Jesus being both God and man at the same time while on

earth, can only be the figment of imagination of nominal Christians coupling Greek philosophy with biblical doctrine.

The truth of the matter is, as the *Commentary* writer above rightly noted in the second part, 'the Son submitted himself to the authority of his Father.' 'The head of Christ is God.' (1 Cor. 11:3) This simply means that God is supreme, in power and rank. Even when Jesus Christ was further glorified after his earthly experience, he too had to fully submit to the Supreme God. (1 Cor. 15:28) Throughout the Bible, Jesus Christ is always shown as second to God, not his coequal.

Professor Jacob Jervell (University of Oslo) writes in *Jesus in the Gospel of John*: "Jesus is not God but God's representative, and, as such, so completely and totally acts on God's behalf that he stands in God's stead before the world...The gospel [of John] clearly states that God and Jesus are not to be understood as identical persons, as in 14:28, 'the Father is greater than I.'" (1984, p. 21.)

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father."

Theologians are often heard saying when making reference to John 1:14 that "God" became flesh. But read the text again. John 1:14 does *not* say anywhere, "God became flesh," rather, "the Word" did. This is another clever move by the traditionalists. The Logos or Word of John 1:14 is the same "Word" mentioned in John 1:1,2 who 'was in the beginning *with* God.' If 'the Word was in the beginning *with* God,' he simply could *not* be that same "God." Those who have fallen victim to the notion that "God became flesh," have likely been misled by the popular rendering found in many Bible versions at John 1:1c, where it says that "the Word was God." But as noted elsewhere*, such rendering is misleading. Other translators reflect the fact that the Greek in this verse indicates the author was making a description of the Logos (or, Word) as "a divine being," not identifying the Word with God. For more on John 1:1, see:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/475073347/The-Correct-Translation-of-John-1-1-God-or-a-god> || Also:
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/50330864/John-1-1-List-of-Alternate-Readings>)

When read correctly, John 1:14 and 2 John 7 are in full agreement: "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist."

1 Timothy 3:16 should not be brought into the equation. Sure, the *King James Version* there reads: "God was manifest in the flesh." But plenty of other versions have corrected this error, to where it reads more correctly: "He [or, "who"] was manifested in the flesh." The corrected reading makes it more obvious (context-wise), that "He" or "who," as a reference to Christ, was manifested in the flesh, and not God, in harmony with John 1:14 and 2 John 7. See revisions of the KJV, known as, *Revised Standard Version*; *New Revised Standard Version*; *New American Standard Bible*; and *English Standard Version*. For more information on 1 Tim. 3:16, see: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/76927834/Was-God->

[manifested-in-the-flesh-1-Timothy-3-16](#)

The Trinity doctrine complicates matters further because it is rooted in Greek philosophy. Greek philosophy is notorious for its complexity. Remember Aristotle's statement on "threes" in the worship of the gods?

John 10:30, "I and the Father are one." It is surprising to find individuals using these words as a trinitarian confirmation when only *two* individuals are mentioned here. What happened to "the Holy Ghost"? Is he not also "one" with the Father and the Son? Why did Jesus not mention holy spirit here? Simply because the spirit is not a person. John 10:30 speaks of the unity of the Father and Son in purpose and will. It was this unity which Jesus prayed for, on behalf of his disciples (John 17:20-22):

"I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one."

A similar thought is transmitted by Paul when he wrote to the Corinthians: "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Hence, John 10:30 once again demonstrates the inanity of the Trinity doctrine...where a *trinity* of three persons is non-existent in a scripture often cited in support of it. Just the simple thought of Christ's followers becoming "one" just as the Father and Christ are "one" in purpose and will, goes against the more complicated articulations of traditional orthodoxy.

John Calvin, a famous Trinitarian, once said: "The ancients made a wrong use of [John 10:30, "I and the Father are one"] to prove that Christ is...of the same essence with the Father. For Christ does not argue about the unity of substance, but about the agreement that he has with the Father." (*Commentary on the Gospel According to John*).

Colossians 1:15, "the first-born of all creation [*πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*]."

Another scripture that is often twisted to say the opposite of what it actually says is Col. 1:15. It is often claimed by those who believe that Christ is eternal, uncreated, that the expression "the first-born [Greek, *prōtōtokos*] of all creation" in reference to Christ does not mean he was created. For instance, *The MacArthur Study Bible* comments: "Firstborn in this context clearly means highest in rank, not first created ... It is impossible for Christ to be both created, and the Creator of everything (Col. 1:16). Thus Jesus is the firstborn in the sense that he has the preeminence (v. 18) and possesses the right of inheritance over 'all creation' (cf. Heb. 1:2; Rev. 5:1-7,13)." Really?

If we ask someone who's never been exposed to the Bible, and show them this text, how would the words "the first-born of all creation" in regards to Christ be understood, would he or she explain that this must mean that Christ was uncreated? Hardly! Most likely, this biblically illiterate person would conclude that the person being spoken of here, was 'the first one to be *created*', or, 'the most outstanding creation one among all *creatures*.' What does it mean to read a few verses later that Christ was "the first-born from the dead"? (1:18) Can someone legitimately claim that Christ was never *dead*? No way! The Bible writer evidently meant that Christ was the first person resurrected to life from death to never die again. Even if we take "first-born" to mean "foremost," or "prime," as traditionalists claim, it does not change the fact that Christ was "dead" at some point of his historical existence.

Colossians 1:15 is saying that Christ was the first created being, preeminent over all creatures. MacArthur overlooked the fact that Col. 1:15,16 indicates that Christ is "the image of the invisible God," and that "all things were created through him [Christ] and for him."

First of all, if Christ were God, what is the point of describing him as 'the *image* of the invisible God?' An image can only be a reflection of the reality it represents. Genesis 9:6 tells us that "God made man *in his own image*." Does this statement indicate somehow that "man" was not created, or that he is equal to God? No. In fact, Jesus simply attributed the creation of the first human pair to God when he said: 'He made them ... male and female.' (Matthew 19:4) Jesus' words makes more sense than MacArthur's anytime.

Secondly, some scholars teach that Christ was both the creator and agent of creation. *The McArthur Study Bible* notes at John 1:3 that "Jesus Christ was God the Father's agent involved in creating everything in the universe...." Elsewhere (e.g., Col. 1:16) it states that it was *Jesus* who created everything. However, it is so illogical to conclude that Christ was both the author of the creation of heaven and earth, and further imply that he did so '*through* himself.' Instead, the biblical account plainly states: 'All things were made *through him*,' which is different. That points to someone *else* as the Source of creation, the Father of Jesus Christ. And Christ is shown as 'mediator' of God's creative works.

The Greek words used in Colossians ch. 1 indicate that Christ was the *mediating agent* of creation, not the source. More on this later. Also, this text says that all things were created "for him"? Andy Gaus renders the words, "for him [Literally: *into him*]" as "with him in mind." (*The Unvarnished New Testament*) *Today's English Version* sums up part of the verse well: "God created the whole universe through him [Christ] and for him [Christ]."

Revelation 3:14, "the beginning of God's creation [*ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ*]:"

Here is another biblical text that is said to mean the opposite of what is stated. The *ESV Study Bible* claims: "Jesus' self-designation as the beginning [Greek, *archē*] of God's creation does not mean that he is God's first creation (cf. notes on Col. 1:15-17) but that he is the one who began God's creation (cf. note on John 1:3)." It is not uncommon among Trinitarian scholars to use similar explanations here in Revelation or in Colossians 1:18 to convince the reader that Jesus is the "beginner," "originator," "first cause," or "ruler" of creation, rather than him being 'the beginning of the creation by God.' However, behind these magniloquent expressions, there is little if any substance to back up their claims.

A related term to *archē* is found at Acts 3:15 (*archēgón*), which according to Liddell-Scott means: 'a founder, prince, chief, originator.' In harmony with other Scriptures which describe God as the primary source of life, and Christ as the intermediary agent *through whom* everything else was made, it is better to render the term which brings out the sense of "chief leader," as the translations below have done*, and not as 'author; originator' as others do.

* 'Prince of Life,' (KJV; Phillips; JB); "the one who leads men to life," (TEV; CEV; Cassirer; *New English Bible*); "the pioneer of Life," Moffatt; "the Pathfinder of life," *A Conservative Version*; "the Master of life," *Christian Community Bible*. A related word (*árchonta*) was applied to Moses in Acts 7:27;35 as "chief" (*Concordant Literal Version*); "leader" (Godbey); "prince" (D-R; Etheridge), or "ruler" in Israel.

Another word including *archē* within its meaning is *aparchē* used in connection with the resurrection of Jesus Christ at 1 Corinthians 15:20. Paul there speaks of Christ as the "first-fruit" of those who have died to come back to life. Translators all but agree with the meaning of "first-fruit," or 'the first of all those who will rise.'

Context-wise, whose "creation" is it being discussed at Rev. 3:14? Answer: It is "God's creation." Not Christ's! *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Bauer, Gingrich, Danker, 3rd Ed.) admits, after offering "first cause" as meaning # 2 (1st. meaning: "beginning") the following: 'Revelation 3:14; but the [meaning] beginning = first created is linguistically probable'. *Archē* with the meaning, 'first cause' or "source," appears in usage in the Septuagint and in Classical Greek, but not in the New Testament. For the most part, *archē* has the meaning of "beginning." Not only is the meaning 'the beginning = first created linguistically probable,' but a check of all of the occurrences of "archē" in the NT where it is followed by a genitive construction (as in Rev. 3:14) will show that it always denotes a beginning or first part of something. Some examples of usage for (*archē*, beginning): Matthew 24:8; Mark 1:1; 13:19; John 2:11; Philippians 4:15; Hebrews 3:14; 5:12; 6:1; 7:3; 2 Peter 3:4. And in LXX: Genesis 10:10; 49:3; Deuteronomy 21:17; Proverbs 8:22; Hosea 1:2.

Matthew 24:8 (*archē ödinōn*), "beginning of birth-pangs."

Hebrews 5:12 (*tēs archēs tōn logiōn tou theou*), "the beginning of the words of God."

Phil. 4:15 (*archē tou euangeliou*), "beginning of the gospel."

In the *Septuagint* (LXX), we read at Genesis 49:3,

“Rouben [Or, Reuben], you are my firstborn [Greek, *prōtótokós*], my might and beginning of my children [*arché téknōn mou*].” (NETS: *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*) Could anyone honestly argue that Reuben, as the “firstborn” and ‘beginning of [Jacob's] children’ was not “born” at all? Or, that Reuben had no “beginning”? Not according to Brenton (LXX), who renders it: “the first of my children.” *The Orthodox Study Bible* translates similarly to NETS. Compare with Deut. 21:17.

We find a grammatical parallel to Rev. 3:14 in Job 40:19 (LXX: *arché plásmatos kyriou*. Brenton, v. 14), – “[the] beginning of [the] Lord’s creation.” Here, the reference is to the “Behemoth,” an animal. Keeping with this article, the question should be, not if this beast was the *first* land animal, or the *foremost* land animal, or even both, but, *who created* this outstanding beast? If we apply the same argument which Trinitarians normally use for Rev. 3:14, as to what the Greek indicate in regards to Christ to Job 40:19 (which is grammatically similar), it becomes fitting to ask: Was this animal mentioned in the text, “the beginner,” “the originator” of all creation? Really, there is no other sensible way of understanding this scripture, other than explaining the conspicuous beast as *part of the creation* of God. I asked my wife, a Trinitarian, how she understood Job 40:19, and she said her understanding of the verse was that the beast was “created.”

A point of interest is that *The Apostolic Bible Polyglot* rendered the Greek of Job 40:19 this way: “This is *the* beginning of the thing shaped by the LORD.” (Italics his.) Notice how the translator dealt with the genitive expression *kyriou*. He translated the genitive not as, “of” the LORD, but “by” the LORD, which shows that Revelation 3:14 which has a similar construction, can also be rendered, “the beginning of the creation *by* God.” NETS renders the text alike: “This is the chief of what the Lord created.” Even assuming the beast was most prominent or “chief” in some way, the inescapable truth of the matter is that the animal was still *a product of creation*, not the *initiator of creation*.

Going further, which understanding of Rev. 3:14 agrees with 1 Cor. 8:6 which says: “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” Saying “*from whom*” and “*through whom*” is self-explanatory.

Which understanding of Rev. 3:14 agrees with Rev. 3:12, just two verses away, where Jesus himself calls the one God, the Father, *from whom* are all things, ‘his God’? If this is true, and we have no reason to believe otherwise, it brings up one implication to consider, that Christ has someone to obey and worship – ‘his God.’ Yet Trinitarians insist on making Christ the ultimate creator, and not give the greater credit where it belongs, ‘*the God of Christ,*’ the one whom Christ is subordinate to, the Grand Creator.

And to those teaching – that all three are *coequal* in the Trinity, why give more importance to one member of the three, Christ over God in the Bible book of “Revelation”? Was not the “revelation” itself *given* to Christ by someone superior to him? That’s right, the book of Revelation opens up by saying: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave him* to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.” (Rev. 1:1) By the way, this text talks about three entities involved in carrying out this *revelation* to John ... God, Jesus Christ, and the angel. The “Holy Spirit” was once again left out of the picture. It must be discouraging indeed for a Trinitarian to find the “Holy Spirit” absent from key verses, considering sensational claims that all three persons are *equally* “God.” In addition, both Christ and the angel are shown *subordinate* to God in Rev. 1:1.

Arché is not used anywhere else in the New Testament by Trinitarians with the meaning of “first cause,” or “source,” with the exception of Colossians 1:18 and Rev. 3:14. So why apply a different meaning in these two places just to evade the plain truth expressed in Scripture? With this in mind, translator Edward Harwood (1768) rendered the words about Christ in Rev. 3:14 in the following manner: “The very first Being that the Deity called into existence.” And Bible scholar Hugh J. Schonfield annotated: “Clearly, John the Elder himself believed that the heavenly Christ was a created being, as did the early Christians.” (*The Original New Testament*, p. 556, 1985, U.K. & Canada) The Trinity doctrine does not clarify anything, rather, it adds to confusion.

“Son of God” is not a synonym for “God”:

Would you believe that Trinitarians often equate “Son of God” with “God”? This is made evident in the next two quotes:

Don Fleming wrote: “But Jesus was more than God's son in the messianic sense. He was God's Son in the sense that he was God.” (*Concise Bible Dictionary*, p. 414)

After a brief consideration of the ‘uniqueness’ of Jesus Christ, the *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia* wrote: “From this it can be understood how the contemporaries of Christ in the NT could take His declaration that He was the Son of God to mean He claimed to be equal with God or to be God.” (Pages 1612-13)

This is another false proposition of the Trinity concept. Basically, the expression “son of God” can refer to One who derives his existence from God. It could also mean, “One who shares a close relationship with God.” (*Eerdmans B. Dictionary* 1987, p. 961) In the case of Jesus, “Son of God” signals that he is of divine origin, in contrast with sonship to sinful Adam. (Matthew 16:13-17; Luke 1:35; John 1:34, 49; 20:31) It has nothing to do with *equality* with God. Quite the opposite. If the appellative “Son of God” meant what Trinitarians claim, then, one would expect such to be equally used of the other two “persons” of the trinity. On the contrary, the expression is only used for Christ, and never for “God,” or “holy spirit.” Why? The Trinity dogma creates more issues

than it solves, and it does not make sense.

The Greek word for "son" (*huiós*) 'primarily signifies the relation of offspring to parent.' (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*) In a wider sense it means a descendant, pl. descendants, posterity. Or, it could indicate membership. The *Dictionary of the Bible* declares: "In common Hb [Hebrew] idiom the 'son' of any collective noun is a member of the species which the noun designates." (Mckenzie 1965, p. 830) And: "'Son' (Heb. *Ben*, Aram. *Bar*) is commonly used in Semitic languages to denote membership of a class, as 'son of Israel' for 'Israelite', 'son of might' for 'valorous.'" (*New Bible Dictionary*, Second Edition, J. D. Douglas, Editor. Pag. 1133. ©1982)

According to Spiros Zodhiates, the expression "son of God" can refer to '(A) 'One who derives his human nature directly from God, and not by ordinary generation: of Adam (Luke 3:38 implied of Jesus [cf. Luke 1:35]). (B) Those whom God loves and cherishes as a father. (C) Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Son of the Most High (Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 1:32 [cf. Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28]). (D) Christ is called the Son of God on account of His divine nature (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 1:14, 18; 10:33-36; Heb. 1:5f.; 3:6)' (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*, p. 1405. ©1992, AMG International, Inc.) There may be other nuances of the term. A sample of usage:

The "son of David," the "son of Abraham," the "sons of Levi," the "sons of Aaron," the "sons of Israel" are all offspring of "humans."

The "sons of the prophets" are themselves "prophets" or members of a company of "prophets." (1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3,4)

The "son of perfumers" is a "perfumer." (Nehemiah 3:8)

The "son of singers" is a "singer." (Nehemiah 12:28)

The "son of man" is himself a "man." (Ezequiel 2:3,6,8; Daniel 8:17)

"Son of man" when applied to Christ (Daniel 7:13; Matthew 8:20; Mark 14:62; John 12:23; Acts 7:56; Revelation 14:14) calls attention to his being of the human race by virtue of his fleshly birth, or to his Messianic designation in his heavenly position. The "sons of God" are themselves "gods," spirit creatures who share divinity with the True God. (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Psalm 89:6)

A perusal of the biblical expression "son of" reveals that a "son" is always a part of a group. All the references above to the "son of..." show that all sons are *creatures* under God. None are equal to God in any way, and never will be. There is no indication anywhere that an offspring, a "son," is ever the Originator, the Beginner, or the Grand Creator. On the contrary, "sonship" implies derivation, origin, a product of creation. *The Companion Bible* states: "It is only by the Divine specific act of creation that any created being can be called a son of God." The biblical record speaks for itself.

“Son of God” when applied to Christ stresses his being of divine origin. (Matthew 16:13-17; Luke 1:35; John 1:34, 49; 20:31) These Scriptures must harmonize with Revelation 3:14 where it speaks of Christ as “the beginning of the creation of [by] God.” It should also agree with Jesus' words at John 6:57, “Just as the living Father sent me and I am alive because of the Father, so the man who lives on me will live because of me.” (*The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips)

Does “sonship” mean *equality* with God in Scripture? Did Christians start this doctrine? *Harper's Bible Dictionary* answers: “The full development of the doctrine that Jesus, as son, is the second person of the Trinity is a product of the later Church, but the N.T. itself contains the seed from which it grew.” (Page 696) The latter part of the quote, “the N.T. itself contains the seed from which it grew,” is the reflexion of a trinitarian writer, rather than a fact. Notice his initial admission though. Likewise, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states: “To ask whether the N. T. presents Jesus as God the Son” is to “seek a frame of reference for Him that was developed only later.”

Any efforts to substantiate the Trinity doctrine on biblical grounds will lead to controversy and contradiction, instead of factual truth.

Matthew 1:23, “God with us”:

I have met a good number of people who through the years with great conviction point to Matthew 1:23 as evidence that Jesus Christ is God Almighty, by reason of this one title-name given to Jesus at birth: “Immanuel,” which means, “With us is God.” Matthew 1:23 says: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emman'u-el (which means, God with us [Literally: “Immanuel...with us the God.”]).”

This is another example of people taking a term strictly literally without looking at other factors presented in Scripture. To the surprise of many, the words, “God is with us” or the message it conveys, is not unique to Christ. It is a common theme in Scripture. “Immanuel” was not the *personal* name of God's Son. It was a *prophetic* title-name, among others. (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8,10; 9:6) “Jesus” was clearly the personal name of the Son of God, and it was this name of “Jesus” that was actually given to the child at birth, and used throughout the New Testament to identify him. (Matthew 1:23, 25) The prophetic name “Immanuel” was given to Jesus as a sign from heaven that God would now be with them through his Son, to accomplish his divine purpose of the salvation of men.

The expressions, “God is with us”; “God was with him”; or “God is with you” appear repeatedly in Scripture. No one could justifiably say that men like Joseph, David, Solomon, Asa, Ishmael, Abraham, and other humans were equally “God” merely by the fact that the same biblical expression was used of them. See instances below:

2 Chronicles 13:12, "Behold, **God is with us*** at our head, and his priests with their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers; for you cannot succeed." (Lit.: "*immanu varo'sh ha'elohim* [**with us** at the head the **God**].")

Isaiah 8:10 "God is with us": "Take counsel together, but it will come to nought; speak a word, but it will not stand, **for God is with us** [Lit.: *ki 'immanu 'el*]."

"God is with him":

2 Samuel 5:10, "And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the **God** of hosts, **was with him.**"

2 Chronicles 1:1, "Solomon the son of David established himself in his kingdom, and the LORD his **God was with him** and made him exceedingly great."

2 Chronicles 15:9, "And he [Asa] gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from E'phraim, Manas'seh, and Simeon who were sojourning with them, for great numbers had deserted to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his **God was with him.**"

Acts 7:9, "And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but **God was with him.**"

Luke 1:66, "For the **hand of the Lord was with him** [John the Baptist]." (NCV: "the Lord was with him.")

Acts 10:38, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for **God was with him.**"

- Other Scriptures which carry the concept that God "was," "is" or "will be" with his people:

Genesis 21:20,22: "And **God was with the lad** [Ishmael], and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow." "At that time Abim'elech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, '**God is with you** in all that you do.'"

1 Chronicles 17:2, "And Nathan said to David, 'Do all that is in your heart, **for God is with you.**'"

Zechariah 8:23, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days [it shall come to pass], that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard **that God is with you.**" (ASV)

Genesis 48:21, "Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Behold, I am about to die, **but God will be with you**, and will bring you again to the land of your fathers.'"

See also: Genesis 26:3; 31:3; Exodus 3:12; Deuteronomy 20:1; 31:8; 31:23; Joshua 1:5; 1:9; 3:7; 7:12; Judges 6:16; 1 Samuel 10:7; 1 Kings 11:38; 1 Chronicles 28:20; Ezequiel 34:30; Isaiah 43:2; 45:14; and Amos 5:14.

The attempt to use the expression "God is with us" as proof that Jesus is the Deity fails miserably, because the term was equally used of other individuals. God was not physically with mankind on

earth when Jesus was walking about on our planet as the term “God-man” suggest. Jesus clearly expressed time and again that God was ‘in heaven.’ (Matthew 3:17; 5:16; 5:45; 6:9; 7:11; 7:21; 10:32; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10; 18:14;18:19; Mark 11:25; Luke 3:22; 11:13; John 12:28, etc.) What would be the point of Jesus stating repeatedly that God was “in heaven” if he consciously knew he was “fully God” on earth, as claimed? What kind of deception are these people promoting?

Instead, it was through Christ that God was accomplishing his divine will, just as he did in times past with men. In that sense, ‘God was with them.’ (Acts 7:9; 10:38)

Aren't Jesus' miracles sufficient evidence that Christ is God?

A miracle often denotes an event attributed to divine intervention. No Christian would question if God is almighty able to perform miracles, and that Christ likewise did many wonderful works. The question is: Is Jesus Christ “God” based solely on the fact that he performed many powerful works? Answer: No! By itself, a report of someone performing a powerful act cannot be used as conclusive proof that the one performing the miracle is the One-and-Only God. The Bible itself reports a good number of miracles, many done by humans. Here are some instances:

Moses parts the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-22); **Samson** kills a lion with his bare hands (Judges 14:5,6) – (‘by spirit of Yahweh’); **Elijah**, “a man of God” resurrects a widow's son (1 Kings 17:17-24); **Elisha** resurrects a boy (2 Kings 4:32-35); **Isaiah** heals Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:7); **A man of God** (prophet) heals the hand of King Jeroboam (1 Kings 13:6); **Peter** resurrects a woman (Acts 9:40); **Paul** resurrects Eutychus (Acts 20:10-12); **Paul** heals the father of Publius (Acts 28:8); **Seventy disciples** sent to *heal* the sick (Luke 10:1,9).

The Bible record shows that it was “God” who was empowering all these men to perform these miraculous acts. (Acts 14:3; 15:12; 19:11) Who can rightly say these men are *God*?

Likewise, Jesus also performed many miracles, but these were done by the power of God in heaven. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, acknowledged this: “This man came to Jesus by night and said to him: ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs [miracles] that you do, unless God is with him.” (John 3:1,2)

Acts 10:34,38: “And Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality ... how **God anointed Jesus** of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power [Lit., in spirit holy and in power]; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

So, according to Peter, Jesus was able to do all the miracles he did, not because he was God, but because *God was with him*. Yes, “God endowed him [Jesus] with the power of the holy Spirit ... because God was with him.” (Acts 10:38, Goodspeed N.T.)

Matthew 12:28, "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

John 20:30,31: "Now Jesus did many other signs ["miracles," other versions] in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." (See also Luke 4:1,18, Jesus *full* of, and *in* spirit; Romans 1:4, "and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord"; "By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was appointed to be the mighty Son of God because he rose from the dead." (*New International Reader's Version*))

Thus, John did not write his account to convince others that Jesus Christ was "God" for having performed miracles, rather, he wrote about them so we all could "believe" that Jesus Christ is 'the Son of the Most High, God'. By insisting that Jesus is Almighty God, traditionalists are missing the main point of the Gospel of John. To have the Bible clearly stress throughout that written historical acts regarding Jesus Christ can only confirm he is "the Son of God," and then, have someone else dubiously claim he must be God Supreme to satisfy Church tradition, does not make biblical sense at all.

Many Scriptures used to "prove" the Trinity doctrine, only mention two persons, not three:

It is not uncommon for those upholding trinitarian belief, to point to Scriptures where Jesus is said to be called "God," such as: Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; 1:18; 14:9; 20:28; Philippians 2:6, Colossians 2:9, etc. However, it should be noted that *interpretation* does play an important role in determining if those references apply to Christ *in the manner* they are frequently explained. Some other references of *theós* ("god") brought forward by trinitarian supporters may not even apply directly to Christ, but to God instead, such as: Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1; and 1 John 5:20.

I. Howard Marshall, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Exegesis at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, asserts: "Jesus is never identified simpliciter [simply, (or, directly)] with God, since the early Christians were not likely to confuse Jesus with God the Father." ("Jesus as Lord: the development of the concept," in *Eschatology and the New Testament: Essays in Honor of George Raymond Beasley-Murray*, Hendrickson, p. 144)

The New World Dictionary-Concordance to the New American Bible admits: "The term God is applied to Jesus in only a few texts, and even their interpretation is under dispute (Jn. 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1)." (Page 213)

Dictionary of the Bible: "In general, in His teaching Jesus does not describe Himself directly as 'God,' and speaks of God as another. [...] Mention should also be made of some cases where Jesus is spoken of as 'God,' of which the most notable are Jn 20.28 ... Jn 1.18 ... He 1.8 ... Tit 2.13 ... Jn 1.1 ... Ro

9.5 ... It seems clear that the designation of Jesus Christ as 'God,' if hardly normal, is not felt to be objectionable, and indeed is quite proper on some occasions. None of the passages represent Jesus as the totality of God." (Hastings 1963, p. 338)

Raymond E. Brown, who remained a devout Catholic and Trinitarian, nevertheless wrote that Mark 10:18, Matthew 27:46, John 20:17, Ephesians 1:17, 2 Corinthians 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3, John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:4-6, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:28, Mark 13:32, Philippians 2:5-10, and 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 are "texts that seem to imply that the title God was not used for Jesus" and are "negative evidence which is often somewhat neglected in Catholic treatments of the subject." (*Theological Studies* #26, 1965, p.545-73, *Does the NT call Jesus God?* https://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/157529#cite_ref-9)

And Catholic theologian Karl Rahner cautioned: "In none of these instances [of *theós* ("god"), such as Romans 9:5; John 1:1, 1:18, 20:28; 1 John 5:20; and Titus 2:13] is 'theós' used in such a manner as to identify Jesus with him who elsewhere in the New Testament figures as 'ho theós,' that is, the Supreme God." (*The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of England*, January 1962.) For a consideration of John 1:1 see: <https://www.scribd.com/document/475073347/The-Correct-Translation-of-John-1-1-God-or-a-god>

At Romans 9:5, some Bible translations render the verse in a way which describes Jesus, the Messiah, as if he was "God over all." The text says according to *The NIV Study Bible*, 1985 Edition: "Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen." But there is a footnote which says: "One of the clearest statements of the deity of Jesus Christ found in the entire NT, assuming the accuracy of the translation (see NIV text note). The text note reads: "Or *Messiah, who is over all. God be forever praised! Or Messiah. God who is over all be forever praised!*"

Thus, the NIV text note and its alternate readings show another legitimate way to render the verse, specifically one which does *not* describe Christ as "God." The NIV translators acknowledge that the accuracy of their translation choice is '*assumed*,' not a surety. Other Bible translators have sided with the alternate readings found in the *The NIV Study Bible* text note, which have the doxology directed at God, instead of Christ. See: *Moffatt's Translation; Revised Standard Version; Contemporary English Version; TEV; The New English Bible; The New American Bible; and the Revised English Bible*.

Interpretation then, is a main factor in the translation choice of Romans 9:5. Therefore, it cannot serve as proof that Christ is "God." The "Holy Spirit" is not mentioned in the doxology either. Other Scriptures said to prove Jesus' deity can be dealt with similarly, with a negative outcome for the trinitarian believer.

Other points to consider:

A servant is not greater than his master. One who is sent is not greater than he who sent him.

Jesus repeatedly stated he was 'sent by God.' That alone is enough to question trinitarian claims about the *equality* of the subjects of the "holy trinity."

John 13:16; 8:42: "Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him."

"Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded and came forth from God; I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.'"

Jesus emphatically mentioned he was "sent" by God, a deliberate indicative that the Sender, the Father God, was greater than he was, that he proceeded and came forth from God, and that he acted, not on his own, but always in accord with the One who sent him. Since he came from God, he could speak with the authority and command that only a messenger from God could. The relationship of Jesus to God in Scripture is always depicted as one of subordination. Why? Simply because he is not the equal of God.

Martin Werner, Professor at the University of Bern, Switzerland summed it up well: "Wherever in the New Testament the relationship of Jesus to God, the Father, is brought into consideration, whether with reference to his appearance as a man or to his Messianic status, it is conceived of and represented categorically as subordination." (*The Formation of Christian Dogma*, p. 125)

- **Jesus is not God, but mediator between God and men.**

Another problem area for Trinitarians has to do with the fact that Scripture does not anywhere portray Jesus as God, but only as "mediator" between God and mankind. There is a world of difference between Jesus being "God" as claimed, and him being a "mediator," as he was really described. 1 Timothy 2:5,6 tells us: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all." (Cf., Gal 3:20; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25)

- **The cost of the ransom:**

Orthodoxy teaches that it was God who came to earth to give himself as a *ransom* for all. In a note to John 1:14 about the Word becoming flesh, the *ESV Study Bible* declares: "This is the most amazing event in all of history: the eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinitely holy Son of God took on a human nature and lived among humanity as one who was both God and man at the same time, in one person." In stark contrast with this statement is what the Bible itself teaches on the matter.

John 3:17 tells us: "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." (1 John 4:9) At reading this, it is proper to ask: Who was the one *sent* into the world? God, or the Son? John 3:16 says that God "gave" his Son to save the world as an act of love. When Jesus came to earth, his Father God remained "in heaven." (Remember the Lord's Prayer at Matthew 6:9?) This fact cannot be ignored when the subject of whether Jesus is God or not comes up. Thus, those who claim that Jesus was fully "God" walking about on earth are deceiving themselves and their followers. Elsewhere, Scripture says that "God was with him," not that he was God himself. (Acts 10:38) Why would this simple statement be ignored, or misunderstood by traditionalists?

Don Fleming mentions this point in a philosophical way: "God was now physically present in the world in the person of Jesus. Yet there was a sense in which he was not physically present in the world. Jesus made it plain that when people saw him they saw God (John 8:58-59), but he also made it plain that God existed elsewhere; for he himself came from God, and during his earthly life he spoke to God (John 6:38; 11:41-42)." Is this not a contradiction? Fleming explains this contradiction by pointing out that Jesus was "God the Son," and that the one from whom he came and to whom he spoke was "God the Father." (Page 446) And on page 216 he wrote: "To deny that Jesus was either fully God or fully man is to deny that which is basic to Christian faith...." (Ibid) (Fleming 2004, p. 216, 446)

Honestly, did Fleming solve the trinitarian paradox? Explaining the mystery of the Trinity with trinitarian language does not solve the difficulty of the doctrine anymore than explaining the difficulties of the Latin language in *latin*. Incidentally, the scripture he quoted (John 8:58-59) does not in any way prove Jesus was God. For an explanation of John 8:58, see: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35318309/The-correct-translation-of-John-8-58-List-of-alternate-readings-to-I-am>

1 Timothy 2:5 explicitly declares that Jesus is the "one *mediator* between God and man," not that he was God. A "mediator" by implication cannot be one and the same as one of the parties he is said to represent. This clashes with the usual trinitarian explanation that he is both God and man. Nowhere in Scripture do we read that Jesus is "God the Son," or a "God-man." Calling it a "mystery" either, as some do as a last resort, would be an evasion of biblical truth.

Coming back to the "ransom" issue, a dilemma is presented when one tries to reconcile the claim that Jesus is God with the concept of substitution in the ransom. Why? Because of sin, man was condemned to death. God's law was violated. God's law stated a simple principle when a crime was committed: life for life; eye for eye; tooth for tooth. Unlike other ancient cultures that allowed punishments greatly out of proportion to the offense, in Israel the penalty was to fit the crime, not exceed it. (Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-21) Would this principle also apply to the loss of Adam's life where restitution by an equivalent perfect life be made to satisfy divine justice?

Yes, the Bible indicates so. Jesus is called “the last Adam,” because Jesus as a perfect human became ‘a corresponding ransom’ for what Adam lost – the right to perfect human life. He paid the penalty for our sins so we could be reconciled with God.

“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” “Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.’” (1 Corinthians 15:22,45)

A Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament defines the Greek word for *ransom* (ἀντίλυτρον): “From [antí] in return, or correspondency, and [lýtron] a ransom. A ransom, price of redemption, or rather a correspondent ransom.” (John Parkhurst, M.A., London. Brackets his – in Greek characters)

And *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the NT* (ἀντίλυτρον): “What is given in exchange for another as the price of his redemption, ransom: 1 Tim. 2.6.” (©1977, Baker Book House, p. 50)

This principle is explained well by scholar Robert H. Gundry in his *Commentary on the New Testament* on 1 Timothy 2:5-7: “Since Christ Jesus is this one and only intermediary, he's the agent of salvation for all who'll believe. But Paul introduces him first as ‘the human being’ to indicate his qualification to give himself as a ransom in substitution for all other human beings (compare Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28) ... ‘A ransom’ alludes to redemption (liberation from enslavement to sin and death) by way of a self-sacrificial payment (compare 1 Peter 1:18-21).” (p. 835, ©2010, Hendrickson)

Also, the *Compact Bible Commentary* explains: “The Greek word translated *ransom* is found only here [1 Tim. 2:6] in the New Testament. It specifically refers to a ransom paid for a slave. In Greek it is formed with a prefix that reinforces the idea of substitution (see Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). In other words, Christ substituted His life for ours. He paid the penalty for our sins so we could be reconciled to our Father.” (Earl Radmacher, Ron Allen & H. Wayne House. Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, 2004) With good reason, other translators render the verse in discussion as shown below:

“Jesus, who offered himself **in exchange** for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free.” (*The Message*)

“who gave Himself **as the redemption price for all** – a fact testified to at its own appointed time.” (Weymouth NT)

“Who is giving Himself **a correspondent Ransom for all** (the testimony in its own eras).” (*Concordant Literal Version*)

“who gave himself **as a ransom in substitution for all.**” (Robert H. Gundry)

“the One giving Himself **a correspondent ransom** (a ransom in the place of and directed toward the situation) over (for) all.” (Jonathan Mitchell NT)

“Who gave himself as **a liberation fee** for all persons.” (*A Translation*, David Bentley Hart)

“He gave himself **as a payment** to free all people.” (NCV)

Hence, Christ's sacrifice served “as a ransom in *exchange* or *substitution* for all.” There is no

mention anywhere in Scripture of a certain requirement that God himself had to die to pay the penalty payment for human sin. That in itself is absurd. John 1:14 does not prove that. Neither does 1 Tim 3:16, nor the above text of 1 Tim 2:6. If God was the one who really died for us, then the payment paid for the "exchange" would have been infinitely higher than it was required by divine justice. God's life as "the Creator" in *exchange* for a human creature would never be fair "substitution".

Some would say, "But you don't understand, that's what makes this the most amazing display of God's love ever!" What? Is not offering Christ, God's most dear, only-begotten Son, as a ransom for all enough sacrifice for God? The Lord God could have offered up any other perfect creature in sacrifice in place of Christ. Offering Christ, his closest One, in itself, was the supreme act of benevolence on his part. There was just no need or requirement for *God to personally* give his *own* life for the world.

There is another problem. God cannot ever die! The *New Jerusalem Bible* reads at Habakkuk 1:12, "Surely you, Yahweh, are from ancient times, my holy God, who never dies!" The Hebrew *lo' tamuth'* ("who never dies"), was the original reading which the Sopherim changed to read *lo' namuth'* ("We shall not die"). There are a good number of Bible versions that read just as the NJB above. See the NET Bible, to name one.

La *Biblia Textual* ('The Contextual Bible') notes on Hab. 1:12: "The Sopherim thought that the mere mention (even indirectly) that God could die, was somehow extremely offensive, so the Hebrew text was modified to read 'we shall not die' in place of 'you do not die.'" (*Biblia Textual*, p. 1294, Holman Bible Publishers) The NET Bible above has a similar footnote.

Hence, if the concept 'that God *could* die was extremely offensive' to Jews, to the point of them willing to alter the sacred record, then, why would nominal Christians centuries after Christ readily adopt a doctrine (the Trinity) which taught that the one who really *died* for mankind was "God", a most '*offensive*' thought to Jews? Is this not strange? This is one more indication of the dubious origin of the doctrine.

And then there is the issue of death. The Bible, unlike other pagan sources, show that death is the cessation of all functions of life. (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Psalm 6:5; 115:17; 146:4; Isaiah 38:18) If Jesus was fully God, one and the same as the Supreme God, as claimed, then his "death" would have lead to a Universe with no existing Omnipotent Entity – one with no Central Source of Energy to sustain it (or, 'to hold everything together.')(Compare Colossians 1:17 with Hebrews 1:3)

The Bible does indicate that Jesus, God's Son, did die, and was resurrected by his Father, the God

Yahweh that 'never dies.' (Acts 2:32) Now, let's suppose for a second that Jesus did not actually "die," but only *pretended* to die, then, his sacrifice, instead of being a "supreme act of benevolence on God's part," would have been 'the supreme act of hypocrisy' throughout the known Universe – not a noble example to follow.

And finally, let us not forget that the Bible tells us that in order for Jesus to give his life in exchange for all (or, "taste death for every one"), he had to become "lower than the angels." (Hebrews 2:9) There is no reason whatsoever for God ever to become "lower than the angels," not even for a blink of 33 years. But the 'lesser' Jesus could! (John 14:28) The fact that Jesus really was made "lower than the angels," flatly contradicts the ESV John 1:14 footnote which talks about: "The eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinitely holy Son of God." That's right! Jesus could not be "eternal" because he was "the beginning [the first] of God's creation [not the beginner]." Additionally, at one point, he *died*. Jesus was not "omnipotent," because right before his death, Jesus cried with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?," and had to have his *Superior* Father raise him from the pangs of death. (Matthew 27:46; Acts 3:15) And he was not "omnipresent," because Christ repeatedly said that his Father, God, was elsewhere, "in heaven," while his feet were firmly planted on earth. (Luke 9:16; John 12:28; 17:1) Remember, Scripture explicitly says that "God was *with* him [Christ], not 'that God was him' on earth. (Acts 10:38)

Because there is a real dichotomy between Scripture and trinitarian doctrine, translators sometimes rephrase actual biblical statements in order to have them say something quite different than what the original writers intended. A case in point is Philippians 2:5-7, where a Trinitarian scholar offers this paraphrase in his version: "Think and act like Jesus. Even though He was equal to God, He never bragged about it. When He came here, He acted the part of a servant." (TCW) Heresy in the making!

Now compare the above paraphrase with another Bible version: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." (RSV)

One version says that Christ "was equal to God," while the other says that "he was in the form of God." These two renderings say something different. Paul, the Author, could have simply said, "He was God." But he did not, choosing instead a wordier expression. Being "in the form of God" is another way of saying that he was "divine by nature," (SEB); "like God in everything," (NCV). It does not say Christ was equal with God. Observe that Paul added: "[Christ] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." This too is often distorted to say the opposite, that Christ did not 'retain' or 'cling to' his prerogatives as God. Here the Trinitarians have come up

with *their own definition* for the Greek derivative *harpagmón* (from *harpázō*). Those who believe Christ is God Supreme claim something like this: "The trans[itive] meaning of *harpagmós*, robbery, is necessary here." In other words, "the Lord did not esteem being equal with God as identical with the coming forth or action of a robber...." (Zodhiates 1992, p. 256) Hence, various translators convey this message at Philippians 2:6, 'Christ did not think being equal with God a robbery [*harpagmón*].' Such interpretation puts Paul saying of Christ the opposite of what he really intended.

The Greek word *harpázō* or any of its derivatives, including *harpagmón* means invariably 'to seize or snatch violently,' and not the purported sense of 'retaining.' This can be verified by checking a Greek-English Concordance to see how translators render the word *harpázō* throughout, from which *harpagmón* derives. Those who believe Christ is God, apply the customary meaning to *harpázō* elsewhere, but here they say it means something else, just to fit their sectarian mold.

The apostle Paul was urging Christians to imitate Christ in humility. *The Clear Word* wrongly renders verse 7: "When [Christ] came here, He *acted* the part of a servant." (Italics added) What? Does it make sense to imitate someone who "acted" the part of a servant who purportedly was 'God in human flesh'? Are Christians exhorted to have the right to be equal to God? Are we not better off instead imitating Christ, who, when understood correctly, after leaving his lofty divine nature behind, became fully human, and through it all, never once considered seizing the chance to be equal to God? In the end, Christ was crowned with all excellence by God.

A Catholic Bible renders the verse: "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped." And in a footnote it says: "Many see [in Philippians 2:6] an allusion to the Genesis story: unlike Adam, Jesus, though...in the form of God (Gn 1:26-27), did not reach out for equality with God, in contrast with the first Adam in Gn 3:5-6." (NABRE)

The correct sense of the passage is conveyed by the *21st Century New Testament*: "Although he [Christ] was like God in nature, he never even considered seizing the chance to be equal with God." This biblical verse, cannot be used to justify the trinitarian doctrine. On the contrary, properly understood and translated, shows that 'the Father is and will be always greater than the Son'. (Philippians 4:19,20; 1 Peter 1:3)

- **Could God be tempted?**

Another area of the Trinity's contradictory nature is seen in the notion of temptation. We mortals know too well how easy it is to fall prey to temptation, be it food, money, sex, power, or some other enticement. But God? Never!

Scripture tells us that “God cannot be tempted with evil.” (James 1:13) However, Jesus as a man, being “made lower than the angels,” could be tempted. (Heb. 2:9) Actually, Luke 4:2 says that “for forty days he [Jesus] was tempted by the devil.” (NRSV) Gladly, Jesus did not give in to any of the Devil's temptations.

I checked a few Study Bibles and Commentaries, and they all make reference to the temptation incident, but avoid touching the implications of the trinity issue here. Why? Simply because it cannot be easily explained without resorting to convoluted reasonings.

- *Scriptures which manifest two different wills:*

Another thorn in the flesh for those trying to prove the Scriptural relevance of the Trinity dogma is the matter of God's will versus Christ's will. If the Trinity were true, then all three persons would share the same will. None could do something the other would object to, and none would *plead* the other's will be imposed over another if all three were one.

Yet, Jesus taught his disciples to pray: ‘Our Father in heaven...May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ Christ spoke of ‘the Father's will’ when addressing him, and cared to mention that he was, not only *his* Father, but ‘the Father of *everyone else.*’ (John 20:17)

Luke 22:42: “Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless **not my will, but thine**, be done.” (Mark 14:36) Expressed another way: “Father, if you will, please don't make me suffer by having me drink from this cup. But do what you want, and not what I want.” (CEV)

Now, why would Jesus ask someone else, ‘Do what you want, and not what I want,’ if he was *fully God*? Rejecting the Trinity makes it easier to grasp how Jesus could in practice make such request because as “*Son of God,*” having limitations, he would have to *depend* on his Father's will, and would not have to do the work of a symbolic ‘actor.’ See next section.

- **Was Jesus really almighty?**

Some have concluded that Jesus is “Almighty” because of Revelation 1:8, which says: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’” says the Lord God, ‘who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’” The previous verse obviously refers to Christ, so verse 8 (‘Lord the Almighty’), must accordingly apply to Jesus, they reason. However, throughout the book of Revelation, it is not unusual for speakers to alternate at various places in the same chapter, and even from one verse to the other.

Because of this, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* (trinitarian) observes: “It cannot be absolutely certain that the writer meant to refer to the Lord Jesus specifically here . . . There is no real incongruity in supposing, also, that the writer here meant to refer to God as such.”

And a *Commentary on the New Testament* notes: “Since alpha and omega are the first and last letters

in the Greek alphabet, saying 'I am the alpha and the omega' is like saying in English 'I am the A and the Z.' [...] This language described God the Father in 1:4 and therefore identifies 'the Lord God' with him here too [in 1:8] (as clearly also in 4:8; 21:22)." (Gundry 2010, p. 998)

Elsewhere, Jesus is always represented as inferior in power to God. John 5:19, "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever he does, that the Son does likewise.'" John 12:49, "For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak."

Christ imitates God, and only does what the Father tells him to. Only someone *lesser* than God with *limitations* would talk like that. Can anyone ever imagine God 'receiving a commandment' from someone else? If so, he would not be "almighty" God. Would he?

- *Scriptures which indicate that Jesus, the Son, did not have full knowledge:*

Mark 13:32, "But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36) How could the Son Jesus Christ be *God* on Earth as is commonly claimed, if he himself had no knowledge about "that day" that only the Father knew?

Acts 1:7, "Jesus said to them, 'The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know.'" (NCV) Jesus Christ made a clear distinction between himself (as Son), and his Father. It is plain that Jesus did not have the authority of the Father. True, trinitarian advocates say that Jesus here, as in Mark 13:32, did not have that authority and knowledge because he was both *God* and *man*, and here he spoke as a human being, not God. These individuals are the same ones who want to convince us in other places, i.e., when Jesus executes a miracle, that Christ was *all of God* on Earth, that he was *omnipotent*. In other words, they want to adapt their interpretation to the occasion. They have become "experts" in convincing people to follow human philosophy.

Hebrews 5: 8, "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered." Is it possible for God to *learn* to *obey* God? What nonsense! The Bible does not contradict itself, but those who want to accommodate a tradition to a Sacred Book do.

Revelation 1:1, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John." Does God need anyone to give him a *revelation*? Does this text show a heavenly *trinity* here composed of God, Jesus Christ and his angel?

- *Scriptures which show Jesus subject to God, even in heaven:*

Matthew 20:23, "He said to them, 'You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'" Jesus acknowledged

here, that even in heaven, there were things for which he would have no right whatsoever to decide, but were only the Father's prerogative. The "Holy Spirit" is absent once again, here, in the decision process of assigning *Kingdom* seats.

1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." There is no denying that Christ is "divine" in the universal picture. This is a fact. What is rejected here as 'incongruous' is the thought of Christ being a third part of a "Holy Trinity" in pagan style, where three partners are said to be *coequal*. How could Christ ever be equal to God, if he had someone over his head in this picture? Besides, is "Holy Spirit" *the head* over anyone? This text clearly states that God is the Sovereign of the Universe, and Christ is second after him.

Philippians 2:5-11, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The above is a beautiful account of the significance of Christ in the Christian's life. Christ is a fine model for us, while being 'divine' in heaven, never considered seizing at equality with God. On earth, he did no less. Notwithstanding, we must fall down to our knees in homage before the glorified Christ, with the understanding that everything that happens in favor of Christ ends with the glorification of his 'greater' Father and Sovereign of the world.

1 Corinthians 15:28, "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him [God] who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one."

Trying to fit the Trinitarian dogma within the context of this explicit scripture would be like trying to fit each of the eight arms of an octopus *separately* in a *two-part* container. This one text alone proves the doctrine of the Trinity as false.

– *Scriptures in which Jesus calls his Father "God"; "my God"; or "the true God":*

John 5:44, "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" Jesus here made reference to someone else as "the only God." How could someone *else* be "the only God," if he too was fully God while on earth? To make reference to someone else as "the *only* God" would only make sense if Jesus himself was a distinct personal being from God and inferior to him. Not to mention, the "Holy Spirit" was never acknowledged as "God."

John 20:17, "Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" The Father is said to be the same "God" that Jesus and Mary Magdalene shared. Jesus had to report to someone else as chief 'master,' an unnecessary act by Jesus if he himself was God Almighty. And it was *not* "the Holy Spirit" he had to report back to.

Rev. 3:12, "He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name."

Five times (4 here and once in John 20:17), Jesus Christ calls someone else '*his* God,' an impressive statement when one considers that mainstream scholars who teach the Trinity cannot name *one* scripture which states that God is accountable to someone else. Jesus Christ never held back from drawing attention to his God. In contrast, those entangled with the trinitarian spider web find it difficult to do so. Oh, but they find it a much easier task to remove God's name from the Bible, than admit Jesus' Father and God is "the Most High" of Luke 1:32.

John 17:3, "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

These are Jesus' own words in *prayer* to his Father, God. Did Jesus disrespect his *coequal* Holy Spirit by not acknowledging his personal presence in the necessary process for salvation? There is no doubt that holy spirit is necessary in a Christian's life, but if it were a *person*, would Jesus not have mentioned him here in this momentous event of his life, the eve of his death and resurrection? You would think that if holy spirit were a distinct *person* with feelings, he too would be there to support Christ when he needed it most, right there along with the Father.

Furthermore, when Jesus called his Father "the only true God," he obviously *excluded* himself and the holy spirit from such description.

Professor H. A. W. Meyer on John 17:3 acknowledged: "Only one, the Father, can absolutely be termed the 'only true God,' not at the same time Christ (who is not even in I John 5:20 the true God...). Jesus, in unity with the Father, works as his commissioner (John 10:30), and is His representative (John 14:9, 10)." (*Commentary on the New Testament*)

In sum: "The New Testament does not teach the later standard doctrine that Jesus is a distinct, divine person co-equal, co-essential and co-eternal with God the Father. It exalts Jesus as high as is possible without compromising monotheism." (Don Cupitt, *Jesus and the Gospel of God*, p. 18.)

"The New Testament says that Jesus was the Word of God, it says that God was in Christ, it says that Jesus is the Son of God; but it does not say that Jesus was God, simply like that." (John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, p. 70.)

Tampering of early manuscripts manifest trinitarian corruption:

Another topic to consider on the subject of the Trinity is one of textual transmission. What does one have to do with the other? Well, if the Trinity doctrine was originally taught in Scripture as truth, there would be no need to tamper with the early manuscripts if these already supported the doctrine. On the other hand, if early manuscripts historically showed no trinitarian inclination, and the transmission record somehow showed alterations *to reinforce the trinitarian view* being introduced into the Holy Writings as manuscripts were being copied, then that alone would be of serious concern to all truth seekers. As various writers have noted:

"It's interesting to see that many of the scriptural 'evidences' said to be in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity, are grounded in mistranslation, errors in textual transmission, and sometimes even outright forgery. These can often be exposed by even a cursory glance at an English/Greek interlinear Bible or a Greek concordance." (Ted Whitten, *The Trinity - A Doctrine Overdue for Extinction; Part 2 "Imperfections in the King James Version"*)

Sir William Whiston: "We certainly know of a great number of corruptions brought into the Scriptures by the Athanasians - relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity." (Second letter to the Bishop of London, 1719, p. 15)

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics; The Bible in the Church: "In the first two centuries nearly all the various readings of the New Testament came into existence, the majority of them by deliberate alteration of the text...in the interests of (the trinity) dogma...."

"What I discovered in most of the versions of the Bible produced by trinitarians which I studied - is irrefutable proof of intentional mistranslation of words which refer to...God. This statement is not intended as an antagonistic denunciation of those translators. It is simply a statement of fact, and it is a fact that no scholar on earth can refute. In the versions of the holy scriptures which they produce, I learned that Christian trinitarians routinely and purposely mistranslate Greek pronouns, so as to promote the doctrine of the holy Trinity."

"Codex B (Vaticanus)...was altered by a later hand in more than two thousand places. Eusebius, therefore, is not without grounds for accusing the adherents of...the newly-risen Doctrine of the Trinity of falsifying the Bible..." (Fraternal Visitor 1924, p. 148; translated from Christadelphian Monatshefte)

Rewriting the Bible to Support the Trinity Doctrine: "Learned men, so called Correctores were, following the church meeting at Nicea 325 AD, selected by the church authorities to scrutinize

the sacred texts and rewrite them in order to correct their meaning in accordance with the views which the church had just sanctioned." (*Einführung in die Textkritik des griechischen Testaments* [Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek Testament]: Eberhard Nestle)

Worshiping God on His Terms – Not ours:

God is Supreme. It stands to reason that he as the Grand Creator of the Universe can dictate how his creatures should worship him. It is his choice. It is not up to us to worship God on *our* terms. We must worship him in *His* terms. Jesus Christ, 'the only begotten Son of God,' taught us *to pray*, and *how* to pray. He also indicated how to worship *the Father*. Jesus Christ told us: 'Those who worship him must worship *in spirit and truth*.' (John 4:23,24) Thus, the worship of tangible idols is unnecessary, since we can freely approach God "in spirit" in our worship.

Worshiping God in "truth" is equally important. 'Truth' demands that we stick closely and simply to God's Word. There is no need to make such worship to God more complex than needs to be. It is in the interest of God's arch-enemy to confuse potential worshipers of God. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Throughout the centuries, there have always been some in each generation who seek to stand out in education. That in itself may not be condemnable. But to give the impression that *only* an elite group of learned people can dispense Bible truths – definitely *is*. Or that only orthodoxy provides the right answers, and those who disagree are wrong.

Jesus' followers were common people, 'unorthodox' by worldly standards then. They were *monotheists*. There were no trinitarian concepts in their teaching. Those obsessed with higher education in Jesus' day, looked down at Jesus' disciples for their unorthodox teaching methods. While pagan nations worshiped their triads of gods, the first Christians stuck to the Jewish custom, the worship of the one true God. (1 Corinthians 8:5,6)

Around the time of the Protestant movement in the 16th century, Roman Catholic leaders were behind the resistance in translating the Bible into plain English. The clergymen at the time loved to use Latin before the people, and used it as a tool to keep the common people hostage to tradition, bewildered by their mixed message. The Trinity, a Catholic doctrine, was one of the mysterious dogmas taught by them. By doing so, these worshipers were kept in the dark.

Once the Protestant movement was in force, a 'reformation' took place. Bible translation into English and other languages were now being developed. Some Roman Catholic doctrines were outright rejected, and a new spirit of religious vitality swept over the land. Some died in their efforts in translating and disseminating the Word of God, but the freedom gained to *read* the Bible in plain English and other languages was monumental to say the least.

Many Protestants, when they look back at the Reformation, are proud of the accomplishments of these Reformers. And much good came from their efforts. It was a certainly a risky move, and

for that, we are in debt. The Protestant movement was believed to be a 'restoration' of Christian doctrine. But in the end, it was not. The Reformation did not go far enough. Protestants carried over many of the Roman Catholic religious practices to their new religious worship. In some cases, they changed their terminology, or rephrased previous statements to make it appear there was a true reformation taking place. But in reality, the Protestant and Catholic faith are not as far apart as their adherents profess. For instance, the Trinity doctrine is in the main a Catholic dogma. And the Protestants defend it with even more passion than the Catholics, surprising when one considers its dubious origin and lack of Scriptural support.

A majority support in favor of the Trinity dogma by the well-educated has swayed millions to believe the doctrine is biblical. But as shown above, there are far too many conflicting issues with the doctrine that one has to wonder why so many do not instead accept the simpler, direct, harmonious Scriptural statements as they were penned. The Trinity dogma made no sense back in the fourth-century when it was ratified, nor did it make sense during the turbulent Reformation period, and still to this day it makes no sense whatsoever – even if we take into account the increased knowledge acquired from countless new discoveries of the last few centuries. The Trinity will never make sense, simply, because its source is *foreign* to Scripture.

The Bible does speak of "mysteries," but ironically there is no mention of a *trinitarian* mystery, which is odd, considering that its defenders claim it is 'the main doctrine of Christian faith.' A *paradox* right there. And as noted throughout, many if not most scholars who support the doctrine acknowledge that explicit trinitarian thought and language are notably absent in Scripture. If so, why teach it?

Tradition plays a big role. As Cardinal Hosius stated: "We believe the doctrine of a triune God, because we have received it by tradition, though not mentioned at all in Scripture." (*Conf. Cathol. Fidei*, Chap. XXVI) And what does Jesus, the founder of Christianity, have to say to those following human traditions opposing Scripture? "You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men." "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition!" (Mark 7:8,9) Jesus stated that 'teaching precepts of men as doctrines' was 'worship in vain.' (Mark 7:7)

A distinguished follower of Jesus Christ even warned: "See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8)

Theologian Arthur Cushman McGiffert, made an interesting observation: "...It has been the boast of orthodox theologians that in the doctrine of the Trinity both religion and philosophy come to highest expression." (*A History of Christian Thought*, C. Scribner)

We thus have a choice between Christendom's heavily backed but distorted expression of Jesus' divinity, and in the other, a simpler portrayal of the life of Jesus as '*the way* to the Father.' (John 14:6) There is no doubt that Jesus is relevant in the Christian life, to the loss of the typical Jewish believer who rejects him. It is only *through* Christ that we can approach God. Without Christ, there is no salvation, period. (Acts 4:12) However, it is the *Father* of Jesus Christ we are asked to worship, not the Son. (John 4:23,24; Matthew 4:10) Jesus Christ was very clear about the identity of God when he said in prayer: "And this is the real and eternal life: That they know you, The one and only true God, And Jesus Christ, whom you sent." (John 17:3, TM)

Trinitarian Cyril Richardson, professor of church history at New York's Union Theological Seminary had this to say: "My conclusion, then, about the doctrine of the Trinity is that it is an artificial construct . . . It produces confusion rather than clarification; and while the problems with which it deals are real ones, the solutions it offers are not illuminating. It has posed for many Christians dark and mysterious statements, which are ultimately meaningless, because it does not sufficiently discriminate in its use of terms." (1958, pp. 148-149)

By no means are theologians' explanations of the Trinity doctrine clear. Extended conversations on the subject frequently end up with claims of a doctrine being a 'deep,' 'profound,' and 'incomprehensible' *mystery*. Religious writer A. W. Tozer, in his book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, states that the Trinity is an "incomprehensible mystery" and that attempts to understand it "must remain forever futile." He admits that churches, "without pretending to understand," have nevertheless continued to teach this doctrine (1961, pp. 17-18). He then remarkably concludes, "The fact that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, instead of being against it, is in its favor." (p. 23)

Have Churches deviated then from true Christianity?

The available evidence points to this inescapable conclusion:

"...Primitive Christianity did not have an explicit doctrine of the Trinity such as was subsequently elaborated in the creeds of the early church." (*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 84)

"Fourth-century Trinitarianism did not reflect accurately early Christian teaching regarding the nature of God; it was, on the contrary a deviation from this teaching." (*The Encyclopedia Americana*, p. 1956, p. 2941)

"Christendom has done away with Christianity without being quite aware of it." (Soren Kierkegaard, quoted in *Time* magazine, Dec. 16, 1946, p. 64)

Emil Br nner, internationally respected Swiss theologian, wrote the following: "It was never the intention of the original witnesses to Christ in the New Testament to set before us an intellectual

problem – that of the Three Divine Persons – and then to tell us silently to worship this mystery of the ‘Three-in-One.’ There is no trace of such an idea in the New Testament. This ‘mysterium logicum,’ the fact that God is Three and yet One, lies wholly outside the message of the Bible.” (*The Christian Doctrine of God, Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, p. 226)

And the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* asserts frankly that the Trinity “is not directly and immediately the Word of God.” (1967, Vol. XIV, p. 304)

Truly, the trinity dogma is an irrational statement which defies clear explanation. In sum, if *Jesus* himself *asked others* to worship his Father, God, and Church followers choose instead to ignore this directive, and go on to worship the “Son” in the name of a philosophical “trinity,” it remains to be seen if such worship would ever be acceptable to God.

– The End –

Is God “one” or “three”?

“Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God **is one** Jehovah.” (Deuteronomy 6:4, ASV)

“The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, **the Lord is one.**’ ” (Mark 12:29)

“Seek the glory that comes from **the only God?**” (John 5:44)

“And this is eternal life, that they know thee **the only true God.**” (John 17:3)

“Since **God is one...**” (Romans 3:30)

“There is **no God but one.**” (1 Corinthians 8:4)

“Yet for us there is **one God**, the Father.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

“But **God is one.**” (Galatians 3:20)

“**One God** and Father of us all.” (Ephesians 4:6)

“For there is **one God.**” (1 Timothy 2:5)

“And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God [not “God”].” (1 John 5:5, *New Living Translation*)

Other subjects by the same author (For Spanish, see below):

Exodus 2:25: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/38676458/Exodus-2-25-And-God-took-notice-Does-God-care-about-us>

Matthew 5:3, ‘the poor in spirit’: <https://www.scribd.com/document/35085619/Matthew-5-3-Blessed-are-the-poor-in-spirit>

John 1:1, <https://www.scribd.com/document/475073347/The-Correct-Translation-of-John-1-1-God-or-a-god>

John 1:1, Briefer text, with *additional* samples: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/50330864/John-1-1-List-of-Alternate-Readings>

John 1:14 (“grace”): <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35002730/John-1-14-Jesus-full-of-grace>

John 8:58: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35318309/The-correct-translation-of-John-8-58-List-of-alternate-readings-to-I-am>

John 17:3: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/57772552/John-17-3-%E2%80%98Taking-in-knowledge-of-%E2%80%99-God-and-Jesus>

Acts 20:28, <https://www.scribd.com/doc/231244155/Acts-20-28-Whose-blood-God-s-Or-Christ-s>

Colossians 1:16, "all other things": <http://www.scribd.com/doc/209607822/Colossians-1-16-Is-the-translation-all-other-things-appropriate>
1 Timothy 3:16, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/76927834/Was-God-manifested-in-the-flesh-1-Timothy-3-16>
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Translation Differences in selected verses: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/59484457/Translation-Differences-Questions-and-Answers>
Was Jesus Created First? <https://www.scribd.com/document/378080373/Was-Jesus-Created-First>

Otros temas – en *español* – por el mismo autor:

Juan 1:1, ¿"un dios"?: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/35899788/Traduccion-correcta-de-Juan-1-1-Lista-de-lecturas-alternativas>
Juan 1:1, Listado de lecturas suplentes: <https://www.scribd.com/document/358556923/Lista-de-lecturas-suplentes-a-la-tradicional-de-Juan-1-1>
Juan 8:58, "yo soy": <http://www.scribd.com/doc/36126649/La-traduccion-correcta-de-Juan-8-58-Lista-de-lecturas-alternas-a-yo-soy>
Juan 17:3, 'adquirir conocimiento': <http://www.scribd.com/doc/74629981/Juan-17-3-%E2%80%98Adquiriendo-conocimiento%E2%80%99-de-Dios-y-Jesucristo>
Colosenses 1:16, "todas las otras cosas": <http://www.scribd.com/doc/209601066/Colosenses-1-16-%C2%BFes-la-traduccion-%E2%80%9Ctodas-las-otras-cosas%E2%80%9D-apropiada>
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